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Two women dead, girl injured in landslide on Vaishno Devi track

LG expresses grief, sanctions ex-gratia

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

KATRA/JAMMU: Two women pilgrims from Punjab and Uttar Pradesh died while a five-year-old girl was grievously injured in a landslide on the new track to the Vaishno Devi shrine in Reasi district on Monday, officials said.

Movement of pilgrims on the Himkoti track was halted following the landslide but the pilgrimage to the shrine atop Trikuta hills continued through the traditional Sanjhihatt route, they said.

Describing the incident as "unfortunate", Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha expressed grief over the loss of lives and sanctioned an ex gratia of Rs 5 lakh each to the bereaved families.

The deceased have been identified as Sapna (27) of Dhianpur village in Punjab's Gurdaspur, and Neha (23) of Kanpur in Uttar Pradesh,



officials said.

In a condolence message, Sinha said, "Extremely pained to learn about the loss of precious lives of pilgrims due to the unfortunate incident of shooting stones on Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine track today. My deepest condolences to bereaved families in this hour of grief."

"Praying for the early recovery of the injured. I have directed the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board and the district administra-

tion, Reasi, to provide all necessary assistance, as provided in the rule, to the affected families and ensure best care for the injured," he said.

Officials said the landslide hit the route near Panchi, three kilometres ahead of Bhawan, around 2.15 pm. A portion of an overhead iron structure was also damaged, they said.

The pilgrims were heading for the shrine when they got trapped under the iron

Cloud burst triggers flash floods in Banihal, one dead

BANIHAL: A man was washed away in flash floods triggered by a cloudburst in Jammu and Kashmir's Ramban district on Monday evening, officials said.

The incident took place in the Bankoot area of Banihal tehsil, when a cloudburst caused flash floods that washed away a JCB machine along with its operator, they said.

Officials said the cloudburst hit the upper reaches of Bankoot village near Banihal, causing flash floods in the Gagarwah and Bankoot rivulets.

The flash floods also damaged the under-construction Bankoot-Gujjarnar road and swept away machinery including an L&T machine and a JCB machine, they said.

Police, local teams from Bankoot and volunteer teams rushed to the spot and launched a rescue operation. Following intense efforts, the body of the deceased was retrieved from the rivulet, they said. The deceased was identified as 28-year-old machine helper Zahir Ahmed from the Manjoos area of Tehsil Khari. He died on the spot. Doctors confirmed his death upon arrival at the hospital, they said. A case has been registered at the Banihal police station and further investigations have begun. On August 26, a cloudburst had occurred in Panchayats Kumate, Dhraman, and Halla in Rajgarh tehsil, causing flash floods in the Tanager and Dadi streams, they added. In the flash floods, three persons, including a six-year-old girl, lost their lives and the search operation to locate the remaining four people continues.

ACB books XEn for misappropriation of funds

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: The Anti-corruption Bureau (ACB) in Jammu and Kashmir has booked a government employee for amassing wealth beyond the sources of his known income, officials said on Monday.

The Bureau has lodged an FIR against an Executive Engineer (Xen), Mushtaq Ahmad Bhat, for misappropriation of funds by allotting work to an unqualified contractor and later inflating the cost of work by 172 per cent, the official said.

The probe revealed that the beneficiary Class 'B' Contractor was eligible for

allotment of contract up to only Rs 50 lakh, he said.

According to ACB, a Joint Surprise Check (JSC) was conducted into the allegations that work for construction of a U-shaped RCC drain at Industrial Estate Khrew, illegally allotted by the Estates Manger, SICOP to M/S Ubaid Rashid Wani at cost of Rs 108 lakh and further extended by adding huge quantum of work amounting Rs 263 lakh in violation to the laid down procedure etc

The probe conducted in the JSC revealed that work for construction of a

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Lumberdar suspended for MCC violation

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SHOPIAN: Acting tough against the violations of Model Code of Conduct (MCC) guidelines, a Lumberdar was on Monday placed under suspension by the authorities in Herman Shopian.

Lumberdar namely Bilal Ahmed Sheikh of Village Hind-Sitapora of Tehsil Herman Shopian was found violating the MCC guidelines by participating and

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Rs 2000 notes: 97.96 pc returned; Rs 7,261 Cr worth notes still with public

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

MUMBAI: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Monday said 97.96 per cent of the Rs 2000 denomination banknotes have returned to the banking system, and only Rs 7,261 crore worth of the withdrawn notes are still with the public.

On May 19, 2023, the RBI announced the withdrawal of Rs 2000 denomination banknotes from circulation.

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WEATHER

Temperature (Jammu)
Max: 34.6°C Min: 25.5°C

Humidity
Max: 85 Min: 68

Temperature (Srinagar)
Max: 28.0°C Min: 18.5°C

Humidity
Max: 93 Min: 82

Sunset : 18:54 Hours
Sunrise : 06:05 Hours

ECI lays down guidelines for print, electronic, social media for J&K

Bans display of any election matter during 48 hours before conclusion of polling

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: In order to uphold the sanctity of the electoral process, the Election Commission of India (ECI) has laid down various guidelines for the print, electronic and social media ahead of the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly Elections 2024.

These guidelines have been issued in the interest of transparency, the Commission said.

The ECI reiterated the guidelines laid down in the Section 126(1)(b) of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 that prohibits dis-

ECI appoints GO for Tral AC

PULWAMA: The Election Commission of India has appointed Brajesh Narain Singh (IAS) as the General Observer (GO) for 33-Tral Assembly Constituency (AC) in Pulwama district for the Legislative Assembly Elections, 2024.

In case the public/ candidates as well as political parties' representatives want to contact the General Observer for any issues related to the

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playing any election matter by means, inter alia, of television, cinematograph or similar apparatus, in any polling area during the period of 48 hours ending with the hour fixed for the conclusion of the poll for any election in the polling area.

No person shall display to the public any election matter intended or circulated to influence or affect the result of an election, it said.

"Violation of the aforesaid provisions of Section 126 is punishable with imprisonment up to a period

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LG attends flag-in ceremony of JIM&WS Pahalgam's Mountain Expedition



LG Manoj Sinha attending flag-in ceremony of JIM&WS Pahalgam's Mountain Expedition at Srinagar on Monday.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday attended the flag-in ceremony of the triumphant mountaineering expedition, accomplished by Jawahar Institute of

Mountaineering & Winter Sports, Pahalgam and interacted with the Expedition team at Raj Bhawan.

The Mountaineering Expedition team has successfully completed the

expedition to Nine peaks including Six peaks (Mount Kang Yatse-I, Mount Kang Yatse-II, Mount Dzo Jongo-I, Mount Dzo Jongo-II, Mount Lungser Kangri and Mount Chamser Kangri) above 20,000 feet.

NC-Cong alliance dangerous for J&K, will promote separatist ideology: Chugh



BJP's National General Secretary, Tarun Chugh addressing public meeting on Monday.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The BJP's National General Secretary, Tarun Chugh, on Monday said that the NC-Congress alliance is very dangerous for

Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) and it is a part of a conspiracy to promote Separatist ideology. This was stated by Tarun Chugh during a

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■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: An army personnel suffered a fatal bullet injury at a military station in Jammu on Monday, a defence spokesman said, ruling out any terror angle after the firing sparked an alert and a massive house-to-house search in the area.

According to officials, Naik Kuldeep Singh of Punjab was on guard duty when he was hit by a bullet in the head at Sunjawan Military Station on the outskirts of Jammu and was evacuated to a hospital where he succumbed to injuries.

"Initial investigations by the Indian Army suggest that the incident in which a soldier lost his life in the morning is not a terror attack. The incident is being investigated," a defence spokesman said.

Sources said that the preliminary probe indicated that the soldier committed suicide.



Earlier in the day, the spokesperson said a few rounds were fired at the military station at around 10.50 am, resulting in critical injuries to a soldier.

An operation had been launched and further details were being ascertained, he said.

A Special Operation Group of local police along with other teams rushed to the scene to join the army in a massive search operation as a terror attack was suspect-

ed. However, nothing suspicious was found during the search operation which continued for hours together with all entry and exit points to the adjoining areas plugged.

Drones and sniffer dogs were also used during the thorough search of the area.

In February 2018, the terrorists attacked the Sunjawan military camp resulting in the killing of

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Cong releases phase 2 list of 6 candidates, fields Karra from Central Shalteng

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: The Congress on Monday released its second list of six candidates for the upcoming assembly polls in Jammu and Kashmir, fielding JKPC chief Tariq Hameed Karra from Central Shalteng.

The list was released soon after Congress' Central Election Committee (CEC) met here to finalise names of candidates for the elections, which the party is contesting in alliance with the National Conference.

Apart from J-K Pradesh Congress Committee chief Karra, the party has fielded

Mumtaz Khan from Reasi, Bhupender Jamwal from Mata Vaishno Devi, Iftikhar Ahmed from Rajouri (ST), Shabbir Ahmed Khan from Thannamandi (ST) and Mohammad Shah nawaz Choudhary from Surankote (ST).

These constituencies will go to polls in the second phase of the three-phase assembly elections.

The total number of candidates declared by the party is now 15.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, former party chief Rahul Gandhi, general secretary

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“Cong made J&K a terror state, Modi has turned tables for peace, prosperity”

KISHTWAR: BJP national general secretary Tarun Chugh, who is also the party incharge for J&K, on Monday blasted the Congress for destroying the socio-political fabric of J&K since Independence.

Addressing a series of public meetings in Gulabgarh, Padar Nagasani Assembly of Kishtwar region, Chugh said the Congress created circumstances that led to the death of Shiyama Prasad Mukherjee, who was then the Jan Sangh president.

Chugh said the Congress later allowed the Pakistan disruptive elements to strike roots in J&K. It gave a long rope to the anti-national forces to gain ground in J&K.

The Modi government, he said has set in a new era of nationalism and enterprise. The J&K youth is looking for a new sunrise and the popularity of B-JP is growing every day. Chugh said, "Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government has worked to wipe out terrorism

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SC refuses to entertain plea for caste census

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Monday refused to entertain a plea seeking direction to the Centre for conducting a

socio-economic caste census for the welfare of backward and other marginalised sections,

saying the issue falls in the domain of governance.

A bench of Justices Hrishikesh Roy and SVN Bharti allowed the petitioner P Prasad Naidu to withdraw his plea in which he had sought a direction for expediting the enumeration of data for census.

"What can be done about this? The issue is in the

domain of governance. It is a policy matter," the bench told senior advocate Ravishankar Jandiyala and advocate Sravan Kumar Karanam, appearing for the petitioner.



Jandiyala submitted that several countries have done it but India is yet to do.

The Indra Sawhney judgement of 1992 (Mandal Commission verdict) has said that this census has to be done periodically," he contended.

The bench told him it was dismissing the petition as the court could not interfere in the issue. Sensing the mood of the court, the counsel sought permission to

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