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Two women dead...**

structure following the landslide, officials said. According to them, the landslide was caused by shooting stones in the wake of rainfall over the past few days. Deputy Commissioner of Reasi Vishesh Paul Mahajan said senior police and civil administration officers have rushed to the spot. Mahajan too left for Katra -- the base camp for the Vaishno Devi pilgrims - - to take stock of the situation and to personally know the condition of the injured girl. Officials said disaster management teams of the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVDSB) immediately reached the spot of the incident and launched a rescue operation. The injured girl -- Sanvi a resident of Kanpur -- was admitted to the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Narayana Superspeciality Hospital for treatment. Her grandfather L Prasad said they were taking a break from trekking to the shrine when police started clearing the track due to a monkey scare. "Suddenly, there was a landslide and the debris fell on the tin shed which collapsed," he said. On New Year's Day in 2022, a stampede at the shrine left 12 pilgrims dead and 16 injured.

Soldier suffers fatal...

six soldiers, a civilian and three terrorists. Talking to reporters at the site earlier on Monday, Superintendent of Police (South) Ajay Sharma said that two gunshots were heard at a post, resulting in injuries to a soldier. "The probe is on (to ascertain the cause of the firing. Senior officers are on the spot," he said.

Cong releases phase...

in-charge (organisation) K C Venugopal, Karra, Jammu and Kashmir screening committee chief Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa and senior leader Salman Khurshid, among others, attended the meeting at the AICC headquarters here. The National Conference and the Congress have finalised the seat-sharing formula and will contest 51 and 32 seats, respectively. There will be a friendly contest on a few seats. "The screening committee meeting that was held yesterday, for about four to four and a half hours, discussed the second phase and the third phase. With the notification for the second phase issued, our emphasis was on the second phase, so that all the seats are cleared in the CEC meeting today...today also we discussed both the second phase as well as the third phase," Karra told reporters after the meeting. Six seats of the second phase and 23 seats out of 40 of the third phase were discussed at the CEC meeting, he said. "The seats in the second phase have been cleared, except for one seat for which the CEC has asked for some information, which we will provide to them by this evening. "So far as the 23 seats of the third phase is concerned, they are asking for further information for five or six seats, but we requested them that instead of calling the CEC again...we will forward it to the (party) president's office and the president has the prerogative, authority to take that decision on his own," Karra said. "So, we discussed 29 seats today, out of which we have taken a final decision on 23 seats, but at this time we will declare names for only the second phase," he added. Last week, the Congress had issued its first list of nine candidates for the assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir, fielding party general secretary Ghulam Ahmad Mir from Dooru and former JKPC chief Vikar Rasool Wani from Banihal. The party also fielded Surinder Singh Channi from the Tral seat, Amanullah Mantoo from Devsar, Peerzada Mohammad Syed from Anantnag, Shaikh Zafarullah from Inderwal, Nadeem Sharief from Bhardwah, Sheikh Riyaz from Doda and Pradeep Kumar Bhagat from Doda West. The Jammu and Kashmir elections will be held in three phases -- September 18, September 25 and October 1 -- followed by counting of votes on October 8.

ACB books XEn...

U-shaped RCC drain at Industrial Estate, Khrew was illegally allotted by the Estates Manger, SICOP to M/s Ubaid Rashid Wani at cost of Rs 108 lakhs and further extended by adding huge quantum of work amounting Rs 263 lakhs in violation to the laid down procedure etc. The probe conducted also revealed that the Project Manager (Executive Engineer) SICOP, Kashmir issued off-line NIT No. 6-SICOP of 2019 dated 11.11.2019 inviting bids from Class 'A' and Class 'B' Contractors for execution of work related to construction of a U-shaped RCC drain at Industrial Estate Khrew for an advertised cost of Rs 99 lakh in violation to SRO-196 of 2011 dated 28.06.2011; four bids (three from Class A and one from Class B Contractors) were received as sub-sequence. The work has been found allotted in favour of M/S Ubaid Rashid Wani, a Class 'B' Contractor, for an amount of Rs 107 lakh despite him being not eligible. It has been also found that as per SRO-196 of 2011 dated June 28, 2011, the beneficiary Class 'B' Contractor was eligible for allotment of contract amounting upto Rs 50 lakh only, the tone and tenor of the SRO-196 of 2011 makes it palpably clear that only 'Class A' Contractor was eligible and entitled for allotment of the work construction of a U-shaped RCC drain at Industrial Estate Khrew having advertised cost @ Rs 99 lakh and allotment @ Rs 107 lakh. The Project Manager not only facilitated illegal allotment of work in favour of M/S Ubaid Rashid Wani but also gave huge extensions in his favour amounting Rs 2,69,57,658/- beyond the allotment cost of Rs 107 lakh. In this way, the Project Manager SICOP Kashmir above-mentioned under well-knit conspiracy with proprietors of M/S Ubaid Rashid Wani, in lieu of pecuniary benefits, dishonestly and fraudulently by abuse of his official position, first invited participation of Class B Contractors in the above mentioned NIT in violation to prevailing norms in order to facilitate participation of the beneficiary Class 'B' Contractor in the bidding process, allotted work in his favour despite him being not eligible as per governing provisions and also favoured him with huge extensions beyond scope of allotment, thus conferred undue benefit upon himself and the beneficiary. These omissions and commissions by then Project Manager SICOP Kashmir namely Mushtaq Ahmad Bhat, son of Ghulam Mohammad Bhat, resident of Cherso Awantipora A/P Mominabad, Firdous abad, Lane No.9 Sector A-2, near Masjid Huda, near Court Srinagar, the beneficiary proprietor of M/S Ubaid Rashid Wani namely Ubaid Rashid Wani S/o Abdul Rashid Wani R/o House No. 47 near Jama Masjid Rehmat Abad Colony, Hyderpora, Srinagar and others constitute offences punishable U/S 7 of the Prevention of Corruption Act 1988 and Section 120-B IPC. Accordingly, case FIR NO.05/2024 stands registered in P/S ACB Anantnag, and investigation was set into motion. Immediately after registration of the instant case search warrant was obtained from Spl Judge Anti-corruption court Pulwama and searches were conducted simultaneously at multiple locations viz residential houses of accused Project Manager Mushtaq Ahmad Bhat at Charsoo Awantipora and Mominabad Batamalo and residential house of accused beneficiary proprietor of M/S Ubaid Rashid Wani namely Ubaid Rashid Wani at Rehmat Abad Colony, Hyderpora, Srinagar. During house searches, some incriminating documents having bearing on the case have been found and seized on spot. Further investigation of the case is going on.

NC-Cong alliance...

meeting held at the residence of senior BJP leader Rachpal Verma at Ghagwal in Samba area of Jammu region. "The NC-Congress alliance is part of a conspiracy to keep J&K people away from the national mainstream," Chugh said, while adding, "This alliance wants to destabilize J&K". Chugh said, "Both Congress and NC want to push J&K in violence again and want to keep the pot boiling as far as Article 370 is concerned and want unrest in J&K". Chugh said that NC wants pre-370 and pre-1953 status which is a conspiracy to promote autonomy and keep J&K away from the national mainstream. "Only BJP and its government here is guarantee to development, long lasting peace and prosperity," Chugh said, while adding, "Prime Minister Narendra Modi led BJP Government has proved this by all round development in J&K and establishing peace here which has also given boost to tourism".

Among others present in the meeting included Rachpal Verma (OBC), Sareesh Kumar Phalli (DDC), Asha Rani (DDC), Ramesh Kumar (DDC), Radhey Shyam (BDC), Rajesh Upadhyay (Mandal (President), Kulbhushan Singh (Mandal President), Geeta Bhagat, Tarsem Singh, Harbas Singhg, Pushpendra Kumar, Shamsher Singh, Kamal Kishore and Nek Ram.

"Cong made J&K...

completely. "The people, who propagate anti-national agendas and regard terrorists and separatists as heroes should introspect", Chugh said, adding that it is the Modi government that has planned and executed strategies to eliminate terrorism with a firm stance of "if you provoke us, we won't spare you," and has acted decisively, even crossing into Pakistan when necessary. "This is what Prime Minister Modi has accomplished", he added. He said the BJP wants J&K to lead the nation. People are so rich in culture and enterprise. The Modi government would take them all to new heights, he added.

ECI lays down...

of two years, or with fine or both," the ECI said. The Commission asserted that the TV/Radio channels and cable networks should ensure that the contents of the programmes telecast/broadcast/ displayed by them during the period of 48 hours referred to in Section 126 do not contain any material, including views/appeals by panelists/participants that may be construed as promoting/ prejudicing the prospect of any particular party or candidate(s) or influencing/ affecting the result of the election. This shall, among other things include display of any opinion poll and of standard debates, analysis, visuals and sound-bites. Political advertisements on any election matter in TV, cable networks, radio, cinema halls, use of bulk SMS/voice messages, audio-visual displays in any polling area during this 48 hours long period would also be prohibited, it said, adding that the prohibition also extends to political advertisements disguised in another form, like ads masquerading as news items/headlines. The Commission also reiterated the ban on conduct of Exit Poll and dissemination of its results from the beginning of hours fixed for poll on the first day of poll and continue till half an hour after the closing of the poll in the union territory of Jammu and Kashmir. On internet websites and social media platforms, the Commission said that the provisions of The Information Technology Act, 2000, Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, and ECI guidelines No-491/SM/2013/Communication, dated 25 October, 2013 for all political content on their platform, even as the political advertisements on electronic media needs pre-certification by the Committees set up at UT-level and District-level. The Commission also announced that 'Voluntary Code of Ethics' formulated by IAMAI during Lok Sabha election 2019, will be applicable in the forthcoming J&K Assembly Election, and thus asked all 'social media intermediaries under the umbrella of IAMAI' to follow the voluntary code. The Commission also informed that no political party or candidate or any other organisation or person would publish any advertisement in the print media on poll day or one day prior to poll day, unless the contents of political advertisements are pre-certified by them from the MCMC committee at UT-level and District-level, as the case may be. "There should be explicit restrictions on advertisements predicting the victory of a particular party and any form of speculative content related to election outcomes should be avoided," the ECI said, adding that an editor would be responsible for all matters, including advertisements in the newspapers. The Jammu and Kashmir Assembly Elections are scheduled to commence from 18 September 2024 in 3 Phases across the Union Territory.

ECI appoints GO...

General Elections to the J&K Assembly constituency TRAL-33, he shall remain available on cell phone number -9103222423. Further, the General Observer shall also be physically available between 9:30 am - 10:30 am on all the working days at Town Hall, Tral Payeen, near bus stand Tral to meet the public/ candidates as well as political parties representatives in case they want to share their worry list related to forthcoming election in Tral-33.

SC refuses to...

withdraw the plea, which was allowed by the bench. Naidu in his plea filed through Karanam said that Centre and its agencies have not conducted the enumeration for the Census-2021 till date. "Initially it was not done due to Covid-19 pandemic and subsequently it has been postponed time and again. That the enumeration of the census of the country for 2021 was initiated in April, 2019. But it was not concluded till date. It is humbly submitted that as per the official website of the Census of India, the first preparatory meeting for conducting Census 2021 was held on April 9, 2019," the plea said. It said thereafter, the process of enumeration for census has been getting postponed multiple times. The plea added that the census is not just a population growth tracker, but it also provides a comprehensive socio-economic data of the people of the country that can be used in policy-making, economic planning and for various administrative purposes. "It is the largest repository of statistical information on various characteristics of the Indian population - gender, age, income, occupation, migration patterns, etc. For instance, census is the only source of primary data for each village, town and ward in India. The delay in the census has resulted in a major data gap as the last census was conducted in 2011 i.e. 13 years ago," the plea added. It said a socio-economic caste census would help identify disadvantaged groups, ensure equitable resource distribution and monitor the implementation of targeted policies. "The last caste-wise data from 1931 is outdated. Accurate data from the census and Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC) is crucial for the Union government to achieve social justice and constitutional objectives. For the first time in post-independence, the SECC conducted in 2011 aimed to gather comprehensive data on socio-economic indicators, including caste information," it said. The plea added that concerns over the quality of data and classification challenges have prevented the release and effective utilisation of the raw caste data and an expert group was formed to classify and categorise this data, but its recommendations are yet to be released by the Union government.

Rs 2000 notes...

The total value of Rs 2000 banknotes in circulation, which was Rs 3.56 lakh crore at the close of business on May 19, 2023, when the withdrawal of Rs 2000 banknotes was announced, has declined to Rs 7,261 crore at the close of business on August 30, 2024, the RBI said. "Thus, 97.96 per cent of the Rs 2000 banknotes in circulation as on May 19, 2023, has since been returned," it said in a statement. The facility for deposit and/or exchange of the Rs 2000 banknotes was available at all bank branches in the country till October 7, 2023. The facility for the exchange of the Rs 2000 banknotes has been available at the 19 issue offices of the Reserve Bank since May 19, 2023. From October 9, 2023, RBI issue offices are also accepting Rs 2000 banknotes from individuals and entities for deposit into their bank accounts. Further, members of the public are sending Rs 2000 banknotes through India Post from any post office within the country to any of the RBI issue offices for credit to their bank accounts. The 19 RBI offices depositing/exchanging the banknotes are in Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Belapur, Bhopal, Bhubaneswar, Chandigarh, Chennai, Guwahati, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Jammu, Kanpur, Kolkata, Lucknow, Mumbai, Nagpur, New Delhi, Patna and Thiruvananthapuram. The Rs 2000 banknotes were introduced in November 2016, following the demonetisation of the then-prevailing Rs 1000 and Rs 500 banknotes.

Lumberdar suspended for...

facilitating the political party meetings and was therefore placed under suspension with immediate effect. Needful to mention that the Model Code of Conduct is a set of guidelines issued by Election Commission of India to provide a level playing field in favour of all political parties. The Model Code of Conduct comes into force from the day and time the election schedule was announced by the Election Commission of India and remains in operation till the completion of election process. District Administration Shopian has issued instructions for strict adherence to the Model Code of Conduct and is dealing strictly with any violation by any employees which comes to the notice of the authorities.

Body of youth recovered from river in Rajouri

■ STATE TIMES NEWS RAJOURI/JAMMU: The body of a 20-year-old man was recovered from a river by rescuers on Monday after four days of search in Rajouri district, officials said. Mohammad Yaseer, a resident of Sarula, was crossing the river on Friday when he was swept away by a strong current, they said. Yaseer's body was recovered, five kilometres downstream this afternoon, by the rescuers comprising of police, State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and local volunteers. It was later handed over to his family for last rites after completion of legal formalities, they added.

SFs recover arms in Samba Distt

■ STATE TIMES NEWS SAMBA/JAMMU: Security forces recovered arms and ammunition that were dropped by a drone in the border area of Samba district on Monday, officials said. Security personnel launched a search operation in the Rangarh sector following intelligence reports of material being dropped by drone during the night, they said. During the search, three pistols and other ammunition were recovered, they said. BSF and police have been placed on alert, and search operations have been intensified, they added.

PDP spokesperson Tahir Sayeed quits

■ STATE TIMES NEWS SRINAGAR: PDP spokesperson Tahir Sayeed resigned from the party on Monday, ahead of Assembly polls in Jammu and Kashmir. Sayeed, who was appointed as Media Analyst in the chief minister's office by Mehbooba Mufti during her tenure at the helm of Jammu and Kashmir, announced his resignation through a post on social media. "With heavy heart I end my ten years of association with @JKPDP. I wish @MehboobaMufti Sahiba and party all the very best," Sayeed posted on X. Last month, PDP Chief Spokesperson Suhail Bukhari had quit the party and joined the Congress. The Jammu and Kashmir elections will be held in three phases -- September 18, September 25 and October 1 -- followed by counting of votes on October 8.

Lt Governor interacts with students visiting J&K under Kashmir Samvad Yatra initiative

■ STATE TIMES NEWS SRINAGAR: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday interacted with the group of students from various States and UTs who are on their visit to Jammu



LG Manoj Sinha along with students visiting J&K under Kashmir Samvad Yatra initiative.

Kashmir as a part of Kashmir Samvad Yatra, a Cultural Exchange Study Tour. Interacting with the students at Raj Bhawan, the Lt Governor highlighted the significance of exchange programmes in promoting the spirit of unity in diversity and values of brotherhood and leadership. The Lt Governor called upon the students to embrace every opportunity to learn through experience and contribute to nation building. The students also shared the insightful experiences of their visit to the UT of Jammu Kashmir.

GCW Bhagwati Nagar organises series of activities under J&K AIDS Control Society

■ STATE TIMES NEWS JAMMU: The Red Ribbon club of GCW Bhagwati Nagar in collaboration with J&K AIDS Control society organized a series of activities including Collage making, Poster making & Essay Writing competition to commemorate the International Youth Day which falls on 12th of August every year. These activities typically



focused on topics like HIV/AIDS awareness, the importance of blood donation, safe practices, and adolescent health. The objective of this Programme was to encourage students to research and express their views on relevant health issues, fostering a deeper understanding of these health issues: These activities stimulate creativity and teamwork among student. RRC plays a vital role in engaging young people in health initiatives, making them ambassadors of change within their communities. The Red Ribbon club of the college is making an effort to reduce the myths attached with HIV/AIDS by spreading awareness, the RRC helps to reduce the stigma and discrimination associated with HIV/AIDS, creating a more supportive environment for those living with the disease. Through its activities, the RRC encourages students to adopt healthy and responsible lifestyles, contributing to the overall well-being. It not just about spreading awareness but also about empowering students to take action, fostering a generation that is informed, compassionate, and proactive in the fight against this disease. Speaking on the occasion Principal of the college said that the RRC plays a vital role in engaging Students in health initiatives, making them ambassadors of change within their communities. By spreading awareness, these activities help to reduce the stigma and discrimination associated with HIV/AIDS, creating a more supportive environment for those living with the disease. Through its activities, the RRC encourages students to adopt healthy and responsible lifestyles, contributing to the overall well-being of society, it is not just about spreading awareness but also about empowering students to take action, fostering a generation that is informed, compassionate, and proactive in the fight against HIV/AIDS. The entire programme was organised by Nodal officer of the college Red Ribbon club Dr. Pavanjeet Baliand attended by all the faculty members, The activities were adjudged by a panel of judges comprising of Prof. Anju Bala and Dr.Mosmi Raina.

DEO Poonch assesses preparations in polling stations located on LoC

■ STATE TIMES NEWS POONCH: District Election Officer (DEO) Poonch, Vikas Kundal on Monday conducted an extensive tour of the Polling Stations located near the Line of Control as part of the preparations for the upcoming Assembly elections 2024. Accompanied by senior officials from the district administration and education department, the DEO inspected several schools where polling stations have been set up for the upcoming assembly elections. The team visited Government High School Mangnar, Government Middle School Jhullas, GHSS Jhullas and Government Middle School Salotri. The DEO assessed the infrastructure and facilities available at polling stations. He examined the accessibility for differently-abled voters, availability of basic amenities such as electricity, water supply, and provision of sanitation. Special attention was given to ensuring proper seating arrangements and separate queues for senior citizens and persons with disabilities. The DEO interacted with school staff to get feedback on any specific requirements or concerns related to the polling process in these border areas. He emphasized the importance of creating a conducive environment for voters to exercise their democratic right freely and fairly. The DEO also reviewed the security arrangements at these locations and the condition of bunkers, where alternative arrangements for the polling has been done in case of any urgency or cross border firing. He discussed contingency plans with security officials to ensure the safety of voters and polling staff.