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Drabu sacked over whitewash of PDP's core ideology

CM took extreme action against high profile Minister after he refused to retract his controversial statement and did not respond to PDP's notice

■ AHMED ALI FAYYAZ

JAMMU: Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti on Monday fired her high-profile Minister for Finance Haseeb Drabu after he failed to either retract his controversial statement or respond to a disciplinary notice from the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

Over the last two days, Drabu landed in a whirlpool of rebuke, not only from the mainstream and the separatist opposition but also his own party over a controversial statement he reportedly made at a political and corporate conference in New Delhi. According to the PTI copy, carried by many of the national and regional newspapers, Drabu said at the conclave of PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry that Kashmir should not be seen as a political problem.

Drabu at the conference claimed that Kashmir was a "social problem" and the country had barked up the wrong tree in the last 70 years. It immediately ruffled feathers in all the Valley-based political parties and the key position party National Conference raised serious questions over PDP's "volte face", calling it "surrender for power" before BJP.



It was widely pointed out that the campaign for recognising Kashmir as a political problem was PDP's political Bible and mark of identification since its raising day in 1999.

Rather than confronting with the opposition, PDP chose to publicly call an explanation from Drabu and, before waiting for his response, asked him to retract his statement if he had said that Kashmir was a social and not a political issue. While as the PDP's Vice President Sartaj Madni issued a lengthy statement as a part of the party's damage control exercise, head of the disciplinary panel Abdul Rehman Veeri sought an explanation from the Minister under cloud.

Even as Drabu neither retracted his statement nor submitted any explanation, PDP held an emergency meeting of its top brass at Chief Minister's residence. Sources present in the meeting revealed to STATE TIMES that a tape of Drabu's purported speech was played. It was unanimously observed that Drabu had not only exceeded his party brief but also done "whitewash" of PDP's political ideology spread over the last 19 years of its history.

Immediately after the meeting concluded, Chief Minister called Chief Secretary Bharat Vyas and directed him to communicate to Raj Bhawan that the head of the government had decided to drop Haseeb Drabu from her Council of Ministers. Governor was requested to accord approval to CM's decision. In about two hours, Raj Bhawan communicated to Chief Minister's Secretariat that Governor had acceded to the proposal of terminating Drabu as Minister.

Later in the evening, Government issued a public notification which said that Drabu's departments of Finance, Labour and Employment would be retained by Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti. There

Three terrorists killed in Anantnag; ISIS affiliated module busted

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Three terrorists including Eesa Fazli and Syed Owais, both of whom left their B.Tech third year course to join terrorism, were killed in an encounter on Monday, a development being seen as a blow to the attempts by the notorious terror group ISIS to gain ground in the Kashmir Valley.

Three terrorists were spotted at a village in the Hakura area of Anantnag district in south Kashmir late Sunday night and special teams were dispatched after intelligence inputs confirmed the presence of Fazli and Owais, officials said.

The locality was cordoned at 1 AM and in a brief encounter, the three cadres of Tehreek-ul-Mujahideen, a terror group which has announced its affiliation to the ISIS, were gunned down as they tried to escape under the cover of darkness, they said. The operation was kept "top secret" till its execution

Will police take action against BGSBU 'anti-national' students?



JAMMU: Rajouri is fast emerging as a den of anti-nationals, with police and its intelligence agencies behaving like ostriches.

Post elimination of three hardcore terrorists in Anantnag last night, the Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah University (BGSBU) Campus in the border Rajouri district is agog with anti-national activities, right under the nose of police. Followed by 'Gaybana Nimaze Jinaza', in memory of the slain terrorists, involved in 'manufacturing ISIS module, among other terror activities, the students converged in the campus during dead of the night to protest against the action of the security forces.

Both, the Gaybana Nimaze Jinaza and night long protests, are sounding alarm bells for the Jammu region, signaling the arrival of 'terror demon' that has left the Kashmir Valley devastated.

The night-long protests speak of the extent of indoctrination carried out by the engineering student turned terrorist Eisa Fazli, who was among the three slain terrorists.

How come the police remained clueless about the happenings taking place in the varsity that has lately turned as a breeding ground for anti-national elements? Today's happenings have already gone viral on social media but the police has preferred to downplay these by not taking any action. Not long ago, some of the students had openly defied the National Anthem, notwithstanding the fact that the function was being attended by Governor N N Vohra. The disrespect to National Anthem, the protests over

BJP endorses Drabu's statement

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Endorsing the statement of Finance Minister, Haseeb A Drabu that Kashmir is not a political issue; Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Monday said that the only issue is to get 'PoK' back.

BJP General Secretary (Organisation) Ashok Koul told a Srinagar based news agency that there is no problem with what Drabu has said. "Drabu has said that it is not just a political problem only but a social problem as well," said Kaul. "BJP believes that there is no

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PDP-BJP workers clash in Nowshera, 5 injured

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Five people were injured on Monday during a clash between PDP and BJP workers in an agitation at Rajouri for a separate Nowshera district.

The BJP and PDP are allies in the Mehbooba Mufti government.

"Five people were reportedly injured in an assault by some people at Nowshera belt (Rajouri District)," a senior police officer said.

Sarpanchs Bhadr Singh and Sukhdev Singh, Chhotu Ram Choudhary, Narinder Kumar alias Mangu and Om Parkash were injured, he



People gathered near clash site in Nowshera.

said, adding that they were referred to the GMC Hospital in Jammu after treatment at Rajouri.

The clash erupted when

Chottu Ram Choudhary who resigned from BJP two days back due to anti-people policies of the party leadership

■ CONTD ON PAGE 9

Three KAS officers among five transferred

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The State Government on Monday transferred three KAS officers.

According to an order issued by General Administration Department (GAD), Bashir Ahmad Wani, KAS, Joint Director, Handlooms, Kashmir has been transferred and posted as Joint Director, Education (North Kashmir) and Dr. Nargis Suraiya, KAS, Development Officer, Handicrafts (Textile), Srinagar has been transferred and posted as Joint Director, Handlooms, Kashmir.

As per another order, Ghulam Mohammad Bhat, Deputy Excise Commissioner (Executive), Srinagar has been transferred and posted as Project Officer, Wage Employment (ACD), Srinagar/Ganderbal while Akramullah Tak, KAS, Joint Director, Employment, Kashmir, shall hold the charge of the post of Deputy Excise Commissioner (Executive), Srinagar, in addition to his own duties, till further orders.

The Government also posted Ishfaq Ahmed Wani as General Manager, SKICC, on ex-cadre basis.

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DB sets aside death sentence, acquits accused in murder case

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: A Division Bench (DB) of the State High Court comprising Chief Justice Badar Durrez Ahmed and Justice Sanjeev Kumar set-aside the death sentence of Subash Chander in murder of his wife Sunita Devi and acquitted him from all the charges.

After hearing both the sides, the DB observed that insofar as the presence of sand particles in windpipe are concerned, no definite answer can be given as to whether these were present because of forceful drowning or accidental drowning. In fact, the prosecution has not been able to elicit any information from the concerned doctor as to whether the

injuries were ante mortem or post-mortem. In other words, all the injuries that are present on the body of the deceased cannot stand to be ante mortem or post-mortem. This being the case, it does not appear that the prosecution has been able to rule out the possibility of the death of Sunita Devi being accidental.

DB further observed that the aspect with regard to the conduct of the appellant which was sought to be highlighted by the counsel for the State was that he was carrying a polythene bag containing the garments of the deceased and ladies Chappals belonging to the deceased when

■ CONTD ON PAGE 9

NIA raids Srinagar Central Jail, seizes Pak flag, Jihadi material

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: The NIA on Monday raided the Central Jail here and seized over two dozen mobile phones, Jihadi literature and a Pakistani flag apart from data hardware, official spokesman said.

At least 20 teams of the central probe agency, with commandos of the NSG and drones in tow, searched the barracks and open ground of the high-security prison that houses some of the most wanted and dreaded terrorists, including those from Pakistan.

The searches, the spokesman said, were carried out in connection with an investigation over the arrest of two youths in Kupwara -- Danish Ghulam Lone and Sohail Ahmed Bhat.

The two youths had claimed that the fresh recruits of Al-Badr, a proscribed terrorist organisation, were being sent across for arms training in furtherance of a conspiracy hatched from inside the Central Jail, Srinagar.

The searches started early morning and continued till late afternoon during which

all the barracks and the open ground were thoroughly searched with the help of well-trained teams and deep search metal detectors.

A close watch was kept on the entire operation with the help of drones, the spokesman said.

During the search, 25 mobile phones, some SIM cards, five secure digital cards, five pen drives, one iPod and large number of documents and articles, including a poster of Hizbul Mujahideen, a Pakistani flag besides Jihadi literature,

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Over 50 killed in Nepal plane crash: official

■ AGENCY

KATHMANDU: Over 50 people are feared dead after a US-Bangla Airlines aircraft today crashed and caught fire at Nepal's Tribhuvan International Airport (TIA) here, a top Nepalese official said.

The plane, a Bombardier Dash 8 Q400, with 67 passengers and four crew members caught fire after it careened off the runway during landing and crashed onto a football ground near the airport, TIA spokesperson Prem Nath Thakur said.

"Over 50 people are feared dead. We are carrying

■ CONTD ON PAGE 9

SC considers Centre's response on setting up of minority panel in J&K

■ AGENCY

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Monday took note of the Centre's response that the Jammu and Kashmir Government has indicated that it would consider setting up of a State Minority Commission and disposed of a PIL alleging that the benefits accruing to minorities there were being taken away by majority Muslim community.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Dipak Misra and Justices A M Khanwilkar and D Y Chandrachud considered the submissions of Attorney General K K Venugopal that the State Government will consider and examine the need and feasibility of setting up of the State Minority Commission.

Venugopal read out the re-drawn minutes forwarded by the Office Memorandum (OM) of February 23,



issued by the central government after the meeting held on January 12 between it and other stakeholder states including the Jammu and Kashmir.

"The state government of Jammu and Kashmir has, in principle, given indication that (it) will consider and examine the need and feasibility of setting up of a State Minority Commission at the rel-

evant point of time as and when need arises based on the critical study of the social and educational backwardness of the minorities spread across various regions of the State," the memorandum said.

The Attorney General said that to cater to the special needs of minorities, a special project - Chief Minister Inclusive Development Initiative - has been formulated by the State Government.

"The said project will have focussed development effort for certain special segments of the society and will include upgrading of civic infrastructure such as health, education and water," he said referring to the OM.

The bench took note of the memorandum and disposed of the PIL filed by Jammu-based

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Max: 80 Min: 41

Temperature (Srinagar)
Max: 20.9°C Min: 05.4°C

Humidity
Max: 69 Min: 37

Sunset : 18:38 Hours
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