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Panchayat poll process initiated in J&K; Sarpanchs to be elected directly

STATE TIMES NEWS
SRINAGAR: A day after the State Administrative Council set in motion the election process for Urban Local Bodies in Jammu and Kashmir, it directed the Department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj to initiate the process of holding elections to Panchayats in consultation with the Chief Electoral Officer.

The directions came at the 4th meeting of the State Administrative Council (SAC) here, presided over by Governor N. N Vohra. His Advisors B B Vyas, K Vijay Kumar and Khurshid Ahmad Ganai besides Chief Secretary, B.V.R Subrahmanyam were present.

The Governor has been strong votary of holding the Panchayat and ULB elections and he missed no opportunity in emphasising this imperative issue

during his meetings with the former Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti.

The SAC approved the proposal to amend the Jammu and Kashmir Panchayati Raj Act, 1989, for conducting elections of Sarpanchs of Halqa Panchayats directly by the electorate of Halqa Panchayats and not by indirect method of electing Sarpanchs from among the Panchs themselves. This will restore the original position in the Jammu and Kashmir Panchayati Raj Act, 1989, which provided for direct elections of Sarpanchs, a position altered by an amendment passed in 2016.

The need for doing this amendment was to restore the primacy and importance of the Sarpanchs in the Panchayati Raj System and giving them the necessary legitimacy to be able to discharge their functions. This provides stabil-

ity in the Panchayati Raj System and ensures accelerated development which meets local needs. Direct elections also make the Sarpanchs accountable directly to the people rather than to an intermediate group. Further, this amendment brings the spirit of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment to the Jammu and Kashmir Panchayati Raj Act.

With the holding of elections to the Panchayats, the institution of local self-governance at the village level will be revived in the State, thereby furthering inclusion and percolation of benefits of decentralised planning at the grass-root level. It will also ensure greater participation of people in planning and formulation of area specific policies and programmes and hence their involvement in decision making process.

Terrorist killed in Kupwara

STATE TIMES NEWS
SRINAGAR: A terrorist was killed in an encounter with security forces in Kupwara District on Thursday, the Army said.

"One militant has been killed in the ongoing encounter in the forest area of Kupwara district," an Army official said.

Security forces had launched an operation in the Kandi forest area of

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CB books MD International College of Aviation for cheating

STATE TIMES NEWS
SRINAGAR: Crime Branch Kashmir received a complaint through CM's Grievance Cell Srinagar and Civil Aviation Department J&K Government wherein it is alleged that the students pursuing the Aviation & Hospitality Courses offered by the International College of Aviation Baghat Barzulla Srinagar are made to pay hefty amounts as the courses fee. However, the said college

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UK-Ireland style open border best solution for Kashmir: Farooq

AGENCY
LONDON: Former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah has proposed an Ireland-style solution of an open border between the UK-governed Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic's adjacent territory as the best option to resolve the Kashmir issue.

The National Conference (NC) leader, who is here on a visit, said India and Pakistan must realise that there is no military solution to the problem.

"Like Ireland, the only



roadmap forward is two Kashmiris with an easy border and autonomy," he said, during a discussion organised by South Asia Institute at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London

on Wednesday.

"Kashmir can be solved if both these nations, now nuclear powers, realise that whatever solution has to emerge, everybody will not accept it. But at least 70-80 per cent of people of India, Pakistan, Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh should accept it," he said.

The Ireland-style solution refers to the Common Travel Area shared between the UK and neighbouring Ireland, dating back to the 1920s. Under the arrangement,

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Fate of 5 top appointments hangs in balance

MUHAMMAD MUKARAM
SRINAGAR: All eyes are set on Governor N N Vohra as to whether he would terminate the five appointees who used their political influence to secure top posts in various government departments during previous PDP-BJP government.

The five appointees, who are serving as directors of prestigious institutions continue to hold their positions and seem to be in no mood to step-down. Now that the Governor has already decided to ensure transparency in the system, what remains to be seen is whether he would take action against the five favourites of the PDP-BJP.

Various departments of the government have last year appointed those close to PDP and BJP leaders with-

out any advertisement or specifying the recruitment rules under which they were hired. The five people who managed top posts are Peer Ghulam Nabi, Mohd Iqbal Lone, Kakhkashan Anjum, Shakti Singh and R K Mahindroo.

The Technical Education Department on September 8 last year appointed Peer Ghulam Nabi as Consultant, designated as Mission Coordinator for J&K Skill Development Mission for a period of one year "which is extendable".

Nabi, however, was engaged as Mission Director J&K Skill Development Mission in the same month after 11 days on September 19 without following any recruitment rules.

The Planning Development

and Monitoring department has hired Shakti Singh Jamwal as consultant in May last year for two years.

As per the official order, Jamwal "will assist the Chief Secretary/ Financial Commissioner in matters of Pragati related issues, coordination regarding land acquisition of Railways and National Highways projects and resolution of bottlenecks, implementation of Prime Minister's financial management system under various schemes, resolution of issues of major development projects, monitoring of PMDP".

A retired KAS officer, R K Mahindroo was appointed as consultant for three months for drafting Act and rules of Goods and Services Tax.

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13 Amarnath pilgrims injured in accident

Maha Yatri dies, toll rises to 21

STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: Thirteen Amarnath pilgrims were injured when their vehicle rammmed into a stationary truck on the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway here on Thursday, a police official said.

The pilgrims were part of a convoy carrying a fresh batch of 3,419 pilgrims including 680 women and 201 'sadhus' from the Bhagwati Nagar base camp here to Kashmir to undertake the annual pilgrimage, the official said.

He said the accident occurred near Dherma bridge in Mallard area of Udhampur district, about 70 kms from here, at around 5.30 AM when the driver of the tempo lost control and hit the parked truck.

Police team led by DySP

Kulbir Handa launched the rescue operation and shifted the injured to hospital.

Thirteen pilgrims travelling in the vehicle were injured and admitted to a district hospital in Udhampur, the official said.

He said the condition of three of the injured pilgrims was stated to be serious and they are being taken to the Government Medical College Hospital here.

While 10 of the injured pilgrims are residents of Jhansi in Uttar Pradesh, three others are from Gwalior in Madhya Pradesh, the official said.

The injured have been identified as Gourav Yadav (20) son of Rajesh Yadav resident of Orcha gate, Jhansi, UP ; Narender Kumar Tiwari

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India-bashing is a short cut to achieving celebrity-hood

ANZOR ROSE
BLUNT BUTCHER

After Jammu, it is now the entire country that has become Rapistan for young and middle-aged icons of Kashmir, no matter which side of the fence they are.

The social media has brought many skeletons out of the cupboard. Earlier, the anti-India sentiment used to remain confined to the cozy rooms of power corridors in Jammu and Kashmir, now these are public. Almost every former bureaucrat and retired official has turned outspoken spokespersons of the separatists, terrorists and India bashers. The virus has spread among serving officials as well, which is why the Mehbooba Mufti government, accused of being pro-separatist and pro-Jihadi, even felt constrained to issue an exhaustive set of guidelines in December 2017. The J&K Government Employees Conduct Rules-1971 were amended, ordering, inter-alia, "No government employee shall engage in any criminal, dishonest, immoral or notoriously disgraceful conduct on social media which may be prejudicial to the government... They shall also not use their personal social media accounts for any political activity or endorse the posts or tweets or blogs of any political figure and also shall not use their accounts in a manner that could reasonably be construed to imply that the government endorses or sanctions their personal activities in any mat-

ter whatsoever. They shall also not post inflammatory, extraneous message in an online community with the intent of provoking readers into emotional response or of otherwise disrupting normal, on topic discussion."

Sending all these guidelines to winds, a civil service officer of Jammu and Kashmir cadre, a native, has mocked the directives of the government, to which he himself is an integral component, thus inviting disciplinary action for his 6th July tweet, Patriarchy+Population+Illiteracy+Alcohol+Porn+Technology+Anarchy = Rapistan! The inference is clear. Still if the officer, Shah Feasel will try to defend his post by double meaning verbose, the IQ of civil services qualifiers can be questioned.

No sooner the intent of the government became public, the officer turned an icon overnight and garnered unprecedented support from Kashmir centric political mainstream, including Congress, CPI(M) and National Conference. The political leaders are openly questioning the impending governmental action and even questioning its legality and morality.

Encouraged by the wave of sympathy coming from his core constituency, the officer went on to tweet, "Love letter from my boss for my sarcastic tweet against rape-culture in South Asia. The Irony here is that service rules with a colonial spirit are invoked in a democratic India to stifle the freedom of conscience. I'm sharing this to under-

score the need for a rule change."

After seeking rule change, the officer does not mind about losing his job.

This is yet another script getting developed to bash India. No surprise! In this country anybody and everybody is free to speak against the nation. It is neither a crime nor a sin. Mocking, abusing and thrashing Indian soldiers and symbols is a rule in the State called Jammu and Kashmir. Those not standing in honour of National Anthem, even in presence of the constitutional head of the State, either at Ghulam Shah Badshah University or Central University Kashmir can get scot-free but the entire law and order machinery gets unleashed if anything is said against any politician.

There is no love lost for any young man raising pro-India in Srinagar's Lal Chowk but those bashing India find stream of sympathisers. Given the environment generated by pseudo seculars, liberals and activists, every anti-national has a huge space across the country and even abroad. No sooner anybody gets prominence over anti-India remarks all the monetary assistance comes flowing from seminar circuit. Therefore, bleed India and get benefited. There are umpteen numbers of activists like Gautam Navlakha and Arundati Roy, to name a few, who have turned out celebrities for India bashing. Activists' like them serve as inspiration for people like Shah Feasel to try their luck at the larger canvass.

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5.	IT Executive	Srinagar -1
6.	Human Resource Executives	Srinagar -2
7.	Executive Assistant to the Managing Director	Srinagar -1
8.	Relationship Executives	Across J&K - 60
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