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Major, soldier martyred; JCO, jawan injured in twin IED blasts in Rajouri

Porter killed in Pak firing along LoC

STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: An Army Major and a soldier were martyred while a Junior Commissioned Officer (JCO) and a soldier were injured in twin IED blasts along the LoC in Rajouri district on Friday, officials said.

An improvised explosive device was planted by suspected terrorists in foot-track along the LoC to target Army soldiers patrolling the borderline in Laam belt of Nowshera sector of Rajouri district, they said.

The blast resulted in injuries to two soldiers, including a Major, the officials said, adding they were rushed to a hospital where they succumbed to injuries.

Army soldiers have been alerted against IED blasts and attacks by the border action teams (BATs) of the Pakistan Army, they said.

Meanwhile, a JCO and a



soldier were injured in another IED blast along the LoC in Rajouri.

The blast resulted in injuries to two soldiers, including a JCO, officials said, adding they have been hospitalised.

Meanwhile, an Army porter was killed when Pakistani troops continued ceasefire violations for the fourth consecutive day along the LoC in Rajouri and Poonch districts of Jammu and Kashmir,

family of martyred porter, the PRO said.

Pakistan troops also resorted to firing and shelling along the LoC in forward areas of the Poonch district, the officials said.

Indian troops guarding the borderline retaliated strongly, resulting in exchange of firing on the both sides, they said.

The year 2018 had witnessed 2,936 ceasefire violations by Pakistan along the Indo-Pak border, the highest in the last 15 years.

The continuous shelling and firing by Pakistan targeting villages has set in fear psychosis among the border dwellers, the officials said.

Pakistani troops resorted to firing and shelling along the LoC in Poonch eight out of ten days of this month, they said. On Thursday, Pakistan resorted to firing and

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Terrorists attack CRPF bunker in Srinagar

STATE TIMES NEWS
SRINAGAR: Terrorists on Friday evening attacked a CRPF bunker in the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir by hurling a grenade, but there were no reports of loss of life, police said. Terrorists hurled a UBGL grenade towards a CRPF bunker near Palladium Cinema in city centre Lal Chowk this evening, a police official said. He said there were no reports of any loss of life so far in the explosion.

Six KAS officers transferred

STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: The State Government on Friday ordered posting of six Junior Scale KAS officers of 2015 batch.

Mohammad Iqbal Mir, Baramulla; Rahul Gupta, Kathua; Mohinder Paul, Rajouri; Mohammad Ashraf Wani, Doda and Tajamul Yousuf, Anantnag are placed at the disposal of the

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Ready for Assembly polls in J&K: Governor

Advises Sarpanchs to ensure development



Governor Satya Pal Malik speaking during the function at Jammu on Friday.

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Governor Satya Pal Malik on Friday said the administration was ready for Assembly elections in the State and a call in this direction should be taken by the Election Commission and New Delhi.

"Whenever, they (EC) tell us, we are ready for the polls (to Assembly)," he told reporters

here after the oath-taking ceremony of Sarpanchs of Jammu region.

On IAS officer Shah Faesal's resignation, Malik said he himself was a government employee and did not wish to comment on the matter.

The Election Commission (EC) had in November last said fresh elections in Jammu and Kashmir would be held within the next six months, even as the body did not rule out the possibility of holding the State polls before the Lok Sabha polls due this year.

"The Jammu and Kashmir Assembly polls must be held on the first occasion before May. It could be held before the parliamentary elections also," Chief Election Commissioner O.P. Rawat had said.

He said as per the Supreme Court, the outer limit for holding fresh polls after the dissolution of the House was six months, that is May, 2019.

It may be recalled that the Central Government on December 28 told the Lok Sabha that Jammu and Kashmir Governor had no option but to recommend President's Rule in the state as no party or alliance staked claim to form the government.

Earlier, the Governor attended the Oath ceremony function of the newly elected Sarpanchs of Jammu ■ CONTD ON PAGE 9

13 AEs, 13 JEs transferred

STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: The State Government on Friday transferred 13 Assistant Engineers (AEs) (Civil) and 13 Junior Engineers of Public Works Department (R&B).

According to order, Zubair Ahmed Dar, JKPCCL Ltd had been recalled and his services are placed at the disposal of Chief Engineer PMGSY Kashmir for further posting in Baramulla District; Noor-ud-din Shah, Rural

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ISRO gears up for human spaceflight programme, Chandrayaan-2 launch by mid-April

AGENCY
BENGALURU: Declaring that India's second Moon mission is planned for mid-April this year, ISRO Friday said it was also gearing up for its maiden human spaceflight programme 'Gaganyaan' by 2021-end that is likely to include a woman astronaut.

The space agency had earlier said Chandrayaan-2 will be launched in a window from January-February 16,

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Sudhir given charge of Dev Comm (Works)

STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: The State Government on Friday assigned the charge of Development Commissioner (Works) to Chief Engineer PWD Jammu.

The order number 37-PW (R&B) of 2019 states, "In the interest of administration, the charge of the post of Development Commissioner (Works) is assigned to Sudhir Kumar Shah, Chief Engineer, PW(R&B) Department Jammu, in addition to his own duties, till further order."

WEATHER

Temperature (Jammu)
Max: 20.2°C Min: 08.5°C

Humidity
Max: 92 Min: 50

Temperature (Srinagar)
Max: 05.4°C Min: -1.0°C

Humidity
Max: 90 Min: 73

Sunset : 17:46 Hours
Sunrise : 07:38 Hours

567 border bunkers nearing completion in Jammu region

STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: Five hundred and sixty seven bunkers are nearing completion while work has been allotted for 731 bunkers along the International Border and LoC in three districts of Jammu and Kashmir, officials said on Friday.

Out of the total 4,257 bunkers planned to be built in three border districts of Kathua, Poonch and Rajouri, work on 644 bunkers has started, 567 bunkers are nearing completion and work of 731 bunkers has been allotted, they said.

This was revealed at a meeting chaired by Divisional Commissioner Sanjeev Verma on Friday as

he reviewed the progress of construction of bunkers along the International Border at a meeting of deputy commissioners of border districts of Jammu.

The officials of Kathua apprised him that out of 1,956 individual bunkers, work on 452 is in progress and 237 are nearing completion.

Similarly, officials of Rajouri informed that out of 2,000 bunkers, work allotment of 310 bunkers has been done and 602 are under evaluation while work on 60 bunkers is in progress.

Officials of Poonch informed that work on 152 community bunkers and

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Pakistan trying to mainstream terror: India

AGENCY
NEW DELHI: India slammed Pakistan on Friday for its statement that New Delhi was not responding to its peace overtures, saying there was "no seriousness" in Islamabad's offer for talks as it continued to extend "explicit support" to terror organisations and was now trying to mainstream them.

India's sharp reaction comes days after Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan accused it of not responding to his peace overtures.

Responding to Khan's comments, Ministry of External Affairs Spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said, "I don't understand these statements. Even before Imran Khan became Prime Minister, our Prime Minister

had called and congratulated him on his election win."

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj also wrote to their counterparts and congratulated them after they assumed office, he said at a media briefing.

Kumar also posed questions to Pakistan to hit out at the country for supporting terrorism and allowing terrorists to use its soil for targeting other nations.

"When they say they are ready for talks, then why do their ministers share platform with internationally designated terrorists. There have been many instances in the past few months when their ministers have shared a platform with such people,"

Kumar said.

He cited some instances such as Pakistan's religious affairs minister Noor-ul-Haq Qadri sharing a public platform with Jamaat-ud-Dawah (JuD) chief Hafiz Saeed on September 30 where both of them made "vitriolic" anti-India statements and the terror organisation opening centres in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

In December, Pakistan's interior minister met representatives of the JuD terrorist organisation and openly pledged support to them, Kumar said.

"If Pakistan is ready for talks then why no action has been taken against terrorists involved in the Mumbai and Pathankot terrorist

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Narco-terrorism racket cracked; 3 arrested with fake currency

STATE TIMES NEWS
RAJOURI: Police on Friday busted a narco-terrorism racket and arrested three persons with fake currency in Rajouri district.

SSP, Rajouri, Yougal Manhas said that a team of Special Operation Group (SoG) of Jammu and Kashmir Police under the supervision of DySP PC, Pranav Mahajan along with a team of 38 Rashtriya Rifle unit on Friday afternoon laid a Naka at Manyal Gali Thannamandi on Thannamandi-Dera Ki Gali road when a car (PB02AK-7288) on way towards Rajouri was signalled to stop.

"Although, the driver

attempted to break the checkpoint but army and police personnel foiled their attempt and overpowered the driver", said SSP.

The car was put to thorough frisking during which fake currency notes worth Rs 15,100 with 43 notes of 200 denomination and 13 notes of 500 denomination were recovered from the possession of one Javid Ahmed, son of Ghulam Mohammad, resident of Kulgam, SSP added.

Soon after the recovery, Javid and two other accomplices travelling in the same car identified as Abdul Rashid son of Sana Ullah and Bilal Ahmed Dar son

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Centre releases Rs 638 Cr for development of areas along IB

AGENCY
NEW DELHI: The Centre has released nearly Rs 638 crore in current fiscal so far under the Border Area Development Programme (BADP), which is being implemented to ameliorate the problems of people living in isolated forward locations, officials said on Friday.

The Home Ministry has so far released Rs 637.98 crore during 2018-19 to 17 states to meet special development needs of border population with a focus on the people living within 50 kilometres of

the International Border, they said.

In 2017-18, the ministry had released Rs 1,100 crore for the all-round development of villages located along the international border, a home ministry official said.

The BADP covers 111 border districts in 17 states to meet special development needs of border population with a focus on the people living within 50 kilometres of

Schemes under the BADP include construction of primary health centres, schools,

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supply of drinking water, community centres, connectivity, drainage to enable sustainable living.

It now covers schemes or activities relating to Swachhata Abhiyan, skill development programmes, promotion of sports activities in border areas, promotion of rural tourism, border tourism, protection of heritage sites, construction of helipads in remote and inaccessible hilly areas, which do not have road connectivity, another official said.

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Petrol price hiked by 19 paise, diesel by 28 paise

AGENCY
NEW DELHI: Petrol price was hiked on Friday by 19 paise per litre and diesel by 28 paise, the second increase in rates in as many days on firming input cost.

Petrol in Delhi now costs Rs 69.07 per litre - the highest this month - up from Rs 68.88 per litre rate of Thursday, according to price notification issued by state-owned oil firms.

A litre of diesel in Delhi is now priced at Rs 62.81 as compared to Rs 62.53 on Thursday. In Mumbai, petrol now costs Rs 74.72 a

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Resentment over appointment of VP Jammu based senior PDP leaders boycott felicitation function

STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: Simmering anger among the Jammu based senior PDP leaders embarrassed top party brass here on Friday as they decided to boycott the function organised to felicitate newly appointed Vice President Hamid Choudhary.

Though Hamid Choudhary arrived in the party office along with large number of supporters and was garlanded with marigold flowers amid beating of drums yet none of the senior PDP lead-

ers were present to welcome him with open arms.

Ved Mahajan, Daman Bhasin, Trilok Singh Bajwa, Hussain Ali Wafa, Rashid Malik, Rafiq Malik, Sukhdev Singh, Dr Harmesh Slathia and Deepak Handa remained conspicuous by their absence.

It may be mentioned here the day the PDP high command had appointed Hamid Choudhary as Vice President; a section of senior leaders had expressed their reservations over his

appointment. Hamid Choudhary, enjoying proximity with the party top brass, was gradually consolidating his grip over the party machinery in Jammu region.

Inside reports suggested, absence of senior party leaders was not taken lightly by the party high command. They may issue them show-cause notice to explain reasons behind their absence from the party function organised to felicitate party Vice President. On the

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India proposes visit by Pak experts to inspect hydropower projects on Chenab river

AGENCY
NEW DELHI/LAHORE: India has written to Pakistan proposing a visit by its experts to inspect two hydroelectricity projects on the Chenab river in Jammu and Kashmir from January 27 to February 1, which is mandatory under the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) between the two countries, sources said on Friday.

The invitation was extended on Wednesday by India's Indus Commissioner under the IWT to his Pakistani counterpart, sources in New Delhi said.

India is yet to receive an official confirmation about the acceptance of the invitation from Pakistan, a senior

official said. After the trip by Pakistani experts, Indian officials will also make a reciprocal trip to Pakistan under the treaty.

On Friday, Pakistan's Federal Minister for Water Resources Faisal Vawda termed this as a "major breakthrough" and said that India had "agreed" to allow the inspection of its two hydropower projects on the Chenab river in Jammu and Kashmir by Pakistani experts later this month.

"Due to our continued efforts there's a major breakthrough that India has finally agreed to our request for inspection of Indian projects in Chenab basin," Vawda

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Centre can take up Kashmir issue with Hurriyat: Farooq

STATE TIMES NEWS
KOLKATA: National Conference president Farooq Abdullah has said that lasting peace can be achieved in Kashmir only through dialogue and the Centre should hold talks with the Hurriyat leaders.

Referring to Army chief Bipin Rawat's comment a day earlier on engaging with Taliban without any preconditions, the former Chief Minister said if the Army could suggest it, then the Centre should also talk with the Hurriyat leaders to solve the Kashmir issue.

Speaking at a discussion on "J&K The Road Ahead", organised by the Centre for Peace and Progress here, Abdullah said the leaders of



Hurriyat have Indian passports and in the past, leaders such as former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee have held dialogue with them.

"The Army and use of force can never be a solution to the Kashmir crisis and lasting peace can be achieved only through dialogue," he told the gathering which included retired senior army officers and academicians from the city.

Expressing hope that dialogue on the Kashmir issue could start after the Lok Sabha polls, Abdullah said each election has divided the country instead of uniting it.

"There is mistrust between Delhi and Kashmir and an atmosphere of hate has been created in the country," he said.

Rawat had Wednesday said that at a time when the US and Russia are reaching out to the Taliban in Afghanistan, the terror outfit should be engaged with but talks should be held without any preconditions.

The Army chief's comments at the Raisina Dialogue, on engaging with Taliban, were the first such public remarks

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Ram Rahim, 3 others held guilty of murdering journalist

AGENCY
PANCHKULA: A CBI court on Friday convicted self-styled godman Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh and three others for the murder of journalist Ram Chander Chhatrapati 16 years ago.

The quantum of sentence for the Dera Sacha Sauda chief and the others will be pronounced by the special CBI court Judge Jagdeep Singh on January 17.

The 51-year-old sect head appeared before the court through video conference from Sunaria jail in Rohtak, where he is already serving a 20-year sentence for raping two of his followers.

The journalist was killed in Haryana's Sirsa in 2002 after his newspaper pub-

lished a letter alleging sexual exploitation of women by the godman.

After the conviction in the murder case, he now faces a minimum sentence of life, lawyers said.

The other three accused - Kuldeep Singh, Nirmal Singh and Krishan Lal appeared in person at the Panchkula court. After the verdict, they were taken to Ambala jail following a medical examination.

All the four accused have been convicted under Sections 302 (murder) and 120 B (conspiracy) of the Indian Penal Code, CBI counsel H P S Verma said.

Nirmal Singh and Krishan Lal have also been convicted

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