

**SRTC vehicle develops snag within 2 days of mechanical clearance**

**17 Amarnath pilgrims killed, 28 injured as bus plunges into 200 feet deep gorge**

**\*Governor, CS, CEO SASB visit spot; enquiry ordered**

Mohinder Verma

State Road Transport Corporation (SRTC) plunged into 200 feet deep gorge in Ramban district this afternoon

after developing mechanical snag. All the injured were, later, shifted to Jammu and Srinagar in vehicles and chop-

special treatment to them.

The accident sent shock wave in different parts of the country particularly in the States

**PM, DM express pain; HM speaks to Guv, CM**

NEW DELHI, July 16:

Prime Minister Narendra Modi today expressed pain at the loss of lives of Amarnath Yatris due to a bus accident in Jammu and Kashmir.

"My thoughts are with the families of the deceased," he said in a tweet.

"I pray that those injured in the bus accident in Jammu and Kashmir recover soon," Modi said.

He also announced compensation of Rs 2 lakh for the next of kin of the deceased Amarnath

(Contd on page 7 Col 1)

of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Assam, Haryana and

(Contd on page 4 Col 1)



Injured pilgrims being evacuated from the site of accident in Banihal on Sunday. Another pic on page 4.

pilgrims were killed and 28 others sustained injuries, 17 of them critically, when a bus of

**\* Watch video on**  
[www.excelsionews.com](http://www.excelsionews.com)

pers as facilities and manpower at the local hospital were not adequate to provide timely and

**Over 7000 perform darshan, yatra crosses 2 lakh**

Excelsior Correspondent

**SRINAGAR /JAMMU, July 16:** Despite the terrorist attack of July 10 in Anantnag district of South Kashmir which claimed seven lives of pilgrims, the spirits of yatris are very high as the Amarnath yatra crossed 2 lakh in last 18 days of darshan which started on June 29.

The terrorist threat failed to dampen the yatris spirits as thousands of pilgrims are reaching for darshan of holy cave from different parts of the country daily.

Today, on the 18th day of the Yatra, 7,214 pilgrims paid obeisance at the holy cave and, cumulatively, since the beginning of the pilgrimage, 2,02,705 Yatris had the darshan of the naturally formed Ice Lingam in the cave shrine situated at an altitude of 3880 meters in deep Himalayas of South Kashmir district of Anantnag.

Out of them, majority of pilgrims have returned to their home States while some are on the way, an official spokesman said.

He said over 5000 pilgrims left from twin base camps of Nunwan, Pahalgam in Anantnag district and Baltal, Sonamarg in Central Kashmir district of Ganderbal for holy cave today.

He said 2555 pilgrims left via shortest Dumel track from Baltal base camp while 2642 pilgrims left via traditional Chandanwari-Sheshnag track from Nunwan base camp. Besides the yatris stationed at Sheshnag and Panchtarni halting stations also left for their onwards sojourn chanting 'Bum Bum Bholey and Har Har Mahadev', the spokesman added.

He said a fresh batch of 3603 Shri Amarnathji pilgrims left from Yatri Niwas Jammu amid Bum Bum Bhole' chants for the

holy cave shrine in South Kashmir early this morning. They left in a cavalcade of 143 vehicles. The yatris comprised 2559 male, 950 females, and 94 Sadhus. Pilgrims left for Pahalgam and Baltal to perform the pilgrimage in 75 buses and 68 light motor vehicles. However, due to the land slides on National Highway in Ramban district, the Yatris were trapped in traffic jam for some time also. But later the Highway was cleared and yatra

**Yatra attack toll 8**

Excelsior Correspondent

**SRINAGAR, July 16:** Army today said that they have intensified the drills to prevent the attacks on Amarnath Yatra even as an injured Amarnath Yatri succumbed at SKIMS today.

A woman pilgrim, injured in the deadly militant attack on Amarnath Yatra bus, succumbed at SKIMS hospital early today, taking the death toll in the July 10 attack to eight.

Lalita, 47, who was being treated at the SKIMS Hospital here, passed away this morning.

The Commander of 1-Sector RR, Brigadier R Chakraborty, told reporters that the attack on the Amarnath Yatra in which 8 pilgrims were killed and 19 others

proceeded smoothly.

Spokesman said a 65-year-old pilgrim from Maharashtra died at the Baltal base camp raising the death toll in the ongoing pilgrimage to 20.

Sada Shiv fell seriously ill yesterday. He was admitted to the Baltal base hospital, where he died late last night, a police official said.

The 40-day Amarnath yatra started on June 29 from the twin routes of Pahalgam in Anantnag district and Baltal in Ganderbal

(Contd on page 7 Col 1)

**Module luring youth into militancy busted**

**Fayaz Bukhari**  
**SRINAGAR, July 16:** Security forces have busted a Hizbul Mujahideen (HM) militant module, luring youth to militancy, by arresting three persons in North Kashmir's Baramulla district while in Shopian, police arrested four persons including a cop and bank official for the last month's killing of a Special Police Officer (SPO).

**\* Pic on page 4.**  
**Video on**  
[www.excelsionews.com](http://www.excelsionews.com)

SSP Baramulla, Imtiyaz Hussain said that Baramulla Police, assisted by other security forces, busted the module which has been active in the area to lure young boys to militancy.

The SSP said the module was being spearheaded by HM commander Parvez Wani alias Mubashir, a resident of Gagloora, Handwara in North Kashmir's Kupwara district.

Imtiyaz identified the three arrested members of the module as Ansarullah Tantaray, resident of Raipora, Palhalan, Abdul Rashid Bhat, resident of Minipora, Sopore and Mehrajuddin Kak, resident of Andargami,

(Contd on page 4 Col 5)

**Voting to be secret but videographed**

**All 9 J&K MPs to vote in Parl; 87 MLAs in Srinagar**

Sanjeev Pargal

**JAMMU, July 16:** Eighty-seven elected MLAs of Jammu and Kashmir Assembly would cast their votes in the Legislature complex at Srinagar, the summer capital of the State tomorrow, along with members of all other State Assemblies and Members of Parliament (MPs) of both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha to elect new President of the country in place of Pranab Mukherjee, whose five-year term expires on July 24.

BJP's candidate Ram Nath Kovind, backed by its partners in NDA and several Opposition parties is pitted against Congress backed Meira Kumar, who also has support of some Opposition parties, for the post of President. Going by the Electoral College for the post of President which included MPs of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha and elected MLAs of all States, Kovind has clear edge in the election.

Official sources told the Excelsior that it would be a secret election, unlike the Rajya Sabha and Legislative Council polls, which are held through

open ballot and the parties can issue whip to their MLAs to cast votes in favour of their candidates. However, in the election of President, the parties can't issue whip but only advise the members of Electoral College to vote for particular candidates.

"It will be a secret ballot and political parties can't appoint their Observers to check the ballots," sources said, adding that the MLAs can cast their votes as per their own conscience.

All nine MPs of Jammu and Kashmir including five Lok Sabha members and four of Rajya Sabha, would cast their votes at Parliament House in New Delhi. According to sources, the MPs can cast votes either in the polling station of their State or in the Parliament complex. However, for casting their votes in the State, they had to submit in writing to the Returning Officer, which has not been done by any of the nine MPs J&K have. Therefore, all of them would vote in the Parliament.

Entire election process from 10 am to 5 pm will be videographed in the presence of a Central Observer, who has

already reached Srinagar," sources said.

The ballot boxes will be taken to New Delhi on Monday and deposited in the Parliament Hall, where counting will take place on July 20. The result is likely to be declared by the evening.

Sources disclosed that only 87 elected MLAs of the State Assembly were eligible to cast their votes for the post of President while two Nominated women MLAs can't vote. Out of 87 MLAs, BJP has 25 but has the support of three Others including two MLAs of People's Conference and another Independent MLA Bakir Rizvi of Zanskar, taking their total to 28. BJP's coalition partner, PDP also has 28 MLAs. Opposition National Conference has 15, Congress 12 and CPM one. Rest three are Independents including Hakim Mohammad Yasin, Pawan Gupta and Engineer Rashid.

Each MLA of Jammu and Kashmir Assembly has vote value of 72.

While BJP and its allies including PDP, People's

(Contd on page 7 Col 1)

**Spl Forces target Pak troops, kill 5**

Excelsior Correspondent

**SRINAGAR, July 16:** At least 5 Pakistani soldiers were killed after Special Forces of Army targeted their vehicle along the Line of Control (LoC) in Furkiyan sector in district Kupwara today.

Sources said that Special Forces of Army (Paras) targeted a Pakistani army vehicle on Neelam Valley road today. The vehicle that was targeted by the Special Forces fell into Kishan Ganga river called as Neelam river by Pakistan which is the LoC in the sector.

They said five soldiers drowned in the river and one body has been recovered so far. "Pakistani troops were seen searching for the bodies in the river", they said.

Pakistani troops later targeted forward posts of Army but there was no loss of life. The intermittent firing in the area continued.

Pakistan's Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) has confirmed the incident and said that Indian Army targeted an army vehicle which fell in the river at Athmuqam in Pakistan occupied Kashmir. The ISPR said the body of one of the soldiers had been found while the search for the others was under way.

"Pakistani troops effectively responded to the ceasefire violation", the ISPR added.

**Govt fails to regularise expenditure**

JAMMU, July 16:

The Jammu and Kashmir Government has failed to regularise an excess expenditure of Rs 1,04,767 crore in the State Assembly for last 36 years, according to a CAG report.

The report of Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India on State finances for the year ending on March 31, 2016, was tabled in the recently-concluded Assembly session.

As per the Section 82 of Constitution of Jammu and Kashmir, it is mandatory for the State Government to get the excess expenditure over the grant/appropriation regularised by the State Legislature, the CAG report said.

The respective Governments of NC-Congress and PDP-BJP alliances have miserably failed to regularise an excess expenditure over Rs 1.04 lakh crore through its State Legislature for past 36 years, it said.

"Although no time limit for regularisation of expenditure has been prescribed under the section, the regularisation of excess expenditure is done after the completion of discussion of appropriation accounts by the Public Accounts Committee (PAC)," CAG

(Contd on page 7 Col 1)

**Oppn to seek debate on China's role**

NEW DELHI, July 16:

Observing that differences with China over Kashmir was a new focal point, the Congress today said it would seek a debate in Parliament on the issue, while asserting that the party stood with the Government on matters of territorial integrity and national security.

The Government has closed all doors for dialogue on Kashmir "which has led to political suffocation in the Valley", senior Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad said.

"If the Government thinks that elimination and guns are the only ways to curb tension in Kashmir, we are not with them," he told reporters after an all-party meeting a day before Parliament opens for the monsoon session.

The Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha said that earlier "Pakistan would figure in discussions on Kashmir, but now China is mentioned without fail".

Azad said the Congress has conveyed to the Government that there are some sensitive issues related to the internal and external security that needed to be discussed during the Parliament ses-

(Contd on page 4 Col 3)

**Reopen cases against Sharif: Panel**

ISLAMABAD, July 16:

The joint investigation team which looked into Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's family assets in London following the Panama Papers leak scandal has recommended reopening of 15 cases against the embattled leader, a media report said today.

The high-profile scandal is about alleged money laundering by Sharif in 1990s, when he twice served as Prime Minister, to purchase assets in London. The assets surfaced when Panama Papers leak last year revealed that they were managed through offshore companies owned by Sharif's children.

The six-member JIT which probed the issue submitted its final report to the Supreme Court on July 10. It said the lifestyle of Sharif and his children were beyond their known sources of income, and recommended filing of a new corruption case against them.

Sharif has dismissed the report as a "bundle of baseless allegations". According to the report in Pakistan's Dawn newspaper, the JIT has asked the court to reopen 15 old cases, including five cases

(Contd on page 7 Col 3)

**'Shortage of doctors cause of concern'**  
**We may end up with sick AIIMS: Dr Jitendra**

Avtar Bhat

**JAMMU, July 16:** Taking serious note of shortage of doctors in Jammu region especially in Super Specialty Hospital (SSH) of Government Medical College (GMC), Union Minister of State in PMO with independent charge of North Eastern States, Dr

**\* Watch video on**  
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Jitendra Singh today said that this way "we may end up in opening a sick AIIMS in Jammu."

The Union Minister was speaking at a function at GMC auditorium here today which among others was attended by Health and Medical Education Minister, Bali Bhagat, Commissioner/ Secretary, Health and

Medical Education, Dr Pawan Kotwal and Principal GMC, Sundanda Raina in connection with the launch of Cornea Andhaty Mukti Bharat Abhiyan (CAMBA). The function was jointly organized by SAK-

SHAM and National Medicos Organization in collaboration with Eye Bank of GMC Jammu.

He said while the AIIMS all over the country have been opened for treatment of sick "I apprehend that we may end up

with opening of a sick AIIMS in Jammu". To overcome this problem, he added, conditions should be created to attract good faculty by providing them incentives and other facilities.

(Contd on page 4 Col 5)



Union Minister, Dr Jitendra Singh addressing a function at GMC, Jammu on Sunday.

— Excelsior/Rakesh

**CAG detects violation of AICTE norms, financial mismanagement in GCET Jammu**

Nishikant Khajuria

**JAMMU, July 16:** The Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) has pointed out violation of several AICTE norms and financial mismanagement resulting into poor utilization of funds by the Government College of Engineering and Technology (GCET) Jammu.

Funds ranging from 11 to 35 percent in Non-Plan of each financial year from 2011-12 to 2015-16 and 61 percent of Plan funds of 2014-15 remained unutilized by the College while non-adherence to prescribed teacher student ratio affected the quality of education imparted to students as reflected in low pass out and campus placement rate, observes the latest CAG report for the year ended March 31,

Audit has noticed preparation of unrealistic budget estimates by the College Management with the result that plan funds were released in the range of 42 and 17 percent during 2012-13 to 2014-15 and Non-plan funds in the range of 79 and 66 percent during 2012-13 to 2015-16. Despite less receipt of funds, there were still unutilized funds ranging between 11 and 35 percent of Non-Plan at the close of each financial year from 2011-12 to 2015-16 while 61 percent of the Plan fund remained unutilized during 2014-15.

Further, audit also noticed un-utilized balance under 23 local funds ranging between Rs 1.70 crores to Rs 3.15 crores at the end of each year from 2011-12 to 2015-16.

Tuition fees of Rs 85.52 lakh, out of Rs 85.73 lakh, collected as of January 2016, had not been utilized by the College Management for organizing specialized lectures for students by guest faculty during the period, which ultimately deprived the students of intended benefits. Similarly, Rs 8.02 lakh was lying unspent under Training and Placement fund as only 17 training sessions were held during the period of five years from 2011-12 onwards.

Under Modernization and Removal of Obsolescence Scheme (MODROB), sponsored by AICTE to enhance the functional efficiency of teaching, training and research activities besides ensuring that practical work and project work carried out by students is suited to the

needs of Industry, more than Rs 17.5 lakh grant to GCET remained unspent. Out of Rs 57.25 lakh received (July 2012) as grant-in-aid from AICTE, only Rs 40.91 lakh had been utilized as of March 2013 leaving an unspent balance of Rs 16.34 lakh plus earned interest of Rs 0.84 lakh.

Even as the AICTE norms stipulate teacher student ratio of 1:1.5 for UG Engineering and Technology courses, there was shortage of teachers in GCET and consequent higher teachers student ratio. As the shortage of teachers increased from 11 to 22 in five years from 2011-12 onwards, non-adherence to prescribed ratio severely affected the quality of education imparted to the students, which was reflected in low pass out rate

(Contd on page 7 Col 3)

**Dumping of waste poses threat to Wullar Lake**

Suhail Bhat

**SRINAGAR, July 16:** Relentless dumping of garbage on the banks of Asia's largest lake in North Kashmir is posing a grave threat to its biodiversity and the overall sustainable development.

The Wullar Lake is considered as the largest freshwater lake in Asia and as per the Ramsar Convention, the lake holds an international importance due to its unique biodiversity. The locals of the area said the unattended mounds of garbage lying on the banks of the lake are discouraging the visitors and alleged that authorities for turning the pristine surroundings of the lake into waste dumping sites.

"The green pastures of 'Zaalwan' around its peripheries look horrible. The land used to be filled with locals who would

sit and enjoy the view of the lake. However, it is difficult to spend five minutes in it these days. The water surface is covered with the garbage and ambient air is filled with a stink," Wajid Rasool, a local, said.

Sources said the Municipal Committee (MC) Bandipora said in a catchment area of about 11.25 acres, the Committee dumps nearly 630 tonnes of garbage around the banks of Wullar every month. "Every day, the Municipal Committee dumps nearly 21 tonnes of garbage and it's nothing new as the department has been doing it since 1968, when it came to existence," they said.

Riyaz Ahmad, a local from Bandipora, said the newly formed Wullar Conservation and Management Authority has failed miserably to save the lake and instead seeking an alterna-

tive dumping site they are contributing in dumping the waste by providing sophisticated vehicles to the Municipal Committee. "Ironically, the vehicle with 'Save Wullar' illustration can be seen ferrying the garbage all day toward the lake.

The inefficiency from the authorities has wasted the whole initiative," he said.

He said the garbage gets into the lake due to swelling of the lake every year in rainy season. "The water washes off the whole

(Contd on page 7 Col 3)



Unattended garbage lying on the banks of Wullar Lake at North Kashmir's Bandipora district. — Excelsior/Aabid Nabi

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INSIDE	WEATHER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funds not utilized ...Page 6</li> <li>* Protected Monuments</li> <li>Naeem launches helicopter service on Srinagar-Kargil sector ...Page 3</li> <li>Desecration of Mian Dido statue: Rana urges Govt to uphold Dogra pride ...Page 3</li> <li>Harsh seeks probe into motivated transfers of Masler in Edu Dept ...Page 5</li> <li>Kashmiri Hindus demand political, economic reservation ...Page 9</li> <li>Harinder Pal Sandhu wins Victorian Open title ...Page 10</li> </ul>	<p><b>JAMMU :</b> Possibility of light rain/thundershowers <b>TEMPERATURE</b> Max: 31.9 Degree C Min: 25.3 Degree C</p> <p><b>RELATIVE HUMIDITY</b> RH-I (Morning): 84.0 per cent RH-II (Evening): 81.0 per cent Sunset on Monday: 07.40 p.m. Sunrise on Tuesday: 05.37 a.m.</p> <p><b>SRINAGAR:</b> Possibility of light rain/ thundershowers <b>TEMPERATURE</b> Max: 32.2 Degree C Min: 20.3 Degree C</p> <p><b>RELATIVE HUMIDITY</b> RH-I (Morning): 80.0 per cent RH-II (Evening): 43.0 per cent</p> <p><b>LEH:</b> <b>TEMPERATURE</b> Max: 23.1 Degree C Min: 20.2 Degree C</p>