

Soldier killed in encounter, militants flee

4 civilians killed, 60 injured in Kulgam

CM reviews situation; colleges, schools closed

Fayaz Bukhari

SRINAGAR, Apr 11: Four civilians were killed in alleged security forces firing in Khudwani area of South Kashmir's Kulgam district today while over 60 were injured after clashes broke out during the gun battle that raged this morning in the village.

**Watch video on www.excelsiornews.com*

Chief Minister, Mehbooba Mufti, who was in New Delhi, flew to Srinagar to review the situation in the aftermath of the killings. She expressed grief at the loss of lives at Khudwani and also paid tributes to the Army jawan who lost his life in the incident.

She said there is an urgent need to get together to get Jammu and Kashmir out of this vicious cycle of violence and killings. She conveyed her sympathies with the families of those killed and prayed for their eternal solace.

She asked security forces to exercise maximum restraint while dealing with the law and order. She is herself monitoring the situation and held meetings with the top security force and

house searches, militants fired at them leading to a gun battle in which a soldier was killed and two security forces personnel were injured.



The site near gun battle in Kulgam on Wednesday.

—Excelsior/Sajad Dar

administration officials.

Earlier, Police, Army's 1-RR and Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) cordoned off Khudwani village last night after inputs about presence of three militants in a house. As the security forces launched house to

The soldier has been identified as Sepoy S Gunakar Roy (No. 16121860/K). He succumbed to injuries at Army's 92-Base hospital in Srinagar where he was evacuated along with two other soldiers.

People in large numbers

gathered at the encounter site and pelted stones at the security forces leading to ding dong battles during which four civilians were killed and over 60 injured.

Several houses and shops were badly damaged in the gun battle as security forces used explosives to blast off the houses where militants were hiding. However, they called off the operation after firing stopped and no militant bodies were found in the debris of the houses. As soon as the operation was called off, three militants appeared from the debris of the houses and fled away.

The civilians who were killed at Khudwani have been identified as Sharjeel Sheikh, 25, of Khudwani, Bilal Ahmad Tantray, 16, of Hawoora Mishpora and Faisal Illahi, 14, of Melhoora Shopian and Ajiaz Ahmad Palla, 30, son of Mohammad Siraj of Batpora, Nagbal at present Tulkhani village in Bijbehara.

Four injured are being treated at SKIMS hospital. One

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Jammu observes total bandh

Avtar Bhat

JAMMU, Apr 11: All shops and other business establishments remained closed with public transport remaining off the roads as Jammu observed a total bandh in response to call given by Bar Association demanding immediate deportation of Rohingyas, handing over of Rassana murder case of a minor girl to CBI for probe and revocation of an order issued by Tribal Department.

**Watch video on www.excelsiornews.com*

The traders downed shutters of their shops and other business establishments in Jammu city and its outskirts while public transport remained off the roads during the day in response to the bandh call of Jammu Bar Association. Most of the private educational institutions remained closed while there was a thin attendance in Government office as employees due to lack of transport facilities owing to bandh call could not attend their duties.

All markets in Jammu City were a deserted look due to bandh call and barring some medical shops in some markets all the business establishments remained closed.

Mob blocks NH, squats on Rly track at Kootah



Members of Bar Association and Civil Society taking out a rally at Parade as Jammu observes complete bandh on Wednesday.

—Excelsior/Rakesh

At various places, the bandh enforcers had also burnt tyre tubes to paralyze the movement of vehicular traffic and stray incidents of stone pelting on commercial vehicles were witnessed at some places in the morning to force the public transport to remain off the roads.

Some vehicles including a passenger bus of Akhnoor route was damaged in stone pelting. However, no major incident of violence was reported from any where and bandh was mostly peaceful.

To deal with any untoward

incident a big contingent of police was deployed in various markets in Jammu City and outskirts.

To enforce the bandh call, the members of Bar Association led by its president B S Salathia with Tricolours in their hands took out a rally from High Court Complex Janipur in cars and two wheelers and marched through the city.

They moved via Old Janipur Chowk, New Plots and Ambphalla Chowk first. At Ambphalla Chowk, they paral-

ysed the movement of vehicular traffic resulting into a huge traffic jam for some time. However, after the intervention of the police the traffic was allowed to move and road was cleared.

Later the rally moved towards Rehari where from it left for Kachi Chawni via Exchange road.

At Kachi Chawni Chowk the Bar held a massive protest demonstration and shouted slogans against the BJP as well as coalition Government. The rally later moved towards Parade,

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NIA again conducts raid; seizes cross-LoC trade record in Poonch

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Apr 11: The National Investigating Agency (NIA) today once again conducted raid at Trade Facilitation Centre (TFC), Chakan-Da-Bagh in Poonch district and seized some records for scrutiny even as cross-LoC trade between Jammu and Kashmir and Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) continued uninterrupted on Poonch-Rawalakote route during the day.

Headed by Inspector General of Police (IGP), NIA, Viplov Kumar, an IPS officer of Jammu and Kashmir cadre, the NIA team was expected to camp in the border district of Poonch for couple of days to examine the record and quiz some people, if required.

Sources told the Excelsior that the NIA team from its headquarters in New Delhi proceeded to Poonch this morning and seized record pertaining to cross-LoC trade of some businessmen. The NIA team remained stationed at the Trade Facilitation Centre throughout the day seeking record.

However, the investigating agency, which had simultaneously conducted raids at TFC Poonch and TFC Salamabad in Uri district of Kashmir on December 18, 2016, hasn't called any cross-LoC trader or official for questioning so far, sources said but added that the questioning of some of the traders and officials wasn't ruled out.

The cross-LoC trade takes place four days of every week from Tuesday to Friday on

both the routes of Poonch-Rawalakote and Uri-Muzaffarabad. The trade continued uninterrupted despite the NIA presence at the Trade Facilitation Centre today. The trucks crossed LoC as usual carrying goods on both the sides, sources said.

The NIA had developed specific inputs that some of the traders were misusing barter facility to pump money to fuel militancy in Jammu and Kashmir.

The NIA has registered First Information Report (FIR) under Regular Case 17 of 2016 in New Delhi following very credible and specific inputs that some of the traders were getting extra goods from PoK and part of the money generated from them was being pumped into the militancy

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CM leaves for Srinagar, cancels Jammu engagements

Mehbooba meets HM; discusses CBMs, summer strategy

Sanjeev Pargal

JAMMU, Apr 11: Two days after her meetings with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti today met Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh in New Delhi and discussed with him security situation in Jammu and Kashmir including the borders and growing involvement of civilians during gun battles between security forces and militants especially the steps needed to check civilian killings.

After the meeting,

Mehbooba straightway flew to Srinagar, the summer capital of the State, cancelling her all engagements in Jammu including two dinners, which were to be hosted by her separately for

Editors and visiting Union Finance Secretary at her official residence tonight. The dinner for the Finance Secretary was hosted by Chief Secretary BB Vyas.

She reached Srinagar to



Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti in a meeting with Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh, in New Delhi on Wednesday. (UNI)

Govt facing crisis at highest level in bureaucracy

Over half a dozen posts of Admn Secys among 9 key positions lying vacant

Mohinder Verma

JAMMU, Apr 11: The PDP-BJP Coalition Government is facing crisis at the highest level in the bureaucracy as over half a dozen posts of Administrative Secretaries among nine key positions have been lying vacant while as there is an ad hoc arrangement for six other important departments in the Civil Secretariat during the past some months.

The prevailing situation, which is the outcome of inability of the Government to take timely decision, has left adverse impact on the functioning of these departments as Administrative Secretaries and

Ad hoc arrangement for six other deptts at Civil Sectt

Heads of the Departments are supposed to take final decision on all important aspects.

Official sources told EXCELSIOR that the posts of Administrative Secretaries of ARI, Trainings and Office Supplies, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Culture, Disaster Management, Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction and Cooperative Departments fell vacant on January 31, 2018 following superannuation of five IAS officers.

"Despite being aware of the fact that five IAS officers will attain superannuation on January 31, 2018 no step was taken in advance by the Government so as to immediately post new officers on these posts", sources said, adding "even after their retirement no seriousness was shown by the Government as a result of which the posts of Administrative Secretaries of these departments are still lying vacant despite lapse of two and half months".

The crisis at the highest

level in the State's bureaucracy deepened further on March 31, 2018 when two more IAS officers holding the posts of Administrative Secretaries of Social Welfare and Agriculture Production Departments attained superannuation. "Due to this the number of vacant posts of Administrative Secretaries has risen to seven", sources added.

Shockingly, even two weeks after the retirement of two more IAS officers the Government has not taken steps to fill up the vacant posts of Administrative Secretaries as a result of which functioning of the seven departments is suffering badly, they

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CB records 22 statements in Rassana case

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Apr 11: The Crime Branch, which probed the brutal rape-and-murder of an eight-year-old 'Bakerwal' girl at village Rassana in Kathua in January this year, has recorded statements of 22 witnesses before a Judicial Magistrate.

A senior police official said today that the statements had been recorded under Section 164 of the Criminal Procedure Code before a Magistrate in which they gave details of the conspiracy hatched by Sanjhi Ram and others.

According to the laid down process, police approach a Magistrate with request for recording the statement of a witness. After his or her production, the Magistrate ensures that the statement is given according to the free will of the individual

and the entire process is video-graphed.

In case, the witness, who has registered the statement, turns hostile during trial, police can press perjury charges against him or her.

"The statements did help us in our investigations and we are hopeful that the guilty will be punished," a Crime Branch official said.

Two chargesheets were filed against eight accused under various Sections of the Ranbir Penal Code (equivalent of IPC) related to rape, illegal confinement, destruction of evidence and criminal conspiracy.

The accused are Sanjhi Ram, his son Vishal, special police officers Deepak Khajuria and Surender Verma, head constable Tilak Raj, sub-inspector Anand Dutta, civilian Parvesh Kumar, and Sanjhi Ram's minor nephew.

The Crime Branch has also proved that Ram's son, Vishal had returned home from his college on January 12.

Vishal, who is pursuing B.Sc in Agriculture at a college in Meerut in Uttar Pradesh, had returned to his village after he was informed by his relative, Shubam Sangra alias "Chuboo" about the kidnapping of the girl telephonically on January 11 and asked him to return in case "he wanted to satisfy his lust", the charge sheet presented by the crime branch in the court said.

On January 12, the investigators said Vishal reached Rassana after which he raped the girl along with five others, besides helping in disposing of the body on January 17 after she was killed.

Many in the village had claimed that Vishal had

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Food in mess, canteens to attract GST

NEW DELHI, Apr 11:

Food and drinks in a mess or canteen of an educational institution would attract 5 per cent GST, the Finance Ministry said today.

However, if schools up to higher secondary level supply food directly to students, then the same are exempt from the Goods and Services Tax (GST), it added.

"With a view to removing any doubt or uncertainty

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INSIDE	WEATHER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changed Central funding pattern ...Page 8 * Inessential litigations & State DB directs sealing of shops indulging in encroachments ...Page 3 Provide first aid kits to Red Cross volunteers: Governor ...Page 3 Tassaduq tours Patnitop, takes stock of tourism infrastructure ...Page 5 Opposition hits out at Govt over civilian killings ...Page 7 Ranges or rings: Indians dominate on another good day at CWG ...Page 14 	<p>JAMMU: Partly cloudy TEMPERATURE Max: 28.4 Degree C Min: 16.5 Degree C</p> <p>RELATIVE HUMIDITY RH-I (Morning): 84.0 per cent RH-II (Evening): 44.0 per cent Sunset on Thursday: 06.59 p.m. Sunrise on Friday: 06.06 a.m.</p> <p>SRINAGAR: Possibility of light rain/thundershowers TEMPERATURE Max: 18.2 Degree C Min: 8.3 Degree C</p> <p>RELATIVE HUMIDITY RH-I (Morning): 93.0 per cent RH-II (Evening): 86.0 per cent</p> <p>LEH: TEMPERATURE Max: 17.1 Degree C Min: 4.9 Degree C</p>

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