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Police escort spiritual leader Asaram Babu outside an airport after his arrest in Jodhpur. (UNI)

**Asaram quizzed for 4 hours**

where the incident was recreated to verify the charge against him, Jodhpur DCP Ajay Pal Lamba said. Asaram was later produced before District and Sessions Judge (Rural) Manoj K Vyas who remanded him to one-day police custody. Police had sought two-day custody of Asaram.

He has been kept under police custody at the RAC Battalion campus after his plea for being allowed to stay at his ashram was rejected.

Earlier, Jodhpur Police Commissioner Biju George Joseph told reporters that there were still some issues that needed to be worked out for a "water-tight" case against Asaram.

Joseph said a medical test was carried out on Asaram and there was nothing to suggest that he was unwell. Asaram had claimed that he could not meet the deadline of August 30 given by the Jodhpur police to appear before it as his health condition had deteriorated.

Asaram has denied sexual assault charges lodged against him by the schoolgirl, the police commissioner said.

He refuted reports that Asaram was on a hunger fast and

refusing to eat or drink anything. "He is taking food and water," Joseph said.

Asaram was brought by Rajasthan police team led by Additional Commissioner of Police Satish Jnagid. They were flown via Delhi in an Air India flight at about 1230 hrs.

He was taken to Rajasthan Armed Constabulary Battalion Campus in Mandore where he was interrogated for four hours, police said.

Unprecedented security arrangements were made at the airport. Asaram's supporters shouted slogans at the Delhi and Jodhpur airports.

A report from Mumbai said they also stopped trains at Uthnasagar's railway tracks in the neighbouring Thane district shortly after noon.

Asaram was arrested by the Jodhpur Police after midnight from his ashram in Indore and escorted by a large posse of police personnel to the airport, where he spent the night on a sofa in the VIP lounge.

His arrest followed an FIR filed by the girl alleging she was sexually assaulted by Asaram at his ashram in this Rajasthan city. (PTI)

**PDD fails to pay Rs 12 cr arrears of pvt firms repairing transformers**

left to suffer due to non-payment of arrears of private firms. B P Bhalla, heading the Association of the Transformers Unit holders, said that the Chief Minister in his cabinet meeting announced to release all the pending arrears of the firms engaged by the PDD on July 2, but unfortunately the PDD released only Rs 2 crore in favour of firm holders.

And out of this, the PDD authorities at Jammu released only Rs 1.5 crore. It is just peanuts amount, like "Oonth ke Munh Mein Zeera". The Chief Engineer PDD (M&RE), Jammu Ms Goni persuaded the firm holders and asked to resume work after CM's announcement. But hardly 2-3 well off firms have resumed work, most of others have refused as they have invested huge amount in repair works and they got almost nothing. They can not afford to continue under such circumstances.

The Government has only befooled the unit holders and PDD's own workshops are unable to take the pressure of increasing unpaired transformers. The public cry is on rise and people are unable to get their transformers repaired even after a week or even fortnight, especially in rural areas.

With the increase in the humidity, the pendency increases as coils are needed to be dried up for binding. He said May, June, July and August are the peak months and maximum damage is caused during these months. The low voltage and load of ACS/coolers etc aggravate the damage during these months.

Responding to another question, he said this problem is mostly experienced in Jammu, Samba and Kathua districts while the damage is less in other areas like Rajouri, Udhampur or Doda. During winters, the loss is much in these hilly areas as the power consumption goes higher. He said nearly ten odd private firms have been engaged for repair of transformers and with this public was getting better service. Now, entire work is dependent on the own workshops and over fifty per cent work has been hit with almost suspension of work. The Government has agreed to release their arrears in parts and it first cleared the pending bills up to March 2012.

President CCI Jammu Y V Sharma when contacted said that Chamber has assisted them for pleading their case and arrears of more than rupees ten crores were lying pending by the end of March this year. Even last time also, some of their arrears were released with the intervention of Chief Minister. The department has failed to evolve a system and release payments of the industry owners in time.

Many of them have taken loans from banks to run their business. They are unable to invest more as they are not getting even a penny from PDD. It is very difficult for them to survive. He alleged that power is the most essential service but the public has been made to lead a miserable life by the department. There is no accountability and even during festivals curtailments are imposed, which is most unfortunate.

If this figure of a senior officer is believed, then there will be more than 300 damaged transformers in Jammu alone and over all number of damaged ones in the region will be double as earlier projected. There are three workshops of PDD in Jammu besides another one Central Workshop at Narwal. In many workshops, double shift work is being performed to meet the challenge but even then the pendency of repair/replacement of damaged transformers has increased from 2-3 days to 5-6

**6 injured in 3 Valley blasts**

The duo was rushed to the Sub-district Hospital Sopore for treatment. The 52 Rashtriya Rifles of Army, 177 Battalion of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and Special Operations Group of Jammu and Kashmir Police immediately cordoned off the area and launched massive searches for the militants involved in the grenade attack. Two Army personnel were injured when they accidentally stepped on an anti-personnel mine near the Line of Control (LoC) in Keran sector of North Kashmir's Kupwara district today.

The Army personnel were on patrol when they accidentally stepped on land mines in Keran sector near LoC. The accident happened in the wee hours today. The Army personnel suffered injuries in lower limbs and were rushed to hospital where their condition was stated to be stable. Army has stepped up vigil along the LoC in the wake of increased attempts by militants

from Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) to sneak into Kashmir. The Army has planted land mines on the possible infiltration routes but these areas are marked. But sometimes the land mines get drifted due to snow and landslides that puts the lives of the Army into risk during patrolling of these areas.

In the meantime, a woman and her daughter were injured when an explosive in a box went off in their house in the old city area of Srinagar today. Police said that a mysterious explosion occurred in the residential house of Manzoor Ahmad Khan at Ali Masjid, Eidgah near the CRPF camp. The duo had found the box on road side and taken it home.

A woman, Ashia and her daughter Arfa were injured in the explosion. Both the injured were removed to SKIMS hospital at Soura Srinagar for treatment. Safakadal police have registered a case and are investigating the case.

**Geelani re-elected chairman TeH**

Shariati criticised the leaders of Jamat. Geelani tenure as the chairman of Tehreek-e-Hurriyat Jammu and Kashmir expired yesterday and Majlis-e-Shoura (advisory council) re-elected him today as chairman with thumping majority.

Geelani was later expelled from Jamat-e-Islami in 2010 after his biography "Quaid-e-Inqilab-A history, a movement" written by Dr Shafi

**Sonia to fly to US for check-up**

welfare legislation and UPA's ambitious Food Security Bill was in the final stages of adoption. She was discharged from the

**Mufti assails Cong for 'shadow boxing' on 73rd amendment**

elections, Mufti said that Congress Party was equally responsible for depriving people of Jammu and Kashmir of their legitimate democratic rights.

Termining the forthcoming Parliament elections as an historic opportunity before the J&K people to send credible representatives in the Lok Sabha, the PDP patron sought the support of the people to ensure victory of party nominee to vociferously raise issues of common masses in the Parliament. He said that unlike in other parts of the country, coming elections in J&K were not only an exercise to elect Lok Sabha members but to send trustworthy representatives in the Lok Sabha, who would represent people's aspirations with sincerity and dedication.

Mufti said that PDP has earned credibility and faith of the people due to its conviction and commitment. "We are contesting Lok Sabha elections to give voice to the peoples' wishes and aspirations" he said adding that like other parties our representatives would not maintain silence in the Parliament over the issues related to J&K. Without naming any political party, the PDP stalwart said that it was all due to the failure of our representatives that due attention was not given to the issues related to Jammu and Kashmir in the Parliament. PDP wants to send tested and credible representatives in the Parliament to take up people's issues with conviction and commitment.

While introducing party nominee Yash Paul Sharma to the workers from Jammu and Samba, he said that Sharma a crusader of communal harmony and brotherhood has set an

example of credible leadership in the twin border districts of Rajouri and Poonch. He pointed out that some people were talking of contesting elections jointly but it should be made very clear to them that PDP is hardly bothered and it has made its place in the public due to its programmes, policies and conviction. It has proved its efficiency, skills of governance and earned credibility during short stint of just three years. There were no employees' strikes and detention of Hurriyat leaders or exploitation of political prisoners during PDP rule.

**Standing Committee seeks timeframe for J&K for laying 220 KV network**

taken in its 31st meeting vis-à-vis alternate connectivity of Jammu and Kashmir through the Northern Grid through Samba-Jallandhar line and installation of second 400 KVA line between Jammu and Srinagar via Mughal Road.

It is pertinent to mention here that Standing Committee is an apex body to take decisions on power system and planning and whose recommendations receive due attention in the Power Ministry as well as Planning Commission. In its 32nd meeting, J&K was represented by Development Commissioner Power, Asgar Ali and Executive Engineer, Sanjay Sharma.

At present, Jammu and Kashmir is connected with the Northern Region only through Kishenpur-Moga transmission line and because of single line connectivity Jammu and

**10 pc DA hike on cards**

10 per cent and would be effective from July 1, this year.

The sources further said the exact amount of dearness allowance, as a proportion of basic pay, works out to over 90 per cent after factoring in the revised all India Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers (CPI-IW) for June.

According to revised data released on August 30, retail inflation for factory workers for June stood at 11.63 per cent, higher than provisional estimate of 11.06 per cent for the month released on July 31.

Sources said that since the revised estimate for the month of June is available, the Finance Ministry would soon prepare a proposal for the purpose for seeking Union Cabinet

**Check misuse of stamp papers: HC**

Vinod Chatterji Koul. Where two or more sheets of paper stamped with impressed stamps are used to make up the amount of duty chargeable in respect of any instrument, either a portion of such instrument should be written on each sheet so used or the sheet on which no such portion is written be signed by the

executants with an endorsement indicating that the sheet is attached with another sheet on which the instrument is written, the circular added. The market value guidelines and stamp duty rates should be strictly adhered to in order to avoid any loss to the State exchequer, the circular maintains.

**Ready to resume prayers at Kedarnath from Sept 11: Bahuguna**

DEHRADUN, Sept 1: Preparations are in place for resumption of prayers from September 11 at Kedarnath shrine in the flood-ravaged state of Uttarakhand, Chief Minister Vijay Bahuguna said today.

Prayers at Kedarnath, suspended since the mid-June natural calamity in the state, will begin again at 7 A.M. On the said day and continue till 11 A.M., Bahuguna told reporters here after a meeting with Badrinath-Kedarnath temple committee officials here to review the arrangements.

Giving details of the meeting, Bahuguna said that the committee, the Kedarnath dharmadhikari and representatives of Shankaracharya Swami Swaroopanand Saraswati had given their consent for the prayers to recommence at the shrine on September 11, as announced earlier by the state government.

Bahuguna, however, added that devotees will not be allowed to visit the shrine by foot till September 30 for safety reasons. The pedestrian route to the high altitude shrine sustained large-scale damage in the flash flood calamity.

The temple committee has provided the state government with a list of 24 persons who will perform the prayers at the shrine on September 11, Bahuguna said. (PTI)

**SC for drastic changes in rape law**

NEW DELHI, Sept 1:

Setting up of fast-track courts to try rape cases is not sufficient to ensure speedy justice to the victims, the Supreme Court has said, favouring "drastic" amendment in the law for quick disposal of such matters.

"Fast-track courts no doubt are constituted for expeditious disposal of cases involving the charge of rape at the trial stage, but we are perturbed and anguished to notice that although there are fast-track courts for disposal of such cases, we do not yet have a fast-track procedure for dealing with cases of rape and gangrape with the result that such heinous offences are repeated incessantly," a bench headed by Justice Gyan Sudha Misra said.

"We are of the considered opinion that there is pressing need to introduce drastic amendments into the CrPC," it said.

Expressing concern that the Centre was not taking any steps to amend the law to ensure fast-track procedure, the apex court sought response from the Government on why statements of victims and witnesses in rape cases be not recorded by a judicial magistrate which can be treated as an evidence instead of the police recording them which is inadmissible.

The bench said that it would put an end to recording of evidence of the victim and other witnesses multiple times which is the primary reason for delay of the trial.

"We feel acutely concerned as to why the Union of India should not take initiative and

**Guj riots unfortunate; unfair to blame Modi for it: Rajnath**

NEW DELHI, Sept 1:

Terming the 2002 Gujarat riots as "unfortunate", BJP President Rajnath Singh today said it was unfair to blame state Chief Minister Narendra Modi for the incident and accused Congress and some other parties of dividing the country on religious lines.

"One of our states is Gujarat. I agree an unfortunate incident took place. Who does not agree that it was unfortunate. Attempts were made to blame Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi as if the riots were planned by the Chief Minister," he said here.

Singh said during his personal interactions with Modi, he tries to read his facial expressions. "He looks so sad...What is wrong with the people. Is it politics?" the BJP President asked referring to charges that Modi was behind the riots.

He was addressing the inaugural session of BJP's Minority Morcha's National Executive meeting.

He said people should ask the Muslims of the states whether they feel any discrimination under BJP's rule.

Singh also used the occasion to lash out at Congress for adopting the Britishers' 'divide and rule' policy.

"Whether Congress adopted any other policy of the British or not, they at least adopted their divide and rule policy...Congress and some other political parties have tried to sow the seeds of division in the country," he said.

He admitted that members of the minority community working for BJP find it difficult to propagate the party's policies among people due to the perception created that the party was against taking minorities along.

"The perception is away from the reality. We do not indulge in such politics," he maintained.

Singh's remarks on Modi came a day after party leader Arun Jaitley said that there should be no controversy over the issue of BJP's Prime Ministerial candidate as that would be akin to committing a "hit-wicket" and turn out to be the only possible reason for the main opposition losing the upcoming general elections.

The Leader of the Opposition in Rajya Sabha had indicated that Modi should be

**4 bovines rescued, 3 held**

JAMMU, Sept 1: Akhnoor police today rescued four bovine animals and arrested three smugglers, who have been identified as Mohammad Sadiq, son of Ghulam Mohammad, Poonch, Ghulam Hussain and Mohammad Khalid, son of Ghulam Hussain, all residents of Chakralka, tehsil Mandi, district Poonch.

A case FIR number 201/13 under Section 188 RPC has been registered at Akhnoor Police Station and investigation started.

**Excelsior Correspondent**

A police spokesman said that, on specific inputs, police party from Akhnoor Police Station led by SHO Mahesh Sharma laid a naka at Mera Manderyan and intercepted two Mahindra vehicles bearing registration numbers JK12-5509 and JK02AG-6787.

During search, police recov-

steps to evolve a procedure for fast-track justice to be adopted by the investigating agencies and the fast-track courts by proposing amendments into the CrPC for speedy justice to the victim," the bench said while issuing notice to the Centre.

"We are of the view that if the evidence is recorded for the first time itself before the judicial magistrate under Section 164 CrPC and the same be kept in sealed cover to be treated as deposition of the witnesses and, hence admissible at the stage of trial with liberty to the defence to cross-examine them with further liberty to the accused to lead his defence witness and other evidence with a right to cross-examination by the prosecution, it can surely cut short and curtail the protracted trial if it is introduced at least for trial of rape cases which is bound to reduce the duration of trial and thus offer a speedy remedy by way of a fast-track procedure to the fast-track court to resort to," it said.

The bench said, "Considering the consistent recurrence of the heinous crime of rape and gangrape all over the country including the metropolitan cities, we are of the view that it is high time such measures of reform in the CrPC be introduced after due deliberation and debate by the legal fraternity as also all concerned."

The apex court passed the order while hearing an appeal filed by the Karnataka police challenging the order of the High Court reducing the sentence of a rape convict from life imprisonment to a 10-year jail term. (PTI)

declared BJP's PM candidate. Singh believe in the concept of hatred and said it was ready to correct any mistakes it could have committed. He said such "confusions" can be sorted out by talking to each other.

Defending the party's 'cultural nationalism' concept, he said family values among Hindus and Muslims carry same importance in India. Quoting a philosopher, he said his words that "what is in you is in me" or "both are made of the same elements like the rest of the universe" hold equally good for the two communities.

Singh, who was flanked by party leaders Najma Heptulla, Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi and Shah Nawaz Hussain, said the three leaders were an example that BJP gives due importance to leaders from the minority community.

He said they all participate in important decision making. He also said BJP governments in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Goa have ensured that minorities are not discriminated and are given their due.

Attacking Congress, he said a party which ruled the country for over 50 years should have ensured that relations between Hindus and Muslims improve. "...Was it not their responsibility?" he asked.

Quoting a report of a parliamentary Committee on Social Justice, he said out of a total budgetary outlay of over Rs 2000 crore for minority welfare, over Rs 900 crore were surrendered as it remained unutilised during the UPA rule.

Singh claimed several schemes meant for minorities remained "non starter" despite being announced by the UPA government.

He said that schemes for minorities conceived during the NDA rule, on the other hand, were hailed by the people who benefited.

Referring to the economy, he said the rupee was falling which was not good for the country and alleged that the Food Security Bill will further lead to a hike in the current account deficit (CAD).

His party had backed the ambitious Bill in Lok Sabha last week. (PTI)

**Cong gets majority in LAHDC Kargil**

oath to the newly elected Hill Council members.

The recently concluded LAHDC, Kargil polls had witnessed a direct contest between the two coalition partners --- National Conference and Congress and the process has to be culminated tomorrow as per rules. Two main Opposition parties, PDP and BJP, who had contested majority of seats for third election to LAHDC Kargil, drew a blank like the outgoing body in which National Conference had 18 seats and Congress 8.

Both the alliance partners---National Conference and Congress were locked in a neck-to-neck battle after having won 10 and 8 seats respectively while the Independent candidates secured six other seats in the keenly contested election for 26 seats LAHDC, Kargil. Two candidates had won uncontested in the polls and one of them was supported by NC.

Lok Sabha member from Ladakh Parliamentary constituency, Ghulam Hassan Khan won as Councilor from Silmoo seat on National Conference mandate while sitting Chief Executive Councilor Kachoo Ahmad Ali Khan won as Independent candidate, backed by National Conference, from Yourbaltok seat with impressive margins. Former CEC Asgar Ali Karblaie won on Congress mandate from Pashkum.

Of 26 elected seats in LAHDC Kargil, election was held for 24 seats on August 22 as two Independent candidates had already been elected unopposed.

The LAHDC Kargil has strength of 30. Twenty-six of them are elected while the Government had the powers to nominate four members of different categories to the Council. However, the nominated mem-

**MHA fails to release single penny from Rs 127 cr budget**

passed and the MHA hasn't released a single penny for the Police Department though the allocation for modernization of the force has been raised from last year's Rs 111 crores to Rs 127 crores," sources said.

They added that modernization plan of the Police Department has been severely affected in the absence of blockade of funds by the MHA despite approval during the past financial year as well as a little less than first half of current fiscal year.

"The purchase of news weapons, vehicles and several other infrastructure for the Police Department has been affected very badly in the absence of MHA funds. Even getting petrol for the running vehicles has become an uphill task," they said.

However, they disclosed that Police Department has not made

bers didn't have the voting right.

Though National Conference and Congress were coalition partners in the State Government, both had contested elections against each other and in fact were involved in very close fight for capturing power in LAHDC Kargil, which had come into effect in 2003 and this was third election of the Council having a term of five years. Imam Khumeini Memorial Trust (IKMT) has been traditionally a supporter of Congress and Islamia School has always extended its support to NC.

Eight Councilors elected on NC mandate included Ghulam Hassan Khan, MP (Silmoo), Syed Abbas (Taisuru), Ghulam Rasool (Bimbhat), Ghulam Mohammad (Tarkechi), Tsering Angdus (Karsha), Mohammad Abbas (Kargil Town), Mohammad Raza (Choskore) and Aga Syed Abbas (Thangdumbur Sankoo).

Ten Councilors elected on Congress mandate were Asgar Ali Karblaie (Pashkum), Mohammad Shaffi (Randeer Pura Drass), Mohammad Ali (Shargole), Skalzang Wangail (Padum), Stenzin Sonam (Cha), Akhoo Hussain (Chulisakambo), Liaquat Ali (Poye), Zakir Hussain (Shakar), Mohammad Ismael (Barsoo) and Sheikh Mohammad Hussain (Thasgam).

Independent candidates backed by NC included Kachoo Ahmad Ali Khan (Yourbaltok), Mohammad Haneefa (Baroo).

The CEC enjoyed status of Cabinet Ministers while Executive Councilors appointed by him had the status of Minister of State. Deputy Commissioner, Kargil served as CEO to the Council.

Voting for the elections were held on August 22 and counting for which had been done on August 28.

any compromise with security. They said the security related requirements of the Department were being met with from the State's budgetary allocation but the modernization proposals have severely been affected as they were mostly carried out with the MHA finances.

"The cut or delay in release of funds by the MHA was not only confined to Jammu and Kashmir. In all States, the funds have been drastically reduced even after allocation and sanction has also been delayed. This has been happening due to countrywide financial crisis," sources said.

They added that the MHA shouldn't treat Jammu and Kashmir like other States as it was badly affected by the militant and police here not only had to deal with normal law and order situation but with the militants trained from Pakistan, which required most modern gadgetry.