

Ultras fire at fuel tank triggering blaze, lob grenades; escape

# Militants target Army truck in Poonch; 5 jawans martyred, one critically injured

Gen Pande briefs Rajnath Singh on terror attack Massive search operations launched by Army, police

**Sanjeev Pargal**  
**JAMMU, Apr 20:** After Dhangri carnage in Rajouri, the militants struck again in broad day-light today at Bhatta Durrian in Mendhar area of Poonch district targeting a moving vehicle of the Army with firing and grenades in which five Army soldiers were martyred and another was seriously injured.

2021 taking toll in the then ongoing operations against three to four militants in the area to nine. The militants had escaped. An Army statement attributable to Northern Command Headquarters and eyewitness account gathered by the

truck by throwing grenades while another opened calibrated fire towards its fuel tank, triggering a massive blaze in the vehicle. In the meantime, another militant opened fire at on-board soldiers with intention to wound them, so that

itary conveys on isolated roads. Army personnel didn't get any chance to retaliate. Eyewitnesses in the area said they heard loud sound of explo-

reached the site late this evening for on spot investigations. The deceased Army soldiers were from a Rashtriya Rifles unit deployed for counter terror



Hav Mandeep Singh L/Nk Debashish Baswal Nk Kulwant Singh Sep Harkrishan Singh Sep Sewak Singh

The fresh terror attack in the border district came at a time when security forces and police were still trying hard to eliminate two foreign militants involved in the killing of seven minority community members, two of them minors, at village Dhangri

Excelsior revealed that the militants hiding behind bushes and cluster of trees opened firing on the Army truck moving between Bhimber Gali and Poonch at Bhatta Durrian in Mendhar tehsil of Poonch district at 3 pm taking advantage of adverse weather conditions as it was raining heavily in the area amidst thunderstorm.

they were not able to move out of the vehicle. Experts said that the militants laid down the trap in a planned manner, leaving very little scope of reaction time for the trained Rashtriya Rifles jawans who were travelling in the truck. They added that modus operandi of attack is also new to Jammu and Kashmir and it was earlier seen in North East, where terror groups target Army and paramil-

operations, it said in a statement. Sources said officials saw bullet marks on the vehicle and also recovered fragments of grenades confirming it was a terror attack. (Contd on page 4 Col 6)

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

in Rajouri district on January 1. At almost the same place at Bhatta Durrian, four Army soldiers were martyred in gun battle with the militants in October

**Bilawal to attend SCO meeting in India**

ISLAMABAD, Apr 20: Pakistan today announced that Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari would travel to India next month to attend the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) meeting, a development that could provide an opportunity to break the ice between the two neighbours. "Bilawal Bhutto Zardari will be leading the Pakistani delegation to the SCO Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) being held on May 4-5, 2023, in Goa, India." Foreign Office spokesperson Mumtaz Zahrah (Contd on page 4 Col 3)

**CUET PG from June 5-12**

NEW DELHI, Apr 20: The Common University Entrance Test (CUET)-PG for admission to postgraduate programmes in Universities across the country will be conducted from June 5-12, the National Testing Agency announced today.

Candidates can apply for the exam till May 5. The application deadline earlier was April 19.

"Common University Entrance Test (CUET)-PG will be conducted on 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 June, 2023. Candidates are advised to regularly visit the NTA (National Testing Agency) (Contd on page 4 Col 4)

**4 JKAS officers transferred**

**Excelsior Correspondent**  
**JAMMU, Apr 20:** The Government today ordered transfer and postings of four JKAS officers. Sumera Shamim, Deputy Commissioner, State Taxes (Stamps) Srinagar has been transferred and posted as Joint Director, Industries and Commerce (Development), Kashmir, against an available vacancy.

Dilshada Akhter, Deputy Director, Tribal Affairs, Kashmir was transferred and posted as General Manager, (Contd on page 4 Col 6)

**J&K adds 87 COVID cases**

**Excelsior Correspondent**  
**JAMMU, Apr 20:** Jammu and Kashmir today reported 87 fresh COVID positive cases. Among them, 52 were recorded in Jammu division and 35 in the Kashmir valley. At the same time, 152 COVID patients recovered including 53 in Jammu and 99 in Kashmir. A total of 2199 COVID tests were conducted during last 24 hours. Jammu and Kashmir now has 574 active positive cases---273 in Jammu region and 301 in Kashmir division.

## EC extends Special Summary Revision schedule in J&K by 17 days

**Excelsior Correspondent**  
**JAMMU, Apr 20:** Chances for early conduct of Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir have further dampened with the Election Commission of India extending date for publication of final electoral rolls in Jammu and Kashmir from May 10 to 27.

Revised schedule by the Commission was issued today. The Commission had earlier clarified that ongoing Special Summary Revision of electoral rolls in Jammu and Kashmir won't impact the Assembly elections. As per a copy of revised schedule of Special Summary Revision issued by the Election Commission of India and

addressed to Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Jammu and Kashmir PK Pole, the exercise, which otherwise would have concluded on May 10, would now culminate on May 27. As per the fresh schedule, the claims and objections can be filed from April 5 to May 6 while disposal of claims and objections would

be done by May 15. Checking of Health Parameters and obtaining Commission's permission for final publication and updating database and printing of supplements will be done on May 22. The final voter list would be published on May 27.

This is the second voter revision in Jammu and Kashmir in a period of less than one year after culmination of delimitation exercise by a three-member panel headed by former Supreme Court judge Justice (Retd.) Ranjana Prakash Desai.

The delimitation exercise concluded on May 5, 2022 by the Panel when it unveiled the final electoral map of J&K. Jammu & Kashmir is without an elected Government for almost five years now.

In the Special Summary Revision undertaken after Delimitation exercise, final rolls were published on November 25, 2022. The erstwhile State is under

the Central rule from June 19, 2018 when BJP withdrew support to Mehbooba Mufti-led Government, citing "deteriorating security situation" in J&K.

Sources said the Election Commission also reviewed Lok Sabha election arrangements with CEOs and other Election Department officers of different States/Union Territories in New Delhi.

However, no review has so far been carried out on conduct of Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir.

There have been reports that the Election Commission team could visit Jammu and Kashmir shortly to assess preparations for the Assembly elections. Sources (Contd on page 4 Col 1)

## Vulnerable forest areas secured in & around Jammu city Nearly 85000 hectares of area treated against 6581 ha forest land diversion

**Mohinder Verma**

**JAMMU, Apr 20:** Nearly 85000 hectares (ha) area has been treated by the Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA) across Jammu and Kashmir as against 6581 hectares of forest land diverted for various types of developmental activities. Moreover, vulnerable forest areas in and around Jammu city have been secured from the encroachers by installing chain link fencing.

As per the official data available with EXCELSIOR during the past over one decade a total of 6581.65 hectares of forest land was diverted for non-

City forests created in various parts of Jammu division

forestry purposes across Jammu and Kashmir and against this 84439 hectares of area has been treated by planting 557.97 lakh saplings by CAMPA, which has the primary task of ensuring compensatory afforestation.

The situation has improved significantly during the past four-five years as on one side the diversion of forest land for non-forestry purposes has witnessed decline and on the other side treatment of area by CAMPA has increased enormously.

In 2019-20 and 2020-21, 794 hectares and 884.13 hectares of forest land was diverted for developmental activities but

the diversion declined to 298.97 hectares in 2021-22 and 216.98 hectares in 2022-23. However, treatment of area has witnessed sharp rise and this is evident from the fact that compensatory afforestation was done on 6636 hectares of area in 2019-20 and in 2022-23 the same was on 10445 hectares of area. In 2022-23, record 61.77 lakh saplings were planted under the close monitoring of CAMPA and the survival rate of the plants is up to the expectations of the concerned authorities.

During the just concluded financial year (2022-23) 10445

hectares of area was treated under CAMPA while as 44.06 lakh Rft fencing was done and demarcation of forest was done by installing 14071 boundary pillars.

Moreover, for securing vulnerable forest areas in and around Jammu city, fencing work was carried out under CAMPA at Bathindi, Dungan, near Batra Hospital, Kheri and Roop Nagar. "A total of 28,800 Rft chain link fencing has been constructed covering 1000 hectares of forest area at the cost of Rs 3.5 crore to prevent encroachments", official sources said. (Contd on page 4 Col 3)

## NGT directs remedial action on Poonch river

**Excelsior Correspondent**

**JAMMU, Apr 20:** The Principal Bench of the National Green Tribunal (NGT) comprising Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel (Chairperson), Justice Sudhir Agarwal, Dr A Senthil Vel (Expert Member) and Dr Afroz Ahmad (Expert Member), has directed the Jammu and Kashmir Projects Construction Corporation (JKPCC) and District Magistrate of Poonch to furnish a joint report on the matter of polluting the Poonch River by hazardous waste, after verifying the facts, and take remedial action.

The application was filed by RTI activist Raja Muzaffar Bhat raising concerns of dumping

unscientific solid waste and bio-medical waste in the area falling between Sher-e-Kashmir Bridge (NG 144A) and the confluence of Poonch River and Belar Nala, near Poonch Town in Jammu & Kashmir. The applicant claimed that the dumping of such waste has a harmful impact on the Poonch River, which is a source of drinking water in the area, and the authorities have failed to take remedial action in spite of representations.

Considering the allegations, the NGT has directed the J&K PCC and District Magistrate, Poonch to furnish a joint report in the matter of polluting Poonch river by hazardous waste after verifying facts and take remedial action within two months. (Contd on page 4 Col 3)

## Shawal moon not sighted, Eid on Saturday

**Excelsior Correspondent**

**SRINAGAR, Apr 20:** The Shawal moon has not been sighted anywhere in the region and Eidul Fitr will be celebrated in Kashmir on Saturday.

The moon was not sighted anywhere in the region and the new month of Shawal will begin from Saturday. Tomorrow is the last day of Ramadan and Eid will be celebrated on Saturday.

Anjuman Auqaf Jama Masjid Srinagar today announced that due to inclement weather and water logging at historic Eidgah Srinagar, Eid-ul-Fitr prayer will be held at 9:00 am at Jama Masjid Srinagar, instead of Eidgah Srinagar. (Contd on page 4 Col 3)

## Court rejects Rahul's plea for stay on conviction

**SURAT, Apr 20:**

A court in Gujarat's Surat city today rejected Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's application for a stay on his conviction in a criminal defamation case over his "Modi surname" remark.

The court of Additional Sessions Judge R P Mogera rejected Gandhi's application for a stay on conviction which, if allowed, could have paved the way for his reinstatement as the Member of Parliament. Gandhi's lawyer had filed two applications along with his appeal against the lower court's order sentencing him to two years in jail, one of them for bail and another for stay on conviction till the disposal of his appeal. (Contd on page 4 Col 3)



Lightning over Jammu City on Thursday night. —Excelsior/Rakesh

## World passing through challenges like terror, religious extremism: PM

\*Buddha's ideas offer solution to these problems

NEW DELHI, Apr 20:

Prime Minister Narendra Modi today said the world is passing through challenges such as war, economic instability, terrorism, religious extremism and climate change and asserted that Lord Buddha's ideas offer a solution to these problems.

Addressing the inaugural session of the Global Buddhist Summit here, Modi took a swipe at rich countries, saying the world is facing a climate change crisis now because in the last century, "some countries stopped thinking about others and the coming generations".

"For decades they kept thinking that meddling with nature will not impact them. They kept putting it on others," he said.



PM Narendra Modi addressing inaugural session of Global Buddhist Summit 2023 in New Delhi on Thursday.

Emphasising that the path shown by Lord Buddha is the "path of the future and sustainability", the Prime Minister also said that "had the world fol-

lowed His teachings, it would not have faced the climate change crisis".

In his address, Modi quoted ancient texts on Lord Buddha's teachings and said the need of the hour is that people and nations prioritise global interests along with that of their own by drawing inspiration from the Buddha's philosophy. This is the road to a happy and stable world. This is necessary to move from self to the (Contd on page 4 Col 1)

## Cash relief for NoKs of defence personnel was raised in 2022 Now, J&K Govt enhances ex-gratia for NoKs of CPMF personnel

**Bivek Mathur**

**JAMMU, Apr 20:** Close on the heels of enhancement of the ex-gratia relief for the Next of Kins (NoKs) of the local Defence Force personnel who attain martyrdom either inside or outside the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, the J&K Government today accorded sanction to the enhancement of the ex-gratia relief for the NoKs of the local Central Para-Military Forces (CPMF) personnel as well.

An order issued in this context read, "sanction is hereby accorded to the enhancement of ex-gratia relief to the NoKs of the CPMF personnel hailing from J&K who attain martyrdom either inside or outside the territorial jurisdiction of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, on same terms as notified vide Government Order number 823-GAD of 2022 dated July 12, 2022, for defence force personnel."

The July 12, 2022 order that notified the enhancement of the ex-gratia relief of the Defence

Force personnel read, "the J&K Government has accorded sanction to the enhancement of the ex-gratia relief from Rs 5 lakh to Rs 25 lakh (RS. 20 lakh out of UT Budget and Rs 5 lakh out of SRE) in favour of NoKs of those Defence Personnel hailing from J&K who attain martyrdom in consequence of due performance of the territorial jurisdiction of

Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir." "Grant of ex-gratia relief of Rs 25 lakh each, out of UT Budget, in favour of NoKs of those Defence Personnel hailing from Jammu & Kashmir, who attain martyrdom in consequence of due performance of



**AKSHAYA TRITIYA**  
 ~ 22<sup>nd</sup> April ~  
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 on all Gold & Diamond Jewellery  
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 (Contd on page 4 Col 3)