

Gunmen attack revenue official's house in Kulgam

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR, JUNE 7

Hours after posters threatening village heads to resign appeared in south Kashmir, suspected militants attacked a house of numberdar (local revenue official) in Kulgam district on Wednesday.

Militants claiming to be members of Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) had put up posters in various parts of south Kashmir threatening panches and sarpanches with "dire consequences" if they did not follow the diktat.

The police said suspected militants fired towards the house of numberdar Mohammad Sidiq Bhat at Gaffabal village in Kulgam district late last night. Bhat and his family members escaped unhurt in the incident.

The Jamaat-e-Islami has condemned the attack on Bhat, who they said was the unit head of the party in Qaimoh.

The firing incident and surfacing of threatening posters have created panic among the village heads. There are around 35,000 sarpanches and panches in the state, who were elected last year on a non-party basis after a gap of over 20 years

"The indiscriminate firing is condemnable. Bhat is a god-fearing man and is popular due to his great social work. His family has made tremendous sacrifices for the cause of Islam as well as that of freedom," Jamaat-e-Islami spokesman Zahid Ali said in a statement.

Acting Director General of Police (DGP) K Rajendra Kumar today reviewed the security scenario of south Kashmir. The DGP stressed close coordination among security agencies for main-

taining continuous vigil on anti-national elements. He said people's cooperation and greater synergy among security agencies was a must.

"Effective domination in area based on analysis is required. Joint patrolling should be intensified to keep a watch on activities of suspicious elements," he said.

The firing incident and surfacing of threatening posters have created panic among the village heads. There are around 35,000 sarpanches and panches in the state, who were elected last year on a non-party basis after a gap of over 20 years. In April this year, posters, allegedly put up by the Lashker-e-Toiba, had appeared in Pulwama asking the village heads to resign or "be ready to face consequences".

The police said it was not clear whether the latest threatening posters in Shopian were actually issued by militants.

Most J-K health indicators better than national average, says Sham Lal

INTERVIEW

UNLIKE other parts of the country, improving health infrastructure is a challenging task in Jammu and Kashmir due to many reasons. The state has a low density of population, difficult terrain, problems of accessibility, poor road connectivity and many other constraints, making it difficult to compete with other states when it comes to infrastructure in the health sector.

With the implementation of the National Rural Health Mission in the state, condition of the ailing health sector has improved to an extent but a lot more is needed to be done. The biggest challenge before the Health Department is to ensure deployment of adequate medical and paramedical staff in health centres located in remotest and backward areas of the state.

Health Minister Sham Lal Sharma, in an interview with Dinesh Manhotra, highlights achievements during his tenure and spells out the steps being taken to make the Health Department more vibrant.

What have been your major achievements as Health Minister?

We have taken a number of steps which yielded positive results to improve health facilities. Health indicators of the state have improved and, except a few, are better than the national ones now. The state figures give an estimated birth rate of 18.6, death rate of 5.7 and infant mortality rate of 45 (per 1000). The corresponding figures at the all-India level are 22.5, 7.3 and 50 (per 1000).

Furthermore, the infant mortality rate (IMR) of the state has reduced from 49 (per 1000) in 2008 to 45 (per 1000) in 2009. The total fertility rate is 2.2 against the national average of 2.6.

How have the health facilities improved in the state after implementation of the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) programme?

Without the help of the Centre, it is not possible for us to improve health facilities in the state. With the support available under the NRHM, efforts have been made to



"The state figures give an estimated birth rate of 18.6, death rate of 5.7 and infant mortality rate of 45 (per 1000). The corresponding figures at the all-India level are 22.5, 7.3 and 50 (per 1000). Furthermore, the infant mortality rate of the state has reduced from 49 (per 1000) in 2008 to 45 (per 1000) in 2009."

— Sham Lal Sharma, J&K Health Minister

strengthen the existing peripheral institutions in terms of infrastructure, machinery, equipment, manpower, etc, to reduce the un-necessarily referrals.

Shortage of doctors and paramedical staff is one of the major problems affecting the functioning of the Health Department. What steps has your department taken so far to cope with this problem, especially in remote areas?

Although we are facing a shortage of doctors, we are encouraging the in-service doctors to serve in rural and remote areas. First of all, remuneration of doctors and paramedical staff engaged

under the NRHM has been enhanced by 20 per cent. Secondly, a special additional incentive of Rs 8,000 per month has been sanctioned for the doctors who are serving in remote and backward areas, which have been notified as very difficult areas.

I want to disclose here that a project report on Rs 2,627-crore health infrastructure development plan has been submitted to the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare for external assistance. The state is rigorously following the matter with the Union Government.

Most of the health institutions located outside the

towns are not working round the clock. What steps is your department taking to make these institutions function round the clock?

I do agree. Health institutions are being made to function round the clock. In the first instance, 170 PHCs have been strengthened to make them function 24x7. Gradually, this number will be increased to minimise the burden on main hospitals of the capital cities.

The male-female sex ratio has reached its lowest ebb in Jammu and Kashmir. How is your department going to check the menace of female foeticide?

The decline in sex ratio, as revealed by Census 2011, is really a serious concern which requires special focus. We have already taken various steps in this regard. A cash reward of Rs 50,000 has been announced for the person giving information about illegal tests being carried out by ultrasound clinics. Sixtyfive ultrasound clinics were sealed in the state last year.

Govt wakes up to 'fake document malpractice'

ARTEEV SHARMA/TNS

JAMMU, JUNE 7

As candidates with "forged" documents continue to get jobs in government departments by "colluding with agents and some officials", the state government has finally woken up from its slumber and attached a strict "condition" in the appointment orders of the selected candidates to filter out undeserving candidates.

The General Administration Department, in a significant decision, issued a formal order which suggested that "if on verification, the certificates produced by the appointees are proved fake or forged, the appointment shall be cancelled ab initio."

On May 13, The Tribune had prominently carried a news report wherein the issue of fake documents being used by candidates to get government jobs was highlighted. The report had highlighted that nearly 20 per cent of the selected candidates had allegedly got government jobs on the basis of fake documents.

The General Administration Department, while issuing the circular, admitted that the certificates of some candidates selected by the Service Selection Board (SSB) recently were found fake and, consequently, such selections were cancelled by the authorities concerned.

"As a matter of abundant precaution and to avoid unnecessary litigation, it is advisable to include a condition — if on verification, the certificates produced by the appointees are proved fake or forged, the appointment shall be cancelled ab initio — in the appointment orders," the circular said.

Azad's frequent visits to J-K give Soz camp the jitters

DINESH MANHOTRA/TNS

JAMMU, JUNE 7

Frequent visits of Union Health Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad to Jammu and Kashmir have given supporters of Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Committee (JKPC) chief Saifuddin Soz the jitters as Azad has become proactive during the last couple of months and has been covering all regions and sub-regions of the state. Last week, Azad was in Kargil where he addressed a meeting of Congress workers besides participating in a number of official functions. For the last two days, Azad has been reviewing functioning of the Health Department in Srinagar.

After the Congress conclave at Srinagar on May 19, the Soz

faction was thinking that they had taken control of the party because it had managed to enrol a good number of its loyalists as members of the JKPC. After the conclave it had become clear that re-election of Saifuddin Soz as JKPC chief was just a formality so Soz's loyalists had reason to assert themselves but now the situation has gradually changed. "There is confusion in our faction. We were expecting that an official announcement regarding the new JKPC chief would be made within a day or two after the Srinagar conclave but no announcement has been made so far," a Soz loyalist told The Tribune on condition of anonymity and added that the recent developments, especially elections of Jammu and



Ghulam Nabi Azad
Playing proactive role in state

Kashmir Pradesh Youth Congress (JKPYC) had expressed "weakness within our group". He admitted that the JKPYC elections were a big victory for Azad faction.

Sources in the Congress said Azad had directed his

supporters to intensify their activities in their respective areas. Azad loyalist Jugal Kishore Sharma has started touring different areas of the Jammu region to "strengthen" the party. He has been directed by his leader to convene meeting of party workers at Udhampur on every first Monday of the month.

"While Soz supporters have been waiting for the official announcement from the high command, Azad's loyalists on the other hand have already intensified their activities to counter the rivals", sources said.

The sources said that after visiting Ladakh and Kashmir regions, Azad would visit Jammu also. "Azad will visit Jammu after June 20," a source said.

Minister promises Centre's support to state in healthcare

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR, JUNE 7

Union Health Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad has assured the full support of the Centre to the state for the development of its health sector.

While taking stock of healthcare facilities here, Azad today sanctioned Rs 37 crore for strengthening of healthcare facilities at the Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS), the Valley's only tertiary care hospital.

Azad also announced Rs 6 crore for procurement of upgraded and latest diagnostic equipment for the Department

of Oncology, Cancer Centre at Shri Maharaja Hari Singh (SMHS) Hospital, Srinagar. He visited SMHS Hospital and took stock of its functioning.

"The Union Government will provide all possible financial assistance to the state government for modernising and upgradation of healthcare," Azad said after holding a high-level meeting at the SKIMS. He inspected various wards of the premier health institution.

The Union Minister said the intake capacity of students for SKIMS Medical College, Bemina, would be enhanced to 100 from the existing capacity of 50 students.

Tourism Minister reviews yatra preparedness

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR, JUNE 7

Minister for Tourism and Culture Nawang Rigzin Jora has underscored the need for ensuring complete preparedness before the commencement of the Amarnath yatra at the Pahalgam and Baltal base camps, en route to the cave shrine and other transit camps on the Srinagar-Jammu national highway.

He has urged upon the authorities concerned to complete all works recommended by the High-Level Committee (HLC) of the Amarnath yatra well in time for the convenience of pilgrims, an official spokesman said.

Chairing a meeting of officials to review the status of the action taken report on the recommendations of the HLC, the Minister asked the authorities concerned to mobilise their field agencies and maintain close coordination to put in place all arrangements before the start of the yatra.

The meeting reviewed the pace of the progress of various works, including construction of impregnable gates at Chandanwari and Domel, upgradation of the existing Rangamoh-Baltal-Domel road, widening and improvement works along Chandanwari-holy cave, establishment of transit camps along the national highway from Lakhampur to Sonamarg and Pahalgam, establishment of shelter units at various locations along the yatra routes, strengthening of drinking water supply at Baltal, Panjtharni, Sheshnag and the holy cave camps, besides strengthening of electricity infrastructure and health care facilities being carried out by the departments concerned to facilitate the yatra.

Valley readers keen on books on culture, literature

M AAMIR KHAN/TNS

SRINAGAR, JUNE 7

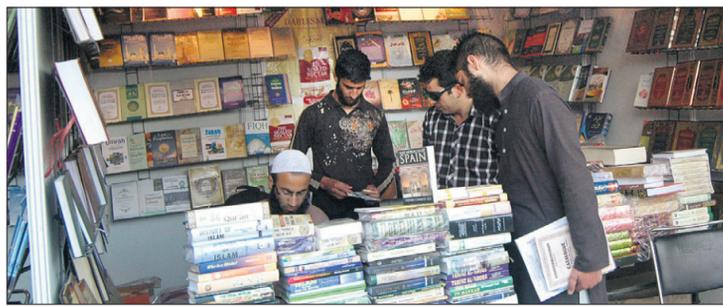
The ongoing National Book Trust (NBT)-sponsored fair may not have drawn large crowds as compared to similar events outside the state. But booksellers are coming across "unique" demands from book lovers of the Kashmir valley.

"A reader's demand for memoirs of Dara Shikoh surprised me. He also had a long list of other unique books. This will never happen in Delhi where people are mostly looking for best-sellers. I found out that people here are more interested in books on literature, culture and regional history," said the in charge of the book fair at S P College, M R Mahapatra, who is also an NBT editor.

Urdu books, especially those from Pakistan, are also in big demand. "Yahaan pe Pakistan kutub dastiyaab hain (Pakistani books are available here)," read a poster.

While the last NBT book fair was held in Srinagar in 1986, Mahapatra said the event was a "good beginning" to promote book reading culture in Kashmir again. General secretary of the Kashmir Book Suppliers and Publishers Association Mir Ghulam Ahmad, who has also set up a stall, termed the book fair a "good beginning" even though he said the fair in 1986 had drawn more people.

"In 1986, I attended the fair as a student and today I am managing a stall. I remember seeing a huge rush of people. Book reading habits have declined



Visitors at the book fair in SP College in Srinagar. Photo: Amin War

over the years due to turmoil and also as a result of Internet usage. But an event like this is a good beginning towards inculcating book culture yet again," he said.

Mahapatra said the number of people visiting the book fair was increasing with every passing day, especially after reading

newspaper reports of several mainstream and separatist leaders visiting the fair. "Even in other parts, including Delhi, not many people visit a book fair during the first two or three days. But then there is a footfall due to media publicity," he said.

Besides Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and other

Cabinet ministers, separatist leaders like Syed Ali Geelani, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and Yasin Malik have visited the book fair so far.

A total of 112 stalls displaying around one lakh books have been put on display at the eight-day that commenced on June 2. The organisers have also been

"A reader's demand for memoirs of Dara Shikoh surprised me. He also had a long list of other unique books. This will never happen in Delhi where people are mostly looking for best-sellers. I found out that people here (in the Valley) are more interested in books on literature, culture and regional history"

— In charge of the book fair

Tourists flocking to Leh for 3 festivals

LEH, JUNE 7

Hotels in Leh town and flights to Leh are booked in advance for this month as the rush of tourists in Ladakh has increased.

Three tourist events are taking place in Leh this month, including an annual three-day tourist promotional Ladakh Singay Khabas Sindhu Festival from June 12 to 14, the first ever two-day Ladakh International Festival on June 16 and 17 and annual two-day Hemis Tseschu Festival on June 29 and 30. — OC

Sudoku

Fill in the grid with digits in such a manner that every row, every column and every 3x3 box accommodates the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

9	2	5	6	1	8	4	7	3
8	4	3	5	2	7	9	6	1
6	7	1	9	4	3	8	5	2
1	5	7	2	3	9	6	4	8
2	8	9	4	5	6	3	1	7
3	6	4	8	7	1	2	9	5
7	9	6	3	8	5	1	2	4
4	1	8	7	6	2	5	3	9
5	3	2	1	9	4	7	8	6

			7					5
5	7		9	4				9
		8		6		5		4
4	5						9	3
6		1		5		2		
2			8					
						9	1	6
	8					5		

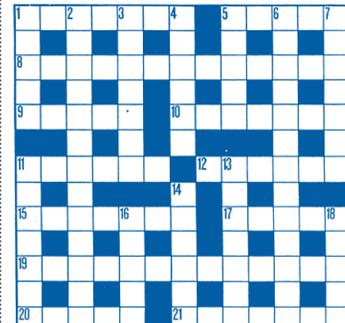
QUICK CROSSWORD

Across

- Israeli communal farm (7)
- Untrue (5)
- As it would appear (2,3,4,2,2)
- Subsequently (5)
- Obsolete (7)
- Day nursery (6)
- Medium-sized American wildcat (6)
- Tearfully sentimental (7)
- General meaning (5)
- Require explanation from (4,2,7)
- Metric unit of capacity (5)
- Soothe (7)

Down

- Small hill (5)
- Face up to unpalatable fact (4,3,6)
- Bring to light (7)
- Fanatic (6)
- Navy (5)
- Easy toil-free existence (4,2,7)
- Burnt out (7)
- Funny (7)
- Supplement to a will (7)
- Inequitable (6)
- Supple (5)
- Sporting championship (5)



Yesterday's solution

Across: 1 First, 8 Heat wave, 9 Blood, 10 Good deal, 11 Hence, 12 Pew, 16 Mousse, 17 Alight, 18 Tug, 23 Choke, 24 Think fit, 25 Bigot, 26 Go halves, 27 Petty.
Down: 2 In lieu of, 3 Spot cash, 4 Become, 5 Study, 6 Cagey, 7 Reply, 12 Pet, 13 Wag, 14 High-rise, 15 Shake-out, 19 United, 20 Stage, 21 Tight, 22 Skill.