

**Fresh avalanche warning in J&K**

**Excelsior Correspondent**  
SRINAGAR, Mar 16: A fresh avalanche warning has been issued in Jammu and Kashmir, where light rain or snow could occur at isolated places during next 24 hours.

An official spokesman said on Friday evening that on the basis of information received from SASE, medium- danger avalanche warning has been issued for next 24 hours for Kupwara-Chowkibal-Tanghdar, Baramulla, Gulmarg, Furkian-Z Gali, Gurez, Kargil.

**Court allows ED to quiz Watali**

**NEW DELHI, Mar 16:**  
A Delhi court today allowed the Enforcement Directorate to interrogate a Kashmiri businessman in connection with a terror funding case involving LeT chief and 26/11 Mumbai attack mastermind Hafiz Saeed to unearth the money trail.

Additional Sessions Judge Tarun Sherawat allowed the application filed by ED's counsel Nitesh Rana seeking permission to quiz Zahoor Watali, an influential businessman allegedly having friendship with Pakistani leaders and Kashmiri separatists, for two days - March 19 and 20.

(Contd on page 6 Col 1)

**IPS officer**

**passes away**

**Excelsior Correspondent**  
JAMMU, Mar 16: SR Samuel, an IPS officer of 1999 batch of Jammu and Kashmir cadre, passed away this morning in New Delhi due to cardiac arrest.

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

He was presently on Central deputation and posted as Joint Development Commissioner, Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises.

(Contd on page 6 Col 5)

**GCET faculty members placed in higher grade**

**Excelsior Correspondent**  
JAMMU, Mar 16: The faculty members of Government College of Engineering and Technology (GCET), Jammu have been placed in the higher grade.

The State Government, addressing the long pending demand of the faculty members and also responding to the directives from the J&K High Court, placed 16 Assistant Professors of the GCET Jammu in the next higher grade.

(Contd on page 6 Col 7)

**Vehicle scrap policy gets go ahead**

**NEW DELHI, Mar 16:**  
The much-awaited vehicle scrap policy was given 'in-principle' approval at a high-level meeting at the PMO to pave way for mandatory disposal of commercial vehicles (CV) that are more than 20 years old from April 1, 2020, an official said.

The development follows Road, Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari's announcement that the Vehicles Scrapping Policy, aimed at curbing vehicular pollution, has almost been finalised.

(Contd on page 6 Col 3)

**Ministers asked to assert in Cabinet**  
**No rift with PDP, Alliance will work smoothly: Madhav at BJP meet**

**BJP leader meets CM, takes up issues**

**Sanjeev Pargal**

**JAMMU, Mar 16: BJP general secretary and party's pointman on Jammu and Kashmir, Ram Madhav today ruled out any rift in the PDP-BJP coalition Government and declared that the Alliance will continue to function even as he advised the party Ministers to assert during the Cabinet meetings and block "controversial decisions" then and there instead of raking them up in public, leading to embarrassment for both the coalition partners.**

Madhav had 45-minute meeting with Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti before taking meetings of BJP Legislature Party comprising Ministers, MLAs, MLCs and senior office bearers followed by exclusive meeting with 11 party Ministers at the BJP headquarters at Trikuta Nagar. After the meet-



ing, Mehbooba left for Srinagar, the summer capital of the State.

"Both the Alliance partners have their own issues, which were being discussed and debated within the respective parties. However, there was unanimity at the meeting between Ram Madhav and Mehbooba Mufti that there was no threat to the PDP-BJP coalition Government, which will continue to work smoothly and that some issues raised by the BJP, which were

generally local in nature, will be resolved," sources said.

Madhav flew-in to Srinagar from New Delhi this morning, where he was briefed on security situation in Kashmir by two senior officers of Jammu and Kashmir Police and Army. He reached Jammu in the afternoon.

Madhav had about 45 minutes long meeting with Mehbooba at her official residence here from 3.45 pm to 4.30 pm after which the Chief Minister left for Srinagar on scheduled visit. Though there was no official word on the meeting, the BJP sources said Madhav took up certain issues with Mehbooba, which have brought embarrassment to the party in Jammu region, which was constituency of the party and had given 25 out of 37 Assembly seats to the BJP.

Working of the coalition Government, giving pace to

(Contd on page 6 Col 5)

**ED raids at 2 places in Jammu**

**Excelsior Correspondent**

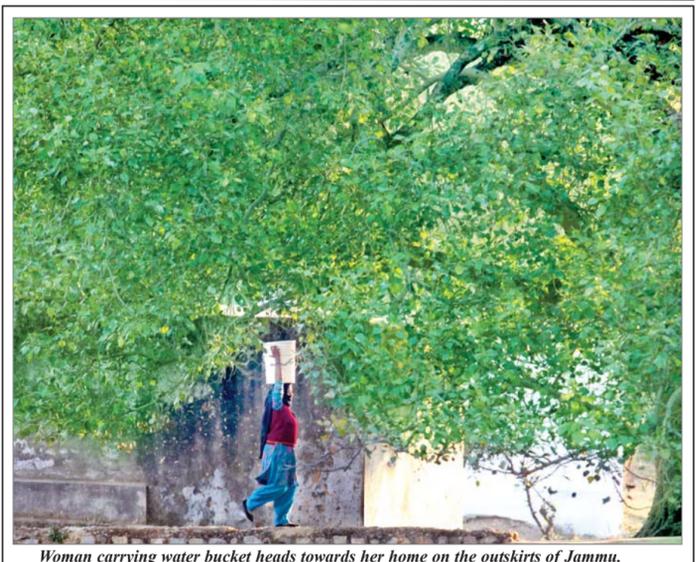
**JAMMU, Mar 16:** The Enforcement Directorate (ED) today carried out simultaneous raids at the house of a property Dealer Charanjit Singh at Nanak Nagar and his petrol pump at Shakti Nagar.

The raids were conducted in connection with a money laundering case registered vide First Information Report (FIR) No. ECIR/01/SKZO/01/2014.

The Enforcement Directorate teams from Jalandhar, Jammu and Srinagar conducted the raids jointly at two premises of Charanjit Singh at Nanak Nagar and Shakti Nagar and seized number of documents and detected many fixed Deposit Receipts (FDRs) with bank.

The Enforcement Directorate teams in the searches were led by Deputy Director from Jalandhar Rahul Sahu and comprised senior officers from Jammu and Srinagar.

The documents seized from the possession of Charanjit Singh have been taken away by the ED officials for scrutiny.



Woman carrying water bucket heads towards her home on the outskirts of Jammu. -Excelsior/Rakesh

**2 militants killed in Srinagar, 2 arrested in S Kashmir**

**Fayaz Bukhari**

**SRINAGAR, Mar 16:** Two militants were killed in an overnight encounter that raged between security forces and militants in Balhama area in the outskirts of Srinagar yesterday while two militants were arrested in South Kashmir today.

The encounter raged in the area after the militants fired upon the PSOs of BJP leader, Anwar Khan, resulting in injuries to a cop, who was guarding the leader. The security

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

forces launched search operation in the area following which the militants took shelter in the residential houses in Balhama village on the outskirts of Srinagar.

The encounter continued till mid night during which houses of Ghulam Mohammad Bhat, Mohammad Yousof Bhat and Ghulam Mouhid were damaged.

Two dead bodies of the militants were recovered from the site. They were identified as Rasiq Nabi Bhat of Tral and Shabir Dar of Awantipora. Two AK-47 rifles were recovered

from the debris of the houses. A police spokesman said here that the two militants who

Aghanzpora, Awantipora area of district Pulwama. Security forces including



A view of a residential house, where militants were holed-up during an encounter at Balhama on the outskirts of Srinagar. Another pic on page 6. -Excelsior/Shakeel

were killed in Khonmoh have been identified by the families as Rasiq Nabi Bhat of Tral and Shabir Dar of Awantipora. "As per police records they had joined militancy last year in the month of March and August respectively", the spokesman said.

Meanwhile, large number of people participated in the funeral prayers of two militants in

55 RR of Army today overpowered a person before he could lob a hand grenade on the Srinagar-Jammu National Highway in Pulwama district.

A police spokesman said this afternoon at about 1300 hrs, a police party deployed for law and order duties on the National Highway near Padgampora noticed a suspicious movement

(Contd on page 6 Col 1)

**7000 habitations don't have access to drinking water**

**J&K's performance under SBM (G) remains dismal despite spending over Rs 200 crore**

**Mohinder Verma**

**JAMMU, Mar 16:** Shocking it may sound but it is a fact that despite making an expenditure of over Rs 200 crore during past three and half years the performance of Jammu and Kashmir under Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin) has remained dismal and far below the national average thereby defeating the objective of the ambitious scheme of the Union Government.

Moreover, the State Government has failed to utilize whopping Rs 298 crore under Swachh Bharat Mission-Gramin and National Rural Drinking

**Fails to utilize Rs 298 cr under sanitation coverage, NRDWP**

Water Programme (NRDWP) much to the disappointment of the Union Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation.

The Swachh Bharat Mission-Gramin scheme was launched on October 2, 2014 by the Prime Minister to accelerate the efforts to achieve universal sanitation coverage and to achieve an Open Defecation Free (ODF) and Swachh Bharat by October 2, 2019-marking the 150th birth anniversary of Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi.

As per the official docu-

ment, the copy of which is available with EXCELSIOR, during the period between October 2, 2014 and February 8, 2018, J&K made an expenditure of Rs 200.10 crore under Swachh Bharat Mission-Gramin. However, an amount of Rs 132.81 crore remained unspent as on February 8, 2018 during 2017-18 despite the fact that the current financial year is also set to conclude within another 15 days.

Despite making expenditure

of Rs 200.10 crore Central Share under Swachh Bharat Mission-Gramin during past three and half years, the performance of Jammu and Kashmir has remained dismal thereby defeating the objective of the ambitious scheme of the Union Government.

The sanitation coverage in J&K as on December 31, 2017 was 44.80%, which is far below the national average and in comparison to adjoining States. During past three and half years, Punjab has achieved 93.94% sanitation coverage while as Himachal Pradesh, which is having topography similar to that of Jammu and Kashmir, has

(Contd on page 6 Col 7)

**Cong plenary session begins**

**NEW DELHI, Mar 16:**

The Congress' plenary session began today, with senior party leaders giving final shape to draft resolutions to be adopted at the conclave tomorrow.

Congress president Rahul Gandhi chaired the meeting of the subjects committee, which included members of the steering committee that had replaced the working committee.

All Congress Chief Ministers, State Congress presidents and Congress Legislature party leaders from all States took part in today's meeting.

The plenary session will give final shape to the party's vision and political roadmap ahead of the 2019 general elections.

Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, ex-Congress chief Sonia Gandhi and top party leaders were present at the

(Contd on page 6 Col 5)

**TDP exits NDA; moves no-trust motion**

**AMARAVATI/NEW DELHI, Mar 16:**

Ending its four-year-old alliance with the BJP, the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) today pulled out of the NDA over the Centre's refusal to grant Special Category Status

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

to Andhra Pradesh and simultaneously moved a no-trust motion in Parliament.

TDP president and Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu made the announcement to exit the BJP-led alliance in Amaravati, eight days after two of its Union Ministers—P Ashok Gajapati Raju and Y S Chowdary—quit on March 8 following a meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The

**Parl adjourned till Monday**

YSR Congress—a regional party in AP—also moved a no-confidence motion against the Modi Government.

The BJP termed TDP's decision as "inevitable".

Naidu later told reporters he was fighting a "dharma yuddh" (righteous war) to secure the State's 'legitimate' rights and claimed that parties at the national level were backing the TDP's no-confidence motion due to his party's credibility.

Naidu also came down heavily on the Prime Minister saying that Modi did not even bother to invite the TDP MPs for a discussion when they were agitating in Parliament for the State's rights.

He said Modi showed a lot of concern for Andhra Pradesh on the eve of 2014 elections and

promised many things, including building the State's new capital better than New Delhi.

The Chief Minister wanted to know what happened to all those promises.

"We joined the NDA in the first place only to protect our State's interests in the aftermath of bifurcation. We waited for four years with the hope that the Centre will honour all the promises but it only meted out injustice to us," Naidu said.

However, the BJP never cared about TDP, he charged adding while in the opposition, it promised to take care of the State and its needs but once in power, "it completely ignored us."

The Centre on its part said it has been waiting endlessly for a

(Contd on page 6 Col 3)

Download Mobile Apps of Daily Excelsior for Android and IOS



<http://www.dailyexcelsior.com/apps/>

INSIDE	WEATHER
Army and defence-budget ...Page 10	JAMMU: Mainly clear
* Defalcation in MC Katra	TEMPERATURE
SMVDSB approves Master Plan for Bhawan,	Max: 28.3 Degree C
extended shrine area ...Page 5	Min: 12.7 Degree C
Mehbooba throws open Maharaja Hari Singh Park, unveils his statue ...Page 5	RELATIVE HUMIDITY
DyCM for timely completion of power sector schemes ...Page 7	RH-I (Morning): 50.0 per cent
Zulfkar calls on Union Home Minister, highlights plight of border residents ...Page 7	RH-II (Evening): 28.0 per cent
Bangla beat SL in drama-filled match, face India in final ...Page 18	Sunset on Saturday: 06.41 p.m.
	Sunrise on Sunday: 06.39 a.m.
	SRINAGAR: Mainly clear
	TEMPERATURE
	Max: 17.2 Degree C
	Min: 5.0 Degree C
	RELATIVE HUMIDITY
	RH-I (Morning): 85.0 per cent
	RH-II (Evening): 38.0 per cent
	LEH: TEMPERATURE
	Max: 10.2 Degree C
	Min: -1.4 Degree C

**9 years on, Saffron mission yet to be completed, growers suffer huge losses**

**Excelsior Correspondent**

**SRINAGAR, Mar 16:** The Centrally sponsored National Saffron Mission, a Rs 400.11 crore project, launched 9 years ago to tackle the problems faced by Saffron cultivators has failed to take off and farmers are still dependent on rains for irrigation.

The mission was launched after the area under Saffron cultivation decreased from 5,707 hectares in 1996 to 3,715 hectares and traditional cultivation methods as well as the uncertainties of weather and disease made saffron cultivation less profitable. The mission was to be completed in 2014 and so far despite two extensions granted to it for 2015-2016 and 2017-



A Saffron grower irrigating his field.

2018 the project is yet to be completed. Under the Saffron Mission, 126 wells were proposed for irrigation of saffron fields and they were to be connected with sprinklers. The Mechanical

Engineering Department, was tasked with the work, and Rs 1,885 lakh was sanctioned to them for procurement of required material.

Sources said that so far only 12 sprinkle systems have been

handed over to the department and only one is functional. The Well Number 72 was made functional by the local farmers and it has led to increase in the saffron yield. The well is in the farm land of Ghulam Mohidin Rather of village Munpara in Pampore area in Pulwama district and he got a yield 4 kilogramme of saffron per hectare this year.

The farmers said the delay in the implementation of the project led to losses worth crores of rupees during past few years. They are still apprehensive about the functioning of the project and they demand that the project should be checked for quality before it is made functional.

(Contd on page 6 Col 5)

**8 officers shifted**

**Excelsior Correspondent**

**JAMMU, Mar 16:** The Government today issued order of transfers and postings of eight officers.

Rita Koul, awaiting orders of posting in the General Administration Department has been posted as Under Secretary to the Government Power Development Department (PDD); Chand Singh, Junior KAS officer of 2011 batch has been placed as Under Secretary to Govt, School Education department.

Naser Ali, Junior KAS officer, presently awaiting orders of posting in GAD, has been placed as Under Secretary in Chief Minister's Secretariat; Manisha, Junior KAS as Administrative Officer in the office of CCF Jammu vice

Shamim Ahmed Karaiyak, who shall report to GAD while Reetika Arora, Junior KAS officer has been posted as Under Secretary to Govt in the Department of Disaster Management, Relief and Rehabilitation vice Agya Anand who has been sent to Transport Department as Under Secretary to Govt.

Naseem Akhtar, Under Secretary to Govt Tourism Department, under orders of transfer to Social Welfare Department has now been placed in the R&B Department while Kiran Raina, awaiting orders of posting in the GAD has been placed as Assistant Director in the Directorate of Stationery and Office Supplies, J&K, on ex-cadre basis.