

PM laments Parl disruptions

NEW DELHI, Mar 28: Prime Minister Narendra Modi today lamented that disruptions in Parliament have unfortunately prevented several members, retiring from the Rajya Sabha, from being able to participate in debates on historic legislations like the triple talaq bill.

Without directly referring to the disruptions which have virtually washed out proceedings through the second leg of the budget session, he said it was

CBSE to conduct re-exams

NEW DELHI, Mar 28: In the wake of reports claiming paper leaks, the CBSE today announced re-examination in the Class 10 mathematics and Class 12 economics subjects.

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) issued a circular today informing about the re-examination and said dates and other details for it would be posted on the board's website.

No proposal from J&K CM on talks with Pak: Centre

NEW DELHI, Mar 28: There is no proposal from Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti seeking a dialogue with Pakistan for bringing peace in the State, the Government informed the Rajya Sabha today.

Union Minister of State for Home Hansraj Gangaram Ahir said the Government has clear and consistent position that it desires "normal neighbourly" relations with Pakistan and is committed to addressing all outstanding issues bilaterally

Vohra meets IGs, Div Com

SRINAGAR, Mar 28: On a day-long visit to the Valley, Governor N N Vohra had a series of meetings with senior echelons in the security management apparatus.

Among others he had discussions about the present and emerging security environment with Swayam Prakash Pani, IGP Kashmir, Zulfikar Hassan, IG CRPF Kashmir and Baseer Ahmed Khan, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir.

Govt extends amnesty

JAMMU, Mar 28: The State Government has extended the amnesty for settlement of unresolved issues under the old tax regime till May 16, 2018 to facilitate smooth implementation of Goods and Services Tax.

As per an order issued by the Finance department here today, "The due date of depositing first instalment as per the provisions of the scheme prescribed vide Government Order No 39-FD of 2018, dated 05-02-2018, has been extended by a period of 45 days.

The due date for depositing first instalment shall now be May 16, 2018.

Militants may have infiltrated under cover of ceasefire violations

4 Pak fidayeens gunned down in Sunderbani; terror attack foiled

Huge haul of arms, explosives, ammunition

Sanjeev Pargal

JAMMU, Mar 28: Four militants, all believed to be Pakistanis, were gunned down in a joint operation by security forces at Rawadi Talla Nullah at village Soudra, about three kilometers from Sunderbani town in Rajouri district during day long encounter today, thus, thwarting a major terror plot by the militants to target security installations in the area.

"It was a recently infiltrated group from the Line of Control (LoC) and was first spotted by the people two days back, then last evening by a shopkeeper and today morning by another group of locals. They had collected food and purchased dry fruit from a shop yesterday.



Bodies of 4 fidayeens at the site of encounter in Sunderbani on Wednesday. —Excelsior/Bhat

Though the security forces including Army, BSF and Jammu and Kashmir Police had launched search operation for

Soudra, and engaged in the gun battle that lasted throughout the day. By the evening, all four militants were killed," official sources told the Excelsior.

Sources said it was a very neat and professionally executed

***Watch video on**
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operation in which not a single security personnel was injured. The cordons by security forces were laid in such a way that all four militants were trapped from all the sides and they had no exit route. Though they continued to open firing and lobbed grenades repeatedly targeting security forces, they failed to cause any casualties before being eliminated.

They said all slain militants were fidayeens and believed to be Pakistanis though their identity hasn't been established so far. They seemed to be looking for an opportunity to target security forces installations in Sunderbani area but

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MGNREGA funds scam worth crores surfaces in RDD

Vigilance teams raid houses, offices of Director, 4 ACDs/DPOs; NCCF office

Gopal Sharma

JAMMU, Mar 28: The Vigilance sleuths today raided the house/ office premises of Director Rural Development Jammu, RK Bhat besides four other officers of the Department including ACDs/DPOs and General Manager of National Cooperative Consumer Federation (NCCF) of India, exposing major scam worth crores in the Rural Development Department (RDD) under Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) funding.

Official sources told the Excelsior that Vigilance teams

under the overall supervision of Director Vigilance J&K, conducted simultaneous raids in the house/ office premises of five officers and seized relevant records pertaining to some purchases made during the year 2015, 2016 and 2017 for the department, personal laptops/computers besides details/ documents related to properties/ FDRs and finally registered an FIR No. 8/2018 against two Directors, R K Bhat (one former, ML Raina), three ACDs (2 former), four District Panchayat Officers of Rural Development Department and one General

Manager of NCCF, DC Saxena. A private agency M/s Hashmie Enterprises, of a blue eyed person of the top people in RDD, operating from Bathindi in Jammu was also booked for this multi-crore scam in the Rural Development Department.

Giving more details the sources further revealed that while the raid in the house of Director RDD Jammu, RK Bhat at Udhewwalla in Jammu was going late this evening, searches in the houses of the then ACD Reasi Mukhtar Sheikh at Sidhra, Suram Chand, the then ACD Reasi in

Jammu (now GM DIC) and Noor Alam ACD Rajouri were completed by evening in presence of Magistrates. Besides official record, details/ documents of some personal/ benami properties worth crores were also seized. The names of ACD Poonch Basharat Hussain (now ADC), Shafiq Choudhary the then I/C ACD Rajouri (Now ADC Kotranka) and Majid Jahangir, the then DPO also figured in the FIR.

A top officer refused to share the details of the properties seized but said that scrutiny of

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Record, laptops, properties seized; FIR lodged

Sharma discusses security situation in Kashmir with Governor

Fayaz Bukhari

SRINAGAR, Mar 28: Centre's Interlocutor on Jammu and Kashmir, Dineshwar Sharma, today discussed security situation in the State with Governor N N Vohra at Raj Bhawan.

Sharma and Vohra discussed various aspects of the security situation in Kashmir during over an hour long meeting this afternoon.

Sources said that the local youth joining militancy was discussed at length and it was stressed that the youth should be engaged so that they may not fall prey to the militant propaganda.

It may be mentioned here that as per official figures 280 Kashmiri youth joined militancy

in last three years and of them, 127 took up arms in 2017.

Sharma, sources said, suggested that the trend needs to be stopped and discussed his recommendation with Vohra on keeping the youth away from militancy.

They discussed the steps needed to be taken for maintaining peace and security in the State ahead of tourist season and annual Amarnath Ji yatra which begins in summer.

Sharma, as per sources, also discussed various issues of governance which needed improvement for creating better atmosphere in Kashmir valley.

Sources said that he also shared with the Governor concerns of cross section of people which he met during his visits to Kashmir and steps taken to

address them.

In the meantime, an official statement said here that the two discussed the security situation since the beginning of this year and the steps required for maintaining peace and normalcy.

In the meantime, Sharma who spent night at Bandipora after meeting 17 delegations yesterday, came to Srinagar this morning. He met two delegations one led by Member Legislative Assembly (MLA) Langate Engineer Rashid and another led by PDP youth president Waheedur Rehman Parra.

Sources said that Rashid discussed with him the prevailing situation in Kashmir and stressed for steps taken to address various issues confronting the people.

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Azad justifies Parl protests

NEW DELHI, Mar 28:

Virtually justifying the ongoing protests in Parliament, Leader of the Opposition Ghulam Nabi Azad today said it would be unfair to blame the Opposition for forcefully raising people's issues in the House.

As the Rajya Sabha bade farewell to about 60 of its retiring members, Azad chose the moment to justify the protests on issues like the banking scam, the Cauvery dispute or the demand for special status to Andhra Pradesh, which have disrupted the proceedings for over the past three weeks.

Asserting that "democracy is alive due to Parliament", he said "our protests were never against the Chair or against some particular people. They weren't politically motivated. It was not

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4 injured in Pulwama

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, Mar 28: Four youth were injured in clashes as security forces fired teargas and pellets to disperse stone pelting protesters during a cordon-and-search operation at Palpora village of Tahab in South Kashmir's Pulwama district today.

Army, SOG and CRPF cordoned off Palpora village in Pulwama following inputs about the presence of some militants in the area.

As the security forces cordoned off the areas, scores of youth took to streets and pelted stones on them. The police and para-military personnel already deployed there fired in air and used tear smoke shells, besides fired pellet guns to disperse the youth.

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A magnificent view as a train seen passing through the full bloom mustard fields in South Kashmir on Wednesday. (UNI)

New grid station for Industrial Estate on papers only

Samba DDB decisions too fail to see light of the day during past one year

Announcements about check dam, municipal limits fall flat

Mohinder Verma

JAMMU, Mar 28: Establishing the general perception that PDP-BJP Coalition Government only believes in making announcements and pays scant attention towards bringing them to realism, several decisions taken by the District Development Board (DDB) of Samba last year have failed to see the light of the day till date due to lack of proper and timely follow-up action from the concerned authorities.

Official sources told EXCELSIOR that in the Samba DDB meeting held under the chairmanship of Deputy Chief Minister Dr Nirmal Singh on March 17, 2017, stress was laid on developing of mechanism for third party audit of ongoing construction works in different sectors.

"Such a mechanism is imperative to ensure that quality and durable assets are created. Moreover, the departments should conduct impact assessment of schemes being implemented by them for further

improvement in their service delivery system", the Deputy Chief Minister had stated in the meeting.

However, neither third party monitoring mechanism has been put to use so far nor the impact assessment of schemes has been started by the concerned authorities as such the major announcement of the District Development Board has remained confined to the official files, sources informed, adding "it is a matter of serious concern that the issue of immense importance is being treated so casually by the Government servants".

On the occasion, the Deputy Chief Minister had announced new grid of 320 MVA capacity for Industrial Estate Samba and it was stated that work will be completed by the Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (PGCIL) within a period of two years at a cost of Rs 80.50 crore.

"Though one year has lapsed since the DDB decision yet work on new grid could not be started by the PGCIL mainly because of the inordinate delay on the part of concerned author-

ities of the State in transfer of land for the project", sources said while disclosing that around 100 kanals of land was transferred for the project only few days back.

Had swiftness been shown in identification of suitable land substantial progress could have been made on the project till date and within another one year the project would have been ready for commissioning, sources said, adding "now the grid station would be ready by 2020 if the PGCIL meets the timeline of two years as was announced in the DDB meeting".

Due to this, the long pending demand of Samba Industrial Estate has remained unfulfilled even after approval of the District Development Board, which is given utmost importance by the Government in the official statements, sources further said.

In the main DDB meeting as well as in the review meeting convened on October 16, 2017, the Deputy Chief Minister had issued directions for completion

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Geelani, Watali's sons listed as prosecution witnesses by NIA

NEW DELHI, Mar 28:

Hardline separatist leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani's son, and the son of noted businessman Zahoor Ahmed Watali have been listed among the "prosecution witnesses" by the National Investigation Agency in a case related to terror funding in the Kashmir Valley.

The NIA, which filed a charge sheet in the case in January this year, have named Watali's son Yasir Gaffar at serial number 30 and Geelani's son Naim-ul-Zaffar at serial number 37 in the list of prosecution witnesses submitted to a special court.

The NIA has also submitted eight-page and four-page statements given by Gaffar and

Zaffar respectively to an NIA official during the course of investigation.

A statement given before a police official is not admissible as a primary evidence in the court.

The charge sheet has been filed by the NIA against 12 people, including Lashkar-e-Toiba chief Hafiz Saeed and Hizbul Mujahideen terror group's head Syed Salahuddin. Both of them are in Pakistan. Ten people arrested by the NIA in connection with the case include son-in-law of Geelani, Altaf Ahmed Shah, besides Watali.

The probe agency registered a case against separatists in the Kashmir valley on May 30 last year and also managed to secure confessional statements on the flow of money, especially from

Pakistan, from some people related to the funding of terror activities in Kashmir.

Geelani's son, who had fled the state to Dubai, London and later to Pakistan after he was threatened by counter-insurgents, had appeared before the NIA on many occasions.

He gave a duly signed statement in which he gave several details, including the people he had met during his post-doctorate from Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences.

Watali's son also gave a detailed statement about the business of his father and his associates, the officials said.

The charge sheet also names 42 protected witnesses in its list of 232 people who would be examined during the proceed-

ings. The witnesses have been protected under section 43(3) of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act under which the name and address of the person is not mentioned during the court proceedings.

Besides Shah and Watali, the NIA has arrested Geelani's close aides Ayaz Akbar, who is also spokesperson of the hardline separatist organisation Tehreek-e-Hurriyat, Peer Saifullah, Shahid-ul-Islam, spokesperson of the moderate Hurriyat Conference, Mehrajuddin Kalwal, Nayeem Khan, Farooq Ahmed Dar alias 'Bitta Karate', photo-journalist Kamran Yusuf and Javed Ahmed Bhat.

The NIA had registered a case on May 30 against the separatist

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INSIDE	WEATHER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ground water resources ...Page 6 * Giving teeth to Army in J&K Jammu Airport runway expansion set to take off ...Page 3 Govt rolls out CM's Business Interest Relief scheme ...Page 3 CM launches web based app ...Page 5 Chib, Majaz meet President ...Page 7 Muskan wins gold as India finishes second ...Page 12 	<p>JAMMU: Mainly clear TEMPERATURE</p> <p>Max: 33.0 Degree C Min: 17.5 Degree C</p> <p>RELATIVE HUMIDITY</p> <p>RH-I (Morning): 72.0 per cent RH-II (Evening): 28.0 per cent Sunset on Thursday: 06.49 p.m. Sunrise on Friday: 06.23 a.m.</p> <p>SRINAGAR: Mainly clear TEMPERATURE</p> <p>Max: 25.6 Degree C Min: 9.1 Degree C</p> <p>RELATIVE HUMIDITY</p> <p>RH-I (Morning): 47.0 per cent RH-II (Evening): 21.0 per cent</p> <p>LEH: TEMPERATURE</p> <p>Max: 18.3 Degree C Min: 3.0 Degree C</p>

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