

## Fire tenders fail to reach on time Major fire at Civil Sectt destroys annexe; records gutted

**Fayaz Bukhari**  
SRINAGAR, July 11: A major fire today destroyed a two storey annexe building in Civil Secretariat in Srinagar gutting official records of six departments and service books of over 300 employees. The Government ordered a time bound inquiry into the fire incident to be conducted by Secretary, General Administration Department Sheikh Mushtaq Ahmad. The inquiry will be completed within 15 days. The fire broke out in the two storied annexe building of Civil Secretariat at around 9 a.m. and engulfed the whole building that was made up of wood. Firemen doused the flames by 11 a.m. when the building and records were already destroyed. The Superintendent of Police Civil Secretariat Security, Maqsoodul Zaman told Excelsior that it is believed that the cause of fire was electric short circuit. He said that the official records of six Government Departments and

service books of over 300 employees were gutted in the fire and a two-storey building was completely damaged. The residents of Suthra Shahi who live adjacent to



Flames rising out of a Civil Secretariat building in Srinagar on Thursday. (Another pic on page 6) -Excelsior/Amin War

Civil Secretariat and employees alleged that the fire tenders reached the spot too late. They said that the building

caught fire at 9 a.m. and the first fire tender reached the spot from Safa Kadal area of Srinagar after 9.30 a.m. They alleged that the Headquarters of the Fire and Emergency

Services is adjacent to Civil Secretariat and they failed to reach on the spot in time to

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## Ministerial powers for CECs, ECs demanded Hill Councils of Ladakh seek more administrative control over officers

**Mohinder Verma**

JAMMU, July 11: In a significant development, the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Councils of Leh and Kargil have jointly sought more administrative control over the officers posted in the respective districts and Ministerial powers for the Chief Executive Councilors and Executive Councilors by carrying out necessary amendments in the LAHDC Act.

The consensus between Hill Councils of Leh and Kargil in this regard was arrived at in the latest round of discussion held at Kargil few days back. The high-level meeting was attended by Chief Executive Councilor of LAHDC Leh, Rigzin Spalbar, his Kargil counterpart, Kachu Ahmed Ali Khan, Member Parliament, Ghulam Hassan Khan, MLC Narboo Gyalsan and some Executive Councilors of both the Councils.

"In the meeting, it was unanimously felt that unless both the Councils make collective efforts the issues pending with the Government regarding empowerment cannot be taken to the logical conclusion", official sources

told EXCELSIOR.

It was also observed that though on the directions of the Chief Minister, some issues were redressed at the administrative level yet several vital issues remain unresolved for which necessary directions are required to be issued from such a forum, which has complete representation from the Ladakh region.

Accordingly, the Hill Councils have urged the Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah to immediately convene meeting of Ladakh Affairs Minister, all MLAs, MLCs, MP from the region and all concerned in order to strengthen and empower these autonomous bodies.

"Both the Hill Councils are in the favour of conferring powers of the Ministers to the Chief Executive Councilors and Executive Councilors for their respective departments", sources privy to the decisions taken in the joint meeting said, adding "the Hill Councils have unanimously decided to press the Government for giving powers to the CECs for imposing penalties on the erring officers after formal departmental inquiry".

They further said, "there is also a collective demand for giving sufficient powers to the CECs and ECs to either review or accept the Annual Performance Report of the district officers", adding "for other block level officers, the Hill Councils are demanding vesting of powers in CECs and ECs to accept ACRs".

Seeking bifurcation of the powers of the Deputy Commissioners/Chief Executive Officers of the Hill Councils by way of separating the powers of District Magistrate/Collector, the Hill

Councils have decided to urge the Government to confer powers of Commissioner Secretary to Secretary/CEO in order to take decisions in respect of LAHDCs.

"The Hill Councils have also decided to seek 5 Sections comprising of one Section Officer, two Senior Assistant and two Junior Assistants to be under the control of Executive Councilor Incharge of the Department. Similarly, they are going to demand 5 Under/Deputy Secretary level officers above the Section Officers", sources added.

It has unanimously been decided by the Hill Councils that their consent should be taken before posting of Deputy Commissioner, Superintendent of Police, Superintending Engineer, PWD in Leh and Kargil besides they must have role to play in the posting of the officers other than District Officers, sources said.

"The Hill Councils have already submitted a joint memorandum to the Chief Minister seeking pension to Chairman/CEC and the Executive Councilors on the pattern of Legislators. Moreover, there is also a common demand that nominated councilors should not be given voting rights for electing or removal of the Chairman/CEC", sources informed.

The other demands, which were unanimously agreed to in the joint meeting, are grant of Divisional Status to Ladakh and creation of police range, immediate functioning of recently created Sub-Transmission Division of the Power Development Department, enhancement of Plan Allocation and filling up of posts of private secretary to CECs.

## Person in jail can't contest polls: SC

NEW DELHI, July 11:

A person, who is in jail or in police custody, cannot contest election to legislative bodies, the Supreme Court has held, bringing to an end an era of undertrial politicians fighting polls from behind bars.

In another pathbreaking verdict to prevent criminal elements from entering Parliament and State assemblies, the apex court ruled that only an "elector" can contest the polls and he/she ceases

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## LC HC gives last chance to JAKFED officers

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, July 11: Expressing serious concern over non-compliance of the directions, House Committee of the Legislative Council probing Rs 300 crore JAKFED scam has given last opportunity to those at the helm of affairs in the organization for submission of entire record pertaining to the bungling and embezzlement. "Despite repeated directions, those managing the affairs of the JAKFED have not submitted the record till date and in the last

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## SHOs, Incharge PPs shifted

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, July 11: SSP Kathua Mohan Lal today ordered transfer and postings of SHOs and Incharge Police Posts in the district. Inspector Ashwani Sharma, SHO Hiranagar has been transferred and posted as SHO Billawar police station vice Inspector Amit Singh, who has been shifted to District Police Lines (DPL). Inspector Kuldeep Kumar has been posted as SHO Bani police station.

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## Cabinet meeting today

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, July 11: State Cabinet is meeting under the chairmanship of Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah at Civil Secretariat, Srinagar tomorrow.

Official sources said that Cabinet would meet at 3.30 pm to take decision on important administrative agenda to be finalized by the General Administration Department by tomorrow afternoon.

## People protest negligent death

Excelsior Correspondent

KATHUA, July 11: Following the protests by the irate residents of Pali Chak Ram Chand who also blocked the National Highway in the evening against the negligent death of an accident victim in the District Hospital Kathua today the Government has constituted a Board of Doctors to probe the same.

This was stated by SSP Kathua, Mohan Lal while talking to Excelsior. After the postmortem of the youth a FIR will be registered in Kathua Police Station against the doctor and in case found guilty action under law will be taken against him, he added.

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## Amarnath yatra touches 2 lakh

**Avtar Bhat**

JAMMU, July 11: With 15,165 pilgrims performing darshan today, nearly two lakh pilgrims have paid obeisance in the holy cave of Swami Amarnath Ji during last 14 days of yatra.

According to an official spokesman, 15,165 pilgrims performed darshan of ice lingam

in the holy cave today taking the number of pilgrims visiting the shrine since the first date of darshan on June 28 to 1,99,163.

The spokesman said, 4,371 pilgrims left for cave shrine

from Nunwan base camp via traditional Chandanwari track early this morning under tight security arrangements while 4,780 pilgrims left from Baltal base camp via shortest track. These include 578 pilgrims who visited by air.

The spokesman said that 1,84,008 pilgrims had performed darshan in the cave shrine till last evening.

He said the pilgrims who left via Baltal reached holy cave by this evening and after performing darshan they started their return journey while the pilgrims who left via Chandanwari track after night halts at Chandanwari, Sheshnag and Panchtami will perform darshan after a gap of two days.

He said maximum yatrais who performed darshan in the holy cave during last 14 days have returned to their home States.



Pilgrims trekking towards Amarnath cave shrine near Sangam. -Excelsior/Sajad Sameer

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## Army to deploy BSMS on LoC

## BAT may be behind IED/mine blasts

**Sanjeev Pargal**

JAMMU, July 11: Investigations by security and intelligence agencies have revealed that Lashkar-e-Toiba's Border Action Team (BAT), which has been revived by the militant outfit some time back, was most likely responsible for planting Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and landmines on the Line of Control (LoC) in Poonch district recently. The IEDs and landmine

explosions on the LoC had taken the life of a civil porter, hired by the Army, and led to injuries to five persons including three porters and two Army soldiers few days back.

Official sources told the Excelsior that the BAT, which used to be very active on the LoC about a decade back, had suddenly disappeared from the scene two to three years back. No activity of the BAT had been reported either from the LoC or the IB this time. However, they said, recently activities of the

BAT have been noticed again and it appeared to have been revived by the LeT outfit.

The first major activity in which security and intelligence agencies had suspected the hand of BAT along with Pakistan Army took place on January 8 this year when two Indian Army soldiers were killed with one of them beheaded and his body taken away to Pakistan.

But, according to sources, the planting of series of IEDs and mines in forward areas of the LoC, was definitely the

handiwork of BAT, whose cadre were experts in sneaking close to the LoC, plant explosive devices and return to Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK).

Sources said the security and intelligence agencies have credible information about revival of the BAT and that recent IED and mine blast on the LoC were handiwork of the outfit.

"It hardly matters for us whether the BAT has been revived or not. We are maintaining a high alert on the LoC", sources added.

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## Colleges being run in schools with adhoc faculty

## Higher education on crutches in J&K

**Nishikant Khajuria**

JAMMU, July 11: In a sorry state of affairs, all the newly opened Government Degree Colleges in Jammu and Kashmir are being run

from temporary accommodation with majority of adhoc faculty.

The temporary arrangements are badly affecting the higher education as students in these colleges are not getting popular

subjects in demand. Lack of permanent faculty as well as own buildings have limited these colleges to offer subjects of only Arts stream.

According to the official sources in Higher Education Department, all the Government Degree Colleges sanctioned under State Plan or Prime Minister's Special Package since 2008, are functioning either from school complexes or private accommodations of a few rooms.

Even as the work has been started for building construction of a few colleges, a number of them are still awaiting acquisition of land as the Government is facing certain hiccups in identifying suitable land for the same, sources further informed.

The situation can be gauged from the fact that Government Degree College Ploura, which was sanctioned and made functional in 2008, is still being run from Old Campus of Jammu

University near GGM Science College as the Government failed to identify suitable land for the same till last year when a piece of evacuee property land was finally selected for the acquisition near Bhalwal.

Same is the case with Government Degree College Chatru and a few other colleges, sanctioned in 2008, which are still waiting for acquiring of the land, sources added.

As maximum of these colleges are still in the process of land acquisition while building construction work has just begun in case of a few, these institutions of higher education are understood to function from the schools or small rented accommodations for the next few years, sources explained.

Pertinent to mention that Jammu Kashmir got 18 Government degree colleges in 2008 while 23 more were sanctioned in 2009.

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	Highest: 63.0 per cent
	Lowest: 63.0 per cent
	Sunset on Friday: 07.41 p.m.
	Sunrise on Saturday: 05.34 a.m.
	KASHMIR
	Possibility of Light rain/Thunder shower.
	TEMPERATURE
	Max: 29.2 Degree C
	Min: 16.6 Degree C
	RELATIVE HUMIDITY
	Highest: 72.0 per cent
	Lowest: 41.0 per cent



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