

## HM module busted, 3 held

SRINAGAR, Mar 14: Inspector General of Police Kashmir, Vijay Kumar today said that police have busted the Hizbul Mujahideen module involved in the recent killing of

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

Sarpanch Shabir Ahmed Mir and arrested three militant associates while another associate involved in Army man's abduction and murder has been arrested from Budgam.

The IGP said that Kulgam

(Contd on page 4 Col 5)

## Less than 10% Govt schools in J&K with internet coverage

NEW DELHI, Mar 14:

Twenty States and Union Territories have internet connection at less than 10 per cent of their Government schools, Lok Sabha was informed today.

The information was shared by Union Minister of State for Education Annpurna Devi in response to a written question in Lok Sabha.

The Minister quoted the Unified District Information System for Education (UDISE), 2019-20, data in her response.

According to the Minister,

(Contd on page 8 Col 1)

## Under-utilisation of funds by Ladakh: Parl Panel

NEW DELHI, Mar 14:

A Parliamentary Committee has expressed disappointment that women constitute only 3.68 per cent of the total strength of Central Armed Police Forces like the CRPF and BSF and asked the Union Home Ministry to take concrete steps to increase the representation of women in the Central Police organisations.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs, headed by Congress leader Anand Sharma, observed that in 2016, it was decided by the

(Contd on page 4 Col 3)

## CBI raids EPFO office in Jammu

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Mar 14: The Central Bureau of Investigations (CBI) today conducted raid in the office of Employees Provident Fund Organization (EPFO) near Railway Station here following

**\*Watch video on**  
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complaints of irregularities. A CBI team carried out raid at the EPFO office and seized documents, the officials said.

They added that the documents will be subjected to scrutiny to establish whether irregularities have been committed or not.

The raid lasted four hours and the CBI officials took into their possession a number of documents.

## Two officers get addl charge

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Mar 14: The Government today assigned additional charge to two IAS officers. Abhishek Sharma, Mission Director, SBM-U 2.0 will hold the charge of the post of Mission Director, DAY-NULM in addition to his own duties.

Akshay Labroo, Mission Director, AMRUT 2.0 will hold the charge of the post of Mission Director, PMAY-U in addition to his own duties.

## Only 12 COVID cases in J&K, 2 in Ladakh

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Mar 14: COVID cases continued to decline in Jammu and Kashmir with only 12 cases reported today while the UT of Ladakh recorded two positives only.

Jammu division reported nine cases including five in Doda and two each in Jammu and Samba districts while rest seven districts in the region didn't report any new cases.

(Contd on page 4 Col 5)

# PRIs/ULBs get Rs 1313 cr, DDCs Rs 200 cr, BDCs Rs 71 cr, JMC/SMC Rs 100 cr, Lakes Rs 373 cr FM presents Rs 1.12 lakh cr budget for J&K, economy to grow at 7.5 pc

**Education Deptt gets highest allocation of Rs 11,832 cr, Home Rs 10,831 cr**

**Kashmir to be connected with rail next year, Metro to be rolled out in 2022-23**

**Own revenues pegged at Rs 25,314 cr, Rs 35,581 cr to come as Central help, Rs 29,750 cr as PMDP**

**Sanjeev Pargal**

JAMMU, Mar 14: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman today presented Rs 1,12,950 crore worth budget for



Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman presenting J&K's budget in Lok Sabha on Monday.

Jammu and Kashmir for next financial year of 2022-23 in Lok Sabha which was dubbed as "growth oriented" in which economy is expected to grow at 7.5 percent but fiscal deficit stood at Rs 9570 crore.

Education Department got highest Rs 11,832 crore fol-

lowed by Rs 10,831 crore for Home Department. Rs 200 crore have been provisioned in the budget as Development Fund for 20 District Development Councils (Rs 10 cr for each DDC) and Rs 71.25 crore for Block Development Councils (BDCs) (Rs 25 lakh each). A total of Rs 1313 crore have been kept for Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs). JMC and SMC will get City Grants of Rs 100 crore while Rs 200 crore have been kept for Smart City

**\*Watch video on**  
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projects. Rs 373 crore will be given for Dal Nageen lake

Development and Conservation. There has been an increase of over Rs 4000 crore in the budget as current fiscal year's

**'Normalcy achieved, earlier it was fake'**  
**Sitharaman attacks Cong over series of tweets on KPs**

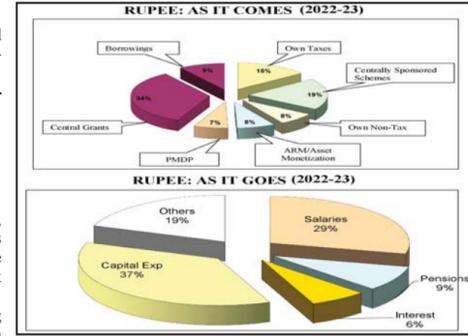
Responding to the discussion on J&K budget in Lok Sabha, Nirmala Sitharaman attacked the Congress over a series of tweets issued by its Kerala unit relating to the Kashmiri Pandits who were displaced from the Valley during the 1990s following the outbreak of militancy.

Sitharaman said the tweets by the Congress with the hashtag #KashmirFiles vs truth on Sunday said that Kashmiri Pandits on their own left the Valley and not because they were forced.

"Our party's (Congress) belief is that it was not because of terrorism but the movement was due to lure of financial benefit and land offer in Delhi.... Another belief is there is a long battle between separatist and those who stand for India," she said quoting the tweets.

She also said Congress was an ally of the Government at the time of the exodus and the then Chief Minister left people to fend for themselves when terrorism was on the rise.

(Contd on page 8 Col 1)



## Highlights

- Provision of Rs 200 crore for capitalization of J&K Bank.
- Rs 20 cr for establishment of highway resting places.
- Rs 100 crore for festival promotion.
- Rs 70 crore for new circuits including Mansar, Surinsar & Sufi Circuits besides, construction of Water Parks in twin cities of Jammu and Srinagar.

(Contd on page 8 Col 4)

## LG announces ex-gratia for kin of deceased, injured

## Woman, toddler among 4 charred alive; over dozen injured as LPG cylinders explode due to fire

**ADGP directs SSP Jammu to investigate incident**  
 Ajay Raina

JAMMU, Mar 14: Four persons including a woman and a toddler were charred alive and over dozen suffered injuries, when LPG cylinders exploded due to fire inside a scrap shop in posh Residency Road area here in the heart of the city this evening.

As per police sources, fire broke out in a scrap shop located in Residency Road area here today. Short circuit in electricity wiring is suspected to be the cause of fire breakout. In the incident, fire flames engulfed the adjoining structures and some LPG cylinders lying inside them exploded, thereby raging the fire.



Fire fighters extinguish flames at Residency Road in Jammu on Monday.

Excelsior/Rakesh about the incident, Additional Director General of Police (ADGP) Jammu Zone Mukesh Singh along with SSP Jammu Chandan Kohli rushed to the spot and supervised the fire fighting and rescue operation.

Soon after the incident, police team led by SHO Police Station City Inspector Rakesh Sharma and assisted by Incharge Police Post Residency Road SI Sudershan Sharma had started the rescue operation. Police team from

(Contd on page 4 Col 7)

## Debate on budget in Lok Sabha Dr Jitendra dares Cong to announce in LS whether it would restore Art 370 in J&K

**\* Law & order cause of concern, says Tewari**

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Mar 14: Union Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) Dr Jitendra Singh today dared the Congress to announce in Lok Sabha that it would restore Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir if it comes to power.

Intervening in the debate on budget for Jammu and Kashmir in the Lower House, he said that the Modi Government was allocating 63 per cent of the budget to the Union Territory to deal with the legacy of the Congress regime.

"Does the Congress party have the courage to say that it will restore Article 370 after coming to power... You don't say that. You want to beat about the

bush and want to have it both ways," he said.

Dr Jitendra Singh said that Article 370, which was abrogated by the Modi Government, had prevented the implementation of welfare measures like the prohibition of child marriages, prevention of corruption, anti-dowry legislation, right to information and SC/ST reservation.

He wanted to know if the Congress had left 'Ram Raj' in Kashmir that the opposition party was accusing the Modi Government of "attempting to destroy".

Dr Singh asserted that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has created a new political culture by honouring Mahatma Gandhi, Sardar Patel, Subhas Chandra Bose and B R Ambedkar and "Congress is now searching for

icons". The fact that Congress leaders are joining the BJP indicates that the ruling party was on the right path, he said, adding "we are doing what the Congress promised to do but did not do because of political reasons."

No political party can oppose the implementation of the welfare measures after the abrogation of Article 370, he said.

Referring to industrialisation in Jammu and Kashmir, Dr Jitendra Singh said that more than Rs 50,000 crore have been invested by large industrial houses in the Union Territory.

Admitting that unemployment continues to be a problem, he said that the Government was focusing on

(Contd on page 4 Col 1)

## '49 journalists arrested since 2016' J&K media being choked due to local administrative curbs: PCI FFC

NEW DELHI, Mar 14:

A three-member Fact Finding Committee (FFC) of the Press Council of India (PCI) has said that news media in Jammu and Kashmir, especially in the Valley, is "slowly being choked" due to extensive curbs imposed by the local administration.

The FFC, in its report submitted last week, has also advised the Union Territory administration to immediately stop the "tendency" to see all critical reporting and opinions as "anti-national".

"A conflict zone has many players and many aspects of events that unfold. A journalist cannot and should not ignore the Government version; at the same time, he is not the spokesperson of the Government," it said.

Headed by Prakash Dubey

(convenor) with members Suman Gupta and Gurbir Singh, the FFC was set up by the PCI — a statutory quasi-judicial body which acts as a press watchdog — six months after a complaint by PDP president Mehbooba Mufti in September last year.

The report submitted to the Council is yet to be considered and adopted.

While advocating restoration of lines of communication with the local press, the FFC said the administration was suspecting that a large number of local journalists were sympathisers of the militants' cause.

"This was admitted by Lt Governor Manoj Sinha, who frankly told the FFC that many journalists were of 'anti-national' persuasion. He conceded that when he was first appointed, he used to encourage open press

(Contd on page 4 Col 5)

conferences, but now had gone back to a 'selective engagement' with preferred journalists," the report said.

The FFC took a holistic view of press freedom especially after the abrogation of Article 370 in August 2019 and came out with a set of recommendations to prevent harassment of journalists and also advised the J&K Police to not become representatives of other departments "by default".

While drawing a distinction between a journalist and a terrorist, the FFC said those indulging in any criminal acts are not journalists pursuing their profession.

"If a journalist is bearing arms or carrying grenades and other ammunition, he is not a journalist; he is a militant, and should be treated as such," the

(Contd on page 4 Col 5)

## Kupwara is militancy free, most peaceful in Kashmir: GOC Fayaz Bukhari

SRINAGAR, Mar 14: General Officer Commanding (GOC) of Srinagar-based 15 Corps Lieutenant General D P Pandey today said that as of now and especially for the past few years, the Kupwara district bordering Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) is militancy free and the most peaceful area of the Valley.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a function of inaugurating a Computer Centre and Nursing Home at Kunan, Trehgam area of northern district of Kupwara, the GOC said people of Kupwara have rejected the violence and are enjoying peace.

"Kupwara was the worst hit by militancy and violence. But

**'170-175 militants active in Valley, recruitment down'**

today, and for the past few years, the district is peaceful and people are living in a peaceful atmosphere as they have rejected the violence. This area was once a hotbed of militancy but of late, people of this place are enjoying the peace," he said.

Lt General Pandey said that there is an atmosphere of peace prevailing in entire Kashmir and the security grid is fully prepared to deal with any situation. "Operations are being carried

(Contd on page 4 Col 7)

## Russia keeps up attacks, both sides hold talks

LVIV (UKRAINE), Mar 14:

Russian and Ukrainian negotiators held a new round of talks today as Russia's military forces bombarded Kyiv and other cities across Ukraine with a punishing assault that the Red Cross said has created "nothing short of a nightmare" for the country's civilians.

After an airstrike on a military base near the Polish border brought the war dangerously close to NATO's doorstep, the talks raised hopes for progress in evacuating civilians from besieged Ukrainian cities and getting emergency supplies to areas without enough food,

(Contd on page 4 Col 7)

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