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PoJK Assembly supports HM on Sharda Peeth corridor
Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, Apr 1: The Government of PoJK has proposed that on the same lines as the Kartarpur corridor has been built between the two countries, the Sharda Peeth corridor should be opened as well, and people from India should be allowed to undertake the pilgrimage.

The Kashmiri Pandit community has welcomed the PoJK Assembly's decision. Save Sharda Committee Kashmir has been pushing for the opening of the corridor since 2004.

(Contd on page 9 Col 7)
GST mop-up rises to Rs 1.6 lakh cr
 NEW DELHI, Apr 1:

GST collection grew 13 per cent in March to Rs 1.60 lakh crore - the second highest mop-up since the rollout of the indirect tax regime.

The return filing during March 2023 has been the highest ever.

Gross GST revenue collected in March 2023 is Rs 1,60,122 crore, of which Central GST is Rs 29,546 crore, State GST is Rs 37,314 crore.

(Contd on page 9 Col 1)
Sidhu released from jail
 PATIALA, Apr 1:

Congress leader Navjot Singh Sidhu walked free today after spending nearly 10 months in Patiala central jail in a 1988 road rage death case.

He was wearing a sky blue jacket when he came out of jail. There were expectations that he would be released by afternoon but he came out of jail at 5:53 pm.

The 59-year-old's supporters had assembled since morning outside the prison to accord him a grand welcome upon his release and they could be heard chanting 'Navjot Sidhu zindabad'.

(Contd on page 9 Col 1)
Pak drone returns after BSF firing
Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Apr 1: The Border Security Force (BSF) today said its troops opened fire at a suspected Pakistani drone along the International Border in Ramgarh sector of Samba district, forcing it to retreat.

A massive search operation is underway to ensure no weapons or narcotics were airdropped by the drone, a BSF spokesperson said.

"A blinking light (of a suspected drone) was observed around 12:15 am (Saturday) on the IB in the night in the general area," he said.

(Contd on page 9 Col 5)
Court defers identification of Malik
Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Apr 1: A local court today deferred the identification by an eye-witness of six accused including JKLF chief Mohd Yasin Malik in connection with the killing of four Indian Air Force (IAF) personnel in a terrorist attack in the summer capital Srinagar in 1990.

The identification was deferred due to non-availability of some of the accused in the court here even as one of the

(Contd on page 9 Col 1)
Papalpreet seen in Hoshiarpur 'dera'
CCTV footage
 CHANDIGARH, Apr 1:

A fresh CCTV footage has surfaced on social media purportedly showing Papalpreet Singh, a close aide of radical preacher Amritpal Singh, in a "dera" in a village in Hoshiarpur even as police continued their search for them in the district today.

The footage is said to be of March 29, a day after a team of the Counter Intelligence wing of the Punjab Police chased an

Rains lash J&K, 10.4 deg fall in Jammu's temp; NH blocked for 7 hrs, restored

**Gopal Sharma/
 Fayaz Bukhari**

JAMMU/SRINAGAR, Apr 1: The rain lashed parts of Jammu and Kashmir today bringing the day temperature of Jammu down by 10 degrees and another spell of wet weather is likely from early next week.

A sharp fall in day temperature ranging from 9 to 10 degrees Celsius has been observed in Jammu today as compared to past 24 hours while higher reaches of Doda, Ramban, Kishtwar and Poonch have experienced light snowfall

*Watch video on www.excelsionews.com

during last night.

Jammu, Udhampur, Reasi, Samba and Kathua and their adjoining areas witnessed constant rain for about 4-5 hours during morning upto noon. Several seasonal nullahs and streams were flooded and it affected movement of traffic. Jammu city witnessed water logging at many places. Very thin movement of public was witnessed on city roads during rain today.



Women taking umbrella cover while moving on a Jammu road on rainy Saturday. Another pic on page 9. -Excelsior/Rakesh

Jammu-Srinagar National Highway was blocked due to landslides at Ramperi near Banihal and Cafeteria Morh near Ramban around 2 am last night. The road was restored at around 9 am today and Kashmir bound stranded traffic was cleared first followed by down convoy from Qazigund side to Udhampur and Jammu.

Udhampur-Pancheril-Landhar-Gilyot road was blocked due to flood in a nullah near Landar and landslide at Kultiar. Several vehicles remained stranded for hours. The power supply to many areas was also affected with this. A western disturbance will affect weather in the Jammu and Kashmir from April 3 to April 6 due to which, many places will experience light to moderate intermittent rainfall, Director of the Meteorological Department Sonam Lotus said.

He said many areas in the Union Territory of J&K including Srinagar and Jammu, received rain since early morning. Lotus said the weather will remain as such till the evening and the temperature will drop about five to six degrees. He said on Sunday, there will be some respite and the weather will improve. "But, there is a possibility of rain in the evening at some places," he added.

The higher reaches could receive snowfall, however, there is no forecast of heavy rain/snowfall, Lotus said. The weather will remain inconsistent till April 6, after which it will improve and the temperatures will also increase, he said.

Meanwhile, Jammu recorded a minimum temperature of 14.7 degree Celsius, about five degree fall as compared to last 24 hours. The day temperature in Jammu was 19 degree Celsius today as compared to 29.4 degree C on Friday, indicating a sharp fall of 10.4 degree C as compared to past 24 hours.

Holy town of Katra recorded a maximum temp of 15.0 deg C and minimum 12.8 deg C; Bhaderwah town maximum 12.5 (Contd on page 9 Col 7)

DG CSIR, Secretary S&T also meet Brig Mishra

Top Army officials call on LG Ladakh in Delhi, discuss situation

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Apr 1: Deputy Chief of Army Staff (Strategy) Lt Gen Tarun Kumar Aich along with Director General (DG) Infantry Lt Gen AK Samantara met Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh Brig (Retired) BD Mishra in New Delhi last evening and had detailed interaction with him.

Brig Mishra is in New Delhi for the past couple of days during which he met several dignitaries including Union Home Secretary Ajay Kumar Bhalla.

The Deputy Chief of Army Staff appeared to have discussed with the Lieutenant Governor

the security scenario prevailing along Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Eastern Ladakh.

The LAC is calm though the Armies of India and China remained stationed opposite to each other in various areas of Eastern Ladakh despite disengagement from many friction points.

Later, Brig Mishra paid rich tribute to the glory of the 18th battalion of Madras Regiment (Mysore) and laid wreath at the Memorial in which he fought against Pakistan in 1965 Indo-Pak war.

Brig Mishra was commissioned in the 18th battalion of Madras Regiment (Mysore) on

December 17, 1961. He inspected the Unit Quarter Guard and addressed the Sainik Sammelan.

The Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh also held a meeting with Dr N Kalaiselvi, Director General of CSIR in New Delhi.

"Commercial cultivation and promotion of rare medicinal and aromatic herbs of Ladakh viz Sea Buckthorn and Sanjeevani were discussed during the meeting," the officials said.

Brig Mishra met with Secretary, Ministry of Science and Technology Srivari Chandrasekhar to further discuss details of astro-tourism

project of Ladakh.

He was also called on by a delegation led by Founder/President Sarhad, Pune, Sanjay Nahar.

Sources said the Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh is likely to meet more dignitaries in New Delhi before returning to the Union Territory of Ladakh.

Meanwhile, a delegation which met the Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh in Leh belonged to Ladakh Buddhist Association (LBA) and not Leh Apex Body (LAB) as reported. However, the issues taken up by the LBA delegation with the Lieutenant Governor were same as reported.

Govt e Marketplace gets orders of Rs 2 lakh crore in 2022-23

Piyush Goyal seeks participation of more manufacturers & suppliers on GeM

Nishikant Khajuria

JAMMU, Apr 1: Seeking participation of more manufacturers and suppliers, Union Commerce and Industry Minister, Piyush Goyal today expressed his reservations over any purchase preference for the locals on Government e Marketplace (GeM).

"Though provision is there for region like Jammu Kashmir and Ladakh or North Eastern States, which are very far off and extremely at distance, if they (Government departments) want to keep any purchase preference for locals or something like that because of very peculiar situation, but we will certainly not recommend this in normal course," he said in

response to a query while addressing a press conference at Mumbai on the landmark achievement of GeM crossing

The Union Minister claimed that purchase preference for local suppliers give an opportunity to the buyers to start gaming in the system and irregularities to come in.

"Ideally we allow that (purchase preference) very sparingly because ultimately we would like the Government to procure at the most competitive prices at right value on the platform where everybody can get a chance to participate," he said.

The Minister said that the Prime Minister desires that the Government departments run at the highest levels of integrity (Contd on page 9 Col 3)



Rs 2 lakh crore procurement of goods and services in the financial year 2022-23.

Pertinent to mention that Government of Jammu and Kashmir allows its departments to use local filters upto a limit

Govt contemplates Shrine Board for Bawe Wali Mata temple

Sanjeev K Sharma

JAMMU, Apr 1: The Government of Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory is contemplating to constitute a Shrine Board for the management and development of revered Fort Shrine of Bawe Wali Mata situated on a hillock at the bank of Tawi River in Jammu.

After a letter from Tourism Department of J&K dated August 9, 2021 sought comments and views for the constitution of Shrine Board for Bawe Wali Mata temple in Jammu, and Deputy Commissioner Jammu and Director Tourism Jammu were requested for the same by the Divisional Commissioner Jammu. However, Deputy

Commissioner Jammu and Director Tourism Jammu in their response stated that setting up of the Shrine Board for Bawe Wali Mata temple at Bahu Fort shall be in the interest of better management of the affairs of the temple and adjoining properties and it will also enhance the overall development of the temple and the historic fort.

Recently, on March 4, 2023 the Divisional Commissioner Jammu wrote a letter to the Secretary Tourism Department J&K in this regard stating endorsements from the Deputy Commissioner Jammu and Director Tourism Jammu to constitute the Shrine Board for the Fort Shrine.

When contacted Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Ramesh Kumar said that he has to check for the fresh development on the issue but so far there was no new development regarding constitution of Shrine Board for Bawe Wali Mata temple. Director Tourism, Vivekanand Rai said that inputs were sought from the Tourism Department regarding what it (Tourism Department) can do at the Shrine on establishment of the Shrine Board. However, the Director assured to update on any new development in this regard when it comes. The demand for establishment of Shrine Board for Bawe Wali Mata temple remained there from certain sections of the society in Jammu. (Contd on page 9 Col 7)

29 projects completed, remaining expected in next few years

Most of projects under PMDP gain momentum: Economic Survey

*418 works completed under BADP in 8 distts of J&K UT

Mohinder Verma

JAMMU, Apr 1: Most of the projects under Prime Minister's Development Package (PMDP) in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir have gained momentum and a remarkable progress has been achieved under the package due to removal of potential bottlenecks by the administration.

As per the Economic Survey 2022-23 released by Chief Secretary Dr Arun Kumar Mehta yesterday, Rs 80,064 crore worth PMDP announced by the Prime Minister on November 7,

2015 was aimed at expanding economic infrastructure, provision of basic services, providing thrust to employment and income generation and providing relief and rehabilitation to the victims of September 2014 floods besides to strengthen Disaster Management Framework of Jammu and Kashmir.

The package initially consisted of 63 projects. However, after reorganization of erstwhile State, Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir was left with 54 (presently 53-one dropped) PMDP projects with an outlay of Rs 58,477 crore. Nine projects

with an outlay of Rs 21,441 crore were transferred to the Union Territory of Ladakh. Seventeen projects--(five of Central Sector and 12 of UT Sector) have been completed in all respects while as 12 projects (four of Central Sector and eight of UT Sector) stand substantially completed up to November 2022, said the Economic Survey, a document presenting the elaborate picture of economic and developmental profile of J&K for the closing financial year.

"Out of the remaining 24 projects, 3 projects are being completed/ substantially com-



Mesmerising view of Jammu city under the clouds after rain showers on Saturday. -Excelsior/Rakesh

Modi reviews security situation, operational readiness

Stay ready to deal with new, emerging threats: PM to 3 Services at Comdrs meet

*Challenges from China, Pak figure at 3-day meet

Sanjeev Pargal

JAMMU, Apr 1: Prime Minister Narendra Modi today called upon the three Services to stay ready to deal with new and emerging threats and emphasized that all steps are being taken to equip the Armed Force with necessary weapons and technologies.

He was interacting with top Defence Commanders on concluding day of three days Combined Commanders Conference at Bhopal.

An official statement said the Prime Minister reviewed the security situation and operational readiness of the Armed Forces during the valedictory session of the Combined Commanders' Conference 2023 in Bhopal.

"The Prime Minister was briefed by Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan about various discussions conducted during this year's conference," the statement said.

"It is learnt that India's security challenges along the frontier with China and ways

to deal with cross-border terrorism from Pakistan were among the key issues that figured at the annual Combined Commanders' Conference. Modi complimented the Armed Forces for their role in nation building and providing Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) assistance to friendly countries.

"During the final day of the session, various topics including aspects of digitization; cyber security; challenges of social media; Aatmanirbharta; absorption of Agniveers and jointness were discussed," the statement said.

In a significant development from the past, the scope of the conference was expanded this year, wherein, a few multi-layered and interactive sessions were conducted with participation of soldiers from every command of the Indian Army, Indian Navy and Indian Air Force, including the Tri-Services Andaman and Nicobar Command.

"The three-day conference of combined apex-level military leadership of the country com-

menced on March 30 with the theme 'Ready, Resurgent, Relevant'. During the conference, deliberations over a varied spectrum of issues were held, including on national security and evolving a Joint Military Vision for the future," the statement added.

It said yesterday, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh interacted with the top military brass and reviewed the defence preparedness.

Rajnath lauded the Armed Forces for their valuable contribution in protecting national interests and providing support to the Government in realizing its vision of 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat'.

This year's conference was special, wherein, inputs from the field units were sought on contemporary issues like changes in TTP and way forward for greater integration among the three Services.

"These inputs were deliberated in detail by the Military Commanders. The conference also provided an opportunity for the Commanders to review the (Contd on page 9 Col 5)

Increase in all components of OTR Tax revenue goes up by 31 pc during 2021-22 in J&K: CAG

JAMMU, Apr 1:

The tax revenue in Jammu and Kashmir touched Rs 11,707.28 crore in 2021-22 compared to Rs 8,876.99 crore in the previous year, marking an increase of 31.88 per cent, according to the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG).

State Excise, State Goods and Services Tax (SGST) and Taxes on sales and trade showed the maximum increase of 32.31 per cent, 32.13 per cent and 27.46 per cent, respectively, the CAG said in its audit report on the Union Territory Finances for the year ended 31 March 2022. The Government's performance in the mobilisation of resources is assessed in terms of

its own tax resources comprising revenue from its own tax and non-tax sources.

The report said there was an increase in all components of Own Tax Revenue (OTR) during 2021-22 which marked an increase of 31.88 per cent compared to the previous year.

"SGST, State Excise and Taxes on Sales/Trade showed maximum increase of Rs 1,554.95 crore, Rs 435.37 crore and Rs 410.70 cores respectively. The highest percentage increase with respect to 2020-21 was 536.67 per cent and 87.02 per cent under Taxes on Goods and Passengers and Land Revenue respectively," the CAG said. The collection of taxes on

vehicles increased from Rs 488.38 crore in 2020-21 to Rs 616.24 crore in 2021-22 (26.18 per cent) and stamp duty and registration fee from Rs 325.54 crore in 2020-21 to Rs 512.02 crore in 2021-22 (57.28 per cent).

Land revenue rose from Rs 60.57 crore in 2020-21 to Rs 113.28 crore in 2021-22 (87.02 per cent) and taxes on goods and passengers from Rs 0.90 crore in 2020-21 to Rs 5.73 crore in 2021-22 (536.67 per cent) and other taxes from Rs 319.22 crore in 2020-21 to Rs 376.60 crore in 2021-22 (17.98 per cent).

During 2021-22, it said the GST collection was Rs 6,394.31 crore compared to Rs (Contd on page 9 Col 1)