

## Road transport, highways sector has maximum number of delayed projects: Govt report

NEW DELHI, Apr 9:

The road transport and highways sector has the maximum number of delayed projects at 407, followed by railways at 114 and the petroleum industry at 86, showed a government report.

In the road transport and highways sector, 407 out of 717 projects are delayed.

For railways, out of 173 projects, 114 are delayed, while in the petroleum sector, 86 out of 146 projects are running behind schedule, as per the latest flash report on infrastructure projects for February 2023.

The Infrastructure and Project Monitoring Division (IPMD) is mandated to monitor central sector infrastructure projects costing Rs 150 crore and above based on the information provided on the Online Computerised Monitoring System (OCMS) by the project implementing agencies.

The IPMD comes under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.

The report showed that the Muncerabad-Mahaboobnagar rail project is the most delayed. It is delayed by 276 months.

The second-most delayed project is the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla rail project,

which is delayed by 247 months. The third-most delayed project, Belapur-Seawood-Urban Electrified Double Line, is running 228 months behind schedule.

The Flash Report for February 2023 contains information on the status of the 1,418 Central Sector Infrastructure Projects costing Rs 150 crore and above.

As many as 823 projects are delayed, 346 projects reported cost overrun and 242 projects reported both times and cost overrun with respect to their original project implementation schedules.

A total of 823 projects are delayed with respect to their original schedules and 159 projects have reported additional delays vis-a-vis their date of completion reported in the previous month.

Of these 159 projects, 38 are mega projects costing Rs 1,000 crore and above.

About the road transport and highways sector, the report stated that the total original cost of implementation of 717 projects, when sanctioned, was Rs 3,97,255.47 crore but this was subsequently estimated to be Rs 4,14,400.44 crore, implying a cost overrun of 4.3 per cent.

The expenditure incurred on these projects till February 2023 is Rs 2,33,007.06 crore, which is 56.2 per cent of the anticipated cost of the projects.

Similarly, in railways, the total original cost of implementation of 173 projects, when sanctioned, was Rs 37,276.145 crore but this was subsequently anticipated to be Rs 6,26,632.52 crore, implying a cost overrun of 68.1 per cent.

The expenditure incurred on these projects till February 2023 is Rs 3,79,380.95 crore, which is 60.5 per cent of the anticipated cost of the projects.

About the petroleum sector, it said, the total original cost of implementation of 146 projects, when sanctioned, was Rs 3,67,615.67 crore but this was subsequently anticipated to be Rs 3,85,117.08 crore, implying a cost overrun of 4.8 per cent.

The expenditure incurred on these projects till February 2023 is Rs 1,44,162.3 crore, which is 37.4 per cent of the anticipated cost of the projects. (PTI)

## Cong has to be at centre of coalition that takes on BJP in 2024: Sibal

NEW DELHI, Apr 9:

The Congress has to be at the centre of any coalition that would take on the BJP in the 2024 general elections and all Opposition parties should be more mindful of sensitivities as well as be circumspect in criticising each other's ideologies in order to build a strong alliance, Rajya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal said on Sunday.

Sibal, a prominent voice in the Opposition ranks, gave a clarion call to all political parties opposed to the BJP-led Government to first find a common platform which, he said, could also be his newly-launched 'Insaaf' platform for fighting injustice.

In an interview with PTI, the former Union Minister said the leadership question for 2024 need not be answered at this stage and also cited the example of 2004 when the incumbent Atal Bihari Vajpayee Government was voted out of power despite the Opposition not having a declared face.

He asserted that the Congress certainly has to be the fulcrum and at the centre of any coalition of Opposition parties that will take on the BJP in 2024.

Asked if the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) supreme Sharad Pawar's statement backing the Adani Group which is facing allegations jolted Opposition unity, Sibal said, "If you narrow down issues then you will have differences among political parties. If you have a broad collaborative platform which does not deal with narrow issues, the possibility of consensus is much greater."

"If Rahul Gandhi has a point of view in the context of crony capitalism in India, I think Sharad Pawar ji would not be averse to a platform relating to crony capitalism, that subsumes individuals. So what we need is to have these broad platforms on the basis of which we can ensure that the Opposition is united," he said.

He said the moment issues are narrowed down problems arise and gave the example of parties having different points of view on a particular legislation.

"You should allow different parties to have different views. We should allow Rahul Gandhi to have a view on an individual and Sharad Pawar also has his point of view. That should not be an example of disunity," said Sibal, who was a Union Minister during UPA 1 and 2, and quit the Congress in May last year. (PTI)

Sibal, who was elected to the Rajya Sabha as an Independent member with the Samajwadi Party's support, recently floated a non-electoral platform 'Insaaf' aimed at fighting injustice.

"Opposition unity will come about only when we have a broad consensus and a platform that elucidates broad issues of that consensus," he said.

Sibal said his message to Opposition parties would be that the bottom line is that great injustices – social, economic and political – are being perpetrated in this country by the diktats of this Government.

"In fact the entire Constitution is a narrative of how to achieve justice. So, the fight against injustice can be a common platform," he said.

On whether his newly-floated platform could provide what the Opposition needs, Sibal said "could be", but added that a lot of work needs to be done to bring all political parties on that platform. (PTI)

## Post office savings schemes compete with bank FDs after 3 hikes in rates by Govt

NEW DELHI, Apr 9:

Post office term deposits, which were fetching lesser returns than bank FDs in the recent past, have again become competitive with the government effecting three back-to-back increases in interest rates on small savings schemes.

The return on post office term deposits of two years under the small savings schemes is 6.9 per cent, the same as offered by most banks on deposits of similar maturity.

After a series of repo rate hikes by the RBI since May 2022, the transmission to retail deposit rates gathered pace in the second half (H2) of the last fiscal after remaining subdued in April-September (H1) period as banks intensified their efforts to garner retail deposits to fund robust credit growth, a central bank analysis.

The Weighted Average Domestic Term Deposit Rate (WADTDR) on fresh deposits (including retail and bulk) of banks increased by 222 basis points (bps) from May 2022 to February 2023.

During H1, banks had focussed on mobilising bulk deposits. This was reversed in H2 with the increase in fresh retail deposit rates (122 bps) outpacing that in fresh bulk deposit rates (77 bps), the RBI said.

The transmission to WADTDR on outstanding deposits is picking up, albeit gradually, reflecting the longer maturity profile of term deposits contracted at fixed rates, the RBI said.

As regards the small savings instruments (SSIs), the government has increased the interest rates by 10-30 bps for October-December quarter of 2022-23, 20-110 bps for January-March quarter of 2022-23 and 10-70 bps for the first quarter of the current fiscal.

The interest rates on SSIs had remained unchanged for nine consecutive quarters -- from the second quarter of 2020-21 to the second quarter of 2022-23.

With these adjustments, rates on most of the SSIs are closely aligned with the formula-based rates, the RBI said.

Interest rates on SSIs, which are administered by the government, are linked to secondary market yields on G-secs of comparable maturities.

"Banks' term deposit rates are now competitively priced vis-a-vis post office term deposit rates," the RBI said.

As RBI estimates, the WADTDR on retail deposits of banks of 1-2 year maturity rose to 6.9 per cent in February 2023 from 5.8 per cent in September 2022 and 5.2 per cent in March 2022. The last repo rate hike by the RBI was in February 2023.

With three consecutive increases in the interest rate on SSIs, the return on 2-year post office term deposits (POTD) under small savings schemes now stands at 6.9 per cent.

The return on POTD of two years was 5.5 per cent in September 2022 and March 2022. The rate on POTD of three years increased to 7 per cent from 5.5 per cent.

The interest rate offered by India's largest lender State Bank of India on deposits of one year to less than two years is 6.8 per

cent. SBI's interest rate on deposit of two years to less than three years is 7 per cent.

Banks have also revised upwards their external benchmark-based lending rates (EBLRs) by 250 bps during May 2022- March 2023 in tandem with the increase in the policy repo rate.

The marginal cost of funds-based lending rate (MCLR) - the internal benchmark for loan pricing - rose by 140 bps over the same period.

The weighted average lending rate (WALR) on sanctioned fresh rupee loans increased by 173 bps and that on outstanding rupee loans by 95 bps from May 2022 to February 2023.

It is to be noted here that the external benchmark-linked loans now dominate outstanding floating rate loans, with their share in total increasing from 44 per cent in March 2022 to 48.3 per cent in December 2022. (PTI)

## Families protest against death of 2 still born babies

Excelsior Correspondent

KATHUA, Apr 9: The death of two still born babies in Kathua Medical College evoked a strong protest today. The family members raised voice against the negligent deaths of two still born babies in GMC Kathua in two separate cases. Both the families termed it negligence of doctors on duty who have not taken care of pregnant women and did not give required treatment to them. The families were anguished over the mismanagement of Associated Hospital Government Medical College Kathua.

The anguished family member Varundeep Singh said that his pregnant wife, Anju was admitted yesterday for delivery when labour pain started. Despite the repeated requests to medical staff, the doctor did not conduct the cesarean of his wife following the complications in delivery.

After repeated requests when doctor conducted operation of the woman they found the baby has died inside the womb before delivery. The family members accused the doctor of negligence as no senior doctor was available in the hospital and they failed to save the life of the child.

In second case a pregnant woman who was regularly taking precautions and checkup at GMC but her baby also had died inside womb three days earlier. She was admitted in GMC with dead child inside womb. But despite passing of three days doctors did not conduct operation to deliver dead child. The family members are worried for life of woman and were demanding immediate operation. The two families were demanding the high-level enquiry into death of still born babies.

When both the families created hue and cry, the GMC Principal, Dr Surinder Attri reached the hospital. He said that he would enquire the matter and will take action against erring staff.

## Public demands Toilet facility at SDH Akhnoor

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Apr 9: The public visiting New Sub District Hospital, on Jourian Road in Akhnoor town, along with their patients and Market Association of the area, have expressed strong resentment over the non-availability of Toilet facilities/ Sulabh Shauchalya outside the new hospital complex in Akhnoor town.

Expressing serious concern

**Tirath Raj Kapal Mochan members hold meet**

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Apr 9: The members of Tirath Raj Kapal Mochan Shrine and Temple of District Shopian, Kashmir in a meeting today discussed various issues for the development of the shrine.

The meeting was informed that Rs three crore and eight lakh has been kept at the disposal of the historical shrine by the Government for its development.

The meeting however announced disbandment of Adhoc and Election Committees and deferment of the elections which were scheduled for today due to unavoidable circumstances.

**52 bottles of illicit liquor recovered**

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Apr 9: Police in Jammu's Miran Sahib area claimed today that they have recovered 52 bottles of illicit liquor from a bootlegger who has been arrested for the crime.

A police spokesperson said that special teams of Police Station Miran Sahib led by SDPO RS Pura Surinder Singh assisted by SHO Miran Sahib Inspector Zaheer Mushtaq during routine checking arrested one person identified as Kewal Krishan of Melowal, RS Pura, Jammu, along with 52 bottle of illicit liquor.

"The accused has been booked in case FIR number 72/2023 under section 48A of the Excise Act registered at Police Station Miran Sahib and further investigation started," he said.

over the insensitive attitude of the local Sub District Administration and Municipal Committee authorities at Akhnoor, the affected people said that over 2500 to 3000 people including over 60 percent of them women and children are visiting this hospital on daily basis since the opening of this new Sub District Hospital about two weeks ago at Akhnoor town, but no Toilet facility was created outside or adjoining this hospital.

They pointed out that a large new market has come up in the area with the shifting of hospital from old complex to the new one on Jourian Road near Church at Akhnoor. There is huge rush of public these days as many people from scores of adjoining villages visit the SDH. But there is no Sulabh Shauchalya in the area. Same problems are being faced by the members of Market Association. The attendants of the patients allege that doors of the toilets in the hospital complex usually remain locked and they face much inconvenience.

The Market Association and general public has demanded Toilet facility on urgent basis outside new SDH Akhnoor without any delay.

**Man injured in highway accident dies**

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Apr 9: A 30-year-old man, who suffered injuries in an accident on the Jammu-Srinagar Highway at Nagrota area on April 8, died today, police said.

SHO Nagrota, Vishav Partap Singh said that Sunny (30) son of Sohan Lal of House Number 360, Peer Kho, Jammu, was injured after he was hit by an unknown vehicle near Rajan Bar on the Jammu-Udhampur stretch of the highway, at around 9:45 yesterday.

"He was shifted to Government Medical College and Hospital Jammu, where he succumbed to his injuries at around 3:35 am today," the police officer said.

He said a case FIR number 132/2023 under relevant sections of the law has been registered at Police Station Nagrota and further investigation taken up.

## Religiosity/spirituality compliment Cardiovascular health: Dr Sushil

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Apr 9: In order to educate the masses regarding the ever importance of religion and spirituality in preventing cardiovascular diseases, Head Department of Cardiology SSH Jammu Dr Sushil Sharma held a day long cardiac awareness cum Health Check up camp at Village Jhiri in Marh area of Jammu during the culmination of Virat Vishnu yagya with a purpose to make people aware of this dimension of healthcare particularly with reference to cardiac ailments. More than 500 people were screened, evaluated, diagnosed and free medicines were given as per the requirements.

While interacting with the people, Dr Sushil stated that the relationship between health and religiosity is complex. Religiosity can influence the health behaviours of individuals with cardiovascular diseases (CVDs), such as coronary heart disease, hypertension and cerebrovascular disorders. CVDs are non-communicable chronic disorders that are highly prevalent globally and are the leading cause of morbidity and mortality worldwide.

He elaborated that Religiosity and spirituality can alter the expression of proteins associated with cardiovascular health, according to the results of a new analysis from the Study on Stress, Spirituality and Health (SSSH). Spirituality can also serve as a resource for resilience and have a protective effect. Individuals who were more religious were significantly more likely to have favourable health habits and fewer cardiovascular risk factors, except for a higher prevalence of overweight/obesity at baseline, he said.

Others who were part of the camp include Dr Nasir Ali Choudhary and Dr Dhaneshwar Kapoor. Paramedics and volunteers include Raghav Rajput, Kamal Sharma, Rajkumar, Amandeep Singh, Rajinder Singh, Mukesh Kumar, Rajnish Dogra, Gourav Kumar, Jatinder Bhasin, Ranjeet Thakur, Sandeep Sharma, Akshay Kumar, Manoj Sharma and Vikas Kumar.

Members of Tawi Welfare Society distribute relief among needy families.

## TWS distributes relief

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Apr 9: In a function organized at Apnavan in Sure Chak, Tawi Welfare Society (TWS) today distributed 80 packets (comprising one

blanket and one bed-sheet each) of relief among the needy families.

Dr. Alka Sharma, president Women Wing of Gandhi Global Family (GGF) was chief guest and Sumi Sahi was guest of honour.

Shifali Gupta, Advisor and Anju Salathia, senior member of GGF were also present at this occasion. Yash Paul Mangotra, general secretary and Nand Kishor, senior member of the Society briefed the invited guests about various activities undertaken by TWS for the needy and underprivileged section of the society.

TWS members also presented bouquet to the invited guests.

Dr. Alka Sharma and Sumi Sahi appreciated the work of TWS and assured full support of their Organization to the TWS in its future activities.

**Unidentified man found dead**

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Apr 9: An unidentified person was found dead under mysterious circumstances here at Bus Stand area today, police said.

They said a person aged around 27 years was found unconscious near Bus Stand area at around 7 am today. "He was taken to Government Medical College Jammu, where doctors declared him as dead on arrival," police said.

SHO Bus Stand Vishal Dogra said that the body has been shifted to the mortuary of the Medical College Jammu for post-mortem while as inquest proceedings under Section 174 of the CrPC have been initiated to ascertain the reasons behind the death of the unidentified person.



DPAP leaders & activists during the inaugural of party office at Janipur on Sunday.

## Maheshwar Manhas inaugurates DPAP office at Janipur

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Apr 9: Advocate Maheshwar Singh Manhas, Provincial General Secretary of Democratic Progressive Azad Party inaugurated the party office of Jammu North Assembly segment at Janipur, here today.

On the occasion, Mr Manhas started membership drive and asked the party workers to reach out to the people and get it completed before 30th April 2023.

He stressed that it was the need of the hour to reach out to the people and agitate their problems before the proper forum for their redressal. He assured the participants that DPAP is the only party with its tall leader Ghulam Nabi Azad who has a vision for the peace, prosperity and development of the J&K.

Mr Manhas added that DPAP is committed for the restoration of full statehood for J&K and further said that DPAP will ensure safety and security to every citizen so that they can enjoy life with dignity.

Participants assured their full support to the DPAP leadership. Prominent among those, who were present on the occasion, included Pawan Kumar (Raju Mahajan), founder member DPAP, Madan Pal Singh (Vice-President District Jammu), Sardar Harjeet Singh (Gen-Secretary), Divinder Khajuria, Pawan Kumar Bhagat, Vishal Abrol, Anil Sharma, Ajit Singh Manhas, Karan Singh Manhas, Om Singh Manhas, Swarn Singh Chib, Kishore Singh Chib, Arjun Singh Chib, Asif Hussain, Mir Hussain and others.

## MSJK demands Assembly elections in J&K

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Apr 9: Mission Statehood Jammu Kashmir (MSJK) has urged upon the Election Commissioner of India, Rajeev Kumar to announce dates for Assembly elections in J&K.

Addressing a press conference here today Sunil Dimple, MSJK president said that they met Election Commissioner of India and requested him to visit J&K as delay in holding Assembly election for the last eight years had created a lot of problems for people of the Union Territory in the absence of the elected government.

Dimple said the Election Commissioner of India assured them that they are ready for holding elections and have completed delimitation of Assembly constituencies along with completion of electoral rolls revision work.

The MSJK leader urged upon Union Home Minister, Amit Shah and J&K LG Manoj Sinha to write letters from their offices to the Election Commissioner of India to hold Assembly elections as soon as possible.

The MSJK leader also demanded restoration of special status to J&K and unification of Jammu, Kashmir, Ladakh along with PoJK and Gilgit-Baltistan.

**Two held with illicit liquor**

Excelsior Correspondent

DODA, Apr 9: Police here today arrested two liquor smugglers with illicit liquor.

Giving details Doda Police informed that cops from Police Station Doda led by PSI Sahil Sharma were on checking duty near Akramabad, Doda and while doing so they stopped a vehicle of TATA Mobile make bearing registration number JK06B/4501 coming from Bhagwah side and moving towards Doda.

It was driven by Ajeet Singh, son of Dharam Singh, resident of Birshalla, Tehsil Doda.

Another associate of the driver who was also travelling in the vehicle revealed his name as Pawan Kumar, son of Mehand Singh, resident of Bijami, Bhagwan in Doda.

During vehicle checking 50 bottles of JK Whisky were recovered which were being taken for selling illegally.

Both liquor smugglers were arrested and a case in FIR number 62/2023 was registered at Police Station Doda under relevant section and investigation has been started.

**Surjeet is president of SPWA Gandhi Nagar**

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Apr 9: Small Plots Welfare Association (SPWA) Park-2 Gandhi Nagar here today in its general body meeting reconstituted the existing committee of the Association.

As per handout of the Association, Sat Pal Sharma has been elected as chief patron of the Association; Surjeet Singh, president; Amit Sharma, vice president; T.R Sharma, general secretary; Shiv Pal Sharma, publicity secretary; Jyoti Parkash, cashier and Romesh Kumar, organizing secretary.

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JAMMU, Apr 9: On the directions of Chief Electoral Officer, J&K, P K Pole, special camps are being held for enrollment of migrants in the electoral rolls and create voter awareness among the people regarding electoral process.

The aim of holding such camps is to reach out to young



Bohri Shopkeepers Association after elections on Sunday.

## Vijay Sharma elected chairman of Bohri Shopkeepers Association

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Apr 9: Vijay Sharma has been elected as chairman of Bohri Shopkeepers Association, while Nischal Sawhney as president of the Association, here today.

It was decided in a meeting of the office bearers, which was held under the presidency of Nischal Sawhney, wherein Vijay Sharma elected unanimously as chairman of the Association.

## Pir Panjal belt facing total neglect: Rana

Excelsior Correspondent

MENDHAR, Apr 9: The Jammu and Kashmir National Conference Pir Panjal Zonal president, Javed Ahmed Rana today said that NC has the record of equitable development of all the areas of Jammu and Kashmir during its governance but it is quite unfortunate that now a significant number of areas have been ignored in terms of development.

While addressing a public meeting Sangote village in Balakote area of Pir Panjal today, Rana said, the blatant discrimination against NC bastions got accelerated after abrogation of Articles 370 and 35-A.

Consequently, the people of the aforesaid areas are living in miserable conditions with no one in Administration to listen to their woes.

He said that only National Conference will end these miseries and bring these areas back on track of development. "We will secure a fully-fledged Administrative Unit for the Pir Panjal region as already assured by NC leadership. Moreover, NC will upgrade Mendhar, Kalakote, Surankote and Dharhal areas, respectively to ensure ease of living and equitable development in the aforesaid areas," he added.

**Spl camp held at Pune to enrol migrants in electoral rolls**

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