

Channi quizzed for 7 hours

CHANDIGARH, Apr 14: Former Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi today appeared before the Vigilance Bureau in connection with a disproportionate assets matter and was questioned by the officials for seven hours.

Channi described the probe as "totally political".

Emerging out from Vigilance Bureau's Mohali office in the evening, Channi again slammed the AAP Government, alleging that "this Government is treating worse than even the Mughals. They want to use every way to humiliate and defame."

"In democracy, this is not (Contd on page 4 Col 3)

Rahul starts shifting belongings

NEW DELHI, Apr 14: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has started shifting his belongings from his 12, Tughlaq Lane residence as he was asked to vacate the premises by April 22 following his disqualification from Lok Sabha.

Two trucks were seen parked outside his residence and the belongings were later shifted to his mother's 10, Janpath residence.

Sources said Gandhi is likely to soon vacate the official bungalow allotted to him.

While Rahul Gandhi has seen a number of houses, he may also opt to stay with his mother and Congress Parliamentary Party chairperson Sonia Gandhi.

(Contd on page 4 Col 5)

151 test COVID +ve in J&K

Jammu and Kashmir today reported 151 fresh cases of COVID-19, 57 from Jammu Division and 94 from Kashmir valley.

According to the reports, highest number of 38 cases were reported from Jammu district, followed by 27 from Srinagar, 15 from Budgam, 10 each from Pulwama and Anantnag, 9 from Ganderbal, 8 each from Baramulla, Kupwara and Kishtwar, 4 each from Kulgam, Udhampur and Doda, 3 from Bandipora and 1 each from Rajouri, Kathua and Ramban districts.

As per reports, a total of (Contd on page 4 Col 1)

28 tourists caught carrying fake Gandola tickets

SRINAGAR, Apr 14: At the renowned ski resort Gulmarg in the Baramulla district of North Kashmir, at least 28 visitors from Mumbai were found in possession of fraudulent Gondola tickets.

Officials today said that the tour operator from Mumbai had provided the passengers with these fraudulent tickets.

In a statement issued here in this regard, Jammu and Kashmir Cable Car Corporation (JKCCC) said the ticket scan- (Contd on page 4 Col 3)

Will ensure smooth, hassle-free pilgrimage: LG 62-day long Shri Amarnath yatra from July 1-Aug 31

Registration to start from Apr 17

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Apr 14: The 62-day long Shri Amarnathji Yatra will commence on 1st July this year and culminate on 31st August.

Further, the registration through online & offline modes for the yatra will start from 17th April.

Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha while announcing the dates for holy pilgrimage and registration today said the administration is committed to ensure smooth and hassle free pilgrimage.

"Hassle-free pilgrimage is top priority of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Shri Amit Shah. The administration will provide best-in-class healthcare and other essential facilities to all the visiting devotees and service providers. Telecom services will be made operational prior to the commencement of pilgrimage. All the stakeholder departments are working in coordination to

ensure facilities for lodging, power, water, security and other arrangements for the smooth conduct of yatra," the Lt Governor said.

The yatra would commence simultaneously from both the routes - the Pahalgam track in Anantnag district and Baltal in Ganderbal district.

The Lt Governor also directed the officials to ensure high levels of cleanliness and to take necessary intervention for sanitation and waste management.

Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board (SASB) will also enable live telecast of morning and evening Aarti (prayers) for devotees across the globe. Shri Amarnathji Yatra's App has been made available on the Google play store to get real time information about the Yatra, weather and for availing several services online.

During the 44th meeting of SASB chaired by the Lt Governor, the members and officials had reviewed various aspects of Shri Amarnathji

Yatra-2023, including registration, provision of helicopter services, service providers, camps, langars and insurance cover for Yatriis.

During 2022, the pilgrimage lasted 43 days from June 30 to August 11. Pilgrimage was not held in 2020 and 2021 due to COVID and only 'Chhari Pujan' was performed.

In 2019, the yatra was curtailed by about 15 days ahead of August 5 decisions of the Central Government to abrogate special status of erstwhile State and bifurcate it into two Union Territories of J&K and Ladakh.

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha had chaired the 44th meeting of Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board (SASB) at Raj Bhawan on March 31 to discuss arrangements and duration of the pilgrimage.

The Chief Engineer BRO had briefed the meeting on the progress regarding maintenance, restoration & development works on the yatra tracks.

CBI summons Kejriwal in excise scam

NEW DELHI, Apr 14:

The CBI today summoned Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on April 16 in connection with the excise policy scam case, in which his former Deputy Manish Sisodia was arrested last month.

According to the notice issued by the CBI, Kejriwal has been called to appear at the agency headquarters at 11 am on Sunday to answer queries of the investigating team as a witness in the case, officials said.

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) called it a conspiracy and confirmed that Kejriwal will appear before the agency on Sunday.

There are allegations that money raised from tweaking the policy in favour of certain liquor dealers and the South lobby was suspected to be pumped in for election purposes by the AAP, which is under the probe as part of the money trail, agency sources said.

They said the process of policy formulation and influence of South lobby, besides changes in the draft stages, was in the know of the Chief Minister, which makes it necessary to put questions to him.

(Contd on page 4 Col 1)



Nomads on their way to Valley through Mughal Road at Pir-Ki-Gali in South Kashmir's Shopian district.

Approval by UT Govt soon after MHA nod J&K finalizes Anti-Encroachment Policy, top officials discuss it with Home Ministry

7 lakh kanals still under unauthorized occupation

Sanjeev Pargal

JAMMU, Apr 14: Jammu and Kashmir administration has submitted Anti-Encroachment Policy to the Union Ministry of Home Affairs and it will be released shortly by the Union Territory Government after nod by the Home Ministry.

Certain sections of society, mostly the poor, who have very minor encroachments on land used for construction of one or two room small houses or a small shop and kiosks are expected to be exempted from purview of anti-encroachment drive, official sources told the Excelsior.

They said the Union Home Ministry is likely to clear the Policy shortly after which the UT Government will release it and all future anti-encroachment operations will be carried out strictly based on the policy document which will be in public domain.

The Policy has reportedly stated that 6-7 lakh kanals of Government land is still under

illegal occupation of the people, mostly influential persons. This include residential, commercial, agriculture, kaicharaal and other State land.

"We have compiled entire data including the encroachments which have been removed during special drive launched by the Jammu and Kashmir Government and the land which is still under possession of encroachers all across the Union Territory," sources said.

The report has been prepared at district as well as divisional levels, they added.

Encroachments are high in Jammu and Srinagar districts but they are not less in other districts as well.

As per the sources, limit of the ceiling for the land which has to be exempted from the purview of anti-encroachment drive will be decided by the Union Home Ministry in consultations with Jammu and Kashmir Government before approval of the Policy.

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha has repeatedly stated that influential persons will not be

spared while poor people will not be touched after resumption of anti-encroachment drive. Even in the previous drive, similar was the case in which poor persons were not affected.

Sinha had stated that some influential persons have encroached Government land for their next four generations and all such land will be evicted.

During the previous drive, land from many influential persons running into hundreds of crores has been vacated.

Sources said the Jammu and Kashmir administration has given detailed briefing to the Union Home Ministry officials on anti-encroachment drives undertaken so far in Jammu and Kashmir, land evicted from influential persons and new policy drafted by the administration.

"The drive will be resumed once the policy is announced by the UT Government after nod from the MHA," sources said.

They said after removal of encroachments from the State land and carrying forward the (Contd on page 4 Col 3)

One killed, 64 injured as overloaded steel footbridge collapses during Baisakhi Mela

Nishikant Khajuria

UDHAMPUR, Apr 14: Tragedy struck Baisakhi celebration fair at Beni Sangam temple in Chenani block when a footbridge collapsed due to overloading resulting into death of a minor girl and

The mishap took place around 2.30 pm in Beni Sangam village of Bain in Chenani block, where a large number of people had assembled for the Baisakhi Mela.

The footbridge suddenly collapsed due to overloading thus resulting into injuries to at least 64 persons, who were part of the

huge gathering assembled there from the adjoining areas of Udhampur district for participation in annual Baisakhi Mela at Beni Sangam temple.

Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Ramesh Kumar told the Excelsior that an inquiry has been ordered into the mishap even as the bridge was not con-

structed by any Government agency but the temple management committee on its own.

"DC Udhampur will conduct the inquiry for ascertaining the reasons that led to the mishap and submit a report within 15 days," he said.

On getting news about the mishap, Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh, who represents Udhampur - Kathua Parliamentary constituency in the Lok Sabha, immediately established contact with DC Udhampur and issued necessary directions for all possible assistance to the victims.

"I'm in touch with DC #Udhampur Kritika Jyotsana after receiving the report of the accident. My office is in touch (Contd on page 4 Col 7)



Collapsed footbridge at Beni Sangam in Chenani.

[*Watch video on www.excelsiornews.com](#)

injuries to 64 persons, including several children and women, here today.

Some of the injured were referred to Government Medical College Hospital Jammu where one of them, a 10-year old girl, succumbed to her injuries while more than a dozen others were undergoing treatment at District Hospital Udhampur and Sub-District Hospital Chenani.

No DPC conducted for 3 yrs, 81 MOs await confirmation as Consultants

95 I/C CMOs regularized after 9 yrs: Comm/Secy

Gopal Sharma

JAMMU, Apr 14: At least 81 Medical Officers possessing Post Graduation qualification and posted as In-charge Consultants in the Health Department are waiting for their confirmation/regularization on the said post for the past over three years.

Official sources said that against 151 posts kept reserved by the J&K Health and Medical Education department, 81 in service Medical Officers with

Post Graduation (PG) qualification in various disciplines were appointed as In-charge Consultants vide Govt order No. 145-JK(HME) of 2020 on 11-02-2020 by the then Financial Commissioner, Health and Medical Education Department, Atal Dulloo.

This urgency was felt as many posts of specialist doctors, especially in far-flung areas across J&K were lying vacant. The Government wanted to provide immediate relief to the suffering people in remote and far off districts and Sub Divisions.

These Medical Officers were posted immediately after their appointment as In-charge Consultants in their own pay and grade, and asked to join their duty within 15 days, except those who were undergoing Registrar-ship in various Govt Medical Colleges. The newly appointed Consultants under going Registrar-ship were directed to join their respective places of postings immediately after completion of their course.

Sources further said that the Jammu and Kashmir Health and Family Welfare (Gazetted) Service Recruitment Rules 2006 were modified and amended vide SRO-325 of 12-07-2013, where in 60% posts were kept for direct quota candidates (PGs) while 40% promotion avenues were kept for the in-service Medical Officers having Post Graduates Degree/ Diploma in respective discipline recognized by Medical Council of India (MCI) with at least two years experience after PG for the posts of Consultants.

(Contd on page 4 Col 3)

MoU to be signed with IRCON, NBCC shortly 42 new Industrial Estates being established in J&K, over 48,000 kanals land identified

3379 applications approved with Rs 34,294 cr proposed investment

Mohinder Verma

JAMMU, Apr 14: Forty two new Industrial Estates are being established in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir for which 48,301 kanals of additional land has been earmarked by the Government. Moreover, 3379 applications have been approved with proposed investment of Rs 34,294 crore and employment potential of 1.54 lakh persons.

As per the official document of the Government of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, at present 5294 indus-

trial units are functioning in 67 Industrial Estates developed by SIDCO and SICOP on 37,341 kanals land thereby providing employment to 1.09 lakh people.

Additional 48,301 kanals of land has been earmarked for development of 42 new Industrial Estates. Of these, IRCON and NBCC will be developing 19 new Industrial Estates on priority and draft Memorandum of Understanding is being finalized in this regard by the Industries and Commerce Department.

As per the document, 5327 online applications were received on the Single Window

Portal for allotment of land to set up industrial units with investment and employment potential of Rs 65,000 crore and 3.12 lakh persons respectively. Of these, 3379 applications have been approved so far with proposed investment of Rs 34,294 crore and employment potential of 1.54 lakh persons. Moreover, private investment of Rs 1539.87 crore has been grounded during the Financial Year 2022-23 (ending January 2023), out of which Rs 949.21 crore is for 552 units which have commenced productions and operations.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been executed by the Government of J&K UT with the Government of Dubai for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) of over Rs 500 crore for development of two Information Technology (IT) towers and a shopping mall.

"J&K Government is in the process of identification of 54 kanals land for IT towers and 100 kanals land for the shopping mall with potential to employ 4500 and 7500 people respectively", the document said, adding "Apollo Group has also moved papers (Contd on page 4 Col 5)

Dogra village showcased at Mubarak Mandi Baisakhi celebrated with religious fervour, gaiety across J&K

Avtar Bhat

JAMMU/SRINAGAR, Apr 14: Baisakhi, marking the beginning of the New Year, birth of Khalsa Panth and signifying beginning of harvesting season was celebrated with religious fervour and gaiety across Jammu and Kashmir today. The day also signifies beginning of Spring season.

In connection with Baisakhi celebration, colourful and glittering functions were held at various places across Jammu region in which thousands of people participated.

A three-day Baisakhi festival is underway at Mubarak Mandi here which started yester-



People making purchases from various stalls at Canal road during Baisakhi festival on Friday. Another pic on page 4.

day after a Shoba Yatra was taken out from Maharaja Hari Singh Park to Mubarak Mandi.

As usual, the Baisakhi Mela

The people attired in colourful costumes participated in the mela while children were seen busy in enjoying fun and frolic. To beat the scorching heat, the youth and children were seen taking a dip in the icy cold Ranbir canal waters. It was heyday for hawkers and vendors who had installed stalls of eatables including bakery and confectionary, besides fun and frolic items. The people were seen enjoying mela to the hilt making purchases and enjoying delicious lip smacking food items and wishing Baisakhi greetings

[*Watch video on www.excelsiornews.com](#)

(Contd on page 4 Col 5)

No prayers allowed at Jamia Masjid Thousands attend Jummat-ul-Vida prayers at Hazratbal

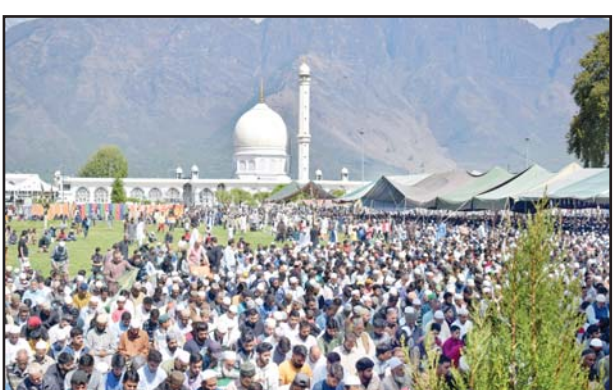
Fayaz Bukhari

SRINAGAR, Apr 14: Thousands of people offered prayers at Hazratbal shrine here on the occasion of Jummat-ul-Vida while the prayers were not allowed at the historic Jamia Masjid in Nowhatta area of Srinagar.

[*Watch video on www.excelsiornews.com](#)

All the shrines and Masjids across Kashmir witnessed a huge rush of devotees on the eve of Jummat-ul-Vida.

The biggest congregation was held at Hazratbal shrines on the bank of Dal lake where thousands of Muslims prayed and



Thousands attend prayers on Jummat-ul-Vida at Hazratbal shrine in Srinagar.

special occasions, remained closed for the prayers. All the four gates of the Jamia Masjid were locked.

Large congregations were also witnessed in others Masjids and shrines including Masjid Jamiat-e-Ahlehadiith, Gawkadal, Asar-e-Sharif, Janab Sahib Saura, Asar-e-Sharif Shehri Kalashpora, Ziarat-e-Makhdoom Sahib, Khanqah-e-Mualla and different Imambaras.

The biggest congregational prayers were also witnessed at several other shrines in different districts, including Char-e-Sharif in Budgam, Khiram Sirhama and Hazratbal

However, the historic Jamia Masjid where usually huge rush of people is being witnessed on (Contd on page 4 Col 3)