

Complete bandh in Leh, Kargil

Excelsior Correspondent

LEH, Apr 17: Leh and Kargil towns of the Ladakh Union Territory observed a shutdown today in support of His Holiness Dalai Lama.

Led by the Ladakh Buddhist

*** Pic on page 4**
Video on
www.excelsiornews.com

Association (LBA), the protesters condemned the conspiracy to defame the Dalai Lama and extended support to him.

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7 more live shells defused in Kargil

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Apr 17: A day after an unexploded shell of 1999 war killed a teenager and injured two others after they fiddled with it, Army today

■ Pic on page 4

defused seven more shells in Kurbathang area of Kargil.

Army launched the sanitization operation in Kurbathang following yesterday's blast, this morning and detected seven shells with the help of local

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Army jawan held for killing of 4 soldiers

CHANDIGARH/NEW DELHI, Apr 17:

An Army jawan has been arrested for allegedly killing four soldiers at the Bathinda Military Station with a stolen assault rifle, an official said today.

Gunner Desai Mohan had earlier claimed that he saw two men with a rifle and an axe near the site of the firing at the military base in Punjab, Bathinda

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SIT to probe killing of Atiq, brother

LUCKNOW, Apr 17:

A Special Investigation Team (SIT) has been formed to probe the killing of Atiq Ahmad and Ashraf, even as the three assailants who shot the two brothers were shifted from the Prayagraj Central Prison to a Pratapgarh jail today.

The shifting of the shooters to the Pratapgarh District Jail was done on administrative grounds, officials said.

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Govt Panel reviews IWT modification

NEW DELHI, Apr 17:

A top Government Panel today took stock of the ongoing modification process of the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT), a pact that was inked 62 years back between India and Pakistan for the management of cross-border rivers.

On January 25, India issued a notice to Pakistan seeking a review and modification of the treaty following Islamabad's "intransigence" in handling certain disputes.

Earlier this month, India said it has received Pakistan's response to

(Contd on page 4 Col 7)

Shahid, Asghar get PM's award

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Apr 17: Dr Shahid Iqbal Choudhary, CEO Mission Youth J&K and Secretary to Government, and DC Baramulla Dr Syed Sehrish Asghar have been selected for the coveted Prime Minister's Award for Excellence in Public Administration, India's highest award in civil services.

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha congratulated Dr Choudhary and Asghar for the prestigious award.

Shahid who has been conferred the PM award for record 3rd time clinched the recognition being at the top innovations among all States and UTs for Mission Youth while

Provisions finalized, final approval soon
UT Govt ready with Policy to allot land to landless people for PMAY houses

Sanjeev Pargal

JAMMU, Apr 17: The Union Territory Government is almost ready with Land Allotment Policy to the poor people for construction of houses under Prime Minister's Awas Yojana for the landless people as there was no provision hitherto to allot land to the people and houses were being constructed only for those people who had land on their names.

Few days back, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha had made an important announcement in this regard saying there was no law in Jammu and Kashmir to allot land to the people who don't possess it for construction of their houses under the Prime Minister's Awas Yojana and that the Government will shortly come out with law so that landless people get houses under the PMAY.

Official sources told the Excelsior that the administration is now ready with the laws for allotment of Government land to the landless people to

Retrieved land may also be utilized

facilitate construction of houses under the Prime Minister's Awas Yojana in both urban as well as rural areas.

"The laws are likely to be approved by the Administrative Council headed by the Lieutenant Governor shortly after which the Land Allotment Policy will come into force," they said.

As per the sources, the Government could utilize some of the land recovered during anti-encroachment drive in January-February this year for allotment to landless people specifically for the purpose of construction of houses where the land is fit for residential purposes. In other cases, the land will be allotted in other areas where State land is available and houses can be constructed.

During anti-encroachment drive, the Lieutenant Governor had stated that encroached land retrieved from the people will

be utilized for construction of schools, hospitals and other such places of public purposes.

During current financial year of 2023-24, Jammu and Kashmir has been allotted 40,000 new houses for houseless families under Prime Minister's Awas Yojana-G, 18934 dwelling units were completed under PMAY-U while 87,350 IHHLs and 2500 CSCs are to be constructed.

"The problem in Jammu and Kashmir was that some poor people who deserved houses under Prime Minister's Awas Yojana didn't have land on their names. Therefore, houses couldn't be constructed for them. Further, there was no law for allotment of land to landless people for construction of houses unlike other States and Union Territories which have provision to give land to the people for raising the houses sanctioned under PMAY," sources said.

In view of this, they added, the Jammu and Kashmir Government had to come out with provision to allot land to the landless people before they could be sanctioned house for construction under the PMAY.

"I don't have to contest elections here nor I have to do politics but no laws were made to give land to the poor. And when they don't have the land how they will construct houses whether it is Prime Minister's Awas Yojana (PMAY) or any other scheme. Now, we are going to make the law shortly. This will ensure that the poor people who don't have land will get land and houses also," the Lieutenant Governor had said in a function here last month.

Describing the decision as "historic", sources said this will go a long way in helping the landless people to avail benefits under the Prime Minister's Awas Yojana.

Sources said a number of houses under the PMAY are likely to be completed by the end of current financial year in March next.

For first time, BRO to maintain both tracks
Registration for holy Amarnath Ji yatra begins in 542 bank branches across country

Avtar Bhat

JAMMU, Apr 17: With 62-day long holy Amarnath Ji annual yatra is all set to start on July 1 this year, the country wide offline registration has started in 542 Bank branches today while Shri Amarnath

*** Watch video on**
www.excelsiornews.com

Shrine Board (SASB) this time has taken various out of box decisions for the safety and hassle-free pilgrimage.

Hundreds of devotees including men and women of Baba Barfani situated at an altitude of 3888 meters in deep Himalayas of South Kashmir from early in the morning



People standing before a registration counter for their enrolment in Jammu chanting Baba Barfani Ki Jai on Monday.

thronged different bank branches to get themselves registered for this year's pilgrimage.

The intending yatri who were high in spirits were very

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CE PHE/I&FC Ladakh attached

Excelsior Correspondent

LEH, Apr 17: Commissioner Secretary of PHE, Irrigation and Flood Control Department of Union Territory of Ladakh has attached Chief Engineer of the department Sumeet Kumar Puri with the Administrative Department with immediate effect.

"Pending decisions on his un-authorized absence and leaving of the Headquarters without

(Contd on page 4 Col 1)

SIU charge sheets militants

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, Apr 17: The Special Investigation Unit (SIU) Baramulla today produced a charge sheet before the court of Additional Sessions Judge (NIA Court) Baramulla against militants.

The charge sheet was produced in a case (FIR No. 40/2022 under Section 3.I.A Act 13,16,18,18-B,38 UAP Act) registered at Police Station Sheeri.

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53 test COVID +ve in J&K

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Apr 17: A total of 53 new COVID-19 positive cases were reported today from Jammu and Kashmir, 28 from Jammu division and 25 from Kashmir valley.

The highest number of 15 cases were reported from Jammu district, followed by 7 from Pulwama, 6 from Anantnag, 5 from Ramban, 4 from Kulgam, 3 from Udhampur, 2 each from Kathua,

(Contd on page 4 Col 7)

Rs 6 cr non-existent works in Kupwara
KPDCL attaches X-En, AEE, JE in solar lights scam

Fayaz Bukhari

SRINAGAR, Apr 17: The Kashmir Power Distribution Corporation Limited (KPDCL) attached three engineers including Executive Engineer while an inquiry has been ordered against them for withdrawing Rs 6 crores for non-existent works in Kupwara.

The Superintendent Engineer Sopore has been asked to conduct the inquiry on the basis of the report received from the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB).

Those attached include Executive Engineer Electric Division Kulgam, Shamim Ahmad who was transferred from Kupwara recently, Assistant Engineer Mudassir Ismael and Junior Engineer Manzoor Hassan Chowdhry.

The ACB has found that Rs 6 Cr was withdrawn from the treasury which was shown to be spent for the procurement and

installation of over 3,600 solar street lights in Kupwara.

During physical verification, not a single solar light was found installed by Electric Division Kupwara in the territorial jurisdiction of Electric Sub-Division Kupwara and Electric Sub-Division Trehgam.

The expose came after people of Kupwara had complained that officials of the Electric Division (ED) had withdrawn over Rs 6 crore from the treasury for works not executed or non-existent on ground.

During the spot inspections, the ACB teams observed that a payment of Rs 6.12 crore had been made illegally to four contractor firms without installing the allotted solar lights.

Subsequently, the ACB has written to the Government's General Administration Department and recommended action against the delinquent officials including cancellation of the tender and recovery of the

payments. AEE Sub Division Kupwara conveyed to Executive Engineer ED Kupwara vide letter No: ESDK/1242-44 dated 28-03-2023 that execution of the allotted works was not possible at the fag end of the financial year in two or three days.

Similar communication came to Executive Engineer ED Kupwara from AEE Sub Division Trehgam on 28-03-2023. It read: "It is impossible for the contractors / Sub Division to complete the erection of poles and installation of solar lights nearly 02 or 03 thousand solar lights. Else it is difficult for sub division to make billing against such a work when nothing is executed on ground".

But Executive Engineer ED Kupwara got the bills prepared through Assistant Engineer Stores, Mudassir Ismail, and JE Store Manzoor Hassan Choudhary instead of the authorised territorial AEEs and JEs.

Will get ALC certificate after Committee report
LG sets up Panel for reservation to people living on LoC, LAC in Ladakh

Quota in Central Govt, UT jobs

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Apr 17: In a major announcement aimed at benefiting the people living along Line of Control (LoC) with Pakistan in Kargil and Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China in Leh, Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh Brig (Retired) BD Mishra today announced constitution of a Committee for issuing certificates to these people for reservation in Government jobs at the Centre as well as the Union Territory.

The all important announcement was made by the Lieutenant Governor while interacting with a delegation of the local people.

Mishra addressed the demand for Actual Line of Control (ALC) certificates from Ladakh's border areas and assured the formation of a Committee to investigate the

issue and the need for a special package for these regions, an official statement said.

The delegation apprised the Lieutenant Governor of their grievances and requested his intervention to address their issues and ensure appropriate action.

Feroz Khan, Chief Executive Councilor (CEC), Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC) Kargil, said the people living along LoC with Pakistan and Drass to Batalik in Kargil and LAC with China in Eastern Ladakh enjoyed reservation in Government jobs in the Government of India as well as the Union Territory of Ladakh.

However, these reservations hadn't been notified.

"The Government Committee will identify the areas which will be covered under reservation in ALC category," sources said, adding

the people living in five kilometres area along LoC and International Border enjoy reservation in the Government jobs in Jammu & Kashmir.

However, the area (up to kilometers) will be recommended by the Committee set up today by the Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, the sources said, adding members to the Panel will be nominated by Brig Mishra shortly.

"As soon as the Committee submits its recommendations, the Government will come out with the policy," sources said.

They added that this was long pending demand of the people which has been addressed by the Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh as reservation in the jobs will go a long way to help the people living under tough circumstances along LoC with Pakistan in

(Contd on page 4 Col 7)

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