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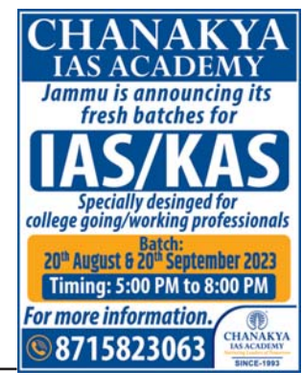


DB directives in PIL on Mubarak Mandi Complex

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Aug 17: A Division Bench of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh High Court comprising Chief Justice N Kotiswar Singh and Justice M A Chowdhary has issued several directions to the respondents in a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) seeking restoration of historic Mubarak Mandi complex.

In the order passed on April

(Contd on page 4 Col 5)

Govt freezes AUs' boundaries

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, Aug 17: The Government of Jammu and Kashmir has frozen the boundaries of Districts, Tehsils, Municipalities, Towns, Revenue

**Watch video on www.excelsiornews.com*

Villages and other Administrative Units till completion of Census 2021.

A notification issued by Planning, Development and Monitoring department in this

(Contd on page 4 Col 5)

JPDCL X-En booked for anti-PM remarks

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Aug 17: Rajouri Police today registered a First Information Report (FIR) against JPDCL Executive Engineer Tassaduq Hussain Sheikh for passing serious derogatory remarks against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and minorities.

A resident of Panjpeer, Rajouri, Sheikh has been booked under Section 153-A at

(Contd on page 4 Col 5)

BJP expels Ladakh VP

Excelsior Correspondent

LEH, Aug 17: BJP Ladakh UT president Phunchok Stanzin has expelled party's vice president Nazir Ahmed from primary membership of the party with immediate effect.

Nazir was relieved of all responsibilities as UT vice president and his primary membership revoked after his son Manzoor Ahmed eloped with a Buddhist girl.

"The incident is unacceptable to all religious communi-

(Contd on page 4 Col 3)

WB man held with pistol

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, Aug 17: A man from West Bengal was arrested today with a pistol that he had stolen from a house here, police said.

Lokesh Kumar, a native of West Bengal's Alipurduar, who is currently living in Elahi Bagh Soura area was arrested at a joint naka at Regal Chowk in the early hours of the day, Srinagar police said on X, formerly Twitter.

According to a police

(Contd on page 4 Col 3)

'Not even 0.1 pc share of G&B will be cut due to quota to Paharis'

Will use Kashmir-like strategy to finish militancy in Rajouri, Poonch: LG

Under conspiracy, migrants' posts were not filled earlier

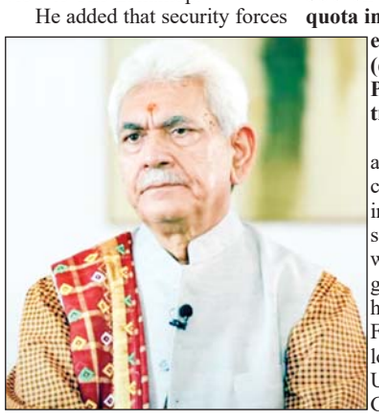
Sanjeev Pargal

JAMMU, Aug 17: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha has said that the strategy adopted by security and Intelligence agencies to finish militancy in the Kashmir valley will also be used in twin border districts of Rajouri and Poonch region which has witnessed certain incidents this year.

"Our focus was on Kashmir where we had adopted 360 degree approach to maintain peace. We succeeded to a large extent. Jammu earlier was peaceful but Rajouri and Poonch districts witnessed unfortunate incidents.

"After killings of civilians at Dhangri (in Rajouri) and Army personnel in the two districts; now Army, paramilitary forces and Jammu and Kashmir Police have adopted same strategy in the two districts which was being followed in the Kashmir valley to maintain peace and finish militancy," Sinha said in an interview to The Lallantop.

He added that security forces



have achieved successes recently in the border districts and threat of militancy will soon be tackled.

Charging certain political parties with playing politics over reservation bill of Paharis, the Lieutenant Governor categorically assured Gujjars and Bakerwals that there will not be even 0.1 percent loss of their quota in Government jobs and educational institutions (due to inclusion of Paharis and other tribes in the ST list).

"Their (the Gujjars and Bakerwals) 10 percent reservation will stay intact. If they get 500 seats in reservation, they will not lose even a single seat. Moreover, we have also given them Forest Rights and taken lot of initiatives for them. Under Narendra Modi Government, they benefitted a lot though earlier they were only used as vote bank," he said and added that there was no need to compare situation with Manipur.

At the same time, Sinha said, there was a long pending demand from the Paharis for reservation. Union Home Minister Amit Shah in his speech in Parliament on J&K Reorganization bill had stated that those deprived of their rights will get their due. Paharis reside not only in Rajouri and Poonch districts but also in Baramulla and Kupwara, he pointed out.

Sinha declared that there can be no special treatment to political leaders in granting appointments for meeting him but maintained that Farooq Abdullah and M Y Tarigami met him before start of Shri Amarnath Ji yatra but Mehbooba Mufti didn't turn up and sent her representative.

"If Omar Abdullah comes, I will meet him but there can be no special treatment to anyone," he asserted.

To a question that whether Farooq Abdullah's house also falls in the list of land encroachments, Sinha said action will be taken against all those who have encroached the Government land. People will know whether

(Contd on page 4 Col 1)

Will attend youth, sports functions

Rahul in Leh, to meet Cong leaders tomorrow

Excelsior Correspondent

LEH, Aug 17: Senior Congress leader and Lok Sabha member Rahul Gandhi reached here today on a two-day visit of the Union Territory of Ladakh to a warm welcome from the UT Congress leaders and workers.

The Congress leader arrived at Kushok Bakula Rimpochee Airport in the afternoon when he was given a warm welcome by Congress leaders and activists of the Ladakh Congress Committee and Youth Congress besides other wings of the party.

A large crowd had gathered

**Watch video on www.excelsiornews.com*

outside the airport to catch a glimpse of the leader who during his Bharat Jodo Yatra was unable to visit Ladakh. He had said he would soon visit Leh.

Rahul met senior leaders at the Airport and later left for Grand Dragon Hotel, where he is scheduled to acclimatize for rest of the day before beginning with his rounds of meetings tomorrow.

Rahul Gandhi will meet people and also senior Congress leaders and his visit will be confined to Leh district, the senior leaders said.

He is likely to interact with youth leaders in Leh tomorrow and is also expected to attend a sports function.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi receives warm welcome at Leh Airport as he arrives on a two-day visit to Ladakh on Thursday.(UNI)

Rahul may also meet Ladakh UT Congress leaders to assess party's performance as Lok Sabha elections are due in April and the Congress has lost lone Lok Sabha seat in Ladakh for two consecutive terms to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

As of now, the Congress leader has no plans to visit Kargil district of Ladakh where the party has tied up with National Conference for Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC) Kargil elections scheduled early next month.

During 'Bharat Jodo Yatra', Rahul had given enough time to Jammu and Kashmir travelling from Lakhanpur to Srinagar but hadn't visited the Union Territory of Ladakh then.

As per the party leaders, Rahul could hold detailed discussions with the UT level party leaders on how to win Ladakh Lok Sabha seat and strengthen the Congress.

The Congress leaders are likely to brief Rahul Gandhi about situation prevailing along Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Eastern Ladakh as he has been targeting the Central

(Contd on page 4 Col 1)

Chandrayaan's exclusive findings to benefit entire world: Dr Jitendra

Excelsior Correspondent

NEW DELHI, Aug 17: Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology; MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr Jitendra Singh today said the exclusive findings and inputs from Chandrayaan-3 will benefit the entire world community.

Speaking to the media after the Chandrayaan-3 mission achieved another historic feat when the "Vikram" lander module of the spacecraft, carrying the Pragyan rover, successfully detached itself from the propulsion module in its onward lunar journey, Dr Jitendra Singh said, even though the USA and the then USSR had started their

Space journey long before us and America also landed a human being on the surface of Moon in 1969, it was nevertheless our Chandrayaan that brought home the pictures of water on the surface of Moon and startled the entire world including the Americans.

"We always heard imaginary fiction and asked ourselves whether there were any people living on the Moon, but for the first time Chandrayaan's findings prompted the world community to find scientific answers to these mysteries," he added.

Dr Jitendra Singh said that India will be the fourth country in the world to achieve this feat after the United States, Russia and China, but India will be the only country in the world to land on the lunar South Pole.

Dr Jitendra Singh expressed confidence that the Mission is designed in such a way that there will be a safe landing of Chandrayaan-3 on 23rd August, 2023 between 5.30 PM to 6.00 PM. He said, every Indian and the whole world is watching every moment and waiting with bated breath for the final outcome.

Dr Jitendra Singh told the media persons that Chandrayaan-3 is a follow-on mission of Chandrayaan-2 and is aimed to demonstrate India's capability in soft landing and roving on the surface of the Moon or the Lunar surface. The complex mission profile, he said, required for the Spacecraft to enter the Moon's orbit has been executed very precisely.

"After the successful landing of Chandrayaan-3 on the surface of the Moon, the rover, which has six wheels, will come out and is expected to work for 14 days on the Moon. With the support of multiple cameras on the rover, we will be able to receive images", he said.

(Contd on page 4 Col 1)

'Petitioners have no role in agreement between J&K, Punjab'

HC provides long overdue relief to owners of land submerged due to Ranjit Sagar dam

Mohinder Verma

Directs Govt to pay compensation, statutory interest

JAMMU, Aug 17: The High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh has provided long overdue relief to the owners of land in Basohli town which got submerged due to construction of Ranjit Sagar Dam with the direction to the Government of Union Territory to pay compensation with statutory interest at the rate of 6% per annum on account of compensation illegally withheld by the respondents.

It was brought to the notice of Justice Wasim Sadiq Nargal by the petitioners that an award was passed in the year 1997 for payment of compensation regarding the land and the residential houses of the petitioners possession of which was taken over by the Collector Land Acquisition and same was placed at the disposal of Ranjit Sagar Dam Authorities in the State of Punjab.

The petitioners admitted that insofar as the compensation for the ownership lands and the houses that came under the acquisition was concerned, the same was paid to the petitioners but insofar Shamlat Deh land in town Basohli is concerned, which has submerged on account of the construction of the dam, the same has not been paid.

It was further submitted that non-payment of the compensation by the respondents is flagrant violation of the constitutional right guaranteed under the Constitution of India.

The respondents, in their reply, not disputed the claim of the petitioners with regard to entitlement for receiving the compensation in question but the only plea which was projected by the them was that the payment of compensation could not be materialized due to the non-availability of the requisite funds from the State of Punjab and Thein Dam Project Authority, who have been requested on various

(Contd on page 4 Col 3)

'In Kashmir, most of KPs converted to Islam'

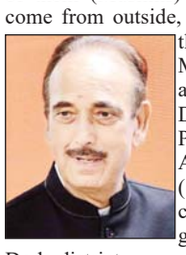
Majority of Muslims in India have converted from Hinduism: Azad

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Aug 17: DPAP chairman Ghulam Nabi Azad said a majority of Indian Muslims have converted from Hinduism, adding that an example of this can be found in the Kashmir valley where a majority of Kashmiri Pandits converted to Islam.

Asserting that religion should not be used to get political mileage, Azad said whoever takes refuge in religion in politics is weak.

"Some BJP leader said some (Muslims) have come from outside and some have not. Nobody has come from outside or inside. Islam came to existence just 1,500 years ago. Hindu religion is very old. Around 10-20 of them (Muslims) must have come from outside, some were



there in the Mughal army," the Democratic Progressive Azad Party (DPAP) chief told a gathering in Doda district.

"All other Muslims converted from Hinduism in India. An example of this can be found in Kashmir. Who were the Muslims in Kashmir 600 years ago? All were Kashmiri Pandits. They converted to Islam. All are born into this religion," the former Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir said.

Azad said that when Hindus die, they are cremated. "They are burnt in different places. Their ashes are placed in the river which mixes the water, and we drink that water," he said.

"Later, who sees that the water contains their burnt ashes? People drink that water," the DPAP leader said.

Similarly Muslims' flesh and bones become a part of the nation's soil, Azad said. "They, too, become a part of this land. Their flesh and their bones become a part of Bharat Mata's soil. Hindus and Muslims both merge into this land. What difference is there between them?" he added.

Taking a dig on the use of

(Contd on page 4 Col 4)

2 OGWs of LeT arrested

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, Aug 17: Security forces in North Kashmir's Sopore area today arrested two Over Ground Workers (OGWs) of Lashkar-e-Toiba militant outfit.

A police spokesman said that a joint naka was established

Pic on page 4

at Sher Colony Tarzoo by Sopore Police and 52 RR of Army today and during the checking, a suspicious movement of two persons coming from Ningli towards Sher Colony by foot was observed.

"While seeing police party and security forces, the duo tried to flee from the spot but alert naka party apprehended them tactfully," the spokesman said.

They have been identified as

(Contd on page 4 Col 5)

Over 900 pilgrims perform darshan

Chhari Mubarak pays obeisance at Sharika Bhawani temple

Avtar Bhat

JAMMU, Aug 17: Before embarking on annual pilgrimage and continuing the age old tradition, Chhari Mubarak, the holy silver mace of Amarnath Ji was today taken to ancient 'Sharika-Bhawani' Temple on Hari Parbat in Srinagar to pay obeisance on the occasion of "Shravan Shukla Paksha Pratipada".

Led by Mahant Deependra Giri Ji, the custodian of holy mace, Chhari Mubarak, was taken to Hari Parbat, temple to pay obeisance to the Goddess on the occasion of 'Shravan Shukla Paksha Pratipada', as per the age-old traditions.

A sizable number of Sadhus

Chhari Mubarak led by Mahant Deependra Giri Ji Maharaj performing Puja at Shri Sharika Bhawani Temple at Hari Parbat in Srinagar on Thursday. — Excelsior/Shakeel

and devotees participated in the 'Pujan' that lasted for more than 90 minutes.

Goddess 'Sharika-Bhawani' popularly known as 'Tripursundari', amongst the mystics, is believed to be 'Isht

(Contd on page 4 Col 3)

While many States, UTs announced it; J&K yet to come up with EV Policy

Sanjeev K Sharma

JAMMU, Aug 17: While most of the States and Union Territories (UTs) of the country have already come up with their Electric Vehicle and Allied Infrastructure Policy applicable to all the commercial and non-commercial electric vehicles which shall be entitled to avail incentives under this policy, Jammu and Kashmir is yet to come up with such a development.

Even the UT of Ladakh has come up with its EV Policy 2022 and it was implemented on August 17, 2022.

Though the General Administrative Department (GAD) of J&K Government had constituted a committee headed by Administrative Secretary, Housing and Urban Development Department (HUDD) for the formulation of Electric Vehicle (EV) Policy for the UT of J&K on October 20, 2022, yet the final report by this Committee is still awaited.

Administrative Secretaries of Departments like Transport, Industries and Commerce and Power Development Department (PDD) were members of the Committee along with Secretary Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Department and Director General, Budget.

Highly placed sources informed that only 1 to 2 meetings of this Committee have taken place so far after which some officers, who were part of the Committee, were transferred and now the GAD is considering to reconstitute this Committee.

"After the Committee conducts its final meeting and gives recommendations to the Government, the Comprehensive Electrical Vehicle Policy will be notified and it may take two months more from now," they said.

Official sources informed that the policy will also pave way for monetary support in the form of subsidy from the Government to those who buys electric vehicle.

Reliable sources informed that Transport Department along with other departments like HUDD and PDD have to work united for the success of this policy.

"Till there is no public infrastructure for charging, electric vehicles may face problems and for that HUDD and Local Bodies

(Contd on page 4 Col 3)

AI campaign faces delays in Kashmir, hindering access for disabled

Suhail Bhat

SRINAGAR, Aug 17: The Accessibility India campaign (Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan) to make public buildings accessible to persons with disabilities is facing significant delays in Jammu and Kashmir, leaving many facilities unfinished.

The campaign's focus in Jammu and Kashmir was to improve accessibility at public buildings and facilities with an initial estimated cost of around Rs 23.65 crores, later restricted to around Rs 7 crores.

An official of the Department of Social Welfare acknowledged that two pilot projects, one each in Kashmir and Jammu, were launched in 2016. However, various factors, including the 2016 unrest, abrogation of Article 370, and the COVID pandemic, led to delays. Additionally, some submitted Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) lacked feasibility, resulting in a restriction of 60% of the total budget.

The scheme's mandate was to eliminate obstacles and barriers in indoor and outdoor facilities, including schools, medical facilities, workplaces, roads, footpaths, parks, and gardens. One significant component was to improve accessibility in Government buildings, covering services, steps, ramps, corridors, entry gates, emergency exits, parking, lighting, signages, alarm systems, and toilets.

Rashid Ahmad, head of the disability association in Kashmir, pointed out that most Government offices, including the Department of Social

(Contd on page 4 Col 5)

You can remove name of Sher-e-Kashmir from building not hearts: Omar

Fayaz Bukhari

SRINAGAR, Aug 17: Former Chief Minister and National Conference (NC) leader Omar Abdullah today said that the name of the founder of his party can be removed from the buildings but not from the hearts of the people.

Omar told reporters here while responding to a question

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of erasing of Sher-e-Kashmir from various institutions that the Government can remove the name of the Sher-e-Kashmir Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah from the buildings in Jammu and Kashmir but not from the hearts of the people.

"You can remove their names from the buildings, but you cannot erase them from the

hearts. Removing the name of Sher-e-Kashmir from the SKICC, SK Cricket Stadium, or hospital makes no difference as the truth cannot be hidden," he said.

The NC leader said that the Chief Justice of India (CJI) has brought the truth to light before the people. "Even if you remove the names from the buildings, the essence remains," he added.

Omar said that today they may erase it, and tomorrow, another political party might reinstate it upon regaining power.

"However, always remember, the name of Sher-e-Kashmir will endure, and those attempting to expunge it will fade into obscurity, their names forgotten. The name of Sher-e-Kashmir will remain in the hearts of the people," he added.

He showed optimism in the restoration of Article 370 by the Apex Court. "We are advocating for the restoration of Article 370 in the Supreme Court and hope that justice will be done. As I mentioned in my speech, we have left no stone unturned, engaging the best lawyers, whose performance in the court has garnered admiration. The case is ongoing, and we remain

(Contd on page 4 Col 5)