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PM, HM, LG pay tribute to Pulwama martyrs

Excelsior Correspondent
NEW DELHI/JAMMU, Feb 14: Paying tribute to the CRPF personnel martyred in the 2019 attack, Prime Minister Narendra Modi today tweeted, "Remembering our valorous heroes whom we lost on this day in Pulwama. We will never forget their supreme sacrifice. Their courage motivates us to build a strong and developed India."

Rahul on 5-day trip to Gulmarg

Excelsior Correspondent
SRINAGAR, Feb 14: All India Congress Committee (AICC) former president, Rahul Gandhi is arriving in Gulmarg tomorrow on a five-day leisure trip. His arrival comes just two weeks after he concluded his Bharat Jodo Yatra in Srinagar on January 30 in which the leaders from various political parties participated at SK Stadium rally here. Gandhi will arrive along

ACB nabs GDC Principal

Excelsior Correspondent
SRINAGAR, Feb 14: The Anti-Corruption Bureau today trapped and arrested Principal Government Degree College Pattan in Srinagar for accepting bribe. An official said that Professor Tariq Ashai who is the Principal of GDC Pattan, was arrested red-handed while accepting a bribe of Rs 60,000 at SP College Srinagar. He said that on receipt of the

CAT penalizes SKUAST employees

Excelsior Correspondent
SRINAGAR, Feb 14: The Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT) imposed a penalty on Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Science and Technology (SKUAST) employees for unnecessarily halting the process of filling of Director and Joint Directors posts and directed the University to go ahead with the filling of posts in question on regular basis. "In view of the above, since

Sub-zero temps across Kashmir

Excelsior Correspondent
SRINAGAR, Feb 14: The minimum temperatures in Kashmir were today recorded sub-zero amid forecast of mainly dry weather till February 18. Srinagar recorded a low of minus 1.6°C against the previous night's minus 4.0°C. Today's minimum temperature was below normal by 1.8°C for the city. Qazigund recorded a low of minus 3.0°C against minus

Govt notifies ITR forms

NEW DELHI, Feb 14: The Income-Tax Department has notified forms for filing IT returns by individuals as well as businesses for 2022-23 fiscal year. The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), through a notification dated February 10, has notified ITR forms 1-6, ITR-V (verification form) and ITR acknowledgement form. AMRG & Associates Senior Partner Rajat Mohan said

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'Under whose tenure terror grew must be answered by BJP's critics'

Shah refuses to give timing of Assembly elections in J&K, says ECI has to take call

New leadership will emerge from Local Bodies, Panchayats

Sanjeev Pargal
JAMMU, Feb 14: Union Home Minister Amit Shah today refused to comment on the timing of Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir saying a call on this has to be taken by the Election Commission of India but reiterated restoration of Statehood after the polls. Shah extensively spoke on Jammu and Kashmir today in an interview to a news agency and addressing a function at Haryana. He said he can't comment on timing of the polls in Jammu and Kashmir. J&K is without an elected Government since June 19, 2018 when the BJP withdrew support to Mehbooba Mufti-led PDP-BJP coalition Government leading to imposition of the President's rule followed by Governor's rule. However, after J&K became a UT on August 5, 2019, the process of Delimitation Commission and revision of electoral rolls has been completed. The Home Minister, however, reiterated that Statehood will be given to Jammu and Kashmir after conduct of the Assembly elections. Asserting that new leadership will emerge in J&K, Shah said it will come from Local Bodies, Panchs and Sarpanchs which elections were held earlier. "Elections were held to Local Bodies under our rule. They didn't take place for many years. Three families were holding sway in Jammu and Kashmir and they are making noise," he said. It may be mentioned that elections to Panchayats and Municipalities are due in November-December this year as these bodies will complete their five-year-term by the year-end. On terrorism, the Home Minister said in whose tenure the terrorism grew in Jammu and Kashmir is a question whose answer should be given by those slamming the BJP. "Under whose rule, the terrorism grew and who allowed it to grow, there should be an answer to it," he added and said now Jammu and Kashmir is witnessing development and decline in terrorism. Asserting that there has been improvement in the situation in Jammu and Kashmir and terror-related figures are at their lowest, Shah said crores of tourists and yatis are visiting J&K which is a huge change. "Removing Article 370 of the Constitution of India granting special status to erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir was on agenda of the Jan Sangh and BJP," he said. Meanwhile, presenting the President's Colour to the Haryana Police in recognition of its exceptional services in Karnal, Shah said the number of terror incidents in Jammu and Kashmir has reduced drastically after the abrogation of Article 370 and a record number of tourists are visiting the Union Territory. He also said the BJP Government at the Centre has successfully tackled internal security challenges -- terror activities in Jammu and Kashmir, insurgency in the North East and Left Wing Extremism -- in the last eight years. "Today I can say with satisfaction that terror incidents in Jammu and Kashmir have reduced drastically after the abrogation of Article 370. And record number of tourists visit Jammu and Kashmir. It is a matter of satisfaction," he said. The Union Home minister also said the Narendra Modi Government will bring changes in the Criminal Procedure Code, the Indian Penal Code and the

Situation in Valley improved after 2019: IG CRPF

Majority of JeM cadres in Kashmir killed post Pulwama attack: ADGP

Fayaz Bukhari
SRINAGAR, Feb 14: Additional Director General of Police (ADGP) Kashmir, Vijay Kumar today said that relentless operations after Pulwama attack has led to killing of all Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) who were operating in the Valley at that time. Speaking to the media persons after paying tribute to the CRPF men at Pulwama, Kumar said that after the Pulwama attack security forces killed all the JeM militants who were operating in the Valley at that time. He said that presently 7-8 local militants of JeM and 5-7 Pakistanis are operating in Kashmir. Among them is Moosa (Sulaimani) and he will be neutralized soon," he said. Kumar said that for the last six months JeM is again recruiting locals into its fold. "Last week we arrested six associates of Jaish in Kulgam and one in Pulwama. We will not allow Jaish to grow", he said. "Their major focus is on small weapons like pistols, grenades and sticky bombs and we are busting small modules and our emphasis also on narcotics," he added. Kumar said that out of 19 militants involved in the Pulwama attack, eight were killed, seven arrested while four including 3 Pakistanis are still alive. The ADGP said the security forces are after Jaish-e-Muhammad and almost all their



Security personnel pay tribute at the memorial to mark fourth anniversary of the Pulwama attack at the CRPF Lethpora camp. — Excelsior/Younis Khalique

Groups from Ladakh reach New Delhi for protest at Jantar Mantar today

Excelsior Correspondent
NEW DELHI, Feb 14: Leh Apex Body and Kargil Democratic Alliance, an amalgam of trade unions, social, political and religious groups from Ladakh, are set to hold a protest at Delhi's Jantar Mantar tomorrow to raise demand of Statehood for the Union Territory. Ladakh became a Union Territory, along with Jammu and Kashmir, when Articles 370 and 35 A were abrogated on August 5, 2019. While Jammu and Kashmir is a UT with legislature, Ladakh does not have any provision for it. The two groups, which came together with a set of demands for Ladakh, will hold a daylong protest in the national capital tomorrow, activist and politician Sajjad Hussain said. Most of the protesters have already reached New Delhi while others will join tomorrow. "When Ladakh was made a Union Territory, we were promised development. However, it's been four years and we cannot see any development happening," he said. "Leh Apex Body and Kargil Democratic Alliance are holding a joint protest. We are raising a four point agenda, under which our demands are Statehood for Ladakh, sixth schedule under Constitution, job reservation, a separate Public Service Commission for Ladakh, and two Parliamentary seats for Leh and Kargil," he said. Ladakh-based activist and educator Sonam Wangchuk, who had recently gone on a five-day 'climate fast', to 'save Ladakh', said the protest is being held in Delhi so that their voice reaches the Government. "We raised our voice from Ladakh, but no one has reached out to us yet. Perhaps our voice did not reach them, so we have come to Delhi to hold a protest," Wangchuk said. "We have been talking to the Government, but in the last three years, the process has stagnated. I did a symbolic protest by holding a fast, we were hoping the Government will call us for discussions at least. Sadly, no invitation has been given so far," he said. "It is our duty as citizens to raise our voice and the duty of the Government to listen to us,"

Will raise four-point agenda

SOP issued by Env Ministry

Follow Environmental safeguards in road projects within 100 kms of IB, LoC

NEW DELHI, Feb 14: The requirement for environmental clearance for highway projects up to 100 kms of the International Border (IB) or the Line of Control (LoC). "The guidelines are to be followed for all roads/highway projects falling within 100 km from the International Border/Line of Control for sustainable environmental safeguards. "Further, the exemption of prior EC (environmental clearance) for all highway projects up to 100 kms from the LoC or border does not exempt it from approvals, consent, permissions etc, required to be obtained under any other act, rule, regulation, bye-laws and notification etc," read an office memorandum issued to chairpersons of all pollution control boards, expert appraisal committees and environment impact assessment authorities, among others. Agencies should conduct a risk assessment and, based on that, a disaster management plan as per the Disaster Management Act be prepared. It should be approved by a competent authority and implemented, the ministry said. "If the proposed route is passing through any hilly area, comprehensive study on vulnerability for landslide, slope stability, (the vulnerability of the project area from the point of view of seismic activity taking into account the seismic zone in which it is located, (an) eco-



Fighter jets parked at Yelahanka air base during the ongoing Aero India 2023 in Bengaluru on Tuesday. (UNI)

'Youth should take India on path of peace'

Under Modi's leadership, every section getting equal opportunities: LG

Excelsior Correspondent
PRANSLA, (GUJARAT), Feb 14: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha addressed 'Rashtra Katha Shivir', organized by Swami Dharmabandhuji, Vedic Mission Trust, at Pransla, Gujarat. The national-level camp provides a platform for the overall personality development of youth. Sharing his thoughts, the Lt Governor called upon the young & brilliant minds assembled at the shivir from all parts of the country to dedicate themselves towards nation-building. "Competitiveness and Youth will be the three major factors in shaping the future of India in the Amrit Kaal," he said. The speed of progress largely depends upon young generation. Youth with their creativity and innovation, are the most powerful resource for societal transformation, Sinha noted. "Education without practical experience has no purpose. We must imbibe the teachings of



LG Manoj Sinha addressing 'Rashtra Katha Shivir' at Pransla, Gujarat on Tuesday.

Mahatma Gandhi and make efforts for experiential learning. We need to create an environment in which our youth are encouraged for new discoveries, new inventions," the Lt Governor said. He underlined the importance of acquiring knowledge through experiences to bring change in the society. The process of learning should never end. Lifelong learning converts the vision into mission. Our young population with courage and conviction to create, invent and innovate can achieve unprecedented success in every sector, he added. The Lt Governor asked the youth to light the lamp of knowledge in the society and to contribute in transforming India into a knowledge economy. Young generation must draw inspiration from the life of towering personalities of the country like Mahatma Gandhi, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and take India forward on the path of peace and prosperity, he added. "Youth should have the courage to explore the unexplored. Keep learning, innovating and be curious. Strive for excellence not for marks and do not look at any stage of life as success and perfection," Sinha said. Competitiveness is another important factor that needs to be

CIC points out poor functioning of RTI mechanism in J&K Police

*** Warns officers against any violation in future**
Mohinder Verma
JAMMU, Feb 14: The Central Information Commission (CIC) has pointed out poor functioning of RTI mechanism in the Jammu and Kashmir Police and stressed that concerned authorities should take necessary steps so that transparency law is implemented in letter and spirit. These observations have been made by the Commission while dealing with Second Appeal filed against denial of information by Jammu and Kashmir Police even after directions from the then State Information Commission. As per the Second Appeal before the CIC, an RTI application was filed before the Public Information Officer on July 27, 2015 seeking copy of enquiry report submitted by DySP Surankote. However, he failed to get any response from the PIO. Accordingly, he knocked the doors of the then State Information Commission and the Deputy Registrar of the State Information Commission directed the PIO in the office of Police Headquarters Rajouri to explain as to why penalty may not be imposed upon him for his failure to appear before the State Information Commission on 07.10.2015, the date on which the case was listed for hearing. While hearing Second Appeal earlier, the Chief Information Commissioner had issued show cause notice to PIO, Police Headquarters, Rajouri-Vinod Kumar to explain why penal action should not be initiated against him for violation of the provisions of the RTI Act by causing deliberate obstruction in the dissemination of information and vitiating the proceedings before the Commission, by his absence despite service of hearing notice. When the Second Appeal came up for fresh hearing few days back, Vinod Kumar Sharma, the then DySP, Rajouri Headquarters participated in the hearing through video conference and referred to his reply to the show cause notice and stated that the matter pertains to the Rajouri-Poonch Range Headquarters as the RTI application was filed before them and not the Rajouri District Headquarters. Regarding his absence in the previous hearing before the Commission, he attributed the same to his preoccupation in connection with the visit of Ex CM of J&K to their jurisdiction. However, in the light of the facts of the case and the submissions made by the Respondent, the Commission observed that the RTI application has been filed with the Rajouri-Poonch Range Headquarters of J&K Police and not the Rajouri District Headquarters. Accordingly, the Commission dropped the show cause notice on the substantive aspect of not replying to the RTI application. "It is evident that show cause notices had been issued by the SIC J&K to the PIO, Distt. Police HQ, Rajouri

Admn takes strong note of absence of officers from Block Diwas Day

Warns of action, says it is facing embarrassment
Irfan Trambo
SRINAGAR, Feb 14: Warning strict action as per the rules, authorities in district Ganderbal have taken a strong note of the absence of district-level officers from the Block Diwas Day organized every Wednesday for speedy disposal of the grievances of the general public across the district. Officials through a communication issued today said it has come to the notice of Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal that some district level officers of Ganderbal are habitual of remaining absent from the prestigious weekly programme and depute their subordinates, who the officials said, are "unable to reply/redress the public grievances." It is to be noted here that all the Deputy Commissioners have already been directed by the General Administration Department (GAD) to conduct the Block Diwas every Wednesday of the week which all the district level officers are supposed to attend and listen to and redress the grievances of the general public. Due to the absence of district level officers, the authorities have noted that the objective of resolving the grievances/com-

(Contd on page 4 Col 3)