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Excelsior

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Valley free from stone-pelting: HM

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Feb 16: Union Home Minister Amit Shah today said after the abrogation of the provisions of Article 370 of the Constitution in 2019, Jammu and Kashmir has seen a huge change with a reduction in terror activities and resumption of tourism.

"After the abrogation of Article 370 in Kashmir, our security agencies have complete dominance over terrorism. According to the latest data from Jammu and Kashmir, there has

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Ladakh Groups to intensify protest

NEW DELHI, Feb 16:

A day after they held a protest at Delhi's Jantar Mantar, groups from Ladakh today reiterated their demands for Statehood and Sixth Schedule status for the Union Territory, threatening to intensify their agitation if the Government does not listen to them.

At a press conference here, environmental activist and educator Sonam Wangchuk said democracy has been compromised in Ladakh and the local people have no say in decision-

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Two officials dismissed

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Feb 16: In its endeavor to make the Administration more efficient and transparent, the Jammu and Kashmir Government today ordered premature retirement of two officers, one each belonging to Prison Department and Transport Department respectively.

These officers conducted their duties in ways which were unbecoming of public servants and in violation of the established Code of Conduct.

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Srinagar tops in SSG

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, Feb 16: In a major recognition, the Srinagar district has attained first rank among 156 districts in the country under Swachh Sarvekshan Grameen with score of 137.70.

The Srinagar district has topped the rank by scoring better than Khargone district of Madhya Pradesh which has achieved 2nd rank by achieving score of 133.02 points followed by Badaun district of Uttar Pradesh with score of 115.38.

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Deposit money to JK legal aid: HC

NEW DELHI, Feb 16:

The Delhi High Court has directed its registrar to transfer the amount deposited by media houses which were pulled up for disclosing the identity of the eight-year-old gangraped and killed in Kathua to a fund for sexual assault victims.

Two media houses recently deposited Rs 10 lakh each with the court and others had done so earlier. In a recent order, the court said the money should be given to the Victim Compensation Fund of the

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With blessings of Lord Shankar, KPs will return to Kashmir

Govt to connect Amarnath shrine by road; NHIDCL ready with report, work to be approved this year: LG

Sanjeev Pargal

Construction likely to be completed in 4-5 years

JAMMU, Feb 16: National Highway Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL) is ready with preliminary report on construction of road project connecting holy cave shrine of Shri Amarnath Ji from Pahalgam-Panjtarni-SangamTop-Baltal and the project could be approved this year itself and completed in next four to five years.

This was stated today by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha while addressing the gathering at Maha Shivratri fair at Jagti migrant camp in Nagrota.

**Watch video on www.excelsiornews.com*

"The Government of India's NHIDCL has completed preliminary report on construction of Pahalgam road to Panjtarni, Sangam Top and Baltal connecting holy cave shrine of Shri Amarnath Ji, (located at the height of 13,000 feet from sea level). I'm confident that the project will be approved this year and construction will be completed in next 4-5 years," Sinha said.

Once the road is built, pilgrims from across the country and Jammu and Kashmir will be able to visit and pay obeisance at the cave shrine in the south Kashmir Himalayas, he said.

LG Manoj Sinha addressing Kashmiri migrants on Thursday.

"There was an unfortunate incident during the yatra last year. I myself visited the yatra route. I have tried and I am confident that (Amarnath) route can be constructed the way the road for the Char Daam Yatra has been constructed," the Lieutenant Governor said.

He said the route would start from Pahalgam via Panjtarni and Sangam top to Baltal.

Meanwhile, in a brief chat with media persons, the Lieutenant Governor while responding to a query on return of Kashmiri migrants to their homes and hearths in the Valley, said: "I think you will see that day with the blessings of Lord Shankar".

"Jammu and Kashmir Government always stands by you. Your safety is our top priority and we are taking all possible measures to ensure that. This is the commitment of the Government of India and Prime Minister Narendra Modi," he said addressing the migrants.

Asserting that the Kashmiri migrants have suffered a lot for three long decades, the Lieutenant Governor said the day will come when you will return to your homes with honour.

"I hope with your return, Kashmir will find its lost glory, he added.

Keeping in view Maha Shivratri festival, full salaries of all PM Package and other minority community employees who have resumed their duties in Kashmir, have been released, he said.

Sinha said earlier it was difficult to get land for construction of 6000 dwellings but now land has been identified and except for two sites, the work is in full swing. While 1200 dwellings will be handed over by April, 2500 more will be given by December, he added.

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Sengupta moves to N Command as CoS

Lt Gen Bali to head Leh-based 14 Corps, Kumar is new vice chief

NEW DELHI, Feb 16:

Lt Gen MV Suchindra Kumar has been appointed as the new Vice Chief of Army Staff, while incumbent Lt Gen B S Raju will take charge as South Western Army Commander, official sources said today.

Lt Gen Rashim Bali has been appointed as the Commander of Leh-based 14 Corps which takes care of security along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China in the Ladakh sector, they said.

Lt Gen Anindya Sengupta, the current Commander of the 14 Corps, will become the new Chief of Staff of Udhampur headquartered Northern Command, the

Lt Gen Rashim Bali

sources said.

They said Lt Gen Raju, at present serving as the Vice Chief of Army Staff, has been appointed as South Western Army Commander.

Lt Gen NSR Subramani, currently the Chief of Staff at the headquarters of the Northern Command in Udhampur, has been promoted to the rank of Army Commander and appointed as the next Central Army Commander.

The sources said Lt Gen Kumar too has been promoted as the Army Commander and appointed as the new Vice Chief of Army Staff. He is serving as the Deputy Chief of Army Staff (Strategy) in the Army Headquarters at present.

They said Lt Gen Raju will succeed Lt Gen Amardeep Singh Bhinder when he retires from service by the end of February.

Lt Gen Subramani will take over as the Central Army Commander from Lt Gen

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Harsh Dev quits AAP, announces to revive Panthers Party

Nishikant Khajuria

JAMMU, Feb 16: Harsh Dev Singh, Chairman of Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in Jammu and Kashmir, today resigned from the party and announced to revive J&K National Panthers Party, which was virtually lying defunct since the death of Prof Bhim Singh.

Resignation of Harsh Dev Singh from the post of Chairman as well as primary membership of AAP is the major blow to Arvind Kejriwal's party in J&K since its entry in the Union Territory for the last more than a year.

In his resignation letter to Arvind Kejriwal- AAP National Convenor and Chief Minister of Delhi, Harsh Dev Singh has said that due to some personal reasons, he could no longer continue in the party and he was therefore quitting the same with immediate effect.

"This communiqué, as such, be treated as my resignation from J&K Chairmanship of the party as well as from primary membership of Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)," read the resignation letter, dated February 16, 2023 and signed by Harsh Dev Singh.

**Watch video on www.excelsiornews.com*

It may be recalled that former Minister and three-time legislator Harsh Dev Singh had joined AAP on May 7, 2022 at New Delhi with much fanfare amid hopes to aggressively consolidate the party, which was expanding its base in the Union Territory on the back of its performance in neighbouring Punjab State.

Immediately after submitting his resignation, Harsh Dev Singh announced to revive J&K National Panthers Party, which was earlier headed by him as Chairman along with Prof Bhim Singh as the President.

"People approached me to revive the Panthers Party, which was known for raising voice of down trodden, poor, oppressed and commoners. After discussion with our well wishers and thinkers, I have decided to revive JKNPP and fight against corrupt regime," he said.

In a veiled attack on AAP, Harsh Dev Singh alleged that national parties were not willing to speak against ruling BJP, which was adding miseries to people of Jammu and Kashmir. "We don't need permission to speak for our people who are suffering because

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Electricity generation to increase by over 3000 Mega Watts

J&K to become power surplus UT in next 3-4 years

Mohinder Verma

Centre, UT admn constantly monitoring progress on HEPs

JAMMU, Feb 16: Jammu and Kashmir will become power surplus Union Territory in the country during next three-four years as hydro electric projects having capacity to generate 3099 Mega Watts of power will be completed by then and in order to ensure that timelines are strictly adhered to the Union Government and administration of the Union Territory are constantly monitoring the progress on the projects.

As per the official data available with EXCELSIOR, at present work is apace on three Central Sector and two State Sector hydro electric projects in the districts of Kishtwar and Poonch in Jammu province of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. While the Central Sector projects are being executed by the Chenab Valley Power Projects Private Limited, Jammu and Kashmir Power Development Corporation is constructing State Sector projects.

As far as Central Sector hydro electric projects are concerned, Pakal Dul, which will generate 1000 Mega Watts of electricity, is being constructed on Marusadar/Chenab river and its all four units will be completed by July 2025 as per the timeline fixed by the Government of India and agreed to by the executing agency. At present, more than 32% progress has been registered on the project.

Similarly, 624 Mega Watts capacity Kiru hydro electric project will be completed by July 25 as Union Power Ministry has already told the project executing agency to accelerate the pace of work to overcome the loss of time due to COVID-19 pandemic. This project is being conducted on River Chenab in Kishtwar district and it will have four units each having capacity to generate 156 Mega Watts of electricity.

Another Central Sector project-850 Mega Watts Ratle also in Kishtwar district will be completed by February 2026 as work has picked up pace on the project only after the formulation of Ratle Hydroelectric Project Pvt Limited and with the involvement of National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC) Limited. This project will have four units each having capacity to generate 205 Mega Watts of electricity and one unit having 30 Mega

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3 FIRs regarding misappropriation, disproportionate assets

DB raises serious question about fairness, capability of ACB, transfer cases to CB

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Feb 16: A Division Bench of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh High Court comprising Justice Tashi Rabstan and Justice Rajesh Sekhri has expressed serious concern over the investigation in the FIRs regarding disproportionate assets of Pranab Gandotra, the then Incharge TSO CA&PD Rajouri and Kalakote and misappropriation of kerosene oil by Mohammad Ashraf and Pranav Gandotra, the then TSOs Kalakote registered by Vigilance Organization (now ACB).

"It seems that the investigation agency has not done anything in these matters despite lapse of considerable time which raises a serious question about the fairness and capability of the investigation agency", the DB said, adding "the court cannot be a mute spectator to the illegalities and nefarious designs of the investigation agency".

Accordingly, DB directed that the investigation of the case in all the three FIRs along with the whole record be forthwith handed over to the Crime Branch of J&K Police, which shall complete the investigation within a period of three months from the date of receipt of this order.

This significant order has been passed in a petition filed by UT seeking quashment of judgment/order dated 01.04.2021 passed in OA No.809/2020 by the Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT), Jammu, whereby the CAT directed for reinstatement of respondent-Pranav Gandotra.

FIR No.21 of 2018 came to be registered against Pranav Gandotra while he was working as a Tehsil Supply Officer (TSO) in the Department of Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs Department for the offence of misappropriation of funds of the department. He came to be suspended on 23.07.2018. However, respondent-Pranav Gandotra joined his duties on the strength of interim order dated 14.11.2018 passed by this court in SWP No.2216/2018.

After joining his duties, again FIR No.35 of 2018 came to be registered against him on the ground

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Army foils infiltration bid in Tangdhar, militant killed

Fayaz Bukhari

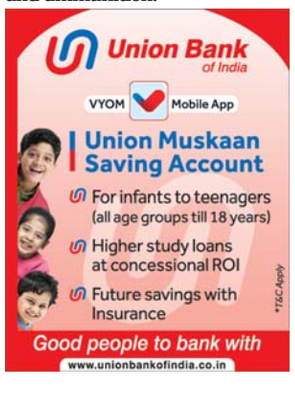
SRINAGAR, Feb 16: Army today foiled an infiltration bid along the Line of Control (LoC) in Tangdhar in North Kashmir's Kupwara district by killing a militant while others fled back to Pakistan leaving behind arms and ammunition.

A Defence spokesman said that the alert troops deployed in an Anti-Infiltration Grid detected the movement of three militants at the Line of Control approaching the fence.

"On being challenged at close proximity to the post, an intense firefight ensued between the militants and the troops, resulting in successful elimination of one militant, while grievously injuring the other", he said.

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

He added that the injured militant managed to flee across, along with the third militant, taking advantage of darkness.

"A thorough joint search operation was launched along with Jammu and Kashmir

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