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**We are living in bankrupt country: Pak DM**  
ISLAMABAD, Feb 19:

Defence Minister Khawaja Asif has said that Pakistan has already defaulted amid looming fears that the cash-starved country may go bankrupt and blamed the establishment, bureaucracy and politicians for the prevailing economic crisis. Addressing a ceremony in his home town of Sialkot, he said that standing on its own feet was crucial for Pakistan to (Contd on page 4 Col 5)

**Avalanche warning issued for hills of Kashmir**  
Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, Feb 19: Jammu and Kashmir Disaster Management Authority (JKDMA) today issued an avalanche warning for the hills of Kashmir.

The JKDMA, issued the warning above 2500 metres over Ganderbal, Bandipora, Baramulla and Kupwara districts.

People living in the specified areas have been advised to (Contd on page 4 Col 5)

**Son killed, father hurt in mishap**  
Excelsior Correspondent

SAMBA, Feb 19: A youth died and his father was seriously injured in a road accident near Ghagwal Bus Stand on Jammu Pathankot National Highway today.

According to police, Trilok Singh, a resident of Gurha Jatta, (Contd on page 4 Col 5)

**\*Watch video on**  
[www.excelsiornews.com](http://www.excelsiornews.com)

Ghagwal was travelling on a scooter with his 26-year-old son, Shubham Singh.

Meanwhile, a truck coming (Contd on page 4 Col 7)

**Human trafficking racket busted**  
Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Feb 19: A gang involved in the trafficking of young women was busted by police here on Saturday, a police spokesperson said.

He said, acting on reliable information, a raid was conducted by a team of senior police officers at Bus Stand area here and four people including two men from Myanmar (Burma) and two women including one from Myanmar and another from Kashmir's (Contd on page 4 Col 7)

**BSF recovers drone with contraband items**

GURDASPUR (Punjab), Feb 19:

A drone containing suspected contraband items was recovered by Border Security Force (BSF) during patrolling in Punjab's Gurdaspur district bordering Pakistan.

The made in China-drone, found in a farming field, was carrying four packets of narcotics in one big packet which was wrapped in yellow adhesive tape. "On February 19 at (Contd on page 4 Col 3)

## Mishra administered oath as Ladakh LG by CJ

Excelsior Correspondent

LEH, Feb 19: Brigadier (Retd) B D Mishra was today sworn-in as the second Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, replacing former IAS officer Radha Krishna Mathur who held the gubernatorial

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## LS MP hails Modi Govt for approval of tunnel Centre will leave no stone unturned to make life easier in Ladakh: PM

■ UT people jubilant over all-weather connectivity

Sanjeev Pargal

JAMMU, Feb 19: Prime Minister Narendra Modi said today that his Government will leave no stone unturned to make life easier for the people of Ladakh.

He made the comment tagging a tweet by BJP's Lok Sabha Member from Ladakh Jamyang Tsering Namgyal in which he said the Modi Government approved Rs 1681.51 crore for construction of 4.1-km-long Shinkun La tunnel to be completed by 2025 to provide all-weather connectivity to Ladakh.

"The residents of Lungnak Valley of Zaskar, the most backward region of Ladakh, welcomed and thanked Modi Ji for this decision," the Lok Sabha MP from the Union Territory said.

Tagging his tweet, Modi, in a tweet in Hindi, said, "We will leave no stone unturned to make

life easier for the people of Ladakh."

People of Ladakh have been jubilant over decision taken by the Union Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi for providing all-weather connectivity to Ladakh with construction of 4.1 kilometres long Shinkun La tunnel. The tunnel is proposed to be completed by 2025.

The all-weather connectivity will not only benefit the people of entire Union Territory of Ladakh but will also help the Army to transport supplies to the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Eastern Ladakh throughout the year. Presently, Srinagar-Leh National Highway remains closed for four to five months of the winter due to heavy snowfall.

The people have to take aerial route from Leh for visiting Jammu, New Delhi or other

parts of the country due to blockade of Srinagar-Leh National Highway during the winters.

It was Darcha-Padam-Nimu route which was used by the troops for transporting weaponry to Eastern Ladakh after confrontation with China in the Eastern Ladakh in May 2020. The BRO constructed black top road on this route in 2019 but it could not be used in winter months due to heavy snow on 16703 feet high Shinkun La.

The road is critical to the defence of Ladakh as it is sheltered from both Pakistani and Chinese long range artillery or missile firing unlike the exposed Srinagar-Drass-Kaksar-Kargil highway near LoC and the Manali-Upshi-Leh highway near the LAC respectively.

The Cabinet had cleared the tunnel and the approach roads on both sides at the cost of Rs1681.51 crore. Since the BRO

has already done road cutting and black topping of the approaches on both sides to Shinkun La, the Government will now only have to complete the 4.1 km underground pass, sources said.

Nimu in Ladakh is close to Kargil as well as Leh. This means that the Indian Army can do faster deployment of forces and equipment if a situation flares up in Kargil-Siachen sector or in Eastern Ladakh.

The Shinkun La tunnel will provide all-weather road connectivity to Ladakh and this will be the shortest route to the border areas of the Union Territory.

"This (project) is also very important as far as the security and safety of the country is concerned.... It will also help in the movement of our security forces in that region," sources said.



Panoramic view of village Arnas in Reasi district of Jammu region. —Excelsior/Rakesh

Enrollment in schools goes up by 14.5 pc

## Govt to come out with policy categorizing schools as hard & soft zones soon: LG

Teachers to be posted in both Zones

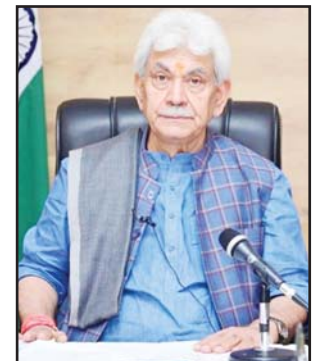
Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Feb 19: Jammu and Kashmir Government will soon come out with a policy categorizing schools in "hard and soft zones" to ensure that the teachers get exposure in both the zones. The Government has asked the School Education Department to come out with exhaustive policy.

This was stated by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha in his monthly 'Awaam Ki Awaaz' Radio Address this morning.

Sinha was responding to a suggestion that the Government should make it mandatory for the Government teachers to serve in rural areas for two years which will bring new vibrancy in rural areas and give exposure to the teachers. The teachers should be given incentives for posting in the rural areas, the person who gave the suggestion said.

The Lieutenant Governor said his office has already asked the School Education Department to come out with exhaustive policy in which the Government schools will be cat-



egorized as "soft zones" and "hard zones" and it will be ensured that the teachers are posted in both the zones.

"The teachers should also be sent for learning and training so that all aspects of National Education Policy (NEP) are implemented on ground," he added.

Sinha said under 'Aao School Chalein' and 'Class Campaign', enrollment of students in the schools has gone up by 14.5 per cent.

Last year, he asserted, the schools were functional for 200 days.

As per the sources, the new policy could be released by the School Education Department shortly.

The Lieutenant Governor asked the concerned departments and officers to convert valuable suggestions into action. "The active participation of the individual and community can accelerate socio-economic growth. Our collective effort can help the society to prosper," he said and urged the youth to utilize maximum benefits of the Government schemes like Mission Youth, Rural Livelihood Mission to realize their full potential and make their dreams a reality.

An official handout said: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha in this month's 'Awaam Ki Awaaz' highlighted the successful conduct of the third Khelo India National Winter Games.

"Sport can bring about positive transformation and recently concluded Khelo India National Winter Games at Gulmarg have shown that 25 States were playing as one team and they push forward (Contd on page 4 Col 1)

## Rahul concerned over denial of democratic rights to J&K people

Fayaz Bukhari

SRINAGAR, Feb 19: The senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi today expressed concern over the situation in Jammu and Kashmir and denial of democratic rights to the people.

Former All India Congress Committee (AICC) president Rahul Gandhi (MP) today chaired a meeting of senior party leaders from Kashmir at Gulmarg during which he expressed serious concern over the difficulties con-

fronting people in absence of the democratic system in J&K.

Gandhi slammed the Government for snatching the rights of people and failing people on all counts.

The Congress leader said J&K



Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka during a meeting of senior party leaders at Gulmarg on Sunday.

was divided into two UTs against the wishes of the people. He added that people at both the places are being denied their democratic rights by the BJP aiming to hide its (BJPs) wrong policies and utter failure on all fronts.

He, however, said that the Congress shall continue to fight for the democratic rights of the people and ensure justice to them.

Gandhi termed the eviction

drive in J&K as BJP's deliberate move to divert attention of the people from real issues especially rising unemployment, unprecedented price hike and other developmental issues.

The Congress leader expressed confidence that people especially the youth are joining the Congress party given its pro people policies. He urged the Party leaders to keep their doors

open for those wishing to join Congress and encourage them to work for the wellbeing of the people.

Gandhi told the Party leaders that he will continue to visit J&K as that he feels their pain and anguish. "I will leave no stone unturned to ensure justice to people of J&K, who have undergone enormous hardships due to the wrong policies adopted by the BJP Govt towards J&K," he added.

Speaking on the occasion, AICC general secretary Priyanka Gandhi urged the party leaders to work hard to strengthen the party at grass roots. He asked them to perform their legitimate role to resolve people's issues.

AICC Incharge Rajni Patil (MP) and JKPC president Vikar Rasool Wani briefed Rahul Gandhi about the organizational affairs, their activities in J&K and the current political situation.

## Appeals industry, media to promote StartUps India fastest growing economy in world: Dr Jitendra Singh

Avtar Bhat

JAMMU, Feb 19: Maintaining that India is emerging the fastest growing economy in the world, Union Minister in PMO with Independent charge of Science and Technology, Dr Jitendra Singh today said that under Prime Minister Narendra Modi India has made a huge quantum jump in the global benchmarks.

While addressing a function as chief guest of 'Big Impact Awards- 2023' at Hari Niwas here this evening, Dr Jitendra Singh said world is celebrating the India's business today and is acknowledging that this is the golden era of India under Prime Minister, Narendra Modi.

The Union Minister said that India has come up to the global parameters as country's economy is growing by seven percent



Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh speaking after felicitating the awardees at "Big Impact Awards-2023" held at Jammu on Sunday.

per year. "We jumped 40 steps in global economy from 80th position to 40th.

Giving all credit to PM Modi for this drastic and rapid progress of country, he said "During COVID world was looking towards India that it can't manage the pandemic

which will prove disastrous for the country but ours is the only country in the world which contained COVID successfully".

Dr Jitendra Singh said International Monetary Fund (IMF) has reported that world is looking towards India as a bright spot now that gives self esteem to countrymen. Highlighting the progress made by India and its excellent growth rate, he said "It (Contd on page 4 Col 3)

## March 15 deadline fixed for finalization of deliverables Govt issues fresh directives to Admn Secys on monitoring projects, field assessments

Mohinder Verma

JAMMU, Feb 19: Government of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir has issued slew of directives to all the Administrative Secretaries for monitoring of ongoing developmental projects and field assessment of their respective departments. Moreover, March 15 deadline has been fixed for finalization of departmental deliverables for the financial year 2023-24.

Official sources told EXCELSIOR that a detailed review of the ongoing projects of different departments across the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir was held recently

and after ascertaining the department-wise progress, the Chief Secretary Dr Arun Kumar Mehta directed all the Administrative Secretaries to take weekly reviews with respect to ongoing projects so as to ensure their timely completion.

"The Chief Secretary has clearly told all the Administrative Secretaries that there should not be any compromise on the completion of as maximum as possible projects before March 31 as the Government has already announced that the number of projects likely to be completed during the financial year 2022-

23 is likely to be around 65,000 which shall be more than seven times of number of projects completed during the financial year 2018-19", sources said.

Further, the Government has directed all the Administrative Secretaries to have a regular field assessment/check of their departments done through simulation of real cases for appropriate action against any employee found creating hindrances in implementation of schemes and initiatives or the system, sources informed, adding the Government has further directed for identification of the employees who discourage

potential investors. Moreover, the Chief Secretary has directed that the orders for identifying officers who have taken stand in courts without the approval of the competent authority and such stands have resulted in liabilities, be complied without further delay.

Meanwhile, the Government has fixed timeline of March 15 for finalization of departmental deliverables for the financial year 2023-24 with the directions to the departments to review the status of the deliverables for the current financial year. (Contd on page 4 Col 3)

## Landslide hits Duksar hamlet in Ramban About 70 residents shifted; 13 houses, road, graveyard badly damaged

Sanjeev K Sharma

JAMMU, Feb 19: Thirteen residential structures of Duksar hamlet in Dalwa area of Gool Sub-Division in Ramban district were badly damaged after a landslide hit the area rendering about 70 people including children homeless.

A graveyard was also excessively damaged in the natural calamity and a body which was buried there recently was shifted to another place of burial.

However, one residential structure in the hamlet was safe till last reports but the residents (Contd on page 4 Col 1)



Broken land in Duksar hamlet of Ramban which was hit by landslide.

were shifted to safer location and information revealed in last reports claimed that the slide that started on Friday was still going on.

Luckily no cattle or human suffered any injury or loss of life

as residents of the hamlet were evacuated much before the landslide struck. "In a timely action by the administration all the residents of landslide hit Duksar hamlet (Contd on page 4 Col 5)

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