

# PDP Chief meets traders in Raghunath Bazaar Mehbooba writes to Jaishankar, seeks intervention in getting passport

**Excelsior Correspondent**  
JAMMU, Feb 20: PDP president Mehbooba Mufti on Monday sought External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar's intervention for her passport, saying she has been waiting for it for the past three years to take her 80-year-old mother on a pilgrimage to Mecca.

In a letter to the Minister, she said her passport's renewal has been pending as the Jammu and Kashmir CID gave an adverse

for three years, the court gave clear directions that the Regional Passport Office in Srinagar should not operate as the CID's "mouthpiece" by denying passports on vague grounds. "In my case, I was asked to approach the Passport Authority of India which I have done multiple times since 2021. Unfortunately, I have not received a positive response yet. The inordinate and deliberate delay in issuing my passport is a grave violation of my fundamental rights," Mehbooba, who is currently in Jammu, said.

She said that "if suspending my basic rights in a democracy like ours is done with such brazen impunity and contempt, one cannot even imagine what an ordinary Kashmiri goes through". "My daughter Iltija applied for her passport renewal in June 2022. Her application too is in

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

limbo and it seems that the Passport Office in Srinagar is yet again failing to discharge its duty," the PDP leader said. For the past three years, "I have been waiting eagerly to take my mother on a pilgrimage to Mecca", she said and added that "as a daughter, I feel pained and anguished to be unable to fulfil such a simple wish because of petty politics". "I write to you hoping that you will look into the matter urgently," she said in her letter to the external affairs minister.

Last week, Iltija filed a petition in the high court for issuance of passport, pleading that she needs the travel document immediately to pursue her higher education outside the

country. The 35-year-old, in the plea, had said her passport expired on January 2 and she had applied for a fresh passport in advance on June 8 last year.

In March 2021, Mehbooba and her mother were refused passports after the Jammu and Kashmir Police cited an "adverse report". Mehbooba's passport expired on May 31, 2019, and she had applied for a fresh passport on December 11 in the next year, while her mother, wife of former Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, had applied for a passport in 2020 to undertake the pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia.

Mehbooba's passport application is still pending but authorities released the passport of her mother early this month after the high court passed fresh directions to the passport officer.

Meanwhile, Mehbooba Mufti on Monday visited the historic Raghunath bazar here.

The former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister interacted with traders to ascertain the current situation in one of the economic and trade hubs of the summer capital, party leaders said. Mufti met the office bearers of Raghunath bazar traders association who apprised her about the work undertaken and progress during her tenure as the Chief Minister, they said. The traders recalled that it was during her Government that the beautification project of the market was undertaken, the party leaders said.

A semi-automatic multi-level car parking facility constructed during her Government besides the market beautification project has provided much needed solace for the traders, they said.

Mufti, while recalling her association with the old city during student years, said "The old Jammu city, its markets and warmth of its residents has always been a binding force for the people of Jammu and Kashmir."



Mehbooba Mufti interacting with traders at Raghunath Bazaar in Jammu.

report that issuing the travel document to her would undermine national security.

Mehbooba also highlighted the delay in issuing of passport to her daughter Iltija who wants to pursue higher studies outside the country.

"I am writing to you about a matter that has dragged on needlessly for the last three years, the former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister said and added that "my mother (Gulshan Nazir) and I applied for passport renewal in March 2020".

"J&K CID gave an adverse report that issuing passports to my 80-year-old mother and me would undermine national security. In J&K, it has become the norm to arbitrarily reject passport applications of thousands, including journalists, students and others, by misusing national interest as a pretext," Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) leader said in her letter.

She said they moved the Jammu and Kashmir High Court and after the case "dragged" on

# Cong rubbing salt on wounds of Sikhs : Kavinder

**Excelsior Correspondent**  
JAMMU, Feb 20: Kavinder Gupta, former Deputy Chief Minister and senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader has castigated the Congress party for appointing the tainted party leader, Jagdish Tytler as an elected member of AICC.

He asserted that Congress stands totally exposed by this decision as Tytler has been the main accused of the 1984 riots against the Sikhs. He said that by adopting this stance the Congress party has only intimidated the Sikh brethren by rubbing salt on the wounds of those who suffered most during the shameful 1984 riots in the nation's Capital.

The senior BJP leader stated this while speaking to media persons on the sidelines of a Bhandara organized at Railway Station Chhani here, today.

While slamming the Congress for the alleged misdeeds Kavinder Gupta also pooh-poohed the Congress leader, Rahul Gandhi for his atrocious statement claiming that the people of Jammu and Kashmir have been denied the democratic rights by the incumbent Government at the Centre and the Union Territory Administration. He said that the re-visit of Rahul Gandhi to Kashmir just days after culmination of 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' is in itself enough proof for him to see that peace stands fully established across Jammu and Kashmir.

Asserting that the incumbent BJP Government deserves full credit for establishing peace in J&K Kavinder Gupta said that the foothold of about 1.82 crore tourists in this Union Territory is more than enough proof of the fact that it is peaceful with people in this region enjoying all the democratic rights as in any other part of the nation. He said Kashmir and its people suffered for more than 30 years only and only due to the misdeeds of Congress and yet again it has made its cheap and demeaning intentions clear by appointing tainted leader Jagdish Tytler as elected member of AICC.

Earlier, in his address to the gathering Kavinder asked the people to preserve rich cultural heritage of J&K and maintain communal harmony and brotherhood at all costs.

# Impersonator from Jammu's Bishnah held for duping Punjabi girl

**Excelsior Correspondent**  
JAMMU, Feb 20: Police in Jammu's Bus Stand area on Monday arrested a former Government employee, who allegedly duped a Punjabi woman of Rs 76000 cash and gold items worth around 8 lakh in lieu of providing the latter a top-ranked job in the Police hierarchy.

SHO Bus Stand, Vishal Dogra told the Excelsior the complainant, a resident of Ludhiana, Punjab, is a civil services aspirant.

"She came in contact with the accused, Ramesh Kumar of Arnia, Bishnah, a former Irrigation and Flood Control Department employee, through Facebook, where the latter projected him as a DIG rank officer of Madhya Pradesh Government, using fake pictures," the police officer said.

Dogra further said, "since the complainant was also preparing for the civil services examination, she was told on Facebook by the accused that she could be helped in getting a top-ranked job in the Police hierarchy provided the she pays the accused for the job".

"Accordingly, the complainant transferred an amount

of Rs 76000 in cash and some gold items worth almost Rs 8 lakh to the accused," he said. Acting on the written complaint of the woman, Police today arrested the accused from Arnia, Bishnah and booked him under section 420 and 379 of the IPC at Police Station Bus Stand, Jammu.

Pertinently, the accused, a former fourth class employee of Irrigation and Flood Control Department, has already been facing departmental action for his alleged unauthorised absence from the duty.

**Drone recovered in Punjab**  
CHANDIGARH, Feb 20:

The BSF and the Punjab Police recovered a China-made drone along the international border of India and Pakistan in Punjab's Fazilka district on Monday, said a BSF official.

This is the second recovery of the unmanned aerial vehicle in the past 24 hours.

Acting on specific information, the teams of the Border Security Force (BSF) and the Punjab Police launched a search operation in the New Hasta Kalan village area in Fazilka at around 9.30 am.

They recovered a quad-

copter - DJI Matrice 300 RTK - from an open area in the village, said the official.

The BSF in coordination with Punjab Police once again captured a rogue drone, said the official.

The BSF on Sunday had recovered the quadcopter along with 2.730 kg heroin from a field in Ghaniaki village in Gurdaspur district.

On Saturday, the force recovered 20 packets of heroin and a cache of arms and ammunition after a gunfight with Pakistani smugglers along the international border in Gurdaspur. (PTI)

# Expert panel of GSI arriving today DC visits sinking area at Duksar Dalwa in Gool

**Excelsior Correspondent**

RAMBAN, Feb 20: Deputy Commissioner, Ramban, Mussarat Islam today visited the village Duksar Dalwa to assess the damage caused to residential houses. He also interacted with the affected families.

The DC was accompanied by Sub-divisional Magistrate Gool, Tanveer-ul-Majid; Executive Engineer PWD (R&B), Abhishek Gupta; Executive Engineer Jal

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

Shakti, Sudhir Sharma and other concerned officers and local representatives.

Interacting with the families whose houses were damaged due to sinking of land, the DC assured them every possible help from the district administration.

He directed the SDM Gool to process relief cases of damaged houses on war footing under SDRF to provide assistance to victims in the shortest possible time.

The DC informed that 16 affected families have been shifted to safer places besides providing tents, blankets and utensils to them.

As conveyed by SDM Gool,

# IIM Jammu records 100% placements

**Excelsior Correspondent**

JAMMU, Feb 20: Indian Institute of Management (IIM Jammu) has released its final placement report for the sixth batch of its post-graduate program in management (MBA 2020-22), recording a 100% placement rate.

As per a statement, the institute saw a rise in the number of companies visiting for final placements as over 135 compa-

nies visited the campus. It said that 239 students of the Sixth Batch of MBA (2021-23) appeared for the final placements who secured roles in domains like product management, marketing, consulting, finance, and general management.

The highest domestic CTC stood at INR 64 LPA, with the average and median CTC at INR 16.43 LPA and 15.25 LPA, respectively, said the press statement.

Some of the prominent recruiters included Microsoft, McKinsey and Company, EXL, Cognizant, Amazon, and more, it said.

Pertinently, IIM Jammu has been one of the preferred hiring destinations for top recruiters in the country. Prof. B.S. Sahay, Director, IIM Jammu, stated that the 100% placements indicate an optimistic placement scenario and a resounding success. The placement activity was coordinated by Prof. Jabir Ali and Dr. Baljeet Singh, Chairperson, and Co-Chairperson, respectively, at IIM Jammu.



Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh speaking at the meeting of Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) at NITI Aayog, New Delhi on Monday.

# Dr Jitendra proposes 'PPP+PPP' model for sustainable StartUps

**Excelsior Correspondent**

NEW DELHI, Feb 20: Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology; MoS (Independent Charge) Earth Sciences; MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr Jitendra Singh has proposed "PPP+PPP" model in international collaborations for sustainable StartUps and sustainable science ventures.

The collaborating Governments on both sides, elaborated the Minister, can engage their respective private sectors as well to achieve sustainable goals. Commercialization of the output is essential to sustain it, he said and added that any successful and replicable models we arrive at can help us move forward.

Speaking at the meeting of Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) in NITI Aayog, Dr Jitendra Singh underscored the importance of taking up programs that engage the Industry upfront in activities like acceleration. "Here, the Industry can map the sector, tell us what are the gaps, and we work together to engage StartUps, a program to brand Indian innovations internationally is important," he said.

Another vital aspect, said Dr Jitendra Singh, is the Vernacular Innovation Program because many creative and innovative people in this country do not get a chance because of the language barrier.

The Minister also called for mentorship and partnerships with Public, Private sector, NGOs, Academia and Institutions to promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneur-

ship in the country. He appreciated that AIM has taken a holistic approach to ensure creation of a problem-solving innovative mindset in schools and creating an ecosystem of entrepreneurship in universities, research institutions, private and MSME sector.

Dr Jitendra Singh underlined that to promote the benefits of technology-led innovation to the unserved/underserved regions of India, AIM is setting up Atal Community Innovation Centers (ACIC) with a unique partnership driven model where-in AIM would grant upto Rs 2.5 crores to an ACIC subject to a partner proving equal or greater matching funding. He said that till date, 14 ACICs have been established by StartUps across the country which are incubating 10. The target of establishing 50+ ACICs will be achieved by March 2023, he added.

Dr Jitendra Singh appreciated that Atal Tinkering Labs are being established in schools nationwide with 10,000 operational in 700 districts and over 7.5 million students having access to ATLS. AIM shall also establish 10,000 new ATLS in Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, North-Eastern states, Aspirational Districts, Himalayan and Island territories.

Dr Jitendra Singh noted out that to enable all the initiatives to succeed, AIM has launched one of the largest mentor engagement and management program "Mentor India - The mentors of Change". To date AIM has over 10000+ registrations nationwide on the AIM iNNONET portal with 4000+ of them allocated to ATLS and AICS

# DC reviews progress on NABARD funded RIDF projects

**Excelsior Correspondent**

KATHUA, Feb 20: Deputy Commissioner, Kathua Rahul Pandey chaired a meeting of concerned Officers to review the status of projects funded under Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF) of NABARD in the district.

The meeting was informed that a total of 79 projects, under different sectors, have been taken up under District and UT Plan for infrastructure development in uncovered areas. The projects funded under RIDF of NABARD in the district include roads, bridges besides assets of Health, Flood Control, PHE, Irrigation, Sheep Husbandry, Animal Husbandry, Ayush etc.

The DC, while reviewing the physical and financial progress

# UT Distribution Reforms Committee re-constituted

**Excelsior Correspondent**

JAMMU, Feb 20: Government of Jammu and Kashmir today reconstituted the Union Territory Distribution Reforms Committee for effective and efficient implementation of Revamped Distribution Sector Schemes (RDSS) in J&K.

Headed by the Chief Secretary, J&K, the committee shall review progress on implementation of schemes as per approved Action plan and DPRs at least once in a quarter and share details of proceedings with respective Nodal Agency (REC/PFC).

It shall review compliance **V Brand exporting products to more than 5 countries**

**Excelsior Correspondent**

JAMMU, Feb 20: V Brand Group is exporting its products to more than 5 countries and has established 2 units in Rajasthan to capture and enter the markets of other states as well.

The Brand is a name dedicated to quality at reasonable price and gives priority to the health of the customers without any compromise. Quality check at every step and priority to purity has made V Brand a household name in many houses.

Established in 1995 by Vinod Grover with just eight skilled and un-skilled employees, V Brand had now a family of about 80 members at different sections. So is the production which begins with just 200 tin of mustard oil per day and has now gone up to 2000 tins per day, and the demand for V Brand oil is on the rise with every coming day.

# LG inaugurates Aerosol Winter School-2023 at CU National Clean Air Prog must become mass movement : Sinha

**Excelsior Correspondent**

SAMBA, Feb 20: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha inaugurated Aerosol Winter School-2023 at Central University of Jammu today.

The Winter School is being organized by Central University of Jammu under the aegis of National Knowledge Network to support National Clean Air Programme.

Speaking on the occasion, the Lt Governor termed the winter school as a vital initiative for developing scientific knowledge in achieving clean air & climate goals.

In order to meet the objective of National Clean Air Programme, this winter school will facilitate theory-based training & hands-on operational training of all stakeholders for atmospheric aerosol measurements, said the Lt Governor.

"Clean air is the priority of the administration and National Clean Air Programme should become mass movement for prevention, control and abatement of air pollution. It is also necessary that scientific research & its benefits reach the public & local institutions," said the Lt Governor.

Sinha highlighted the efforts being made under the guidance of Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi towards National Clean Air Programme across the country.

The world is looking at India to combat the challenges of climate change. Experts should work at the grassroots level and there should be coordination between various experts, academic & administrative institutions on capacity building and public outreach, the Lt Governor observed.

"Productive life of citizens & progress of the region depends upon the health of environment. All stakeholders, Pollution Control Committee & ULBs must work together for effective implementation of Clean Air Program and to shape the cli-

mate future of Jammu Kashmir, the Lt Governor said.

"Every citizen should discharge their responsibility towards nature and become Green Warrior & Environment Soldier. We have to strengthen the monitoring system at grass root level by developing city action plans and micro action

Kashmir Pollution Control Committee and ULBs, noted the Lt Governor. The Lt Governor urged the National Knowledge Network to cooperate in increasing the technical capabilities of concerned institutions in Jammu and Kashmir. He further advised the

LG Governor Manoj Sinha inaugurating Aerosol Winter School-2023 at Central University, Jammu on Monday.

plans for local solutions", Sinha added.

The Lt Governor also shared the significant steps taken by the administration for maintaining a balance between development and ecology.

Awareness campaign among common citizens at Panchayat level by Forest Department and initiatives like 'Har Gaon Haryali', 'Ped Lagao Beti Ke Naam' has encouraged Jan Bhagidari and infused a sense of responsibility in the society to work towards environment protection, the Lt Governor observed.

City-specific strategy was formulated under NCAP guidelines for Jammu and Srinagar. Our focus should be on filling the gaps through policy formulation, capacity building, training program and extending its maximum benefits to Jammu

# HC upholds removal of Sarpanch in 'Non Confidence Motion'

**Excelsior Correspondent**

SRINAGAR, Feb 20: High Court held the removal of a Sarpanch by 'Non Confidence Motion' as legal and valid and dismissed the pleas challenging his removal from the office by the aggrieved Sarpanch.

The petitioner-Mohammad Fayaz Sheikh after contesting the panchayat elections of 2018 for the post of Sarpanch in border area of Tangdhar was declared elected as the electorates of Panch of Halqa Khowerapara, Tangdhar.

However, in August, 2021, he was removed in a no-confidence motion with 5 members voting against him, 2 in favour and one was absent.

The Petitioner challenged the vote for 'non confidence motion' by contending that the same have been issued in gross violation of the mandate of Section 7 of the Jammu and Kashmir Panchayati Raj Act on the ground that the same has to be passed by a resolution expressing want of confidence in a Sarpanch or Naib Sarpanch by a majority of not less than 2/3rd of the total number of the Panchs of the concerned Halqa Panchayat.

The division bench of Justice Rajesh Oswal and Justice Mohan Lal dismissed the appeal of aggrieved Panch. The court said the appellant has not challenged the Rule 81 (3) of the J&K Panchayati Raj Act and also the appellant has raised a plea that as one of the Panch did not participate in the meet-

# General Category people will no longer accept continuation of reservation: GCPF-JK

**Excelsior Correspondent**

JAMMU, Feb 20: Strongly condemning continuation of reservation without any review, General Category People's Front (GCPF-JK) today said that General Category people would no longer accept the continuation of reservation on the basis of castes.

A meeting in this connection was held today under the chairmanship of Raj Kumar Banathia (chairman of the Front) in which members of the Front deliberated upon the socio-economic and political problems being faced by the majority.

Addressing the meeting, Prof Yash Paul Sanson (president of the Front) said that continuation of reservation without any review is the biggest deception and political fraud as it provides benefit to the rich and exploits the poor, divide the society and creates hatred among castes. He demanded that Government should make the caste irrelevant as it is anti-national.

"No political party has protected the rights of General Category because of negative biased and prejudiced perception about 'Swam' castes. After Supreme Court verdict on EWS Reservation, the concept is altogether changed," he added.

Jammu Kashmir Pollution Control Committee, ULBs and Central University to work on city action plan and work out a strategy to strengthen the monitoring mechanism at the grass root level.

Arun Kumar Mehta, Chief Secretary and Dheeraj Gupta, Principal Secretary, Forests Department, highlighted the useful impact of the discussion and studies to be conducted during the hands-on training program in the Winter School.

Prof Saachchida Nand Tripathi, Convener, National Knowledge Network for National Clean Air Programme briefed on the aims and objectives of the programme.

Prof Sanjeev Jain, Vice Chancellor Central University Jammu, experts, deans and faculty members of the University were present on the occasion.

ing because of her ailment, so her vote should have been considered in his favour.

"This contention of appellant is misconceived and without any justification. Similar plea can also be raised by the Panchs who voted in favour of motion of no-confidence. We have examined the order passed by the Writ Court and we find that there is no illegality in the same. This appeal, as such, is without any merit, and is accordingly dismissed", reads the judgment.

The DB said, admittedly 9 Panchs, one of whom died, therefore, out of 8 Panchs, not less than 06 Panchs should be present to vote against no-confidence motion, while as in the instant case, as is evident from the impugned communications, only seven 7 Panchs were present, out of which only 5 voted in favour of the motion to remove the Petitioner as Sarpanch.

Court reiterated that out of the 7 members who were present at the time of voting for the motion, 5 Panchs voted in favour of the motion, which is well above the two-third majority as prescribed in terms of the rules governing the field.

"That being the position, the contention raised by the Petitioner in the instant Petition qua the 'No Confidence Motion' against him not having been adopted by two-third majority of the members present at the time of voting is belied by the pleadings on record", Court recorded.

General Category people will no longer accept continuation of reservation: GCPF-JK

Som Nath Sharma (general secretary) said that General Category people would no longer accept the continuation of reservation as they are emotionally shattered and feel humiliated. He appealed the Government of India to move in direction of legal action and enact 'Equality Act' to ensure equality, justice, dignity and liberty to all. He demanded restoration of restricted fundamental basic rights of majority and shunning the suppression and marginalization of incarcerated non-reserved people.

Raj Kumar Banathia in his presidential address said that like SCs/STs/OBCs' reservation, EWS reservation is also a political fraud and exploitation and dangerous game plan to hoodwink majority community. Country is needed a new concept of reservation today, he said and demanded that Government's socio-economic and political policies as well as welfare schemes should be guided by the very essence of human equality, justice, liberty and dignity.

VK Sharma and Deepak Khajuria (vice-presidents), Bushan Pargal, Gopal Dass Verma, Swam Singh, Ravi Sawhney, Jagdish Dogra and Dr Bansal Lal also expressed their views on reservation.