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**India, China discuss Ladakh disengagement**

BEIJING/NEW DELHI, Feb 22:

India and China today held diplomatic talks in Beijing and discussed proposals for disengagement in the remaining friction points along the LAC in eastern Ladakh in an "open and constructive manner", but there was no indication of any breakthrough.

During the meeting - the first in-person talks since July 2019 - held under the WMCC framework, the two sides (Contd on page 6 Col 3)

**DB seeks status of CBI probe in Patnitop constructions**

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Feb 22: Division Bench of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh High Court comprising Justice Tashi Rabstan and Justice Moksha Khajuria Kazmi has directed the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to file status report with regard to the investigation conducted into illegal constructions at Patnitop.

The direction has been passed in a Public Interest (Contd on page 6 Col 3)

**3 arrested in narco-militancy syndicate**

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, Feb 22: The State Investigation Agency (SIA) today raided four premises of narco-militancy suspects and arrested three persons who ran the syndicate.

"Targeting the financial networks of terror outfits with an aim to destroy its ecosystem and support structure completely, SIA Kashmir conducted searches on Monday at multiple locations in districts of (Contd on page 6 Col 7)

**MoE for 6 years as minimum age for Class 1**

NEW DELHI, Feb 22:

The Ministry of Education has directed all States and Union Territories to fix the minimum age for admission in Class 1 as six years, officials said today.

According to the new National Education Policy (NEP), the foundational stage consists of five years of learning opportunities for all children (between 3 to 8 years) that includes three years of preschool (Contd on page 6 Col 5)

**Temps drop, avalanche warning issued**

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, Feb 22: Amid forecast for mainly dry weather in Kashmir, night temperatures dropped below sub-zero at a few places and authorities have (Contd on page 6 Col 5)

**\*Watch video on www.excelsiornews.com**

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Authorities have issued a low danger avalanche warning in four districts of Kashmir. (Contd on page 6 Col 3)

**50 SSPs, SPs transferred**

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Feb 22: The Government today ordered transfer and postings of 50 SSPs and SPs.

Swarn Singh Kotwal, SSP Security Jammu has been transferred and posted as Commandant, SDRF 1st Bn, Srinagar, against an available vacancy.

Aijaz Ahmad Bhat, Commandant, IR-13th Bn was transferred and posted as Commandant, IR-10th Bn, vice Fayaz Ahmad Lone.

Mohd Arshad, Commandant, IRP-12th Bn was transferred and posted as Commandant, IR-13th Bn, replacing Aijaz Ahmad Bhat.

Mohd Arif Rishu, SSP Railways Jammu has been transferred and posted as Commandant, IR-8th Bn, against a vacancy. (Contd on page 6 Col 5)

**MHA reviews J&K situation with top officials**

**Phased troops withdrawal from some UT pockets discussed, no final decision so far**

Sanjeev Pargal

JAMMU, Feb 22: Security situation in Jammu and Kashmir during upcoming summer came up for a high-level review at a meeting in the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) attended by entire top brass of MHA and civil, police and Intelligence officials from Jammu and Kashmir.

"Besides security review in hinterland and situation prevailing along Line of Control (LoC) and International Border (IB), a proposal for relocation of troops including withdrawal of Army from some areas and their replacement with CRPF was also discussed but a final call hasn't been taken," official sources told the Excelsior.

Besides top brass of civil, Intelligence and police administration, two Additional DGPs heading Jammu and Kashmir divisions including Mukesh Singh and Vijay Kumar had also been specially called to the meeting as the Home Ministry went into ground level review of the situation.

**Anti-militancy ops, drone activities on agenda**

A proposal has been mooted for phased withdrawal of Army from some pockets of Jammu and Kashmir divisions and replace them with CRPF in view of normalcy prevailing in some of the districts which are by and large free from the militancy though the militants continue to make attempts to revive the terror activities there unsuccessfully.

Making it clear that no final decision has been taken so far on withdrawal of troops, sources said it will be discussed with all stakeholders before reaching a conclusion. They added that if approved five districts in Jammu and three districts in Kashmir could be taken up for phased withdrawal of replacement of troops with CRPF.

"Intensifying anti-militancy operations in Kashmir during summer also came up for high-level discussion in the meeting," sources said, adding the operations are on and will be further stepped-up shortly as winter season is close to over.

Top officials of Jammu and Kashmir Police, Intelligence agencies and civil administration have detailed feedback of the prevailing situation in the Union Territory to the Home Ministry officials. There was general view that militancy has been contained to a large extent and number of the militants, both locals and foreigners, is at all time low and police is now targeting Over Ground Workers (OGWs) network of the militants.

Officials were of the view that Jammu Police have gathered vital leads in terror attack at Dhangri in the border district of Rajouri in which seven civilians from minority community were killed and over dozen others were injured. Elimination of the militants involved in the carnage is now only a matter of time, they said.

Sources said the progress on casting 360-degree security net in Jammu region as assured by Union Home (Contd on page 6 Col 3)

Minister Amit Shah during his visit here on January 13 in the aftermath of Dhangri attack, was also reviewed. Shah had set deadline of three months for providing 360-degree security net in the region and strengthening Security Grid.

As far as security situation along the Line of Control (LoC) and International Border (IB) is concerned, sources said the MHA was briefed that most of the infiltration attempts by the militants have been thwarted by the security personnel.

However, the drone activities remained a cause of concern though no such attempts have been observed during past few days on the International Border in Jammu region.

Pakistan-based militants have largely been using drones to send arms and ammunition and narcotics to Jammu and Kashmir but security forces are not allowing these bids to succeed because of alertness on both LoC as well as (Contd on page 6 Col 3)

4 ex-CMs, Mayor oppose Property Tax

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, Feb 22: Four former Chief Ministers have opposed the Property Tax announced by the Government while the City Mayor, Junaid Azim Mattoo said that the decision was not approved by elected ULBs and thus the SMC will explore ways to contest this 'arbitrary move'.

The former CM and president of People's Democratic (Contd on page 6 Col 7)

**CBI books ex HC Judge**

NEW DELHI, Feb 22:

The CBI has booked former Allahabad High Court Judge S N Shukla, who is being probed for allegedly favouring a Medical college owner, in a fresh case of amassing disproportionate assets worth over Rs 2.54 crore in the name of family members, officials said today.

The CBI had carried out searches after it booked Shukla, then a Judge of the Lucknow bench of the High Court, and (Contd on page 6 Col 3)

**HC puts on hold fresh elections for SGC**

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, Feb 22: The High Court today restrained the authorities from holding elections for the Sikh Gurdwara Committee (SGC) in Kashmir and directed for maintaining the status quo with regard to the elections.

Aggrieved of the notice of election dated February 17, issued by the Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, the (Contd on page 6 Col 1)

**Centre plays gimmick on restoration of Statehood: Farooq**

Fayaz Bukhari

SRINAGAR, Feb 22: National Conference president Dr Farooq Abdullah today accused the Central Government of playing a gimmick with the people on the restoration of Statehood to Jammu and Kashmir.

"They (the Centre) doesn't want to restore Statehood. It is all a gimmick to mislead us the world. They won't give it," he said here on the sidelines of a meeting of NC leaders at Nawai Subh headquarters of the party. Dr Abdullah said that the Centre should hold the Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir if it claims a return of normalcy to the region. "The question arises that the (Contd on page 6 Col 1)

**\*Watch video on www.excelsiornews.com**



A group of tourists posing for photograph at Botanical Garden as summer like weather conditions prevail in Srinagar on Wednesday. (UNI)

**Property Tax will help Municipal bodies to generate revenue for better services: Prasad**

Sanjeev K Sharma

JAMMU, Feb 22: The Government of Jammu and Kashmir today said the Property Tax may improve Municipal services besides assuring the residents of the Union Territory (UT) that lower rates shall be imposed in comparison to other States and UTs of the country with residential houses up to 1000 (Contd on page 6 Col 3)

Government of India along with the Finance Commission have been strongly recommending tapping this resource from time to time.

"Accordingly, the Government of J&K has notified the Property Tax with the aim to improve financial health of Municipal bodies to enable them to provide better Municipal services," he further said.

Prasad said that Tax rates in J&K are notified in such a way that Tax implications are progressive in nature with minimum implication to small businesses and households.

"Further, as Property Tax is being imposed for the first time in J&K, the UT has notified lower Property Tax as compared to neighbouring States/UTs," he maintained adding: "J&K is one of the last UTs of the country where Property Tax was not imposed till date."

The Principal Secretary told reporters that Property Tax is linked with Stamp Duty Tax of the area so property valuation of different areas (Contd on page 6 Col 3)

**4 ex-CMs, Mayor oppose Property Tax**

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**No plan formulated for public display of historic items**

Even after lapse of 6 months, Toshkhana assets yet to be formally handed over to Culture Deptt

Stored articles not inspected during past many years

Mohinder Verma

JAMMU, Feb 22: Even after the lapse of six months, the assets of the Toshkhana Organization have not been formally handed over to the Department of Culture by the Hospitality and Protocol Department. Moreover, no plan has so far been formulated for public display of historic items, which otherwise are rusting continuously for not having been inspected during the past so many years.

The Administrative Council vide Decision No.115/9/2022 dated August 13, 2022 gave nod to the proposal regarding winding up of Toshkhana Organization. Accordingly, the Hospitality and Protocol Department vide Government Order No.11-JK (H&P) dated August 30, 2022 formally accorded sanction to the closure of J&K Toshkhana (Contd on page 6 Col 5)

Property Tax policy will help Municipal bodies to generate revenue for better services with minimum Tax implication to the residents.

"Better Municipal services are expected to attract more investment and encourage more people to set up businesses in J&K. Revenue gen-

erated from Property Tax will be used to improve infrastructure, build new parks and playgrounds and maintain the already existing facilities which will significantly enhance the services provided by Municipal bodies," he further said.

Prasad said that Tax rates in J&K are notified in such a way that Tax implications are progressive in nature with minimum implication to small businesses and households.

"Further, as Property Tax is being imposed for the first time in J&K, the UT has notified lower Property Tax as compared to neighbouring States/UTs," he maintained adding: "J&K is one of the last UTs of the country where Property Tax was not imposed till date."

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required to be formally handed over to the Department of Culture and then to the Department of Archives, Archaeology and Museums so as to pave the way for their proper maintenance and public display", sources said.

They disclosed that inspection of these articles of historic importance kept haphazardly in the stores of the Toshkhana Organization and in a strong room at Civil Secretariat Jammu has not been conducted during the past many years as such nobody knows about their exact condition. This is notwithstanding the fact that such articles need proper preservation after regular intervals to prevent them from decaying or getting damaged further.

It is pertinent to mention here that several valuable articles of historic importance were (Contd on page 6 Col 7)

**\*Watch video on www.excelsiornews.com**

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