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G20 FM's meet to see largest gathering

NEW DELHI, Mar 1:

The G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting that begins in New Delhi tomorrow is one of the largest gatherings of Foreign Ministers hosted by any G20 presidency, with over 40 delegations expected to participate, Foreign Secretary Vinay Mohan Kwatra said today.

The G20 meet will begin with a gala dinner being held tonight. It is the second ministerial being held under India's presidency, with the Finance Ministers' Meeting being held in Bengaluru last week.

The Foreign Ministers' Meeting is being held at the (Contd on page 4 Col 5)

Kumar takes over as Army vice chief

NEW DELHI, Mar 1:

Lt Gen M V Suchindra Kumar today took charge as the Vice Chief of Army Staff, officials said.

The General Officer has taken over the appointment from Lt Gen B S Raju who has taken over the reins of Jaipur-based Sapta Shakti Command, they said.

"Lieutenant General M V Suchindra Kumar has assumed the charge of the Vice Chief of Army Staff on March 1, 2023," the Defence Ministry said in a statement.

Prior to taking over as the Vice Chief of the Army Staff, Lt (Contd on page 4 Col 5)

Tripathi gets addl charge of NACWC

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Mar 1: The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet today assigned additional charge of the post of Chairperson, National Authority Chemical Weapons Convention (NACWC), Cabinet Secretariat to Pradip Kumar Tripathi, an IAS officer of 1987 batch of erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir cadre, now AGMUT.

Tripathi is presently posted as Secretary (Coordination), Cabinet Secretariat.

(Contd on page 4 Col 1)

Gulmarg receives 3 inches of snow

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, Mar 1: Upper reaches of Kashmir today recording light snowfall with Gulmarg receiving around 3 inches while rains lashed the Valley. The Weather Department has forecast intermittent snowfall and rain during the next 24 hours in J&K with authorities issuing avalanche warning for the hills.

A Meteorological department official said that mainly dry weather was expected during March 3 to 7.

(Contd on page 4 Col 5)

LPG price up by Rs 50

NEW DELHI, Mar 1:

Cooking gas LPG price today was hiked by Rs 50 per cylinder -- the first increase in rates in almost eight months --

*Watch video on www.excelsiornews.com

that came within days of end of polling in three northeastern States and was sharply criticised by the Opposition.

A 14.2-kg LPG cylinder in Delhi now costs Rs 1,103, up from Rs 1,053, according to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers.

State-owned Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat (Contd on page 4 Col 5)

WEATHER

JAMMU:
Possibility of light rain/thundershowers
TEMPERATURE
Max: 25.1 Degree C
Min: 14.2 Degree C
RELATIVE HUMIDITY
RH-I (Morning): 69.0 per cent
RH-II (Evening): 54.0 per cent
Sunset on Thursday: 06.30 p.m.
Sunrise on Friday: 06.58 a.m.

SRINAGAR:
Rain/thundershowers
TEMPERATURE
Max: 13.4 Degree C
Min: 6.4 Degree C
RELATIVE HUMIDITY
RH-I (Morning): 83.0 per cent
RH-II (Evening): 61.0 per cent

LEH:
TEMPERATURE
Max: 7.4 Degree C
Min: -5.6 Degree C

'Poor won't be touched, anti-encroachment drive will go on'

Influential persons, those who held high posts encroached land for next 4 generations: LG

Sanjeev Pargal

JAMMU, Mar 1: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha today declared that anti-encroachment drive in Jammu and Kashmir will continue and influential persons and those who held high positions will not be spared as they have not only encroached land for themselves but for their coming four generations. At the same time, he made it clear that no poor person has been touched during the drive and they will not be affected in future as well.

He also charged bigwigs *Watch video on www.excelsiornews.com

who have to pay Property Tax for provoking others, who don't have to pay the tax, and called upon the people not to fall in their trap.

Sinha made these important announcements while addressing two functions here today.

"There was uproar over anti-encroachment drive. But, not even a single poor person has been ousted from the land. And,

People who should pay Property Tax instigating others



LG Manoj Sinha addressing a function in Jammu on Wednesday.

in future also, the poor people who have taken some land for their earnings, will not be touched," Sinha said.

He, however, declared that influential persons and those who held high positions earlier and have grabbed Government land not only for themselves but for their four generations, in violation of law, will not be spared.

"All such encroachments will be removed," the Lieutenant Governor declared.

He announced that land retrieved from encroachers will be used for building hospitals, schools, play grounds etc.

Referring to imposition of Property Tax, Sinha cited figures to say that the tax imposed in Jammu and

Kashmir was just one-tenth from other cities of the country and nearly 40 percent household owners don't have to pay any tax at all.

"Some persons have houses in New Delhi. I have their photographs also. They pay Rs 50,000 tax in New Delhi but won't pay in Jammu and Srinagar," he said, adding those who should pay tax have been provoking others against it.

He called upon the people not to fall into trap of those who are misleading the people.

However, the Lieutenant Governor said, the Government is open to suggestions and if someone has better model of the tax or he thinks that it can be implemented in more better way he is welcome.

"The businessmen, industrialists, Chartered Accountants, journalists are sitting here. If anyone has suggestions and they think it can be implemented in better way, they can give their

(Contd on page 4 Col 3)

'Important to build futuristic infra'

Well-planned cities will determine fate of country: PM

NEW DELHI, Mar 1:

Prime Minister Narendra Modi today said that well-planned cities will determine the fate of the country, asserting that India's position in the world would have been completely different if 75 planned cities had been developed since Independence.

Addressing a post-Budget webinar on 'Urban Planning, Development and Sanitation', he noted that only one or two planned cities have been developed in the country in 75 years of India's Independence.

The Prime Minister said with India urbanising rapidly, it is important to build infrastructure that is futuristic.

"Urban planning will determine the fate of our cities in 'Amrit Kaal' and it is only well-planned cities that will determine the fate of India. When planning is better, our cities will

become climate resilient and water secure," the Prime Minister said.



PM Narendra Modi addressing post-budget webinar on 'Urban Planning, Development and Sanitation' on Wednesday. (UNI)

He urged the participants of the webinar to focus on three main questions about how to strengthen the urban planning ecosystem in the States, how to properly use the expertise available in the private sector in urban planning and lastly how to develop a centre of excellence that will take urban planning to a new level.

The Government has organised a series of post-budget webinars to seek ideas and suggestions for the effective implementation of the initiatives announced in the Union Budget 2023.

He informed that an incentive of Rs 15,000 crore has been declared in this year's budget for the standards of urban development and expressed confidence that it will provide impetus to planned urbanisation.

Well-planned cities, he said, are going to be the need of the hour in the fast-paced environment of India in the 21st century.

Underlining that the development of new cities and the modernisation of services in the existing cities are the two main aspects of urban development, Modi

(Contd on page 4 Col 1)

Govt suspends FCRA license of CPR

NEW DELHI, Mar 1:

The Ministry of Home Affairs has suspended the FCRA licence of prominent public think-tank Centre for Policy Research (CPR) for six months over alleged violation of laws, officials said today.

CPR, a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO), in a statement, said it continues to cooperate fully with authorities, is in complete compliance with the law and is routinely scrutinised and audited by Government authorities, including the Comptroller and Auditor General of India.

CPR was under scrutiny after Income Tax surveys on it and Oxfam India in September last year.

The Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) licence of (Contd on page 4 Col 3)

TRF behind KP's killing

NEW DELHI, Mar 1:

Security forces have pumped up their efforts to dismantle the network of LeT's shadow terror group The Resistance Front (TRF) which had issued a poster glorifying the terrorists who had killed a Kashmiri Pandit Sanjay Kumar in Pulwama, officials said today.

The agencies are choking its fund flow and acting against its members to tear up the network in Jammu and Kashmir, they said.

Two terrorists of the group — Aqib Mushtaq Bhat and Ajaz Ahmed Bhat — who were accused of gunning down Kumar were killed by a team of 55 Rashtriya Rifles in an encounter on Tuesday.

Although 'Kashmir Freedom Fighters' had claimed responsibility (Contd on page 4 Col 7)



A vendor sells chocolates at Gulmarg.

—Excelsior/Aabid Nabi

'Furnish Designated Committee's recommendations'

DB seeks particulars of 53 unauthorized occupants of Govt accommodations

180 ex-legislators evicted after dissolution of Assembly: Govt

Mohinder Verma

JAMMU, Mar 1: A Division Bench of the High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh comprising Chief Justice N Kotiswar Singh and Justice Sanjeev Kumar has sought particulars of 53 unauthorized occupants of the Government accommodations in Jammu and Srinagar and also directed for furnishing the recommendations of Designated Committee headed by Additional Director General of Police (ADGP) Security.

When the Public Interest Litigation (PIL) highlighting illegal occupation of Government accommodations by the political persons beyond their entitlement came up for hearing, Advocate Sheikh Shakeel Ahmed along with Advocate Rahul Raina submitted that in spite of repeated orders passed by the Division Bench on earlier occasions clearly delineating the requirement for giving protection and official accommodation, the

authorities continue to accommodate as many as 53 persons even when they have ceased to hold any Constitutional or official position in the Government.

"The State has already taken a stand in the similar cases that security and accommodation are two different issues but despite that these 53 persons are in the possession of Government accommodation illegally", he pointed out.

However, Senior Additional Advocate General S S Nanda submitted, "in view of the continuous assessment made by the Designated Committee, the process for eviction of these persons has been put on hold for the time being".

After hearing both the sides, the Division Bench headed by Chief Justice sought particulars of these 53 persons who are still being given the official accommodation beyond their legal entitlement. "We also wish to know the recommendations of the Designated Committee concerned", the DB added.

Accordingly, the DB direct-

ed for listing the PIL on April 6, 2023.

As per the status report submitted by the Estates Department in compliance to the Division Bench order dated February 6, 2023, the copy of which is available with EXCELSIOR, the department initiated eviction proceedings against illegal occupants of Government quarters particularly ex-legislators and other political persons after the Legislative Assembly of erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir was dissolved.

"Estates Department has so far evicted about 180 ex-legislators and political persons from the Government accommodations at Srinagar and Jammu and at present 49 persons (24 in Jammu and 25 in Srinagar) are still residing/availing Estates Department accommodation beyond their period of entitlement", the status report said.

A meeting of Designated Committee was held on January 29, 2021 under the chairmanship

(Contd on page 4 Col 3)

Farooq backs Stalin for PM, asks Cong to forget about PM's choice

CHENNAI, Mar 1:

Jammu Kashmir National Conference president Farooq Abdullah today said there are chances for DMK top leader and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin to become the Prime Minister if Opposition parties come together and win the general election next year.

Abdullah said Congress should forget about the Prime Minister's choice and focus should be only on winning the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

On his arrival here to take part in the 70th birthday celebrations of Stalin, Abdullah, when asked on prospective Prime Ministerial candidates, said a decision could be made on the best man to lead and unite the nation at the appropriate time



NC president Dr Farooq Abdullah at a function in Chennai on Wednesday.

can't he become the Prime Minister?"

To a question on opposition unity, he said Stalin and DMK have done very well. When the

(Contd on page 4 Col 3)

Rs 3.50 cr spent but building remains unutilized Yatrika Niwas at Sukrala Mata lying abandoned

Gopal Sharma

JAMMU, Mar 1: Constructed by the Tourism department with the project cost of Rs 5 crores, a two-storey building of Yatrika Niwas at Sukrala Mata with allied facilities, in Billawar area of district Kathua, has been lying abandoned and unused for the last over 10 long years.

The purpose of raising this building for the benefit of the thousands of pilgrims visiting Mata Sukrala in Billawar Sub Division of Kathua has been defeated so far as this building which was completed during 2013-14, has not been put to use



Yatrika Niwas at Sukrala Mata in Billawar area of Kathua lying unused.

due to the callous attitude of the people at the helm of affairs, infrastructure and other allied facilities were ready for the pub-

(Contd on page 4 Col 1)