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Farooq leaves for 'Umrah'

Excelsior Correspondent
SRINAGAR, Mar 5: National Conference president Farooq Abdullah today left for Saudi Arabia to perform 'Umrah', a minor pilgrimage to the twin Muslim holy cities of Mecca and Medina.
A party leader said here that Abdullah (85), a Member of Parliament from Srinagar Lok Sabha constituency, was accompanied by party colleague Aijaz Jan.
(Contd on page 4 Col 3)

Man shoots himself dead in Doda

Excelsior Correspondent
BHADERWAH, Mar 5: A 35-year-old man allegedly shot himself dead with his brother's rifle in Doda district today, a police officer said.
Sub-Divisional Police Officer (Bhaderwah) Waseem Ahmad said that Arvind Kumar shot himself dead at his house in Sindra village of Bhalla tehsil around 8 am.
He said Kumar's elder brother
(Contd on page 4 Col 2)

Tremors felt in J&K

SRINAGAR, Mar 5:
An earthquake of low intensity jolted parts of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir today, officials said.
The magnitude of the earthquake was measured on the Richter scale 3.9 with the epicenter at latitude 34.42 and longitude 74.88 in Jammu and Kashmir. The tremors were felt for a few seconds.
The tremors were felt at 06.57 am with the 38 km depth in north of Srinagar.
There was no report of loss of life or damage to property. (UNI)

6 grenades recovered

Excelsior Correspondent
JAMMU, Mar 5: Six hand grenades and 127 rounds of General Purpose Machine Gun were recovered during construction of a road in Rajouri district.
*Pic on page 4
Video on www.excelsiornews.com
today.

The grenades and ammunition were found buried by workers engaged in construction of a link road in remote Neali village
(Contd on page 4 Col 3)

Jawan injured in mine blast

Excelsior Correspondent
POONCH, Mar 5: An Army personnel was injured today in a landmine explosion near the Line of Control (LoC) in Poonch district.
Naik Rajeev Kumar was injured when a landmine went off during patrolling of a forward area in the Mankote sector this afternoon.
The injured soldier was immediately given medical aid and was later airlifted to a military hospital in Jammu for specialised
(Contd on page 4 Col 5)

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WEATHER
JAMMU:
Partly cloudy
TEMPERATURE
Max: 27.7 Degree C
Min: 13.0 Degree C
RELATIVE HUMIDITY
RH-I (Morning): 73.0 per cent
RH-II (Evening): 38.0 per cent
Sunset on Monday: 06.32 p.m.
Sunrise on Tuesday: 06.53 a.m.
SRINAGAR:
Possibility of rain/snow
TEMPERATURE
Max: 17.8 Degree C
Min: 7.4 Degree C
RELATIVE HUMIDITY
RH-I (Morning): 84.0 per cent
RH-II (Evening): 47.0 per cent
LEH:
TEMPERATURE
Max: 10.8 Degree C
Min: -5.2 Degree C

'Go! spending Rs 1 lakh cr on tunnels, NHs in J&K'

Some people have mindset that no taxes have to be paid to Indian Govt, don't fall in their trap: LG

Sanjeev Pargal

JAMMU, Mar 5: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha today called upon the people not to fall into the trap of some people who have developed mindset that they don't have to pay any taxes to the Indian Government and mentioned that Jammu and Kashmir gets power made in other cities of the country while Rs one lakh crore worth funds are being used for construction of National Highways and tunnels in the Union Territory.

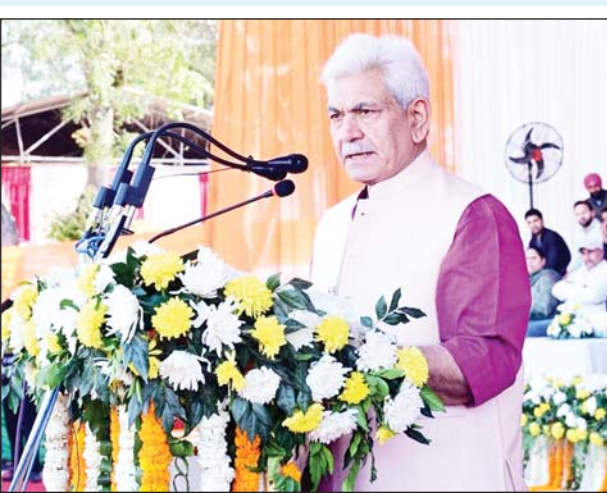
He said this while referring to imposition of Property Tax in his address to 'Youth Festival' at the

*Watch video on www.excelsiornews.com

Border Security Force (BSF) Campus at Paloura this afternoon.

"Some people have developed the mindset that 'Bharat Sarkar Ko Koi Tax Nahin Dena Hai' (no taxes have to be paid to the Indian Government). I want to say this that very few people are involved in this conspiracy," Sinha said and advised the people not to fall into trap of such people.

*Previous Govts gave jobs to favourites; 47 sacked, more to follow



LG Manoj Sinha addressing 'Youth Festival' at BSF Campus Paloura on Sunday.

Asserting that we all are Indian citizens, the Lieutenant Governor said Jammu and Kashmir has to import power from many Indian cities and it was the Indian Government which is constructing

Rs one lakh crore worth National Highways and tunnels in the Union Territory.
Further, he added, for doubling the agriculture's contribution in J&K's Gross Domestic Product

(GDP) in next five years, the Government of India has given Rs 5000 crore.

He called upon the youth to prevail over the elders to change their mindset on payment of tax.

Again hitting out at certain wealthier and influential persons charging them with instigating people against Property Tax, Sinha said they have houses and showrooms in Delhi and Mumbai where they pay Rs 5 lakh tax but here they have problems in paying Rs 2500 tax.

At the same time, the Lieutenant Governor reiterated that if common man, farmers, traders, employees and others have any genuine concerns, the administration is ready to discuss and make changes. But the people with vested interests who have made money for their next five generations will not be allowed to create trouble.

Later, addressing another function at Jammu Club, Sinha described August 5, 2019 as very significant day in the country's history saying Jammu and Kashmir is now writing new story

(Contd on page 4 Col 1)

Adjustment of Settlement Assistants as Patwaris

HC seeks personal appearance of FCR, Revenue Secretary for non-compliance of clear direction

Mohinder Verma

JAMMU, Mar 5: Taking serious note of non-compliance of the clear direction, High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh has sought personal appearance of Financial Commissioner Revenue (FCR) and Secretary, Revenue Department on next date of hearing. Moreover, it has made it clear that contemptors cannot escape from the legal obligation to act on the judgment passed earlier.

In a Writ Petition SWP No.1462/2017 the High Court vide judgment dated July 31, 2017 issued directions for adjustment of Settlement Assistants as Patwaris

*Says contemptors can't escape from legal obligation to act

on substantive basis and the same was confirmed in another judgment dated September 13, 2017.

The Government implemented this judgment and adjusted some Settlement Assistants as Patwaris. However, when similarly situated Settlement Assistants approached the Government for their adjustment as Patwaris their plea was rejected and this compelled them to knock the doors of the High Court.

In terms of order dated December 21, 2022, High Court came up with a very categorical direction with respect to the compliance of the Writ Court judgment failing which the personal appearance of the Commissioner/Secretary to Government Revenue Department and also of the Financial Commissioner Revenue was to take place along with the record of the case.

After passing of this direction, a compliance report dated February 27, 2023 was filed resting upon the affidavit of present Secretary to Government, Revenue Department. The compliance report was submitted along with Government Order No.22 JK

(Rev) of 2022 dated February 27, 2023 in terms whereof the outcome being reported is that the claim of the petitioners has been found to be devoid of any merit and hence rejected.

After hearing Senior Advocate Abhinav Sharma with Advocate Abhirash Sharma for the petitioners and counsels for the respondents, Justice Rahul Bharti observed, "read between the lines, this Government Order No. 22-JK (Rev) of 2022 dated 27.02.2023 is literally meaning to convey back a message to this court that the Writ Court judgment is also devoid of merit admitting of no compliance".

(Contd on page 4 Col 1)

Light snowfall in hills, rains in parts of Kashmir

Fayaz Bukhari

SRINAGAR, Mar 5: The hills of Kashmir including Gulmarg received light snowfall while rains lashed Valley with weatherman forecasting isolated very light rain and dry weather in Kashmir till March 12.

"The weather is expected to be partly cloudy with possibility of intermittent light rain (light snow over higher reaches) in isolated places of Kashmir division in next 24 hours," a Meteorological Department official said here.

He said mainly clear to partly cloudy with dry weather was expected from March 6 to 12.

There has been light rain in parts of Kashmir since last night and in Sonamarg area of Ganderbal district it led to a land-

slide.
An official said that a landslide occurred near Sonamarg Bypass, bringing an abrupt halt to the traffic on both sides.

Meanwhile, Jammu and Kashmir Disaster Management Authority (JKDMA) today issued an avalanche alert over higher reaches in three districts of Kashmir division.

The DMA said that a low danger level avalanche is likely to occur 2500 metres above sea level in Ganderbal district.

It similarly expressed apprehension of a medium danger level avalanche above 2400 to 2500 metres in Bandipora and Kupwara districts.

"People living in these areas have been in the meantime advised to take precautions and

avoid venturing in the avalanche prone areas till further orders," a statement issued by the JKDMA said.

In the meantime, Srinagar recorded a low of 7.4°C against 6.4°C the previous night and it was above normal by 5.2°C for the city.

Qazigund recorded a low of 6.5°C against 4.2°C the previous night and it was 5.6°C above normal for the town.

Pahalgam recorded a low of 1.2°C, same as the previous night and it was 3.5°C above normal for the famous tourist resort.

Kokernag recorded a low of 4.7°C against 4.8°C the previous night and it was 3.8°C above normal for the place.

Gulmarg recorded a low of
(Contd on page 4 Col 4)

Patients suffer as offline payments consume hours

Even after one year, SKIMS yet to put in place online payment gateway in OPD

Irfan Trambo

SRINAGAR, Mar 5: The authorities at Sher-e-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS), Soura have failed in implementing the online payment gateway which was meant to be put in place to facilitate the payments in the Out Patient Department (OPD) due to which the patients, as well as their attendants, are facing a tough time.

Due to the non-functioning of the gateway, people are left with no option but to stand in long queues where they end up waiting for hours together till their turn of making the payments offline finally arrives.

"I have reached here around 10

in the morning and was finally able to make the payment for an X-ray after one and a half hours, and then there was another wait of nearly 2 hours to get the X-ray done; so much time gets consumed here daily," Zahid Bhat, one of the attendants said.

Another attendant, Abdul Rahim from north Kashmir's Sopore, who had to make payments for a few diagnostic tests, said that he happened to see a poster about the option of the availability of online payments for the investigations.

"But when I logged on to the website, I was asked to enter the patient ID, which I had, and then it asked to enter the order number, which I didn't have; thus, I was not able to make the payment and

(Contd on page 4 Col 3)

Govt to scrutinize 65 lakh J&K UT Ration Card holders falling in AAY/PHH category

Gopal Sharma

JAMMU, Mar 5: The Government of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir has launched a massive exercise to scrutinize a whopping number of nearly 65 lakh beneficiaries under AAY and PHH (Below Poverty Line-BPL) category in Jammu and Kashmir and asked the ration card holders under these categories to produce documentary evidence for the same before the respective Tehsil Supply Officers.

Official sources said that the number of BPL category people are much more than those falling in Non-Priority House Hold

(NPHH), earlier APL category in the Jammu and Kashmir. While the number of people falling in NPHH in J&K before creation of UT were nearly 45 lakhs and those PHH/BPL nearly 74 lakhs in Jammu Kashmir and Ladakh. But at present, as per figures taken from the Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Department, the number of AAY and PHH (BPL) beneficiaries in Kashmir and Jammu Divisions are nearly 65.52 lakhs.

*Produce evidence before TSO or get RTs cancelled

Sources further said that, as per figures, out of the total number under AAY plus PHH categories, 56.31 lakh people/rationees fall in PHH category and nearly 9.21 lakh under AAY category. Out of the 56.31 lakhs, 25.28 lakhs belong to Jammu Division while 31.03 lakhs Kashmir. Under AAY category, 2.82 lakh ration beneficiaries belong to Jammu region while 6.38 lakh Kashmir Division. Under NPHH category, about 15 lakh (14.92) beneficiaries hailing from Jammu division fall while the number in Kashmir is about 26 lakhs, the sources added.

"After the implementation of Food Security Act in Jammu and Kashmir, the BPL and APL categories were redefined and exercise of preparing new ration cards was started. Many people taking undue advantage of politics patronage and links, produced bogus/ fraudulent docu-

ments so as to find place in PHH/AAY categories.
The present administration after observing a whopping number of PHH/AAY (BPL) people falling in the category and taking undue advantage, decided to go for major scrutiny and seek documentary evidence from the ration card holders in J&K. The people/ration card holders falling in these categories have been asked to report to their concerned TSO for exclusion/ inclusion in these categories as per their claim. The government may go for cancellation if no such proof was provided within a specific time frame," the sources added.
(Contd on page 4 Col 5)

Life imprisonment for Capt in Amshipura case

NEW DELHI, Mar 5:

Completing general court-martial proceedings in less than a year, an Army court has recommended life imprisonment for a Captain in connection with the killing of three men in a 'staged' encounter in Amshipura in south Kashmir in July 2020, officials said here today.

Captain Bhoopendra Singh was subjected to court martial after a Court of Inquiry and Summary of Evidence found that troops had "exceeded" powers vested under the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA), they said.

The life sentence is subject to confirmation by higher Army authorities, the officials said.

Declining to comment, the Army sources said the process
(Contd on page 4 Col 3)

Slam Sisodia's arrest by CBI

9 Oppn parties' leaders write to PM on 'misuse' of Central agencies

HYDERABAD, Mar 5:

Leaders of nine Opposition parties, including Chief Ministers Mamata Banerjee, Arvind Kejriwal, K Chandrasekhar Rao, have written a joint letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi alleging "blatant misuse" of Central agencies against members of the opposition.

The other signatories of the letter are Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, Tejashwi Yadav (RJD), Sharad Pawar (NCP), Farooq Abdullah (Jammu & Kashmir National Conference), Uddhav Thackeray (Shiv Sena, UBT) and Akhilesh Yadav of Samajwadi Party.
"The blatant misuse of Central

agencies against the members of the opposition appears to suggest that we have transitioned from being a democracy to an autocracy... the misuse of Central agencies and Constitutional offices like that of the Governor - to settle scores outside of the electoral battlefield is strongly condemnable as it does not bode well for our democracy," the letter said.

Highlighting Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia's arrest by the CBI in connection with the irregularities in Delhi Liquor Policy, the leaders said the charges against the AAP leader were "outrageously baseless and smack of a political conspiracy".
His arrest has enraged people across the country. Sisodia is recognised globally for transform-

ing Delhi's school education. His arrest will be cited worldwide as an example of a political witch-hunt and further confirm what the world was only suspecting - that India's democratic values stand threatened under an authoritarian BJP regime, they alleged.
Citing Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and former TMC leaders Suwendu Adhikari and Mukul Roy as examples, the leaders claimed that the investigation agencies go slow on cases against opposition politicians, who join the BJP.
"Since 2014, there has been a marked rise in the number of raids conducted, cases lodged against and arrest of the Opposition leaders. Be it Lalu Prasad Yadav (Rashtriya Janata
(Contd on page 4 Col 3)



Almond blossoms attract tourists in Srinagar's Badamwari Garden. -Excelsior/Shakeel

'All steps will be taken for success of G20 meetings'

Money generated from narcotics being used to fund terror: DGP

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Mar 5: Money generated from the narcotics trade is returned to Pakistan and subsequently used to fund terror activities in Jammu and Kashmir, Director-General of Police Dilbag Singh said today.

Singh's comment comes close on the heels of a large stockpile of drugs, cash and weapons being recovered near the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch.

"We are faced with a new challenge where the drugs and weapons are smuggled from

*Watch video on www.excelsiornews.com

Pakistan together. While the weapons are delivered to the terrorists, the major part of the drug proceeds are returned to handlers (across the border) and the rest shared by the peddlers.
"The proceeds (from the drugs trade) are being utilised to keep terrorism alive (in Jammu and Kashmir)," the police chief told reporters here on the sidelines of the Jammu Marathon.

The 'Run for Fun' Jammu Marathon was organised by the police here as part of its civic



action programme and drew hundreds of participants from all walks of life at Gulshan Ground.

Responding to a question on the seizure of seven kilogramme of heroin, over Rs 2.30 crore in cash and some arms and ammunition from the home of a notorious drug peddler in Mandi sector on March 3, Singh said a dozen major peddling rackets had been busted in the recent past.

"The probes unearthed interstate connections of drug trafficking, especially connected to Punjab, and raids were conducted. We are also roping in the Narcotics Control Bureau and, like in the past, investigated vari-

ous cases together.
"In this (Poonch) case, the entire module involved in the drug trafficking will be unveiled and stern action taken against those found involved," he said.

This was the second time such a huge recovery of cash was made near the Line of Control following the earlier seizure of Rs 1.50 crore in Poonch.

"The money generated from the drugs trade is returned to handlers in Pakistan who use the cash to fund terror activities. Some cash is handed over to infiltrating terrorists. Money is also sent to this side by drones," he said.

Singh said if anyone is assigned the task of triggering a blast, he is given both the improvised explosive device and the prize money in advance by drone.
"This is the same money that is generated by the drugs trade and used by Pakistani agencies and terrorist groups operating from there," Singh said.

Asked about the criticism of security agencies by certain political leaders, he said they must refrain from making such comments and added that otherwise,

(Contd on page 4 Col 1)