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DP queries Rahul over remarks made in Srinagar

NEW DELHI, Mar 19: A Delhi Police team today queried Congress leader Rahul Gandhi at his residence over his remark made during the Bharat Jodo Yatra that "women are still being sexually assaulted" and asked him to provide information about the "victims" to take up their complaints, officials said.

A furious Congress condemned the Delhi Police action after the cops knocked on Gandhi's doors for the third time in five days, and attacked the Central Government, accus-

(Contd on page 4 Col 1)
Providing security to conman mistake: ADGP

Excelsior Correspondent
SRINAGAR, Mar 19: Additional Director General of Police Kashmir, Vijay Kumar, ***Watch video on www.excelsiornews.com**

today termed the providing of security to the conman as a mistake and said that detailed investigation is being conducted and those involved in providing him security will not be spared.

Kiran Patel, the imposter hailing from Gujarat posed as an Additional Director (Strategy (Contd on page 4 Col 5)

Magisterial probe into cop's death

Excelsior Correspondent
KATHUA/JAMMU, Mar 19: A magisterial inquiry was started today into the death of a policeman shortly after his arrest by the Central Bureau of Investigation on graft charges in Kathua district.

Head Constable Mushtaq Ahmad, a resident of Billawar, was allegedly caught red-handed on Saturday while taking a bribe of Rs 3000 at women police station in Kathua, a few hours before his death.

"On the directions of the Deputy Commissioner, Kathua, we have started the magisterial (Contd on page 4 Col 7)

Rains lash Valley, snow in hills

Excelsior Correspondent
SRINAGAR, Mar 19: Kashmir was lashed by rains while hills including Gulmarg recorded snowfall today leading to plummeting temperatures.

A Meteorological Department official said that generally cloudy weather was expected from March 21-22.

From March 23 to 25, he said, generally cloudy weather with intermittent light rain with thunder at scattered places was expected. From March 26 to 28, he said, partly cloudy weather was expected.

Srinagar and other parts of Kashmir valley were lashed by (Contd on page 4 Col 3)

NOTICE
See Obituaries on Page Nos. 7 & 11
-Advt Manager

FDI will fuel economic growth in UT: Sinha Emaar group to invest Rs 500 cr in J&K, LG lays Mall of Srinagar foundation

Fayaz Bukhari
SRINAGAR, Mar 19: Emaar Group of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) made its formal entry into Jammu and Kashmir with the foundation-laying ceremony of a mega-mall project in Srinagar today.

The project includes the building of a mega-mall- Mall of Srinagar-, and a multipurpose tower. Emaar will pump in a total investment of Rs 500 crore. The construction of the



LG Manoj Sinha along with officials and delegates at India-UAE Investors Meet at SKICC Srinagar on Sunday. Another pic on page 4.

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

mega-mall will cost Rs 250 crore, Sinha told reporters. He said the project envisages the creation of over 10,000 jobs in the Valley.

"The Mall of Srinagar and allied projects with the Government of Dubai will fuel the economic growth of J&K and bring us closer to achieving the shared vision of strengthening bilateral trade and investment ties between India and UAE.

"This is a new dawn of limit-

less possibilities. We are taking forward PM's vision for development of J&K. Mall of Srinagar will have transformative impact on UT & boost infrastructure, employment generation and ease of living," he said.

"This is to be one of the largest malls in the region, the mall will have over 500 shops," he said.

The LG said the credit for the strong ties between UAE and India goes to the strenuous efforts of the Prime Minister.

Sinha highlighted the progressive reforms introduced

under the guidance of the PM to create a favourable environment for Industries and Business to flourish in J&K.

"Unprecedented industrial & economic growth of J&K is laying the foundation for a stronger and more prosperous future for the people of Union Territory.

"Within 22 months of implementation of New Industrial Policy, we have received investment proposals from more than 5,000 domestic and foreign companies. Every day, eight companies have expressed their

willingness to invest in J&K," he said.

"A new industry is becoming

'Anti-encroachment drive to continue'

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha today said the drive to evict illegal occupants of state land in Jammu and Kashmir will be resumed and the recovered land used to fuel industrial revolution in the Union Territory.

"We took the lands. Let me make it clear that we will take back all State land. The State land must remain with the Government," Sinha said at the foundation-laying ceremony of first FDI project in J&K at Sempora here.

(Contd on page 4 Col 1)

operational in the UT every day. Last month, 45 industries started their operations," he added.

He further said that the Prime Minister has already done the ground breaking ceremony for projects worth Rs 38,000 crore.

(Contd on page 4 Col 5)



Farmers collect flowers from a field on the outskirts of Jammu. -Excelsior/Rakesh

New areas to be added based on criteria Nearly 50 pc areas may lose RBA status as Commission undertakes massive exercise

No review carried out for last many years

Sanjeev Pargal

JAMMU, Mar 19: The Commission for Socially and Educationally Backward Classes which recently got extension of six months is reportedly working on deletion of nearly 50 percent areas listed as "Backward Areas" as they ceased to be backward now and is likely to add new areas in their place which are genuinely backward.

The Commission is headed by Justice (Retired) GD Sharma and comprised Rup Lal Bharti and Munir Khan.

Sources told the Excelsior that after recommending reservation for Pahari Ethnic Tribe, Paddari Tribe, Koli and Gadda Brahmins and Valmikis, the Commission has been carrying out an extensive exercise on revamping Resident of Backward Areas (RBA) reservation which is presently 10 percent in Jammu and Kashmir.

"In 1995 when the then Commission declared backward areas, it was mentioned that a review will be carried out after every five years as some areas

may develop during that time which can be excluded from the list of RBA while left out areas can be included," sources said.

However, they said, the review was not carried out for last 28 years now but, at the same time, many areas were added. There were allegations that new areas were included as RBA due to "political considerations" to strengthen vote bank of the then ruling parties.

Connectivity, schools, hospitals etc were among the criteria listed for declaration of backward area. In 1995, 18 percent area of Jammu and Kashmir was declared as backward area and 20 percent reservation was given to RBA. The reservation was brought down to 10 percent in 2020.

"Now, the Commission is undertaking an extensive exercise on the backward areas and nearly 50 percent of the areas are likely to lose status of RBA," sources said. In their place, the areas which deserve to be backward as per criteria will be included," sources said.

The revision is likely to take some time and it was in view of

this that the Commission has been granted an extension of six months.

The Commission has been receiving large number of communications and representations from the Kashmir valley for inclusion of their areas in the list of backward areas. However, number of representations being received from Jammu division is far less, they said.

Based on recommendations of Justice GD Sharma Commission report, the Government has cleared Pahari Ethnic Tribe, Paddari Tribe and Koli & Gadda Brahman for accord of Scheduled Tribes (ST) status. All concerned Ministries and the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes have also cleared the proposal and the bill now will require approval of the Parliament.

Gujjars and Bakerwals in Jammu and Kashmir already enjoyed ST status and the Government has clarified that their rights will not be diluted.

Paddari tribe is settled mostly in Paddar area of Kishtwar (Contd on page 4 Col 7)

Intervention of CS sought; coercive action warned Income Tax Deptt detects fraudulent claims of refund by Govt employees

Nishikant Khajuria

JAMMU, Mar 19: Income Tax Department has detected fraud by several Government employees of various departments in Jammu and Kashmir who allegedly claimed excessive refund of the Income Tax returns without actually being eligible for the same.

Taking cognizance of the fraud, Principal Commissioner of Income Tax, Srinagar, is learnt to have apprised the Chief Secretary, J&K Union Territory about the matter in detail and sought his intervention for necessary direction to all such employees to update their Income Tax Return (ITR-U) along with penalty by March 31, 2023 or face coercive actions.

A copy of the official communiqué to the Chief Secretary in this regard is in possession of the Excelsior, according to which, the Income Tax Department has complete details of all such erring employees, who belong to Education, Health, PDD, PHE, Cooperatives, Sports, Tourism, Industry, PWD, Police and other departments of J&K Government.

Such cases of bogus refund may lead to scrutiny and recoveries of demand besides levy of penalty under Section 270A of the Income Tax Act, which is 200 percent of the tax levied. Further, the case of such employees may also be taken up for prosecution under Section 276C of IT Act.

The matter came to light during analysis of the refunds issued in the Financial Year 2021-22 and 2022-23 in respect of Income Tax Returns filed by the tax payers of Jammu and Kashmir for Assessment Years 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23.

The analysis of data revealed that large number of individual taxpayers, particularly those who derive income from salaries, have claimed excessive deductions under various Sections of the Income Tax Act viz. 80C, 80D, 80DD, 80DDB, 80EB, 80E, 80EE, 80G, 80GGC etc without actually being eligible for such deductions. This way they have claimed the refunds of Tax Deducted at Source (TDS) made by their

DDOs, either substantially or fully.

Pertinent to mention that the salaried employees file their returns in ITR-1 online either personally or through some tax practitioners. In order to ease the compliance for tax payers, the Income Tax Department does not ask them to upload documents evidencing the deductions under various Sections of the Act as the department trusts the taxpayers. The Central Processing Unit (CPU) processes the returns of income and issue refunds without asking any questions/details.

However, the data of every individual tax payer is analyzed by the Director General of Income Tax (Systems) and later (Contd on page 4 Col 3)

New communication modes crucial in today's citizen centric Govt: Dr Jitendra

Avtar Bhat

JAMMU, Mar 19: Union Minister of State in PMO with Independent Charge Science & Technology, Dr Jitendra Singh today said, that new communication modes are crucial in today's citizen centric Government the basis for

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

which have been laid by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Dr Jitendra Singh, who was the chief guest during the launch of J&K Chapter of Public Relations Society of India (PRS) here, said the launch of J&K chapter will definitely script a new history for the UT in the public relations and it is going to touch new horizons and

create new themes in public relations for this part of the country.

Dr Jitendra Singh said, the greater responsibility of PRSI is to fill the gaps in Government communication in such a manner that the people are informed by the media according to the development communication models. He said there is need that (Contd on page 4 Col 3)



Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh addressing a function during launch of J&K Chapter of PRSI at Jammu on Sunday. -Excelsior/Rakesh

Show cause notice issued to BDO, other officers cautioned Furnish timely replies to applicants under RTI Act: CIC to Public Authorities of J&K

Mohinder Verma

JAMMU, Mar 19: The Central Information Commission (CIC) has asked several Public Authorities in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir to ensure strict compliance to the time-frame fixed for furnishing replies to the applications under the Right to Information Act, 2005. Moreover, it has issued show-cause notice to a Block Development Officer (BDO) and cautioned other officers for casual approach in this regard.

Section 7 of the Right to Information Act, which deals with disposal of request, states:

"The Central Public Information Officer or State Public Information Officer, as the case may be, on receipt of a request under Section 6 shall, as expeditiously as possible, and in any case within 30 days of the receipt of the request, either provide the information on payment of such fee as may be prescribed or reject the request for any of the reasons specified in Sections 8 and 9".

Likewise, Section 20, which pertains to penalties, read: "Where the Central Information Commission or the State Information Commission, as the case may be, at the time of deciding any complaint or appeal is of the opinion that the

Central Public Information Officer or the State Public Information Officer has, without any reasonable cause, refused to receive an application for information or has not furnished information within the time specified under Section 7, shall impose a penalty which shall not exceed Rs 25,000".

The Central Information Commission, which dealing with several Second Appeals filed against the Public Authorities of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, has noticed non-compliance to the timeline fixed under the RTI Act. Accordingly, the Chief Information Commissioner Y K Sinha has asked the Public

Authorities to furnish replies to the applications filed under the transparency law within the specified time limit so as to achieve the objective behind the law.

In one such instance, an application was filed before the Assistant Director, Directorate of Indian System of Medicines on July 31, 2021 seeking information on certain points. Having not received any response from the CPIO, the appellant filed a First Appeal dated 20.09.2021 which was not adjudicated by the First Appellate Authority. Aggrieved over non receipt of the information, the appellant approached the Central (Contd on page 4 Col 7)

Forms panel to scrutinize projects for PPP viability H&ME releases Rs 184 cr as 1st payment of policy premium for AB-PMJAY

Irfan Trambo

SRINAGAR, Mar 19: The Government has released the first instalment of premium amounting to over Rs 184 crore for the policy period covering until next March of next year for the implementation of Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri-Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PM JAY) and SEHAT Scheme in J&K.

The funds have been released by the Health & Medical Education (H&ME) to be further credited to the State Health Agency (SHA), J&K for the policy period from March 12, 2023, to March 14, 2024. "Sanction is hereby accorded

to the release of funds to the extent of Rs 184.44 crore in favour of Director Finance, Health and Medical Education Department, J&K during 2022-23," the order issued in this regard said.

As per details, the advance drawl of the funds has been made in favour of the Director Finance, Health & Medical Education Department, out of the budget available under the existing classification, and Grant-in-Aid for its onward credit into the official accounts of Chief Executive Officer, SHA-Ayushman Bharat, PMJAY, J&K.

As per details, under the detailed head of Rent Rates &

Taxes Rs 108.73 cr have been released while under Grant-in-Aid of Rs 75.71 has been released.

The utilization of the funds by the CEO, SHA, AB PM-JAY, J&K has been made subject to the conditions which include the CEO and Accounts Officer, Ayushman Bharat (PMJAY), J&K shall vouchsafe the availability of funds.

The expenditure, as per the details, shall be booked on admissible items as approved by the competent authority and all the codal formalities as per GFR 2017 should be followed while incurring expenditure out of the funds already authorized.

(Contd on page 4 Col 3)

34 more Amritpal supporters held, some sent to Assam

CHANDIGARH/DIBRUGARH, Mar 19:

Police today conducted flag marches and searches across Punjab in their manhunt for radical preacher Amritpal Singh, arresting 34 more supporters and shifting four men in custody to a jail in far-off Assam.

The Punjab and Haryana High Court has, however, asked the State Government to respond on Tuesday to a habeas corpus petition, claiming that the preacher is already in illegal police custody and should be released.

Justice N S Shekhawat held the hearing at his home-office as the courts were closed.

Police stuck to their version

that the "Waris Punjab De" chief gave them the slip during a car chase in Jalandhar district on Saturday, when the crackdown against the group began. They have slapped fresh FIRs against the Khalistan sympathiser and his supporters.

Section 144 of the CrPc, which prohibits congregations, was imposed in the Union Territory of Chandigarh, the joint capital of Punjab and Haryana. Prohibitory orders were already in force in some parts of Punjab.

Police recovered a second vehicle in the case, an abandoned pick-up with a gun, a sword and several cartridges in Jalandhar district's Salema village and said it appeared to be a part of Amritpal Singh's cavalcade.

The crackdown has come weeks after Singh and his supporters barged into the Ajnala police station near Amritsar, extracting an assurance that an arrested man would be released.

Twenty-one Amritpal supporters were taken into custody near Boparai Kalan in Jalandhar district when they tried to stage a 'dharna' over the previous days' action.

These detentions are apparently not part of the arrests' tally given by police - 78 on Saturday and 34 more on Sunday. Earlier, police said nine firearms have also been seized.

The State remained on high alert. Security forces took out flag marches at several places including Ferozpur, Bathinda,

(Contd on page 4 Col 1)



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