

## No back-log...

puts on record that all liability on account of contract payment has been cleared and there is no back-log so far as contract payment at treasuries is concerned. "The fact is that the Department has released full funds under Capex", the statement reads. The DGAT has further requested the media organisations that in the interest of balanced and professional reporting, Finance department's version regarding these matters may also be included.

## Consignment dropped by...

plastic-packed consignment was recovered from a forward area along the IB in the R S Pura sector, they said. Acting on the information, teams of the BSF and Police rushed to the spot, and the consignment was recovered at around 11 am in a forward area following information from locals, officials added.

Preliminary reports said that the consignment was wrapped in a package weighing approximately 1.5 kilograms and was lying in the border belt. The package has not been opened yet, they said. Officials noted that, as a precautionary measure, the package will be examined using a metal detector and other safety protocols to rule out the presence of any explosive material before it is opened. Further investigation and technical examination of the recovered consignment are underway, they said.

## Let's hope this...

Let's hope and pray that this war ends soon," Abdullah told reporters at Hazratbal shrine here. The former J-K chief minister was at the famous shrine for Juma'atul Vida prayers. Abdullah said some forces were trying to destroy Islam. "May Allah destroy them (who want to destroy Islam)," he said. The party president urged the people to stay united. "We can move forward only when we are together."

## Curbs imposed in...

the valley, especially the Shia-dominated areas. The restrictions on the assembly of people were imposed in the morning as a precautionary measure to maintain law and order in view of the likelihood of protests, the officials said.

The protesters shouted slogans against the US and Israel aggression in Iran, and in support of Palestine, they said. However, the officials added that the protests remained peaceful so far. They said the situation is being monitored closely, they said. Juma-tul-Vida (last Friday of Ramzan) is also being observed as Youm-ul-Quds to express solidarity with Palestine and there are apprehensions of anti-Israel protests after the congregational prayers, they said.

The authorities also shut the historic Jamia Masjid in Nowthatta locality of the city here. "On the last Friday of holy Ramzan, when tens of thousands gather from towns and villages for prayers and supplication at the historic Jama Masjid Srinagar, its gates have once again been locked from all sides," Kashmir's chief cleric Mirwaiz Umar Farooq said.

He said it was the seventh consecutive year, "the rulers have denied permission to Muslims to pray here". "As Israel has forcibly shut the gates of Masjid al-Aqsa during Ramzan, similar painful reality is witnessed here. Our hearts bleed. Shame on those who lock the houses of Allah against the faithful," the Mirwaiz added.

## BJP ensured lasting...

He said that hills of Bodoland echoed for decades with sounds of guns and bomb blasts, but "now those days are over, and it is moving ahead in the path of peace and development".

"The people have suffered and lost a lot over the years... we have seen those difficult days, but now the beats of the 'kham' (drum) and 'siphong' (flutes) are heard," he said. Only when the people removed the Congress from both the state and the Centre, "we were able to begin the region's development honestly and sincerely", Modi said.

In an apparent reference to Rahul Gandhi's 'Mohabbat ki Dukaan' (shop of love) slogan, the Prime Minister claimed: "The Congress is a 'jhute vaido ke dukkan' (a shop of false promises), and with one lie it gives four more 'super lies' as a gift, as they do not have the intention of fulfilling any promise." In contrast, the model of the 'double engine' government is before the people and an honest effort is made to fulfil all the promises made, he said.

The BJP's double-engine government is committed to preserve cultural traditions and speedy development of the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR), he said. He said that he was indebted to the people of BTR for their love and added, "I

have always tried to repay it with my service and speedy development of the region." Modi also mentioned that he had witnessed the grand spectacle of 'Bagurumba dwhou', a Bodo cultural event, at Guwahati in January.

"I feel proud that the Bodo society has kept its language, culture and traditions with such care- whether it is the spiritual traditions of Bathou or the Bwisagu festival, which strengthens Indian civilisation," he said. The NDA government is also working to preserve Assam's heritage and ensure speedy development, Modi said. "In today's programme itself, projects worth more than Rs 4,750 crore have been launched with over Rs 1100 crore to be spent on the development of road infrastructure in Bodoland, which will further strengthen road connectivity in the state," he said.

Trains have also been flagged off, which will not only be convenient for the people but also promote trade and tourism, the PM said, adding that a railway workshop will be set up here and help the region to be a major logistics hub. Work on railway connectivity with Bhutan is also progressing along with the modernisation of several stations, he said.

## J&K Govt issues...

Department has directed all District Development Commissioners to strictly follow the guidelines governing the CDF Scheme issued under Government Order No. 76-FD of 2025 dated March 10, 2025. The order outlines the procedure for allocation, release, deposit and utilisation of funds under the scheme.

As per the guidelines, the funds under the scheme are non-lapsable and any unspent balance available with District Development Councils or executing agencies as on March 31 each year must be deposited in the Government Treasury under Account Head MH:8229. The circular further states that the DDCs shall furnish details of such unspent balances to the Finance Department at the end of every financial year. The unspent balances deposited in the treasury can be utilised in the next financial year.

The Finance Department has also instructed concerned officers and Drawing and Disbursing Officers to prioritise the utilisation of these balances under the CDF Scheme in the subsequent financial year to avoid delays in execution and completion of developmental works. All officers have been asked to ensure strict adherence to the instructions while implementing the scheme.

## Juma'atul Vida in...

The largest gathering for Juma'atul Vida prayers took place at Hazratbal Shrine on the banks of Dal Lake. Officials said an estimated 80,000 people offered prayers there. Among the notable persons to offer prayers at Hazratbal was former chief minister Farooq Abdullah.

Large gatherings at Alvida prayers were reported from the district and town headquarters of the valley. Although there is a possibility of having another Friday in this year's fasting month, grand mufti of Jammu and Kashmir Nasir Ul Islam on Thursday said the Juma'atul Vida will be observed this week.

He said Eid ul-Fitr is likely to fall on March 20 (Friday) or March 21 (Saturday), depending on the appearance of the crescent moon. "After consulting other scholars, it was decided to observe Juma'atul Vida on March 13," he said. Consequently, the Jammu and Kashmir government announced a public holiday on Friday. An order to this effect was issued by the general administration department on Thursday.

## NC MPs meet...

according to an official statement. The MPs "strongly urged the early restoration of full statehood to Jammu and Kashmir in line with the assurances made on the floor of Parliament," it said. They also "emphasised the need to protect land and job rights of the local population and called for a comprehensive economic and employment package to address the growing unemployment crisis among the youth," the statement said.

The delegation sought the return of major hydroelectric power projects currently operated by NHPC Limited to the region, stating that Jammu and Kashmir should receive a fair share of benefits from its natural resources. The memorandum also highlighted environmental concerns, noting the impact of climate change and the rapid retreat of glaciers such as the Kolahoi Glacier, and called for urgent scientific and policy interventions to protect the fragile Himalayan ecosystem.

Kichloo said on X that he, along with his colleagues, had the honour of calling on the president at Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi. "We submitted a memorandum highlighting key

concerns of Jammu & Kashmir," he added.

## Fake currency racket...

the police registered a formal case and launched further investigation to trace the origin of the counterfeit money. "The case surfaced after a shopkeeper approached the Shopian Police Station, reporting that an individual had used fake currency notes while purchasing goods from his shop earlier this week," the police added in a statement.

"Police officials said the complaint triggered an immediate investigation, with officers launching verification of the suspected transaction and identifying individuals allegedly linked to the circulation of counterfeit currency." "During the course of the probe, police conducted searches and recovered fake currency notes amounting to Rs 79,000 from the possession of the accused persons and their associate."

"The arrested individuals were identified by police as Mohd Syed Wani, a resident of Batpora village in Shopian; Mohd Maqbool Naikoo, a resident of Bungam village in Shopian; and Peerzada Altaf, a resident of Tukroo Babnad village in Pulwama." "All three suspects have been formally taken into custody. Police have registered an FIR in the case at the Shopian Police Station under relevant sections of law, and further investigation is underway. Investigators are now working to determine the source of the counterfeit currency and whether the accused were part of a larger network involved in the circulation of fake notes in the region."

The police is also examining possible links that could lead to other individuals involved in the supply or distribution chain of counterfeit currency, the police said in the statement. "The recovery highlights the continued risk of fake currency being circulated in local markets, where unsuspecting shopkeepers and customers can easily become victims of such illegal activities." "Meanwhile, police urge residents and traders to remain cautious while accepting cash payments and to immediately report any suspicious transactions." "The Shopian Police also appealed to the public to stay vigilant and cooperate with law enforcement agencies in identifying and reporting cases involving counterfeit currency," the statement added.

## Omar chairs Cabinet...

efficiency and public service delivery, the office of the chief minister said. The meeting was attended by Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary and ministers, including Sakina Itoo, Javed Ahmed Rana, Javid Ahmed Dar and Satish Sharma, officials said. Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo was also present. Separately, the chief minister also chaired a review meeting on the implementation of works under the SASCI scheme. He stressed the need for timely execution and effective monitoring of projects and directed officers to ensure that the benefits of the scheme reach people on the ground in a transparent and efficient manner within the stipulated time-frame, without any lapse of funds.

## LG Sinha urges...

was speaking at the inaugural ceremony of two-day literary-cultural conclave "Sahitya Sanskriti Samagam", organised by University of Jammu. He commended the University of Jammu for its steadfast commitment to preserving and promoting the region's cultural ethos and making its mark among the country's top universities. The Lieutenant Governor said the society shaped by our abundant literary and cultural wealth will determine who we are and what we can become.

He urged everyone to reflect in this festival of literature and culture on the true identity that binds us and instills a profound sense of belonging. "True confluence of culture and literature means engaging with the soil through diverse art forms, infusing new resonance into society's soul," he said.

Paying homage to great luminaries and illustrious literary personalities, the Lieutenant Governor emphasised that a region's identity is not defined merely by economic achievements; it shines through its stories, songs, and the vibrant hues of its artisans. He said that the society's enlightened minds must recognize folk arts and folk literature as Jammu's living vitality. "Our folk traditions do not dwell in libraries; they thrive in writers' quills, singers' songs, folk dance footprints, and artists' brushes and pigments."

With deep responsibility, I call upon everyone, especially youth to serve literature and culture. It upholds the living legacy of values passed down through generations, entrusting you not just with an inheritance but with the duty of its cul-

# Jaishankar holds fresh talks with Iran FM amid Hormuz shipping concerns

**NEW DELHI, MAR 13:**

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar spoke to his Iranian counterpart Seyyed Abbas Araghchi - their fourth such conversation since the West Asia crisis began - as New Delhi intensifies efforts to secure safe passage to 28 merchant vessels currently stationed on either side of the Strait of Hormuz. The two foreign ministers held the phone conversation on Thursday night. Jaishankar and Araghchi had spoken on February 28, soon after the US and Israel launched the attack on Iran that killed Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. They also spoke on March 5 and March 10.

"Had another conversation

with Iranian FM @araghchi yesterday night. Discussed bilateral matters as also BRICS related issues," the external affairs minister said on social media. The latest phone conversation came as India ramped up efforts to secure safe passage to the Indian-flagged merchant vessels through the strategic shipping route of Strait of Hormuz that has been partially blocked by Tehran following escalation in its conflict with the US and Israel. An Iranian readout said Araghchi briefed his Indian counterpart on the latest situation "resulting from the aggressions and crimes" committed by the US and Israel against Iran and its consequences on the sta-

bility and security of the region and the world. It said the Iranian foreign minister emphasised to Jaishankar Tehran's firm will to exercise the "legitimate right to self-defence".

"Araghchi emphasised the need for international and regional forums and organisations to condemn military aggression against Iran," the readout said. "Referring to the importance of the role and position of BRICS as a forum for developing multilateral cooperation, he considered it essential for this institution to play a constructive role at the current juncture to support stability and security in the region and the world," it added.

# Cop, wife killed as vehicle falls into stream in Doda; children injured

*DC visits GMC to ensure specialized medical care*

**BHADERWAH, MAR 13:**

A head constable of the Jammu and Kashmir Police and his wife were killed, while their two children injured after their vehicle skidded off the road and plunged into a stream in Doda district on Friday, officials said. The accident occurred around 9 am when the four were on way to Bani from Bhaderwah in their SUV. Head Constable Zulfikar Ali, who was posted with the District Special Branch (DSB) in Bhaderwah, and his wife Rehana Begum died on the spot, the officials said. Their two children -- Arshad Ahmed (20) and Kamran Ahmed (24) - sustained injuries in the incident, they said, adding they have been shifted to the sub-district hospital in Bhaderwah.

Union Minister Jitendra Singh condoled the loss of lives in the accident. "Just now spoke to DC Doda, Krishan Lal, after learning about the tragic road accident near Basti village of Bhaderwah, in which unfortunately, a head constable of Jammu & Kashmir Police, Zulfikar Ali and his wife lost their lives", he said in a post on X. Their two children, who were also travelling with them, were injured but are out of danger, he said, adding that all possible assistance is being provided. The injured were immediately shifted to Sub-District Hospital Bhaderwah for treatment and were later shifted to government medical college Hospital Doda. As per doctors, the victims sustained

multiple injuries but are stable and are presently under observation.

The District Administration Doda promptly ensured that the injured persons received immediate medical attention and all required treatment. Meanwhile, the Deputy Commissioner visited the Government Medical College here to enquire about the condition of the injured. The hospital authorities briefed the Deputy Commissioner about the condition of the injured and the treatment being provided to them at the hospital. He directed the Chief Medical Officer and attending doctors to ensure the best possible medical treatment and proper care for the injured.

# SC directs HCs to extend Civil Judge application deadline to April 30

**NEW DELHI, MAR 13:**

The Supreme Court on Friday asked all the high courts to extend the last date for submission of applications for civil judge (junior division) posts to April 30. A three-judge special bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Augustine George Masih and K Vinod Chandran was hearing four petitions, including pleas seeking review of an earlier judgement mandating a three-year law practice requirement for entry into judicial service.

On May 20 last year, the top court barred fresh law graduates from appearing in the entry-level judicial services examination, fixing a minimum three-year law practice

criterion. However, the CJI-led bench later sought the opinion of all the high courts, National Law Universities and other law schools on the three-year criterion for appearing in the entry-level judicial services examination. It decided to hear review pleas as well.

The CJI, while deciding to hear the pleas in detail next week, directed that all ongoing and future recruitment notifications must reflect the extended deadline. "All the high courts are directed to extend the last date of submission of applications, if they have already advertised the post, up to April 30, 2026. Fresh advertisements to be issued by high courts or state Public Service Commissions

shall also have the deadline of April 30, 2026," the bench ordered.

The direction was issued after the bench was informed that the recruitment process for civil judges had already commenced in some states. During the hearing, senior advocate Pinky Anand urged the bench to keep the three-year law practice requirement in abeyance until the review petitions are decided.

The bench, however, declined the request and assured the parties that the review petitions would be taken up next week, stating that the extension of the application deadline would address the urgency faced by the aspirants.

# Online crimes against women, children rising in digital ecosystem: Govind Mohan

**NEW DELHI, MAR 13:**

Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan on Friday said online crimes against women and children are rising in an increasingly digital ecosystem and asked states and other stakeholders to step up efforts for a stronger and more coordinated response to tackle the issue, an official statement said. He made the remarks while inaugurating the 'National Dialogue on Online Crimes Against Women and Children (OCWC)' here. The event was organised by the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) under the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).

"The Union Home Secretary

highlighted the growing challenges posed by online crimes in an increasingly digital ecosystem and emphasised the need for strengthening institutional capacities at the State and Union Territory-level to combat such offences effectively," the statement said. Mohan said states and Union Territories must develop robust, specialised units and coordinated response mechanisms to ensure timely investigation, victim support and swift action against perpetrators.

He also directed law enforcement agencies of all states and UTs to accord priority to online crimes against women and children and

ensure prompt and coordinated response to such cases. The secretary further urged IT intermediaries to strictly adhere to the provisions of the Information Technology Act and relevant rules, and called upon all stakeholders to work collectively towards ensuring a safe and secure digital ecosystem for women and children.

The inauguration also marked the launch of the 'Master Trainers Induction Programme for States and Union Territories on Online Crimes Against Women and Children', aimed at creating a national pool of trained officers who will lead capacity-building initiatives in their respective regions.

tural-literary bequest. This tradition teaches us the virtue of inclusion," the Lieutenant Governor said. The Lieutenant Governor observed that safeguarding our language preserves our memories; nurturing regional art forms builds self-assurance.

"Let us focus on local tales, dialects, and artistic traditions, for every individual's identity draws nourishment from these roots. When generations gather to exchange experiences, cultural and literary heritage transcends the past-it becomes a living dialogue," he further said. The two-day literary-cultural conclave features cultural processions, stalls showcasing indigenous attires, handicrafts, traditional cuisines, books and arts, panel discussions, and series of activities highlighting region's unique identity, honouring languages, folklore, customs, creativity and literary heritage.

On the occasion, the first edition of Jammu University's multilingual magazine 'The Litzine' was also released. Prof. Umesh Rai, Vice Chancellor, University of Jammu; Prof. Pragati Kumar, Vice-Chancellor, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University; Prof. K.S. Chandrasekar, Vice Chancellor, Cluster University of Jammu; eminent journalists Shri Rajkishor, Consulting Editor, Amar Ujala and Shri Jai Prakash Pandey, Editor, Sahitya Tak India Today Group; Prof. Neelu Rohmetra, Dean Research studies; Dr. Neeraj Sharma, Registrar; Prof. Sadaf Shah, Coordinator, Sahitya Sanskriti Samagam; Heads of Departments, faculty members of Jammu University, senior officials, prominent citizens and students in large number attended the inaugural ceremony.

## SOP issued for...

the physical progress of the project. All such spending must be properly recorded in the accounts and stock registers to allow for inspection. Finally, the reasonability of the expenditure should be ensured with reference to the outcomes achieved. Recently, the Public Works (R&B) Department requested the inclusion of forest compensation/structure compensation and utility shifting charges under the SOP for contingency expenditure. The Finance Department has reviewed the request and approved the inclusion. It was noted that out of 304 ongoing projects, 234 projects can be made functional by permitting payments for forest compensation, utility shifting, and structure compensation from contingency funds, subject to the maximum 3% limit of the total administratively approved project cost. All Administrative Secretaries of Works/Engineering Departments are directed to instruct subordinate officers to incur expenditure under DPR contingencies for additional items including forest compensation / structure compensation, utility shifting. These instructions are issued as a continuation of the earlier circular, ensuring proper utilization of contingency funds to facilitate smooth project execution.

## Northern Army Commander...

commander was also briefed on the intelligence grid and enhanced security measures in the region.

"Lt Gen Pratik Sharma, Army Commander, Northern Command, visited Basantgarh to review the prevailing security situation and ongoing counter-terrorist operations," Northern Command headquarters said on X. "Focused deliberations were held on reinforcing the security architecture in coordination with all stakeholders."

Lt Gen Sharma interacted with the troops and commended them for their work towards a terror-free Jammu and Kashmir. Basantgarh in Udhampur district lies along a traditional infiltration route used by Pakistani terrorists who reportedly enter Indian territory through Kathua before moving into the mountainous districts, officials said. The area shares boundaries with both Kathua and Doda, giving it significant strategic importance. Several encounters between security forces and terrorists have taken place in Basantgarh in recent years, they added.

## Jammu DM issues...

franchise workers - must undergo police verification, and an updated register of verified personnel must be maintained. The companies have also been directed to train and sensitise their staff to identify suspicious consignments and report them to the police. The DM said that any violation of the order will attract legal action, with owners, managing directors, directors, agents and employees liable for prosecution under relevant provisions of the NDPS Act, BNSS and other applicable laws. "Penalties may include seizure of consignments, cancellation of licences, fines and criminal sanctions". The order has come into force with immediate effect and will remain valid for eight weeks unless withdrawn earlier or extended, it added.

## JKAS Officer Sanam Mansoor transferred

**JAMMU, MAR 13:**

The Jammu and Kashmir Government has ordered the transfer of JKAS officer Sanam Mansoor, who was serving as Deputy Secretary to the Government in the Home Department. According to an order issued by the General Administration Department, Mansoor has been transferred in the interest of administration and directed to await further orders of adjustment in the department.

## Opposition MPs move notices in both Houses seeking removal motion against CEC Kumar

**NEW DELHI, MAR 13:**

Opposition MPs have submitted notices in both Houses of Parliament seeking a motion for the removal of Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar, sources said on Friday. As many as 130 Lok Sabha MPs and 63 Rajya Sabha MPs have signed the notice, a source said. The signatories include members from all the INDIA bloc parties, the source said, including the Aam Aadmi Party, which has also backed the move despite no longer being formally part of the opposition alliance, the source said. Some independent MPs have also signed the notice, and several others have expressed interest in joining the initiative, the source added. This is the first time a notice has been moved seeking the removal of the CEC. According to sources, the notice lists seven charges against Kumar, including alleged "partisan and discriminatory conduct in office", "deliberate obstruction of investigation of electoral fraud" and "mass disenfranchisement." The opposition parties have accused the CEC of aiding the ruling BJP on several occasions, especially with the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, which they alleged aims to help the saffron party at the Centre.

## NH-44 safety upgrade completed in J&K at Rs171.25 Cr cost: Gadkari

**NEW DELHI, MAR 13:**

Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari on Friday said that key safety and commuter facility works have been completed on the strategic NH-44 in Jammu & Kashmir at a total project cost of approximately ₹171.25 crore. The initiatives include blackspot rectification at SIDCO Chowk and the Gole Mela-Sangoor stretch, the construction of a Limited Vehicle User Path (LVUP) with service roads at Samba, and the development of modern Wayside Amenities at Jhajjar Kotli, Qazigund, and Marhama. The minister stated that these locations had been identified as accident-prone sections and high-conflict traffic points along the highway.