



OBC quota in local bodies envisaged: Govt tells LA

The government today informed the legislative assembly that no final decision had yet been taken on reservation for OBCs in panchayats and ULBs, even as such reservation was envisaged under the Jammu and Kashmir Local Bodies Laws (Amendment) Act, 2024, recently enacted by Parliament.

Replying to a question by MLA Sunil Kumar Sharma, the government said that the amendments in the 2024 Act provide

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Soldier shoots self dead

A soldier allegedly shot himself dead with his service rifle at an Army camp late Wednesday night.

According to officials, a 24-year-old Agniveer, hailing from Uttar Pradesh, was on guard duty at Nagrota garrison when he allegedly took the extreme step around Wednesday midnight.

The soldier died on the spot and his body was shifted to the Government Medical College (GMC) & Hospital for post-

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Speaker admits PDP MLA's resolution

Legislative assembly Speaker A R Rather today admitted a private member's resolution moved by PDP MLA Waheed Parra, condemning hate crimes against 'minorities' and calling for strict enforcement of law.

According to an official communication issued by the assembly secretariat, the resolution has been admitted under Rule 179 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the J&K Legislative Assembly.

The resolution "condemns all forms of hate crimes against minorities and calls upon the Gov

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Man held with 2 pistols

Himalayan Mail News
JAMMU, FEB 19

A joint team of Army and police today arrested a man along with two pistols, magazines, and live rounds in Nowshera border area of Rajouri district of Jammu.

According to officials, a joint patrol of Army and Nowshera police apprehended a suspect, who was identified as Sachin Kumar of Sair, Nowshera, from Raipur area.

He was apprehended after the patrol party recovered from two Turkey & China-made pistols, four

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13,000 posts of teachers vacant: Itoo

Himalayan Mail News
JAMMU, FEB 19

A total of 12,977 posts of teachers were vacant across Jammu and Kashmir, and the school education department had not upgraded any school since 2024, education minister Sakeena Itoo said today.

In her written reply to a starred question by BJP MLA Shakti Raj Parihar in the legislative assembly here, she said 7,985 posts of teachers were vacant in Jammu division and

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Youth discontent could trigger another rebellion, warns Nepal PM Karki

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Delhi HC Pulls Jubin Nautiyal For Not Filing Personality Rights Plea In Local Court

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Major relief for daily wagers

Regularisation to begin this yr; 30,000 vacancies to be filled: Omar



Himalayan Mail News
JAMMU, FEB 19

In an announcement that has come as a major relief for daily wagers, chief minister Omar Abdullah today told the legislative assembly that the

process of their regularisation would begin in 2026, and nearly 30,000 vacant posts would be filled during the current year.

"The government will initiate the process of regularising daily-rated, seasonal, ad hoc and other temporary employees in a legally and financially sus-

tainable manner in 2026, even as it works to fill nearly 30,000 vacant posts during the current year," he said while replying to discussion on grants of his departments and cut motions in the legislative assembly.

The assembly passed grants amounting to Rs 61,575.88 lakh for GAD, Rs

47,648.38 lakh for planning, Rs 12,408.31 lakh for information, Rs 12,54,383.63 lakh for PDD, Rs 52,37,955.90 lakh for finance, Rs 7,742.54 lakh for parliamentary affairs, Rs 75,028.93 lakh for law department (excluding election department), Rs 78,461.35 lakh for revenue, Rs 4,22,783.97 lakh for H&UDD, Rs 66,622.88 lakh for tourism, Rs 40,749.54 lakh for hospitality, protocol & estates, Rs 17,622.31 lakh for culture, and Rs 1,46,098.46 lakh for disaster management, relief, rehabilitation & reconstruction.

The grants were passed following extensive two-day discussions in the House. The assembly also passed 19 supplementary grants amounting to Rs 3,52,341.28 lakh.

"The issue of daily wagers and temporary workers has been raised by members across party lines, acknowledging that the problem has persisted

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Infiltration bid foiled along LoC

Himalayan Mail News
JAMMU, FEB 19

An infiltration attempt by terrorists was early this morning foiled by alert Army troops along the Line of Control (LoC) in Sunderbani sub-sector of Rajouri district of Jammu.

Based on Intelligence inputs and sustained surveillance, suspicious movement of terrorists was detected in general area of Nathua Tibba in Sunderbani sub-sector along the LoC during the early hours of Thursday, Army's White Knight Corps said.

The troops responded

Anti-CAA pleas

SC to start hearing petitions on May 5

NEW DELHI, FEB 19: The Supreme Court on Thursday said that it will commence the final hearing on May 5 over 200 pleas including the lead one of IUML challenging the constitutional validity of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 (CAA).

The CAA seeks to grant citizenship to migrants belonging to Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Christian, Jain and Parsi communities who came to the country from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan on or before December 31, 2014.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant

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Lt Gen Pratik reviews combat preparedness at Siachen



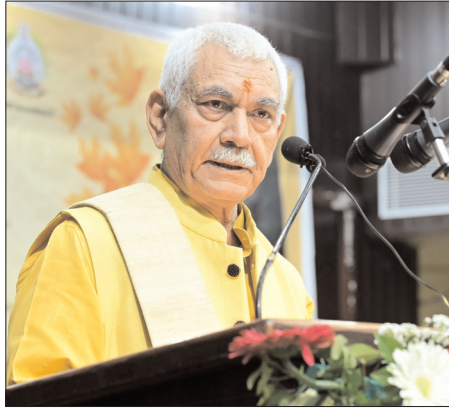
Himalayan Mail News
JAMMU, FEB 19

Northern Army Commander Lieutenant General Pratik Sharma on Thursday visited Siachen sector and reviewed the combat potential and operational preparedness of troops.

He lauded the professionalism, courage and dedication of the soldiers

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J&K will very soon be freed from scourge of terrorism: LG



Himalayan Mail News
JAMMU, FEB 19

Stating that 'we can't forgive terror support networks that struck at the souls of generations', LG Manoj Sinha today said J&K would very soon be freed from the scourge of terrorism.

"The terror ecosystem in J&K tried to bury the truth but we can never forget & forgive the terrorists and their support networks who sowed terror and struck at the souls of generations," he said in his address at a book release function here.

"The return of Kashmiri Pandit migrants back to their homes in the valley with full dignity and security is the commitment of Prime Minister Narendra Modi," the LG said.

"Jammu & Kashmir has been undergoing a profound transformation since 2019.

Sinister plot of adversary to destroy the dreams and destiny of the people of the UT has been decisively dismantled," he added.

"Through tireless effort, this land's ancient glory has been restored, and development has been accelerated. Very soon, this soil will be completely freed from the scourge of terrorism," Sinha said.

He said the book was not just a literary endeavour but also a laudable effort to shatter the silence that had shrouded our collective consciousness for decades.

"I salute the indomitable spirit of Kashmiri Pandit Community. Every displaced family carried within them a living ember of Kashmir. In the crucible of struggle and adversity, they preserved philosophy, spirituality, culture, language, and traditions. Even in agony, they unearthed possibilities and scaled new pinnacles of success," the LG added.

He said that in 2021, Kashmiri Migrant web portal was launched to recover house and lands of Kashmiri Pandit community, which were encroached upon in the valley.

"I firmly believe that among the world's gravest sorrows is the agony of becoming a stranger on one's own soil. This is precisely what had transpired in Jammu & Kashmir," he added.

"The anguish of the 1989-90 massacre of Kashmiri Pandits by terrorists runs so profoundly deep that even the balm of time has failed to heal it. The torment of abandoning homes overnight, of being uprooted from one's roots, lingers like thorns

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Govt initiates process for liquidation of SCARD bank

Assures protection of depositors' interests

Himalayan Mail News
JAMMU, FEB 19

Cooperatives Minister Javid Ahmad Dar today said that the government had initiated the process of liquidation of J&K State Co-operative Agriculture & Rural Development (SCARD) Bank Ltd due to its prolonged financial & operational distress.

He, however, said that the bank had not been declared bankrupt. "The bank's liquidation has been initiated in accordance

with the provisions of the Jammu and Kashmir Co-operative Societies Act, 1989," he said while replying to a clubbed question raised by MLAs - Rajeev Kumar Bhagat, Vikram Randhawa, Surjeet Singh Sathia and Vijay Kumar.

He said that the bank, established in 1962 under the J&K Cooperative Societies Act, 1960, was presently under the control of the UT government through the registrar of co-operative societies (RCS) and the administrative department of cooperatives.

"SCARD is not registered under the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 and, therefore, does not fall under the purview of the Reserve Bank of India," the minister informed.

He said the bank's financial stress developed gradually due to accumulated losses, weak governance and internal control systems, poor loan recovery and liquidity pressures.

The situation worsened due to inadequate refinancing support from the National Bank for Agricul

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EC asks 22 states, UTs to prepare for final phase of SIR

NEW DELHI, FEB 19: The Election Commission today asked 22 states and Union Territories, including J&K and Delhi, to complete preparatory work related to the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) at the earliest as the exercise was "expected to start from April".

Once the exercise was completed, all states and UTs would be covered.

In a letter to the chief electoral officers of Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Chandigarh, Dadra and Nagar Haveli & Daman and Diu, Haryana,

Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Ladakh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Delhi, Odisha, Punjab, Sikkim, Tripura, Telangana and Uttarakhhand, the poll authority said pan-India SIR of voters' list was ordered in June last year.

Battling "vote chori" allegations levelled by the opposition Congress, the Election Commission held the SIR of electoral rolls in 13 states and UTs and a 'special revision' in Assam this year.

It was all set to hold a similar exercise in the remaining 22 states and UTs this year.

While the exercise, which kept the EC in the news, was completed in Bihar, it is ongoing in 12 states and UTs with nearly 60 crore electors.

The remaining 40 crore electors will be covered in these 17 states and five UTs. In Assam, a 'special revision', instead of SIR, was completed on February 10.

Due to a variety of reasons, SIR in the nine states

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National Herald case

HC to hear ED plea against Sonia, Rahul

NEW DELHI, FEB 19: The Delhi High Court on Thursday listed for hearing on March 9 a plea by the ED challenging the order of the trial court that refused to take cognizance of its chargesheet against Congress leaders Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi and others in the National Herald related money laundering case.

Justice Swarna Kanta Sharma granted time to the Gandhis and others to file their replies.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the

Enforcement Directorate (ED), objected to the request made by the counsel for the respondent leaders for additional time to file responses, saying notice was served to them two months ago.

Terming it a "neat question of law", he said the case has to be argued on law and not facts, and the findings of the trial court were "coming in the way" of other cases.

The reasons given by the trial court to refuse taking cognizance in the case were "patently perverse", the so-

licitor general said.

On December 22, the high court had issued notice to the Gandhis and others on the main petition as well as on the ED's application seeking a stay on the December 16, 2025 trial court order, which held that cognizance of the agency's complaint in the case was "impermissible in law" as it was not founded on an FIR.

Besides Gandhis, the high court had also issued notices to Suman Dubey, Sam Pitroda, Young Indian,

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