

## !! Continuations from Page 1 !! PM Modi approves...

before its completion, the minister added.

He said the setting up of the new Pay Commission in 2025 will ensure that its recommendations are received well before the completion of the term of the seventh pay panel.

Pay commissions hold extensive consultations with central and state governments and other stakeholders before giving recommendations to the government. The pay commission has a key role in deciding salary structures, benefits and allowances for government employees. Most of the state-owned organisations follow the commission's recommendations.

The 7th Pay Commission was constituted in 2014 and its recommendations were implemented on January 1, 2016.

Sources said around 50 lakh central government employees, including defence personnel, will benefit from the decision.

Also, about 65 lakh pensioners, including defence persons, will also see an uptick in their pensions, they added.

In Delhi alone, about 4 lakh employees will benefit, including defence and Delhi government employees, from the recommendations of the panel. Delhi is going to assembly polls on February 5, 2025.

In past, salaries of Delhi government employees increased with the central pay commission, sources added.

The 7th pay commission saw an expenditure increase of Rs 1 lakh crore for fiscal 2016-17.

Implementation of the pay panel's recommendations provides a significant boost to consumption and economic growth, along with improved quality of life for government employees.

Usually, every 10 years, the central government constitutes a pay commission to revise the remuneration of its employees.

The pay commission also recommends the formula for the revision of dearness allowance and dearness relief for central government employees and pensioners with a view to compensating them for inflation.

Several state governments also revise the remuneration of their employees on the lines of the central pay commission.

## PAY COMMISSIONS: TIMELINE...

**5th Pay Commission (April 1994 - January 1997)**  
Chairman: Justice S. Ratnavel Pandian  
Recommended a minimum pay of Rs 2,550/month  
Suggested reducing the number of pay scale  
Focused on modernizing government office  
Beneficiaries: Around 4 million employees

**6th Pay Commission (October 2006 - March 2008)**  
Chairman: Justice B.N. Srikrishna  
Introduced Pay Bands and Grade Pay  
Minimum salary: Rs 7,000/month; maximum salary: Rs 80,000/month  
Emphasized performance-related incentive  
Beneficiaries: Nearly 6 million employees

**7th Pay Commission (February 2014 - November 2016)**  
Chairman: Justice A K Mathur  
Minimum pay raised to Rs 18,000/month; maximum pay Rs 2,50,000/month  
Recommended a new pay matrix instead of grade pay system  
Focused on allowances and work-life balance  
Beneficiaries: Over 10 million (including pensioners)

**8th Pay Commission announced on 16th January 2025.**

## Vaishno Devi hills...

experienced moderate snowfall.

Moderate to heavy snow fell in parts of Kishtwar, Doda, Ramban, Poonch, Kathua, and Reasi districts, officials said.

Some inter-district roads, as well as the inter-regional Mughal road and Simthan roads, were closed due to snowfall, they added.

Jammu-Srinagar national highway remains open for traffic despite rain in Ramban and Udhampur districts.

Traffic police issued an advisory stating that vehicles on the highway were moving at a slow pace due to heavy snowfall in the Qazigund-Anantnag sector and the Banihal area near the Navyug tunnel.

"Commuters are advised to avoid travelling on the highway if possible because of heavy snowfall on the Qazigund side," the advisory said.

## CM reaffirms commitment...

simplify procedures to empower women."

Highlighting the programme's impact, the Chief Minister expressed satisfaction that over 12,000 'Lakhpati Didis' have already been empowered under the initiative. He expressed hope for this number to grow significantly, emphasizing that financial independence for women strengthens not just individuals but the entire society.

"This programme, which began during my first tenure as Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, has exceeded expectations."Who would have thought that this initiative would lead to the emergence of Lakhpati Didis in Jammu and Kashmir? And yet, here we are, witnessing incredible stories of success, perseverance and achievement," said the Chief Minister.

He praised the women's fiscal discipline, which has garnered trust from banks and financial institutions. "Your discipline, responsibility and commitment to timely repayments have built this trust. If all sectors operate with the same level of integrity and accountability as you do, Jammu and Kashmir's economic landscape would be transformed," he said.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah emphasized the transformative power of financial independence for women, saying, "When women-our mothers, sisters, and daughters-become self-reliant, the entire society benefits. It allows you to make your own decisions, shaping a future that is better for you and your families."

He commended the quiet yet impactful progress of the Umeed Programme, stating, "This programme has done wonders, quietly and without fanfare. Where there is noise, there is often politics. But progress made in silence speaks volumes."

The Chief Minister highlighted how the program has evolved, with many women not only achieving self-reliance but also creating job opportunities for others. "You are no longer just beneficiaries of this program; you are its leaders and torch bearers," he said.

Acknowledging the potential of the Umeed programme to serve as a national model, he urged the replication of success stories from other states.

He also announced plans for women entrepreneurs to receive training and skill development opportunities across India, with a batch of women already scheduled to travel to Ahmedabad for advanced training.

On the occasion, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah virtually launched several key initiatives aimed at further empowering women entrepreneurs under the Umeed Programme. These included the felicitation of 11,936 LakhpatiDidis, the e-delivery of engagement orders for 650 banking correspondents and the e-inauguration of four Common Training Centres to build the capacity of potential Lakhpati Didis.

Additionally, CM witnessed e-disbursement of loans amounting to Rs 5000 lakh among 2016 Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and Rs 231 lakh to 165 Cluster Level Federations (CLFs) for establishing mini-custom hiring centers.

The Chief Minister also flagged off a group of women entrepreneurs deputed to the Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India (EDII) in Ahmedabad for advanced training.

A documentary on the Umeed Programme's journey was screened, highlighting its transformative impact. Two Lakhpati Didis shared their inspiring success stories with the audience and the Chief Minister.

The event was attended by Minister for Rural Development & Panchayati Raj Javed Ahmad Dar, Advisor to the CM Nasir Aslam Wani, Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, Secretary RDD & PR Aijaz Asad, Chief General Manager NABARD J&K and Mission Director JKRLM, among others.

## SC to hear...

On February 27, 2002, 59 people were killed when the S-6 coach of the Sabarnati Express was burnt at Gujarat's Godhra, triggering riots in the state.

Several appeals have been filed in the apex court challenging the October 2017 verdict of the Gujarat High Court which had upheld the conviction of several convicts and commuted the death penalties of 11 people to life term.

The Gujarat government had in February 2023 told the apex court that it will be seeking death penalty for the 11 convicts whose sentences in the case were commuted to life imprisonment by the high court.

When the matter came for hearing on Thursday, a lawyer, appearing for a convict, submitted that no evidence has been put on record.

"We don't know. We will hear the matter and we had clarified this earlier. We will not adjourn this case. This case has been adjourned at least five times. (For the) last one year, I have been adjourning this matter," Justice Maheshwari said.

The lawyer told the court that some of the convicts have filed remission pleas that are pending.

Refusing to adjourn the matter, the bench said, "We have instructions from the Chief Justice's office that the cases of criminal appeal and remission need not to be heard together."

Senior Advocate Sanjay Hegde, appearing for one of the convicts, submitted that the appeal filed by Gujarat against commutation of death penalty to life has to be heard first.

"Twenty-two years have passed... My clients have not been awarded death. This bench will have to first confirm the guilt. Once that is confirmed, then comes the sentencing part. When we go through that, that will possibly take time. There will be repercussion if you were to send to three judges," Hegde said.

The court then deferred the matter for hearing to February 13 after the lawyers appearing for the convicts sought time.

During the hearing before the apex court earlier, the state's counsel said the 11 convicts were sentenced to death by the trial court and 20 others were awarded life term in the case.

The high court had upheld the 31 convictions in the case and commuted the death penalties of the 11 convicts to life term, the counsel had said.

While the state has appealed against the commutation of death penalty to life term for the 11 convicts, several convicts have challenged the high court's verdict upholding their convictions in the case.

## SC dismisses J&K...

asking the High Court to not unnecessarily summon officials of J&K administration; however, the underlying order in the present case pertained to understaffed judicial offices.

Justice Bhatti, on the other hand, emphasized the burden on clerks and said that the UT itself invited the High Court's observations because of its contentions.

In response, the ASG raised a grievance that such matters shall be dealt with on the administrative side, not judicial. "If on the judicial side they say whatever we say is binding, we can't take anything forward", he said, while informing that 156 posts have already been created. Objecting to the following observation made by the High Court, the ASG added that the "government can't run with these observations".

".. Once the High Court has given on the judicial side its requirement for 334 posts, the act of the Government in stating that it would have to examine the requirement of the High Court based on the parameters of the number of judges working in the High Court and the number of posts against ongoing cases and also examining the requirement of this Court of 334 posts while drawing a comparison with the High Court of Himachal Pradesh and the Allahabad High Court with its principal seat at Allahabad and one Bench at Lucknow, is gross contempt."

Considering the submission, Justice Bhatti commented that perhaps the High Court was not happy with the comparison drawn with other High Courts/benches. Ultimately, the Court clarified that the High Court observations shall be seen as tentative.

Briefly put, the Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh High Court is seized of a writ petition, filed in 2017, which originally sought monetary benefits for High Court employees. Over time, the case evolved into a broader discussion about the critical need for additional staff to address the growing requirements of the judiciary.

The High Court strength increased from 14 to 17 judges in 2021, and subsequently to 25. However, the UT administration repeatedly fail

ed to act on recommendations from the High Court's Registry, which in 2014 proposed creating 334 posts across various categories. The matter gained urgency with a February 2023 order from the Court, which pointed the acute need for staff and infrastructure. Although the UT administration eventually sanctioned 24 posts in May 2023 after significant delays, the broader recommendation for 334 posts remained in limbo.

Taking serious note, the High Court, vide order dated November 12, 2024, highlighted that recommendations from the High Court or the Chief Justice concerning post creation are binding on the government, leaving no room for discretion. It held that the financial implications must be borne by the consolidated fund of the UT of Jammu and Kashmir.

Criticizing the UT administration's approach as laggardly and casual, the Court noted that compliance reports filed in a phased manner lacked specificity or urgency. Frowning over the UT government's attempt to compare the requirements of the J&K High Court with other High Courts like Himachal Pradesh and Allahabad, the bench pointed out unique logistical challenges faced by the J&K High Court, such as maintaining dual establishments at Srinagar and Jammu, unlike other High Courts with single or primary benches.

Warning that any future attempts by the government to assess judicial staffing requirements would invite contempt proceedings, the Court observed, "This High Court shall understand and accommodate the UT if the question is restricted only to the issue of finances. But we would take very serious note henceforth, if commitments are made to sit and ascertain and assess the requirement of this Court. If it is ever so done again, this Court shall exercise its powers to initiate proceedings of contempt against those officers for their indiserction."

## Actor Saif Ali...

A 2.5-inch piece of knife was removed from his spine, the doctors said, adding he was on "100 percent recovery path".

Police registered a case of `armed robbery with attempt to cause death or grievous hurt'. The attacker fled using the building's staircase, a senior police official said, adding that his CCTV visuals was traced on the sixth floor, and 10 teams have been formed to nab him.

Khan's domestic help, who raised alarm first, also sustained a minor injury to her hand during the scuffle. She later lodged a police complaint.

Opposition leaders in Maharashtra said even celebrities were not safe in India's financial capital, and Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, who holds the home portfolio, has failed to maintain law and order. Fadnavis, however, said the attack was a serious incident, but it would be wrong to call Mumbai unsafe because of it, and the police were taking action in the matter.

As per the preliminary probe, the intruder did not force his entry or break into the actor's flat, but possibly sneaked in at some point during the night.

Khan's domestic staff took him to Lilavati Hospital in an auto rickshaw after the incident. He was operated upon by a team of doctors led by neurosurgeon Dr Nitin Dange, cosmetic surgeon Dr Leena Jain and anaesthesiologist Dr Nisha Gandhi.

"He sustained six injuries, two are minor, two intermediate and two deep injuries, one of the injuries is on the back which is close to spine," the hospital's chief operating officer Dr Niraj Uttamani told PTI.

"Saif sustained a major injury to his thoracic spine due to a knife.....Surgery was performed to remove the knife and also to repair the leaking spinal fluid," said Dr Dange.

"There were two other deep wounds in his left hand and right side of the neck which were repaired by the plastic surgery team.

Khan is completely stable now. He is in recovery mode and is completely out of danger," Dr Dange added.

According to Dr Uttamani, the actor was "on 100 per cent recovery path as per our initial understanding." "He has been shifted to the ICU. Maybe in a day or two he will be shifted to the (non-ICU) ward," he added.

The actor's representatives described the incident as an "attempted burglary".

A First Information Report was registered at Bandra police station under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita sections 311 (robbery with attempt to cause death or grievous hurt), 331 (4) (house break-in or trespass at night) and other relevant provisions.

Saif's wife and actor Kareena Kapoor Khan, and some other members of the family were present in the house when the incident took place.

The son of actor Sharmila Tagore and late cricketer Mansoor Ali Khan Pataudi, Saif Ali Khan is known for his performances in films like "Omkaara", "Dil Chahta Hai", "Kal Ho Naa Ho" and "Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior". He is also a recipient of the Padma Shri award.

Talking to reporters, Chief Minister Fadnavis asserted that Mumbai is a safe city. "I think Mumbai is the safest among mega cities in the country. It is true that some incidents take place sometimes, and they must be taken seriously. But to say that Mumbai is unsafe due to such incidents is not right," he said.

"....But, to make the city safer, the government will certainly make efforts," he added.

NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar said the incident shows that the law and order situation was deteriorating in Maharashtra.

"Recently, a person was killed in the same area and now this incident. All these things are worrisome," Pawar told reporters at Baramati. "The state government, especially the chief minister who holds charge of the home department, should pay attention to these things more seriously," the former Maharashtra chief minister said.

In October last year, former state minister Baba Siddique was shot dead by three persons in Bandra area.

Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut said, "No one is safe. Let alone ordinary people, even celebrities who have their own security are not safe."

Fadnavis had completely failed to maintain law and order, said Congress spokesperson Atul Londhe.

Prominent politicians including West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, Arvind Kejriwal and Chiranjeevi, expressed shock over the attack on Saif Ali Khan.

"It's very concerning to hear about the attack on noted actor Saif Ali Khan. I pray for his speedy recovery, trusting that the law will take its course and those responsible will be held accountable. My thoughts and prayers are with Sharmila Di, Kareena Kapoor, and the entire family during this difficult time," Banerjee posted on X. Kejriwal said, "Shocked to hear about the attack on Saif Ali Khan. Wishing him a speedy recovery and strength to his family during this difficult time."

## Mysterious deaths: J&K...

six children requiring hospitalization"

Responding promptly, the Govt took a number of steps to find root cause of the unusual illness.

The Minister for Health and Medical Education, Sakina Itoo, visited the spot along with other cabinet colleagues, besides chairing several meetings with the Health and Medical Education Department, District Administration, and other related departments to find the cause of the illness and provide necessary healthcare facilities to the affected.

Chief Secretary. Atal Dulloo, also chaired a series of meetings with health authorities, administration, technical experts from across the country, and police to ensure thorough fact-finding and provide the best healthcare facilities to the affected.

The Department of Health and Medical Education has been providing the best possible treatment and management to the patients besides reviewing the situation on a daily basis. Experts from some of the most reputed institutions of the country have been arranged to manage the situation and understand the causative factors of the deaths.

Secretary Department of Health Research, MOHFW and DG ICMR Govt of India Dr. Rajeev Bahl held a video conference to discuss strategies and steps to rule out any epidemic.

The Government took several steps immediately after the first incident on December 7, including deputing a medical team along with the food safety department to collect food and water samples, organizing medical camps, establishing mobile medical units, door-to-door screening, and deploying rapid action teams.

A team of the state rapid response experts, including epidemiologists, microbiologists, and others from DHS Jammu, GMC Jammu, and Rajouri, visited the area to conduct detailed screening and collect contact tracing samples. Experts from NCDC, NIV Pune, and PGI Chandigarh also visited the area to assist in containing the situation.

Clinical reports, lab investigations, and environmental samples indicate that the incidents are not due to a communicable disease.

The toxicological analysis conducted by CSIR-IITR has detected toxins in multiple biological specimens.

Meanwhile Rajouri police has formed a SIT for investigating the deaths. Efforts are on by the J&K police to investigate the incident.

The Government is committed to safeguarding the lives of people and is taking all necessary steps in the matter.

## Firing on Advocate...

with grave implications. Considering the severity of the allegations and the ongoing investigation, the court found sufficient grounds to deny bail.

The CJM concluded that the accused's actions were a blatant misuse of personal liberty, adding that the judiciary must act decisively to curb violence and protect public peace. The bail application was subsequently dismissed.

## Six SPs posted...

immediate effect. Also, Javid Hussain Bhat (JKPS), (CO) Bordr Bn Srinagar) Mehmood Ahmad (JKPS) (Commandant IR 21st Bn) and Abdul Qayoom (JKPS) (Commandant IR 2nd Bn) have been posted in ACB on deputation basis.

Subsequently, three SPs-Abdul Wahid Shah (JKPS), Mohammad Rashid (JKPS) and Rakesh Kumar (JKPS) have been repatriated from ACB to Home Department for further posting.

Mohammad Saleem Bhat, JKPS, posted as DySP in the ACB, upon his promotion as Superintendent of Police, shall continue in the ACB as Additional Superintendent of Police, on deputation basis from the Home Department along with post (AWP), the order reads further.

Further, it said, Dr. Ashok Sharma, JKPS, Superintendent of Police, under orders of transfer to CID, in terms of Government Order No. 364-Home of 2024 dated August 16, 2024, has been relieved from the ACB, J&K with immediate effect.

## What is Rahul...

challenges posed by China, such interactions carry a heavy burden of responsibility. Instead of backing the government's efforts to counter Chinese aggression, Rahul Gandhi frequently questioned the Centre and the Army's credibility, which weakened India's diplomatic stance and undermined its will to protect territorial integrity.

Rahul Gandhi's engagement with international platforms critical of India has fueled doubts about his patriotism. While Prime Minister Modi has been tirelessly working to elevate India's stature globally, Rahul Gandhi's actions have dented the nation's image. His speeches and interactions abroad, including at reputed universities, often criticize India's democratic and cultural foundations. These interactions have been seen as part of a larger agenda to malign the nation by creating divisions based on caste, religion, and other societal fault lines. By questioning India's democratic credentials and challenging its unity, his actions seem to align more with external narratives than with national interests. He appears to be adamant to jeo-pradise the national interest and project the majority community in bad light to appease a particular segment of the society.

Rahul Gandhi's actions pose significant challenges for the Congress, especially its rank and file in regions like Jammu and Kashmir. J&K Congress leaders will have to answer whether they endorse the divisive views often expressed by Rahul Gandhi.

The core issue is that Rahul Gandhi's actions and statements often appear incoherent. While he portrays himself as a crusader for justice and equality, his rhetoric aligns with narratives that undermine India's unity and progress. This duality raises doubts: is he a misguided leader, a pawn in a larger global agenda, or a calculated disruptor? As time progresses, the true motivations behind Rahul Gandhi's actions will become clearer.

## CS advocates tough action against online scammers

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Taking notice of the instances of defraud committed against the people of the Union Territory, Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo on Thursday stressed on taking strict action against these online scammers under the relevant provisions of BUDS Act.

Chairing the 35th Union Territory Level Coordination Committee (UTLCC) meeting, convened by Reserve Bank of India, Jammu branch here, Dulloo reiterated that commission of crime in itself is cognizable offence so the law enforcement agencies have primary responsibility to take impromptu action against such entities to safeguard people from falling prey to their traps.

He enjoined upon the regulatory bodies to notify the rules so as to facilitate the law enforcement agencies in taking action. He also advised them including the RBI, SEBI and others to generate awareness among the people and circulate this knowledge through social media, WhatsApp and bulk messaging to people through banks operating in J&K.

The Chief Secretary urged the RBI authorities to empower the police officers in carrying out effective investigations in the cases of digital arrest or online scams. He asked them to train some master trainers who would go in districts to train about 5000 investigation officers in police department. He maintained that this is the area of concern as the digital marketing and online transactions are becoming popular by each day making people vulnerable to defrauding on the hands of these criminals. He stressed on reaching out to students in colleges and villagers in blocks/panchayats for holding such outreach campaigns.

He also reviewed the progress achieved in disposal of pending fraud cases and called for concrete preventive action that would act as deterrent for others. He called upon the concerned to ensure effective implementation of BUDS Act and the relevant sections of newly adopted criminal laws to eradicate this menace from J&K.

Dulloo also underscored the need for taking strong action against fraudulent apps/websites, activities of Nidhi and other unregistered/unaddressed entities duping the people of J&K. Regional Director, Reserve Bank of India, Chandrashekhar Azad, discussed various steps that can be taken to tackle the rise of such fraudulent activities in cyber space and called for collaborative approach among all stakeholders. He also assured about accelerating the pace of literacy campaigns for creating necessary awareness in public besides building capacity of local law enforcement agencies to deal with such crimes in a more effective manner. The meeting was held to discuss issues related to unauthorised deposits, fraudulent activities of unregulated entities and sharing of market intelligence among the stakeholders. Regional Director, RBI, Jammu, Principal Secretary, Home Department, Principal Secretary, Finance, ADGP(CID), Secretary, Revenue , Secretary, Law, Director Industrialise and Commence and Joint Director, Information, Jammu were present in the meeting. Besides, top officials of regulatory bodies in J&K including GM, RBI, Registrar Cooperatives, RoC, Market Intelligence Unit, RBI and representatives from SEBI and ICAI also attended the meeting.