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Air surcharge 50 paisa for Leh

Dr Jitendra addresses 'Centre-State Conclave', **U** underlines India's bioeconomy driven future growth

CM reviews preparations for Jammu Half Marathon, Ultra Marathon 2025

Website: www.statetimes.in. Email: statetimes1@gmail.com

City Excise Range, South Jammu organises **Badminton, Volleyball Competitions**

Govt approves continuation, restructuring of skill India programme with Rs 8,800 Cr outlay

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STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: The Union Cabinet on Friday approved the continuation and restructuring of central sector Programme' till 2026 with an overlay outlay of Rs 8,800

Giving details, Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana 4.0 (PMKVY 4.0), the Pradhan Mantri Apprenticeship National Promotion Scheme (PM-NAPS), and the Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS) Scheme -- the three key components -- are now combined under the composite Central Sector Scheme of "Skill India Programme".

The allocation towards PMKVY 4.0 is Rs 6,000 crore, PM-NAPS Rs 1,942 crore and JSS Rs 858 crore.

An official release said that the approval underscores the

Clears new IT bill; to be introduced in Parliament next week

NEW DELHI: The Union Cabinet on Friday approved the new income tax bill, which will replace the six decades old I-T

The new bill seeks to make direct tax law simple to under stand and not to impose any new tax burden. It will not have rovisos and explanations or long sentences.

The Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved the New Income Tax Bill, sources said. Sources said the new income tax bill will now be introduced

in the Parliament next week and would be sent to Parliament's Standing Committee on Finance. The first leg of the ongoing budget session ends on February

13. The session will reconvene on March 10 and sit through Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had announced in

ongoing session of Parliament. Sitharaman had first announced a comprehensive review of the Income-tax Act, 1961 in July 2024 Budget. The CBDT had set up an internal committee ■ CONTD ON PAGE 9

Budget 2025-26 that the new tax bill will be introduced in the

building a skilled, futureready workforce by integrating demand-driven, technology-enabled, and industryaligned training across the

"These initiatives aim to

provide structured skill development, on-the-job training, and communitybased learning, ensuring that both urban and rural populations, including marginalized

high-quality vocational education," it said.

Under the three flagships schemes of Ministry of Skill Development Entrepreneurship, there are

more than 2.27 crore beneficiaries till date. The Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana 4.0

(PMKVY 4.0) has undertransformational gone changes to make skill development training industry oriented, aligned with national priorities with increased accessibility.

A key shift under the scheme is the integration of On-the-Job Training (OJT) within short-term skilling programmes, ensuring that trainees gain real-world exposure and industry experience. To keep pace with evolving industry demands and advent of new age technology, 400-plus new courses on AI, 5G technology, cybersecurity, green

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Modi to pay 2-day working visit to US from Feb 12

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will pay a two-day working visit to the US from February 12 during which he will meet President Donald Trump, the external affairs ministry Friday announced.

Addressing a press conference, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said Modi's visit will give further impetus and direction to India-US bilateral relationship.

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Atul posted as **Special Assistant with** LOP J&K Assembly **STATE TIMES NEWS**

JAMMU: The government on Friday posted a special assis-Srinagar. tant to the Leader of Opposition J&K Legislative Assembly. "Atul Dutt Sharma, JKAS, Personnel Officer, Associated Hospitals, Jammu has been transferred and posted as Special Assistant with Leader of Opposition, J&K Legislative Assembly, with immediate effect," reads the

LG visits National Book Trust's World Book Fair

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Governor Manoj Sinha on Friday visited the New World Book Fair Delhi 2025. Bharat Mandapam, Pragati Maidan, New Delhi.

The Lieutenant Governor commended the endeavour of National Book Trust, India, under the Ministry of Education, Government of India, for providing an engaging platform to book lovers, publishers and authors. He has also asked the National Book Trust to regularly organise annual book festivals in Jammu and

The Lieutenant Governor has posted on X: "World Book Fair is the ideal opportunity to promote reading habit, celebrate the contribution of literary communities, keep track of new ideas and invite writers and citizens for cultural exchange and intellectual discourse to



LG Manoj Sinha during visit to World Book Fair 2025 at New Delhi on Friday.

World Book Fair is the ideal opportunity to promote reading habit, celebrate the contribution of literary communities, keep track of new ideas and invite writers and citizens for cultural exchange and intellectual discourse to expand our horizon: LG Manoj Sinha

A book is the best compan- and perspectives in

DG CRPF Chief visits forward areas in Rajouri, reviews security situation



Rajouri on Friday.

STATE TIMES NEWS RAJOURI/JAMMU: CRPF Director General GP Singh reviewed the security situation and the force's operational preparedness during a

Mysterious deaths: 38

patients discharged after

complete recovery

patients, who were admitted

to different hospitals after

falling ill due to a mysterious

illness at Badhaal village in

J-K's Rajouri district, have

been discharged after com-

plete recovery, officials said.

Currently, 363 individuals

from 60 families remain

quarantined in various facili-

ties across Rajouri, they

informed a meeting of health

professionals and police per-

sonnel chaired by Chief

Secretary Atal Dullo on

The mysterious illness has

claimed 17 lives from three

families in Badhaal between

Health Secretary Syed

Abid Rashid Shah briefed

the meeting, stating that

every measure has been

taken to isolate the affected

families and provide them with food and water after

"Out of the 55 sympto-

matic persons, 38 have been

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discharged after

December 7 and January

Thirty-eight

STATÉ TIMES NEWŠ

JAMMU:

Thursday.

forward areas in Rajouri district, officials said on Friday. Singh also met Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha

recent two-day visit to the

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CM holds pre-budget consultation with stakeholders **STATE TIMES NEWS**

JAMMU: Continuing with the pre-budget consultations for the third consecutive day, Minister Abdullah on Friday engaged in extensive discussions with public representatives and key stakeholders to gain firsthand insights into the issues and developmental priorities of various sectors and districts. The meeting was attended

by Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Education Secretary Shantmanu, Additional Chief Secretary to CM Gupta, Dheerai Administrative Secretaries of Finance, Social Welfare,



Public representatives. including District Development Council (DDC) Chairpersons and Members of Legislative Assembly (MLAs) from Pulwama and Reasi districts, raised concerns regarding electricity

drinking schemes, flood management, staffing of schools and hospitals, upgradation of primary health centers, construction of bridges, and the development of new tourist

of BJP poaching AAP candidates between AAP and the BJP, NEW DELHI: The Delhi

ACB serves notice to Kejriwal over claims

Anti-Corruption Branch (ACB) on Friday served a legal notice to AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal, seeking details and evidence regarding his allegations that the BJP attempted to bribe his party candidates ahead of the Delhi Assembly election

The legal notice comes just a day before the counting of votes is scheduled to take place for the Delhi Assembly elections held on February 5.

The notice, delivered at Kejriwal's 5, Ferozeshah Road residence, has intensified the political tensions

with the former calling it a politically motivated move. The ACB's notice specifi-

cally refers to a post on X by Kejriwal accusing the BJP of offering bribes to 16 AAP candidates to switch sides. The notice asks Kejriwal to

confirm whether the tweet was made by him and provide detailed information on the alleged poaching attempts.

It also seeks the names of the 16 candidates who received phone calls, the phone numbers of those who contacted them and any supporting evidence to substantiate these claims.

■ CONTD ON PAGE 9 CB arrests accused in Rs 1.44 Cr Bank

Ensure priority, protocol to MLAs: J&K Govt issues directive for officials

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Jammu and Kashmir government on Friday issued a directive to its employees, directing them to ensure that all elected representatives are attended to on priority in public offices and that proper protocol as per established government norms and guidelines is maintained.

The directive also emphasized that MLAs should be invited to all official functions and meetings organized within their jurisdiction.

"The elected Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir are expected to play a crucial role in the governance process at the grassroots level. It is, therefore, imperative that all government departments, officers and officials extend due cooperation and accord priority to issues highlighted and flagged by these public representatives," stated a circular issued by General Administration Department (GAD) secretary M Raju on

He further directed that all officers and officials working in various government departments of the Union

elected representatives on priority in public offices and adhere to proper protocol as per established government norms and guidelines.

heads of various depart-

ments, both in person and

"Communications, requests and grievances raised by elected representatives shall acknowledged and processed on priority and government officers and officials shall engage with them in a professional and respectful manner," the circular

It also specified that elected representatives should be invited to all official functions and meetings

logo to Kashmir carpet to preserve exclusivity STATE TIMES NEWS SRINAGAR: In a major step $\,$

aimed at safeguarding the genuineness of Kashmir Crafts and brand promotion, the Geographical Registry, Chennai, has assigned a new logo for the famed Kashmir Hand-Knotted Carpet under its Geographical Indication procedures.

GI logo is a sign used on products that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin.

In a press release issued here today, Director Indian Institute Carpet

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STATE TIMES NEWS JAMMU: Crime Branch (CB) on Friday arrested main accused involved in Rs $1.44~{\rm crore}~{\rm J\&K}~{\rm Bank}~{\rm loan}$ scam immediately after his pre-arrest bail was rejected by the Court of 2nd

Additional Sessions Judge

Jammu.

The accused, terminated J&K Bank employee of B C Road Jammu, has been identified as Rohit Taroch, son of Som Raj Taroch, resident of Rehari Ambphalla, Jammu.

According to the Crime Branch, the involvement of

47/2023 under offences of 420,467,468,471,120-B RPC registered in Police Station Crime Branch (EDW), has surfaced for criminal conspiracy and cheating by fraudulently facilitating loans in favour of beneficiary accused persons on the basis of fake and

loan scam after court rejects bail

trating a fraud to the aggregate amount of Rs 144.53 Lakhs upon the J&K Bank Branch BC Road. Jammu.

Judge Jammu Amit Sharma after hearing Advocate Inderjeet Shavotra for the applicant whereas APP Arvinder Rathore for the UT, observed that facts shaken the conscious of this court that on the one hand there are the 'genuine set of customers' who obtained loan of meager amount from the bank and the said amount

forged documents. Thus succeeded in perpe-2nd Additional Sessions

tomers' in whose favour the bank sanctioned the loan and the said customers in

will never be settled down. Because the bank charges interest after the interest on the principal amount borrowed by these genuine customers. On the other hand,

there are the 'Fake set of cus-

■ CONTD ON PAGE 9

NEET-UG to be conducted on May 4

STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: The medical entrance exam NEET-UG will be conducted on May 4, the National Testing Agency (NTA) announced on Friday.

The application process for the the National Eligibilitycum-Entrance (NEET)-UG began on

Friday and will conclude on March 7. It is the largest entrance exam in the country in terms of the number of candidates appearing for the

In 2024, a record more than 24 lakh candidates took the exam. The NTA conducts the NEET every year for admission into medical colleges. A total of 1,08,000 seats are available for MBSS Approximately 56,000 of them are in government hospitals and

■ CONTD ON PAGE 9

Informing accused grounds of arrest constitutional requirement: SC **STATE TIMES NEWS** NEW DELHI: In a signifi-

cant ruling, the Supreme Court on Friday said the requirement of informing grounds of arrest to an accused was not a "formality but a mandatory constitutional requirement".

A bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Nongmeikapam Kotiswar Singh said noncompliance by the police would amount to violation of fundamental right under Article ofConstitution.

requirement informing the person arrested of the grounds of arrest is not a formality but a mandatory constitutional requirement. Article 22 is included in Part III of the Constitution under the head-



ing of Fundamental Rights. Thus, it is the fundamental right of every person arrested and detained in custody to be informed of the grounds of arrest as soon as possible," it

The bench therefore held the arrest of one Vihaan

ior advocate Kapil Sibal and advocate Vishal Gosain, in a financial fraud case as unconstitutional and violative of his fundamental rights under Article 22(1) of the Constitution.

the top court ordered Kumar, represented by sen-Kumar's immediate release

underscoring the importance of procedural safeguards in

"If the grounds of arrest are not informed as soon as may be after the arrest, it would amount to a violation of the fundamental right of the arrestee guaranteed under Article 22(1). It will also amount to depriving the arrestee of his liberty..., Justice Oka said in the judgement.

Justice Singh concurred with Justice Oka and wrote a few pages to highlight the importance of Article 22 and the right of the accused.

Justice Oka concluded the verdict saying, "The requirement of informing a person arrested on grounds of arrest is a mandatory

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Al based Samadhan 2.0; CS dedicates upgraded version to public

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, on Friday dedicated Samadhan 2.0, an interactive AI based platform, with all new features for both public and administration to ensure quality disposal of grievances registered by the citizens on this portal. All the Administrative

Heads of various departments besides others were present on the occasion. The Chief Secretary

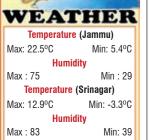
assessed the upgraded features of this rechristened public grievance portal, evaluated the prospective outcomes and improvements to be obtained by the people with its introduction. He enjoined upon the developers to incorporate the features such as filters to trickle down grievances based upon their

content, area, department, pendency, settlement, gender and timeframe. He also suggested to use AI for identification of similar grievances so that these are clubbed for redressal in a time bound manner.

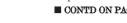
The Chief Secretary also advised them to keep this platform open for communication in both ways so that grievances registered are resolved as per the aspirations of the aggrieved. He asked for increasing registrations on this portal so that households of the UT having a smart phone are heard at the appropriate level in the administration. Dulloo also underscored

the need for making this portal a one stop solution for administration to reach

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Sunset: 18:08 Hours Sunrise: 07:21 Hours





Declaring the arrest illegal