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# DDC members call off protest, scheduled to meet LG on Friday

### STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The newly-elected District Development Council (DDC) members on Wednesday called off their two-day long protest in support of better status and monthly honorarium, saying they have got an assurance from Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha whom they are meeting on Friday.

However, the DDC members said they will decide their future course of action after the meeting with the Lt Governor, reiterating their demand for cancellation of the warrant of precedence and honorarium scale set up by the Union Territory administration.

Cutting across party lines, the newly-elected DDC members had on Tuesday boycotted a two-day training programme here and staged a protest in support of their demand for better status and monthly honorarium, forcing the Lt Governor to cancel his inaugural session.

Various political parties including the BJP, the Congress, the CPI(M) and the Peoples' Conference came out in support of the agitating DDC members and urged Lt Governor Sinha to ensure they have adequate powers to mobilise government departments and address public grievances.

The maiden DDC elections to 280 seats -- 14 each in 20 districts -- were held in November-December last year and the chairpersons and their deputies in all the 20 districts were elected last

month.

The DDC members staged the protest after the UT administration amended its warrant of precedence, placing the DDC chairpersons equivalent to administrative secretaries, vice chairpersons to vice-chancellors of universities and the DDC members to district magistrates.

As per the government order, the DDC chairpersons would get monthly honorarium of Rs 35,000 including Rs 1,500 travel allowance and Rs 500 telephone charges. Vice chairpersons will get Rs 25,000 including Rs 1,500 travel allowance and Rs 500 telephone charges and members will get Rs 15,000 including Rs 1,500 travel allowance and Rs 500 telephone charges.

"We have received a message from the Lt Governor, who is presently out of the station, and is coming back on March 12 for a meeting to address our genuine demands," DDC chairperson and senior BJP leader Bharat Bushan told reporters at Exhibition Ground here.

Bushan was flanked by other DDC members affiliated with different parties including the Congress, National Conference, PDP, CPI(M) and independents who had assembled at the place to resume the protest this morning. Bushan said they are calling off the protest on the assurance of L-G Sinha that "injustice will be undone".

Blaming bureaucrats for the protocol and power related fiasco, he said Prime

Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah and even the Lt Governor had in the past talked about strengthening of the Panchayati Raj Institutions in the Union Territory and ensured a three-tier system for the betterment of the people. "We have formed a committee, composed mostly of DDC chairpersons from across the Union Territory, and they will hold the meeting with the Lt Governor. We are hopeful of a peaceful resolution of the issue," he said.

However, he alleged that the administration cancelled the accommodation of the DDC members who have come from different districts forcing them on the roads following the protest.

"We condemn this action of the administration...protest is our democratic right," he said, adding they will decide the next course of action after meeting the Lt Governor.

Earlier, the protesting DDC members shouted slogans during the sit-in protest against the administration to press for immediate rescinding of the recent orders prescribing protocol and honorarium of chairpersons, vice-chairpersons and members.

"We are on the roads for our people who voted for us...How can we serve our people if we are not given adequate powers and facilities. We will not hesitate to resign en masse if our demands are not met," DDC member Taranjeet Singh said addressing the protesters.

## Encounter breaks out between SFs, terrorists in Anantnag

### STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: An encounter broke out between militants and security forces on Wednesday in Anantnag district, police said. Security personnel launched a cordon and search operation at Kandipora in Bijbehara area of Anantnag following information about the presence of militants there, a police official said. He said the search operation turned into an encounter after militants opened fire on the security forces, who retaliated.

## JDA seals two unauthorised constructions at Bhatyari, Bishnah

### STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Jammu Development Authority (JDA) on Wednesday sealed two unauthorised constructions which had no valid building permission from the Competent Authority at Bhatyari, Tehsil Bishnah.

The sealing operation was undertaken as per the instructions of JDA Vice-chairperson, Babila Rakwal, and under the close supervision of Director Land Management, JDA,

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Shiv Barat taken out on Mahashivratri eve in Jammu City on Wednesday.

# JeM terror module busted, 4 held: Police

### STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Police on Wednesday claimed to have busted a module of terror outfit Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) by arresting four men, who were allegedly planning to carry out a car-bomb attack on security forces in Kashmir's Pampore.

"Jaish wanted to carry out a car-bomb attack and the Awantipora police was track-

ing this module. We have arrested four persons in this regard and have also seized the car that was to be used in carrying out the attack," Inspector General of Police (IGP), Kashmir zone, Vijay Kumar told reporters here.

He said JeM had motivated Sahil Nazir, a BA first-year student, through Telegram and other mobile

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## Prpl Secy to LG reviews progress on Smart City projects of Jammu, Srinagar

### STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Principal Secretary to Lt Governor, Nitishwar Kumar on Wednesday reviewed the progress on various projects of Jammu Smart City limited (JSCL) and Srinagar Smart City Limited (SSCL) here at Raj Bhavan.

Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Sanjeev Verma; Deputy Commissioner Jammu, Sushma Chauhan; Commissioner JMC, Avny Lavasa; Vice Chairman JDA, Babila Rakwal; Additional CEO, Jammu Smart City Limited, Satish Kumar Sharma; members of

PMC besides senior officers were present in the meeting.

The Principal Secretary sought details of the latest progress made on various projects including IT Interventions, Integrated Command & Control Center, Intelligent Traffic Management System (ITMS), IT-based Smart Parking System for Jammu city, Complete Streets development project for Jammu city viz Mubarak Mandi to Raghunath Bazaar, Residency Road "High Street", Apsara Road "High Street", besides

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# Access to corridors of power; Daily-Wager to Special Secretary Spl Secy retrospectively retired, arrested for tampering date of birth

He was pursuing his case for induction into KAS under technical quota

### STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Crime Branch Jammu, on Wednesday arrested retrospectively superannuated Special Secretary (Legal) Home Department, J&K for forging his own date of birth.

The Crime Branch Jammu arrested former Special Secretary (Legal) Home Department J&K, Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Ganai, son of Abdul Salam Ganai, resident of Hanjura, Tehsil Chadoora, District-Budgam who has



Ex-Special Secretary (Legal) Home Department J&K, Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Ganai been retrospectively superannuated by the Government as on March 31, 2019, the CB officials said.

It has prima facie been established that Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Ganai forged and manipulated his own date of birth in his service records in connivance with others in order to take illegal monetary gains for himself and enjoy powers as Senior Legal Officer of the Union Territory, they said adding that the accused has been produced before the Court.

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## Delhi HC stays ED's summon to Mehbooba Mufti

### STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: The Delhi High Court on Wednesday gave an interim stay on summons issued by the Enforcement Directorate to former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Mehbooba Mufti, her counsel said.

The matter came up for hearing before a division bench of Justices Siddharth Mridul and Hairam Bhamhani.

The court asked the ED to not press for her personal appearance and posted the matter for March 19.

The PDP leader had challenged the validity of the summons issued by the ED for appearing before it on March 15 without specifying the case for which she was being investigated. She asked the court to quash the summons, her counsel S Prasanna said.

**WEATHER**

Temperature (Jammu)  
Max: 30.1°C Min: 16.7°C

Humidity  
Max: 51 Min: 24

Temperature (Srinagar)  
Max: 10.8°C Min: 4.3°C

Humidity  
Max: 87 Min: 73

Sunset : 18:36 Hours  
Sunrise : 06:48 Hours

# Will continue discussions with China to resolve remaining issues: Govt on Ladakh standoff

### STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: India on Wednesday said it will continue discussions with China to resolve the remaining issues along the Line of Actual Control in eastern Ladakh and achieve the objective of disengagement from all friction points to restore peace and tranquillity in the border areas at an early date.

In responding to a question in Lok Sabha on whether China has admitted loss of

lives of their commandos in the Galwan encounter, Minister of State for External Affairs V Muralaedharan said the Central Military Commission of China on February 19 announced awarding posthumously honorary titles and merit citations to Chinese soldiers.

"As per the announcement, these titles were awarded for the role of these soldiers in the faceoff at Galwan Valley in June 2020," he said.

Twenty Indian soldiers were killed in the fierce hand-to-hand combat in the Galwan Valley clash, an incident that marked the most serious military conflicts between the two sides in decades.

For the first time, China officially acknowledged last month that five Chinese military officers and soldiers were killed in the clash with the Indian Army.

"Government will

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## J&K reports 97 new COVID cases, 3 deaths

### STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir recorded 97 new COVID-19 cases and three fatalities on Wednesday, taking the infection tally to 1,27,288 and the death toll to 1,968, officials said.

Sixteen of the new cases were from the Jammu division and the rest from Kashmir division, they said.

The officials said Srinagar district recorded the highest number of 46 new cases, followed by 16 in Baramulla and 12 in Jammu district.

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# RS proceedings disrupted for third consecutive day amid Oppn uproar over farm laws

### STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: Rajya Sabha proceedings were disrupted for the third day in a row on Wednesday as the Congress and other opposition parties created an uproar demanding a discussion on three new farm laws of the Centre.

The proceedings were first adjourned till 12 noon and then again till 2 pm after the opposition members trooped into the Well of the House raising slogans.

Repeated pleas by

Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu and then by Deputy Chairman Harivansh to restore order went unheeded as the opposition members continued to create a ruckus in the House.

Amid the din, the House passed through voice vote the Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Bill, 2021. The bill amends the arbitration law that would ensure all stakeholders get a chance to seek an unconditional stay on enforcement of arbitral

awards where an agreement is "induced by fraud or corruption". The bill was passed in Lok Sabha on February 12. It will replace an ordinance issued on November 4, 2020. Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said it makes the provision to avoid payment of tax payers' money as an award in those cases where the agreement or contract is "induced by fraud or corruption".

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# J&K Wine Traders express resentment over draft Excise Policy, Dr Jitendra takes cognizance

### STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir Wine Traders on Wednesday expressed strong resentment over the draft J&K Excise Policy 2021, saying the uncalled move will impact sustenance and livelihood of a large number of people, who are engaged with the trade.

Interacting with media, the stakeholders referred to the policy that has been put in public domain for so-called suggestions and said the prevailing mechanism is well thought over for decades as they are carrying on with the trade for generations and providing jobs to many. Any attempt of divesting them from their avocation will wreck their sustenance besides rendering the employees jobless. It will be a peculiar situation with some people getting licences at the cost



of others losing their businesses.

A woman trader narrated the human angle of the business, saying her wine shop is the only source of income to her physically disabled husband, who is bedridden due to medical condition. As per doctors he will remain in the same condition all his life, she said, adding in a choked voice, "What will happen to the hapless family once the shop

gets shut?"

The other traders also narrated their ordeal and said the proposed policy will hugely impact their livelihood and they will virtually come on roads overnight.

The traders said they have registered their legitimate concerns with the authorities and all those who matter in governance. They exuded confidence that the policy planners would understand the gravity of the situation and review the policy in the larger interest of the stakeholders.

The traders regretted over the impression being created about some of them holding multiple licenses, saying that each one of them were having just one license.

"This is misinformation", they added.

Meanwhile, taking cognizance of

the concerns of wine traders, highlighted in the social media, the Union Minister in Prime Minister's Office Dr Jitendra Singh has reportedly conveyed his reservations on draft Excise Policy 2021 to the J&K UT Government. Dr Jitendra has suggested some modifications in the draft so that genuine cases are not affected.

The MoS PMO Dr Singh, who is presently in Assam, has taken cognizance of the demand of J&K Wine traders and asked the UT Administration to look into the genuine demands of wine traders before finalising the policy, sources said.

The traders expressed their gratitude to the Union Minister of State in PMO Dr Jitendra Singh for timely intervention and cognizance.

## HC grants pre-arrest bail to ex-DGM JKPC, his wife in PMLA

### STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Justice Sanjeev Kumar of J&K High Court on Wednesday granted pre-arrest bail to Suresh Kumar Rekhi, ex-DGM, Jammu & Kashmir Projects Construction Corporation (JKPC) and his wife Kinnud Rekhi, who were booked by the ACB in Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). While granting bail to both, Justice Sanjeev Kumar after hearing Adv Ayushman Kotwal for petitioners observed that in instant case and the fact that petitioners were neither arrested by ACB during investigation in FIR No. 12/2013 dated August 5, 2013, nor they were ever required for custodial interrogation by respondent No. 2 while investigating offences

under PMLA, for which ECIR/02/JMSZP/2020 dated February 21, 2020 was registered a year back, I am of the view that interest of justice would be met by allowing the petition. Accordingly, instant petition is allowed and petitioners are granted pre-arrest bail subject to the conditions that they shall furnish personal bonds amounting to Rs 1 lakh each with a surety of like amount to the satisfaction of the Investigating Officer; that they shall cooperate with investigation and shall appear before the investigating officer as and when called for; that they shall not leave territorial limits of Union Territory of J&K without prior permission of the Investigating Officer and that they shall not tamper with the prosecution witnesses.