

03 Fard Intikhab, Mutation to be given online soon: CS

09 Trucker nabbed with 1.24 quintal poppy straw

10 2nd Martyr's Memorial Volleyball Tournament from Mar 19

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



CBI raids EPFO office to investigate PF scam

■ **STATE TIMES NEWS**

JAMMU: A CBI team on Monday raided the Employees' Provident Fund Organization (EPFO) office located at Railhead Complex in Jammu. The team with full force is investigating the malpractices in the release of PF to some employees.

According to sources, this case of rigging is related to the Jammu and Kashmir Provident Fund

■ **CONTD ON PAGE 9**

LeT responsible for abduction, martyrdom of Army Jawan Sameer Ahmad Malla: Police

■ **STATE TIMES NEWS**

SRINAGAR: The banned Lashker-e-Taiba (LeT) terror outfit is responsible for the abduction and martyrdom of Army soldier Sameer Ahmad Malla, whose body was found in an orchard in Jammu and Kashmir's Budgam district last week, police said.

The last call made by Malla, a Territorial Army jawan attached with Jammu and Kashmir Light Infantry, to his mother was also done when he was being held in captivity by the Lashker-e-Taiba led by Yusuf Kantoo.

Kantoo, one of the oldest surviving terrorists, was

described by Inspector General of Police (Kashmir range) Vijay Kumar as "the mastermind behind the killing of the Army jawan".

According to police, the probe narrowed on a local villager Ather Illahi Sheikh who had called Malla for a meeting. It turned out that Sheikh was working for the banned terror outfit.

Malla upon reaching the meeting point with Sheikh saw three other terrorists including Kantoo.

"During questioning, he (Sheikh) confessed that on March 6, three terrorists of proscribed terror outfit

■ **CONTD ON PAGE 9**

Atin Sharma tops PSC's Assistant Registrar Cooperative Societies Exam

■ **STATE TIMES NEWS**

JAMMU: Atin Sharma from Jammu secured 1st rank and got selected for the post of Assistant Registrar Cooperative Societies in Cooperatives Department.

He got 75.80 per cent marks and topped in selection list issued by Jammu and Kashmir Public Service Commission on Monday.

Son of Dr Keerti Bhushan Sharma and Dr Vijay Lakshmi, Atin Sharma's success story started after his Class 10 board results. He secured top position in Class 12 also. Atin did his BE Electrical from Government College of Engineering and Technology (GCET) Jammu and stood first.

Atin Sharma's father, Dr Keerti Bhushan Sharma is Medical Superintendent

■ **CONTD ON PAGE 9**

WEATHER

Temperature (Jammu)

Max: 31.0°C Min: 16.2°C

Humidity

Max : 64 Min : 52

Temperature (Srinagar)

Max: 24.5°C Min: 6.6°C

Humidity

Max : 79 Min: 38

Sunset : 18:39 Hours

Sunrise : 06:43 Hours

Sitharaman presents Rs 1.42 lakh Cr J&K budget in LS

■ **STATE TIMES NEWS**

NEW DELHI: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday presented a Rs 1.42-lakh-crore budget for Jammu and Kashmir for the year 2022-23 in Lok Sabha, amid opposition accusations that the government was rushing the proposals through Parliament.

Sitharaman also presented the supplementary demands for the year 2021-22 totalling Rs 18,860.32 crore for the Union Territory and moved a motion seeking suspension of certain rules to allow the House to take up the discussion on the same day.

Opposition members objected to the government move to present the J&K Budget and discuss it in the House on the same day, contending that members will not get adequate time to study the proposals.

Congress member Manish Tewari and RSP member N K Premachandran objected to the motion moved by Sitharaman, alleging it was in violation of the rules of procedure of the House.

Some rules are beyond the amending powers of the House, Tewari, a Congress member from Anandpur Sahib, said.



Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs Arjun Ram Meghwal said the discussion will take place after two hours.

Rajendra Agarwal, who was in the Chair, said the business for the day was approved by Speaker Om Birla during the Business Advisory Committee meeting.

Premachandran, the member from Kollam, said the minister had also sought a discussion on the budget proposals and the supplementary demand for grants together, which would go against the rules.

LS passes J&K Budget; war of words over exodus of KPs

NEW DELHI: Lok Sabha on Monday passed a budget totalling Rs 1.42-lakh-crore for Jammu and Kashmir for 2022-23 amid a war of words between the treasury and opposition benches over the exodus of Hindus from the Valley, with Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman accusing the Congress of leaving the minority community in the state in the lurch.

During a discussion on the budget, the Congress, TMC and other parties alleged that the government has not been able to achieve the objectives it set out while abrogating Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir and demanded the early restoration of statehood.

Opposition parties also accused the government of not doing enough for the displaced Kashmiri Pandits, an issue that has again gained political currency after the film Kashmir Files based on the exodus was released.

Responding to the discussion, Sitharaman attacked the Congress over a series of tweets issued by its Kerala unit relating to the Kashmiri Pandits who were displaced from the Valley during the 1990s following the outbreak of militancy.

Sitharaman said the tweets by the Congress with the hashtag #KashmirFiles vs truth on Sunday said that Kashmiri Pandits on their own left the Valley and not because they were forced. "Our party's (Congress) belief is that it was not because of

■ **CONTD ON PAGE 9**

Tewari and Premachandran sought a ruling from the Speaker Om Birla on the issue.

As the House re-assembled in the post-lunch session, Sitharaman said the then UPA government had presented and discussed the

Budget for NCT of Delhi in 2014 on the same day.

That time the Chair allowed it, and this time also the Chair may kindly allow, it is my appeal, Sitharaman said.

BJD member Bhratruhari

Delimitation Commission makes its proposals public; invites objections till March 21

Suchetgarh, Habba Kadal assembly seats restored

■ **STATE TIMES NEWS**

JAMMU: The draft report of the Delimitation Commission for Jammu and Kashmir, which has agreed to restore two assembly seats but ignored objections on other issues from political parties, was placed in the public domain on Monday for suggestions till March 21 following which the panel will visit the union territory for public hearing.

The report published in the gazettes of India appeared in local newspapers on Monday and showed that Habba Kadal seat in Kashmir divi-

sion and Suchetgarh seat in Jammu province had been restored.

The BJP's Jammu and Kashmir unit had objected to the first draft report, presented to Associate members in December, that had proposed scrapping of the seats.

The panel's report had come for sharp criticism, especially from the valley-based political parties including those who are friendly to the BJP, after it had recommended an increase of six seats in Jammu province and one in Kashmir besides annexing Rajouri and

Poonch areas in Jammu province with South Kashmir's Anantnag parliamentary seat.

Though the dissent report from Associate members from the BJP does not mention this, it may be mentioned here that all Suchetgarh office bearers including council members had resigned en masse after the report was leaked. They were assured by party leaders that it would be taken up with the panel.

Similarly, there was disquiet about the proposed merging of Habba Kadal seat in

Srinagar district with three different assembly seats. This seat has a considerable number of Kashmiri Pandit voters, who had migrated to Jammu and other areas. The same has been restored in the draft proposal put in the public domain by the Commission.

The commission published the proposal, maintaining the number of Lok Sabha constituencies at five but increasing the assembly seats from the present 83 to 90 (adding six in Jammu and one in Kashmir).

■ **CONTD ON PAGE 9**

JEE-Main 2022 rescheduled to avoid clash with Class 12 board exams

■ **STATE TIMES NEWS**

NEW DELHI: The National Testing Agency (NTA) has rescheduled the first session of engineering entrance exam JEE-Main as its dates were clashing with Class 12 board exams, according to officials.

The exam will now be held on April 21, 24, 25, 29 and May 1 and 4. Earlier, the first session was scheduled from April 16 to 21.

"Representations are being received from candidates seeking change of dates of first session on account of clashing of their board exam date with JEE-Main. In

■ **CONTD ON PAGE 9**

SC notes Centre's decision to reduce 15 pc marks for admission to NEET-PG, disposes of plea

■ **STATE TIMES NEWS**

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court noted on Monday that a decision has been taken by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare that there shall be a reduction across all categories of 15 percentile for admission to the NEET-PG courses and disposed of a plea seeking reduction of cut-off marks.

A bench of Justices D Y Chandrachud and Surya Kant said the petition which has been instituted by the doctors stands disposed of as they would be able to secure admissions and their grievances would be addressed.

■ **CONTD ON PAGE 9**

COVID vaccination to begin for 12-14 yrs from Wednesday; comorbidity clause removed for precaution doses: Govt

■ **STATE TIMES NEWS**

NEW DELHI: The COVID vaccination for children in the age group of 12-14 years will begin from Wednesday, Union Health Minister Mansukh

Mandaviya announced on Monday. The COVID-19 vaccine to be administered to the 12-14 years age group would be Corbevax manufactured by Biological E. Limited, Hyderabad, the Union health ministry said.

Tweeting the announcement in Hindi, the minister said, "if the children are safe then the country is safe! I am happy to inform that the

COVID vaccination of children in the age group of 12 to 13 and 13 to 14 is starting from March 16. Also, everyone aged 60 years and above will now be able to get precaution doses."

Mandaviya also urged the families of children and people in the age group of 60 years and above that they must get the vaccination done.

The Union Government after due deliberations with scientific bodies has decided to start COVID-19 vaccination for 12-13 yr and 13-14 yr age groups (those

■ **CONTD ON PAGE 9**

Kashmir journalist booked under PSA

■ **STATE TIMES NEWS**

SRINAGAR: Journalist Fahad Shah, who was arrested by police last month for glorifying terrorism among other charges, has been booked under the stringent Public Safety Act (PSA).

Shah has been booked under the PSA, a day before his bail application was scheduled to come up for hearing, the journalist's lawyer, Umair Ronga said.

I am in consultation with his family and we will knock on the doors of the High Court as well as the Supreme Court to get justice, the lawyer said. Police has said Shah is wanted in

■ **CONTD ON PAGE 9**

4 dead, 15 injured as fire breaks out in Jammu building

LG condolees, announces ex-gratia relief of Rs 5 lakh to each NoK of deceased

■ **STATE TIMES NEWS**

JAMMU: Four people, including a child, were killed and 15 others injured after a massive fire broke out in a building here on Monday, police said.

The death toll may increase further as the rescue operation is still underway, officials said.

The fire broke out in the evening in a scrap shop on the ground floor of the building in Residency Road area apparently due to a short circuit. Soon the flames engulfed the entire building and some of the LPG cylinders kept inside exploded, said Senior Superintendent of Police, Jammu, Chandan Kohli.

He said three people,



Flames coming out of a building at Residency Road, Jammu.

including a child, were charred to death in the incident and 15 others were rescued and rushed to the hospital.

Another body was recovered later. Residents of the building were mostly workers from Assam, the officials

said. A spokesperson of the Fire and Emergency Services Department said they received a call about the fire around 6.10 pm and immediately rushed fire tenders to the spot.

Additional Director

General of Police, Jammu, Mukesh Singh also rushed to the scene to supervise the firefighting and rescue operation.

"Over a dozen families were living in the building. The fire spread very fast, many of the residents could not escape immediately," said a building resident Anwar Hussain.

Another survivor, Yasmeena Khatoon, said the building residents lost everything in the fire.

"We could not retrieve anything and tried to flee the raging fire," she said, adding that many of her relatives are either injured or missing after the incident.

The injured identified as Marjeema Khatoon (23) res-

ident of Assam, Anwar Hussain (53) resident of Assam, Momina Khatoon (25), Menar-ul-Hussain son of Mehju Din (3.5 yrs), baby (7), Asrar-ul-Islam (19) son

of Anwar Hussain. Anku Ram Alias Antu son



Police officials said the incident occurred around 2.35 pm and three of the injured selection grade constables Nazir Ahmad, Mohd Musa and constable Raju Sharma were referred to Government Medical College Hospital Doda for specialized treatment. Special Police Officer Suraj Kumar suffered minor injuries and was discharged after first aid, the officials said. "We were in our barrack and were about to leave for lunch when we heard a deafening sound from the

■ **CONTD ON PAGE 9**