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STATE TIMES

THE BOLD VOICE OF J&K

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Air surcharge 50 paise for Leh

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Dr Jitendra announces 13 languages option for job recruitment exam, timeline reduced

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Government of India (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1936 had used term SC instead of depressed classes

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J&K Squash championship begins

Pampore gas turbine land being utilised to set up largest utility solar power plant in J&K: CM

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Jammu and Kashmir government said on Saturday that the gas turbine at Pampore is going through the process of decommissioning and its over-56-acre land is being utilised to set up the largest utility-scale power plant in the Union Territory.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, who is also the minister in-charge for power, shared the information in a written reply to an unstarred question from National Conference (NC) legislator Hasnain Masoodi in the Legislative Assembly.

"The total land area under Gas Turbine Phase-I (3x25 = 75 MW) and Phase-II (4x25 = 100 MW) is 56.287 acre. The facility has been lying idle without any generation since 2010, with a brief operational period for one unit in 2012," Abdullah said.

He said after a comprehensive evaluation of the plant's

condition, coupled with economic and environmental considerations, it was decided to decommission the gas turbine.

"The process for its decommissioning as per the Central Electricity Authority (CEA) Guidelines for the retirement, up-rating/de-rating of conventional generating units has already been initiated and shall culminate soon," the chief minister said, adding that after fulfilling all

the conditions, a formal request to the CEA shall be made for dropping GT-Pampore from the list of conventional generating units.

Highlighting the reasons for its decommissioning, Abdullah said the plant has been defunct since 2012 and its machinery is in a non-operational state for a prolonged period, thus deteriorating beyond useful repairs.

"It cannot be operated in the present condition and the

revival of the gas turbine will have huge financial implications. Gas turbines have a very high cost of generation of the order of Rs 30 per unit, which renders the power generated unsaleable," he said.

Abdullah pointed out that there is a countrywide push towards renewable energy.

"The vacant land of the project has been found suitable and proposed for the development of a solar power plant of 10 MW capacity," he said, adding that there is a plan to utilise the area under the gas turbine for the development of the solar power plant (not a solar park, which is usually for larger-scale developments) by the Jammu and Kashmir Power Development Corporation Limited (JKSPDC).

He said the project would involve setting up a 10-MW grid-connected agro-solar power plant (SPP)

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Speaker announces House Committee to probe alleged irregularities in JJM

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Speaker Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, Abdul Rahim Rather, on Saturday announced formation of a House Committee to probe the alleged irregularities in implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) in J&K.

The Speaker said that there had been a constant demand from

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Dy CM tables Bill to amend J&K GST Act, 2017

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary on Saturday tabled the Bill to amend the Jammu and Kashmir Goods and Services Tax Act, 2017 (L.A. Bill No. 1 of 2025) in the Legislative Assembly. The Bill, stands already published in an extraordinary issue of the Official Gazette.

The Bill was introduced on behalf of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah.

Maurya Empire in Bihar established united India: LG Sinha

LG Manoj Sinha speaking during Bihar Diwas Celebrations at Raj Bhawan on Saturday.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Saturday attended the Bihar Day Celebrations, hosted by Jammu Kashmir Raj Bhawan at Jammu.

The Lieutenant Governor conveyed his hearty greetings and best wishes to the people of Bihar on the occasion.

"Since ancient times, Bihar has been known for its spirituality, rich history and vibrant culture. Magadha was core part of Bihar, which

■ LG attends Bihar Diwas Celebration at Raj Bhawan
■ Says, since ancient times, Bihar has been known for its spirituality, rich history and vibrant culture
■ Presence of holy places like Baba Baijnath Dham, Gaya, Vishnupad Temple, Janaki Temple, Bodhgaya, Takht Shri Harimandir Sahib Ji, Kundagram, Pawapuri in one state is no less than divine blessing in itself

was known as the centre of education and culture.

First empire of India, Maurya Empire in Bihar

established a united India. From Education, Culture, Science,

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CBI arrests forest guard for demanding, accepting bribe of Rs 35,000 in Kathua

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has arrested a forest guard for allegedly demanding and accepting a bribe of Rs 35,000 in Kathua district of Jammu and Kashmir, an official spokesperson said on Saturday.

Vipin Pathania, posted at the Billawar zonal office of the Jammu and Kashmir forest department, was trapped following a complaint that he sought a bribe for the smooth execution of a

road construction contract and the release of an earth-mover key he had allegedly taken away, the spokesperson said.

The accused was produced before the special judge for CBI cases in Jammu on Friday and was remanded to 14 days of judicial custody, he said.

A search was also conducted at his residence in Billawar, leading to the recovery of some incriminating documents, the spokesperson added.

LA passes grants of Forests, I&FC, PHE, Tribal Affairs departments

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly on Saturday passed the Demands for Grants amounting Rs. 154531.84 lakh for Forest, Ecology & Environment, Rs. 157671.32 lakh for Irrigation & Flood Control Department, Rs. 350126.57 lakh for PHE (Jal Shakti) and Rs. 44,299.17 lakh for the Tribal Affairs Department.

The House passed the Demands for Grants through a voice vote on Saturday evening.

Earlier, during the day, the

Assembly discussed the Demands for Grants and Members of the House put forth their views and suggestions.

Winding up the discussion on Demands for Grants, Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, extended his gratitude to the MLAs for their valuable suggestions and constructive observations on the demand for grants.

He said that inputs reflect the collective commitment of this House towards ensuring sustainable development,

environmental conservation and welfare of the people of Jammu & Kashmir.

He said that the government is fully committed towards addressing the concerns raised while ensuring efficient utilization of resources to meet the aspirations of the people.

While speaking regarding the Jal Shakti department, Rana said that government is determined towards providing "Har Ghar Nal Se Jal" to all rural households and is utilizing resources from Jal Jeevan Mission, NABARD and UT Capex to provide fifty five (55) litres of clean

drinking water per capita daily, conforming to BIS 10000 and 10500 standards.

"In order to achieve this objective, J&K has planned the execution of 3253 Water Supply Schemes at an estimated cost of Rs 13344.25 crore to provide new tap water connections as well as to upgrade the existing connections, provided under erstwhile programs, to make them JJM compliant by raising the new infrastructure as well as retrofitting the existing infrastructure, wherever required," informed the Minister.

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Bids invited for preparing DPRs for setting up ropeway to Amarnath Cave Shrine

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Jammu and Kashmir government on Saturday said bids have been invited for preparing detailed project reports (DPRs) for development of three ropeways, including 11.60 kms Baital to 3,880 meter high holy cave shrine of Amarnath, to facilitate the easy movement of pilgrims during the annual pilgrimage.

In addition, bids for preparation of DPRs are also being invited by the National Highways Logistics Management Ltd (NHLML) for three more ropeway projects -- two in Budgam and

one in Ramban district, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said in a written reply in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly.

Abdullah, who is also minister in-charge tourism, gave the information in response to unstarred question by National Conference legislator Sajjad Shaheen, who referred to the March 15, 2022 decision of the lieutenant governor led administrative council and subsequent government order dated September 6, 2023 about the development of ropeway projects through the NHLML under

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Cops alert as drone camera crashes inside AIIMS campus

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: A drone camera was seized after it crashed on a residential building inside the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) campus in Samba district, officials said on Saturday.

The campus falls under the 'no-flying zone' category, and the presence of the drone has prompted a security alert, police said.

After being informed by some residents who

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Kala Kendra to be developed as Centre for performing, visual arts: CS

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo on Saturday announced that Kala Kendra will be developed as a premier Centre for Performing and Visual Arts in Jammu and Kashmir.

He emphasized the government's commitment towards prioritizing culture as a vital component of identity. He highlighted the formulation of a well-defined Cultural Policy for Jammu and Kashmir.

Addressing an art exhibition at Kala Kendra, Jammu, organized as part of the Tawi Festival-2025 by

Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo at an art exhibition at Kala Kendra, Jammu on Saturday.

the Kala Kendra Society, Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture, and Languages, and Amar Mahal Museum and Library, Jammu, the Chief Secretary

revealed that an award scheme has been finalized to encourage and recognize the versatile artists, writers and performers from the

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Two killed after vehicle falls into gorge

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

RAMBAN: Two persons died when a load carrier carrying fresh vegetables skidded off the road and plunged into a deep gorge in Ramban district of Jammu and Kashmir on Saturday, a police officer said. Driver Arshid Ahmad and his helper Seva Singh, aged around 30, were en route to their village Ukhral Pogal-Paristan with the vegetables when the accident occurred near Battery Cheshma on Jammu-Srinagar national highway, he said.

The officer said the bodies were retrieved from several hundred feet gorge in a joint rescue operation by police and local volunteers.

CB books several individuals for financial fraud, mismanagement of MNREGA Funds

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Special Crime Wing (SCW) of Crime Branch Jammu has initiated formal investigations into two serious allegations involving financial fraud and mismanagement of government funds.

"A written complaint was lodged by a complainant alleging that individuals Rizwan Ahmad Sheikh, son of Abdul Rashid Sheikh, a resident of Sallan Surankote, District Poonch, currently residing in Dungan Bathindi, Jammu; Asif Rashid Sheikh, son of Abdul Rashid Sheikh from

Brahmani Bathindi Road, Jammu; and Arfana Parveen, daughter of Abdul Rashid Sheikh, also from Sallan Surankote and residing in Dungan Bathindi, Jammu (the proprietor of Lovely Boutique) conspired to committed financial fraud," a CB official said.

The official added, "The complainant reported that these individuals approached him with fraudulent promises of doubling investments made in their purported financial company within three months. As a result, the complainant transferred more than Rs 10 lakhs,

specifically Rs. 6,20,000 to one account and Rs. 4,00,000 to another, based on the directions of the accused. Despite numerous follow-ups, the promised returns or material benefits were not fulfilled, leading to significant financial loss for the complainant and unlawful gains for the accused."

Upon preliminary verification, official said, the enquiry revealed that the accused utilized fraudulent means to misappropriate the complainant's funds, extracting a total of Rs. 10.20 lakh through deception.

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ROZA TIMING

SEHR TIME: 05:16 (MARCH 24)

IFTAAR TIME: 06:52 (MARCH 23)

WEATHER

Temperature (Jammu)

Max: 30.0°C Min: 13.2°C

Humidity

Max: 66 Min: 43

Temperature (Srinagar)

Max: 23.2°C Min: 3.9°C

Humidity

Max: 48 Min: 10

Sunset : 18:43 Hours

Sunrise : 06:32 Hours

E-auctioning of wine shops in J&K; Excise Deptt registers manifold increase in revenue

Against Rs 845.82 Cr in 2017-18, Rs 2000 Cr revenue realized in 2024-25

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir Excise Department has registered manifold increase in revenue realization on account of wine shops since the financial year 2017-2018.

"Against Rs 845.82 crores in 2017-2018, the department has realised Rs 2200 Cr in the financial year 2024-2025 till March 20," according to sources

The sources described as baseless the allegations made by AAP MLA in Legislative Assembly about loss of excise revenue after auction of liquor shops.

According to sources, the fee on account of the e-auction of wine shops has increased to Rs 286 Crores in 2024-2025 as against just Rs 6.69 Crores prior to 2021-2022. This year 2025-2026, the e-auction amount is Rs 280 Crore (till March 2025). On an average license fee per shop before 2021-2022 was just Rs 3 Lakhs which has increased to Rs 94 Lakhs per shop after e-auctioning.

Over the past eight years, the Excise Department has undergone a huge transformation in revenue realization especially after introduction of e-auctioning of liquor shops.

Revenue realization during last 8 years in respect of J&K Excise Department					
S No.	Year	Achievement (In crores)		Remarks	
1	2017-18	Excise	845.82		
		Toll	846.13		
		Total	1691.95		
2	2018-19	Excise	1274.97		
		Toll	909.10		
		Total	2184.08		
3	2019-20	Excise	1320.60	Toll Posts abolished by the Govt w.e.f. 01-01-2020 vide Notification S.O-59 and S.O-60.	
		Toll	727.75		
		Total	2048.35		
4	2020-21	Excise	1353.81	Covid Period	
5	2021-22	Excise	1777.37*		
6	2022-23	Excise	1796.05*		
7	2023-24	Excise	2486.34 *		
8	2024-25 (upto 20 th March 2025)	Excise	2200*		
* Prior to 2021-22 license fee for wine shops was Rs 6.69 crores, after e-auction of the wine shops their fee increased to Rs 286 crores in 2024-25.					
This year (2025-26) e-auction amount is Rs 280 crores (till 20 th March 2025)					
Average license fee per shop before 2021-22 was Rs 3(Three) Lakhs, which increased to Rs 94 (Ninety Four) Lakhs per shop after e-auctions.					

14956 Kanal land transferred for establishment of IEs in Jammu, 6745 in Kashmir

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudary, on Saturday said that 14956 Kanal and 15 Marla land in Jammu division and 6745 Kanal and 19 Marla land in Kashmir division has been transferred for establishment of Industrial Estates (IEs) in Jammu and Kashmir.

The Minister was replying to a question raised by Ali Mohammad Dar. He informed the House that the intends have also been placed for 9661.05 kanal of land and 5000.13 kanal for establishment of Industrial Estates in Jammu and Kashmir respectively.

He said that among others, Education and Skill Development, figures in the Focus Sector List of J&K

Industrial policy 2021-30 which is also part of Service Sector Positive List of New Central Sector Scheme (NCSS) 2021, issued by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India.

He added that 596 applicants have been registered under the Jammu and Kashmir Start-Up Policy notified vide Government Order No. 29- JK(IND) of 2024 dated 23.02.2024., of which, 436 applicants have been recognized as Startups. Besides, 26 of these applicants are in the Skill Development and Education Sector.

The Minister asserted that the Industrial Estates

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