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BRIEF

Govt announces winter vacation schedule for Degree Colleges both divisions

TT Correspondent Jammu : The Government of Jammu and Kashmir has officially announced the winter vacation schedule for all Government Degree Colleges in the Union Territory for the academic year 2024-2025.

According to a government order, issued by the Higher Education Department, the winter break will be observed as Jammu Division (Summer Zone): Winter vacations will begin on January 1, 2025. Kashmir Division: Winter vacations will commence from December 27, 2024, and will continue until February 14, 2025. Jammu Division (Winter Zone): These colleges will also follow the same vacation period as Kashmir Division, from December 27, 2024, to February 14, 2025.

Cold wave continues in Kashmir, Srg records season's coldest night

Srinagar : As prolonged dry spell continued in several parts of the valley, the Summer capital Srinagar has recorded the season's coldest night so far at minus 6.2 degree Celsius. Several areas in valley records continue dip in mercury while both the capital of UT on Friday recorded coldest nights of the season. The famous Ski resort Gulmarg, recorded a minimum temperature of minus 6.0 degree Celsius. Pahalgam, a famous tourist destination, recorded a low of minus 8.

2 degree Celsius while Shopian in South Kashmir recorded a low of minus 10.0 degree Celsius. Also, Qazigund, a gateway of Kashmir, recorded a low of minus 7.6 degree Celsius while Kupwara in north Kashmir recorded minus 6.5 degree Celsius. Kokernag in South Kashmir recorded a low of minus 5.8 degree Celsius.

Police destroy narcotic drugs & psychotropic substances worth over Rs 1 Cr

Srinagar, Dec 20 : In a significant move to curb drug abuse, the District Drug Disposal Committee, led by SSP Sopore destroyed narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances valued over Rs. 1 crore. This action was carried out in accordance with the orders of the special Court (NDPS) Baramulla. Police said that the seized narcotic and psychotropic substances, which had been confiscated in 21 separate NDPS cases from various police stations within Sopore Police District, were destroyed by incineration at an approved facility in Lassipora, Pulwama. The destruction process adhered strictly to the legal requirements under the Rules, 2022, and was conducted under the supervision of the relevant authorities. The consignment destroyed included 123.728 kg of poppy straw/powder, 2,811 bottles of Codeine Phosphate, and 28,316 capsules of Spasmoxyvon, all of which were eliminated in compliance with the directions issued by the Hon'ble Special Court (NDPS) Baramulla.

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GST Meeting in Jaisalmer: CM Omar praises pre-budget consultations

TT Correspondent Srinagar, Dec 20 : Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah,

discussions on tax reforms and pre-budget consultations. Srinagar, Dec 20 : Jammu and Kashmir Chief

facilitating important discussions on tax reforms and pre-budget consultations. Speaking to reporters,

people like us an opportunity to share insights. It's a constructive process that benefits everyone," Omar said as per the news agency. He expressed his appreciation for the region during his visit, adding, "It's my first time in Jodhpur, and I hope to return someday for a vacation, but for now, work has brought me here." When asked about the contentious 'One Nation, One Election' proposal, Omar remained guarded in his words. "For now, it's just been introduced. There's still a discussion pending, and it will also need to be passed in several states along with Parliament. When asked about the political targeting of Rahul Gandhi by opponents, Omar refused to delve into the controversy. "I have nothing to say. I said everything I had to say yesterday," he added.



attending the Goods and Services Tax (GST) meeting in Rajasthan's Jaisalmer, lauded the platform for facilitating important dis-

Minister Omar Abdullah, attending the Goods and Services Tax (GST) meeting in Rajasthan's Jaisalmer, lauded the platform for

Abdullah highlighted the significance of the GST Council's work, describing it as a valuable opportunity for stakeholders. This gave

5 dead, 37 injured in fire after LPG tanker collides with other vehicles on Jaipur highway

Jaipur, Dec 20 : A deadly collision involving an LPG tanker and multiple vehicles turned a stretch of the Jaipur-Ajmer highway here into an inferno on Friday morning, killing five people, injuring 37 and engulfing over 30 vehicles in flames as thick black smoke filled the sky.

Eyewitnesses reported spotting the flames from over a kilometre away and ambulances and fire brigade teams rushed towards the crash zone as panic and

chaos set in. A school van driver on his way to pick up students recounted with horror the sight of a man engulfed in flames. Jaipur Police Commissioner told five people lost their lives and 37 suffered injuries in the accident. Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma rushed to the SMS Hospital, where the injured were admitted, spoke to administration officials and doctors and issued directions to ensure proper treatment was facilitated. He

also visited the accident site and spoke to police officials. In a post in Hindi on X, the chief minister said, "Deeply saddened to hear the news of casualties in the gas tanker fire incident on the Jaipur-Ajmer National Highway. As soon as the information about the incident was received, I went to the SMS Hospital and directed the doctors there to provide immediate necessary medical facilities and take proper care of the injured."

Satish Sharma assumes charge as President of J&K Bharat Scouts & Guides

TT Correspondent Jammu : Minister for Food Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Youth Services and Sports, Transport, Science and Technology, Information Technology, ARI and Trainings, Satish Sharma, today assumed charge as President of J&K Bharat Scouts & Guides in presence of National Commissioner, Bharat Scouts & Guides Wing, Cdr M.M Joshi, Chief State Commissioner J&K Bharat Scouts & Guides, R.S Tara, Former State Commissioner, J&K Bharat

Scouts & Guides I.D Soni and State Training Commissioner, J&K Bharat Scouts & Guides, R.P Kotwal were also present on the occasion. J&K Bharat Scouts & Guides felicitated the Minister as new President of the organisation. Satish Sharma was apprised of ongoing activities of the organisation in J&K. He was also informed that J&K Bharat Scouts & Guides stood 2nd in overall national level ranking and has received Rs. 50,000 cash award from its Chief Patron Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha.

Police arrest two drug peddlers, seize Contraband Substances

Srinagar : In two separate operations, Srinagar police arrested two drug peddlers and recovered significant quantities of contraband and psychotropic substances. In the first incident, acting on specific intelligence, a police team from PS Nowgam, accompanied by a 1st Class Executive Magistrate from BK Pora, raided the residence of Bashir Ahmed

Ganie, son of Ghulam Mohammad Ganie, in Suthsu Kalan. The search resulted in the recovery of 8.5 kilograms of psychotropic substances. The accused has been taken into custody, and a case under FIR No. 116/2024 has been registered under the NDPS Act. In another case, as part of the investigation into FIR No. 28/2024 under (Cont. on Page-11)

Centre hikes copra Minimum Support Price by up to Rs 420 for 2025 season

New Delhi : The government today (December 20) announced an increase in the minimum support price (MSP) for copra by up to Rs 420 to Rs 12,100 per quintal for 2025 with a budget outlay of Rs 855 crore. A decision in this regard was taken by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said, "A series of decisions have been taken for the welfare of farmers. It reflects our commitment, the Prime Minister's commitment towards improving the lives of farmers... In our country, Karnataka has the highest share of Copra production... For procurement of Copra, both NAFED and NCCF will be the central nodal agencies and apart from this, the state governments will have a big role in it, so this procurement will be done with the cooperation of the state government corporations." The total financial implication would be Rs 855 crore. Cooperative agencies Nafed

and NCCF will be the central nodal agencies for the procurement of copra, he added. Cost of production ; demand-supply of copra and coconut oil ; trend in domestic and global prices of coconut oil and other vegetable oils ; profitability of coconut vis-à-vis other crops ; likely impact of the recommended MSP on consumers & other users. A minimum of 50% margin over all India weighted average cost of production, Karnataka has highest share in production of 32.7 %, followed by Tamil Nadu - 25.7 %, Kerala - 25.4 % and AP - 7.7 %. Milling Copra : Rs 11,582 per quintal, Ball Copra : Rs 12,100 per quintal, Financial implication: Rs 855 Crore, NAFED and NCCF will be the Central Nodal Agencies (CNAs) for Copra.

While, The Lok Sabha Secretariat announced on Thursday that senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader and Member of Parliament PP Chaudhary has been appointed as the chairperson of the Joint

Power Purchase Costs Hollowing Jammu Kashmir's Exchequer, Official Documents Reveal

TT Correspondent Jammu, Dec 20 : In Jammu and Kashmir, the expenditure trend over the years reveals that a huge part of the total expenditure is on the purchase of power.

According to an official document, "Analysis of expenditure trends over the years reveal that the UT of J&K faces hard budget constraints on account of the sizeable, committed nature of its expenditure." They include interest payments, salaries, and pensions. Cumulatively, they constituted nearly 73 per cent of its total expenditure in FY 2023-24. A significant part of the total expenditure of the UT is on the purchase of power," it reads. The document, however, does not delve into details but mentions that a significant amount of the overall expenditure is being executed on the purchase of power.

It further said that

although power purchase expenditure cannot be classified as committed expenditure, "yet in the case of the UT, it has assumed the nature of committed expenditure because of the historical practice of huge under-recoveries from the sale of the power sector."

"In recent years, there has been some increase in the power receipts with improvement in metering. However, despite this, the gap between the cost of the power purchase bill and receipts is substantial," reads the document. It also states, "This has been in part financed from the UT's Budget and remains a cause of stress to the public finances." Besides, the official documents reveal that the hydel-power generation capacity is being doubled to 6647 MW by 2026. The estimated hydro power potential of the UT of J&K is 18,000 MW, of which about 14,867 MW has been

identified. Out of the identified potential, only 3526.65 MW, that is 23.72 per cent of identified potential, has been harnessed so far, which consists of 1197.4 MW in State Sector, 2250 MW in Central Sector, and 79.2 MW in IPP (Independent Power Producers) mode," it reads. The documents further reveal that J&K is in the process of doubling the hydel power generation capacity by 2026 by developing 4 power projects having a power generation capacity of 3014 MWs (1000 MW Pakal-Dul, 850 MW Rattle, 624 MW Kiru, and 540 MW Kwar). Further, power generation capacity is proposed to be augmented by 3,284 MWs by 2030 through 4 power projects, including 1856 MW of Sawalkote, 930 MW of Kirthai-II, 240 MW in Uri (Stage-II), and 258 MW in Dulhasti (Stage-II)," it reads.

Babar Qadri killing case: SIA files supplementary challan against former HC bar body president

Srinagar : The State Investigation Agency (SIA), Kashmir filed a supplementary chargesheet against Senior Lawyer and former President of High Court Bar Association (HCBA) Kashmir, Mian Abdul Qayoom in the much-publicized Babar Qadri murder case before the Third Additional Sessions Judge, Jammu. Babar Qadri, a promising Srinagar-based young lawyer in his late twenties, was gunned down by the terrorists at his residence, Zahidpura (Hawal) Srinagar, on September 24, 2020.

As per the official release issued by the Police Headquarters, the SIA SIT on

Thursday presented a 340-page long supplementary chargesheet against Mian Qayoom for offences under relevant sections while the further investigation in the case U/S 173 (8) shall continue. The initial chargesheet in the case had been filed before the Special NIA Court Srinagar, however, in December 2023 the High Court transferred the trial to Jammu taking a serious view of the interference in the judicial process by Mian Qayoom as well as the threat/intimidation to the deceased's family. Mian Qayoom has since been lodged in District Jail Amphalga, Jammu. The SIT took over the investigation

and based on sufficient oral, documentary, and technical evidence arrested Mian Qayoom on June 25, 2024, as the principal conspirator behind the deceased's killing. It was revealed during the in-depth investigation conducted by SIA SIT that Mian Qayoom, who had an inimical relation with the deceased, got Babar Qadri eliminated through terrorists of TRF and their handlers in Pakistan by hatching a criminal conspiracy. The TRF is a proxy outfit for the dreaded LeT formed in the aftermath of the 5th of August 2019.

Babar Qadri was a very vocal young lawyer who not only questioned Mian

Qayoom's one upmanship at HCBA Kashmir but severely criticized him on multiple occasions for using HCBA Kashmir as a platform for furthering his secessionist agenda. The deceased had also founded a dissident body within the HCBA called Kashmir Lawyers Club which was attracting a sizeable number of Young lawyers. Moreover, the deceased was also contemplating fighting the Bar elections against Mian Qayoom which were due to be held around the same time. All this antagonized Mian Qayoom who on several occasions also threatened the deceased, read the chargesheet.

IT dept 'unearths' hawala cash network funding Rs 800 crore investments in Dubai properties

Srinagar : The Income Tax Department has carried out raids on the KCI Emporium Group of Kashmir and Dubai property brokers in a coordinated operation across Srinagar, Mumbai, and Delhi this week, top sources disclosed. Sources said the raids revealed significant hawala cash transactions originating from Kashmir, used to invest in properties in Dubai, UAE. Evidence of substantial investments made by Indians in Dubai properties was unearthed during the operation, with sources indicating the total amount exceeds ?800 crores. They said middlemen facilitating these transactions were also raided,

shedding light on a nationwide network of individuals involved, spanning cities from Srinagar to Hyderabad.

In addition to uncovering evidence of offshore investments, the IT Department seized property transaction records in Kashmir worth over ?50 crores, involving substantial cash components. Officials also confiscated cash exceeding ?1 crore during the searches, said the sources. The investigations, conducted under the Income Tax Act, 1961, and the Black Money Act, 2015, are ongoing, with several individuals now under the IT Department's scrutiny. Further details are awaited.

J&K Medical Council issues notice to private hospitals and practitioners for mandatory registration

Jammu : Jammu and Kashmir Medical Council has issued a notice mandating all private hospitals, nursing homes, diagnostic centers, and clinics operating in the Union Territory to ensure that their medical

practitioners, whether local or from outside the region, are registered with the J&K Medical Council. The Council, expressed concern over reports of some practitioners operating without (Cont. on Page-11)

'Green Sustainability no longer option, but necessity'

New Delhi, Dec 20 : "Green Sustainability" is no longer a distant ideal or an optional endeavor-it has become a necessity, a singular path forward in the face of global challenges, emphasized the Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Earth Sciences, MoS PMO, Department of Atomic Energy, Department of Space, Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Dr. Jitendra Singh. The pressing realities of climate change, resource depletion, and environmental degradation demand immediate, actionable commitment. Governments, industries, and individuals alike must pivot

towards sustainable practices, embracing innovation and responsibility to ensure a livable planet for future generations, said the Minister. This shift is not merely a choice but an imperative for survival and progress in an interconnected world, he added. Dr Jitendra Singh was addressing the Green Sarathi Summit organised by the Indian Express group. Dr. Jitendra Singh highlighted that public participation has the power to influence policy direction, citing the collective response during the COVID-19 pandemic as an example. He pointed out that when citizens take ownership of sustainability efforts, it creates pressure for systemic change, making policies more inclusive and effective.

He urged all stakeholders-government, civil society, academia, and industry-to collaborate in fostering solutions that are not only innovative but also widely accepted by communities. The Minister, who is a medical doctor and diabetologist, brought a unique perspective by linking sustainability to

public health. He pointed out the alarming rise of health issues like diabetes due to environmental degradation. Explaining the connection,



he said the destruction of carbon-absorbing ecosystems, increasing pollution levels, and the prevalence of endocrine-disrupting chemicals, such as pesticides, are

adversely impacting insulin production and its action in the human body. He stressed the importance of preserving biodiversity and reducing pollution, not just as an environmental imperative but also as a health necessity for India's growing population. Dr. Jitendra Singh elaborated on the government's initiatives to combat climate change and promote sustainable practices. He highlighted the "Mission LiFE" initiative, which encourages individuals to adopt environmentally conscious lifestyles. He also discussed the Green Credits Program, which incentivizes eco-friendly actions by rewarding efforts that contribute to sustainability. National missions on climate change and strategic

knowledge for climate resilience were also presented as key components of the government's comprehensive framework to address environmental challenges. The Minister spoke at length about the role of technology in managing climate change. He stressed the importance of digital public infrastructure, such as sector-specific solutions like a Climate Stack, which can provide accurate and real-time data for climate management. Additionally, he emphasized the necessity of accurate weather forecasting systems, particularly in the context of India's vulnerability to extreme climate events, such as cyclones and urban flooding. These tools, he said, are crucial for disaster preparedness and

resilience. Dr. Jitendra Singh also drew attention to the pioneering work being undertaken by the Ministry of Science and Technology and the Ministry of Earth Sciences. He praised efforts to integrate science and technology into sustainability debates, such as developing early warning systems and sensor-based alerts to mitigate disaster risks. At the recent COP29 summit in Baku, India demonstrated its commitment to integrating disaster-resilient infrastructure into adaptation strategies, setting an example for global climate leadership. In his concluding remarks, Dr. Jitendra Singh outlined the immediate and medium-term priorities for the government in achieving sustainability goals.