

CJI Surya Kant inaugurates Ladakh High Court Bench at Leh, pledges easier access to justice

“Paperless court, e-filing and virtual Supreme Court hearings for Ladakh cases to cut travel burden; Full Court flags safe, affordable hostels for girls from remote areas”

YASH KHAJURIA
LEH: In a historic step towards bringing constitutional justice closer to the people of Ladakh, Chief Jus-



tice of India Justice Surya Kant on Sunday inaugurated the Ladakh Bench of the High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh at Melongthang, Leh, ending a long-standing aspiration for easier access to judicial remedies in the strategically important, geographically challenging Union Territory.

The establishment of the Bench is expected to substantially reduce the hardship, travel time and expenses faced by litigants from Leh, Kargil and remote areas who have traditionally had to travel to Srinagar or Jammu to pursue their cases. The inauguration marks a significant development in strengthening access to justice, particularly for people living in far-flung villages where difficult terrain, harsh climatic conditions and long distances have often posed formidable barriers to legal recourse. The ceremony was attended by Supreme Court ▶P11

Srinagar-bound bus stoned; passenger, Dhaba worker injured in Karnal, 2 held

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

KARNAL: Two men have been rounded up for allegedly throwing stones at a Jammu and Kashmir-bound bus following a dispute in Haryana's Karnal district, leaving a passenger and a dhaba employee injured, police said on Sunday.

The incident drew a reaction from Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, who said his office had taken up the matter with the Haryana government.

Abdullah said the Haryana administration had assured prompt and stringent action in accordance with the law.

The J&K Government stands with the affected passengers and is closely monitoring the situation, he said in a post on his official X handle. The incident occurred

“Haryana assures action over bus attack: Omar”

around 11.30 pm on Saturday at the parking area of Divine Star Dhaba in Karnal, Inspector General of Police (Karnal Range) Ashwin Shenvi said.

According to Shenvi, two youths arrived at the spot in a car. The bus, travelling from Delhi to Srinagar, also stopped in the dhaba's parking area.

While attempting to reverse and move ahead, the youths allegedly hit the bus, triggering a verbal alterca-

tion that escalated into a physical fight. Some bus passengers and dhaba employees also joined the confrontation, police said.

During the altercation, the two youths allegedly threw stones at the bus, breaking its windowpanes and damaging seats inside the vehicle.

A passenger and a dhaba employee sustained injuries, Shenvi said, adding that the bus left for its destination around 1.30 am.

Shenvi, said the stone attack on the bus stemmed from a parking dispute and was not a hate crime. He urged the public not to believe rumours on social media. Earlier, no formal complaint was made and the bus continued its journey to Srinagar, police said. Police later registered a First Information Report ▶P11

Minor's rape-death case: CB files chargesheet against 15

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

JAMMU: The Jammu and Kashmir Crime Branch on Saturday filed a chargesheet against 15 people in the Kishtwar minor's rape and death case, alleging a criminal conspiracy to cover up the sexual assault, intimidate the girl's family, and terminate her advanced pregnancy through unauthorised and unsafe methods.

The chargesheet, running into more than 1,000 pages and citing 143 witnesses, invokes provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, an official said.

The 15-year-old tribal girl was allegedly sexually assaulted repeatedly

over several months by a teacher in her school, resulting in her pregnancy. She died following an alleged attempt to terminate the pregnancy in the Chatroo area on August 20.

The case was initially registered at the Chatroo police station following the girl's death. A week later, amid widespread protests, the investigation was transferred to the Special Crime Wing in Jammu. By then, nine people, including the teacher and his brother, had been arrested.

Inspector General of Police, Crime, Sarah Rizvi, constituted a special investigation team (SIT) headed by Senior Superintendent of Police, Special Crime Wing, Jammu, Sanjay Kumar Parihar, immediately after the Crime Branch took over the investigation, the spokesperson said. He said the ▶P11

Army officer's wife booked for alleged espionage-related activities in Jammu

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

JAMMU: An Army officer's wife, who allegedly used artificial intelligence tools including ChatGPT and Claude to write analytical papers on sensitive national security issues for Chinese intelligence operatives, has been booked in Jammu for alleged espionage-related activities, officials said on Sunday.

The accused, a well-qualified resident of Telangana who undertook an IT internship with the United Nations in 2023, is currently working as a freelance researcher. Although she has not been arrested, she has been questioned following the registration of the FIR and is cooperating with investigating agencies, the offi-

“Woman was allegedly tasked to write analytical papers on sensitive security, defence, & geopolitical issues, covering LoC dynamics in J-K, critical infra projects in Arunachal Pradesh, and drone deployment”

cials said.

The woman was allegedly tasked to write analytical papers on sensitive security, defence, and geopolitical issues, specifically covering Line of Control (LoC) dynamics in Jammu and Kashmir, critical infrastructure projects in Arunachal Pradesh, and drone deployment, they said.

According to the officials, the case was registered at Gandhi Nagar police station in Jammu on Friday under relevant provisions of the Official Secrets Act, concerning espionage and the unauthorised handling of protected official information, alongside provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) relating to criminal conspiracy and offences against national ▶P11

Speeding truck mows down 15 devotees outside temple

GWALIOR: Fifteen persons, including several teenagers, lost their lives and more than 25 were injured when a speeding truck ploughed into devotees gathered for Navratri prayers outside a temple in Madhya Pradesh's Gwalior district early on Sunday, police said.

The paddy-laden truck, bearing a Punjab registration number, entered a no-entry zone on Chinara Road at around 1.30 am, crashed into several devotees waiting for darshan and roadside shops before hitting the Sheetla Mata temple's entrance gate, they said.

The impact brought

down a section of the temple wall, trapping people under the debris, officials said.

The truck driver fled the scene, and police teams were searching for him, they added.

An investigator said the truck's brakes may have failed, forcing the driver to swerve left in a desperate attempt to control the vehicle. Had it continued straight, he said, it would have ploughed into at least 600 to 700 devotees.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed grief over the loss of lives in the accident and announced ex gratia relief of ▶P11

Lt General Pratik reviews security in north Kashmir

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR: Army's Northern Commander Lieutenant General Pratik Sharma on Sunday visited North Kashmir to assess the prevailing security situation and operational preparedness.

"Lt Gen Pratik Sharma, #ArmyCdrNC, visited #RashtriyaRifles units in North #Kashmir to review operational preparedness and assess the prevailing security situation," the Army said in a post on X. Lt Gen Sharma interacted ▶P11

Rs 5.91 Cr flood management works inaugurated in Jammu

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

JAMMU: Emphasising the need for a proactive and sustainable approach to flood management in the face of changing climatic conditions, the Jammu and Kashmir government on Sunday said preventive measures, timely interventions and resilient infrastructure are essential to minimise the impact of natural disasters on lives, livelihoods and public assets.

Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology and Environment and Tribal Affairs Javed Ahmed Rana said the

government is committed to strengthening protective infrastructure in vulnerable areas and ensuring that development initiatives translate into tangible and lasting benefits for local communities.

"As we witness increasingly erratic weather patterns and climate-related challenges, strengthening our preparedness against floods has become imperative.

"Our priority must be to protect vulnerable riverbanks, safeguard habitations and agricultural land, and ensure that critical public ▶P11

Dr Jitendra bats for better healthcare access, proposes weekly doctor visit

“MoS resolves grievances in public durbar”

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

JAMMU: Union Minister Jitendra Singh on Sunday said the close relationship between the Army and local residents, coupled with effective coordination with civilian authorities, strengthens public confidence and enhances the sense of security in remote areas of Jammu and Kash-



mir.

The Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office was speaking at a two-day medical camp organised by the Army's Northern Command in the remote Basantgarh area of Udhampur district, which benefited more than 2,000 patients.

Singh thanked the Army for organising the camp and appreciated the doctors and medical teams for their commitment and hard work in delivering services despite

the challenges of conducting a large medical camp in a remote area.

He also acknowledged the cooperation extended by the district administration, health authorities, local representatives and residents.

"The close relationship between the Army and the local population, supported by cooperation with civilian authorities, contributes to residents' confidence and sense of security," the minister said.

Recalling an earlier instance when local residents had requested the continuation of an Army ▶P11

Lady among 2 feared drowned in Chenab river

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

JAMMU: Two persons are feared drowned after allegedly jumping into the Chenab in Doda and Ramban districts on Sunday, officials said.

Rescue operations are underway to trace the missing persons, they said.

Officials said a 30-year-old woman, identified as Priya -- resident of Balwana village and mother of two minor children -- allegedly jumped into the Chenab from Bug Bridge ▶P11

Plot to incite Indian youth akin to France, Bangladesh 'unrest': Rijiju

NEW DELHI: Union minister Kiren Rijiju alleged on Sunday that a "conspiracy" similar to one that led to violent incidents in France and Bangladesh earlier was hatched here by "anti-India gangs and some politicians" to instigate youngsters and spread violence on the streets.

But those who hatched such a "dangerous conspiracy" forgot that India is neither Bangladesh nor France, Rijiju said, launching a fresh attack on the opposition and others who held a series of protests in Delhi this month against the Special Intensive Review (SIR) of the electoral roll and demanding the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar.

A change of government in India is "certainly possible", but only through elections, "not through Soros",



the parliamentary affairs minister added.

Hungarian-American political activist George Soros and his organisations like Open Society Foundations (OSF) have been accused by the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of acting against India's interests.

Rijiju made the remarks in a post in Hindi on X and

shared a short video showing recent comments made by lawyer Prashant Bhushan, All India Students' Association (AISA) leader Neha Bora, socio-political rights activist Yogendra Yadav and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi.

"The violent incident that occurred in Bangladesh and the riots, arson and looting that took place in France -- a similar conspiracy was hatched for India as well. Anti-India gangs and some politicians had colluded to incite youngsters and spread violence on our streets," Rijiju said.

"But those who devised this dangerous conspiracy forgot that India is neither Bangladesh nor France," he said, adding, "Satta parivartan" (change of government) in India is certainly possible but only through elections, not through Soros."

Kolkata stampede: WB Govt orders safety audit, two held

KOLKATA: The second day of Durga Puja was overshadowed by the stampede in Kolkata the night before, which killed 19 people, including a seven-year-old. As bereaved families collected bodies from morgues, the government announced sweeping safety measures, with a high-level committee inspecting compliance.

While police arrested seven people, including organisers of Chorbagan Durga Puja, for the pandal stampede, Union Home Minister Amit Shah cancelled his puja engagements to meet 14 injured people undergoing treatment at a private hospital.

The tragedy triggered intense bickering between the ruling BJP and the Mamata Banerjee faction of the Trinamool Congress over accountability for one of the deadliest incidents to

mar the city's festivities.

The seven arrested, including the Chorbagan puja committee general secretary and vice-president, were produced in court. Police have registered a suo motu case of culpable homicide not amounting to murder.

Amid concerns over crowd management, police deployment and allegations of negligence against Chorbagan puja organisers, officials said investigators were examining the arrangements, the role of organisers and possible lapses by personnel deployed.

The state government decided to deploy nine IPS officers experienced in Durga Puja crowd management to handle the festive rush in Kolkata.

CM Adhikari attended a high-level meeting at the CID headquarters ▶P11

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