

Naxalism to end by Mar 31; infiltrators will be removed from voter list within 5-yr: HM

CRPF played crucial role in Jammu & Kashmir: Shah

GUWAHATI: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday asserted that Naxalism would be eliminated from the country by the March 31 deadline set by the government, while illegal immigrants would be removed not only from the electoral rolls but also from the nation in the next five years.

On the second of his two-day visit to Assam, Shah attended the 87th CRPF Day Parade here and laid the foundation stone for the Rs 270-crore new campus of the state police's 10th Battalion, which would be constructed on land freed from encroachment by infiltrators.

Addressing the CRPF Day Parade, the first ever in the northeast, Shah said the force played an important role in Jammu and Kashmir, where the number of stone-throwing incidents has dropped to zero, besides handling ethnic violence in Manipur and break-



ing the backbone of Maoists in only three years.

Naxalism had spread across 12 states and countless districts of the country, and when the Centre resolved to uproot the menace, the CRPF and CoBRA force personnel played the most crucial role in the effort, he said.

"Because of the CRPF personnel, we can confidently say that by March 31, 2026, the country will be completely free from Naxalism," he asserted.

Shah said in the 86-year history of the force, this was

the first time that its Raising-Day celebrations were held in the northeast, which is a matter of pride for everyone and the entire region.

"In 2019, it was decided that the annual parade of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) would be held in different parts of the country. And today, the CRPF parade is being held in one of the most important parts of the country -- the northeast," he said.

In the second event of the day, Shah asserted that if India can be free of Naxals, it can also be free of infiltrators.

"Illegal immigrants would be removed not only from the electoral rolls but also from the country in the next five years", Shah said.

He was addressing a gathering after laying the foundation stone for a new campus of the Assam Police 10th Battalion, which he said would be constructed on 347 P11



Modi bats for 'Made in India' chip revolution

GREATER NOIDA: The foundation of developed India will be laid on the basis of self-reliance for which having chips made in India is very important, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Saturday.

In a virtual address to lay the foundation stone of India Chip Pvt Ltd -- the HCL Group and Foxconn JV -- Modi said a weak supply chain of tiny chips during the Covid-19 pandemic halted development of several economies and stopped work at various factories.

"Developed India will be built only when India is self-reliant. For this, Made in India chip is very important. Whatever India is doing in the field of technology in this decade, P11

Shantmanu takes oath as J-K SEC, signals move on Local Body Polls



JAMMU: Former bureaucrat Shantmanu, who was on Saturday sworn in as the State Election Commissioner of Jammu and Kashmir for a five-year term, underscored the importance of holding the long-pending panchayat and urban local body elections in the Union Territory.

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha administered the oath of office to the retired IAS officer at a ceremony held at Lok Bhavan here.

The oath-taking ceremony was attended by Chief

strengthening decentralised governance and grassroots development. Since they have not been held for some time now, it becomes all the more important."

"I am happy to formally begin my responsibilities. I will work with full commitment to ensure effective discharge of my duties," he said.

While the tenure of municipal councils ended in October-November 2023, the panchayats and block development councils completed their five-year term on January 9, 2024. With the tenures of district development councils ending on February 24, there will be essentially no elected local bodies functioning in Jammu and Kashmir.

Officials said local body elections could not be conducted on time due to multiple factors, including the delimitation exercise and the reservation of wards for Other Backward Classes.

Recently, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah had said that his government was making necessary arrangements to hold these elections P11

VP to attend convocation at KU on Feb 26

SRINAGAR: Vice President C P Radhakrishnan will visit Kashmir next week on his maiden visit to the valley after assuming office to attend the 21st convocation of the University of Kashmir here.

The University of Kashmir (KU) will hold its 21st Convocation on February 26 in the varsity's Convocation Complex.

A university spokesperson said the vice president will attend as the chief guest and deliver the convocation address.

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor P11

IAF attack case: Witness identifies Malik, Pahloo

JAMMU: Another eyewitness on Saturday identified Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) chief Yasin Malik and Mohd Rafiq Pahloo alias "Nanaji" as one of the shooters involved in the January 25, 1990, attack on a group of Indian Air Force (IAF) personnel in Srinagar, officials said.

The key prosecution witness identified the two accused during a hearing at the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act (TADA) court in Jammu, they said.

Earlier on January 31, another eyewitness had identified Malik's close confidant Shoukat Bakshi as one of the shooters.

In January 2024, Malik was identified as the main shooter by former IAF corporal Rajwar Umeshwar Singh, who survived the terror attack in which four IAF personnel were killed.

Besides the four personnel -- including squadron leader Ravi Khanna -- who were killed, 40 people were injured in the incident which took place in Rawalpura on the outskirts of Srinagar on January 25, 1990.

The IAF personnel were waiting for their pickup to old Srinagar airfield for duty when they came P11

NMC approves 24 PG seats for Jammu, Srinagar GMCs, SKIMS

JAMMU: In a landmark development and significant boost to specialised medical education in Jammu and Kashmir, National Medical Commission (NMC) has approved 24 new super-specialty postgraduate (PG) seats in Government Medical Colleges (GMCs) of Jammu and Srinagar, and SKIMS Soura.

The seats have been approved in streams like Cardiology, Urology, Pulmonary Medicine, Medical Gastroenterology, Paediatric Surgery, Neuro-Anaesthesia, Paediatric and Neonatal Anaesthesia and Clinical Immunology and Rheumatology.

Welcoming the development, Minister for Health and Medical Education, Sakeena Itoo described this development as a major milestone, adding that this transformational step underscores the Government's firm commitment to expanding specialised health-

Lt Gen inaugurates monument near LoC

JAMMU: Army's Northern Commander Lt Gen Pratik Sharma on Saturday inaugurated the 'Banwat Ekta Sthal' -- a public monument symbolising national pride and sovereignty -- near the Line of Control in Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir.

The project was completed in a record 45 days and features a towering 105 feet National Flag, the tallest in Poonch district, a defence spokesman said.

Located barely two km from the LoC and set against the scenic backdrop of Pir Panjal ranges, the site is expected to attract tourists from within the country and outside, thereby boosting local employment and encouraging small businesses in the Bandi Chechiyan village and surrounding areas, the spokesman said.

Apart from the national flag, the facility includes a children's park for recreation, and an 'Ekta Mandap' to promote peace and mental well-being.

The spokesman said the initiative underscores the Army's commitment to nation-building, community development and strengthening unity in border areas.

Through such P11

Arms hideout busted; IED recovered

JAMMU: The army on Saturday busted a terrorist hideout in a remote village in Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir and seized a pistol and other logistic stores, an official said.

The hideout was set up inside a natural cave and was unearthed during a search operation in the general area of Hari Budha bowl, the army's White Knight Corps said in a post on X.

During the systematic search of suspicious locations, including cave-like structures, the troops came across the hideout and effected the recovery, which also included clothing and eatables. P11

Terror threat: Security heightened around key religious, heritage sites

NEW DELHI: Security was tightened across key religious and heritage sites in Delhi on Saturday, including in areas around the Red Fort and parts of Chandni Chowk, following intelligence inputs suggesting a possible terror threat, an official said.

Security agencies issued an alert on a possible explosion near Red Fort, a major tourist destination and high-security zone, after Central intelligence agencies indicated that Pakistan-based terror outfit Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) has allegedly kept prominent religious places in India on its target list.

Sources said specific inputs suggested that a temple in the Chandni Chowk area could be among the potential targets.

While the intelligence inputs are being verified and assessed, security has been stepped up in and around sensitive religious places and crowded public areas, they added.

Intelligence agencies indicated that LeT could be attempting to carry out an Improvised Explosive Device (IED)-based attack. The alleged plan is reportedly linked to attempts by the terror group to avenge the February 6 blast at a mosque in Islamabad, Pakistan, sources said.

Central agencies and Delhi Police units are maintaining close coordination, and surveillance has been intensified through CCTV monitoring, vehicle checks and deployment of additional personnel at vulnerable points. Bomb disposal squads, dog squads and quick reaction teams have also been placed on standby at strategic locations, they added.

The alert comes in the backdrop of the deadly car explosion near the historic Red Fort on November 10, 2025, which killed at least 13 people and injured more than 20 P11

BJP organises mega joining event at SKICC Govt shattered dreams of youth by outsourcing 23,000 jobs: LoP Sunil

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir government has "shattered" the dreams of unemployed youth in the Union territory by "outsourcing" around 23,000 jobs, Leader of Opposition (LoP) Sunil Sharma said on Saturday.

The BJP leader asked the Omar Abdullah government to roll back the order or face the "wrath of the youth".

"The Abdullah government has outsourced, sold around 23,000 jobs instead of filling them through a transparent recruitment process. It has shattered the dreams of poor, unem-



ployed youth. This is a huge betrayal with the youth of J-K," Sharma said here.

He was speaking to reporters after a mega joining event of the BJP at Sher-i-Kashmir International Conference Centre (SKICC) here during which a number of political activists, including former members of the District Development Councils (DDCs). He cited the govern-

ment's response in the assembly that nearly 23,000 jobs were outsourced across the region in the past two years.

The J-K government, in a written reply to a question by MLA Handwara Sajad Lone, said a total of 22,886 positions were outsourced during the period.

"It is a decision which has shattered their (youths) dreams. I am warning the government to roll back this order, otherwise, you have to face the heat of the youth of J-K," he said.

The BJP will expose the government especially on the issue of providing employment, he added. P11

9 CRPF jawans injured in road mishap

SRINAGAR: Nine CRPF personnel were injured after their vehicle fell into a river here on Saturday, officials said.

The accident occurred on the Dagpora-Umerhair Road in the Ahmadnagar locality on Srinagar outskirts.

The vehicle fell into the river after the driver lost control of it, officials said.

The injured Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel have been shifted to the SKIMS hospital in Soura, where their condition is said to be stable, they added.

Meanwhile, police have registered a case and initiated an investigation P11

7 peddlers held; two pistols, heroin seized

JAMMU: Seven alleged drug peddlers were arrested at different places in Jammu and Udhampur districts of Jammu and Kashmir, police said on Saturday.

Balvinder Kumar and Sunny Kumar, both residents of R S Pura, were arrested from the Gandhi Nagar area of Jammu city and one pistol, one magazine and 21 grams of heroin were recovered from them, a police spokesman said.

Mohd Iqbal and Amit Kumar alias Jogi, hailing from Samba, were also arrested from Gandhi Nagar, and one pistol and 146 grams of heroin were seized from them, he said.

The official noted that the arrests were made on the disclosure of a drug peddler who was arrested by the Gandhi Nagar police early this month.

A police party intercepted a suspiciously moving person near Canal road in Jammu and subjected him to frisking, leading to the recovery of some quantity of heroin, the spokesman said, adding that the arrested individual was identified as Yawar Fayaz of Anantnag.

In Udhampur district, two hardcore drug peddlers -- Mohit Sharma and Imran Khan -- were arrested at Roun Domail and P11

Srg logs highest-ever day temp in Feb; parts of Kashmir reel under heatwave

JAMMU: Srinagar city recorded the highest ever daytime temperature for the month of February on Saturday, as most parts of Kashmir experienced a heatwave, officials said here.

A few weather stations in the valley registered record-breaking maximum temperatures for February. The daytime temperatures were 9.5 to 10 degrees Celsius above the seasonal average, they added.

Officials stated that Srinagar reached a maximum temperature of 21 degrees Celsius, which is 10 degrees above the normal for this time of year. This temperature is an all-time high for February, surpassing the previous



record of 20.6 degrees Celsius set on February 24, 2016.

The famous ski resort of Gulmarg, located in the Baramulla district of north Kashmir, also recorded its highest-ever February daytime temperature at 11.5 degrees Celsius, which is 9.5 degrees above the seasonal average. The previous high was 11.4 degrees Celsius, recorded on February 11, 1993, officials said. In south P11

Over 6 lakh lavender seedlings disbursed free among farmers

JAMMU: In a bid to further strengthen lavender cultivation, around six lakh free quality planting material (QPM) seedlings were distributed among 750 farmers in different parts of Jammu and Kashmir and Uttarakhand, an official said on Saturday.

The initiative aims at expanding the cultivation of the exotic aromatic crop, enhancing farmers' income and consolidating the region's growing reputation as a hub of lavender production in the country, Sandeep Singh Charak, Lavender Scientist from CSIR-IIIM Jammu, said.

He said the free seedlings were distributed over the past few days at 50 nurseries of Bhabarwah, widely recognised as the birthplace of India's Purple Revolution.

"IIIM Jammu has procured and distributed six lakh lavender seedlings among 400 farmers of Uttarakhand and 350 farmers of Bhabarwah in Doda and twin border districts of Rajouri and Poonch in Jammu and Kashmir," Charak said, adding that the P11