

## Cabinet clears key expansion of Srinagar Airport to 71,500 Sqmt for Rs 1,677 crore

### Approval for civil enclave a major boost to J-K: Modi

**NEW DELHI:** The Union Cabinet on Tuesday approved the expansion of the civil enclave at the Srinagar International Airport at an estimated cost of Rs 1,677 crore.

The expansion of the civil enclave will mark a major milestone in strengthening aviation infrastructure and connectivity in the Kashmir Valley, an official release said.

"The project scope also includes the construction of barracks for security personnel.

"Operated by the Airports Authority of India within the Budgam Airbase of the Indian Air Force (IAF), the airport, designated as an international airport in 2005, is located approximately 12 km from Srinagar city," it said.

The decision taken at the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, was announced by Information & Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnav at a briefing in the national capital.



It was also the first time that the Cabinet meeting was held at the Prime Minister's new office, 'Seva Teerth'.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi today termed the approval for civil enclave at the Srinagar Airport by the Cabinet as a major boost to Jammu and Kashmir.

Soon after the Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnav announced the approval for the project at a briefing

## LG, CM express gratitude to PM

**JAMMU:** Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Tuesday expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for approving the development of the civil enclave at Srinagar International Airport, proposed at an estimated cost of Rs 1,677 crore.

In a post on X, the Lieutenant Governor said, "J&K skies soar: dawn of a bold aviation era. I am grateful to PM Narendra Modi for the major expansion of the civil enclave at Srinagar International Airport."

Terming the decision a defining leap in connectivity for the Valley, Sinha ► P11

## CM rolls out Rs 84.41 Cr multi-sector devp works to transform Ganderbal

### Omar asks J-K students in Iran to return

**■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE**

**SRINAGAR:** Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday urged students from Jammu and Kashmir studying in Iran to follow the Union government's advisory and return home while commercial travel remains operational.

In its latest advisory, the Embassy of India asked its citizens to "leave Iran by available means of transport, including commercial flights."

The advisory comes in the wake of Saturday's protests in Iran following 40-day memorials for people killed in January during anti-government rallies.

"I would tell them that please do not ignore this advisory from the government of India, because it otherwise becomes an issue for us," Abdullah told reporters in Ganderbal district in central Kashmir.

The chief minister said the situation in Iran is currently stable, with airports open and commercial flights operating.

"I appeal to all the students and those who work there, who do not ignore this advisory, book your



tickets and leave Iran," he said. "The Ministry of External Affairs has not issued this advisory unnecessarily. If, God forbid, the situation worsens, then it will be an issue for us as to how to evacuate them. So, I appeal to them to take the advisory seriously and leave from there," he added.

To a question on the alleged harassment and eviction threats faced by Kashmiri students studying at CT University in Punjab, the chief minister said he would raise the issue with his counterpart in Punjab.

"I will talk to the Punjab chief minister on this. It must be the University's doing, because the government of Punjab has always supported Jammu and Kashmir. I can say with certainty that the Punjab government will not allow this, and the University will be asked about it," he said, adding, if any Kashmiri student is facing such difficulties, it will be addressed.

Earlier in the day, CM Omar Abdullah today inaugurated and laid the foundation stones of major development projects worth ₹84.41 crore in Ganderbal Constituency, marking a ► P11

## Shirtless protest lands IYC chief in police custody

**NEW DELHI:** Delhi Police on Tuesday arrested Indian Youth Congress president Uday Bhanu Chib as the "main conspirator" and "mastermind" of the shirtless protest at the AI Summit last week, and added charges of rioting against him and other seven IYC workers held earlier.

While the Congress strongly slammed the government, terming the arrest of its workers as 'murder of democracy in India', the BJP alleged that Rahul Gandhi was the "mastermind" ► P11

## Over 1K Doc posts lying vacant in J-K

**■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE**

**JAMMU:** More than 1,000 posts of doctors are currently vacant across Jammu and Kashmir, according to figures shared by the Health and Medical Education Department.

Kashmir division accounts for 797 of these vacancies -- comprising 24 senior consultants, 253 consultants, 458 medical officers and 62 dental surgeons -- while Jammu division has 288 vacant consultant posts as on February 2026.

"The districts of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir are not facing an acute shortage of specialists...In order to overcome shortage of doctors in peripheral and remote areas, the government has recently referred 480 posts of medical officers to the J-K Public Service Commission for selection of suitable candidate," the medical and health department said.

It said the department is monitoring issues related to the referral of direct recruitment vacancies as well as the filling up of promotion-quota posts on a priority basis, and necessary steps for filling up these vacancies ► P11

## Complaint lodged against Vidyamandir Classes for 'cheating students'

### Coaching 'agents' accused of alluring school students outside exam centre

**■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE**

**JAMMU:** The management of a top reputed private school in Jammu on Tuesday lodged a complaint seeking registration of an FIR against Vidyamandir Classes (VMC) Jammu, a coaching institute, for alleged cheating, misrepresentation and illegal use of students' identity for commercial gains.

In its written police complaint, the school has urged authorities to initiate action against the Vidyamandir Classes under relevant sections of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023 and Information Technology Act.

According to the complaint lodged at Pacca Danga Police Station, Jammu, today stated that on 23 February 2026, the agents of the coaching institute allegedly approached 12th class students of the private school outside an examination centre without prior consent from the students and their parents.

It is alleged that the representatives recorded videos of the students and later portrayed them on social media as beneficiaries or enrolled students of their coaching centre.

The videos were reportedly uploaded with promotional captions suggesting that the students were receiving academic learning and guidance from the coaching centre.

Meanwhile, the management of the school has claimed that the concerned students have given written statements confirming that they were approached suddenly, instructed to speak on camera and were unaware due to examinations stress that the video recordings would be used for promotional purposes by revealing their identity.

The students further clarified that they have no academic association with the Vidyamandir Classes at any level of their academic qualification and ► P11

## IGP calls strong counter-terror actions in Doda

**JAMMU:** The Inspector General of Police, Jammu Zone, Bhim Sen Tuti, on Tuesday conducted a security review of Jammu and Kashmir's Doda district and underscored the need for intelligence-driven operations and a robust counter-terrorism posture to prevent any disruption of peace and public order.

The IGP, along with Deputy Inspector General Shridhar Patil, on Monday chaired a comprehensive crime review and security assessment meeting in Doda to evaluate the prevailing law and order situation, ► P11

## Jammu courts lead in pendency with nearly 78,000 cases, 3.89 lakh pending state-wide

**■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE**

**JAMMU:** Subordinate courts across Jammu and Kashmir are grappling with a pendency of 3,89,210 cases till January-end, with criminal matters accounting for nearly two-thirds of the total backlog and over 58,000 cases lingering between five to 30 years, official data shows.

The government is actively pursuing multiple measures to tackle the persistent pendency of cases in the high court and subordinate courts of Jammu and Kashmir, alongside efforts to fill judicial vacancies, as highlighted in a recent legislative response, officials said.

Among 20 districts, Jammu accounts for the highest pendency at



77,992 cases, with over a thousand cases pending for a period between 15 to 30 years -- more than Srinagar, which stands at 62,785.

According to official data, there is a pendency of 3,89,210 cases in the 232 district and other lower courts in Jammu and Kashmir from the past 30 years till January 2026.

Of this, 2,40,718 (62 per cent) cases are criminal litigation while 1,48,492 are civil, with criminal proceedings exceeding civil disputes by over 92,000 ► P11

## JKBOSE, SSSA named nodal agencies for conduct of TET

**■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE**

**JAMMU:** In a key move to align with the Right to Education (RTE) Act, the Jammu and Kashmir government has named the J&K Board of School Education (JKBOSE) and State School Standards Authority (SSSA) as the Nodal Agency for conducting the Teachers Eligibility Test (TET) throughout the Union Territory.

The directive comes via Government Order No. 87-JK (Edu) of 2026, issued by the School Education Department's Civil Secretariat.

It stems from in-depth discussions chaired by the Chief Secretary on October 30, 2025, and enforces a Supreme Court judgment affirming RTE Act provisions for all schools except minority institutions.

The court mandated that in-service teachers must pass TET to remain in service, with narrow exceptions.

Key exemptions and requirements include teachers with fewer than five years until retirement are exempt from TET for job retention but must pass it for promotions; those recruited before the RTE Act, with over five years of service left, must qualify within two years—or face compulsory retirement with full terminal benefits.

The Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Department confirmed the ruling's nationwide binding force under Article 141, making TET mandatory for teachers in government, private, and registered schools (minority institutions temporarily exempt pending larger bench review).

JKBOSE handles exams; ► P11

## RSS's apex panel to finalise annual plan

**NEW DELHI:** The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh's highest decision-making body will deliberate on a range of issues and prepare its action plan for the year at a three-day annual meeting in Haryana's Samalkha town next month.

RSS chief Mohan Bhagawat and General Secretary Dattatreya Hosabale will preside over the meetings, starting March 13.

"The Akhil Bharatiya Pratinidhi Sabha (ABPS) of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) will be held this year at Samalkha (Haryana) from March 13 to March 15. This annual meeting will take place at the Gram Vikas and Seva Sadhana Kendra, Patti Kalyana, Samalkha (Haryana)," RSS national media and publicity head Sunil Ambekar said.

From an organisational perspective, this is the highest decision-making body of the organisation, he added.

Ambekar said the meeting will deliberate on the "current national scenario" and pass resolutions on important matters.

"Discussions are expected on the Panch Parivar-tan initiatives and the social transformation efforts being undertaken through Sangh shakhas (daily gatherings). Deliberations will be held on the plans for Sangh Shiksha Vargs (training camps), Karyakarta Vikas ► P11

## Canine soldier 'Tyson' recovering well: Army

**■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE**

**JAMMU:** Army canine soldier 'Tyson', a German Shepherd who took the first bullet while leading troops during Operation Trashi-I in Kishtwar district, is recovering well, officials said on Tuesday.

The heroics of the four-legged soldier contributed to the killing of Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) commander Saifullah and his two associates inside their hideout -- a mudhouse (dhok) in the foothills of a hill -- at Passerkut in the Chatroo belt on Sunday.

"In the recent operation Trashi-I at Kishtwar, assault dog 'Tyson', displayed extraordinary courage by taking the first bullet while leading the

entry into the terrorists' hideout. Undeterred by his injuries, he pressed forward and launched a fierce assault, compelling the terrorists to open fire and thereby confirming their presence," the army's White Knight Corps said in a post on X.

The army said Tyson's fearlessness enabled troops of White Knight Corps, police, and the CRPF to precisely engage and neutralise the three Pakistan-sponsored terrorists.

"Wounded yet in high spirits, alert and recovering well, Tyson exemplifies unwavering devotion to duty -- a true warrior and a soldier in every sense," the army said, adding, "the hunt continues -- those who seek to disturb peace will find no ► P11

## Prakriti International Documentary Film Festival of CEC concludes at JU

### Prof Manhas spotlights filmmakers' role in CEC's vision

**■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE**

**JAMMU:** The 2-day Prakriti International Documentary Film Festival, organised by the Consortium for Educational Communication (CEC), New Delhi, in collaboration with the University of Jammu as the Grand Finale partner, concluded today with a valedictory ceremony.

An annual initiative of CEC, the Prakriti International Documentary Film Festival promotes awareness, appreciation and action, and is a move towards a broad alliance of people working on



the educational aspects of equity, ethics, ecology and hygiene.

The 17th edition featured 8 selected documentary films centred on themes of Environment, Development, Human Rights and Swachh Bharat, sensitising students and stakeholders to pressing social and environmental concerns. ► P11

## Security tightened ahead of VP's visit

**■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE**

**SRINAGAR:** Security has been beefed up across Kashmir ahead of Vice President CP Radhakrishnan's maiden visit to the Valley on February 26, officials said on Tuesday.

The vice president is scheduled to attend the 21st convocation of the University of Kashmir here.

Authorities have put in place a comprehensive, multi-layered security grid, particularly around the university campus in the Hazratbal area of the city and other vital installations, officials said.

Elaborate arrangements have been made to ensure the safety of the vice president, residents, and visitors, they said.

Security forces have been deployed in strength at vulnerable locations, with heightened alertness maintained to counter potential terrorist threats. Checking and surveillance have been stepped up across the Valley, officials said.

Additional checkpoints have been set up at important entry points, especially around the city, and increased patrolling, area domination operations, and surprise inspections are being conducted along vital roadways to prevent any untoward incident, they said.

Vehicles are ► P11