

Modi gets red carpet welcome in Israel 'Terrorism anywhere threatens peace everywhere', asserts PM



JERUSALEM: Prime Minister Narendra Modi landed in Israel on Wednesday to a red-carpet welcome with his Israeli counterpart Benjamin Netanyahu and wife Sara receiving the Indian leader at the Ben Gurion airport.

It is PM Modi's second visit to Israel in nine years. The India-Israel relationship was elevated to

the level of strategic partnership during his first visit to that country in July 2017.

Netanyahu greeted the Indian prime minister with a warm hug, following which Modi was accorded a ceremonial welcome at the airport, located 20 kilometres southeast of Tel Aviv. In a historic address to Knesset, ► P11

Modi receives Knesset Medal

JERUSALEM: Prime Minister Narendra Modi was on Wednesday conferred with the 'Speaker of the Knesset Medal' in recognition of his exceptional contribution to strengthening strategic relations between India and Israel.

The Indian Prime Minister is the first leader to receive this medal, which is the highest honour of the Knesset - the Israeli Parliament.

Knesset Speaker Amir Ohana conferred the award on the prime minister after his address at the Israeli Parliament.

The medal was conferred in recognition of the prime minister's exceptional contribution - through his personal leadership - to strengthen strategic relations ► P11

Red Fort blast: NIA arrests 2 terror operatives

NEW DELHI: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has apprehended two more terror operatives allegedly involved in the Red Fort area blast conspiracy, officials said on Wednesday.

With this, the anti-terror agency has so far made 11 arrests in the case.

The duo, identified as Zameer Ahmad Ahangar of Ganderbal and Tufail Ahmad Bhat of Srinagar in Jammu and Kashmir, were formally arrested by the NIA for their active involvement in the conspiracy related to the Delhi blast, a statement issued by the agency said.

They had supplied the weapons to the prime accused in the case, investigations by the NIA have revealed.

Eleven people were killed, and several were injured in the blast that shook the national capital on November 10, last year. The prime accused, Umer Un Nabi, was also killed in the deadly explosion. The NIA, which has been investigating the case to unveil the ► P11

Kashmir University's 21st convocation VP Radhakrishnan arrives in Valley on maiden visit amid tight security

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR: Vice President C P Radhakrishnan arrived here on Wednesday evening on his maiden visit to Kashmir valley during which he will attend the Kashmir University's 21st convocation, officials said.

The Vice President was received by Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and senior officials of the administration and police on his arrival at the technical airport at around 5 PM, officials said.

The Vice President's cavalcade drove to the Lok Bhawan here, where he will be staying for the night, they said.

On Thursday, Radhakrishnan will be the chief guest at the 21st convocation of the University of Kashmir here and will address the gathering in his first visit to Kashmir since assuming office.

Meanwhile, a comprehensive multi-layered security grid has been put in place for the VP's visit, including around the university campus in the Hazratbal



area of the city here, the officials 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 being randomly checked at entry and ► P11

Terror funding case: SC questions NIA on referring old speech

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Wednesday questioned the NIA for referring to certain alleged inflammatory speeches of 1990s while opposing the bail plea of Kashmiri separatist leader Shabir Ahmed Shah in a terror funding case.

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) told a bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta, which was hearing arguments on Shah's bail plea, that there were materials, including inflammatory videos and incriminating e-mails, against Shah.

When senior advocate Siddharth Luthra, appearing for the NIA, referred to some transcripts of videos, the bench asked about the date of the speeches.

Luthra said the agency had the dates for some of the videos and they were from the 1990s.

"These speeches are not a new creation. These are something which were already there, say 30 years or 35 years before today. Now, you refer them in 2019 and say that these are the inflammatory speeches," the ► P11

ACB registers DA case against Dy CM's brother, conducts search at 10 locations

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

JAMMU: The Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) on Wednesday registered a disproportionate assets case against Vijay Singh Choudhary, a police inspector and brother of Jammu and Kashmir Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary, and conducted searches at 10 locations across Jammu and Rajouri districts, officials said.

While posted at different places, the officer allegedly raised assets worth crores of rupees, including more than 10 properties -- houses, shops and land parcels spread over about 100 kanals -- mostly in the names of family members, relatives and others, an ACB spokesperson said.

Reacting to the action, Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary strongly defended his brother, terming the raid a fallout of "inter-police rivalry" and asserting that nothing incriminating would be found.

The ACB spokesperson said that the case was registered following a verification into allegations that Vijay Singh Choudhary, currently posted in Ladakh, had amassed assets highly disproportionate to his known sources of income.

A prima facie case of criminal misconduct was found to be made out against the accused under relevant provisions relating to dishonest or fraudulent misappropriation by a public servant, he said.

Accordingly, a formal FIR was registered at Police Station ACB Central and an investigation was taken up, he said. During the course of the investigation, search warrants were obtained from the court of the Special Judge, Anti-Corruption, Jammu.

The ACB teams conducted searches at multiple locations, including residential houses at Santokh Vihar and Kaluchak in Jammu, a residential house at ► P11

CDS: Shift to AI driven warfare

HYDERABAD: As warfare expands from physical to the synthetic and cognitive realms, the armed forces need to transition from net-centric operations to intelligent warfare and move beyond MDO to ARADO, CDS General Anil Chauhan has said.

He also emphasised the need to establish non-nuclear strategic deterrence, ensuring the ability to win at every level of escalation, a defence release said here on Wednesday.

General ► P11

TET to be put on hold in J-K: Govt

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Education Minister Sakina Itoo on Wednesday said the Union Territory government has put on hold the conduct of Teacher Eligibility Test (TET).

She said Jammu and Kashmir would be the last to enforce the Supreme Court order, which mandates the TET for all in-service teachers of primary and upper primary classes, requiring them to qualify within two years to continue in service.

The minister's clarification came a day after the School Education Department designated the Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education (JKBOSE) as the nodal agency for conducting the TET in compliance with the apex court order.

The Jammu and Kashmir government has designated JKBOSE as the State School Standards Authority in the Union Territory.

"There was a ruling from the Supreme Court a few months ago ► P11

After Kerala, Omar supports Bengal renaming CM lays foundation for Rs 190 Cr devp projects in Srinagar, Budgam

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Wednesday said the Centre should accept the West Bengal government's demand to rename the state, following the Union Cabinet's approval of a similar proposal for Kerala.



The Union Cabinet on Tuesday approved the Kerala government's proposal to change the state's name to Kerala. Following the approval, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee expressed dissatisfaction that

her state's renaming proposal has remained pending with the Centre for a long time despite the move for Kerala.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of an event here, Abdullah said, "Other states have also proposed name

changes. If the West Bengal assembly is seeking to rename the state, the Centre should accept this demand."

"If a similar proposal was to be moved in the Jammu and Kashmir assembly in the future, the Centre should also give it due consideration," he added.

The chief minister also welcomed Vice President C P Radhakrishnan on his maiden visit to Kashmir. The vice president will attend the 21st convocation of the Kashmir University on Thursday.

"He is arriving this evening to attend the ► P11

Delhi-Katra expressway on fast track, set for March 2027 finish

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

JAMMU: The Delhi-Amritsar-Katra Expressway, the fifth major expressway being developed in the country, is set for completion by March 2027, a senior official of the National Highways Authority of India said on Wednesday.

The construction of the National Expressway 5 (NE5), which began in April 2021, had significantly slowed last year due to Operation Sindoor as well as heavy rains and floods across northern states.

Once completed, the project is expected to considerably enhance regional connectivity, promote religious tourism and facilitate faster



mobility for the armed forces, the official said.

The expressway will reduce the distance from Delhi to Katra from 727 to 588 kilometres, cutting travel time from 14 to about six hours, he said.

Speaking to PTI Videos

Govt issues Helpline for Iran returnees

NEW DELHI: The Resident Commission, Government of Jammu and Kashmir, has activated helpline numbers to assist the residents of the Union Territory returning from Iran, following an advisory issued by the Embassy of India in Tehran on February 23, 2026.

The 24x7 working helpline numbers included "Hello J&K" at 7303620090 and Control Rooms at 011-24611108 and 011-24611210.

Officials said the helplines will provide necessary assistance, facilitate coordination with concerned authorities, and address travel or documentation-related issues faced ► P11

204 Panchayat Ghars finalised

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

JAMMU: In a push to strengthen grassroots governance infrastructure, the Jammu and Kashmir government has identified land for 579 Panchayat Ghars across the Union territory, of which 204 have been completed so far, officials said on Wednesday.

The Panchayati Raj Department had set a target of constructing 640 panchayat ghars in Jammu and Kashmir.

"Against the target, land has been identified for 579 such buildings. Work has been allotted in 435 cases, while 204 units stand com-

J&K receives 23 Mobile Forensic Vans from NFSU

AHMEDABAD: The Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir has been provided 23 mobile forensic vans by the National Forensic Sciences University (NFSU), Gujarat, to strengthen the criminal justice delivery system and enable prompt, on-site scientific investigation at crime scenes. This was stated by the Vice Chancellor of NFSU, Dr. J. M. Vyas during an interaction with the media persons from Jammu and Kashmir who are on a PIB led media tour to the state.

Dr. Vyas said the mobile vans, equipped with advanced forensic tools and gadgets, aim to expedite evidence collection and improve conviction rates. He also highlighted NFSU's role in supporting investigations of



complex cases across the country. Dr. Vyas informed that the University houses around nine Centres of Excellence dedicated to addressing diverse domains of physical and digital crimes. He highlighted that NFSU is actively engaged in education,

specialized training and advanced research for national as well as international law enforcement agencies. He further stated that the University is playing a leading role in strengthening crime prevention mechanisms through the applica-

tion of preventive forensics. Campus Director Prof. S. O. Junare emphasised that forensic science is an applied science integral to modern investigations, including terrorism and cybercrime cases. He noted that NFSU experts handle several major ► P11

Terror hideout busted; IEDs, pistols recovered

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

JAMMU: Security forces on Wednesday unearthed a terrorist hideout in a forward village in Poonch district and recovered a cache of arms, including two ready-to-use improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and a pistol, officials said.

The recovery was made during a joint cordon and search operation launched by the Army and the Special Operations Group (SOG) of the local police at Salani Kasblari village in the Mendhar sector.

The items, which included two grenades and 24 pistol rounds, were found hidden inside a cave. In a post on X, the Army's White Knight Corps said, "Based on synergised intelligence inputs from own sources and police, a joint operation was launched by the troops of White Knight Corps and SOG Poonch in the Gani Forest area."

"The detailed search led to the recovery of one big IED (4.5 kg), one small IED (800 grams), two Chinese grenades, one 9-mm pistol, two 9 mm rounds and 22 7.62 mm rounds were recovered from the site," it said.

According to officials, the IEDs and the grenades were later destroyed through a controlled explosion. The timely recovery of the consignment has thwarted a potential terror attack in the border district, they said.