

Illiteracy and Poverty are the biggest enemies of Mankind, they must be fought and conquered at any cost.

-Bhikkhu Sanghasena

*Inking the Truth*

**20 dead in firecracker unit blast**

**VETLAPALEM:** As many as 20 people were killed and 8 others critically injured in the cracker unit blast here in Kakinada district on Saturday, Andhra Pradesh Minister Kandula Durgesh said. Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu is expected to visit the site, he said. "As far as I know, 21 bodies are seen here (at the site). Another eight persons are undergoing treatment in hospitals. Approximately there were 30 people in the ► P11

**9 mortar shells found near LoC**

**JAMMU:** At least nine rusted mortar shells were found in a forward village near the Line of Control (LoC) in Mendhar sector of Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district on Saturday, officials said. The mortar shells were found scattered in the Mankote area by Army troops during area domination. The whole area was cordoned off and Army bomb disposal squads were rushed to the spot. The mortar shells were safely destroyed in controlled explosions without causing any damage, the officials said. Officials said the shells appeared to be remnants of past cross-border shelling in the sector. Residents ► P11

**J&K clinches maiden Ranji Trophy in historic triumph**  
'They've done it': PM, HM, Sinha, parties hail team's performance

**HUBBALLI:** Jammu and Kashmir scripted an extraordinary tale of resilience in Indian domestic cricket to claim their maiden Ranji Trophy title by out-batting traditional heavyweights Karnataka here on Saturday, capping a glorious season that saw them tackle favourites and fellow upstarts with equal tact and confidence. The bald facts will tell that Jammu and Kashmir held the eight-time former champions to a draw punctuated by a 291-run first innings lead to lock the crown, an advantage they extended to 633 runs after scoring 342/4 in their second innings on the fifth and final day here. Opener Qamran Iqbal's second first-class hundred (160 not out) and Sahil Lotra's maiden first-class ton (101 not out) added sheen to the historical occasion. But the day was always meant to be more than just cold numbers, it was meant to tell the story of determination and the power of a dream that was more than six decades in the making. It was 67 years ago when Jammu and Kashmir made their debut in India's premier domestic competition, which is now 92 years old. In the past, J&K ► P11



**SCOREBOARD**

**Jammu & Kashmir 1st Innings:** 584  
Karnataka 1st Innings: 293  
**Jammu & Kashmir 2nd Innings:** (overnight at 186/4)  
Qamran Iqbal not out 160  
Yawer Hassan b Prasidh Krishna 1  
Shubham Pundiro c sub b Vyshak 4  
Paras Dogra b Prasidh Krishna 16  
Abdul Samad c Vyshak b Gopal 32  
Sahil Lotra not out 101  
Extras: (B-17 LB-9 W-2) 28  
**Total:** (For four wickets in 113 overs) 342 decl  
**Fall of wickets:** 1/6 2/11 3/72 4/145  
**Bowling:** Vijaykumar Vyshak 10-1-30-1, Prasidh Krishna 12-0-42-2, Vidyadhar Patil 13-0-51-0, Shikhar Shetty 31-10-50-0, Shreyas Gopal 36-13-84-1, Karun Nair 7-2-21-0, KL Rahul 2-0-15-0, Mayank Agarwal 2-0-23-0.

**CM announces Rs 2 Cr cash reward for team**

**SRINAGAR:** Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Saturday announced a cash reward of Rs 2 crore for the Jammu and Kashmir cricket team following its maiden Ranji Trophy triumph. Calling it a watershed moment for Jammu and Kashmir cricket, he said, the landmark win has filled the entire region with pride and inspiration. In a post on X, Abdullah announced a cash reward of 2 crore for the players and support staff after their "emphatic" victory over Karnataka on their home turf. Abdullah on ► P11

**Long road to title, focus on stadias now: Manhas**

**HUBBALLI:** BCCI president Mithun Manhas was elated to see Jammu and Kashmir landing their maiden Ranji Trophy title, but his pragmatic mind has already zeroed in on the construction of new stadias in the valley to take the cricket further forward. After 67 years of toil, Jammu and Kashmir held eight-time champions Karnataka to a draw and bagged the coveted title by virtue of a massive 291-run first inning lead. "It took us 67 years. It's been a long journey to title. I'm very thankful to BCCI for giving us a state of the ► P11

**US, Israel attack Iran**  
**India calls for immediate restraint in Middle-East**

**JERUSALEM:** Israel and the US embarked on an operation to remove the existential threat posed by the terrorist regime in Iran, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in a video message to citizens. "I thank our great friend, President Donald Trump, for his historic leadership," Netanyahu said. "For 47 years, the Ayatollah regime has called for 'Death to Israel' and 'Death to America.' It has spilled our blood, murdered many Americans, and massacred its own people," the Israeli Premier said. "This murderous terrorist regime must not be allowed to arm itself with nuclear weapons that would enable it to threaten all of humanity," he stressed. The US held two round of talks with Iran to negotiate a deal but said that it failed to reach an agreement to stop Iran from going nuclear. "Our joint action will create the conditions for the brave Iranian people to take their destiny into their own hands," Netanyahu further added, in ► P11

**Modi launches HPV vaccine drive for girls**

**JAIPUR:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday launched a nationwide Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination campaign for 14-year-old girls from Ajmer in Rajasthan. The campaign against cervical cancer was formally inaugurated at a programme held in Kayad, Ajmer, where several girls were administered the vaccine. The prime minister also interacted with the beneficiaries on the occasion. According to officials, a single-dose "Gardasil 4" vaccine, a quadrivalent HPV vaccine, will be used under the campaign. The injection provides protection against HPV types 16 and 18, which are responsible for cervical cancer, as well as types 6 and 11. The Union Health Ministry, in an official communication sent to all states on February 25, stated, "All 14-year-old girls across the country will be administered a single dose of the 'Gardasil 4' vaccine at government health facilities, including Ayushman Arogya Mandirs (Primary Health Centres), Community Health Centres, sub-district and district hospitals, and government medical colleges and hospitals."

**CONGRATULATIONS**  
**TEAM JAMMU AND KASHMIR**  
FOR THE MAIDEN AND HISTORIC WIN OF  
**Ranji Trophy 2025-26**

**Jammu and Kashmir Government announces Rs. 2 Crore for Winning Team**

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