

# Harness full hydropower potential to fuel J-K's devp, growth: HM Shah

‘Aggressive outreach needed to unlock tourism potential in UT’

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

**JAMMU:** Union Home Minister Amit Shah reviewed the progress of development projects in Jammu and Kashmir on Saturday, highlighting the need to utilise the full potential of hydropower projects in the Union Territory.

Chairing a high-level review meeting at the Lok Bhawan here, Shah said under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, the Centre is firmly committed to the vision of building a developed and prosperous Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting continued for nearly two hours and was attended by Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, Chief Minister



## KEY HIGHLIGHTS

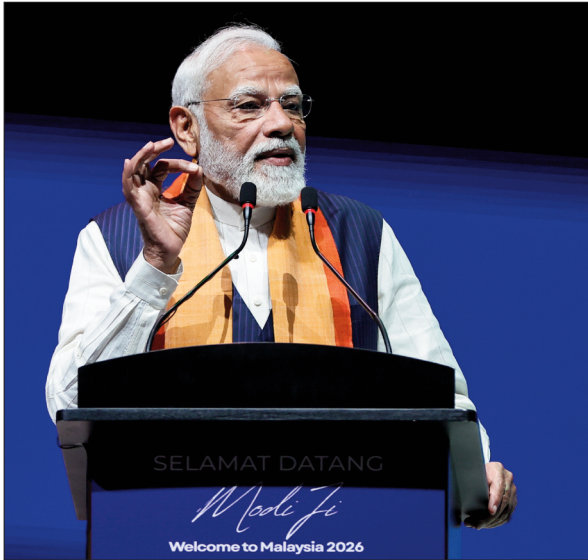
- ▢-Progress on roads, industry, tourism, optical fibre connectivity reviewed
- ▢-Centre reaffirmed its commitment to build a developed & prosperous J-K
- ▢-Projects have seen accelerated progress due to sustained efforts of PM
- ▢-Emphasis was laid on completing 100 pc saturation of Central schemes
- ▢-Focus was urged on boosting sports infra & setting up sports academies
- ▢-Govt stressed promoting dairy sector in J&K in collaboration with NDDB

Omar Abdullah, Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan, Chief Secretary of the Union Territory Atal Dulloo and Director General of Police (DGP) Nalin Prabhat, among others, officials said.

"Due to the continuous and dedicated efforts of the Modi government to accelerate development, the development projects in Jammu and Kashmir have made unprecedented progress. Jammu and Kashmir needs to develop the full potential of its hydropower projects," the home minister said.

Shah arrived here late on Thursday evening and kicked off his two-day visit to the region by touring the forward outposts of the Border Security Force (BSF) at ► P11

Trust is India's strongest currency, says PM; flags EU, US trade deals  
‘Trade deals brace Make in India, create jobs’



**KUALA LUMPUR:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said India is seen as a "trusted partner for growth" and it was reflected in the recent trade deals it has agreed with various countries, including the UK, USA and the EU. Addressing a community programme here, Modi said

the Indian diaspora served as a living bridge between India and Malaysia and announced a new consulate in the archipelago nation and the Thiruvalluvar Scholarship to enable students to study in India. Modi, who arrived in Kuala Lumpur on Saturday on a two-day visit, referred to

the trade deals India agreed with various countries and said India is seen as a "trusted partner for growth".

"Trust has become India's strongest currency," Modi said, citing trade deals with the UK, UAE, Australia, New Zealand, Oman, the EU and the US.

Malaysia is home to nearly three million people of Indian descent, the second largest in the world, with an overwhelming majority of Tamil origin.

Greeting the Indian community members in different languages, the prime minister made it a point to highlight the singing abilities of his Malaysian counterpart Anwar Ibrahim, particularly his love of Tamil songs of legendary actor-politician M G Ramachandran (MGR).

"Tamil is India's gift to the world. Tamil literature is eternal, and Tamil culture is global. Tamil people have served humanity with their talents," Modi said, recalling that India's Vice ► P11

# Army chief reviews troop readiness, surveillance amid counter-terror Ops

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

**JAMMU:** Army chief Gen Upendra Dwivedi on Saturday visited forward areas of Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch sector and assessed deployment posture, surveillance measures and readiness of deployed formations.

The Chief of Army Staff (COAS) on Friday attended a high-level security review chaired by Union Home Minister Amit Shah and also visited the headquarters of the Jammu-based White Knight Corps to assess the operational preparedness in the region.

"The COAS visited forward areas of Poonch sector to



review operational preparedness. He assessed deployment posture, surveillance measures and security arrangements, and reviewed the overall readiness of formations deployed in the sector," Addi-

tional Directorate General of Public Information (ADGPI) of the Army wrote on X.

During the visit, Gen Dwivedi interacted with troops and lauded the high standards of professionalism

and readiness demonstrated by the soldiers deployed in the challenging terrain, commending their unwavering dedication and exceptional preparedness.

Officials said the Army chief visited the twin border districts of Poonch and Rajouri and was briefed by senior officers on the ground.

Gen Dwivedi met with field commanders of the Army and officers of other security agencies, officials said, adding that he took stock of the security situation, both along the LoC as well as in hinterland areas, in view of ongoing counter-terror operations in Poonch. An official said that during the visit, ► P11

# No plan for new admin units; priority on operationalising existing ones: CM

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

**JAMMU:** Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Saturday said that the government has no intention of creating new administrative units at present and is focused on operationalising those already sanctioned.

Abdullah was replying to supplementary questions by members in the Assembly seeking new administrative units in Jammu and Kashmir.

"This issue should end here. The government, as of now, has no intention to open new administrative units," he told the House.

The chief minister said the units already created have not been properly opera-

## No plan to relax CLU norms: Govt tells LA

**JAMMU:** The Jammu and Kashmir government on Saturday said there is no proposal under consideration to relax the norms related to change of land use (CLU) in the Union Territory. The information was provided by minister Javed Ahmed Rana in the Assembly in reply to a question raised by MLA Surjit Singh Salathia. The minister was replying on behalf of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah. Rana said, "The government does not intend to grant any relaxation in CLU norms at present." He also clarified that there is ► P11

tionalised. "It is our responsibility to operationalise them, to make them function properly and to put systems in place wherever gaps need to be filled," he said.

He further said MLAs

have complained that units set up in their constituencies have not been operationalised. "The units that were opened have not been operationalised. Our first responsibility is to make them



functional," he said. "After making ► P11

## Porter hurt in landmine blast near LoC

**JAMMU:** An army porter was injured in a landmine explosion near the Line of Control (LoC) in Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir on Saturday, officials said.

Zulufqar Ahmad (24), a resident of Slotri-Patiya village, was injured when he accidentally stepped on a landmine in a forward area in Mankote sector at around 2.10 pm, the officials said.

As part of an anti-infiltration obstacle system, the forward areas are dotted with landmines, which sometimes get washed away by rain, resulting in such accidents, they added.

The officials further informed that the injured ► P11

## RSS not against anyone, does not seek power Partition took place as Hindu Bhav was forgotten: Bhagwat

**MUMBAI:** Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh chief Mohan Bhagwat on Saturday said the partition of India took place because the "Hindu bhav" (sentiment) was forgotten.

Speaking at a programme titled '100 years of the Sangh journey' here, he also said that the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh can not be understood without a dialogue.

While 'swadeshi' (reliance of indigenous production) was necessary, global dependence was also needed, Bhagwat said, while adding that such dependence should not be driven by "tariffs."



"Partition happened because of religion. We said we respect all religions, because we are Hindus. There are people who say this was

wrong. Islam, Christianity still exist in India. There are skirmishes, but the country has remained united.... 'Hindu bhav' ► P11

## Conman held in Ganderbal, Police foiled cheating scam

**SRINAGAR:** Jammu and Kashmir Police have arrested a man in Ganderbal district on charges of cheating investors by allegedly offering them government or disputed land for sale.

The accused, Javid Ahmad Gojree, was posing as a land broker and cheating innocent people by falsely presenting disputed and government land as his private property, a spokesperson said.

He allegedly deceived multiple individuals by showing them land which, upon verification, was found to be either ► P11

## LoP Sunil calls special status demand 'betrayal', says Art 370 stands buried

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

**JAMMU:** Leader of Opposition Sunil Sharma on Saturday rubbished the demand for restoration of "special status" to Jammu and Kashmir, asserting that Article 370 is a "historical provision that now stands buried".

Addressing mediapersons outside the assembly here, Sharma said the Constitution does not mention "special status" in connection with Jammu and Kashmir's accession or merger with India.

He criticised National Conference (NC) legislators for raising the demand, alleging that it amounted to "betrayal" and was being used



for political purposes.

"Several states demand special financial packages, but that should not be confused with Article 370," Sharma said.

Commenting on Jammu and Kashmir's budget, the

BJP leader accused the ruling party of "mocking daily wagers and unemployed youth" while focusing on the issue of special status.

Responding to the NC's claims of a rise in terror activities following the ► P11

## 4 held for assaulting tourist

**JAMMU:** Police on Saturday detained four persons for assaulting a tourist in Jammu and Kashmir's Doda district, officials said.

A written complaint was received at Police Station Bhaderwah from Suresh Kumar of Nagni Bhalra, Bhaderwah, regarding the assault of a tourist in the area on Friday, they said.

Taking prompt cognizance of the complaint and to prevent any further escalation or breach of peace, police initiated preventive action under the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, they said. In this connection, four persons — Javed Iqbal, ► P11

## AN-32 Courier Service starts in Kargil, 82 passengers airlifted

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

**KARGIL:** The AN-32 Kargil Courier Service commenced operations on Saturday for the winter season, restoring air connectivity for the remote district during the months when surface transport remains largely cut off due to snowfall and extreme weather.

The first flight of the season marked the resumption of the Indian Air Force-operated service, which remains the only dependable link between Kargil and Srinagar during winter. The arriving air crew was received at Kargil by Execu-



tive Councillor, LAHDC Kargil, Kacho Mohd Feroz, Deputy Commissioner Kargil Rakesh Kumar, Additional Deputy Commissioner Imteaz Kacho and Assistant

Commissioner Development Shafiq Ahmed.

The Executive Councillor and the Deputy Commissioner expressed appreciation to the Indian Air Force

for continuing the courier service every winter. They said the air service remains vital for passengers with urgent needs, particularly elderly residents, patients undergoing medical treatment in Jammu and Srinagar, and students returning to or leaving the district for their studies.

At Srinagar, the AN-32 crew was welcomed by Chief Coordinator, Kargil Courier Service, Aamir Ali, Airport Director Srinagar Javed Anjum, and officials of the Airports Authority of India, the Central Industrial Security Force, the Station Manager of AIASI, besides the ► P11

## Tourist footfall hits 1.77 Cr; including 36,000 foreigners

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

**JAMMU:** Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir received more than 1.77 crore tourists in 2025, including over 36,000 foreign visitors, the government informed the Legislative Assembly on Saturday.

In a written reply to a question by MLA Hasnain Masoodi, the Tourism Department, said 1,77,65,390 tourists visited the Union Territory between January 1 and December 31, 2025. Of them, 36,410 were international travellers, while 1,77,28,980 were domestic tourists.

The government said it has not set specific targets for

tourist arrivals in 2026, but stressed that sustained promotional and developmental measures are underway to boost both domestic and foreign inflow.

On the resumption of international flights from Srinagar airport, the government said the airport is fully equipped with immigration, customs, security, and passenger-handling facilities. However, the start of international operations depends on the operational and commercial decisions of airlines.

The department said the airport remains prepared to facilitate international flights as soon as airlines

choose to begin services.

Regarding the Home Stay Programme, the government said the initiative has been largely successful, enhancing accommodation capacity, generating local employment, and encouraging community participation in tourism. Given its positive impact, the programme is likely to be expanded to other potential areas. The reply also noted challenges such as limited awareness, capacity gaps, and infrastructure issues, which the department is addressing through awareness drives, capacity-building initiatives, and coordination with concerned departments.