

"Sometimes magic is just someone spending more time on something than anyone else might reasonably expect."

—Raymond Joseph Teller

*Inking the Truth*

## Centre approves over Rs 330 Cr addl disaster assistance for J&K

Shah chairs high-level committee meet

**NEW DELHI:** The Centre has approved Rs 1,912.99 crore in additional financial assistance to five states and the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir affected by floods, flash floods, cloudbursts, landslides and cyclone 'Montha' in 2025, an official statement said on Friday. The decision was taken by a high-level committee (HLC) chaired by Union Home Minister Amit Shah, it said.

According to the statement, the five states are Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, and Nagaland.

"Of the total amount, Rs 341.48 crore has been approved for Andhra Pradesh, Rs 15.70 crore for Chhattisgarh, Rs 778.67 crore for Gujarat, Rs 288.39 crore for Himachal Pradesh, Rs 158.41 crore for Nagaland and Rs 330.34 crore for Jammu and Kashmir," it said.

This assistance is over and above the funds already released to states under the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF), it said.

During the Financial Year 2025-26, the Centre has released Rs 20,735 crore to 28 states under the SDRF and Rs 3,628.18 crore ▶ P11



## MHA eyes VIP security audit

**NEW DELHI:** The Union Home Ministry will undertake a comprehensive security audit of all VIPs under the central security cover in the wake of the assassination bid on former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Farooq Abdullah, officials said on Friday.

The decision to hold the review next week was taken in a meeting chaired by Union Home ▶ P11

## VK Saxena takes Oath as LG Ladakh

**LEH:** Vinai Kumar Saxena on Friday took oath as the Lieutenant Governor of the Union Territory of Ladakh, eight days after President Droupadi Murmu appointed him to the constitutional post.

Saxena, who succeeds Kavinder Gupta, was administered the oath of office and secrecy by Chief Justice of the High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, Justice Arun Palli, at a ceremony held at the Arya Nagarjuna Auditorium of the Central Institute of Buddhist Studies in Choglamsar, an official spokesman said.

Earlier, Chief Secretary Ashish Kundra read out the warrant of appointment issued by the President, following which Saxena signed the charge certificate.

Following the swearing-in ceremony, he was accorded a ceremonial guard of honour by Ladakh Police.

He is the fourth LG of the Union Territory ▶ P11

## Literary-cultural conclave 'Sahitya Sanskriti Samagam' commences Sinha urges practitioners of literature, arts to preserve Jammu's rich heritage

EARTH NEWS SERVICE

**JAMMU:** Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Friday urged the practitioners of literature and arts to preserve Jammu division's rich heritage, promote its legacy, and connect the new generation to their roots.

"Jammu's traditions in literature, culture, and spirituality have taught us to rise above divisions of caste, creed, and artificial boundaries. The values embedded in our culture embody an ideology that places humanity above all," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor was speaking at the inaugural ceremony of two-day literary-cultural conclave "Sahitya Sanskriti Samagam", organised by University of Jammu. He commended the University of Jammu for its steadfast commitment to preserving and promoting the region's cultural ethos and making its mark among the country's top universities.

The Lieutenant Governor said the society shaped by our



abundant literary and cultural wealth will determine who we are and what we can become.

He urged everyone to reflect in this festival of literature and culture on the true identity that binds us and instills a profound sense of belonging.

"True confluence of culture and literature means engaging with the soil through diverse art forms, infusing new resonance into society's soul," he said.

Paying homage to great luminaries and illustrious literary personalities, the Lieutenant Governor emphasised that a region's identity is not defined merely by economic

achievements; it shines through its stories, songs, and the vibrant hues of its artisans. He said that the society's enlightened minds must recognize folk arts and folk literature as Jammu's living vitality.

"Our folk traditions do not dwell in libraries; they thrive in writers' quills, singers' songs, folk dance footprints, and artists' brushes and pigments.

With deep responsibility, I call upon everyone, especially youth to serve literature and culture. It upholds the living legacy of values passed down through generations, entrusting you not just with an inheritance but with the

duty of its cultural-literary bequest. This tradition teaches us the virtue of inclusion," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor observed that safeguarding our language preserves our memories; nurturing regional art forms builds self-assurance.

"Let us focus on local tales, dialects, and artistic traditions, for every individual's identity draws nourishment from these roots. When generations gather to exchange experiences, cultural and literary heritage transcends the past—it becomes a living dialogue," he further said. ▶ P11

## Cop, wife killed, children injured in Doda accident LG Sinha expresses grief

EARTH NEWS SERVICE

**JAMMU:** A head constable of the Jammu and Kashmir Police and his wife were killed, while their two children injured after their vehicle skidded off the road and plunged into a stream in Doda district on Friday, officials said.

The accident occurred around 9 am when the four were on way to Bani from Bhandarwah in their SUV.

Head Constable Zulfikar Ali, who was posted with the District Special Branch (DSB) in Bhandarwah, and his wife Rehana Begum died on the

spot, the officials said.

Their two children -- Arshad Ahmed (20) and Kamran Ahmed (24) -- sustained injuries in the incident, they said, adding they have been shifted to the sub-district hospital in Bhandarwah.

Union Minister Jitendra Singh condoled the loss of lives in the accident.

"Just now spoke to DC Doda, Krishan Lal, after learning about the tragic road accident near Basti village of Bhandarwah, in which unfortunately, a head constable of Jammu & Kashmir Police, Zulfikar Ali and his ▶ P11

## Restriction imposed in Budgam

**SRINAGAR:** Protests broke out on Friday in some Shia-dominated areas of Kashmir, including Magam and Budgam, against the US-Israel strikes on Iran, officials said.

Apprehending the protests on the last Friday of Ramzan, restrictions were imposed this morning in Srinagar and other parts of the valley, especially the Shia-dominated areas.

The restrictions on the assembly of people were imposed in the morning as a precautionary ▶ P11

## Omar chairs Cabinet meeting; key governance issues taken

EARTH NEWS SERVICE

**JAMMU:** Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Friday chaired a Cabinet meeting here, paving the way for key decisions aimed at strengthening governance and accelerating development across the Union Territory.

The decisions were taken with a focus on improving administrative efficiency and public service delivery, the office of the chief minister said in a post on X.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary and ministers, including Sakina Itoo, Javed



Ahmed Rana, Javid Ahmed Dar and Satish Sharma, officials said. Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo was also present.

Separately, the chief minister also chaired a review meeting on the implementation of works under

the SASCI scheme. He stressed the need for timely execution and effective monitoring of projects and directed officers to ensure that the benefits of the scheme reach people on the ground in a transparent and ▶ P11

## Govt issues guidelines for proper utilisation of CDF

EARTH NEWS SERVICE

**JAMMU:** The Jammu and Kashmir Government has issued fresh instructions to ensure proper utilisation and management of funds under the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) Scheme.

In a circular, the Finance Department has directed all District Development Commissioners to strictly follow the guidelines governing the CDF Scheme issued under Government Order No. 76-FD of 2025 dated March 10, 2025. The order outlines the procedure for allocation, release, deposit and utilisation of funds under the scheme.

As per the guidelines, the

funds under the scheme are non-lapsable and any unspent balance available with District Development Councils or executing agencies as on March 31 each year must be deposited in the Government Treasury under Account Head MH:8229.

The circular further states that the DDCs shall furnish details of such unspent balances to the Finance Department at the end of every financial year. The unspent balances deposited in the treasury can be utilised in the next financial year.

The Finance Department has also instructed concerned officers and Drawing and ▶ P11

## INBRIEF



## Drone dropped consignment recovered at IB

**JAMMU:** A suspicious consignment allegedly dropped by a Pakistani drone was recovered by security forces near the International Border (IB) in the outskirts of Jammu city on Friday, officials said.

The yellow plastic-packed consignment was recovered from a forward area along the IB in the ▶ P11

## NC MPs meet Prez, seek J-K statehood restoration

**NEW DELHI:** National Conference MPs in the Rajya Sabha on Friday met Droupadi Murmu here and submitted a memorandum, seeking early restoration of statehood to Jammu and Kashmir, and flagging issues such as land and job rights, hydropower projects and unemployment.

MPs Chowdhry Mohammad Ramzan, Sajjad Ahmed Kichloo and Shammil Oberoi called on the president at the Rashtrapati Bhavan and submitted a memorandum raising a range of issues concerning Jammu and Kashmir, according to an official statement. The MPs "strongly urged the early restoration of



full statehood to Jammu and Kashmir in line with the assurances made on the floor of Parliament," it said.

They also "emphasised the need to protect land and job rights of the local popula-

tion and called for a comprehensive economic and employment package to address the growing unemployment crisis among the youth," the statement said. The delegation sought the return ▶ P11

## Oppn MPs submit notices to remove CEC Gyanesh Kumar

**NEW DELHI:** Opposition MPs have submitted notices in both Houses of Parliament seeking a motion for the removal of Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar, sources said on Friday.

According to a source, 130 Lok Sabha MPs and 63 Rajya Sabha MPs have signed the notice.

The signatories include members from all the INDIA bloc parties, including the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), which is no longer formally a part of the opposition alliance, the source said.

Some Independent MPs have also signed the notice while several others have evinced interest in joining the initiative, the source added. This is the first time a notice has been moved ▶ P11

## Army Cmdr reviews counter-terror Ops

EARTH NEWS SERVICE

**JAMMU:** The Northern Army Commander, Lieutenant General Pratik Sharma, on Friday visited the Basantgarh hills in Udhampur district to review the prevailing security situation and ongoing counter-terrorist operations in the militancy-affected mountainous belt.

During the visit, the Army commander was also briefed on the intelligence grid and enhanced security measures in the region.

"Lt Gen Pratik Sharma, Army Commander, Northern Command, visited Basantgarh to review the prevailing security situation and ongoing counter-terrorist operations," Northern Command headquarters said on X. "Focused deliberations were held



on reinforcing the security architecture in coordination with all stakeholders."

Lt Gen Sharma interacted with the troops and commended them for their work towards a terror-free Jammu and Kashmir.

Basantgarh in Udhampur district lies along a traditional infiltration route used by Pakistani ▶ P11

## RSS to expand 'Shakhas', ramps up public outreach in centenary year

**CHANDIGARH:** Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) Joint General Secretary C R Mukunda on Friday said special emphasis is being placed on expansion of 'shakhas' and engagement of society through public outreach programmes to mark the organisation's centenary year.

Elaborating on the Sangh's plan of action to mark its centenary year, Mukunda said two types of programmes have been planned -- organisational growth, focused on expansion of 'shakhas', and the other focused on bringing together the constructive forces of society to promote goodwill and social harmony.



In this context, 'grihasampark abhiyan' (mass contact programme) is being carried out, he added.

In Kerala, volunteers contacted over 55,000 Muslim and 54,000 Christian homes under the outreach initiative,

he said in a press conference in Samalkha, Panipat.

RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat and general secretary Dattatreya Hosabale inaugurated the three-day meet of the RSS' top decision-making body -- Akhil Bharatiya Pratinidhi Sabha (ABPS) -- in Pattikalyana, Samalkha.

The meeting includes detailed discussions on major programmes and campaigns organised as part of the celebrations which also include Hindu Sammelan, youth conferences, gatherings of prominent citizens and social harmony meetings.

Meanwhile, as the meet began, tributes were ▶ P11

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