



The management and staff of The Earth News greet all patrons and readers on the auspicious occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr.

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Making the Truth

IN BRIEF

LG, Omar greet people on Eid-ul-Fitr

JAMMU: The Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha has extended his heartiest greetings to the people on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr, which is being celebrated tomorrow.

In his message, the Lieutenant Governor has said, "On the auspicious occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr, I extend my heartiest greetings and good wishes to all.

The festival of Eid-ul-Fitr, which marks the auspicious culmination of the holy month of Ramzan, is an occasion of profound spiritual and social significance. The sacred festival embodies the noble spirit of sacrifice and the joy of sharing. On this auspicious day, let us recommit to humanity's service, uplifting the lives of the poor and needy.

May Eid usher in peace, prosperity and happiness for all."

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has extended warm greetings to the people of Jammu and Kashmir, as well as to those celebrating across the globe, on the ► P11

India stresses respect for navigational freedoms PM condemns attacks on energy infra in West Asia; speaks to King of Bahrain

LONDON: Voicing deep concern over the evolving situation in West Asia, India has called for de-escalation through dialogue while asserting that the navigational rights and freedoms of merchant and commercial vessels must be respected in accordance with international law.

Addressing the 36th Extraordinary Session of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) Council here Wednesday, Indian High Commissioner to the UK Vikram Doraiswami also said that targeting commercial ships, endangering civilian crews and impeding safe and free navigation through international waters, including the Strait of Hormuz, are "unacceptable".

The extraordinary two-day session of the IMO Council discussed the impacts on shipping and seafarers of the situation in the Arabian Sea, the Sea of Oman and the Gulf



region, particularly in and around the Strait of Hormuz, amid the US-Israel war against Iran.

"India remains deeply concerned about the evolving situation and continues to call for de-escalation through dialogue and diplomacy with utmost restraint and priority being given to the safety of civilians," Doraiswami said. "Targeting of commercial

shipping and attacks on civilian maritime infrastructure is unacceptable. Such attacks have resulted in the loss of innocent lives, injuries and heightened risks, including to seafarers," he added.

At present, 24 Indian flag vessels are operating in the Persian Gulf region, including 22 vessels west of the Strait of Hormuz with 611 Indian seafarers on board, and two vessels east of the Strait of Hormuz, with 47 seafarers on board, the High Commissioner said.

"We reiterate that targeting commercial shipping, endangering civilian crews and impeding safe and free navigation through international waters, including the State farmers, are unacceptable," he said.

Doraiswami said the safety and welfare of seafarers, the security of international shipping, energy supply chains that sustain

nations and humanitarian supply chains that ensure the survival and welfare of seafarers must remain paramount.

He conveyed India's deepest condolences to the families of seafarers injured or killed in the ongoing conflict in West Asia, and informed the IMO Council that of the seven fatalities mentioned by the Secretary General, three are Indian seafarers; four more are injured, and one is missing.

Doraiswami further said that India is among the top three seafarers supplying nations, contributing approximately 13 per cent of the global seafaring workforce.

"We remain deeply concerned about the safety and welfare of all seafarers. An estimated 23,000 Indian seafarers have been impacted by the current crisis," he said.

Elaborating on the government of India's "robust response mechanisms," ► P11



31K Mata Vaishno Devi pilgrims brave inclement weather to visit Holy Shrine

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

JAMMU: Braving inclement weather, over 31,000 pilgrims visited the holy town of Katra and paid obeisance at the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi temple atop Trikuta Hills in Reasi district on the first day of Navratri, officials said on Friday.

"As many as 31,690 pilgrims visited the cave shrine and paid obeisance at the

temple on the first day of Navratri (Thursday) till 10 pm," a senior official of the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board said.

The nine-day Navratri festival got off to a grand start on March 19, with officials expecting a daily footfall of more than 30,000 pilgrims. It will conclude on March 27.

Decorated with fresh flowers and illuminated with multi-coloured lights for a

spectacular view, the cave shrine is witnessing a huge rush of pilgrims.

Officials said over 15,000 pilgrims have registered for the yatra on Friday, while hundreds made a beeline for darshan at the Bhawan since morning.

On Thursday, a large number of devotees, braving rain and chanting "Jai Mata Di," trekked along the serpentine pathway to ► P11

New IT rules to take effect from April 1

NEW DELHI: Central Board of Direct Taxes on Friday notified the rules for Income-tax Act, 2025 which provided enhanced tax benefit for HRA to salary earner but makes disclosure of landlord-tenant relationship mandatory.

The Income-tax Rules, 2026 will operationalise the simplified direct tax legislation that was approved by Parliament last year and will come into effect from April 1.

"These rules may be called the Income-tax Rules, 2026. They shall come into force on the April 1, 2026," a gazette notification said.

Parliament on August 12, 2025 passed a new ► P11

Syllabus row: JU forms panel as ABVP protests

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

JAMMU: The University of Jammu has constituted a high-level committee to examine concerns related to the Political Science syllabus that were recently highlighted in the media and raised by students.

According to an order issued by the Office of the Dean Academic Affairs, the committee will be headed by Prof Naresh Padha as Convener and comprises the Heads of the Departments of Philosophy, History and Sociology, besides the Director, DSRS, with the Assistant Registrar (Academic Affairs) serving as Member Secretary.

The panel has been tasked with thoroughly reviewing the issue and submitting its report at the earliest.

Meanwhile, ABVP on Friday staged protests at the University of Jammu, demanding the withdrawal of a ► P11

EC's transfers in poll-bound WB won't change result: CM

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Friday said the efforts of the Election Commission to "gerrymander" will not change the results in West Bengal Assembly elections, expressing confidence that Trinamool Congress will emerge victorious.

"No amount of effort by the Election Commission to gerrymander will change the results. Come counting day Mamata Didi will win a thumping majority," Abdullah posted on his personal X handle.

Commenting on the large-scale transfers ordered by the Election Commission in the poll-bound state, Abdullah said these things happen only in the states where the BJP is not in power.

"These sweeping transfers only happen in non-BJP ruled states & especially in West Bengal but that's no surprise. However, West Bengal will once again prove what ► P11

Weather swing brings cheer to farmers

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR: After experiencing an unusually warm winter, Kashmir is now witnessing below-normal daytime temperatures due to recent rains and snowfall, which could augur well for crops and

flowering plants, officials said on Friday.

Since Sunday, most parts of the valley have seen intermittent rains, while many areas at higher elevations received snowfall.

There was overnight snowfall in tourist resorts like

Gulmarg and Sonamarg, as well as in various locations in the upper reaches of Kashmir. As a result, the mountains and hills in the valley are now covered with fresh, pristine layers of snow, officials noted.

The wet weather has caused a drop in daytime tem-

peratures across Kashmir. Over the past few days, the valley has been experiencing colder days and warmer nights due to cloud cover.

On Thursday, Srinagar city recorded a maximum temperature of 9.5 degrees Celsius, which is over ► P11

BRO intensifies snow clearance on key roads

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

JAMMU: As heavy snowfall disrupted traffic movement in several parts of the Jammu region, the Border Roads Organisation has intensified snow clearance on the Mughal Road and the Basohli-Bani-Bhaderwah road, officials said on Thursday.

Following heavy snowfall in the area on Tuesday, Mughal Road, connecting the twin border districts of Poonch and Rajouri in the Jammu region with south Kashmir's Shopian, was closed for vehicular traffic.

"Snow clearance is underway on Mughal Road in

Poonch after heavy snowfall disrupted connectivity. The Border Roads Organisation's 79 RCC team is working round the clock to reopen the route swiftly," officials said.

The BRO's 52 RCC has cleared the road from Hirpora to Peer Ki Gali, they said, adding that the heavy snowfall on Thursday night made the operation difficult.

The BRO's Border Roads Task Force under Project 'Sampark' also carried out an operation to ensure the recovery of an SUV trapped in heavy snow on Mughal Road, they said.

After heavy snowfall disrupted traffic movement on the ► P11

India-China border trade via Lipulekh to resume after 6-yr

PITHORAGARH: Border trade between India and China through the Lipulekh Pass in Uttarakhand's Pithoragarh district is set to resume this year after a six-year hiatus.

District Magistrate Ashish Bhatgai said that following directives from the Union government, preparations have begun for the trade session, which typically runs from June to September. The move comes after a No Objection Certificate (NOC) was issued by the Ministry of External Affairs.

According to the district magistrate, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri wrote to Uttarakhand Chief Secretary

Anand Bardhan requesting the restoration of trade through the Himalayan pass. The letter mentions that the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry have also granted clearances.

Bhatgai said the state government has been asked to direct concerned departments to ensure the resumption of trade for the 2026 session. Local officials' contact details will be shared with Chinese counterparts to ensure better coordination between the two sides.

To facilitate the session, instructions have been given to the authorities issuing trade passes, ► P11

Selfish interests, desire for dominance drive global conflicts: Mohan Bhagwat

NAGPUR: Selfish interests and the desire for dominance were the root cause of conflicts in the world, RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat said on Friday, asserting that lasting peace can only be achieved through unity, discipline and adherence to dharma.

Addressing a gathering in Nagpur, Bhagwat said that for 2,000 years the world has experimented with various ideas to resolve conflicts with little success.

His comments came in the backdrop of the ongoing conflict in West Asia, where a full-fledged war started when



the United States and Israel launched joint military strikes against Iran on February 28. Religious intolerance,

forced conversions and ideas of superiority and inferiority still exist, Bhagwat pointed out.

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief was speaking at the gathering after laying the foundation stone for the Vidarbha prant office of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) in Nagpur.

Bhagwat said that India's ancient wisdom teaches that "all are connected and one", and called for a shift from conflict to harmony and cooperation.

He further noted that even modern science ► P11

J&K ACB set to use AI for investigation

JAMMU: The Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) is all set to use artificial intelligence (AI) for investigations in Jammu and Kashmir, as the government on Friday constituted a technical appraisal committee (TAC) to examine the proposed adoption of AI in investigative operations of the anti-graft body.

"Sanction is hereby accorded to the constitution of a technical appraisal committee for the project 'Adoption of artificial intelligence (AI)' in investigative operations in the anti corruption bureau," Commissioner ► P11



Eid Mubarak

May this Eid bring blessings with bliss into your lives



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