

CM Nitish's son Nishant joins JD (U)

PATNA: Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's son Nishant Kumar joined the JD(U) on Sunday and said he would work to strengthen the party's organisation.

Nishant, an engineering graduate who is in his 40s, was inducted into the party at its headquarters here in the presence of top leaders, including Union minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh 'Lalan' and JD(U)'s national working president Sanjay Jha.

After joining the party, Nishant, clad in a simple kurta-pyjama and wearing a flip-flop, said, "My father decided to go to the Rajya Sabha. It was his personal decision. We all respect it. We will keep working under his guidance. I will work to strengthen the organisation."

Nishant claimed his father, as the longest-serving chief minister of Bihar, did a lot for the state in the ► P11

ACB HQ building inaugurated at Sidhra J-K dares to dream big, transparent governance now a reality: LG Sinha



■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir today stands at a pivotal juncture with the past five to six years witnessing transformative changes that have made the governance system more transparent and firmly oriented towards public serv-

ice, Lt Governor Manoj Sinha said on Sunday.

Addressing a gathering after inaugurating Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) headquarters building at Sidhra in Jammu and ACB APKS branch, Awantipora, Sinha said these two buildings are not merely structures of steel, glass, and concrete but they stand as a bold declaration of transparency in public life and a corruption-free Union Territory. "Today, J&K stands at a pivotal juncture. Over the past five-six years, we have ushered in transformative changes, rendering the system transparent and dedicating it to public service. Entire machinery now operates not for the benefit of a ► P11

ABVP's SERU delegation from Ladakh calls on LG

JAMMU: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Sunday interacted with the youth from Ladakh visiting Jammu as part of the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad's (ABVP) "Students' Experience in Regional Understanding" ► P11

Protocol lapse at Prez's event under Centre's lens People of West Bengal will not forgive TMC: PM Modi

NEW DELHI: Amid a row over "lapses" at President Droupadi Murmu's event in West Bengal, the Centre has sought a response from the state government by 5 pm on Sunday over the "violations" of the rules related to protocol, venue and route arrangements during her visit, sources said.

In a letter to the West Bengal chief secretary, the Union home secretary has asked him to furnish a response on the violations of the 'Blue Book' rules of protocol, venue and route arrangements.

The 'Blue Book' is a confidential document which lists out rules for the security and protocol for the President, Vice-President and the prime minister and their families. President Murmu



on Saturday expressed dismay over a low turnout at a tribal community event near Bagdogra airport, and questioned the decision to shift the venue from Bidhannagar.

She also noted the absence of West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and her ministers during her visit.

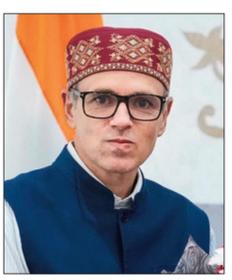
Highly placed sources said the communique sent to the West Bengal chief secretary sought response on the absence of the chief minister, the chief secretary and the DGP when the President arrived in the state, saying it is a serious violation of ► P11

Govt committed to women's safety, empowerment: Omar

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Sunday said his government is committed to ensure empowerment of women, and their safety, and dignity, and provide equal opportunities to them across all spheres of life.

Abdullah greeted the women on the International Women's Day, and lauded their strength, resilience and contribution to the society.

"On the occasion of International Women's Day, the chief minister has extended his warm greetings and heartfelt appreciation to women for their strength, resilience, and invaluable contributions in shaping families, communi-



ties, and society," the CM's office said in a post on X.

The chief minister reaffirmed the government's unwavering commitment to ensuring their empowerment, safety, dignity, and equal opportunities across all spheres of life, the post said.

Meanwhile, Jammu and

Kashmir Police also greeted women on the occasion.

"J&K Police extends warm greetings to all women on International Women's Day. Your courage, determination, and contributions inspire us every day. We remain steadfast in our commitment to ensuring your safety, dignity, and empowerment," Kashmir Zone Police said on X.

The chief minister also highlighted the need to create an inclusive environment where women can pursue education, employment and leadership roles without barriers. He said the government is working to strengthen institutional mechanisms aimed at protecting women's rights and promoting their socio-economic advancement. ► P11

Schools to reopen across Valley today

SRINAGAR: Director School Education Kashmir, Naseer Ahmad Wani, on Sunday clarified that all schools across the Kashmir division will reopen tomorrow as per the already notified schedule, dismissing rumours circulating on social media regarding any delay in reopening.

The Director urged parents and the general public not to pay heed to unverified information being shared online, stating that no change has been made to the reopening schedule after the winter vacation.

He further extended a warm welcome to students from Classes 1st to 8th, who will be attending school tomorrow on the first day after the winter break. Emphasizing the importance of a positive start to the academic session, the Director directed all Heads of Institutions (HOIs) and teaching staff to receive students warmly and ensure that the reopening day is conducted in accordance with the previously issued guidelines and instructions.

The School Education Department reaffirmed its commitment to providing a supportive and welcoming environment for students as they return to their schools after the winter vacation.

ED moves to contest bail in Al Falah case

NEW DELHI: The Enforcement Directorate is expected to challenge the interim bail granted by a local court to Al Falah University group chairman Jawad Ahmed Siddiqui stating he can influence the probe as "more aspects" of the case are still under investigation, officials said.

A court in Delhi granted two-week interim bail to Siddiqui, 61, on Saturday in a money laundering case linked to alleged generation of illicit funds, from the fees paid by students of his Faridabad-based educational institution, by allegedly misrepresenting the accreditation and recognition of his colleges.

He was arrested by the ED in November 2025 and is lodged in jail under judicial custody.

The money laundering case against Siddiqui and the ► P11

NTA extends date for NEET-UG application

JAMMU: The National Testing Agency (NTA) has extended the last date for submission of the online Application Form for the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET (UG) - 2026 upto 11th March.

A public notice, issued by NTA in this regard reads, "the last date for submission of Online Application Form for the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test [NEET (UG)] - 2026 has been extended up to 11th March, 2026 (09.00 P.M.). The payment of fees can be made up to 11:50 PM on 11.03.2026".

The notice further reads that candidates are advised to complete the filling up of form within the extended date and time and no further extension will be granted.

Pertinently, Minister for Health and Medical Education, Sakeena Itoo had written to Union Minister for Education, Dharmendra Pradhan on 6th March, 2026 and requested for extension of the NEET-UG 2026 application deadline in view of recent internet restrictions in Kashmir valley to maintain law and order as well as safety of citizens.

Several students had had faced difficulties in submitting their application forms due to issues with OTP verification and submission.

Minister Sakeena has extended her gratitude to Union Minister of Education for promptly ► P11

6 spa, massage centres closed over violations

JAMMU: Six spa and massage centres were closed here for violating regulatory norms and notices issued to their owners, officials said on Sunday.

The action came after a comprehensive inspection drive ordered by District Magistrate Jammu, Rakesh Minhas, to regulate the functioning of such centres.

During the day-long drive on Saturday, dedicated inspection teams under the supervision of Additional Deputy Commissioners Anusya Jamwal and Vidhu Shekhar inspected a number of spa and massage centres across the district, some of which were found to be in vio-

lation of the directions stipulated under the order, the officials said.

The establishments served notices are K Crystal Spa, Evergreen Thai Therapy Centre, Touch of Magic, The Bubble Spa, the Golden Thai Unisex Spa and Health Ayurveda Spa and Salon.

The violations observed across the inspected establishments included, among others lack of mandatory undertaking, absence of display board and site plan; provision of cross-gender services; presence of door locks inside private cabins, non-production of identity cards by staff, unaccounted payment of employee salaries, non-maintenance of client registers and malfunctioning ► P11

Man wanted for killing daughter lands in Police net after 10 years

23 FIRs registered, 33 person held under NDPS Act: SP

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

JAMMU: On the run for almost 10 years, a man wanted for allegedly killing his 12-year-old daughter here has been arrested by Jammu and Kashmir Police from Delhi, officials said on Sunday.

The accused, Ramesh Kumar from Jhikmau-Chhatarpur in Madhya Pradesh, has been brought to Jammu and Kashmir to face trial, they said.

Kumar assaulted his daughter on July 27, 2016, and later abandoned his rented accommodation in Digiana Puli. The girl died in hospital, Superintendent of



Police, Jammu City (South), Ajay Sharma.

A murder case was registered at Gandhi Nagar police station here. However, despite sustained efforts, police could not trace the accused, he said.

Based on reliable information gathered about Kumar's whereabouts, he was finally arrested from south Delhi's Bhati Mines with the assistance of Delhi Police.

Security beefed up after clash among jail inmates

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

RAJOURI/JAMMU: Security was strengthened inside and around a jail in Jammu and Kashmir's border district of Rajouri on Sunday, a day after a clash among inmates left at least 12 people, including four security guards, injured, officials said. The incident at the district jail located in Dhangri village occurred on Saturday evening following a heated argument between two prisoners — one from Kashmir Valley and the other from Rajouri — which escalated into a scuffle involving several inmates inside the prison, the officials said. During the clash, some prisoners allegedly pelted stones at jail staff, injuring four security personnel and eight inmates before authorities intervened to bring the situation under control.

While the four security personnel were shifted to the Government Medical College hospital Rajouri on Saturday night, eight inmates were brought to the facility for necessary tests on Sunday, the officials said, adding the condition of all the injured is stable. Following the clash, reinforcements from police and CRPF rushed to the scene along with senior police and civil officers to restore order. The officials said that security has been strengthened within and outside the jail, and the situation at present is normal.

SSP orders intensified vigil in Doda

JAMMU: A senior police officer has directed intensified surveillance across the hilly Doda district of Jammu and Kashmir, with particular focus on tourist and religious places to thwart attempts by anti-national elements to disturb peace.

Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP), Doda, Sandeep Mehta was chairing a security review meeting which was attended by all Additional Superintendents of Police, supervisory officers, Station House Officers and in-charges of police posts of the district, a police spokesman said on Sunday.

He said the SSP emphasised the need for heightened vigilance and ► P11

T20 World Cup 2026: India win record 3rd Title, Script History

AHMEDABAD: Team India has won its record third T20 World Cup title in Ahmedabad on Sunday (Mar 8), beating New Zealand in a lop-sided contest by 96 runs.

The Men in Blue have created history at the venue where they suffered their cruellest heartbreak in 2023, becoming the first team to defend its T20 crown and win the World Cup at home, surpassing England and West Indies to do it three times overall, most by any team.

The heartbreak of 2023 is finally over. At the same stadium where a billion dreams broke three years ago, Team India flipped the script on Sunday. This win over New Zealand wasn't just about the title but about healing for the fans and a fresh start for Indian cricket.

Meanwhile, batting first after losing the toss, the Indian openers made a mockery of the Kiwi bowling attack by smashing runs and records for fun. Underperforming Abhishek Sharma roared back to form with his second fifty of the tournament, while stitching 92 runs with Sanju Samson inside the Powerplay, a new record. Although they could add just six more to the tally before Sharma departed, Samson's onslaught dragged New Zealand away from the win.

The right-hander completed his third straight fifty in this T20 World Cup, with all coming at the crucial stages. Ishan Kishan, on the other hand, also smashed a quickfire half-century, helping India cross 200 inside the 16 overs. With the runs and momentum on their side, India had almost already sealed the final's fate by then; however, a cluster of wickets in the same over held them back. Three wickets off ► P11

