

**INBRIEF**

**LG, CM condole loss of lives in drowning incident**

**JAMMU:** Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday expressed grief over the loss of lives in a drowning incident in the Tawi river at Nagrota.

While the bodies of two boys who drowned in the river on Sunday have been recovered, the search for the third boy was underway and his body was recovered on Tuesday.

Sinha also spoke to senior officials and took stock of the search and rescue operations, a Lok Bhawan spokesman said.

"The loss of young lives is heart-wrenching. My deepest condolences and heartfelt sympathies to the bereaved families. We stand in solidarity with them during this difficult time," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The three boys -- Bavish Koul (15), Sonam Dutt (16) and Aditya Pandit (15) -- were swept away by a strong current near the Nagrota Sainik School on the outskirts of Jammu on Sunday evening. ▶ P11

**Sinha attends Mahavir Janma Kalyanak celebrations**

## Lord Mahavira's lessons fostering peace can guide in times of global conflicts: LG

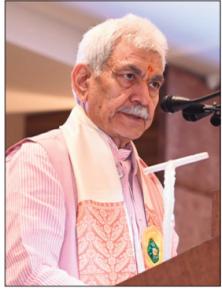
**■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE**

**JAMMU:** Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Tuesday attended the Mahavir Janma Kalyanak, a special event organized by S.S Jain Sabha, to celebrate Mahavir Jayanti, at Jammu.

The Lieutenant Governor extended his felicitations and best wishes to all on the auspicious occasion.

In his address, the Lieutenant Governor spoke on Lord Mahavira's teachings of Ahimsa and Anekantavada, emphasizing right faith, knowledge, and conduct in today's world, which urgently needs compassion, peace, and brotherhood.

"Under the leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji, India stands resolute today. He has laid foundation for a powerful nation which is inspiring the world with its message that true peace is not weakness but unwavering courage and this is a time to build bridges, not battlefields," the



Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor said that amid global conflicts and strife, humanity must draw lessons from Lord Mahavira's teachings which fosters enduring peace and unbreakable brotherhood.

"True progress stems from responsibility and accountability to one's actions. To envision a better future, we must bridge divides among people, fostering trust through understanding diverse cultures, ideas, and experiences," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor observed that Lord Mahavira focus on introspection, individual transformation and his teachings of discipline, faith, and awareness can elevate society.

"By internalizing Ahimsa, restraint, austerity, Anekantavada, non-possession, and truth, we can contribute meaningfully to nation-building. Our impact depends on the character we cultivate," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor called upon the young generation to infuse non-violence into its mindset and reform attitudes toward nature, long exploited as mere utility. "True Ahimsa transcends ethics, becoming the sharpest environmental strategy," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor emphasized that Lord Mahavira's legacy is a refined guidebook for navigating complexity.

"Lord Mahavira declared Ahimsa, restraint, and austerity the supreme auspiciousness. One whose mind dwells therein earns even god's salutations. This is his bequest and heritage for every generation.

Through Anekantavada, Lord Mahavira taught humility. He affirmed truth's multifaceted nature, no single viewpoint captures it fully, today, amid echo chambers, people mistake opinions for absolute truth, eroding balance. On Mahavira Jayanti, embrace intellectual humility, questioning one's opinion exemplifies supreme wisdom," the Lieutenant Governor said.

On the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor also felicitated the achievers from diverse fields.

Suneel Jain, President, SS Jain Sabha; Devki Nandan, Jain, Vice President, Pavinder Vijay Jain, General Secretary and other members of SS Jain Sabha, Jammu, prominent citizens and people from different walks joined the celebrations.

Justice Rajnesh ▶ P11

## J-K Govt clearing liabilities regularly, over Rs 18K Cr paid in 2025-26: CM

### 25K posts to be filled this year: Omar

**■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE**

**JAMMU:** Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday said the government is regularly clearing its financial liabilities, including dues to contractors and retired employees, with over Rs 18,000 crore paid during financial year 2025-26.

Replying to a question of BJP MLA Sham Lal Sharma in the Legislative Assembly, he said "the financial liabilities of the government in the shape of bills presented at treasuries are cleared on regular basis. Bills pertaining to contractors and retired employees are also cleared at regular intervals".

He said liabilities in the form of bills presented at treasuries are being cleared on a regular basis and at periodic intervals.

A total of Rs 18,382.26 crore have been paid so far by the department of finance, he said.

Abdullah said during 2025-26 financial year ending March 31, payments have been made across multiple heads, including ▶ P11



## Govt clears Rs 50L CDF use for victims

**JAMMU:** Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday informed the Legislative Assembly that MLAs can allocate up to Rs 50 lakh from their Constituency Development Fund (CDF) for housing aid, including reconstruction and repairs for calamity-affected families, in FY26-27.

Responding to a Calling Attention Motion moved by National Conference MLA Shamim Firdous, he said the government has amended the CDF guidelines to expand the scope of assistance.

"As per the revised provisions, MLAs can now allocate up to Rs 50 lakh from their CDF for providing housing assistance, including reconstruction and repair of houses for families affected by calamities, for the FY 2026-27," Abdullah said. He said the assistance to an individual ▶ P11

## 11K ticketless passengers fined in Mar

**JAMMU:** Over 11,000 ticketless passengers were penalised in the Northern Railway's Jammu division in March, with authorities recovering around Rs 62 lakh in fines during intensified checking drives, an official said on Tuesday.

The achievement not only signifies an increase in revenue but also marks a significant step towards ensuring discipline and transparency within railway services, the official said.

He said intensive checking drives were carried out at entry and exit points of major stations, including ▶ P11

## Evolving multi-polarity defines new global order: S Jaishankar

**RAJGIR:** External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Tuesday observed that a "democratisation of global order" was being witnessed across the world, which was "becoming more multi-polar" since many cultures and societies were "making their voices heard".

The remarks were made in his brief speech to the convocation ceremony of Nalanda University at Rajgir in Bihar, which was attended, among others, by President Droupadi Murmu.

"The world is becoming more multi-polar because there are many more societies and many more cultures that are making their voices heard. The Nalanda tradition can be a powerful influence



in this democratisation of world order", said Jaishankar, referring to the ancient seat of learning which was known to attract students and scholars from far and wide.

He added, "the very term Nalanda evokes memories of India's intellectual heritage and cultural ▶ P11

## Personal data isn't collected: MHA over agencies using open-source intelligence

**NEW DELHI:** The Home Ministry has told a parliamentary panel that security agencies use open-source intelligence from public sources, including social media, to gather information, emphasising that no privacy breach occurs as personal data isn't collected.

The ministry's submission was made to the Standing Committee on Communications and Information Technology (2024-25), chaired by Lok Sabha member Nishikant Dubey, which tabled its report on Monday.

The committee had sought to know from the ministry how it dealt with the

issue of privacy while scraping through the internet and through social media.

"Publicly available information on the internet and social media platforms is used for intelligence gathering. No private or personal information is gathered from social media. Hence, privacy is never violated," the ministry told the panel.

Scraping generally refers to the use of computer programmes, tools or software (called web scrapers) to automatically browse public web pages or social media posts; extract specific information (e.g., names, phone numbers, keywords, hash-

tags, trends, images); store or analyse that information for law enforcement or intelligence purposes, it said.

The ministry said the type of data that can be scraped by the authorised security agencies only from publicly available sources using open-source intelligence technique may include social media posts like public tweets, Facebook posts, YouTube videos, deepfakes or morphed media, fake news or misinformation, including viral instigating content spreading communal hatred.

The scraping may be used to collect ▶ P11

## Encounter breaks out; Search Op on in G'bal

**■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE**

**SRINAGAR:** Security forces on Tuesday trapped terrorists in Ganderbal villages after a tip off about their presence.

Sources informed that two terrorists were believed to be trapped in Ahrama village of Ganderbal district by the security forces.

Meanwhile, Army, Police and CRPF launched a joint cordon and search operation (CASO) in the village after they received an input about their presence in the village.

The security forces were carrying out searches as part of an anti-terror operation when the reports last came in from the near.

Officials said that the firing shot was reportedly heard near the cordoned area. Reinforcements have been rushed to the spot, they added.

In a post on X, Chinar Corps wrote, "OP ARAHAMA, Ganderbal. Based on specific intelligence input, joint search operation was launched by #IndianArmy and @JmuKmrPolice in Gen area Arahama of Ganderbal. During the search, vigilant troops observed suspicious activity. On being challenged, terrorists opened fire and own troops retaliated. Operation is in progress".

Further details of the incident were awaited till the filing of the news ▶ P11

## I-T Dept notifies all 7 ITR forms for AY 2026-27

**NEW DELHI:** The Income Tax department has notified all income tax return forms for the assessment year (AY) 2026-27.

While ITR forms 1-4, filed by small and medium taxpayers, were notified on March 30, ITR forms 2, 3, 5, 6 and 7, as well as ITR-U (for filing updated returns), were notified on Tuesday.

With the ITR (income tax return) notification, individuals, businesses and other entities can start filing I-T returns for the income earned in the financial year 2025-26.

The last date of filing ITR for individuals and ▶ P11

## Omar slams security withdrawal at NC HQ weeks after attack on Dr Abdullah

**■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE**

**JAMMU:** Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday condemned the decision to strip the National Conference (NC) headquarters of security, calling the move "incomprehensible" given that it comes less than a month after an assassination attempt on party president Farooq Abdullah.

The comments of Omar Abdullah came after a heated half-an-hour discussion in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly with Speaker Abdul Rahim Rather demanding that authorities either declare J&K "risk-free" or provide

equitable security for all.

Talking to reporters outside the Assembly, the chief minister expressed deep concern over the total removal of guards from the 'Nawai Subuh' complex in Srinagar, party headquarters which is often visited by veteran politician Farooq Abdullah, a three-time chief minister and former Union minister.

Omar Abdullah highlighted the alarming timing of the administrative decision, noting the recent threat to his father's life. On March 11, Farooq Abdullah narrowly escaped a point-blank shooting at a wedding function in Jammu. "The security at NC head-

quarters has not been reduced, but completely withdrawn," the chief minister stated. "That in itself is surprising, because it has barely been weeks since the attack on Farooq Abdullah. At the time, everyone said it should not have happened, and it is a matter of concern."

He questioned the logic behind leaving the headquarters vulnerable, specifically pointing out the frequency of his father's visits.

"Farooq Sahib visits that office two to three times a week. What is the compulsion? What is the reason that it had to be removed? If we come to know from the administration, it ▶ P11

ud-Din Bhat, Balwant Singh Mankotia and Qaysar Jamshaid Lone moved amendments on the resolution.

Justice (Retd) Hasnain Masoodi, moved a resolution which read, "This House resolves that all measures be taken by the Government to regularize the possession of State land and all types of Shamlat land in use of registered Private and Government educational institutions and till the regularization process is completed to allow such Educational institutions function from present premises without any objection on account of proprietary status of such land".

Responding to the resolution and concerns, the Minister stated that the government has already given extension to the private institutions and assured the Member that the government will look into the ▶ P11

## Govt's assurance prompt 3 MLAs to withdraw motion

**■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE**

**JAMMU:** Legislators, Nazir Ahmad Khan (Gurezi), Justice Hasnain Masoodi and Mubarak Gul withdrew their respective resolutions after assurances by the government.

Nazir Ahmad Khan (Gurezi) moved a resolution which read, "This House resolves that the promotion of employees especially in Education and Health Department may be based on at least two years' service in far flung areas".

Responding to the resolution, Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo, said that vacancies are being filled up expeditiously and requisite staff will be posted across all hard zones and far flung areas in coming days. MLAs Mir Saifullah, Nizam-

## Army rescue 34 persons trapped in rain

**SRINAGAR:** Army rescued 34 persons, including 30 students and four teachers, who were trapped in a school hostel in Baramulla district of Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday after heavy rainfall caused a sudden rise in water levels, officials said.

"Continuous and intense rainfall caused a sudden rise in water levels in a stream in the Watargam area of Rafiabad (Baramulla), leading to flooding in a local school hostel. As a result, 30 school children and four teachers were trapped inside the premises with no safe exit routes," the officials ▶ P11

## 5 high-risk glacial lakes categorised

**■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE**

**JAMMU:** At least five glacial lakes in the Kashmir Himalaya have "very high susceptibility" to glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs), even though they are not immediately unstable, Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said on Tuesday.

Speaking in the assembly, Abdullah said a preliminary geospatial analysis was conducted to map downstream exposure of glacial lakes, identifying habitations and critical infrastructure along potential flood paths in districts like Ganderbal, Shopian and Kulgam.

The study was recently conducted

by the University of Kashmir, published in the Journal of Glaciology, assessed 155 glacial lakes using geomorphic indicators such as lake expansion rate, dam stability and surrounding conditions.

According to the study, around 2,704 buildings, nearly 15 major bridges, road segments and at least one hydropower project could be affected in the event of a glacial lake outburst flood -- a high-magnitude catastrophic flood caused by the failure of a dam containing a glacial lake.

"The study identified Bramsar, Chirsar, Nundkol, Gangabal and Bhagsar lakes as falling under the 'very high susceptibility' ▶ P11

## LG urges youth to reconnect with roots, drive innovation

**■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE**

**JAMMU:** Jammu and Kashmir Lt Governor Manoj Sinha on Tuesday urged the youth to return to their

roots, cultivate new ideas and leverage cultural heritage to drive meaningful social change.

Speaking at the inaugural ceremony of 'Jammu Kashmir Cultural

Festival' here, Sinha emphasised that the culture and spiritual treasures of the Union Territory will play a vital role in shaping a brighter future for all.

He said the festival, organised by Shri Kailash Jyotish and Vedic Sansthan Trust, aims at preserving rich heritage, recommitting to folk arts, spiritual foundations, traditions and strengthening our identity.

"I am confident traditional performances will enrich the atmosphere with color and melody, cultural displays will carry our priceless legacy to all, and farmer awareness programs will honour the hands nourishing JK's soil," he said. The Lt Governor ▶ P11



## J&K Bank accords farewell to GM on superannuation

**■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE**

**SRINAGAR:** J&K Bank on Tuesday accorded a warm farewell to its General Manager Nishikant Sharma on his superannuation after rendering nearly 36 years of dedicated service to the institution.

The farewell meeting, chaired by MD & CEO Amitava Chatterjee, was attended by Executive Director Sudhir Gupta, Chief General Managers, General Managers and Deputy General Managers and other senior officers.



Over the course of his long career, GM Nishikant Sharma held several key positions in the Bank and served across diverse operational assignments in Jammu & Kashmir as ▶ P11