

"You have power over your mind —not outside events. Realize this, and you will find strength."

—Marcus Aurelius

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Inking the Truth

INBRIEF PM savours street food "Jhalmuri"

KOLKATA: Making an unscheduled stop during his campaign tour in West Bengal on Sunday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi savoured 'jhalmuri', a popular Bengali street food made of puffed rice, green chilies and other spices at Jhargram.

Bystanders and the vendor were surprised when the PM's convoy suddenly stopped before his modest shop in Jhargram and none but Modi walked up to the stall asking the price of 'jhalmuri'.

"Bhai, apka jhalmuri khalao, kitna? Accha se bana do jhalmuri (treat me with your jhalmuri; how much is it? Make it tasty)," Modi told the amazed shopkeeper.

The PM, who was accompanied by his security personnel, handed over the money to the vendor, insisting that he accept the money.

Asked by the shopkeeper if all the ► P11

Don't disturb others, won't spare attackers: Rajnath on Op Sindoor

'No power can stop us to implement women's quota'



RADHAPURAM: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Sunday said India does not disturb anyone but does not spare those who attack it, remarks made in reference to Operation Sindoor.

His comments came days ahead of the first anniversary of the Pahalgam attack in Jammu and Kashmir, where terrorists killed 26 tourists in an incident that sparked na-

tional outrage.

"Operation Sindoor—remember, we do not disturb anyone, but we do not spare anyone if they disturb us. Wait, your ambitions will come true, I assure you," Singh said while addressing a roadshow in support of the BJP candidate in Radhapuram for the Tamil Nadu Assembly elections.

Elections to 234 Assem-

blly seats in Tamil Nadu will be held on April 23.

Soon after the terror attack, India launched Operation Sindoor, targeting terror launchpads inside Pakistan.

Meanwhile, Rajnath Singh today slammed the Congress and DMK over the defeat of the amendment bill regarding the Women's Reservation Act in Parliament but said the government was determined to implement it and that "no power in the world can stop us," from doing so.

Addressing a poll rally in support of BJP candidate from Vasudevanallur, Ananthan Ayyasamy here in Tenkasi district for the April 23 Assembly polls, he lashed out at the ruling DMK over corruption and urged people to "give it a farewell" in the hustings.

"Recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi brought a bill in Parliament ► P11

Oppn 'played with fire', conspired to derail Women's Quota Bill: Puri

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

JAMMU: Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri on Sunday alleged that opposition parties led by Congress "hatched a conspiracy" to derail the Women's Reservation Bill, warning they have "played with fire" and will face serious consequences.

Addressing a press conference alongside Rajya Sabha MP and former National Commission for Women (NCW) chairperson Rekha Sharma here, Puri said even at the last minute, the government made efforts to accommodate the opposition's concerns to ensure passage of the bill.

The leaders asserted that the bill is not merely a political issue but a social cause aiming to ensure equitable representation, and maintained that opposition will face the consequences of public backlash.

Puri said Home Minister Amit Shah had appealed in the House for an hour to in-



corporate suggestions, but the offer was rejected.

"They were not interested in constructive engagement. This was a deliberate attempt to derail the discussion and stall a historic reform," Puri said.

He said all of this was part of a conspiracy by Congress and its alliance parties, including DMK, TMC and Samajwadi Party, and they do not want this to be implemented before the 2029 elections.

"However, after listening

carefully to the address to the nation by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday, it is clear that the national mood is still in favour of implementing this before 2029," the minister added.

Calling the bill a "transformative step" in India's democratic journey, the minister said the move seeks to transition from women-centric welfare to women-led development.

He reiterated that the government has been committed to 33 per cent reserva-

tion for women in legislatures since 2014, when it was clearly outlined in the BJP's manifesto.

Highlighting the government's track record, Puri pointed to schemes focused on women's empowerment, including the construction of around 11 crore toilets and nearly three crore houses under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, with ownership largely given to women, and plans underway to build an additional four crore houses.

On the contentious issue of delimitation, Puri said it is a necessary precondition for implementing reservation.

Dismissing opposition claims that southern states would be disadvantaged, he cited data presented in the Parliament showing proportional seat increases across states such as Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

Accusing opposition parties of spreading misinformation, the minister said, "There is no north-south ► P11

2 US nationals detained with satellite phone

SRINAGAR: Two United States (US) nationals were detained at the Srinagar International Airport on Sunday after a satellite phone was recovered from their luggage during routine screening, officials said.

The two have been detained for questioning, the officials said.

Officials said the device was seized and the matter was reported to security and intelligence agencies for further investigation. The use and possession of satellite phones without prior permission is restricted in the Union Territory due to security concerns.

Authorities are verifying the purpose of their ► P11

LeT operative 'Khargosh' tracked in Saudi Arabia with fake passport

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR/NEW DELHI: Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terrorist Umer Harris, alias 'Khargosh' (rabbit), is believed to be in Saudi Arabia after managing to escape the country using a forged passport issued in the name of Sajjad, claiming to be a resident of Rajasthan, officials said on Sunday.

The Srinagar Police, which is spearheading the investigation into the inter-state LeT terror module, has shared details with central intelligence agencies, raising concerns about systemic loopholes that allow such abuse, they said.

While the case, registered by the Jammu and Kashmir Police earlier this month, is likely to be taken over by the National Investigation Agency (NIA), details have been shared with the state police forces

concerned to facilitate urgent action and plug the gaps, they said.

Contrary to earlier reports stating that Harris hailed from Karachi, it has emerged that he is from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. He joined the LeT to evade police prosecution as he had several arson cases pending against him in Karachi. He was later pushed by the terror group into Jammu and Kashmir in 2012.

Harris earned the alias 'Khargosh' as he could hop from place to place in no time, evading the security dragnet.

According to investigations and interrogations of the arrested accused, Harris, after infiltrating the Kashmir Valley from the northern side, stayed at various locations in Bandipora and Srinagar and married the daughter of an LeT Over Ground Worker (OGW). ► P11

Five days mock drill cancelled

JAMMU: A five-day Civil Defence air raid and blackout mock drill scheduled to be held in the border district of Poonch from April 20 has been cancelled, officials said on Sunday, without assigning any reason for the decision.

"Routine mock drill (20-24 Apr) by Civil Defence and SDRF cancelled. No cause for alarm — this was just standard readiness training. Stay safe, stay vigilant!", the district information centre in Poonch said in a post on X.

According to an earlier communication issued by the Office of Deputy Commissioner Poonch, the exercise was planned from April 20 to 24 in coordination ► P11

Tourist spots under tight security at one-year mark of Pahalgam attack

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR: Security has been beefed up at tourist spots across Kashmir ahead of the one-year mark of the Pahalgam terror attack in which 26 people were shot dead by Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorists on April 22 last year, officials said here.

All security agencies have been asked to remain alert for any possible subversive activities on one-year mark of the Pahalgam terror anniversary, especially around tourist spots, they said.

Preparatory meetings to devise a foolproof security plan were held at the ground level while senior officers recently reviewed these arrangements, they said.

On April 22, 2025, a dastardly terrorist attack ripped through the quaint Baisaran meadow in Pahalgam, killing 25 tourists and a



local pony-ride operator.

The brutal attack carried out by Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorists led to an exodus of tourists from Jammu and Kashmir, prompting the authorities to shut nearly 50 tourist spots before reopening some of those in a phased manner after a security audit.

Now, about a year down the line, the famed meadows of Pahalgam are once again buzzing with tourist activity, with none ruing their decision to visit the 'Mini Switzerland' in Anantnag district that is overcoming the ► P11

Northern states see above-normal temp

NEW DELHI: Many places across northern states including Delhi on Sunday recorded above-normal temperatures crossing 40 degrees Celsius during the day, while the India Meteorological Department warned of heatwave conditions in parts of Uttar Pradesh in the coming days.

However, Jammu and Kashmir saw a dip in temperatures with fresh snowfall in the higher reaches and rainfall in the plains. A western disturbance is likely to provide similar relief with a wet spell in the mid and high hills of Himachal Pradesh on Monday, Friday and Saturday, according to the Shimla MeT office.

The national capital

recorded a maximum temperature of 40.1 degrees Celsius, 3.3 notches above the seasonal average, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

The minimum temperature settled at 21.7 degrees Celsius, 0.1 notches below the season's average, it said.

The weather department has predicted mainly clear skies for Monday with the maximum and minimum temperatures expected to touch 41 and 21 degrees Celsius, respectively.

In Uttar Pradesh, cities including Prayagraj, Varanasi, Sultanpur, Agra, Barabanki, Bahraich, Shahjahanpur and Hardoi recorded ► P11

ACB records 23K complaints; 12.6 per cent conviction rate

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

JAMMU: A conviction rate of just 12.6 per cent in corruption cases over the last six years has put a spotlight on the Anti-Corruption Bureau of Jammu and Kashmir, which sent 214 cases to various courts in the last six years but could manage only 27 convictions.

According to data provided by the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) in reply to an RTI query by Jammu-based activist Raman Sharma, in the last six years, the ACB received a massive volume of 23,798 complaints.

However, they led to the

registration of only 534 FIRs, representing a complaint-to-FIR conversion rate of just 2.24 per cent.

The bureau noted that complaints undergo rigorous scrutiny before they are registered as formal cases.

Data provided by the ACB, covering the period between January 1, 2020, and March 2026, show that out of 214 cases that reached a judicial conclusion, only 27 resulted in convictions.

According to the data, during the period under review, 72 persons were acquitted, 115 cases were not proved, 325 cases were chargesheeted, while 432 cases remained under inves-

tigation.

On the enforcement front, the ACB arrested 267 public servants, including 20 gazetted and 247 non-gazetted officers, indicating action across administrative ranks, the RTI reply said.

The bureau also conducted 208 trap cases, recovering more than Rs 1.22 crore in bribe money, the data showed.

Judicial outcomes, however, reflect significant challenges.

Of the cases decided, only 27 resulted in convictions, compared to 72 acquittals and 115 cases not proved, the reply said.

The data from ► P11

US to head to Pak today for talks with Iran, says Trump

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump said US negotiators will head to Pakistan on Monday for another round of talks with Iran, raising hopes of extending a fragile ceasefire set to expire by Wednesday even as Washington and Tehran remain in a standoff over the Strait of Hormuz.

Iran did not immediately confirm the talks but its chief negotiator, parliament speaker Mohammed Bagher Qalibaf, said in an interview aired on state television late Saturday that "there will be no retreat in the field of diplomacy," while acknowledging a wide gap remained between the sides.

The White House said Vice President JD Vance,

who led the first round of historic face-to-face talks last weekend, would lead the delegation to Pakistan with envoys Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner.

Pakistani authorities began tightening security in Islamabad. A regional official involved in the efforts said mediators were finalizing preparations and US advance security teams were already on the ground. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to discuss preparations with the media.

Iran on Saturday said it had received new proposals from the United States. It was unclear whether either side had shifted stances on issues that derailed ► P11

Mortar shell found near IB in Samba

JAMMU: An illumination mortar shell was recovered from an open field near the Border Out Post (BOP) along the International Border in Samba district of Jammu and Kashmir on Sunday, officials said.

The illumination round, meant to create artificial light over a large area at night, was noticed by a patrolling party of village defence guards in village Bhakha Chak near BOP Kandral in Ramgarh sector, they said, adding that a police party rushed to the spot and seized the shell.

Meanwhile, Samba Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Anuj Kumar ► P11

Char Dham Yatra begins as portals of Gangotri, Yamunotri temples unlock

DEHRADUN: The Char Dham Yatra began on Sunday with the opening of the portals of Gangotri and Yamunotri shrines in Uttarakhand on the occasion of Akshaya Tritiya after a six-month winter break.

The portals of the Gangotri temple opened at 12.15 pm and those of the Yamunotri temple opened at 12.35 pm amid the chanting of Vedic hymns.

Hundreds of devotees chanted religious slogans as the doors were thrown open.

The first prayers at both temples in Uttarakashi district were performed in the name of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhama attended the



opening ceremony at the Gangotri shrine and prayed for the prosperity of the country.

Dhama said the state government has made robust arrangements to ensure a safe and smooth pilgrimage. He urged devotees to support a

green and clean yatra.

In a first, restrictions have been imposed on the entry of non-Hindus to three shrines — Badrinath, Kedarnath and Gangotri. The Gangotri temple committee has mandated that non-sanatanis ► P11

Himachal Govt defers 30% salary of officials

SHIMLA: A portion of the salary of officers and employees of the Himachal Pradesh government has been deferred for a period of six months in a bid to efficiently manage financial resources, according to a notification issued by the Finance Department on Sunday.

According to the notification, the deferment will be effective from May, 2026 and is temporary in nature.

Thirty per cent of the salary of the chief secretary, additional chief secretaries, principal secretaries, director general of police, additional director general of police, principal chief con-

servator of forests and additional principal chief conservator of forests has been deferred.

Twenty per cent of the salary of the secretaries, heads of departments, inspector general of police, deputy inspector general of police, superintendent of police, police officers up to the level of SPs, chief conservator of forests, conservator of forests and other forest officers up to the district forest officer level have been deferred.

The payable and deferred components of salary will be reflected in the e-salary system and pay slips to ensure ► P11

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