

Whatever the mind of man can conceive and believe, it can achieve.

—Napoleon Hill

Inking the Truth

21 killed, 51 injured as bus plunges into 100m deep gorge in Udhampur

PM, CM announce ex-gratia of Rs 2 lakh

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

JAMMU: At least 21 people were killed and 51 injured on Monday when an overcrowded passenger bus plunged nearly 100 metres down a hillside in Udhampur district, crushing an auto-rickshaw before landing upside down on the road below, officials said.



An Army convoy passing along the hilly stretch led the rescue operations after the driver of the private bus lost control of the vehicle while negotiating a blind curve near the hilltop Kagort village in the Ramnagar area around 10 am, the officials said.

They said more than 65 passengers, including women and students, were on board, largely daily commuters travelling from Ramnagar to Udhampur.

The rescue operations proved to be extremely challenging as the bus was reduced to a mangled heap of iron, with its top portion almost completely torn off.

President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi condoled the loss of lives in the accident. Modi also announced an ex-gratia of Rs 2 lakh each for the families of those killed and Rs 50,000 for those injured.

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor (LG) Manoj Sinha and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah assured the families of the deceased and those injured of all possible assistance. Abdullah also announced an ex-gratia of Rs 2 lakh each for the next of kin of the deceased, Rs 1 lakh for those seriously injured and Rs 25,000 for those who sustained minor injuries. ■ P11

Omar assures action

JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Monday expressed deep sorrow over the loss of lives in a road accident in Udhampur district and assured that action would be taken against those found responsible after ascertaining the cause of the incident.

A passenger bus rolled down a hillside on Ramnagar-Udhampur road in the district on Monday, leaving 21 people dead and 51 others injured. The bus crushed an auto-rickshaw before landing upside down on the road. ■ P11

Omar slams BJP led Govt in Centre over 'unfulfilled' statehood promise

CM reviews work on 2.7-km Sungal tunnel



■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

JAMMU: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Monday hit out at the BJP-led central government over what he termed as its "unfulfilled promise" of restoring statehood to Jammu and Kashmir, and said there was "no clear answer" from it on the issue.

The chief minister also targeted the BJP over the issue of the implementation of

women's reservation in legislatures.

"There is no clear answer about the restoration of statehood in Jammu and Kashmir. They (BJP) say -- 'at the right time'. What does 'the right time' mean? I keep asking them -- tell us clearly. If you say it is your promise, if you have given your word, does your word have no value?"

"Should we consider your promises so light that you re-

peat them everywhere -- in the Supreme Court, in Parliament, in rallies, in elections-- and then step back?", Abdullah told a public rally in Nowshera border area of Rajouri district.

The chief minister urged the Centre to spell out a clear roadmap for restoring statehood.

"Explain to us what this 'right time' is, so that we can work towards it. Just like when we set exams for children -- we tell them what marks are needed to pass, for first division, for distinction. They know what they must achieve. Similarly, tell us what conditions need to be met so we can reach that goal," he said.

Asserting that his government was delivering on its commitments, Abdullah said, "We are fulfilling our promises. The promise you

Army Cmdr urges troops to adopt tech

JAMMU: Emphasising the need for constant evolution in modern warfare, Army Northern Commander Lt Gen Pratik Sharma on Monday encouraged the troops guarding the Line of Control (LoC) to continuously enhance their skills and effectively integrate emerging technologies.

The army commander was interacting with troops during his visit to units deployed in Krishna Ghati and Bhimber Gali sectors in Poonch district to review the anti-infiltration grid and assess operational preparedness along the LoC, Udhampur-based Northern Command said in a post on X.

According to the post, the army



Swami Vishwatmanand Saraswati Ji Maharaj leads Nasha Mukht Bharat Rally in Lal Chowk

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR: In order to aware the masses regarding the harmful outcomes drug abuse, Atal Akhada Peethadheeshwar Rajguru Acharya Mahamandaleshwar Shri Shri 1008 Shri Swami Vishwatmanand Saraswati Ji Maharaj led the Sant Samaj during a 'Nasha Mukht Bharat Rally' held at the iconic Ghanta Ghar in Lal Chowk area of Srinagar on Monday, drawing significant participation from the public.

Thousands of volunteers from Shri Shri Swami Vish-

watmanand Saraswati Ashram took out the rally in support of the ongoing 100-day 'Nasha Mukht Jammu Kashmir Abhiyaan', an initiative launched by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha to eradicate the drug menace from every corner of the Union Territory.

Prominent spiritual leader Mahant Rameshwar Dass Ji, head of Shri Ram Mandir in Purani Mandi, Jammu, was also present on the occasion, along with several other religious figures. The speakers called for united efforts by society, re-

ligious institutions, and the administration to eliminate drug abuse and guide youth towards a healthier and more constructive path.

The campaign aims to create widespread awareness about the harmful effects of substance abuse and mobilise collective efforts to curb its spread.

Of devotees, youth, and people from different sections of society joined the rally in large numbers, reflecting growing public concern over drug abuse. The participants carried placards and raised slogans ad-

vocating a drug-free society, emphasising the need for community participation in addressing the issue.

Many attendees appreciated the proactive role of the Sant Samaj, led by Swami Vishwatmanand Saraswati Ji Maharaj, in organising such an awareness drive in the Kashmir region. They noted that while the region has witnessed challenges due to terrorism in the past, the rising drug menace has emerged as a serious threat, particularly affecting the younger generation.

From cook to trader: Unusual 'career path' of LeT terrorist

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR/NEW DELHI: From a cook to plumber, and painter to electrician, Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terrorist Abdullah alias Abu Hureira, who had been tasked with setting up bases outside Jammu and Kashmir, even took share trading as his profession to blend with the masses in other parts of the country in pursuit of his sinister agenda, officials said on Monday.

Tracking his stay in various parts of the country, including Rajasthan, Haryana and Punjab, Abdullah, who was the oldest surviving LeT terrorist, gave a detailed picture about his stay in these states and told interrogators about the professions adopted by him to gel with the local population, the officials said.

These details emerged after Srinagar police busted a "deep-rooted" interstate LeT module and arrested five people, including Abdullah, who

had been on the run for 16 years.

The officials said that after undertaking menial jobs in Rajasthan, Abdullah, who had infiltrated into Jammu and Kashmir from the north side in 2010, took up plumbing work as he had some basic knowledge about it from Pakistan.

After getting in touch with the contacts of Umer Harris, known with the alias 'Khargosh' in the counter-terrorism grid in Jammu and Kashmir, he managed to procure an Aadhar card followed by a Permanent Account Number (PAN) card so that he could receive digital payments from his customers, the officials said.

Hailing from Kasur village in Pakistan's Punjab province, Abdullah, who was well-versed in Punjabi dialect, decided to shift his base to Amritsar but the fear of getting caught by security agencies restrained him from doing so.

After doing other jobs like that of a painter and electrician in

Doval discusses regional affairs with Saudi heads

RIYADH: National Security Advisor Ajit Doval has met Saudi Arabia's senior leaders and discussed the bilateral relations, the regional situation and other areas of mutual interests.

Doval, who reached Riyadh on Sunday, was received at the airport by India's Ambassador Suhel Khan and Saudi Arabia's Deputy Minister for Political Affairs Saud Al-Sati.

Doval held meetings with Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan, Energy Minister Abdulaziz bin Salman and National Security Advisor Musaed Al-Aiban.

During the meetings, the two sides discussed bilateral relations, the regional situation and other issues of mutual interests, the Indian Embassy in Saudi Arabia said in a post on X.

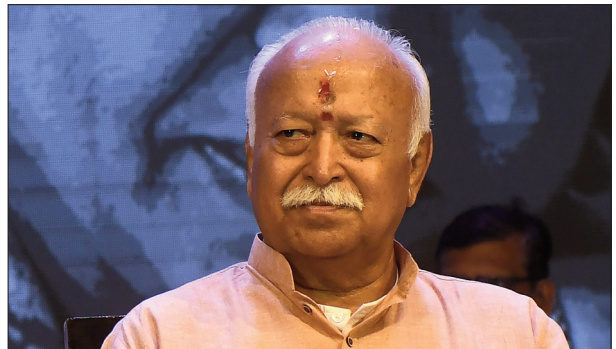
Doval's visit comes amid a possible second round of talks between the US and Iran this week in Pakistan to end the West Asia conflict.

The first round of talks between the US and Iran in Pakistan on April 11 and 12 concluded without any agreement. ■ P11

Mohan Bhagwat calls for greater promotion of Sanskrit in country

NEW DELHI: RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat on Monday made a strong pitch for the greater promotion of Sanskrit in the country, saying increase in its prevalence will not only enrich all other Indian languages and serve as a bridge between them, but also connect people with ancient thoughts and culture of Bharat.

Addressing an event organised here to inaugurate newly constructed central office of the Sanskrit Bharati, Bhagwat said the essence of the name 'Bharat' is not merely geographical; nor is it solely a political-economic entity. "Bharat is a tradition, a



foundation upon which life continues to flow. It is a tradition that sustains life across the entire cosmos, encompassing all its animate and inanimate constituents. The world remains in constant

need of this tradition; and fulfilling this need is the duty of those who identify themselves as Indians," he said.

For this, Bhagwat said that one has to "know and comprehend" ■ P11

Uncertainty looms over US-Iran talks in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: Uncertainty prevailed over the much-touted second round of peace talks between the US and Iran on Monday, amidst exhibitory brinkmanship by both sides.

The two sides are expected to meet in the coming days in Islamabad, for which Pakistani authorities have taken elaborate security measures.

A two-week ceasefire between the US and Iran is set to expire on Wednesday.

On Monday, Iran's Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Esmail Baqaei said that his country has yet to decide whether to attend the next round of talks with the US. Earlier, Iranian Parlia-

ment Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf said Tehran was continuing negotiations with the US but remained ready to take "necessary measures", amid fears of renewed escalation.

On the other side, US President Donald Trump said the US Navy targeted an Iranian ship trying to evade the blockade of the Strait of Hormuz.

Addressing a weekly press briefing in Tehran on Monday, Baqaei said, "As of now, while I am at your service, we have no plans for the next round of negotiation, and no decision has been made in this regard."

The foreign ministry spokesman ■ P11

DyCM Shinde builds house for Pahalgam victim's family

PAHALGAM: The family of a victim of the Pahalgam terror attack on Monday highlighted the support extended by Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, stating that he not only provided financial assistance but also built a house for them, fulfilling a promise made after the last year's tragedy.

Syed Haider Shah, father of Adil Hussain Shah, a pony-wallah who along with 25 tourists lost his life in the attack by a group of terrorists on April 22 last year, said they are also thankful ■ P11

SC asks for pending terror, drugs cases

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Monday asked all states and union territories to provide details of terror and narcotics cases being probed by Central and state agencies, including the NIA and the NCB, as a step towards setting up special exclusive courts for early disposal of the cases.

The top court asked the Centre to consider providing funds of Rs 1 crore each for setting up the courts in all states and UTs to prosecute cases lodged under the UAPA (the Unlawful Activities [Prevention] Act) and the NDPS Act (the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act). A bench comprising

Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joymalye Bagchi also asked Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati, appearing for the Centre, to consider releasing Rs 1 crore annually for ensuring smooth functioning of the special courts.

The suo motu case was fixed for further hearing on May 8.

On March 24, the apex court directed the establishment of special courts for cases investigated by the National Investigation Agency and those falling under the UAPA. Expanding the ambit, the CJI on Monday asked advocate generals of 17 states to furnish the details ■ P11