

**"The thing women have yet to learn is nobody gives you power. You just take it."**

—Roseanne Barr

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*Inking the Truth*

## NEET-UG: CBI focussing on source of leak

**NEW DELHI:** The CBI on Thursday secured the custody of five persons arrested in the NEET-UG exam leak case and apprehended two more suspects as officials said the agency is also looking into possible role of any insider in the National Testing Agency (NTA) in the irregularities.

The court which granted CBI the custody of the five accused for seven days said the allegations revealed the role of an "organised gang" involved in leaking and circulating confidential examination papers for monetary gain.

In Uttar Pradesh's Lakhimpur Kheri district, a 21-year-old NEET aspirant hanged himself in his house in Gangotrinagar locality over the cancellation of the exam, his father claimed.

This was Mishra's third NEET attempt, and he was highly confident of clearing the exam this time, his father said. Police said no suicide note was recovered from the room where Ritik's body was found hanging. **▶ P11**

## Rajnath cautions Pakistan against terrorism, attacks divisive politics



**JAIPUR:** Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday warned Pakistan against terrorism and said India would strike back decisively if provoked again.

Addressing a public gathering at Nagaur's Merta town after unveiling a statue of Rajput ruler Rao Duda, Singh said Operation Sindoor had sent a strong mes-

sage to Pakistan.

"Perhaps Pakistan will not dare to look at India with hostility again. But I want to say that if it does, what has not happened till now will happen," he said.

"From the beginning, our policy was not to provoke anyone. But if anyone provokes us, we do not spare them either," **▶ P11**

### We dominated escalation during Op Sindoor: CDS

**NEW DELHI:** Indian armed forces had superior situational awareness and better battlefield transparency during Operation Sindoor, and "dominated the escalation matrix on all four days" of the conflict, Chief of Defence Staff Gen Anil Chauhan said on Thursday.

His remarks, made during an interactive session at the 'Kalam and Kavach' defence conclave at the Manekshaw Centre here, came days after the country and the armed forces marked the first anniversary of the military action.

"We dominated the escalation matrix **▶ P11**

## LG inaugurates 'Shaurya Gatha' Complex at SM Hill in Tangdhar

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

**SRINAGAR:** Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Thursday inaugurated the 'Shaurya Gatha' Complex at SM Hill in Tangdhar, Karnah in Kupwara District. The initiative marked a significant milestone in the promotion of battlefield tourism, heritage preservation and border area development.

The Lieutenant Governor applauded Northern Command, Chinar Corps, and all officers, soldiers, engineers, workforce and local residents for the completion of the prestigious project in a short span of time. He said our brave sol-



diers laid down their lives to defend the motherland, and their courage and sacrifice should be instilled in every Indian as a powerful source of pride and inspiration.

"The dedication of our

forces and people is the true strength of the nation. The Shaurya Gatha Complex stands as a tribute to the valour and sacrifices of Indian soldiers. This initiative will create new **▶ P11**

## Xi warns Trump on Taiwan

**BEIJING:** Chinese President Xi Jinping told his US counterpart Donald Trump that not handling the Taiwan issue properly could trigger "clashes and even conflicts" between the two countries, as the leaders held wide-ranging talks on the Iran war, energy security and trade on Thursday.

After concluding the first round of talks in Beijing, which lasted for around two hours, Trump invited Xi and his wife to the White House on September **▶ P11**

## Red Fort blast: NIA files chargesheet against 10

**NEW DELHI:** Six months after a car explosion killed more than a dozen people near the Red Fort, the NIA on Thursday said it has filed a 7,500-page chargesheet against 10 accused and exposed a "jihadi conspiracy" being hatched by banned Ansar Ghazwat-ul-Hind, an Al-Qaeda offshoot.

According to a statement issued by the National Investigation Agency (NIA), the accused have been charged under various sections of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Explosive Substances Act, Arms Act, and Prevention of Damage to Public Property Act. The voluminous chargesheet was filed before

the designated NIA court at Patiala House against Aamir Rashid Mir, Jasir Bilal Wani, Dr Muzamil Shakeel, Dr Adeel Ahmed Rather, Dr Shaheen Saeed, Mufti Irfan Ahmad Wagay, Soyab, Dr Bilal Naseer Malla and Yasir Ahmad Dar.

The accused launched "Operation Heavenly Hind" aimed at overthrowing the Indian government and imposing Sharia rule, said the statement.

The Srinagar police had busted the blast-linked terror module -- dubbed as 'doctor' or 'white-collar' module because of the involvement of medical professionals -- after a meticulous investigation into terror group's posters found on the city's **▶ P11**

## Cabinet clears Rs 361 Cr ISWM project at Achan

Relaxed norms allow SDH Hazratbal upgradation

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

**SRINAGAR:** The Council of Ministers headed by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has accorded approval for the establishment of an 800 TPD Integrated Solid Waste Management (ISWM) Project at Achan, Srinagar, at an estimated cost of Rs 361 crore.

The decision was taken during the 6th meeting of the Council of Ministers with the objective of strengthening scientific waste management infrastructure in Srinagar and ensuring sustainable disposal and processing of mu-

nicipal solid waste in an environmentally responsible manner.

The proposed Integrated Solid Waste Management Project is aimed at enhancing the waste processing capacity of Srinagar city through modern and efficient systems for collection, segregation, treatment and disposal of solid waste. The project is expected to significantly improve sanitation standards, reduce environmental pollution and contribute towards cleaner and healthier urban surroundings.

The establishment of the

**100-DAY  
NASHA MUKT  
JK ABHIYAAN**

**STOP  
DRUGS**

**DAY 34** The EARTH NEWS joins with the campaign launched by Honourable Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha Ji to eradicate drug menace from union territory of J&K.

## Illegal structure on State land razed in NDPS case

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

**SAMBA:** In a significant action against the narcotics network and illegal encroachments, Samba Police in close coordination with the Civil Administration, on Thursday carried out a demolition drive at Badheri Nanke Chak tehsil and district Samba.

During the operation, a residential "Kacha Kulla" belonging to a notorious drug peddler namely Abdul Habib @ Bheem S/o Maon Din R/o Ladana tehsil Ramnagar district Udhampur presently residing at Bad-



heri Nanke Chak tehsil & district Samba, constructed over State land was demolished in accordance with law.

It is pertinent to mention here that the accused Abdul Habib @ Bheem S/o Maon Din is a notorious drug peddler and is currently lodged at the Central Jail Kot Bhalwal Jammu under PITNDPS Act.

He is involved in multiple cases registered under the NDPS Act, details of which are as under FIR No. 231/2025 u/s 8/21/22 NDPS Act of PS Samba; FIR number 17/2024 **▶ P11**

## House worth Rs 1.2 Cr attached in Noorbagh

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

**SRINAGAR:** Continuing its sustained crackdown against drug trafficking and narcotics-related activities under the ongoing Nasha Mukta Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan, Srinagar Police has attached a residential house along with land worth approximately ₹1.20 crore belonging to a notorious drug peddler in the jurisdiction of Police Post Noorbagh of Police Station Safakadal.

The attached property belongs to Adil Manzoor Bhat @ Watson S/o Manzoor Ahmad Bhat R/o Pamposh Colony, Noorbagh, Srinagar, who is involved in Case FIR No. 48/2022 under sections 8/21/22 of the NDPS Act registered at Police Station Safakadal. The accused is presently on bail granted by the Hon'ble Court.

The attachment has been carried out under Section 68-F of the **▶ P11**

## Lady peddler among two held for narco-trafficking

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

**SRINAGAR:** Jammu and Kashmir Police has arrested two drug peddling suspects, including a woman, with alleged links to an interstate narco-trafficking network, an official said on Thursday.

Qazigund police station in Kulgam district busted the narcotics trade after a naka team deployed at Churrat near Kund Mode apprehended a suspicious person identified as

Shakoor Khan, a resident of Delhi, and presently staying in Khanabal Batpora area of the south Kashmir district.

During a search, approximately 6.9 grams of heroin-like substance was recovered from his possession, leading to the registration of a case under provisions of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act.

During sustained investigation, police established backward linkage **▶ P11**

## DGP issues stern warning to narco-terror networks



■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

**SRINAGAR:** Jammu and Kashmir Police chief Nalin Prabhakar on Thursday issued a stern warning to Pakistan-based gangster Shahzad Bhatti for "pumping narcotics" into India, saying he, along with his associates, will be hunted and hounded,

and his evil infrastructure will be decimated.

"A warning to Pakistan-based Shahzad Bhatti who is ISI's acolyte and partner in pumping narcotics into India; we will hunt and hound you and your associates, and decimate your evil infrastructure," the Jammu and Kashmir Director General of Police (DGP) said at a press conference here.

He said while firmly focusing on combating Pakistan-sponsored terrorism, Jammu and Kashmir Police has paid equal attention to the menace of narco-terrorism during the intensive anti-drug campaign -- 'Nasha Mukta Jammu Kashmir Abhiyan' -- launched by Lt Governor Manoj **▶ P11**

## 111 killed as storm batter UP

**LUCKNOW:** At least 111 people were killed and 72 injured after a strong storm and heavy rain pounded several districts of Uttar Pradesh, uprooting trees and damaging houses, an official statement said on Thursday.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath took cognisance of the loss of lives and damage caused by the unseasonal rain, thunderstorms and lightning on Wednesday and directed officials to ensure relief reaches the affected families within 24 hours.

In a statement, the Relief Commissioner's office said, "Due to bad weather **▶ P11**

# NTA's Audit Loophole: How Weak Public Scrutiny Became a Risk to Exam System



**T**he National Testing Agency (NTA) was created to bring professionalism, transparency and reliability to India's entrance examinations. But its structure as a government-created society, without a clearly visible stand-alone public CAG audit of its systems, finances, vendors and risk controls, has left a serious accountability gap. In the aftermath of NEET-related controversies, that gap must be treated not as a technicality, but as one of the structural reasons why mismanagement and paper-leak risks could grow.

- NTA was created as a society under the Societies Registration Act, 1860, not through a dedicated Act of Parliament.
- NTA received a one-time government grant of ₹25 crore and was expected to become financially self-sustaining.
- NTA has conducted more than 240 examinations involving more than 5.4 crore students since inception.
- NEET-UG 2024 involved more than 24 lakh registered candidates across 4,750 examination centres.
- Parliamentary committee observations raised concerns regarding NTA's operational performance and vendor dependence.
- A High-Level Committee headed by former ISRO Chairman K. Radhakrishnan was constituted after the NEET-UG 2024 controversy.

When the NTA was approved by the Union Cabinet, it was presented as a specialised, autonomous and self-sustained testing organisation that would conduct entrance examinations for higher educational institutions. The Cabinet decision said NTA would be registered

as a society under the Societies Registration Act, 1860, receive a one-time government grant of Rs 25 crore to start operations, and thereafter become financially self-sustainable. It was also expected to benefit around 40 lakh students and relieve

AICTE from the burden of conducting entrance examinations.

That promise was large. The accountability structure built around it was not equally strong.

Today, NTA handles examinations that decide the future of millions of stu-

dents. A government reply placed in Parliament stated that NTA, established in 2018 as a specialised body for entrance examinations, had conducted more than 240 examinations involving more than 5.4 crore students. The same document recorded that NEET-UG 2024 alone in-

volved more than 24 lakh registered candidates and more than 23 lakh appearing candidates across 4,750 centres in 571 cities, including 14 cities abroad.

Yet despite this enormous public function, there does not appear to be any prominently available **▶ P11**