

Either write something worth reading or do something worth writing.
—Benjamin Franklin

Top CBSE officials shunt out

NEW DELHI: The government on Tuesday removed two top CBSE officials following alleged irregularities in the Class 12 digital evaluation system and ordered a probe by a high-powered committee to investigate how the national educational board procured these marking services. Simultaneously, a 17-year-old student from Jharkhand affected by the CBSE's online marking system, appeared before a parliamentary panel where he pointed out the anomalies in the tendering process of the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) to select vendors for online marking and put forth a set of questions for the board.

Sarthak Sidhant, who himself appeared in the board examination, presented a seven-page copy of his findings before the Parliamentary Committee for Education, Women, Children, Youth and Sports, chaired by Congress MP Dignvijaya Singh. The CBSE, meanwhile, said "malicious" ▶ P11

3 cloudbursts hit Doda, Kishtwar Poonch; trigger floods, blockades

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

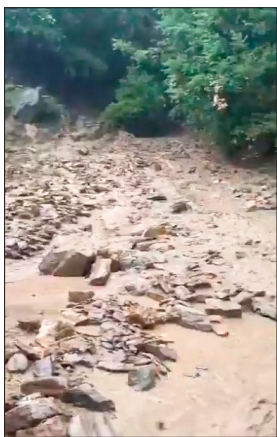
JAMMU: Heavy rain triggered three cloudbursts and multiple flash floods in Jammu and Kashmir's Doda, Kishtwar and Poonch districts on Tuesday, blocking roads, inundating residential areas and trapping vehicles under debris, officials said.

No loss of life has been reported so far, they added.

Union Minister Jitendra Singh and Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha are closely monitoring the situation, with emergency teams deployed across affected areas.

Two cloudbursts were reported in Kishtwar district -- the first in the Gahan area of Sarthal and the second in Machhipal -- while another cloudburst struck the Thathri area of Doda district, triggering flash floods.

In Doda, flash floods swept through parts of Thathri, trapping several parked vehicles in debris and forcing authorities to shift residents of houses into



Lightning strike kills woman

JAMMU: A woman was killed after she was struck by lightning in Doda district on Tuesday, officials said. The deceased has been identified as Pinki Devi, a resident ▶ P11

which floodwaters had entered. Mudslides and debris were also deposited on the highway passing through the Thathri market area.

Flash floods triggered by heavy rain also affected the Sabzian-Ghorayank area of Mandi in Poonch district, depositing debris near a school building. No loss of life or property was reported there, officials said.

Union Minister Singh said he spoke to Kishtwar Deputy Commissioner Pankaj Sharma immediately after receiving information about the incidents.

"Two cloudburst incidents were reported in district Kishtwar today. The first occurred in the Gahan area of Sarthal, while the second was reported from Machhipal," Singh said in a post on X.

According to immediate field reports, there were no casualties, injuries or damage to property at either location, he added.

Talking to reporters in Kishtwar, Deputy ▶ P11

Telangana Statehood Day celebrated at Lok Bhavan

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR: The Statehood Day of Telangana was celebrated in Jammu Kashmir Lok Bhavan in the presence of Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, earlier on Tuesday. Speaking on the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor said that this is a remarkable coincidence that both Jammu Kashmir and Telangana are considered as sacred lands of Lord Shiva.

He also emphasized on rich literary traditions of Telangana and said the great figures in this field inspired and awakened the society.

"From the 11th century



verses of Malliya Rechanna to the poetic imagination of modern figures such as Atreya and Dasarathi Krishnamacharyulu, 'Telangana's literary tradition has enriched Indian literature.

Since ancient times, Telangana's great luminaries have undertaken extraordinary efforts to awaken social consciousness and advance the social reforms," the Lieutenant Governor said. ▶ P11

Srinagar airport to remain shut for 15 days

SRINAGAR: The Srinagar International Airport will suspend all flight operations for 15 days starting October 1 to undergo crucial runway maintenance and repair work, officials said on Tuesday.

The two-week shutdown is expected to deal a massive blow to Jammu and Kashmir's tourism sector, as it directly clashes with the peak Durga Puja holiday season.

The Valley traditionally witnesses a massive influx of tourists from West Bengal during this ▶ P11

CM receives 1st batch of Hujjaaj

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today received the first batch of Hujjaaj returning from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia after performing Haj-2026 at Srinagar International Airport.

The first incoming Haj flight landed at Srinagar Airport carrying 144 pilgrims, including 74 men and 70 women. The Chief Minister warmly welcomed the pilgrims and congratulated them on the successful completion of the sacred pilgrimage.

Interacting with the returning Hujjaaj, the Chief Minister expressed hope that their prayers and spiritual experiences would contribute towards peace, prosperity and well-being of the people of Jammu & Kashmir and the nation as a whole.

He also enquired about the arrangements made for the pilgrims during their stay in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia ▶ P11

Mehbooba, Omar spar over call for 'political' unity in J-K

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR: A call for political unity in Jammu and Kashmir devolved into a public spat on Tuesday after PDP president Mehbooba Mufti claimed Chief Minister Omar Abdullah ignored her meeting requests, a charge Abdullah swiftly denied and accused her of misrepresenting facts to score political points.

In a letter posted on social media addressed to the chief minister and leaders across the political spectrum, including the BJP, Mehbooba urged Jammu and Kashmir's fractured political leadership to take a cue from Ladakh's recent success and unite to safeguard the region's special identity and constitutional rights.

However, the call for solidarity was immediately overshadowed by a war of words over political etiquette.

In her letter, Mehbooba claimed she was forced to write publicly because she had sought an appointment with Abdullah, but "due to his preoccupation, it has not been possible."

"Therefore, I am taking the liberty of writing to you since time is running out and we cannot afford to delay things any further," the former chief minister said.

Abdullah hit back swiftly, accusing the PDP chief of misrepresenting facts to score political points.

"Mehbooba Mufti Sahiba, we spoke on Saturday when you asked to meet. I told you I was in Pahalgam on Sunday and would get in touch on Monday or Tuesday to fix to meet.

"Your letter gives the impression that I've kept you waiting for an appointment for weeks on end, which is clearly not the case. Be that as it may, your letter to me is now in ▶ P11

J&K Bank ties up with SMVDU for banking solutions to employees

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

JAMMU: Continuing its efforts to strengthen institutional partnerships and extend value-added banking solutions to employees of reputed organisations, J&K Bank today signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University (SMVDU), Kakryal, Katra, under its Corporate Salary Package (CSP). The agreement will enable the University's employees to avail a host of customised banking benefits and preferential financial services designed to enhance their banking experience and financial well-being.

The MoU was signed at the office chamber of the Vice Chancellor, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University, with Registrar Ajay Kumar Sharma and Zonal Head (Udhampur) Lalit Prakash signing the



agreement on behalf of the University and J&K Bank respectively in presence of Vice Chancellor Prof. (Dr.) Pragati Kumar, Finance Officer Kajal Jasrotia, Cluster Head Reasi Amit Bargartha, Chief Manager Ashish Gupta and Branch Head Katra Kapil Nanda.

Speaking on the occasion, Zonal Head Lalit Prakash said, "This MoU with Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University reflects our continued endeavour to strengthen long-standing institutional relationships while delivering customised financial solutions that add ▶ P11

CJI swears in 5 new SC Judges

NEW DELHI: Chief Justice of India Surya Kant on Tuesday administered the oath of office to five new judges of the Supreme Court, taking the strength of judges at the top court to 37, the highest ever.

The CJI administered the oath of office to justices Sheel Nagu, Shree Chandrashekhar, Sanjeev Sachdeva, Arun Palli, and V Mohana.

The swearing-in ceremony was held in the apex court premises.

The strength of judges at the apex court will now be 37, one short of the upgraded sanctioned strength of 38.

The Centre on ▶ P11

Litchi cultivation gains ground as farmers reap higher returns

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

JAMMU: Farmers in the Jammu region are increasingly turning to litchi cultivation under the high-density plantation (HDP) programme, attracted by better yields and annual earnings of around Rs 24,000 to Rs 30,000 from a kanal of land, officials said.

The Jammu and Kashmir administration has set a target of converting over 3,200 kanals of conventional litchi orchards into high-density plantations over the next few years to boost productivity and farmers' income, they noted.

"Farmers in the region are increasingly turning to the cultivation of litchi under the HDP programme. Farmers can earn an



annual income of around Rs 24,000 to Rs 30,000 from a kanal (0.125 acre) of land. Apart from its profitability, litchi also has significant nutritional value," Director Horticulture Jammu Gul Syed said.

Scores of farmers have taken up the cultivation of the litchi in vast lands on the outskirts of Jammu city, officials added.

Syed said the administration would provide all necessary support to growers, including assistance in the marketing of litchi and other fruits. ▶ P11

100-DAY NASHA MUKT JK ABHIYAAN

DAY 53

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

SSP Anuj Kumar reviews NDPS cases; stresses focus to curb drug trafficking

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

SAMBA: Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Samba, Anuj Kumar, IPS on Tuesday chaired a Crime Review Meeting at the District Police Office Samba to assess the progress of investigations in cases registered under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act and to formulate strategies for further strengthening anti-narcotics efforts in the district.



The meeting was attended by Addl SP Samba, all SDPOs, SHOs, Investigating Officers (IOs) of NDPS cases and other officers of the district.

During the meeting, SSP Samba stressed the need for a more focused and intelligence-driven approach to dismantle narcotics networks rather than limiting investigations to individual offenders. He directed all Investigating Officers to always establish backward and forward linkages in every NDPS case so as to identify the original suppliers, financiers, transporters, facilitators, distributors and end-level peddlers ▶ P11

Campaign against drug trafficking 170 cases registered, 202 held in 50-day crackdown

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

JAMMU: In the first 50 days of Jammu and Kashmir's campaign against drug trafficking, 176 cases were registered under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act and 202 accused persons were arrested or detained, police said on Tuesday.

The police's zero-tolerance policy towards narcotics, backed by intelligence gathering, enforcement

measures, community participation and legal action, has yielded significant results in curbing the drug menace, Jammu Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Joginder Singh said.

Under the 'Nasha Mukta Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyaan', the police seized 5,533 kg of heroin, commonly known as chitta, worth Rs 16.60 crore during the period, he said.

In addition, 3,250 kg of poppy straw worth around Rs 87,000, 29,267 kg of

ganja valued at about Rs 8.78 lakh and 1 kg of opium worth nearly Rs 27,000 were also recovered, he added.

The SSP said that a notorious drug offender was detained under the Prevention of Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (PIT-NDPS) Act as part of efforts to target habitual offenders and dismantle narcotics networks.

Highlighting the financial investigation and asset-tracing component ▶ P11

Notorious drug peddler detained

RAJOURI: District Police on Tuesday detained a notorious drug peddler under the Prevention of Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (PIT-NDPS) Act in Rajouri district and lodged him in jail, officials said.

The accused has been identified as Nahid Choudhary, a resident of Peer Kanju in the district.

Officials said that as the accused is involved in multiple cases of drug peddling, the competent authority issued ▶ P11

Property attached in anti-drug action



■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

PULWAMA: In its continued efforts to curb drug trafficking and dismantle the financial networks of narcotics peddlers, Police

in Pulwama has attached a double-storey residential house worth ₹19.65 lakh belonging to a drug peddler involved in an NDPS case. The attached property comprises a ▶ P11

Illegal drug cultivations eradicated across Valley

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR: Continuing its sustained campaign against narcotics cultivation and drug abuse under the ongoing Nasha Mukta Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyaan, J&K Police carried out anti-drug enforcement operations in Baramulla, Sopore and Anantnag districts, leading to the destruction of wild cannabis and illegally cultivated poppy crops.

In Baramulla, Police, in coordination with local residents, conducted a destruction drive at Check Jamal Mir, Palhalan, where wild cannabis spread over ap-

proximately one kanal of state land was identified and destroyed, preventing its potential misuse. The operation also served as an opportunity to sensitize the local population about the harmful effects of narcotic substances and the importance of community participation in combating the drug menace.

In Anantnag, acting on specific information, a joint team comprising Police, an Executive Magistrate and officials from the Agriculture Department detected illegal poppy cultivation in an orchard at Kapran, Verinag. The crop was destroyed on the spot after ▶ P11