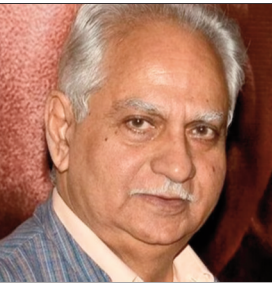


Kabul rejects Pak's claim on Masood Azhar

NEW DELHI: The Taliban regime has dismissed Pakistan's repeated claims that Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) founder Masood Azhar is operating from Afghanistan, with a senior Afghan Foreign Ministry official confirming that he is not in the country. Kabul reiterated that Afghan territory will not be used against any other nation. Islamabad has long maintained that Azhar fled to Afghanistan, particularly as it faces pressure from the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) to crack down on terror groups and their leadership. The Paris-based global watchdog is set to review Pakistan's anti-terrorism efforts at its upcoming plenary. Azhar remains wanted in India for major terror attacks, including the 2001 Parliament strike, the **► P11**

IFFJK 2026 Ramesh Sippy hopes to shoot films in J&K



■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR: "Sholay" director Ramesh Sippy said he has been coming to Kashmir since 1964 and hopes that he and other filmmakers will get to shoot many more films in the Valley. The director, whose work also includes "Shaan" and "Saagar" among others, is also looking forward to watch movies at the International Film Festival of Jammu and Kashmir (IFFJK).

HC sets aside discharge order 'Secessionist slogans alongside separatist leader attract UAPA'

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR: The High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh has set aside the discharge of an accused in a UAPA case stating that secessionist sloganeering in a mob in the presence of the head of a banned separatist organisation prima facie falls under the definition of unlawful activity. A division bench headed by acting Chief Justice Sanjeev Kumar set aside the discharge of Mohammad Yousuf Lone in a 2013 UAPA case by the Additional District and Sessions Judge (Designated Special Court under NIA Act) Kupwara. "The sloganeering for secession, raised by an accused leading a mob in the company of the head of a proscribed separatist organisation, coupled with incitement of the public and violence against security forces, is capable, on a prima facie appreciation, of falling squarely within this definition," the bench observed in its order. According to the case, a mob headed by Mohammad Yousuf Lone and Late Syed Ali Shah Geelani, chairman of the banned Hurriyat Conference, came out of Jamia Masjid in Kupwara **► P11**

Hybrid terrorist arrested

SRINAGAR: Security forces on Wednesday busted a terror module run by an ex-terrorist in Kupwara district of Jammu and Kashmir, police said. Police in Handwara received reliable information regarding the activities of an ex-terrorist who was operating as a "hybrid terrorist" as part of a module of the banned Hizbul Mujahideen (HM) in the Handwara-Kupwara area, a spokesperson said. "Hybrid terrorist" refers to an unlisted, radicalised individual who performs a specific subversive or violent task assigned by his **► P11**

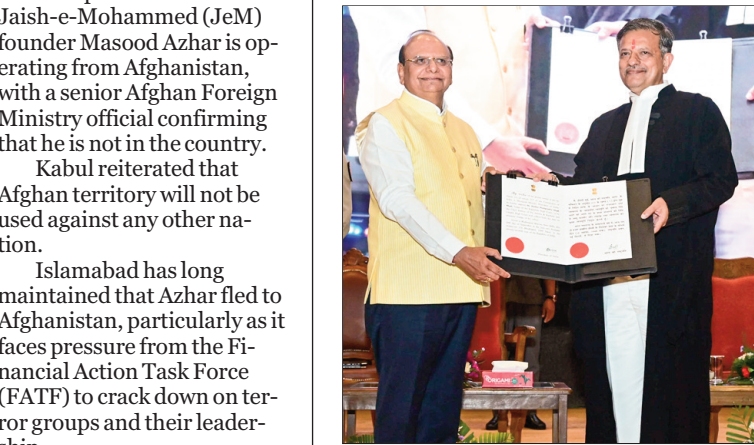
'Floating Cinema' draws big crowds

SRINAGAR: Cinema has found an extraordinary setting in Kashmir, as the tranquil waters of world famous Dal Lake have been transformed into a floating theatre during the first International Film Festival of Jammu & Kashmir (IFFJK). In a setting where the lake, mountains and city lights come together, audiences are experiencing films on a large floating screen, with the banks of Dal Lake serving as an open-air auditorium. The initiative has emerged as one of the most distinctive attractions of the four-day festival that began on September 07, giving the celebration of cinema a setting deeply connected with Kashmir's visual and cinematic heritage. The Floating Cinema opened on the first day of the festival with the screening of the evergreen 1961 film Jungle. The screening drew audiences to the lakefront, creating a memorable spectacle as a classic Hindi film played out against the waters of Dal Lake. **► P11**

JAI MATA DI

Dr Pushpendra Singh Bhati sworn in as Chief Justice of J-K, Ladakh High Court

Justice Bhati's journey began at Rajasthan HC



■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR: Dr. Justice Pushpendra Singh Bhati was sworn in as the 39th Chief Justice of the High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh at a solemn function held at SKUAST, Srinagar, on Wednesday. The oath of office was administered to

Dr. Justice Bhati by Vinai Kumar Saxena, Lieutenant Governor of UT of Ladakh with additional charge of UT of Jammu & Kashmir. The proceedings were conducted by Shashanka Ala, Secretary to Lieutenant Governor, UT of Ladakh, while the Warrant of Appointment of the Chief Justice was read out by M. K. Sharma, Registrar General, High Court of J&K and Ladakh. The occasion was graced by the Chief Minister of the UT of J&K, Judges of the High Court of J&K and Ladakh along with their spouses, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Cabinet Ministers, Members of Parliament, Advisor to Chief Minister of UT of J&K, Chairperson J&K Waqf Board, State Election Commissioner, former Chief Justices and Judges of the High Court and a distinguished gathering representing the judiciary, Bar, civil and police administration and academia. A large number of sitting and former Chief Justices and Judges from several High Courts across the country, particularly from Rajasthan besides the High **► P11**

Man dies in custody, family alleges torture

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

JAMMU: A 32-year-old man died after allegedly falling unconscious at Chakroi police post in R S Pura sector near here early Wednesday, triggering protests by locals and family members who alleged custodial torture and sought an impartial probe and compensation. Superintendent of Police, headquarters, Anna Sinha who rushed to the spot to pacify the protesters said both departmental and magisterial inquiries were ordered into the death, assuring that any wrongdoing or lapses found during the probe would invite action as per law. Official sources said four police personnel posted at the police post were attached to the headquarters following the incident. The deceased, Uttam Chand, a resident of Rakh village, was picked up by the police from his house in the early hours following a complaint and taken to Chakroi police post where he fell unconscious and subsequently taken to the Sub-district Hospital R S Pura at around 4 am, the sources said. Chand was referred to Government Medical College Jammu but died on way to the hospital, they said, adding the body was shifted to a mortuary for postmortem. Following the death, the family members and relatives of the deceased staged a massive protest, demanding clarity over the circumstances leading to the man's death and seeking appropriate action. Talking to reporters after trying to pacify **► P11**

NC, Cong at loggerheads over full Vande Mataram rendition

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR: Tensions appear to be growing within Jammu and Kashmir's ruling alliance, with the National Conference pushing back against ally Congress on Wednesday over the full rendition of Vande Mataram at an official state event. The National Conference (NC) said it was a "statutory obligation" to play the full national song at a state event and that no one would be forced to sing. The controversy erupted after the unabridged version of the national song was played at the ongoing International Film Festival of Jammu and Kashmir (IFFJK) in the presence of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and NC president Farooq Abdullah on Monday. The Congress, which provides outside support to the NC-led government in the Union territory and shares a broader national alignment under the opposition INDIA bloc, publicly expressed strong disapproval over the incident. The Congress has six MLAs in the 90-member Jammu and Kashmir **► P11**

Clerk nabbed for accepting Rs 20K bribe

JAMMU: The Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) on Wednesday arrested a clerk posted in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district for allegedly accepting a bribe of Rs 20,000, officials said. The accused has been identified as Khadam Husain, who was posted in the Treasury Office in Kalakote, they said. According to the ACB, it received a written complaint from a retired fourth-class employee of the health department, who alleged **► P11**

Dr Jitendra launches advanced ocean research vessel ORV Sagar Manthan

KOLKATA: Marking a historic milestone in India's journey toward self-reliance in oceanographic science and maritime technology, the state-of-the-art Ocean Research Vessel (Yard 3041), officially named ORV Sagar Manthan, was launched today at the Rishi Bankim Shipyard, Kolkata. Designed, engineered, and constructed by defense public sector undertaking Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers Limited (GRSE) for the National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR), under the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES), the vessel was officially launched through virtual presence by Dr. Jitendra Singh, Hon'ble Minister of Earth Sciences, Government of India, with his spouse Manju Singh, who named the vessel, keeping with the tradition. The event was held in the august presence of Dr T. Srinivasa Kumar, Secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences, Government of India, who was joined by his spouse, Mrs Kavita Ellanti, for the ship launch in Kolkata. Minister highlighted National Pride, Global Ocean Geopolitics, and Atmanirbharta. Delivering the keynote address (virtual), Dr Jitendra Singh, Minister of Earth Sciences, termed the occasion a "red letter day" for NCPOR, the Ministry, and the nation. He praised the team for achieving the launch within just two years of contract signing and barely five months after keel laying, hailing it as an **► P11**

Terror Funding Case Delhi HC asks NIA If Er Rashid can get bail with stringent conditions

NEW DELHI: The Delhi High Court on Wednesday asked the National Investigation Agency whether Bara-mulla MP Sheikh Abdul Rashid alias Engineer Rashid, who is in jail in a terror funding case, could be released on bail with stringent conditions. A bench of Justices Prathiba M Singh and Vikas Mahajan asked the NIA counsel to get instructions on the issue and listed the matter on November 3. The bench said there was no doubt that Rashid was an influential person as he has become a member of Parliament. "The court is putting to you -- the biggest threat from him is his physical presence in Kashmir because he has a lot of local influence. Suppose there is stringent condition that he will remain only in Delhi, what is your (NIA) response? That he will find a place of residence and remain only in Delhi," the court said. "NIA counsel to take instructions on whether the applicant (Rashid) can be released on bail under stringent conditions, including the condition to remain in Delhi," the bench added. It noted that he has been in custody for almost seven years and there are a total of 240 witnesses in the case and the trial would take a long time to conclude. The court was hearing arguments on Rashid's plea seeking bail in the terror case lodged under the provisions of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. During the hearing, NIA's counsel opposed the bail contending that there was sufficient evidence on record to show that Rashid was prima facie guilty. He argued that the allegations made against Rashid were serious in nature and he has allegedly **► P11**

Suvendu vows to 'uproot' forces raising 'Kashmir wants freedom'

KOLKATA: West Bengal Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari on Wednesday vowed to "uproot" forces raising slogans such as "Kashmir wants freedom" and "red salute" on Jadavpur University campus, asserting that he would not tolerate any insult to the saffron colour. Addressing a gathering outside the campus after leading the 3-km 'Gerua Samman Yatra' from Golpark, Adhikari described the varsity as the land of Sri Aurobindo. "I will not tolerate the insult of saffron. I have given a clear message. The West Bengal chief minister knows how to wipe out 'Kashmir Mange Azadi' and 'red salute' from Jadavpur," he said. "I have taken a vow that from Jadavpur, the land of Sri Aurobindo and a centre of excellence, I will uproot those who raise 'Kashmir Mange Azadi' slogans and those who have supported the 'kisan' (sic) movement," he added. Adhikari announced he would visit the area again, saying those who insult saffron should be "taught a lesson" through religious programmes. "I will come again to teach them a lesson through recitation of the Gita and the Hanuman Chalisa," he said. "This is the land of Swami Vivekananda, and saffron will remain here," he added. Dressed in saffron and carrying a saffron flag, Adhikari led the procession, which was joined by a large number of monks, including 'Naga Sadhus', and BJP workers, chanting 'Jai Shri Ram'. "We have **► P11**



from Jadavpur, the land of Sri Aurobindo and a centre of excellence, I will uproot those who raise 'Kashmir Mange Azadi' slogans and those who have supported the 'kisan' (sic) movement," he added. Adhikari announced he

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