

BLUE MOON
Banquets & Conventions
THE BANQUET WITH A DIFFERENCE

National Highway, Near Thandi Khul, Jammu
Contact: 9886035550, 9886035551

STATE TIMES

THE BOLD VOICE OF J&K

J.K. PUBLIC SCHOOL
KUNJWANI, JAMMU
The School with a Difference

SOWING SKILLS
SHAPING INDIA

RNI No. : 66908/96
Regd. No. L-29/JK-346/2025-27

Vol. 31 Issue 56 • Jammu • Thursday • February 26, 2026 • Pages 12 • ₹ 3.00

Air surcharge 50 paise for Leh

03 Union Govt need to have a relook at composition of National Commission for Minorities

10 Ranji Final: Pundir, Hassan help J&K gain control

10 J&K teams shine at 46th Sub-Junior National Volleyball Championship

Website : www.statetimes.in, Email: statetimes1@gmail.com

Modi at Knesset: India backs Gaza peace plan, declares 'terrorism anywhere threatens peace everywhere'



PM Narendra Modi addressing the Knesset, Israel's house of representatives, on Wednesday.

STATE TIMES NEWS

JERUSALEM: In a historic address to Knesset, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday described the Gaza Peace Initiative as a path for "just and durable peace" in the entire region even as he delivered a powerful message of solidarity to Israel, asserting that "terrorism anywhere threatens peace everywhere".

Modi said like Israel, India has a "consistent and uncom-

promising policy of zero tolerance for terrorism with no double standards" and called for sustained and coordinated global efforts to counter the menace.

The prime minister's address to the Knesset, Israel's house of representatives, came hours after he landed in the country to a rousing welcome with his Israeli counterpart Benjamin Netanyahu along with his wife Sara receiving him at

the Ben Gurion airport.

"I also carry with me the deepest condolences of the people of India for every life lost and for every family whose world was shattered in the barbaric terrorist attack by Hamas on October 7 (2023)," Modi said.

"We feel your pain. We share your grief. India stands with Israel, firmly, with full conviction, in this moment, and beyond.

■ CONTD ON PAGE 9

PM Modi conferred with Israel's 'Speaker of the Knesset Medal'

JERUSALEM: Prime Minister Narendra Modi was on Wednesday conferred with the 'Speaker of the Knesset Medal' in recognition of his exceptional contribution to strengthening strategic relations between India and Israel.

The Indian Prime Minister is the first leader to receive this medal, which is the highest honour of the Knesset - the Israeli Parliament.

Knesset Speaker Amir Ohana conferred the award on the prime minister after his address at the Israeli Parliament.

The medal was conferred in recognition of the prime minister's exceptional contribution - through his personal leadership - to strengthen strategic rela-



tions between India and Israel.

PM Modi is a rare world leader who has received top awards from both Israel and Palestine.

In 2018, PM Modi

■ CONTD ON PAGE 9

VP Radhakrishnan arrives in Kashmir on maiden visit amid tight security

STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Vice President C P Radhakrishnan arrived here on Wednesday evening on his maiden visit to Kashmir valley during which he will attend the Kashmir University's 21st convocation, officials said.

The Vice President was received by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and senior officials of the administration and police on his arrival at the technical airport at around 5 PM, officials said.

The Vice President's cavalcade drove to the Lok Bhawan here, where he will be staying for the night, they said.

On Thursday, Radhakrishnan will be the chief guest at the 21st convocation of the University of Kashmir here and will address the gathering in his first visit to Kashmir since assuming office.

Meanwhile, a comprehensive multi-layered security



LG Manoj Sinha and CM Omar Abdullah receiving Vice President C P Radhakrishnan at Srinagar on Wednesday.

grid has been put in place for the VP's visit, including around the university campus in the Hazratbal area of the city here, the officials said.

Security forces have been deployed in strength at vulnerable locations, with heightened alertness maintained to counter potential terrorist threats. Checking and surveillance have been stepped up across the Valley, officials said.

Additional checkpoints have been set up at important entry points, especially around the city, and increased patrolling, area domination operations, and surprise inspections are being conducted along vital roadways to prevent any untoward incident, they said.

Vehicles are being randomly checked at entry and exit points of the city, especially on the roads leading to

■ CONTD ON PAGE 9

DGP calls for focused action against terror ecosystem



DGP J&K Nalin Prabhat chairing security review meeting at Budgam.

STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Director General of Police Nalin Prabhat on Wednesday called for focused approach and renewed efforts to eliminate terrorism and its support structure and establish peace.

Prabhat was chairing a comprehensive security

review meeting in central Kashmir's Budgam district to assess the prevailing security scenario and operational preparedness of the district police.

The meeting was attended by Special Director General of Police (Coordination) S J M Geelani, Inspector

■ CONTD ON PAGE 9

ACB registers DA Case against Insp Vijay Choudhary; conducts searches

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Jammu and Kashmir Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) has registered a Disproportionate Assets (DA) case against Vijay Singh Choudhary, Inspector in Jammu and Kashmir Police, brother of DyCM Surinder Choudhary following a verification that allegedly revealed possession of assets disproportionate to his known sources of income.

An ACB spokesperson said that the action was initiated "based on a specific input regarding accumulation of huge assets by the officer."



The accused has been identified as Vijay Singh Choudhary, son of Jia Lal Choudhary, a resident of Nonial, Nowshera in Rajouri district, presently residing at Santokh Vihar, Kaluhack,

Jammu, and posted in the Union Territory of Ladakh.

"During the course of verification, it surfaced that the suspect, while posted at different places, had allegedly raised assets worth crores of

rupees which were found highly disproportionate to his known sources of income," an ACB official said. "The verification further revealed that more than ten properties, including houses, shops and approximately 100 kanals of land valued in crores, have been raised, mostly in the names of his family members, relatives and other associates."

Officials stated that upon completion of the verification, a prima facie case of criminal misconduct was established against

■ CONTD ON PAGE 9

Shah in Bihar; review of 'demography change' on agenda



Union Home Minister Amit Shah arriving in Bihar on Wednesday.

STATE TIMES NEWS

PURNEA/KISHANGANJ: Union Home Minister Amit Shah arrived in Bihar on Wednesday for a three-day tour during which he is expected to attend several functions in the strategically

located Seemanchal region, besides reviewing "demographic changes" in the area. During the day, he chaired a meeting of the Land Ports Authority of India, a statutory body functioning

■ CONTD ON PAGE 9

Army busts terror hideout in Poonch; IEDs, pistol recovered

STATE TIMES NEWS

MENDHAR/JAMMU: Security forces on Wednesday unearthed a terrorist hideout in a forward village in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district and recovered a cache of arms, including two ready-to-use improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and a pistol, officials said.

The recovery was made during a joint cordon and search operation launched by the Army and the Special Operations Group (SOG)

■ CONTD ON PAGE 9

ROZA TIMING

SEHR TIME: 05:40 (FEB 26)
IFTAAR TIME: 06:27 (FEB 26)

WEATHER

Temperature (Jammu)
Max: 25.5°C Min: 13.6°C

Humidity
Max: 83 Min: 62

Temperature (Srinagar)
Max: 20.8°C Min: 1.5°C

Humidity
Max: 85 Min: 31

Sunset: 18:24 Hours
Sunrise: 07:03 Hours

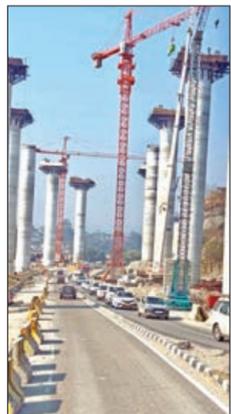
Delhi-Katra Expressway will be completed by March 2027: NHA

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Delhi-Amritsar-Katra Expressway, the fifth major expressway being developed in the country, is set for completion by March 2027, a senior official of the National Highways Authority of India said on Wednesday.

The construction of the National Expressway 5 (NE5), which began in April 2021, had significantly slowed last year due to Operation Sindoor as well as heavy rains and floods across northern states.

Once completed, the project is expected to considerably



enhance regional connectivity, promote religious tourism and facilitate faster mobility for the armed forces, the official said.

The expressway will reduce the distance from Delhi to Katra from 727 to 588 kilometres, cutting travel time from 14 to about six hours, he said.

Speaking to PTI Videos here, Rajiv Kumar, project director, NHA (Project Implementation Unit Jammu), said, "Construction of the expressway was hit badly last year in the aftermath of Operation

■ CONTD ON PAGE 9

Delhi bomb blast: NIA arrests 2 more terror operatives

STATE TIMES NEWS

DELHI: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has apprehended two more terror operatives allegedly involved in the Red Fort area blast conspiracy, officials said on Wednesday.

With this, the anti-terror agency has so far made 11 arrests in the case. The duo, identified as Zameer Ahmad Ahangar of Ganderbal and Tufail Ahmad Bhat of Srinagar in Jammu and Kashmir, were formally arrested by the NIA for their active involvement in the conspiracy related to the Delhi blast, a

■ CONTD ON PAGE 9

ILLEGAL MINING: ACB conducts joint surprise checks across Jammu Div

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Jammu and Kashmir Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) on Wednesday conducted Joint Surprise Checks (JSCs) at multiple locations across Jammu division following complaints of widespread illegal mining activities allegedly being carried out in connivance with certain officials.

An ACB official said the Bureau had received specific inputs alleging that several mining block holders (lessees) were indulging in illegal extraction of minerals in connivance with officers



and officials of the Mining and Geology as well as Ecological Departments.

"Taking cognizance of the complaints, the ACB constituted special teams to conduct Joint Surprise Checks at various locations in Jammu division to verify the

allegations and curb illegal mining," the official said.

During the course of the checks, ACB teams carried out extensive inspections at stone crushers and mining sites located at Bajalta (Jammu),

■ CONTD ON PAGE 9

CM lays foundation for Rs 190 Cr urban dev projects in Srinagar, Budgam

STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Wednesday laid the foundation for infrastructure and river conservation projects worth over Rs 190 crore across Srinagar and Budgam districts, marking a significant push towards urban transformation and environmental sustainability.

Spanning five constituencies, the projects focus on urban beautification, pollution abatement of the Jhelum River, and advanced sewerage treatment infrastructure for Doodh Ganga, reflecting the Government's commitment to improving civic amenities, enhancing climate resilience, and restoring water bodies.

At Rainawari, the Chief Minister laid the foundation

stone for the construction of BAB-UL-SULTAN-UL-ARIFEEN, a landmark city gateway featuring artistic calligraphy at Rainawari Chowk. Executed by PW (R&B) at a cost of Rs 130 lakh, the project aims to enhance the aesthetic and cultural identity of the historic locality.

He said the gateway would not only beautify the area but also highlight its spiritual and cultural significance.

The Chief Minister also laid the foundation of a major environmental initiative at Barri-Nambal Munawarabad for Pollution Abatement and Conservation of River Jhelum at Chuntikal and Gowkadal. The project, under the Housing & Urban Development Department, will be executed by UEED at



Chief Minister Omar Abdullah laying foundation stone for construction of Bab-Ul-Sultan-Ul-Arifeen at Rainawari Chowk.

a cost of Rs 7090.68 lakh. It includes the establishment of an 8 MLD Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) to significantly reduce untreated discharge into the river.

At the same venue, the Chief Minister laid the foundation for two major sewage treatment projects under H&UDD (UEED) to curb

pollution in Doodh Ganga - a 14 MLD STP at Aloo-chi-Bagh, Srinagar (Rs 5060.47 lakh), and a 6 MLD STP at Mochua, Budgam (Rs 6772.32 lakh) to treat dry weather flow from Chadoora to Baghi-i-Mehtab - significantly strengthening wastewater management and environmental protection in the

area.

Addressing the gathering, the Chief Minister said that although projects worth nearly Rs 200 crore across five constituencies would ordinarily warrant a large public function, the programme was deliberately kept modest in view of the holy month of Ramzan.

"If we had organised this programme some other time, it would have been garnered huge public participation. But keeping Ramzan in mind, we did not want to cause inconvenience to people, nor delay projects for which the public has been waiting impatiently," he said.

Highlighting the pressure on the Housing & Urban Development Department and the Srinagar Municipal Corporation, he said drainage, sewerage, roads, parks and development of new colonies fall under their mandate.

"Our two capital cities, Srinagar and Jammu, create the first impression of Jammu and Kashmir. Tourists arrive here first. Millions of residents live here. It is our responsibility

to ensure the infrastructure in cities reflects the development of this region."

The Chief Minister stressed that inadequate drainage and sewerage systems often result in waterlogging after even brief rainfall.

"It rains for one hour and the whole city is under water. This must change. Whether through Central schemes, UT Capex, District Capex or new funding schemes like SASCI, our effort is to upgrade Srinagar's infrastructure comprehensively."

Referring to changing climate patterns, he said rainfall distribution has become increasingly erratic.

"We may not see rain for months, and then receive six months' rain in three days. Instead of water

■ CONTD ON PAGE 9