

!! Continuations from Page 1 !! Ensure we rid...

added. "We need to strike hard at the terror ecosystem. The aides of terrorists should be identified and they should be given the same punishment as a terrorist for inflicting wounds on the soul of J&K.

After the terror attack in Pahalgam, the kind of protests that were seen on the J&K's streets against the terrorist country Pakistan were historic. The valley echoed with slogans against terrorism," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor also called for collective efforts to foster the spirit of 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat' and promote unity across the diverse communities. He said statements like the guests are spoiling the culture of J&K or demographic invasion are truly problematic and public should oppose such statements.

"I appeal to those in positions of responsibility in Jammu Kashmir to stop using the phrase like local and non-local. We all are Indians. Stop dividing Indians into local and outsiders. You should work to unite people so that a united society can take Jammu Kashmir to the greater heights of growth," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor prayed that Prophet Muhammad, Baba Amarnath may shower their blessings and strengthen the love, peace and brotherhood in the society.

Dr Darakhshan Andrabi, Chairperson J&K Waqf Board; Nalin Prabhat, DGP; Shri Vidhi Kumar Birdi, IGP Kashmir; Vijay Kumar Bidhuri, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir; members of J&K Waqf Board, senior officials, religious leaders, prominent citizens and people in large number were present.

Highlights...

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Govt ratifies interest...

the interest rate of 8.25 per cent on employees' provident fund (EPF) deposits for the financial year 2024-25, equal to the rate provided in the preceding fiscal. The approved rate of interest for 2024-25 was sent for concurrence of the Ministry of Finance.

"Ministry of Finance has given concurrence to 8.25 per cent rate of interest on the EPF for 2024-25 fiscal year and labour ministry sent a communication regarding this to the EPFO on Thursday," a labour ministry official told PTI.

Now the interest amount as per the rate ratified for FY25 will be credited into the accounts of over seven crore subscribers of EPFO.

The decision on interest rate was taken at the 237th meeting of the central board of trustees of the EPFO chaired by Union Minister for Labour & Employment Mansukh Mandaviya in New Delhi on February 28.

Compared to many fixed-income instruments, EPF offers relatively higher and stable returns, ensuring steady growth on post-retirement savings.

In February 2024, the EPFO had increased the interest rate marginally to 8.25 per cent for 2023-24, from 8.15 per cent in 2022-23.

In March 2022, EPFO had lowered the interest on EPF for 2021-22 to an over four-decade low of 8.1 per cent, from 8.5 per cent in 2020-21.

The 8.10 per cent rate of interest on EPF for 2020-21 was the lowest since 1977-78, when it stood at 8 per cent.

If Centre, states...

hugely interested in India.

"Citing recent trade agreements with UAE, UK and Australia, the prime minister encouraged the states to utilise this opportunity and make it easy for investments," it added.

Quoting Modi, the Niti Aayog CEO said states are places where action is, therefore states need to focus on expanding services and manufacturing sector to create jobs.

"They (states) need to reduce policy bottlenecks, removes obsolete laws, create investor friendly environment...remove unnecessary regulation at state level," Subrahmanyam said, quoting the prime minister.

Modi urged states to develop at least one global-standard tourist destination each to attract international visitors and boost local economy.

"We have to increase the speed of development. If the Centre and all the states come together and work together like Team India, no goal is impossible," Niti Aayog said in a post on X, quoting the prime minister as saying.

The prime minister; Subrahmanyam said, also urged the states to focus on agriculture, education and healthcare.

The statement said Modi asked NITI Aayog to prepare an 'Investment-friendly Charter' for attracting investments.

According to the statement, the prime minister encouraged creation of River Grids at state level for effective utilisation of water resources.

The prime minister also called for sustainable urban growth, planned urban planning in tier 2 and tier 3 cities.

"The prime minister emphasised skilling and training of youth towards Emerging Sectors to make them employment ready," the statement said.

Modi cited cyber security as a challenge as well as an opportunity.

"Hydrogen and Green Energy were emphasised by him as arenas of immense potential and opportunities," the statement said.

According to the statement, the prime minister emphasised on the need to focus on health services delivery.

"He (Modi) said that we must check for oxygen plants and preparations to be ready for any Covid related challenges," the statement said.

The prime minister said that the 10-year journey of Niti Aayog was "to prepare the nation to achieve the goal of Viksit Bharat".

The theme of the Governing Council meeting was 'Viksit Rajya for Viksit Bharat@2047'.

"Viksit Bharat is the goal of every Indian. When every state is Viksit, then Bharat will be Viksit. This is the aspiration of its 140 crore citizens," Modi said.

"We should have the aim of making each state viksit, each city viksit, each Nagar Palika viksit and each village viksit. If we work on these lines, we will not have to wait till 2047 to become Viksit Bharat," Modi said.

The prime minister also suggested that states should develop at least one tourist destination per state on par with global standards and provide all facilities and infrastructure.

"One State: One Global Destination. It would also lead to the development of the neighbouring cities as tourist places," he said.

Noting that India is getting rapidly urbanised, Modi said, "We should work towards future-ready cities".

Growth, innovation and sustainability should be the engine for the development of India's cities, he added.

Modi also emphasised the need to work towards the inclusion of women in the workforce.

"We must make laws and policies so that they can be respectfully integrated into the workforce," he said.

Subrahmanyam said taking cue from the Union government, five states have already released their vision documents, and 12 states are on verge of releasing their vision documents.

According to the official statement, the stat chief ministers and lieutenant governors of Union Territories also praised the efforts towards Aatmanirbharta in the defence sector; which have strengthened the defence forces and bolstered confidence in our capabilities.

"Chief Minister/Lt. Governors gave various suggestions for the vision of Viksit Rajya for Viksit Bharat @ 2047 and also discussed steps being taken in their States," it said.

Actor Mukul Dev...

his daughter; Sia Dev, from his marriage to ex-wife Shilpa Dev.

He made his acting debut with the 1996 movie "Dastak", co-starring Sushmita Sen and Sharad Kapoor. He was largely seen playing supporting roles in Hindi, Punjabi, Bengali and Telugu films.

Some of his notable movies included Ajay Devgn's "Son of Sardaar", Salman Khan-starrer "Jai Ho" and "Yamla Pagla Deewana", starring Dharmendra, Sunny Deol and Bobby Deol, as well as "Kohram", "R... Rajkumar" and "War Chhod Na Yaar".

He was also the co-writer of filmmaker Hansal Mehta's critically-acclaimed 2017 movie "Omerta", starring Rajkummar Rao.

Mehta mourned Mukul Dev's death in a post on Instagram.

"Not done Mukul mere dost... so many more stories, so much more laughter. See you on the other side my dear friend," he wrote alongside a photo of the actor.

Actor Manoj Bajpayee posted, "It's impossible to put into words what I'm feeling. Mukul was a brother in spirit, an artist whose warmth and passion were unmatched. Gone too soon, too young. Praying for strength and healing for his family and everyone grieving this loss. Miss you meri jaan...until we meet again. Om Shanti."

"Rip Mukul bhai. You will always be missed. Stay strong @rahluldeofficial bhai," wrote actor Sonu Sood on social media.

Actor Arshad Warsi also condoled Mukul Dev's death, saying he was "heartbroken". "I was really fond of him. He was a friend, colleague, a wonderful person with a beautiful soul... may his soul rest in peace," he wrote on Instagram.

On the small screen, Mukul Dev appeared in popular daily soaps such as "Gharwali Uparwali", "Kumkum", "Kutumb" and "Kasshish".

CS chairs SLSC...

irrigation works in the DPRs so that the water reaches up to the last fields in these areas. He also suggested measures to make the execution of works more transparent and beneficial for the public at large.

The meeting reviewed the progress and approved the proposals under the centrally sponsored flagship programme aimed at enhancing the water conservation, climate resilience and sustainable agriculture in the UT.

While highlighting broad contours of the scheme, Secretary RD& PR Department, Aijaz Asad, informed that WDC-PMKSY is continuation of the earlier Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP), which had been subsumed into PMKSY in 2015-16.

He revealed that under WDC-PMKSY 2.0, several initiatives and infrastructure projects had been implemented to boost watershed-based development. Besides, physical and financial progress has been recorded across various districts, with special emphasis on construction of water harvesting structures, ponds and irrigation channels.

Additionally, the rainwater harvesting tanks and bunds for soil and moisture conservation, beautification and rejuvenation of water bodies including springs and streams also constitutes the actions being taken under this programme.

A significant highlight of the year has been the Watershed Yatra Campaign 2025, launched on 5th February in Kathua district by the Union Cabinet Minister for Agriculture and the UT Minister for Rural Development. The campaign underscored the integrated watershed governance and community participation for which J&K secured the 2nd rank nationally for strategic planning and participatory implementation of WDC-PMKSY 2.0.

In alignment with the theme of public engagement, the Janbhagidhari Watershed Cup is set to recognize 2-3 districts demonstrating exceptional community involvement in project execution, the meeting was informed.

Moreover, it was divulged that as part of a new initiative under WDC-PMKSY 2.0, 300 springs have been allocated to J&K for rejuvenation as pilot projects. Further, under the national initiative to rejuvenate 50,000 springs, 3,100 more have been tentatively assigned to the UT for which the final project guidelines are awaited from DoLR.

The SLSC also reviewed and approved the Annual Action Plan (AAP) for 2025-26 with a proposed budget of Rs 75.80 crore, focusing primarily on Natural Resource Management (Rs 42.70 crore), Production Systems (Rs 15.03 crore), Consolidation & Withdrawal Phase (Rs 2.15 Cr), Work done claims from AAP 2024-25 (Rs 8.14 crore) and Administrative Expenses of Rs 4.15 crore to be utilised over the ensuing financial year.

The committee also approved the revision of Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) to include the newly allocated 300 springs and asked for creation of DPR in consultation with the Jal Shakti Department.

The approved initiatives, as concluded in the meeting, are expected to accelerate the sustainable agricultural growth and foster inclusive rural development across the region.

BOPEE conducts CET...

monitored the conduct of the said Common Entrance Test at Srinagar and Jammu. They thanked the district administration, IGP Jammu/Kashmir, for deploying police personnel, members of the monitoring squad, the Principal and staff members of the respective University/Colleges for their support during smooth conduct of the said Entrance Test.

ACB books Srinagar...

said, Imtiyaz Ahmad Bhat and his family members were found operating several bank lockers in J&K Bank, and were in possession of multiple immovable properties of considerable value. Imtiyaz Ahmad Bhat was also found to be maintaining a lifestyle that is inconsistent with his declared income.

In view of the above findings, official said, a formal case bearing FIR No. 09/2025 has been registered against Imtiyaz Ahmad Bhat at Police Station Anti-Corruption Bureau, Srinagar, under Section 13(1)(b) read with Section 13(2) for criminal misconduct.

Following the registration of the FIR, search warrants were obtained from the competent Court and simultaneous search operations were carried out at the residential and other premises of the accused, official said adding that the searches were conducted by ACB teams in the presence of Executive Magistrates and were facilitated by the local police and other agencies.

During the course of these searches, incriminating documents and evidence pertaining to both movable and immovable assets were recovered, official said adding that further investigation in the matter is underway.

Teenager found dead...

The villagers including her family members, however, blocked the main chowk at Budhal and held a peaceful protest demanding a probe into the circumstances leading to her death, the officials said.

Superintendent of Police, Kandli, Wajahat Hussain reached the site and pacified the protestors, assuring speedy investigation in the case to unravel the cause of her death. The protestors later dispersed and buried the body, the officials said.

SC orders cadre...

the other hand, we are of the view that the number of posts earmarked for deputation in the cadres of the CAPFs up to the level of Senior Administrative Grade (SAG) should be progressively reduced over a period of time, say within an outer limit of two years.

"This will bring in a sense of participation of the cadre officers belonging to the CAPFs in the decision-making process within the administrative framework of the CAPFs thereby removing the long-standing grievances of the cadre officers," the bench said.

The court said the role of CAPFs is crucial for maintaining security at the borders of the country as well as for discharging internal security duties.

There are various issues connected with the deployment of CAPFs, including coordinating with the state governments and the state police force, it said.

The court said the Centre has taken the view that presence of IPS officers in each of the CAPFs is vital to maintain the character of each of them as a unique central armed force.

"This is a policy decision. Of course, individual officers belonging to the IPS or the association of IPS officers cannot have a say as to how much the deputation quota should be and how long the deputation should continue. They are there on deputation by virtue of the policy decision of the central government manifest through the service rules/recruitment rules of the CAPFs.

"Having said that, we cannot also be oblivious of the grievance expressed by officers of the CAPFs as highlighted supra. Their dedicated service upholding the security integrity and sovereignty of the nation while safeguarding our borders and maintaining internal security within the country cannot be ignored or overlooked," the bench said.

Noting that CAPFs discharge their duties under very demanding conditions, the court said they have a grievance that because of lateral entry into the higher grades of the respective CAPFs, they are unable to get timely promotion.

"Consequently, there is a great deal of stagnation. Such stagnation can adversely impact the morale of the forces. This also needs to be factored in while considering review of such policy decision," the bench said.

Alleged fraudster Angad...

officials had cheated the Union Bank of India causing wrongful loss to the bank," the CBI said in a statement.

They were declared proclaimed offenders and open-ended arrest warrants were issued against them by the court, it said.

In 2017, the CBI got the Interpol Red Notice against him which alerts all the member countries to locate and detain the wanted person.

"Efforts are continuing for return of family members of the subject, who are other wanted accused in this case. The return of the subject, main co-conspirator in the fraud, will help in starting the trial," the agency said.

While in California, US, with his asylum application pending, Chandhok got involved with a gang of tech scam perpetrators who were cheating American citizens including senior citizens of their savings. He had routed proceeds of crime to India through money laundering channels.

He operated a "long-running and complex money laundering network, in which he

created and used shell companies to move millions of dollars stolen from Americans through an online tech support scheme, and later an online travel fee scheme", US Department of Justice had said in 2022.

Chandhok was sentenced in 2022 to six years imprisonment by a Rhode Island court on money laundering charges.

The justice department said Chandhok, who had at least five others (mostly Indian students in the US) working at his direction, was in direct contact with high-ranking international members of the scheme.

Chandhok had pleaded guilty in the case.

"According to information presented to the court, Chandhok's criminal activity spanned two years, during which time he 'cleaned' at least than 1.5 million dollars. The government's evidence showed that in just one month he laundered nearly USD 930,000," the justice department said.

The CBI as the national central bureau for Interpol in India coordinates closely with all law enforcement agencies in the world for cooperation and assistance via Interpol channels. "Since, 2021, over 100 wanted criminals have been returned to India through coordination via Interpol channel," CBI's spokesperson said.

Pakistan put in...

glaciers, the variation in quantities of water available in the rivers and demographics.

These, besides a quest for clean energy, mandate renegotiations for the distribution of rights and obligations under the treaty.

It added, "The treaty in its preamble says that it is concluded in a spirit of goodwill, and friendship. All these principles have in effect been held in abeyance by Pakistan. The unrelenting cross-border terrorism from Pakistan interferes with our ability to exploit the treaty as per its provisions."

The MEA said it is only natural and well within India's right to hold the treaty in abeyance when the fundamental ground situations have changed completely.

Drawing a red line, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had recently said that blood and water can not flow together.

J&K Govt suspends...

The temporary suspension was necessary in the interest of sovereignty and integrity of the country, the security of the Union Territory and for maintaining public order; it added.

Will not be...

MP said the delegation is a mission of peace and hope, and will one day remind the world that India stands for all the values "we need to preserve in the world today".

"We need to speak up with clarity and conviction for our country, for our response and to give the world the message that we will not be silenced by terrorism and we don't want the world to look away either," the MP from Thiruvananthapuram said.

"We don't want indifference to triumph over the truth. It's a mission of peace. It's a mission of hope. And it's a mission that will one day remind the world that India stands for all the values we need to preserve in the world today of peace, of democracy, of freedom, and not of hatred, killing and of terror. Jai Hind," he said in his video message.

Tharoor also posted pictures of the delegation members at the airport before boarding the flight.

The delegation led by Tharoor comprises Shambhavi (LJP-RV), Sarfaraz Ahmed (JMM), G M Harish Balayogi (TDP), Shashank Mani Tripathi (BJP), Bhubaneswar Kalita (BJP), Milind Deora (Shiv Sena), Tejvasi Surya (BJP) and former diplomat Taranjit Sandhu. It will travel to Guyana, Panama, Colombia, Brazil and the US.

India's multi-party delegations to different countries will emphasise Pakistan's links to terrorism, including the 9/11 attack in the US, and assert that the recent conflict was triggered by the Pahalgam terror strike and not Operation Sindoor as alleged by Islamabad.

After the briefing by Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri to four of the seven parliamentary delegations here on Friday, delegates said they will work to bust the Pakistani narrative of projecting India as the aggressor by underscoring the links of Pahalgam terrorists to the country.

Three delegations were briefed by Misri on Tuesday and are already on tours of their destinations.

The delegation, which is led by Tharoor, visiting the US is likely to underseore Pakistan's links to al Qaeda, which was behind multiple terror strikes across the world, including the 9/11 attack in the North American country.

Missing woman traced, reunites with family

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

DODA: Doda Police has traced a missing Lady and reunited with her family whose missing report was lodged at Police Station Gandoh.

On 04.03.20256, a missing report of lady namely resident of Manoo Tehsil Gandoh was entered at PS Gandoh Soon after getting the information regarding missing of the lady, Police swung into action and on the directions of SSP Doda Sandeep Mehta team was constituted from PS Gandoh led by SHO PS Gandoh under the supervision of concerned supervisory officer in search of the missing lady. The Police teams by using all possible means as well as technical help and after getting some clues, succeeded in tracing her out on 24-05-2025. Accordingly, after completing all codal formalities, the lady has been handed over to her family and missing report has been closed on Saturday.

Two successive bovine smuggling bids foiled: 12 bovines rescued, 5 arrested, 2 vehicles seized

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

DODA: As part of its ongoing drive against bovine smuggling, Doda Police foiled two successive smuggling attempts in the jurisdictions of PS Doda (i.e PP Mohalla and PP Kashtigarh), leading to the rescue of 12 bovine animals and seizure of 02 vehicles. In the first incident a naka was established by a police party of PP Mohallah headed by IC PP Mohalla. During checking a Tata Mobile bearing registration number JK06-8707 was intercepted. During checking the vehicle was found loaded with 06 bovine being smuggled illegally without the requisite permission from the competent authority (DM). The 02 accused person were apprehended on the spot namely (1) Driver Tanvir Ahmed S/o Mohd Hanief R/o Mudhar Tehsil Kashtigarh, (2) Shabir Ahmed S/o Sikander Batt R/o Zadan Tehsil Kashtigarh Doda. The vehicle used in the offence has also been seized. In this regard FIR No. 121/2025 U/S 223 BNS & 11 PCA was registered at PS Doda and investigation has been initiated.

In a similar incident a naka was established by a police party of PP Kashtigarh headed by IC PP Kashtigarh. Both the incidents supervised by DySP Hqrs Doda and SHO PS Doda. A Tata Mobile bearing registration number JK06-2467 was signa-led to stop, During Search 06 bovine animals were found being transported illegally without valid permission from the District Magistrate. The 03 accused Persons have been arrested on the spot and were identified as (1) Driver Ashfaq Ahmed S/o Gh. Qadir R/o Jundi Mahalla, (2) Talib Hussain S/o Irshad Hussain R/o Balwana and (3) Majid Hussain S/o Tanveer Ahmed R/o Balwana and the vehicle seized. In this regard FIR No. 122/2025 U/S 223 BNS & 11 PCA was registered at PS Doda and investigation is in progress.

Samba police seizes 6 vehicles including 3 dumpers for illegal mining

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SAMBHA: Continuing its drive against illegal mining, Samba Police has seized six vehicles including three dumpers across the district which were being used for illegal transportation/mining of the construction material. Police teams headed by SHO PS Vijaypur, SHO PS Bari Brahmana and Incharge of PP Supwal of PS Samba while performing patrolling duty in their jurisdictional areas, have seized six vehicles including three dumpers bearing registration Nos. JK14FI-8607, JK21G-3008, JK02CK-0835, two tractor trolleys with bearing registration Nos. JK21J-1557, JK21J-9866 and one tractor trolley without No. which were being used for illegal transportation/mining of the construction material in the area. The above mentioned vehicles have been seized by Samba Police and handed over to the Geology & Mining Department, Samba for further legal action.

100 bottles of illicit liquor seized, bootlegger arrested

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

UDHAMPUR: Police team of PP Roundmail led by its ICPP intercepted one person who is moving on a three wheeler (load carrier) bearing registration number JK14K-4589 near Tawi bridge Ritti. Upon noticing the police presence, Driver of the load carrier attempted to evade but was swiftly stopped and searched.

Upon frisking/searching, police recovered 100 bottles (180 ml each) of illicit liquor from the possession of driver namely Parkash Chnad S/O Shiv Ram R/O Panj Grian, Nagrota, Ramnagar who has been arrested on spot. In this regard, a case under FIR No. 184/2025 U/S 48(a) Excise Act has been registered at Police Station Udhampur.

