

03 Dr Jitendra hosts luncheon get together for Delhi based J&K cadre AGMUT officers

03 Jammu Police cracks multiple theft cases; 5 women among 13 arrested, stolen property worth over Rs 27 lakh recovered

10 LG congratulates 12 yr old athlete

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Centre to set up Clean Plant facility to provide disease-resistant plants to horticulturists in Kashmir: Chouhan

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: The central government will establish a Clean Plant Centre for Rs 150 crore under the Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture scheme to provide disease-resistant plants to the horticulturists in Kashmir, Union Agriculture Minister Shivrav Singh Chouhan said here on Thursday.

Addressing a press conference here, Chouhan said local horticulture products are facing problems as new plants were getting infected by viruses within three to four years of being planted.

"We need to work on getting disease-free plants, and this area needs to be worked out. Under the Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH) scheme, we will be setting up a state-of-the-art Clean Plant Centre in Srinagar at a cost of Rs 150 crore," he told reporters after reviewing the functioning of various schemes run by the departments under his charge.

He said the Clean Plant Centre Srinagar will immensely benefit the horticultural farmers as they will be able to get better quality, infection-free plants.

The focus will be on improving the quality of plants for crops like



Union Agriculture Minister Shivrav Singh Chouhan briefing media at Srinagar.

Chouhan serves water to people at Lal Chowk

SRINAGAR: Union Agriculture Minister Shivrav Singh Chouhan on Thursday served water to people at Jammu and Kashmir's famous Lal Chowk as part of Muharram tradition.

Chouhan, who is on a two-day official visit to Kashmir, distributed water to the passersby at City Commercial nerve centre Lal Chowk.

Talking to reporters, the minister said that it was a touching experience to be a part of the Muharram tradition by distributing water to people.

Chouhan also spoke about the Central government's schemes for underprivileged sections of the society. "There are about five lakh persons, who do not have a pucca house in Jammu and Kashmir. All of them will get a pucca house under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana," he said. Chouhan said the government's mission is to empower women and make them "Lakhpati didis".



apples, almonds and walnuts at this centre, he added.

The minister said several schemes will soon be started for the coverage of horticultural crops in the crop insurance scheme, so that horticulture can be mapped.

"A tissue culture lab will be developed in Kashmir to promote saffron cultivation, while saffron nurseries will also be set up. Quality control labs will also be set up at Kathua, Anantnag and Baramulla in order to check the fertility and health of the soil," he added.

There has been a demand for setting up a Regional Horticulture Centre in the Jammu region, for which ICAR will provide assistance, the minister said.

Under the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY), dedicated irrigation projects will also be developed in the command area to bridge the gap in providing water from canals to the fields, he said.

"Reforms will also be made in the National Saffron Mission, keeping in mind the specialities of Jammu and Kashmir. A special team of scientists will be formed to work on this to increase productivity and reduce losses," Chouhan added.

Over 12,000 Shri Amarnathji pilgrims have darshan of 'Shivling'

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Over 12,000 pilgrims had darshan of the naturally formed ice 'Shivling' in the holy cave shrine of Amarnath in south Kashmir Himalayas on the first day of the pilgrimage on Thursday, officials said.

"A total of 12,348 pilgrims paid obeisance at the 3,880-metre high cave shrine on the first day of the pilgrimage," they said.

The officials said that it included 9,181 male pilgrims, 2,223 female pilgrims, 99 children, 122 sadhus, seven sadhvis and eight transgenders.

The officials further said that they had not expected such high number of pilgrims to attend the pilgrimage on the very first day, especially in the wake of the deadly Pahalgam terror attack on April 22 this year.

Unprecedented security measures have been taken to ensure a smooth pilgrimage this year.

The yatra started early in the morning from the traditional 48-km Nunwan-Pahalgam route and the 14-km Baltal route.

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Second batch of pilgrims leave from Jammu

JAMMU: Amid tight security, the second batch of more than 5,200 pilgrims left the base camp here on Thursday for the Amarnath cave shrine in South Kashmir Himalayas, officials said.

The pilgrims left the Bhagwati Nagar base camp in a cavalcade of 168 vehicles escorted by security police and central paramilitary forces, they said.

With this, the number of pilgrims who have left for the shrine from the Jammu base camp has reached 11,138, officials said.

The second batch of pilgrims includes 4,074 men, 786 women, and 19 children.

A group of pilgrims on way to the shrine said they were not deterred by the April 22 Pahalgam attack that left 26 people dead.

"We do not fear terrorists or Pakistan, which has engineered attacks on innocent and unarmed tourists. It is a cowardly act. They cannot stop us from paying obeisance at Baba Barfani by triggering fear through terror incidents such as Pahalgam," Harish Kumar, a

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ACB files charge-sheet against Ex ZEO, others for misappropriation of scholarship Funds

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) on Thursday presented charge-sheet against the then ZEO Tangdhar Kupwara and other officials for misappropriation of scholarship Funds meant for Pahari speaking and Gujar-Bakewal students during 2010-2011.

"On receipt of information about the allegations of fraud/ embezzlement in disbursement of scholarship funds meant for Pahari speaking/ Gujar-Bakewal students in Education Zone, Tangdhar District Kupwara for year 2010-11, a verification was conducted by VOK

(Now ACB Kashmir) which revealed that during the year 2010-11, the then ZEO Tangdhar namely Mohammad Ashraf Bhat; the then dealing Clerk namely Mohammad Ashraf Paswal and other officials under a well-knit conspiracy, by abuse of their official positions, dishonestly and fraudulently inflated the figures of beneficiary students and thus obtained the excess funds from CEO Kupwara on account of Gujar/Bakewal and Pahari speaking student scholarships and misappropriated the excess funds

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Union Min, CM review Agri, Rural Dev progress in J&K Centre, J&K Govt join hands to accelerate growth in farm, rural sectors

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: In a significant move to strengthen Jammu & Kashmir's agriculture and rural development landscape, Union Minister of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare and Rural Development & Panchayati Raj, Shivrav Singh Chouhan, and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Thursday co-chaired a high-level review meeting at the Civil Secretariat, Srinagar.

The meeting was also attended by Union Minister of State for A&FW Ram Nath Thakur, Minister for Agriculture Production, RDD & PR Javid Ahmed



Union Minister Shivrav Singh Chouhan and CM Omar Abdullah chairing a meeting at Srinagar on Thursday.

Dar, and Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani.

Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, Secretary DA&FW, GoI Devesh Chaturvedi, Secretary DARE, GoI Mangi Lal Jat, Additional Chief

Secretary to the Chief Minister Dheeraj Gupta, Joint Secretary Ministry of Rural Development, Additional Secretary DA&FW, along with senior officers from the

Government of India and Jammu & Kashmir administration including Administrative Secretaries of Agriculture Production, PWD, RDD, and heads of departments of agriculture, allied sectors and rural development were present in the meeting.

Addressing the meeting, Union Minister Shivrav Singh Chouhan reaffirmed the Government of India's commitment under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the holistic development of Jammu & Kashmir. "For Viksit Bharat, a Viksit Jammu &

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Srinagar to host first ever Khelo India Water Sports Festival next month

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: Srinagar will host the inaugural Khelo India Water Sports Festival at its iconic Dal Lake where more than 400 athletes from all over the country will compete in disciplines like kayaking and canoeing, water skiing and rowing from August 21 to 23.

Sports minister Mansukh Mandaviya announced this in an interaction with the media here and said it would add to the government's push for expansion of the Khelo India movement that recently added the first ever Beach Games in Diu to its roster.

The festival is scheduled to be held under the vertical of Sports Competition and Talent Development of Khelo India Scheme. "This initiative aims to promote

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Strong India will contribute to more stable, prosperous world: Modi

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

ACCRA: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said a strong India will contribute to a more stable and prosperous world as he pushed for credible and effective reforms in global governance in the wake of changing circumstances.

In his address to the Parliament in Ghana, Modi also said that progress cannot come without giving voice to the Global South.

"In these times of global uncertainty, India's democratic stability shines as a ray of hope. India's rapid

progress is a catalyst for global growth. As the world's



largest democracy, India is a pillar of strength for the world. A strong India will contribute to a more stable and prosperous world," the

prime minister said. Noting that India is the fastest-growing emerging economy, Modi said that on the foundations of stable polity and governance, India will soon become the third-largest economy.

"We already contribute nearly 16% to global growth. Our demography is paying its dividend. India now has the world's third-largest start-up ecosystem. India is an innovation and technology hub, where global companies want to converge," he said.

The Prime Minister

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Search operation underway in Kishtwar

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

KISHTWAR: A search operation was underway on Thursday to track down two to three terrorists hiding in a forested area of Kishtwar district, officials said.

The cordon and search operation follows an encounter that broke out between terrorists and security forces in the heavily forested Kanzal Mandu area of the Kuchal-Chatroo belt on Wednesday night.

The operation is backed by drones and sniffer dogs, with the cordon further strengthened by additional reinforcements. As per unconfirmed reports, one

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Message conveyed with great clarity: Jaishankar on Op Sindoor

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW YORK/ WASHINGTON: Operation Sindoor conveyed to the world with great clarity that India will act against perpetrators of terrorist acts, a response to the scourge in line with the UN Security Council stance on bringing the perpetrators of the Pahalgam attacks to justice, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Wednesday.

"What is important for us in the Quad statement, as also the statement which the Security Council had issued on April 25, is that the per-

petrators of terrorism must be held accountable. They



must be brought to justice," Jaishankar said during a press conference in Washington.

"And that's important because we then have to communicate to the world that what we did... on May 7, the objective of Operation

Sindoor is that if there are attacks, if there are terrorist attacks, we will act against the perpetrators, the supporters, the financiers, the enablers. So that message, I think, was conveyed with great clarity," he said.

A joint statement issued by the Quad Foreign Ministers - Jaishankar, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Foreign Minister of Australia Penny Wong and Japanese Foreign Minister Takeshi Iwaya -- had unequivocally condemned all acts of terrorism and violent extremism in all its forms and

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Shri Amarnath Yatra-2025 makes consequential difference for J&K for all times to come



JAMMU: The Amarnath Yatra 2025 has defied all the doomsayers. It has started on a very positive note. Thousands of pilgrims from across the country have descended into Jammu and Kashmir, for their journey to the cave shrine in Kashmir Himalayas, devoted to Lord Shiva.

A big question mark had hung over the annual yatra after Pahalgam massacre. The very brutality with which the terrorists shot dead tourists after ascertaining their faith had sent shockwaves across the country. There was a nation-wide outrage. It was not only condemned but the coun-

trymen also called for avenging the carnage.

At the time of writing, first batch of the pilgrims has reached the cave shrine. They are chanting religious slogans, hailing Lord Shiva. Other batches are readying to reach the shrine. There is both enthusiasm and air of spiritualism all over.

In simple words, pilgrims and the organizers of the yatra have accomplished a Herculean task. Lieutenant Governor and Chairman Shri Amarnath Shrine Board Manoj Sinha has been working 24x7 for making arrangements and ensuring foolproof security for the pilgrims. Many a new facilities were set up and existing were upgraded to give a life time experience to the devotees coming from across the country.

But this year's yatra is beyond the facil-

ities and security. It has many other dimensions, which came to fore after the Pahalgam terror attack on April 22. That terror attack had shattered the notion that tourists were safe in the Valley. Although Pakistan's intentions were very well known in the country but Pahalgam shocked and surprised everyone. Jammu

PERSPECTIVE

and Kashmir has, in fact been the victim of Pakistan sponsored terrorism since 1947 - the tribesmen's invasion backed by Pakistan army was the first act of terrorism in J&K, in which not only the people were massacred but India lost a part of the state of Jammu and Kashmir-Pakistan occupied Jammu and Kashmir. However, Pahalgam happened at a time when Kashmir was considered terror-free.

That was not just an idea but a pleasant reality.

Now with the start of the pilgrimage, and thousands joining it with the traditional, rather with an extra dose of enthusiasm - displaying their religious devotion to the shrine, and also reflecting a confidence that terror act of April 22 cannot hold them back from their religious journey of faith. They snubbed terrorists and their backers. They have reinforced the message that Operation Sindoor delivered to Pakistan that terrorism and its infrastructure and men will be targeted wherever they might exist. Borders will not come in between.

The pilgrims have delivered a supplementary tiding. They have visited the Valley without any fear. Their security has been ensured by the soldiers, who targeted

and decimated the terror infrastructure and its inmates in Pakistan and Pakistan occupied Kashmir on the intervening night of May 6 and 7. Within Jammu and Kashmir, their confidence has gone up with the presence of security personnel along the route. That pilgrims trounced the fear and rebuffed the terror is one of the main features of this year's yatra.

This yatra will also add to the confidence of the people of Kashmir, who felt and suffered the impact of Pahalgam tragedy. They were waiting to overcome the depressing environment. Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha by his tireless efforts helped them to do so. It is nothing short of a miracle. Just compare the times after April 22 terror attack in Pahalgam and now. A consequential difference has been made by the pilgrimage.

WEATHER

Temperature (Jammu)
Max: 34.5°C Min: 26.6°C
Humidity
Max: 77 Min: 69
Temperature (Srinagar)
Max: 34.0°C Min: 21.1°C
Humidity
Max: 72 Min: 68
Sunset : 19:42 Hours
Sunrise : 05:27 Hours