



J&K on maximum alert ahead of Amarnath Yatra

Advanced surveillance systems, facial recognition cameras, security reviews in place

Traffic Police issue advisory to regulate movement of convoy, non-convoy vehicles

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Jun 24: Authorities have beefed up security in Jammu and Kashmir ahead of the 57-day annual Amarnath Yatra, slated to commence on July 3, with the Union Territory placed on maximum alert to ensure the safe and smooth conduct of the pilgrimage.

According to the details available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) authorities have rolled out an extensive security, surveillance and traffic management plan to ensure that the annual yatra passes off peacefully.

The yatra to the 3,880-metre-high holy cave shrine, nestled in Himalayas in South Kashmir will conclude on August 28. This



year's Yatra will be longer than last year's duration of around 38 days.

Officials said that security agencies have intensified preparations across the Union Territory to manage the

expected movement of thousands of pilgrims through the twin routes of Pahalgam and Baltal.

They said specialised security teams have been deployed while comprehensive fire safety

audits of hotels, lodges and guest houses accommodating pilgrims have been conducted. Authorities have also introduced QR-based digital identification for service providers associated with the pilgrimage.

The security grid has been further strengthened through the installation of additional CCTV cameras equipped with facial recognition capabilities and advanced surveillance systems at key locations along the Yatra routes.

A series of mock drills and coordination exercises have been conducted in recent days to test emergency response mechanisms and inter-agency coordination.

At Banihal Railway Station, a joint mock | [More on P6](#)

LG Sinha chairs SKUAST-K's 36th Council Meet

Approves reforms, flagship agri initiatives

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Jun 24: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday chaired the 36th University Council Meeting of SKUAST-Kashmir, at Lok Bhavan.

The meeting was attended by the Chief Minister Omar Abdullah; Minister for Agriculture Production, Rural Development, Panchayati Raj and Cooperatives, Javid Ahmad Dar; Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo; Additional Chief Secretary, Agriculture Production Department, Dr. Ashish Chandra Verma; Additional Chief Secretary, Finance Department, Shaileendra Kumar; Chairman Committee on Reimagining Agriculture NITI Aayog, Dr. Ashok Dalwai; DDG ICAR,



Dr. Yashpal Malik; Principal Secretary to Lieutenant Governor, Dr. Mandeep K Bhandari; Vice Chancellor SKUAST Kashmir, Prof. Nazir Ahmad Ganai; Vice Chancellor SKUAST Jammu, Dr. B.N. Tripathi; Commissioner Secretary, Planning Development &

Monitoring Department, Ms R Alice Vaz; Registrar SKUAST Kashmir, Dr. Azmat Alam Khan and other senior officials.

The Council approved several institutional reforms, including the upgradation of the Agricultural Research Information | [More on P6](#)

J&K Police top brass joins 8th Muharram procession

Mourners hail arrangements; DGP monitors on ground; IGP, senior police officers interact with mourners, distribute water; drones deployed to oversee arrangements

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Jun 24: Top brass of Jammu and Kashmir Police on Wednesday joined the traditional 8th Muharram procession in Srinagar and interacted with mourners, while thousands of devotees participated in the religious observance amid elaborate security, traffic and civic arrangements put in place by the administration.

According to the details available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO)

Director General of Police (DGP) J&K Nalin Prabhat remained on the ground to monitor the arrangements for the 8th Muharram procession and visited Dalgate Imam Bargah, where he interacted with mourners and members of the local community.

The DGP was warmly received by devotees, while several children were seen posing for photographs with him during his visit. While leaving the Imam Bargah premises, the DGP Prabhat was | [More on P6](#)



Shia Muslims take out traditional 8th Muharram procession in Srinagar on Wednesday
Pic: Jahangir Shah (KNO/KT)

KPs join procession, pay tribute to Imam Hussain (AS)

'We share each other's joy & grief'

Rehan Qayoom Mir

In a display of Kashmir's longstanding tradition of communal harmony, members of the Kashmiri Hindu community on Wednesday joined Muharram observances in Srinagar and paid tributes to Imam Hussain (AS) - the grandson of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) | [More on P6](#)

J&K notifies VB-G RAM-G scheme, replacing MGNREGA from Jul 1

'Enhanced 125-day guarantee'

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Jun 24: Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha has notified the Jammu Kashmir Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) [VB-G RAM-G] Scheme, 2026, which will come into force across all notified rural areas of the Union Territory from July 1, 2026.

Issued under Section 3(1) read with Section 8 of the Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin)



Act, 2025, the new scheme replaces MGNREGA and marks a major reform in rural employment and livelihood generation, aligned with the vision of Viksit Bharat @2047.

The scheme guarantees 125 days of wage employment

annually to every eligible rural household willing to undertake unskilled manual work, up from the earlier 100-day guarantee. Employment is to be provided within 15 days of demand, failing which applicants will be entitled to unemployment allowance. Wage payments will be made on a weekly basis or within a fortnight, with compensation for delays.

To protect agricultural productivity, the scheme introduces a mandatory 60-day pause in public works during peak sowing and harvesting seasons, ensuring adequate labour availability for | [More on P6](#)

Gulmarg Gondola likely to resume operations today

Waris Fayaz

Srinagar, Jun 24: The Gulmarg Gondola, one of Kashmir's premier tourist attractions, is likely to resume operations on Thursday after remaining shut for a month following a major technical malfunction that left hundreds of tourists stranded mid-air.

Sources told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that successful trial runs of the cable car system have been completed and authorities are now preparing for the restoration of services.

"The trial runs have been successful and there is

nothing left. We will most probably resume operations tomorrow evening," they said.

The Gondola has remained non-functional since May 25, when a technical snag halted services and left more than 300 tourists stranded in cabins suspended above the ground. The incident triggered panic among visitors and led to a large-scale rescue operation involving technical teams and emergency responders. The evacuation process continued for several hours before all passengers were safely brought to the ground.

Following the incident, the Jammu and | [More on P6](#)

MeT forecasts widespread rainfall from Jun 30

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Jun 24: Several parts of Jammu and Kashmir witnessed rain, thundershowers, gusty winds and hailstorm activity on Wednesday evening as the Meteorological Department forecast a fresh spell of widespread rainfall across the Union Territory from June 30 to July 3.

An official of Meteorological Centre Srinagar told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that rain and thundershowers affected many areas of Kupwara, Handwara, Baramulla, Sopore, Ganderbal and Bandipora districts, besides parts of Srinagar, Poonch,

Rajouri and Kishtwar. Weather activity was also reported along the Sonamarg-Baltal-Holy Cave and Pahalgam-Holy Cave axis.

Officials said some places experienced brief intense showers, thunderstorms, gusty winds and hailstorm activity, particularly in North and Central Kashmir. Localised waterlogging was reported in some low-lying areas of Srinagar following heavy showers.

The weather office advised people to remain indoors during thundershowers and stay away from electric poles, wires, loose structures and old trees. Boating and shikara operations were also | [More on P6](#)

J&K faces 530 tonne daily waste treatment gap; Dal, Wular lakes at risk: NGT amicus report

Highlights 1.8 million tonnes of legacy waste, calls for dedicated protection plans

Raja Syed Rather

Srinagar, Jun 24: An Amicus Curiae appointed by the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has raised concerns over gaps in municipal solid waste and sewage management in Jammu and Kashmir, while suggesting several measures to safeguard environmentally sensitive water bodies, including Dal Lake and Wular Lake.

In a note submitted before the NGT's Principal Bench in connection with Original Application No. 606 of 2018,

the Amicus Curiae reviewed the compliance affidavit filed by the Union Territory and observed that J&K generates around 1,557 tonnes of municipal solid waste every day. Of this, nearly 1,027 tonnes are processed, leaving a treatment shortfall of about 530 tonnes per day. The report also highlighted that around 26 tonnes of waste remain uncollected daily.

According to the note, accessed by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), nearly 352 tonnes of



waste are currently being dumped in landfills. It added that a proposal to use Refuse Derived Fuel (RDF) in cement plants is under consideration. A 300-tonne-per-day Compressed Bio-Gas (CBG) plant has also been sanctioned and is expected to be completed by March 2027, while two Construction and Demolition (C&D) waste processing facilities are likely to be commissioned this year.

The Amicus Curiae also expressed concern over the large volume of legacy waste across

the Union Territory. The note states that around 1.816 million tonnes of old waste are lying at 101 identified dumpsites spread across 49 urban local bodies. It further observed that details regarding leachate treatment, land reclamation, site restoration and the future use of reclaimed land have not been adequately provided.

The note also flagged environmental risks from waste processing units located near water bodies. It pointed to the Bandipora facility near the Wular Ramsar Wetland,

warning that leachate from dumpsites could pollute freshwater sources if not properly managed. It also cited flood-related damage to waste processing facilities at RS Pura and Arnia, indicating a lack of disaster-resilient planning.

On liquid waste management, the report said J&K generates 445.647 million litres of sewage daily, while the installed treatment capacity is 229 MLD, of which only 137.06 MLD is being utilised. It noted a treatment gap of 323.89 MLD and said | [More on P6](#)

Kashmir's GI QR Code System earns National recognition

Award-winning system enables buyers to instantly verify authenticity, origin quality such as Pashmina, Kani shawls, Sozni embroidery, hand-knotted carpets, other GI registered crafts

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR/ NEW DELHI, JUNE 24 - Department of Handicrafts and Handloom, Kashmir, has been conferred with the prestigious SKOCH Award for its innovative GI QR Code Management System, implemented through the Pashmina Testing & Quality Certification Centre (PTQCC) at the Craft Development Institute (CDI) and the NABL-accredited Carpet Testing Laboratory at IICT, Srinagar.

The award recognizes the Department's pioneering use of technology to strengthen product authenticity, quality assurance, sustainability and artisan welfare in the handicrafts sector.

In a statement issued here Wednesday, a spokesperson of the department said, "The GI QR Code Management System is among the country's



first comprehensive QR code-based Geographical Indication (GI) certification mechanisms for handicrafts".

The award, as per an official statement, was received by Sajid Nazir, Senior Faculty, CDI, on behalf of the Department at a ceremony in New Delhi. The award-winning

system enables buyers to instantly verify the authenticity, origin and quality of products such as Pashmina and Kani shawls, Sozni embroidery, hand-knotted carpets and other GI registered crafts. By scanning the QR code, consumers can trace a product back to the artisan or institution that created it, ensuring

transparency and preventing counterfeiting.

The spokesperson said thousands of handicraft products have already been labelled under the initiative, enhancing consumer confidence, expanding market access and supporting export growth.

Congratulating the technical teams of PTQCC and IICT, Director Handicrafts and Handloom, Kashmir, Sh. Mussarat Islam, said the recognition reflects the Department's commitment to preserving Kashmir's rich craft heritage. He added that the QR code system provides direct visibility to artisans, helping them connect with buyers and access niche global markets, thereby improving their economic prospects.

The SKOCH Award is a prestigious national recognition honouring innovative initiatives that promote excellence, good governance, and inclusive development

KU hosts consultative workshop on "Strengthening Cyber Security Frameworks for State Data"

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, JUNE 24: The J&K Information Technology Department in collaboration with the University of Kashmir and with support from the National e-Governance Division (NeGD), Union Ministry for Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), Wednesday organized a UT Level Consultative Workshop on "Strengthening Cyber Security Frameworks for State Data" at the University of Kashmir, Srinagar.

The workshop, as per a KU statement, was organised as part of the national consultative process being undertaken by NeGD, MeitY, to facilitate stakeholder consultations and develop a comprehensive framework for strengthening cybersecurity, data protection and digital resilience across States and Union Territories.

The inaugural session was attended by Professor Nilofer Khan, Vice Chancellor, University of Kashmir; Saurabh Bhagat, Commissioner Information Technology Department; Asha Choudhary Malhotra, Chief Executive Officer, JaKeGA; Professor Naseer Iqbal, Registrar, University of Kashmir; Abdul Hafiz Shah, Special Information Technology Department; Shokat



Mehmood Special Secretary; Jaskaran Singh Modi, State Informatics Officer, NIC J&K; Maroof Naieem Qadri, Director IT, University of Kashmir; Ashaq Dar, Director, NIELIT, besides representatives from NeGD, CERT-In (through VC), NIC, J&K Bank, SeMT, JaKeGA, Academia and senior officers of various government departments who have also been nominated as CISOs, ISOs and Technical Experts.

Addressing the participants, Saurabh Bhagat emphasized that cybersecurity has emerged as a critical pillar of digital governance and citizen trust. He highlighted the growing dependence of government institutions on digital platforms for delivery of public services. He underscored the need for robust cybersecurity mechanisms, proactive threat management, and resilient digital infrastructure to safeguard critical government systems and

citizen data.

The workshop was attended by the policymakers, cybersecurity experts, government officials, academia and industry stakeholders to deliberate on the emerging cyber threats, cybersecurity best practices, incident response mechanisms, data protection frameworks and institutional measures required to strengthen cyber resilience across the Union Territory. A major highlight of the workshop was the breakout group discussions, where the participants deliberated on six key thematic areas. These included risk-based security assessments, securing State Data Centres and State Wide Area Networks, strengthening Security Operations Centres (SOCs) and Computer Security Incident Response Teams (CSIRTs), modernizing legacy systems, implementing data protection and privacy frameworks besides enhancing the cybersecurity capacity-building

initiatives. The discussions focused on strengthening the cybersecurity governance, enhancing monitoring and incident response capabilities, securing critical digital infrastructure, promoting secure-by-design principles, protecting citizen data and fostering a culture of cybersecurity awareness across government institutions.

The participants also took note of the significant progress made by Jammu & Kashmir in digital governance and cybersecurity. The prominent achievements included establishment of the State Security Operations Centre (JK-SOC), approval of Cyber Crisis Management Plans (CCMPs) across departments, implementation of cybersecurity monitoring mechanisms, large-scale security audits of government websites and various capacity-building initiatives.

The workshop concluded with presentations by the six thematic groups, followed by a plenary discussion on key recommendations and action points. The deliberations and recommendations emerging from the workshop will be shared with the National e-Governance Division (NeGD) and will contribute towards formulation of a stronger and more resilient cybersecurity framework for State Governments across the country.

DC Budgam reviews preparedness for Pulse Polio

■ Immunization Drive scheduled on June 28

KT News Desk

BUDGAM, JUNE 24: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Athar Aamir Khan, Wednesday chaired a comprehensive review meeting to finalise preparations for the Pulse Polio Immunization Drive scheduled to be held on June 28th, 2026.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by the PO ICDS Budgam, CMO Budgam, CEO Budgam, DIO Budgam, all BMOs, ARTO Budgam, and other concerned district officers, health authorities, block-level teams, and officials from supporting departments who are directly involved in vaccination planning, booth management, logistics, supervision, and field execution.

During the meeting, the DC reviewed in detail the district-wide micro-plan for the immunization drive,



which included block-wise targets, number of Pulse Polio booths, manpower deployment, and the overall preparedness of health and field teams.

Officers presented the complete structure of booth arrangements across Budgam district along with the deployment of vaccinators, supervisors, and supporting manpower to ensure the smooth functioning of the campaign.

A special focus of the meeting remained on high-risk and hard-to-reach areas, with detailed block-wise presentations. The DC

emphasised that all these locations must receive dedicated attention, with proper vaccination booths, field supervision, and follow-up mechanisms to ensure that no eligible child is left out.

The meeting also assessed the location and functioning of transit booths, which will be established at busy mobility points such as markets, bus stands, and major travel routes to cover children who are on the move during the campaign period.

Officers from the Health Department shared

block-wise requirements of vaccine vials, cold chain logistics, printed material, banners, and other necessary supplies for the smooth execution of the drive.

The DC reviewed the plan for door-to-door verification activities that will follow the booth day, aimed at identifying and vaccinating any missed children.

A detailed schedule of training sessions and workshops for supervisors, vaccinators, ASHAs, AWWs, and other field workers was also presented during the meeting.

The DC directed officials to keep track of all migratory and tribal populations, particularly families moving from one district to another, so that every child under five years of age belonging to these groups is covered under the immunization programme.

DC Samba reviews flood preparedness ahead of monsoon

KT News Desk

SAMBA, JUNE 24: Deputy Commissioner Samba Ayushi Sudan chaired a review meeting to assess flood preparedness and finalise preventive measures ahead of the monsoon season.

The meeting, as per an official statement, focussed on strengthening inter-departmental coordination

for effective flood management and minimising risks in vulnerable areas across the district.

The DC directed Revenue, Police, Health, Irrigation and Flood Control and other line departments to maintain close coordination for prompt response during any flood-related emergency and remain fully prepared to safeguard life and property.

Ayushi Sudan reviewed the status of ongoing flood mitigation works, including desilting of rivers and nallahs, construction and strengthening of embankments, retaining walls and identification of flood shelters. The Irrigation and Flood Control Department briefed the chair on progress at vulnerable locations across the district.

THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PHE DIVISION BARAMULLA KHAWAJA BAGH, DISTRICT BARAMULLA UNION TERRITORY OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR

Email ID:- kmphebla@gmail.com

NOTICE INVITING TENDER
e-NIT No. 03 of 06/2026 dated 22.06.2026

For and on behalf of Lt. Governor of UT of J&K, Executive Engineer Jal Shakti (PHE) Division Baramulla, invites e-tenders from "reputed and resourceful eligible Bidders/ Firms/Companies / Consortiums/ joint ventures registered in JKPWD/CPWD/Railways/MES/ROC or any other State Government for "Electrical/ Electro-Mechanical and Civil Works" for Water Supply Scheme Watergam Town under CAPEX BUDGET on EPC Mode for an amount of Rs. 1477.00 Lacs"

The bidding process shall be completed online on www.jktenders.gov.in in two covers viz. Cover 1st consisting of Pre- Qualification Criteria, General Terms and Conditions, Scope of work and Technical Specifications and Cover 2nd consisting of Financial Bid on percentage basis, in the prescribed BOQ. ANNEXURE-A

| S.No | Particulars of Work | Total EPC Cost | Tender Fee | Earnest Money | Bid Validity Period | Time of completion |
|------|--|----------------|--------------|---------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| 1. | Water Supply Scheme Watergam Town under CAPEX BUDGET on EPC Mode | Rs. 1477.00 | Rs. 10,000/- | Rs. 3000000/- | 180 days | 18 Months |

Position of funds: Projected under UT Capex
Administrative Approval: Accorded vide Govt. Order No. 120-JK(HUD) of 2026 dated 10.06.2026.
Position of TS: Tenders invited on EPC

The tender inviting authority: Executive Engineer PHE Division Baramulla on behalf of Chief Engineer, Jal Shakti (PHE) Deptt. Kashmir

| | | |
|------|-----------------------------------|--|
| i) | Publish Date | 22.06.2026 |
| ii) | Document Download/sale start Date | 24.06.2026 |
| iii) | Bid submission start date | 24.06.2026 |
| iv) | Pre-Bid Meeting date | 29.06.2026 from 10.00 hrs to 13.00 hrs |
| v) | Bid submission end date | 10.07.2026 upto 02.00PM |
| vi) | Date and time of Bid opening | 10.07.2026 at 04.00PM |

- Bid documents can be accessed and downloaded from the website www.jktenders.gov.in.
- The pre-bid meeting will be held in the office chamber of the Chief Engineer, Jal Shakti (PHE) Department Kashmir, Srinagar through virtual/offline mode.
- The whole bidding process shall be completed online on tender portal www.jktenders.gov.in. The intending bidders can download the bid document from the tender portal and can submit their bids by uploading them on the tender portal.
- The valid bids received shall be opened online in the office of Chief Engineer, Jal Shakti (PHE) Department Kashmir, Srinagar Bids must be accompanied by EMD and cost of Tender
- Document as specified in column 4 & 5 of the table and shall be payable at Kashmir. The cost of tender documents should be in the form of TR/e Challan/DD/CDR/FDR in favour of the Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti (PHE) Division Baramulla.
- The hard copies of cost of tender document in shape of TR/e-Challan, Earnest money in shape of CDR/FDR/DD and other relevant documents shall be obtained from the bidder who is declared as L1 after opening of financial cover.
- EMD of Rs 3000000/- Thirty lacs in the form of CDR/FDR/DD/BG in favour FA/CAO, PHE Jalshakti Department Kashmir
- The bid shall remain valid for a period of 180 days from the last date of submission of bids. withdraws his bid before the said period or makes any modifications in the terms and conditions of the bid, the same shall be considered to be in violation of bid security declaration and shall be dealt with accordingly and the bid shall be declared non-responsive.
- Other details can be seen in the bidding documents from the website. www.jktenders.gov.in.
- Queries by email if any should be sent to all the mail IDs below: • kmphebla@gmail.com

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
PHE Division Baramulla

No. PHE/Bl/1329-33
Dt. 22.06.2026

DIPK-2493/26
Dated: 24-06-2026

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER MECHANICAL IRRIGATION DIVISION BARAMULLA

Short Term e-Tender
NIT No: E-12 of 2026-27

For and on behalf of Lieutenant Governor of Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir, e-tenders in two covers are invited from experienced, reputed and registered firms/ genuine manufacturers/authorized distributors/dealers/workshop holders / SSI Unit holders for the following maintenance works of electromechanical equipments:

| S. No. | Name of work | Cost of tender document (Rate in Rs) | Estimated Cost (Rs in Lacs) | Earnest money | Validity of offer | Time of completion | Programme Head | Whether Accorded/ Position of Funds | Tender ID no. |
|--------|--|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|---|---------------|
| 1. | Mechanical and Electrical work to be carried out at lift irrigation scheme Ijara Phase II. | Rs. 200.00 | Rs. 3.70 | Rs. 7400.00 | 120 days | 07 days | CDF of Hon'ble MLA Fund | AAA: Order No: 77- DDC of 2026 Dated: 15-06-2026. | 2026_ |

The tenders consisting of qualifying/eligibility criteria, technical specifications, general and commercial terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the website <https://jktenders.gov.in> from 23-06-2026 (04:00 pm).

The bids shall be submitted in electronic format on the website <https://jktenders.gov.in> from 23-06-2026 (06:00 pm) to 02-07-2026 (6:55 pm). The bids uploaded on the website up to due date and time will be opened on the time and date, in the office of the Executive Engineer, Mechanical Irrigation Division Baramulla in presence of the bidders who wish to attend. In case offices happen to be closed due to holiday, or any other reason, on the schedule date of opening, the bids will be opened on the next working day at the scheduled time and venue.

The complete bidding shall be online.

Prequalification bids shall be opened online in the office of the Executive Engineer, Mechanical Irrigation Division Baramulla on 03-07-2026 at 13:00 pm after which the financial bids of qualifying bidders shall be opened on the same day.

The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of bids. No. MIDB/CC-02/1347-53

Dated: 23-06-2026

DIPK-2494/26
Dated: 24-06-2026

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
Mechanical Irrigation Division
Baramulla

Thousands participate in 8th Muharram procession

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Jun 24: From weeks of preparation and a city draped in black to a sea of mourners flowing through Srinagar city on Wednesday, the traditional 8th Muharram procession unfolded as a powerful expression of faith, sacrifice and collective remembrance.

As mourners filled the streets, children carrying Alams walked alongside elders, volunteers ran Sabeels across the route, religious leaders highlighted the message of humanity, and authorities ensured the peaceful conduct of one of Kashmir's largest Muharram gatherings.

Thousands of mourners converged on the traditional Guru Bazar-Dalgate route for the procession commemorating the martyrdom of Imam Hussain (AS) and his companions in Karbala.

Beginning in the early morning hours, the procession moved through Budshah Kadal, Jehangir Chowk and M.A. Road before culminating at Dalgate. The route echoed with Nauhas and elegies as mourners carrying black standards joined the procession from different districts of Kashmir.

Among the most heart-touching scenes were the participation of little children. Dressed in black, many carried miniature alams and flags, while others accompanied their parents and elders throughout the route. "Their presence symbolised the transmission of Karbala's message of sacrifice, truth and resilience from one generation to another," said Zainab Zahoor, mother of a three-year-old boy.

The entire city centre wore a distinctly Muharram look. Black flags fluttered from rooftops and market buildings,



banners carrying religious messages lined major roads, while Guru Bazar emerged as the focal point of preparations. Dozens of sabeels, medical camps and volunteer-run service stalls remained operational throughout the day, offering water, refreshments and assistance to mourners.

Residents lined portions of the route, observing the procession from roadside spaces, while volunteers worked tirelessly to manage crowds and facilitate participants. A multi-layered security

and civic management plan remained in force throughout the observance. Personnel from Jammu & Kashmir Police, CRPF, traffic police and civil administration were deployed across strategic locations. Medical teams, sanitation workers, emergency response units and essential service departments remained on standby to ensure uninterrupted facilities.

Authorities had for the last several days finalised arrangements, including traffic diversions, parking facilities,

route management, sanitation drives, healthcare services, drinking water supply and emergency preparedness. The administration also maintained close coordination with Muharram committees, religious organisations and volunteers.

Reviewing the arrangements, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir Anshul Garg said the administration and stakeholders were working in complete coordination to ensure peaceful Muharram observances despite simultaneous

preparations for the annual Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra and the ongoing tourist season.

"Elaborate arrangements have been made for Muharram processions and gatherings. Public cooperation is crucial to ensuring the smooth conduct of all events," Garg said, while thanking mourners, volunteers, media and various departments for their support.

RELIGIOUS LEADERS SPEAK:

Prominent Shia cleric Syed Mohammad Masroor Abbas Ansari described the 8th Muharram procession as a "message of humanity" and expressed gratitude to the administration for allowing the traditional procession after decades. "The LG administration gave us the freedom to hold this mass gathering. We are grateful to them," Ansari said. Referring to the revival of the traditional route after more than three decades, he said the development carried deep emotional and religious significance for the community. On the upcoming Ashura procession, Ansari appealed to the administration to take what he called a "bold step" by permitting the traditional 10th Muharram procession. "For 35 years, governments could not do this due to bureaucratic pressure. This administration has the courage and strength," he said. He further urged authorities to allow the traditional Ashura route to culminate at Zadibal, saying it would enable people to exercise their constitutional religious freedom in a peaceful, disciplined and organised manner.

Cleric Aga Syed Mujtaba called for the restoration of the traditional Ashura procession in Srinagar, asserting that the prevailing security environment is conducive to its peaceful conduct. "The 8th Muharram procession has been

observed smoothly for the past three consecutive years, reflecting improved administrative coordination, effective security management and public cooperation. We hope the authorities would extend similar permission for the traditional 10th Muharram procession, allowing devotees to observe their religious practices in a peaceful and disciplined manner," he said.

Several other leaders addressing mourners along the route highlighted the universal message of Karbala, calling for justice, patience, unity and peaceful coexistence while emphasising the values embodied by Imam Hussain (AS).

MESSAGE FROM THE MOURNERS

Tahir Ali, a mourner from central Kashmir's Budgam district, said, it is not merely a procession, but a journey of remembrance and sacrifice. "People wait throughout the year for this day," he said. Another participant, Mubashir Hassan, said the gathering reflected both grief and unity. "You can see people from every corner of Kashmir here. The arrangements by volunteers and authorities have helped everything move smoothly," he said.

The traditional 8th Muharram procession along the Guru Bazar-Dalgate route was revived after remaining suspended for more than three decades. Since its restoration, it has once again emerged as one of the largest religious gatherings in Kashmir, attracting thousands of mourners annually.

The procession commemorates the martyrdom of Imam Hussain (AS), his family members and companions in the Battle of Karbala and symbolises the timeless values of sacrifice, justice, truth and resistance against oppression—(KNO)

Dy CM conducts public outreach camp at Majalta



KT News Desk

Udhampur, June 24: Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary on Wednesday conducted a public outreach-cum-grievance redress camp at Government Higher Secondary School, Majalta, to interact with the local residents, hear their issues and ensure timely redress of the same.

During the camp, former PRI members and local residents projected several demands, including establishment of a Trauma Centre at Manwal, augmentation of drinking water supply, construction and upgradation of roads, construction of Manwal-Pingla Mata road, inclusion of left-out beneficiaries under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, resolution

of issues concerning the tribal community and other development-related matters.

While responding to the demands, the Deputy Chief Minister assured the public that all their genuine issues would be addressed in a time-bound manner. Several grievances were resolved on the spot by issuing necessary directions to the concerned officers. He also instructed the officers to organise awareness camps to sensitise the people about various government welfare schemes and initiatives so that the eligible beneficiaries can avail the benefits.

The Deputy Chief Minister said that the primary objective of conducting such outreach programmes is to resolve

day-to-day public issues at the grassroots level through direct interaction with the people. He asked the officers to work with dedication and sincerity to address the genuine public grievances within their respective departments.

Reiterating the government's unwavering commitment to people-centric governance, he said that the administration led by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah remains focusing on delivering good governance and addressing the public concerns on priority. He directed the concerned officers to record all demands and ensure their prompt redress. He further instructed the departments to take government policies, welfare schemes and

developmental programmes to the doorstep of the people and ensure their effective implementation.

The Deputy Chief Minister also acknowledged the support of the Government of India, led by the Prime Minister, for providing substantial funds to Jammu and Kashmir for developmental works, which, he said, are contributing significantly to the region's progress. Later, the Deputy Chief Minister also conducted an on-site inspection of the ongoing development works in Majalta, Udhampur to review progress and ensure quality execution.

He had exclusive interaction with the officials and the residents regarding the welfare and development issues concerning the area.

BJP started Panchayat Poll preparations: Ashok Koul

■ Says statehood at 'appropriate time'

Sajid Raina

Gurez, Jun 24: Bharatiya Janata Party Jammu & Kashmir General Secretary (Organisation) Ashok Koul on Wednesday said the party has started preparations for upcoming panchayat elections. He reiterated that statehood would be restored to Union Territory at an "appropriate time".

Speaking to reporters in Gurez, Koul said the BJP was working to strengthen its organisational base in the region and was gearing up for local body elections whenever they are announced.

"We have started preparing for the panchayat elections. Whenever the government decides to hold them, the party will contest with full preparation," he said.

Koul targeted the Omar Abdullah-led government over the outsourcing of jobs, alleging irregularities in the recruitment process.

He claimed that around 24,000 jobs had been outsourced and questioned the transparency of the exercise. "If appointments are to be



made, they should be done through established recruitment agencies such as the Jammu and Kashmir Services Selection Board (JKSSB) and the Public Service Commission. We have opposed this outsourcing policy and will continue to raise our voice against it," he said.

On the restoration of statehood to

Jammu and Kashmir, the BJP leader said both Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah have already committed to restoring statehood.

"We believe statehood should be restored. The Prime Minister and the Home Minister have said it will be restored at the appropriate time. That time has not come yet, but when it does, the people of Jammu and Kashmir will get statehood," he said.

Referring to development projects, Koul said work on the Razdan Pass tunnel project would begin after completion of procedural formalities, including the detailed project report and tendering process.

He claimed that the security situation in Jammu and Kashmir had improved significantly, saying incidents such as stone-pelting had largely disappeared and normal life had returned across the region.

Koul was in Gurez to attend a programme organised by a local cultural centre and interact with party workers—(KNO)

3 of family killed, 2 injured in Doda accident

KNO

Doda, Jun 24: Three members of a family were killed and two others sustained injuries after a vehicle they were travelling in met with an accident near Khellani Tunnel in Pakki Hatti area of Doda district on Wednesday.

An official said that the vehicle, bearing (No. JK02DB-6037) skidded off the road near Khellani Tunnel this evening.

He said five occupants were travelling in the vehicle. Three of them died on the spot, while two others sustained injuries. They were rushed to GMC Doda for treatment.

The deceased were identified as Sonakshi (17), Jai Singh (46) and Babu Devi (44), all residents of Nagrota, Jammu. The injured have been identified as Vaishali Devi (22) and Aryan (13).

Police have taken cognisance of the incident and investigations are on—(KNO)

Mandeep Kaur chairs WRRC meet on Jal Hi AMRIT

J&K gets Rs 10.5 Cr for wastewater reuse



KT News Desk

Srinagar, June 24: With a focus on sustainable water management and promoting water circularity, the Water Resource Recovery Cell (WRRC) under the Jal Hi AMRIT (JHA) initiative of AMRUT 2.0 met on Wednesday under the chairpersonship of Commissioner Secretary, Housing and Urban Development, Mandeep Kaur. The meeting discussed strategies to encourage reuse of treated wastewater, especially for non-potable purposes.

The officials informed that the Housing and Urban Development Department is implementing AMRUT 2.0 through various water supply, sewerage and water body rejuvenation projects. Under its Jal Hi AMRIT sub-component, launched to upgrade

Sewage Treatment Plants through incentive-based funding, J&K has secured Rs 10.50 crore in incentives, so far. The ongoing interventions included installation of SCADA systems and tertiary treatment facilities to improve wastewater quality for reuse. Pertinently, the J&K government has constituted a Water Resource Recovery Cell for inter-departmental coordination to ensure effective use of treated water. Its members included representatives from Agriculture, Horticulture, Industries and Commerce, Urban Local Bodies, Jal Shakti, I&FC, J&K Pollution Control Committee, Forest and Chambers of Industries and Commerce.

During the meeting, the members shared suggestions on the objectives and framework of the Jal Hi AMRIT initiative launched by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.

Mandeep Kaur stressed that treated water, meeting prescribed quality standards, should be utilized for the irrigating parks and gardens, industrial processes, construction, automobile cleaning, kitchen gardens and reducing non-revenue water.

Continued on
www.kashmirthunder.in

Health experts urge iron boost for Women, Girls

Jahangeer Ganaie

Srinagar, Jun 24: Health experts in Jammu and Kashmir have intensified efforts to raise awareness about anaemia among women and girls, emphasising the importance of proper nutrition, healthy habits, and timely medical care to combat the widespread health condition.

According to medical experts, anaemia occurs when the haemoglobin level in the blood falls below normal, reducing the body's ability to carry oxygen efficiently. The condition can lead to persistent fatigue, weakness, dizziness, headaches, poor concentration, and reduced physical and mental performance, affecting education, work, and overall quality of life.

Dr S. Muhammad Salim Khan, Professor in the Department of Community Medicine at GMC Srinagar, called for educating women and adolescent girls about practical and natural ways to prevent and manage anaemia through dietary and lifestyle modifications.

He said common symptoms of anaemia include extreme



tiredness, pale skin, hair fall, dizziness, rapid heartbeat, low energy levels, difficulty concentrating, and, in some cases, irregular or excessively heavy menstrual bleeding. Women of reproductive age, adolescent girls, and those with poor dietary intake are particularly vulnerable and require extra attention.

Experts recommend the daily consumption of iron-rich foods as the first line of defence against anaemia. Locally available green leafy vegetables such as Haakh (Kashmiri collard greens), spinach, bathua, methi, sarson, and kale are considered excellent sources of iron. Pulses and legumes, including rajma, chana, lobia, masoor,

soybeans, peas, and whole pulses, also play a crucial role in maintaining healthy haemoglobin levels.

In addition, nuts and seeds such as almonds, walnuts, pumpkin seeds, flaxseeds, and sesame seeds provide valuable nutrients that support blood health. Fruits, including figs, apricots, plums, dates, pomegranates, and apples, are also encouraged as part of a balanced diet.

Doctors highlighted the importance of traditional and locally available foods such as ragi, bajra, buckwheat (kuttu), whole grains, and dry fruits. Moderate consumption of ingredients commonly used in Kashmiri Kahwa, including almonds and saffron, can also

contribute to overall nutritional well-being.

Medical experts stress that iron absorption can be significantly improved by consuming Vitamin C-rich foods alongside meals. Lemon, amla, oranges, guava, kiwi, strawberries, and tomatoes help the body absorb iron more effectively and should be included regularly in daily diets.

At the same time, people are advised to avoid drinking tea, coffee, or cola beverages immediately after meals, as these can interfere with iron absorption. Instead, such beverages should be consumed one to two hours after eating.

Beyond nutrition, experts underline the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Regular physical activity, such as walking, yoga, and light exercise, along with adequate sleep, stress management, proper hydration, and spiritual well-being, can contribute significantly to overall health and recovery from anaemia. Women are also encouraged to pay special attention to their menstrual health by ensuring adequate nutritional intake during periods.

Continued on
www.kashmirthunder.in

EDITORIAL

A Lifeline Must Not Be Severed

Thousands of dialysis and cancer patients in Jammu and Kashmir are living in fear. Their lifeline is under threat. The possible withdrawal of private hospitals from the Ayushman Bharat-SEHAT Scheme from July 1 has left them anxious, uncertain, and desperate. For years, this scheme has enabled them to access life-saving treatment without financial ruin. Now, a dispute over pending dues is putting their lives at risk.

Dialysis patients require treatment multiple times a week. Cancer patients follow strict chemotherapy schedules. Any disruption in these cycles is not just an inconvenience; it can be fatal. The government must understand that patients cannot wait for bureaucratic disputes to be resolved. Their health cannot be held hostage to payment delays. The concerns of private hospitals are not entirely unreasonable. Prolonged non-payment

of dues by the State Health Agency is a genuine issue. But the response cannot be to withdraw services abruptly. The government must intervene immediately. Pending payments must be cleared without further delay. At the same time, a mechanism must be put in place to ensure that such situations do not recur. Government hospitals are already overburdened. They do not have the capacity to absorb thousands of

additional patients. If private hospitals withdraw, the public health system will collapse under the weight. The patients who will suffer the most are the poor, who have no alternative. They cannot afford private treatment without insurance. They cannot travel to other states. They have nowhere to go. The government must treat this as an emergency. Patient welfare must be the top priority. The State Health Agency must clear dues

immediately. Private hospitals must be assured of timely payments in the future. And if a transition is required, it must be patient-centric, not provider-centric. No patient should be left without care midway through their treatment. Ayushman Bharat was designed to be a lifeline. It must not become a source of anxiety. The government must act now. The patients are watching. And they have waited long enough.

JAN VISHWAS REVOLUTION

New India Moves From Suspicion To Trust, From Fear To Freedom

For decades, India's regulatory architecture dealt with citizens with deep mistrust, and regarded them as criminals for minor, procedural violations.

In a refreshing change, the Modi government has made policies rooted in trust and compassion for the common man. PM Modi has taken significant steps towards improving India's legislative landscape to support citizens and businesses, simplify compliances, and acknowledge the practical difficulties businesses face.

Piyush Goyal

For decades, India's regulatory architecture dealt with citizens with deep mistrust, and regarded them as criminals for minor, procedural violations, or mere suspicion by a person in authority. In a refreshing change, the Modi government has made policies rooted in trust and compassion for the common man.

PM Modi has taken significant steps towards improving India's legislative landscape to support citizens and businesses, simplify compliances, and acknowledge the practical difficulties businesses face. Whether through reducing compliance burdens, digitisation, or single-window clearances, the broader shift has been towards making governance more reasonable and efficient.

The PM's mantra of governance based on trust and compassion is clearly visible in the Jan Vishwas Act, 2026, and a similar law in 2023.

Citizen friendly - To create a citizen-friendly regulatory environment and encourage compliance, the new law deals with minor offences with clear principles: Warning before punishment, making penalties proportional to the severity of the offence, swift

and transparent resolution, and a dynamic penalty framework with periodic revision to ensure that enforcement remains effective, relevant, and responsive over time.

This represents a major shift in regulatory approach, compliance, and enforcement in line with the PM's view that India's 21st-century aspirations cannot be realised through governance tools of the bygone colonial era.

The scale of the reform is unprecedented. The Jan Vishwas Act amends 784 provisions across 79 Central Acts administered by 23 Ministries. It decriminalises 717 provisions and rationalises another 67 to improve ease of living. It is the largest decriminalisation exercise in independent India's legislative history.

It rationalises more than 1,000 offences, removes outdated and redundant provisions, omits obsolete colonial-era offences, and strengthens adjudication and appeal mechanisms outside criminal courts.

Welcome Changes - Earlier, anybody could be imprisoned for three months for merely being present in a house, building, or vehicle between sunset and sunrise without a "satisfactory explanation". This reflected the colonial-era, suspicion-based approach that treated ordinary movement as potentially

criminal. The reform abolishes this offence altogether, aligning the law with modern principles.

Under the previous framework, if a person's driving license expired, the next day a driver faced criminal charges for being on the road. The new law provides a 30-day grace period.

Consider also a small manufacturer who fails to update registration details under the Apprentices Act. Earlier, this was a criminal lapse but now strong action is allowed only for repeated non-compliance.

Similarly, a procedural lapse in documentation by a mining company could earlier lead to imprisonment. Today, such cases attract civil penalties. Criminal liability remains for illegal mining, fraud, wilful harm, and serious violations of public interest; not for paperwork.

12 Years of gains for all - The Jan Vishwas legislation is a symbol of PM Modi's effort to ease life for all our citizens. This has been the key mission of PM Modi in his 12 years of service to the nation as Prime Minister, and earlier as Chief Minister of Gujarat.

Jan Vishwas 2026 builds on an important foundation. In 2023, India decriminalised 183 provisions across 42 Acts through the

first Jan Vishwas Act. That effort demonstrated that decriminalisation could improve governance without weakening enforcement. The 2026 legislation expands the exercise nearly fourfold, signalling that this is not a one-time initiative but a continuing reform direction.

Larger mission - The new law is actually a part of the larger mission of PM Modi to improve the lives of Indians. In this mission, the PM has strived to provide roti, kapda aur makaan to every citizen and ensured that welfare expenditure is transferred directly to beneficiaries, unlike the days of Congress rule when the then PM Rajiv Gandhi said that only 15% of the money spent on welfare actually reached the poor.

Replacing low-value criminal provisions with administrative and monetary frameworks is a welcome move not just for the ordinary citizen, it also helps small businesses. It allows enforcement agencies to focus on serious violations rather than routine technical breaches. Courts can devote their attention to cases that genuinely require judicial intervention.

Economy and Investment - The benefits extend beyond governance. In an increasingly competitive global economy, regulatory credibility matters. For years, concerns about

criminal prosecution for technical lapses were among the most frequently cited deterrents to investment. India has witnessed a 143 per cent increase in FDI between 2014 and 2025, and the trend of increasing FDI continues. Regulatory reform has been an important part of this growth. Jan Vishwas 2026 is designed to strengthen that momentum by making India a more predictable and reliable destination for investment and enterprise.

The reform also offers relief to the justice system. Many of the more than 5.5 crore pending cases, including approximately 4.9 crore in district and subordinate courts, involve minor regulatory matters, which are now decriminalised. Moving such cases to administrative adjudication is not merely a business reform, it is a judicial reform that allows courts to focus their limited time and resources on serious disputes and questions of justice.

Serious violations will continue to attract serious consequences. The law remains firm where firmness is necessary. What changes is the approach. Governance has moved from suspicion to trust, from prosecution to correction, and from fear to freedom.

The author is Union Minister of Commerce and Industry

Smartphones Must Not Diminish Potential

Children are widely regarded as the architects of our future. Yet, as a teacher of science and mathematics, I am increasingly concerned that a silent crisis is unfolding among the very generation expected to lead tomorrow's world.

Debapriya Mukherjee

Children are widely regarded as the architects of our future. Yet, as a teacher of science and mathematics, I am increasingly concerned that a silent crisis is unfolding among the very generation expected to lead tomorrow's world. Over the past few years, I have observed a noticeable decline in the ability of many students to concentrate, analyse, and think independently. The problem becomes particularly evident during science demonstrations and mathematical problem-solving sessions, where sustained attention and critical thinking are essential.

Science is fundamentally a process of observation, questioning, experimentation, and reasoning. Mathematics similarly demands patience, logical thinking, and the ability to connect ideas. However, many students now appear uncomfortable with activities that require prolonged concentration. During classroom experiments, instead of carefully observing a phenomenon and drawing conclusions, some students quickly lose interest and seek immediate answers. They often expect the same instant gratification provided by short videos, online games, and social media platforms.

As a result, the intellectual discipline required for scientific inquiry is gradually weakening. My concern is not based solely on classroom observations. During the last two years, I have received numerous complaints from mothers regarding

their children's excessive dependence on mobile phones. Many describe situations in which children become unusually aggressive, impatient, or disrespectful when denied access to their devices. Some mothers have reported that their children forcefully take mobile phones from them, neglect studies, ignore household responsibilities, and react with anger when screen time is restricted.

Such behaviour reflects more than a simple attraction to technology; it suggests a growing psychological dependence that is affecting family relationships and academic performance. Scientific research increasingly supports these observations. Medical experts have linked excessive screen exposure and problematic smartphone use with reduced attention span, impaired impulse control, sleep disturbances, and difficulties in emotional regulation. Researchers have also expressed concern about the impact of prolonged screen engagement on executive functions, the mental processes responsible for concentration, planning, decision-making, and self-control.

These functions play a critical role in learning science and mathematics, where students must analyse information, evaluate evidence, and solve complex problems. It is important to clarify that scientists do not claim mobile phones literally destroy brain cells. Such a statement would oversimplify a complex issue. However, growing evidence suggests that excessive smartphone use can



influence the development and functioning of brain networks involved in attention, memory, self-regulation, and cognitive flexibility. Children and adolescents are particularly vulnerable because their brains are still developing. When digital stimulation becomes excessive, it may reduce opportunities for the brain to engage in reflective thinking, creativity, and deep learning.

The consequences are becoming increasingly visible in educational settings. Students who spend long hours on mobile devices often struggle to remain focused during laboratory activities or analytical discussions. They may possess quick access to information but demonstrate difficulty in interpreting, evaluating, or applying that information

independently. Knowledge acquired through passive scrolling cannot replace the intellectual growth that emerges from experimentation, reading, discussion, and thoughtful reflection. A generation accustomed to constant digital stimulation may find it increasingly difficult to engage in the slow and deliberate thinking that scientific progress requires. The responsibility for addressing this challenge cannot rest solely with schools.

Parents play a decisive role in shaping children's habits during their formative years. In many households, mobile phones have become convenient tools for managing children's behaviour during meals, travel, or leisure time. While understandable, this practice can

gradually transform a useful device into a source of dependency. Children need opportunities to explore the world through conversation, books, outdoor activities, creative pursuits, and direct interaction with people rather than through a screen alone. Addressing this growing problem requires a balanced approach rather than an outright rejection of technology.

Mobile phones are valuable educational and communication tools when used responsibly. The objective should be to establish healthy boundaries. Parents should ensure that mobile use does not interfere with study, sleep, physical activity, or family interaction. Bedrooms should remain largely screen-free environments, particularly during

nighttime hours. Children should be encouraged to read, participate in sports, pursue hobbies, and engage in activities that stimulate curiosity and imagination. Equally important, adults must serve as role models by demonstrating responsible digital behaviour themselves. Schools also have an important role to play.

Awareness programmes on digital well-being should become an integral part of education. Students need to understand not only how to use technology but also how to prevent technology from controlling their lives. Activities that encourage questioning, experimentation, observation, and problem-solving can help restore habits of deep thinking that are essential for both academic success and personal development. The challenge before us is not merely technological; it is educational, social, and psychological.

If we aspire to nurture future scientists, engineers, doctors, teachers, and innovators, we must protect the qualities that make meaningful learning possible: curiosity, concentration, discipline, and independent thought. Smartphones should remain tools that support human potential, not distractions that diminish it. The future of our children will ultimately depend not on the sophistication of the devices they possess, but on the strength of the minds they develop.

The writer is former Senior Scientist, Central Pollution Control Board
Courtesy: The Statesman

The views expressed by contributors on this page are their own and do not necessarily reflect the policies or positions of the newspaper

Fruit Fall Incidents

Javid Dar sets up Horticulture panel to fix causes

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, JUNE 24: Minister for Agriculture Production, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Cooperatives and Election Department, Javid Ahmad Dar, on Wednesday chaired a meeting to review the impact of recent fruit fall incidents across horticultural zones of Shopian and Anantnag districts.

The Minister, as per an official statement, took stock of the damage reported from various orchard belts and reviewed the ongoing measures for assessment and mitigation. He directed the officials to undertake a comprehensive ground-level survey to accurately quantify losses and ensure timely submission of reports. The Minister emphasized the need for a broader response and called for an immediate assessment of fruit drop across major apple-growing districts, with specific focus on identifying vulnerable varieties and high-risk locations.

Stressing on quality control, he instructed the Enforcement Wing to intensify field inspections and take appropriate action against the sale of substandard or unauthorized pesticides and plant protection chemicals.

The Minister also directed for constitution of a committee headed by the Director Horticulture, Kashmir, to carry



out a detailed assessment of the situation. The committee has been tasked with identifying the underlying causes of the incidents and submitting its report in a time bound manner.

He further instructed the officers to ensure wide dissemination of scientific recommendations on balanced nutrient management. He asked for providing necessary handholding

support to the farmers regarding scientific orchard management practices to mitigate risk of recurrence of such incidents.

Senior officers including Director Agriculture Kashmir, Director Horticulture Kashmir, Director Enforcement J&K, Director HPMC and Director Horticulture (P&M) J&K besides other stakeholders attended the meeting.

Rana inaugurates Rapid Sand Filtration Plant in Dooru

Inspects WSS Express Highway near Navyug Tunnel

KT News Desk

DOORU, JUNE 24: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana on Wednesday inaugurated the 0.31 MGD Rapid Sand Filtration Plant at Dooru Town in Anantnag district.

The filtration plant, as per an official statement, has been established under the Water Supply Scheme (WSS) Augmentation Dooru Town being executed under JKIDFC/UT Capex to augment and strengthen the potable water supply in the area.

While dedicating the filtration plant to the people, the Minister said that the government is committed to ensure safe, adequate and reliable drinking water supply to every household across Jammu and Kashmir. He said that augmentation and modernization of existing water supply infrastructure is imperative to meet the growing demand and provide sustainable water security to the people.

Javed Rana was informed that the gravity-based scheme, which draws water from Verinag Nallah, caters to six wards of Dooru Town, including Arampora, Bonpora, Sehpora, Ganipora, Mirmaidan and Main Dooru Town. He was further apprised that the scheme will provide piped drinking water connectivity to all the 2,164 households in the



command area besides covering 11 schools, one Degree College and two hospitals.

The project will significantly improve the quality and reliability of drinking water supplied to the consumers.

The Minister also reviewed the proposal under AMRUT 2.0 for construction of an additional one lakh gallon service reservoir aimed at upgrading the service levels and extending coverage to newly developed households.

Javed Rana directed the concerned officers to ensure proper operation and maintenance of the filtration plant and maintain the highest standards of quality in water supply services.

"Provision of clean and safe drinking water remains one of the top priorities of the government. The inauguration of this filtration plant marks another significant

step towards strengthening the urban water supply infrastructure and improving the quality of life of the people," the Minister said.

Earlier, the Minister inspected the Water Supply Scheme (WSS) Express Highway near Navyug Tunnel, Qazigund, being implemented under the Jal Jeevan Mission.

During the visit, the Minister reviewed the implementation status of the scheme and assessed the progress of various ongoing works. He was apprised that the multi-village scheme covers the Panchayats of Chaki-Wangund, Tangloo and Manzmoor," the Minister said.

The officers informed the Minister that the scheme draws water from the Express Highway Spring near Navyug

Tunnel. It has been designed to cater to a population of remaining 451 households, besides extending potable water facilities to 13 schools, 17 Anganwadi Centres, two Health Centres and four other public institutions, added the officers.

It was informed that the existing storage capacity of 1.16 lakh gallons is being augmented with an additional storage capacity of 65,000 gallons. The scheme also envisages construction of key infrastructure, including intake works, pre-filtration facilities, service reservoirs, sumps, pump houses, distribution network and other allied works.

Reviewing the pace of work, Javed Rana directed the concerned officers to expedite the execution of the remaining components and ensure timely completion of the project while maintaining the highest quality standards.

"WSS Express Highway near Navyug Tunnel is a significant project that will strengthen water supply infrastructure and ensure reliable drinking water services for the people of Chaki-Wangund, Tangloo and Manzmoor," the Minister said.

The Minister also inspected the water storage tank at Chini Gund, Dooru and stressed the need for ensuring its proper functioning for efficient irrigation management and enhanced ground-water recharge in the area.

DE&CC Shopian hosts mega Job Fair

Over 500 aspirants participate

KT News Desk

SHOPIAN, JUNE 24: District Employment & Counselling Centre (DE&CC), Shopian, Wednesday organized a one-day Job Fair at its premises under the theme "One Platform for Employment and Entrepreneurship", aimed at connecting unemployed youth with prospective employers and expanding employment opportunities across the district.

The event, as per an official statement, was inaugurated by the District Development Commissioner (DDC) Shopian, Shishir Gupta, in the presence of ADDC Shopian, Dr. Nasir Ahmad Lone and officers from various departments, representatives of participating companies, and a large number of aspiring job seekers.

The Job Fair witnessed an overwhelming response, with more than 500 unemployed youth from across the district participating in the recruitment drive cum awareness event.

Around 20 reputed companies and institutions representing diverse sectors took part in the event, including Idigi Academy Pvt. Ltd., Pitman Institute Shopian, WEPS Soft Skill Centre,

IQU Info Tech Pvt. Ltd., Al Fatima Tour & Travel, Umeed Nursing College, Umeed International Group, Think and Win Technologies, NIIT Foundation, and several other organizations.

In addition to recruitment activities, stalls established by various line departments showcased a range of government schemes aimed at supporting unemployed youth. The initiative helped create awareness about livelihood opportunities, skill development programmes, self-employment initiatives, and socio-economic empowerment schemes available to eligible beneficiaries.

Addressing the participants, the DDC underscored the importance of such initiatives in bridging the gap between job seekers and employers. He encouraged youth to actively explore emerging career opportunities and make full use of platforms being created for their professional growth.

He urged young people to take advantage of employment and self-employment schemes and emphasized the need to broaden their horizons, adapt to evolving job market demands, and align their skills with emerging opportunities to enhance their employability and long-term career prospects.

KCFL becomes a sporting destination, draws national attention, enthusiastic crowd as League resumes today

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, JUNE 24: Kashmir Champions Football League (KCFL), being organised by the Jammu & Kashmir Sports Council, continues to generate tremendous enthusiasm among football lovers while steadily emerging as a major sporting attraction for visitors and sports personalities from across the country.

The fixtures scheduled for Wednesday, June 24, were postponed and will now be played on Thursday, June 25, at TRC Synthetic Ground in Srinagar. The revised schedule includes Match No. 15 between Baramulla Strikers and Shopian Legends, followed by Match No. 16 featuring Srinagar United against Budgam Royals.

Since its inception, the KCFL, as per an official statement, has witnessed an encouraging response from local football enthusiasts, with spectators turning up in significant numbers to cheer their favourite teams. The



league has also attracted visitors from outside Jammu & Kashmir, many of whom have taken time out of their travel itineraries to experience the electrifying atmosphere and competitive football on display.

The growing stature of the tournament was further reflected by the presence of renowned sports personalities among the spectators. The notable visitors was Dr. Amit Samarth, Director of Tigerman Sports and Race Director

of Race Across India. Also present was Anshu Sharma, founder of Highland Sports India, a platform dedicated to documenting athlete stories, inspiring sporting journeys and endurance sports across the country. Their presence reflects the growing recognition that the Kashmir Champions Football League is receiving beyond the Union Territory and highlights the role of sport in showcasing Kashmir's sporting potential to a wider audience.

GCW Nawakadal marks International Day Against Drug Abuse with multiple events

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, JUNE 24: In a massive, multi-dimensional effort to commemorate the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking under the national theme "Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan - Viksit Bharat Ki Pehchan", the College Well-being and Anti-Substance Cell of Government College for Women (GCW) Nawakadal organized a mega series of plantation, sports, and music activities Wednesday.

Coordinated by Nodal Officer, Dr. Nuzhat Jan, the day commenced with a campus plantation drive under the sub-theme "Ek Ped Nashay Ke Viruddh" in collaboration with the Department of Botany, led by HOD Dr. Riyaz u Rehman, followed by dynamic competitive matches in badminton, table tennis, and volleyball in collaboration with the Sports Committee.

Simultaneously, a powerful musical awareness program was conducted in collaboration with the Department of Music, led by HOD, Dr. Asmat Ara and CWASC Nodal Officer, Dr. Waseem.

During the event, the

Incharge Principal, Prof. (Dr.) Pinu Andrabi, as per an official statement, termed drug addiction a silent epidemic, emphasizing that a drug-free generation is foundational to building a developed nation and stressing that continuous institutional intervention, sports, and arts serve as powerful deterrents.

Dr. Nuzhat Jan highlighted that every single activity and planted sapling Wednesday symbolizes a student's lifelong pledge toward a healthy, productive lifestyle while encouraging them to be active ambassadors for a drug-free society.

Dr. Waseem added that a culturally vibrant campus forms a strong psychological barrier against narcotics, while Dr. Riyaz u Rehman emphasized that just as strong roots anchor a tree, strong moral values protect youth from toxic dependencies.

Furthermore, Prof. Rukhsana Shawl noted that sports instill the exact discipline needed to shield youth from addiction, and Dr. Asmat Ara concluded by stating that music holds the unique power to awaken societal conscience and heal minds.

79th Raising Day of Zila Sainik Welfare Board celebrated in Kupwara

KT News Desk

KUPWARA, JUNE 24: Zila Sainik Welfare Office, Kupwara celebrated the 79th Raising Day of the Department with great zeal and enthusiasm.

The programme, as per an official statement, was presided over by Deputy Commissioner Kupwara, Shrikant Suse who is President of the Zila Sainik Board, Kupwara. The programme also witnessed the presence of SSP Kupwara, Syed Al-Tahir Gilani and participation of several officers from different departments along with Ex-servicemen, Veer Naris, Veer Mata and their dependents.

The Programme commenced by a Welcome address delivered by Col SS Raja, Zila Sainik Welfare Officer (ZSWO) who paid rich tributes to the brave soldiers who laid down their lives in the service of the nation and conveyed his heartfelt respects to Ex-servicemen and their dependents. He also highlighted the collective



responsibility of every stakeholder in combating the growing menace of drug abuse initiated by the Lieutenant Governor, Jammu & Kashmir and stressed that the fight against drug menace is not merely an administrative responsibility but a larger social mission requiring vigilance, awareness and sustained public participation.

During his address, the ZSWO emphasized that ex-servicemen should strive to become self-reliant by beginning a successful second innings in life and encouraged them to become job creators rather than job seekers

by taking advantage of various self-employment and entrepreneurship schemes of the central and UT Government like Mission YUVA, KVIB schemes, HADP schemes, Skill development or small business schemes. He further urged veterans to motivate the youth and their children to embrace self-employment and contribute to nation building and vision of Viksit Bharat-2047.

To mark the occasion, a free Eye Screening and Medical Camp was organized in association with ASG Eye Hospital, Srinagar for ex-servicemen, Veer Naris and their dependents.

Vikas Kundal reviews developmental works in Vibrant Villages of Karnah

KT News Desk

KUPWARA, JUNE 24: Chairman, Jammu and Kashmir Services Selection Board (JKSSB), Vikas Kundal, accompanied by Deputy Commissioner Kupwara, Shrikant Suse, Wednesday visited the border Sub-Division Karnah and reviewed the progress of developmental works being executed under the Vibrant Village Programme (VVP) Phase-II in the identified villages of Gundi Gujran and Jabdi.

During the visit, the Chairman, as per an official statement, chaired an inter-departmental review meeting at Mini Secretariat, Tangdhar, to assess the developmental profile and implementation status of various projects being undertaken in the two Vibrant Villages.

The meeting was attended by Secretary JKSSB, Khurshid Ahmad Sanai; Sub-Divisional Magistrate Karnah, Mohd Raiyaz; Chief Education Officer,



Chief Medical Officer and BDO, Executive Engineer Tangdhar and other district and sectoral officers.

On the occasion, the SDM Karnah presented a detailed overview of the socio-economic and developmental status of the villages. It was informed that Gundi Gujran comprises 567 households with a population of 1,819, while Jabdi has 135 households with a population of 739.

The Chairman reviewed sector-wise progress in road connectivity, tele connectivity, power supply, drinking water supply, education, healthcare, agriculture and allied sectors,

social welfare and rural development. Stressing the importance of timely execution, he directed the concerned departments to ensure effective implementation of all ongoing works for achieving the objectives of the Vibrant Village Programme.

Later, Vikas Kundal, along with the Deputy Commissioner, conducted a public outreach programme at Government High School Gundi Shart, where residents of Gundi Gujran and Jabdi projected various developmental issues and public demands.

Interacting with the public, the Chairman directed

the Roads and Buildings Department to expedite all ongoing road projects and ensure their completion before the onset of winter. He emphasized promotion of livelihood generation through schemes such as the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP), Prime Minister's Employment Programme (PMEGP), Mission Yuva and cooperative initiatives. He also called for strengthening Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and cooperative institutions to enhance economic opportunities and self-reliance among rural households.

Among the issues raised by the public were the requirement of permanent paramedical staff at the Health Centre, Jabdi, and the construction of a community marriage hall. Taking note of the demands, the Chairman directed the concerned officers to take appropriate measures for their early redressal.

Health Min reviews SSH Sgr, GMC MFC, Pahalgam SDH projects; sets March 2027 deadline

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Jun 24: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo, on Wednesday reviewed the progress on construction of OPD Complex of Super Speciality Hospital (SSH) Srinagar and Multi Facility Centre (MFC) of Government Medical College Srinagar as well as additional 50-bedded hospital building of SDH Pahalgam here at Civil Secretariat.

MLA Pahalgam Altaf Ahmad Wani; Principal GMC Srinagar; Director Health Services Kashmir; Director Finance/Director Planning Health and Medical Education and other senior officers of health and medical education department were also present in the meeting.

During the review meeting, the Minister took stock of the progress achieved on each project. She directed the concerned officers and executing agencies to expedite the pace of work and ensure completion of all pending civil works within the stipulated timelines.

Emphasizing accountability in execution of public projects, the



Minister said that these initiatives are being undertaken with public funds and are aimed at improving the healthcare services for the people. She asserted that any delay in completion of such projects adversely affects the public welfare and, therefore, must be avoided.

Reviewing the construction of the 50-bedded additional building at Pahalgam, the Minister directed the concerned authorities to finalize the Detailed Project Report (DPR) and commence the remaining works without delay. She observed that Pahalgam is one of the most prominent tourist destinations in Jammu and Kashmir and also serves as the base camp for the annual Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra. She stressed the need for a well-equipped

healthcare facility in the area to cater to both residents, visitors as well as devotees.

The Minister set a target of March 2027 for completion of the hospital building and directed the concerned agencies to ensure that the facility is made fully functional and operational.

Earlier, Director Health Services Kashmir informed the meeting that the project involves an estimated cost of Rs 19.90 crore, out of which civil works worth Rs 12.40 crore have already been tendered. He added that the hospital, once operational will provide a range of essential healthcare services and facilities to the people of the area.

While reviewing the

Multi-Tasking Facility Centre (MFC) of GMC Srinagar, the Minister directed that all civil works be completed by the end of July 2026. She also instructed the concerned officers to pursue necessary approvals from the Government of India for installation of additional facilities and infrastructure required for the centre.

Reviewing the progress of works related to the Super Speciality Hospital and other healthcare infrastructure projects, the Minister reiterated that delays in the healthcare sector are unacceptable and called for close monitoring of all ongoing projects.

She directed the Health Department to maintain regular oversight of project implementation. She asked for ensuring that infrastructure is developed strictly in accordance with healthcare requirements and approved standards. She also stressed the need for proper planning, coordination and adherence to guidelines in the execution of all health sector projects to ensure timely completion and optimal utilization of resources.

National seminar, exhibition mark 350th martyrdom anniversary of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Jun 24: The North Zone Cultural Centre (NZCC), Ministry of Culture, Government of India, in collaboration with the Jammu & Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture & Languages (JKAACL), on Wednesday organized a national level seminar and exhibition dedicated to the 350th Martyrdom Anniversary of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji at Mattan, Anantnag.

An exhibition of paintings depicting the life, teachings, philosophy and supreme sacrifice of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji was also organized on the occasion which was inaugurated by Principal Secretary, Department of Culture, Brij Mohan Sharma.

Speaking on the occasion, the participants highlighted the enduring relevance of Guru Sahib's teachings, which continue to inspire the humanity through their message of tolerance, compassion, justice and universal brotherhood. They



also recalled his unparalleled sacrifice in defence of religious freedom, human dignity and the rights of all communities.

During the seminar, five scholarly papers focusing on the Bani, teachings, philosophy and martyrdom of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji were presented by the eminent scholars and writers, including Ajit Singh Mastana, Satish Vimal, Navtej Singh, Dr. Arvinder Singh Amn and Dr. Harsimran Singh. The presentations provided valuable insights into the spiritual, social and historical contributions of the Ninth Sikh Guru.

Earlier, Jamail Singh, Assistant Director, NZCC, read the welcome address.

The programme witnessed enthusiastic participation from literary personalities, intellectuals, devotees, students from various educational institutions and the public. Prominent among those present were Shri Ashok Kumar Sidha, President, Martand Tirath Trust, Mattan, representatives of the District Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (DGPC), Anantnag and a large number of devotees and members of the local community.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

J&K on maximum

drill involving the Indian Army, J&K Police, GRPF, RPF, CRPF, SDRF and health officials assessed preparedness for potential emergencies during the pilgrimage.

National Security Guard (NSG) commandos and Special Operations Group (SOG) personnel also conducted a mock drill at Bhagwati Nagar, the main base camp for pilgrims in Jammu.

In Poonch district, SDRF, Civil Defence, CRPF, Army and district police carried out an exercise at the Poonch River to evaluate response capabilities for emergencies that could arise during the monsoon season and the Shri Buddha Amarnath Yatra.

Senior Superintendent of Police, Anantnag, Amod Ashok Nagpure chaired a briefing of zonal and sector officers deployed for Yatra duties, directing them to maintain strict adherence to standard operating procedures and ensure close coordination with all departments.

Security review meetings have also been held in Samba, while Jammu Municipal Corporation Commissioner Devansh Yadav reviewed civic arrangements at Purani Mandi. A tenant verification drive has been launched in Jammu and security has been intensified at the Jammu Bus Stand.

TRAFFIC POLICE ISSUE ADVISORY TO REGULATE MOVEMENT OF CONVOY, NON-CONVOY VEHICLES

Meanwhile, the Traffic Police Headquarters issued a detailed advisory regulating the movement of convoy and non-convoy vehicles during the Yatra period.

According to the advisory, Yatra convoys from Jammu towards Baltal will leave at 4 am, cross Banihal by 10 am and proceed from Ganderbal towards Baltal by 5 pm. Convoys towards Pahalgam will depart Jammu at 4.15 am and cross Banihal by 10.45 am.

For returning convoys, vehicles from Baltal will move towards Jammu from 6 am, while those from Pahalgam will begin at 6 am and 6.30 am.

Authorities have also imposed cut-off timings for non-convoy vehicles. The last vehicle from Jammu towards the Valley via the Navyug Tunnel will be allowed at 3 pm, while traffic from Mir Bazar towards Anantnag will stop at 4 pm. Similar restrictions have been imposed at Pantha Chowk, Sumbal, Wayil, Narbal and other key junctions along the Yatra routes.

For vehicles travelling from Jammu towards Kashmir Valley, cut-off timings have been fixed at Nagrota (12 noon), Jakheni-Udhampur (1 pm), Chanderkote (2 pm) and Banihal (3 pm).

Officials said the restrictions are aimed at ensuring the safe movement of Yatra convoys and minimising congestion along the national highway and pilgrimage routes. They urged commuters to follow traffic advisories and cooperate with security personnel during the pilgrimage period. (KNO)

LG Sinha chairs

System into the Directorate of Information Technology, the Internal Quality Assurance Cell into the Directorate of Quality Assurance, and the establishment of an International Students Cell to strengthen global outreach and student support.

As part of SKUAST-Kashmir's future road-map, three futuristic and self-sustainable flagship initiatives were proposed during the meeting: the establishment of a Centre for Agri Innovation, Analytics and Certification as a National Reference Laboratory; creation of an Agri-Startup Park to nurture and host over 50 SKUAST startup enterprises; and establishment of a Global Veterinary School as an internationally benchmarked centre for veterinary education, research and advanced clinical services.

The Lieutenant Governor commended the University's incredible journey from local roots to global aspirations, praising its sustained growth in academics, research, innovation, entrepreneurship, and international partnerships.

He noted that the SKUAST-Kashmir's transformative initiatives have the potential to position it as a leading, innovation-driven, and globally engaged agricultural university.

The Lieutenant Governor also directed the Vice Chancellor, SKUAST-Kashmir, to ensure that meetings of the University Council are convened regularly, at least twice a year, for timely review of academic and administrative matters.

Presenting the University Report, Vice Chancellor Prof. Nazir Ahmad Ganai highlighted SKUAST-Kashmir's remarkable transformation from a regionally focused institution into a nationally recognized university with a clear vision of emerging as a globally competitive institution in agricultural and allied sciences. He also shared the University's vision of excellence in education, research, innovation and societal impact.

The Vice Chancellor informed the meeting that the University has made significant gains in national rankings, developed the largest startup ecosystem among higher educational institutions in Jammu Kashmir, and recorded 123 Intellectual Property Rights including patents, trademarks and designs, reflecting a strong culture of innovation and translational research. Nearly 30 percent of the University's students now come from outside Jammu Kashmir, demonstrating its growing national outreach and academic reputation. (KNO)

Frequent parl

grievance redressal. Soon after, the Department-related Standing Committee on Housing and Urban Affairs, led by MP Magunta Sreenivasulu Reddy, visited Jammu & Kashmir and assessed the progress of Smart City and other urban projects.

The Department-related Standing Committee on Home Affairs, headed by BJP MP Radha Mohan Das Aggarwal, visited Jammu & Kashmir from May 10 to May 15 to discuss various issues. The Department-related Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment also visited the Union Territory in May-June as part of its study tour.

Cutting across party lines, legislators are optimistic that these visits will boost development in Jammu & Kashmir and promote it on the tourism map.

MLA Gulmarg, Farooq Ahmad Shah, termed the visits as positive, saying that parliamentarians can better understand the realities on the ground through firsthand experience.

"When parliamentarians visit J&K and witness the situation themselves, they become ambassadors of Jammu and Kashmir. This is a welcome step and will help project the region in a positive manner," Shah told KNO.

"Once they return, they will carry good impressions of Jammu and Kashmir and encourage others to visit. We are hopeful that this will have a positive impact on tourism and development alike," he said.

Shah, who is also head of J&K Assembly's petition committee, said that these visits also draw the attention of the Central government to the developmental needs of J&K.

"During these visits, they also examine developmental issues concerning J&K, which are later mentioned in their reports. Once the report is tabled, the concerned ministry has to submit an action-taken report on it," he explained.

Echoing similar views, MLA Udhampur East R.S. Pathania said the visits would prove beneficial for the Union Territory.

"Jammu & Kashmir is getting positive projection through such visits, and it will certainly help," Pathania said. (KNO)

J&K Police top

also seen briefly holding an Alam, a moment noticed by many participants present at the venue.

Inspector General of Police (IGP) Kashmir VK Birdi, IG Security Sujit Kumar, Special Director General of Police (Coordination) SJM Gillani, Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Central Kashmir Range Rajiv Omprakash Pande, Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Srinagar Dr. G V Sundeep Chakravarty, DySP Headquarters Srinagar Syed Sleet Shah and other senior officers remained present along the procession

route, reviewed arrangements and interacted with mourners.

Among the officers present, DySP Headquarters Srinagar Syed Sleet Shah was seen interacting with mourners during the procession, reflecting the police's outreach and engagement with participants on the occasion.

Senior police officers distributed drinking water among mourners from a facilitation stall established by the police at MA Road. The initiative received a positive response from devotees, particularly amid the warm weather conditions during the procession.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the procession, IGP Kashmir V.K. Birdi said the Jammu and Kashmir Police had made comprehensive arrangements to ensure the smooth, peaceful and dignified conduct of the 8th Muharram procession.

"The police, volunteers and organisers worked in close coordination to facilitate the procession. Simultaneously, measures were taken to ensure smooth traffic flow in other parts of Srinagar and prevent inconvenience to the general public," IGP Birdi said.

Describing Muharram as an occasion of profound significance, the IGP said the sacrifice of Imam Hussain (AS) and his companions continues to inspire people across the world.

"This is a solemn occasion. We remember the supreme sacrifice of Imam Hussain (AS) and his companions. Their message teaches us humanity, duty, sacrifice and tolerance. We salute these values and strive to imbibe them in our lives. The message of Imam Hussain (AS) is as relevant for us as it is for the entire humanity," he said.

Meanwhile, SSP Srinagar Dr. G.V. Sundeep Chakravarty said extensive security, traffic and civic arrangements had been implemented along the traditional route from Guru Bazar to Dalgate and Imamabada.

"The Srinagar Police, in coordination with paramilitary forces and the traffic police, has meticulously planned security arrangements from the starting point to the end point of the procession. Drone surveillance is also being used to enhance security and provide comfort to mourners as well as the general public," he said.

The SSP said similar elaborate arrangements have already been planned for the upcoming 10th Muharram procession.

Meanwhile, mourners and members of the Shia administration praised the Jammu and Kashmir Police, district administration and other departments for the extensive arrangements made for the procession. They appreciated the security deployment, traffic regulation, drone surveillance, sanitation measures, medical facilities, public service camps and drinking water distribution points established along the route.

"The coordination between police, volunteers and organisers ensured that the procession was conducted peacefully and without disruption, while also minimising inconvenience to the general public," said Adil Bashir, a mourner from Bemina Srinagar.

The mourners also welcomed the participation of senior police officers and the presence of the DGP at the venue, describing it as a positive outreach effort that strengthened public confidence and reflected the administration's commitment towards facilitating religious events in a peaceful and respectful atmosphere. (KNO)

KPs join procession

who was martyred in the Battle of Karbala. Participating in the 8th Muharram procession, a Kashmiri Pandit representative, Jagdish Bhardwaj said the sacrifices made by Imam Hussain (AS) transcend religious boundaries and continue to inspire people across communities.

"Imam Hussain sacrificed his life for truth, justice and humanity. Such sacrifices are never forgotten and remain etched in history forever," Bhardwaj said while addressing mourners.

Bhardwaj, as reported by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said he had come on behalf of the Kashmiri Hindu

community to express solidarity with the Shia community during the days of mourning and remembrance.

He said Kashmir has always been an example of communal brotherhood, where people of different faiths stand with each other in times of joy and grief. "The Constitution of India teaches us to live together with mutual respect and brotherhood. We are partners in each other's happiness and sorrow," he said.

Referring to the annual Kheer Bhawani mela and the upcoming Amarnath Yatra, Bhardwaj said members of the Muslim community, including Shias and Sunnis, have traditionally extended support to Kashmiri Pandits and Hindu pilgrims.

"Just as people from all communities participate in and support Hindu religious events, we too stand with our Shia brothers during Muharram. This mutual respect and participation reflect the true spirit of Kashmir," he added.

The participation of Kashmiri Hindus in the Muharram procession was widely appreciated by mourners, who described the gesture as a reflection of Kashmir's inclusive culture and shared heritage. (KNO)

MeT forecasts

advised to be suspended during adverse weather conditions.

J&K TO WITNESS 4-DAY WET SPELL FROM JUNE 30

The MeT office said Jammu and Kashmir is likely to witness generally dry weather during mornings and afternoons till June 29, although isolated to scattered places may receive brief spells of rain or thundershowers accompanied by gusty winds during late afternoon and evening hours.

From June 30 to July 3, a fresh spell of light to moderate rain and thundershowers is expected at many places across the Union Territory, with the possibility of brief intense showers, thunderstorms and gusty winds, it said.

The weather office warned that intense showers could trigger flash floods, mudslides and landslides at isolated locations and advised people to avoid streams, nullahs and vulnerable areas.

Meanwhile, temperatures remained above normal across most parts of Kashmir.

Srinagar recorded a maximum temperature of 32 degrees Celsius, 2.8 degrees above normal, while Qazigund registered 31.6 degrees Celsius, 4.2 degrees above normal. Gulmarg recorded 23.2 degrees Celsius and Pahalgam 25.7 degrees Celsius.

In the Jammu region, Jammu city recorded a maximum temperature of 39.5 degrees Celsius, while Katra registered 36 degrees Celsius. Banihal recorded 30.9 degrees Celsius and Batote 29.1 degrees Celsius.

The Meteorological Department said it was closely monitoring the evolving weather situation and urged residents, tourists and pilgrims to follow official advisories. (KNO)

Gulmarg Gondola

Kashmir Cable Car Corporation suspended operations and initiated an extensive technical inspection of the system. Engineers and experts carried out detailed examinations of the mechanical, electrical, communication, braking and safety components of the cable car network.

As maintenance work continued, the corporation repeatedly extended the closure period, eventually announcing that the Gondola would remain closed until further notice to facilitate comprehensive safety checks and repairs.

Meanwhile, the Jammu and Kashmir Government on June 10 this year had constituted a high-level committee to probe the circumstances that led to the malfunction. The panel was tasked with examining the technical failure, reviewing maintenance and operational records, assessing compliance with safety protocols and fixing responsibility, if any, for lapses that may have contributed to the incident.

Sources said all mandatory inspections and test runs have now been completed

successfully, paving the way for the restoration of services. The final decision regarding reopening is expected after formal approval from the concerned authorities.

The reopening of the Gondola is expected to provide a significant boost to tourism in Gulmarg, which has witnessed a decline in visitor activity following the suspension of operations during the peak summer season. (KNO)

J&K notifies

farming activities. At the same time, it prioritises the creation of durable community assets and sustainable livelihood infrastructure.

VB-G RAM-G focuses on four priority sectors including Water Security, Core Rural Infrastructure, Livelihood Enhancement and Climate & Disaster Resilience. Planning will be undertaken through Viksit Gram Panchayat Plans (VGPSPs) using GIS-based tools and PM Gati Shakti layers, ensuring convergence, saturation-based development and avoidance of duplication.

The scheme provides special support for the vulnerable groups, including single women, persons with disabilities, senior citizens, members of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs), released bonded labourers and transgender persons through dedicated Gramin Rozgar Guarantee Cards. At least one-third of beneficiaries under the programme shall be women.

A key feature of the scheme is its robust digital governance architecture, incorporating biometric and face-authenticated attendance, geofencing, GPS-enabled project monitoring, AI-driven analytics, real-time dashboards, bilingual electronic muster rolls and mandatory public disclosures at worksites. The contractors and labour-displacing machinery are prohibited to preserve the employment-generation objective of the programme.

The implementation framework provides for strengthened institutional oversight at the UT, district, block and Gram Panchayat levels. The Gram Panchayats will continue to serve as the frontline implementing agencies responsible for registration of households, receiving work applications, issuance of guarantee cards and execution of approved works.

The scheme will operate as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme with a 90:10 cost-sharing pattern between the Government of India and the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir. Administrative expenditure has been enhanced to strengthen staffing, monitoring, grievance redressal and accountability systems, with substantial resources earmarked for Gram Panchayat-level functionaries.

A time-bound grievance redress mechanism, mandatory social audits, independent evaluations and multi-tier monitoring arrangements have been built into the framework to ensure transparency, efficiency, and citizen accountability.

With its enhanced employment guarantee, agriculture-sensitive design, technology-enabled governance and focus on resilient rural infrastructure, VB-G RAM-G is expected to usher in a new era of inclusive, sustainable and future-ready rural development in Jammu Kashmir.

J&K faces 530 tonne

information on river water quality, sewage-carrying drains, sludge management and other key parameters was not provided.

The Amicus Curiae recommended dedicated protection plans for Dal Lake and Wular Lake, a ban on dumping waste and sewage near water bodies, detailed leachate management reports, and avoiding the establishment of waste treatment facilities near rivers and wetlands. It also urged the UT administration to develop an in-house plan for RDF utilisation instead of transporting waste outside J&K.

The report further sought a detailed status report on industrial effluent management across the Union Territory, including waste generation, treatment facilities, compliance with pollution norms and disposal of untreated industrial waste. (KNO)

India, US conclude two-day trade talks; review core elements of bilateral pact

PTI

New Delhi, Jun 24: India and the US reviewed the progress in negotiations for an interim bilateral trade agreement during a two-day ministerial meeting and discussed core elements, including market access, digital trade and non-tariff barriers, as both countries aim to conclude the pact before Washington's temporary 10 per cent tariff expires on July 24.

Leading an official delegation, United States Trade Representative (USTR) Jamieson Greer was here from June 22-24 for the talks with Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on the first phase of the bilateral trade agreement (BTA).

The visit marked a key step in the ongoing efforts to advance a balanced, mutually beneficial India-US BTA, and to finalise an interim deal in line with the joint statement of February 7, 2026, the commerce ministry said in a statement on Wednesday.

The two ministers held multiple rounds of discussions and "conducted a comprehensive review of core BTA elements, including enhanced market access, digital trade, supply chain resilience, reduction of non-tariff barriers, and expanded cooperation in strategic sectors," it said.

It added that 'substantial' progress has been made by the negotiating teams of the two sides on the pact during the recent months. "Discussions focused on pathways to conclude an interim agreement as an important



milestone toward a comprehensive BTA," it said, adding that the two ministers reaffirmed their commitment to a trade agreement that is balanced, commercially meaningful, and delivers tangible benefits for businesses, farmers, workers, and consumers in both countries.

"Recognizing the growing significance of the India-US economic partnership amid evolving global trade dynamics, both sides reiterated their shared goal of expanding bilateral trade, fostering innovation, and building resilient, trusted supply chains," it added.

Earlier in the day, Goyal said in a social media post that the two sides reviewed the progress of the ongoing India-US trade discussions.

"I appreciate Ambassador Greer's leadership and the sustained efforts of both teams in advancing our discussions in a constructive and forward-looking manner," Goyal said. The meeting

was important as the two countries are aiming at salvaging and recalibrating the proposed agreement after changes in US tariff policy upended a framework deal finalised earlier this year.

Greer's visit comes days after Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump held their first meeting in more than a year on the sidelines of the G7 summit in France on June 17, injecting fresh momentum into trade negotiations that both sides see as critical to strengthening economic ties.

The ministerial-level meeting follows chief negotiator-level discussions held in New Delhi earlier this month (June 2-4).

Securing preferential tariff treatment in the pact has become a central objective for New Delhi after changes in the US tariff landscape eroded an advantage India had expected to enjoy over regional competitors such as Vietnam and other ASEAN economies.

Under the February 7

framework, the US had agreed to reduce tariffs on Indian goods to 18 per cent from 25 per cent, lower than duties facing several competing exporting nations.

However, the subsequent US Supreme Court ruling striking down President Donald Trump's sweeping tariffs and Washington's move to impose a temporary 10 per cent tariff on imports from all countries prompted the two countries to revisit key elements of the proposed framework.

According to one of the clauses of that framework, "In the event of any changes to the agreed upon tariffs of either country, the United States and India agree that the other country may modify its commitments."

India and the US formally launched BTA negotiations on February 13, 2025.

Meanwhile, to retain bargaining leverage, the US Trade Representative launched two Section 301 investigations on March 11 and 12, covering about 60 economies.

One focused on alleged excess industrial capacity, while the other examined forced-labour concerns in global supply chains. India was included in both investigations.

After expiry of the temporary tariff, the US has only this mechanism (Section 301 probes) to impose tariffs of any magnitude on its trading partners, including India.

In February this year, the two sides announced the contours of the first phase. It was based on the 50 per cent tariffs imposed by the

US on Indian goods.

However, on February 20, the US Supreme Court struck down these sweeping tariffs. It forced the Trump administration to impose 10 per cent tariffs under Section 122 of the Trade Act on all countries for 150 days from February 24. It will expire on July 24 this year.

Both sides are aiming to finalise the pact before that, as after July 24, most US imports will again face normal MFN tariff rates, restoring the pre-April 2025 tariff framework.

Under the agreed framework, India proposed to eliminate or reduce tariffs on all US industrial goods and a wide range of food and agricultural products, including Dried Distillers' Grains (DDGs), red sorghum for animal feed, tree nuts, fresh and processed fruit, soybean oil, wine and spirits, and additional products.

New Delhi has also expressed its intentions to purchase USD 500 billion of US energy products, aircraft and aircraft parts, precious metals, technology products, and coking coal over the next five years.

The US was the second-largest trading partner of India in 2025-26.

India's outbound shipments to the US grew marginally by 0.92 per cent to USD 87.3 billion during the last fiscal year despite high tariffs, while imports increased 15.95 per cent to USD 52.9 billion. The trade surplus declined to USD 34.4 billion in 2025-26 from USD 40.89 billion in 2024-25.

Ethanol blending safe, use of E20 won't affect vehicle insurance validity: Govt



PTI

New Delhi, Jun 24 India's ethanol blending programme remains safe, consumer-friendly, and economically beneficial, the government said, dismissing concerns that the use of E20 fuel could affect the validity of vehicle insurance policies.

The oil ministry in a statement said claims linking E20 fuel use to insurance invalidation had been clarified with relevant stakeholders and were found to be incorrect.

"Ethanol blending is a globally accepted practice and is successfully implemented in several countries, including the United States, Brazil, and Japan," it said. It noted that Brazil has long adopted higher ethanol blending levels, with E27 serving as the country's standard petrol blend.

The government said the ethanol blending programme has helped India save more than Rs 1.4 lakh crore in foreign exchange by reducing crude oil imports. It added that the programme has created sustained demand for agricultural feedstocks used in ethanol production, supporting farmers' incomes and strengthening rural economy.

"Ethanol blending plays an important role in enhancing India's energy security, reducing carbon emissions and advancing the country's transition towards cleaner mobility," the statement said. The government said it remains committed to implementing the programme "in a safe, transparent and consumer-centric manner, guided by scientific evidence and continuous stakeholder engagement."

India advises against non-essential travel to Iran

PTI

Dubai, Jun 24: India on Wednesday advised its people to continue avoiding all non-essential travel to Iran until further notice, despite recent improvements in the security situation. The Indian Embassy in Tehran said it has been closely monitoring the prevailing security situation in Iran and was issuing a revised advisory in light of recent positive developments and improvements in the overall situation.

"Notwithstanding the recent improvements, Indian nationals are advised to continue to avoid all non-essential travel to Iran until further notice," the mission said in its advisory - a copy of which was posted on social media.

The mission further advised Indian citizens presently residing in Iran, as well as those who may be required to travel to the

country for unavoidable reasons, to exercise a high degree of caution, remain vigilant at all times and maintain constant awareness. It urged them to closely follow local developments through credible sources of information and comply with instructions issued by local authorities.

The embassy also reiterated its advice to all Indian nationals currently in Iran, as well as those arriving in the country, to register their particulars with the mission at the earliest opportunity. It further advised Indian citizens to regularly monitor the embassy's website and social media platforms for updates and any further advisories. The embassy also shared its emergency contact details, including mobile numbers (+989128109115, +989128109109, +989128109102 and +989932179359) and email address cons.tehran@mea.gov.in for further guidance.

Indian-American lawmakers urge diaspora to enter politics amid rise in anti-India sentiment

PTI

Washington, Jun 24: Indian-American lawmakers have urged members of the diaspora to consider contesting elections and taking a more active role in public life to make their voice heard amid increasing incidents of anti-India hate in parts of the US.

Addressing an event at Capitol Hill organised by the Foundation for India and Indian Diaspora Studies (FIIDS) on Tuesday, Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi said Indian-Americans, despite being among the most educated and prosperous communities in the country, are "facing new challenges". "There is the rise of anti-Hindu, anti-Indian, anti-Desi hate," he said, urging community members to become more engaged in the political



process. "It's time to get more involved than you've ever been. You have to raise your voice. You have to speak up. You have to show up. You have to make sure that your voices are heard everywhere," the Democrat lawmaker from Illinois said. Krishnamoorthi encouraged Indian-Americans to run for public office at all levels, irrespective of political affiliation.

"I want you to think about running for office,

whether it's city council. I don't care if you're a Republican, Democrat, or Independent. I don't care who you are.

"There's an old saying in Washington DC, if you don't have a seat at the table, you're on the menu. And none of you can afford to be on the menu, nor can our families, nor can our interests," he said.

"I want you to consider running for city council. I want you to consider running for state house

or state senate or for the US Congress, although not in my congressional district. But consider running for office and making sure your voice is heard," Krishnamoorthi said.

Congressman Suhas Subramanyam echoed the sentiment, saying one of the best ways to address issues facing the community is to have representation in decision-making bodies.

Congressman Shri Thanedar said hate against immigrants in the country is on the rise and urged the members of the diaspora to be united while dealing with the issue.

US Senator Roger Marshall, a Republican from Kansas, highlighted the importance of the growing India-US partnership and said a bilateral trade agreement would benefit both countries, particularly farmers in his home state.

Jaishankar, S Korean FM discuss deepening strategic partnership

PTI

Seoul, Jun 24: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Wednesday held talks with his South Korean counterpart Cho Hyun, focusing on bilateral cooperation and the rapidly changing global situation, the leaders said.

Jaishankar is currently in South Korea on a two-day visit - the second leg of an ongoing foreign tour - after having visited Mongolia.

"It is a great pleasure to be back in Seoul and to meet you and your team today for our discussions," Jaishankar said in his opening remarks, noting that the meeting was timely, given the state of the world and the importance of the bilateral relationship.

The talks focused on follow-up measures in the key areas of trade, investment and finance, agreed during South Korean President Lee Jae-myung's state visit to India in April.

Jaishankar emphasised that as foreign ministers, it was their responsibility to take the relationship forward and build a more forward-looking, contemporary partnership.

"The potential of our



relationship remains to be realised, and from our side, there is a full commitment that we would strive to do that," Jaishankar said, acknowledging Cho's personal commitment to strengthening ties.

After the meeting, he posted on X: "We reviewed our cooperation across political, shipbuilding, trade, investments, defence, technology, clean

energy, culture and people-to-people domains."

Jaishankar also said the two of them discussed opportunities in areas like startups, fintech and multilateral forums, and exchanged views on developments in their respective regions and around the world.

The discussions, held in Seoul, continued through lunch and went on for around three hours.

Cho said President Lee's visit to India in April marked a turning point for elevating Korea-India relations to a new dimension.

"We welcome swift follow-up progress in areas such as trade, investment and finance and discussed how to build on these achievements," he said in a post on X after the meeting.

Cho highlighted India's hosting of "Korea Week" this week, and how it fulfilled Prime Minister Narendra Modi's commitment to directly address challenges faced by Korean businesses in India.

"I am grateful for India's strong support, and Korea will soon host a similar dialogue for Indian companies in Korea," he said.

The two foreign ministers also had an in-depth discussion on the rapidly changing global landscape and agreed to maintain close communication in responding to economic implications stemming from developments in West Asia, said Cho.

Jaishankar and Cho are scheduled to meet again on Thursday at the Jeju Forum for Peace and Prosperity, where the former will deliver the keynote speech.

Stock markets rebound in early trade on softening crude oil prices

PTI

Mumbai, Jun 24: Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty rebounded in early trade on Wednesday after falling sharply in the previous session, following softening crude oil prices and buying in blue-chips.

The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 187.63 points to 76,388.31 in early trade. The 50-share NSE Nifty went up by 57.75 points to 23,878.85.

From the 30-Sensex firms, Tech Mahindra, ICICI Bank, Trent, Infosys, Tata Consultancy Services and Kotak Mahindra Bank were among the major winners.

Maruti, Bharti Airtel, NTPC and Tata Steel were among the laggards.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth Rs 17.86 crore on Tuesday, according to exchange data.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, traded 1.02 per cent lower at USD 76.29 per barrel.

"The crash in Brent crude to below USD 77 has removed the macro headwinds for India. Rupee has stabilised. FII selling appears to have tapered off. This is positive for the market," VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

A senior US official has said, the United States and India are "very, very close" to concluding a historic bilateral trade deal that will open the 1.4 billion-strong Indian market to American goods on reciprocal and mutually beneficial terms.

RBI in wait and watch mode; premature to discuss rate hike: Guv

PTI

New Delhi, Jun 24: Reserve Bank Governor Sanjay Malhotra has said the central bank is closely monitoring developments in West Asia and that it would be premature to talk about a rate hike at this stage.

"If we actually wanted to prepare them (market) for this (rate hike), then we would have changed our (stance)... if it was so certain that we are going to hike in the coming months, then we would have changed the stance from 'neutral' to 'restrictive', right? We did not do that," he told ET Now.

"So, I think it will be premature to talk about a rate hike. What we have said is that we are cautious, we are aware that there could be risks, both on inflation, as well as on growth, especially inflation, because it is hitting the upper band... we are cautious, and we will continue to remain data dependent," he said.

Earlier this month, the

RBI kept its benchmark repo rate unchanged at 5.25 per cent amid growing risks to growth and inflation from the prolonged West Asia conflict, elevated energy prices and global supply-chain disruptions.

The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) unanimously voted to leave the policy repo rate unchanged at 5.25 per cent, and continue with its "neutral" stance.

The RBI lowered its growth expectations for the current fiscal year, projecting real GDP growth at 6.6 per cent in 2026-27, below the 6.9 per cent April forecast. The projection is also lower than the 7.6 per cent estimated for 2025-26.

It forecast inflation to rise to 5.1 per cent in 2026-27, with price pressures expected to peak at 5.9 per cent in the third quarter before easing. This compares to the previous projection of 4.6 per cent average retail inflation for the year. Core inflation is expected at 4.7 per cent, up from the earlier projection of 4.4 per cent.

Iran says deal to end Middle East war 'declaration of US defeat'



AFP
Tehran, Jun 24: The deal between Iran and the United States to end the Middle East war is "America's declaration of defeat," Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, the head of the Iranian negotiating team, said on Wednesday.
"The Islamaband understanding was not the result of pressure and coercion, but rather the result of the resistance and authority of

the brave Iranian nation," Ghalibaf said, referring to the text finalized through Pakistani mediation. "That is why, the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding became a declaration of America's defeat," he said, adding that security in the Middle East must be ensured by the countries of the region.

"We consider the withdrawal of foreign military forces from the region a strategic goal" because, "not only do they not create sustainable security but they are

also a source of instability," said Ghalibaf, who also serves as his country's parliament speaker.

He was addressing a conference in Azerbaijan's capital Baku on Wednesday, which was broadcast on Iranian television.

The United States maintains military bases in the Middle East and the host countries were targeted by Iranian attacks during the war in retaliation for the bombing of Iran by US and Israeli forces.

"We see the future of the region not in confrontation but in interaction, and not in elimination but in coexistence," Ghalibaf said, in what appeared to be an overture to Gulf states targeted by Iranian strikes.

Iran's chief negotiator also reiterated that peace in Lebanon was a fundamental pillar of reaching a definitive agreement with Washington.

"For us, the ceasefire in Lebanon has been and is as important as the ceasefire in Iran, and the end of the war in Lebanon has been as important as the end of the war in Iran.

Oman opens temporary maritime corridor through Strait of Hormuz

■ Says no tolls will be charged

REUTERS

Muscat, Jun 24: Oman said it would keep the Strait of Hormuz open to shipping without imposing any tolls and had designated two temporary routes north and south of the existing shipping lane to facilitate the safe passage of vessels departing the region. In coordination with the International Maritime Organization, Oman established temporary maritime corridors to help ships leave the area safely amid heightened security risks.

The Strait of Hormuz, a vital route for roughly a fifth of global oil and liquefied natural gas supplies before the war, has been heavily disrupted since the United States and Israel launched a war against Iran on February 28, curbing commercial shipping and rattling global energy markets. In a notice to mariners, Oman said the existing Traffic Separation Scheme in the strategic waterway was currently unsafe for use and that vessels departing through the strait could instead use temporary routes located to the north



and south of the existing shipping lanes. The scheme, adopted by the United Nations' shipping agency in 1968, established routing lanes through Iranian and Omani waters in the strait.

The Gulf Arab state said the measures reflected its responsibilities towards the strait, its importance to the global economy and its commitment to international law and freedom of navigation, citing understandings reached between the United States and Iran.

Oman said navigational safety

remained the overriding priority and that a gradual, controlled movement of vessel traffic was required because of an elevated risk of collisions.

Under a phased plan developed by the IMO in coordination with Omani authorities, vessels will be grouped and contacted individually with instructions on when they may depart and which route they should follow. Ships will be directed to a designated waiting area in international waters before being cleared to proceed. Vessels using

Oman's eastbound route will be required to maintain communications with coastal authorities and comply with all navigational instructions. Oman said ship-owners and masters remained responsible for conducting independent risk assessments before voyages.

Vessels were instructed to keep their Automatic Identification System activated during transit and to report any navigational hazards to the Oman Maritime Security Centre. Oman's statement said that no tolls would be imposed on vessels transiting the Strait of Hormuz, in line with the outcome of recent talks between the United States and Iran.

Iran and Oman began discussions on the future administration of navigation and maritime services in the waterway on Tuesday. While the interim U.S.-Iran agreement provides for commercial vessels to transit without charge for 60 days, the talks are expected to address longer-term arrangements, including any costs associated with maritime services after that period ends.

Premier says China's tech advancements an 'opportunity' for world, not threat

AP

Hong Kong, Jun 24: China's Premier Li Qiang on Wednesday defended the country's technological advancements as an opportunity for the world rather than a threat.

Li also said the country's heavy state subsidies were not the main reason for the rapid rise of its high-tech industries, at a time when Western officials have complained that China's state support for industries from artificial intelligence to electric vehicles has provided an unfair competitive edge. China's No 2 leader made the remarks in his speech at the opening plenary of the World Economic Forum's Annual Meeting of the New Champions, known as the "Summer Davos," held this week in the northeastern Chinese coastal city of Dalian. He acknowledged there have been growing global concerns about China's technological innovations, with some pointing to the term "China Shock 2.0," as they see the nation's high-tech boom as a threat to many advanced economies.

Instead, that should be seen as "China Opportunity 2.0," he said.

"From the global development perspective, 'China Opportunity 2.0' means there'll be broader access to advanced technologies and more widely shared benefits," Li said.

Gill at No. 2 in ICC rankings for batters in ODIs

Henry joins Bumrah as top-ranked Test bowler

PTI

Dubai, Jun 24: India captain Shubman Gill rose three spots to move to the second spot in ICC ODI rankings for batters, while New Zealand pacer Matt Henry joined Jasprit Bumrah as the world's top ranked bowler in Test cricket here on Wednesday.

Gill is now behind New Zealand's Daryl Mitchell by only 24 rating points as the Indian skipper reaped the benefits of his big scores against Afghanistan in the recently-concluded three-match ODI series.

While he did not bat in the final ODI which India won by 9 wickets, Gill scored 84 and 154 in the first two matches of the series. Ishan Kishan moved up 21 positions to reach 43rd rank among batters while three Indian bowlers also made big gains in the latest rankings.

Arshdeep Singh moved up 16 positions to reach 22nd, Prasidh Krishna moved up 34 places to get to 58th while



all-rounder Washington Sundar climbed 17 spots to reach joint 71st.

Virat Kohli slipped to the third position after missing the Afghanistan series due to a hamstring injury while Rohit Sharma remained at the fourth position.

Shreyas Iyer moved up a spot up to 14th but KL Rahul slipped a couple of positions

to be ranked 11th.

Meanwhile, Henry, who took five wickets each in New Zealand's huge victory of 253 runs in the second Test against England, rose to the No. 1 slot to share the position with Bumrah.

It is after 36 long years that a New Zealand fast bowler has risen to the topmost ranking after Jack Cowie and

Richard Hadlee.

"Pacer Matt Henry becomes just the third New Zealander to become the top ranked Test bowler as the 34-year-old joins India seamer Jasprit Bumrah at the top of the bowler rankings following his 11-wicket haul during the second Test against England," the ICC said. "Bumrah had occupied top position on his own since overtaking Kagiso Rabada in November 2024, but Henry climbs to the top after he played a major role in helping New Zealand level their three-game World Test Championship series with England at 1-1."

"Henry joins Jack Cowie (1947) and Richard Hadlee (1984-1990) as New Zealanders to hold the premier ranking for bowlers in Test cricket, with the right-arm breaking a 36-year drought for the Kiwis in the category," the ICC added.

England's stand-in skipper Joe Root rose two spots to reclaim No. 1 ranking in Tests batters.

UN resolution urges accountability for peacekeeper attacks

REUTERS

New York, Jun 24: The UN Security Council adopted a resolution aimed at strengthening accountability for attacks on UN peacekeepers, amid concern over rising violence and low prosecution rates.

The move follows a series of deadly incidents targeting UN personnel, including the killing of seven peacekeepers serving with the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon after a fresh round of fighting broke out between Israel and Hezbollah in early March.

The resolution, drafted by Denmark and Pakistan and co-sponsored by 152 countries, passed unanimously on Tuesday. It urges countries hosting UN peacekeepers to take "all necessary measures" to investigate and prosecute those responsible for attacks on UN personnel.

It says prosecution rates have remained low and that accountability is essential to prevent



future attacks. While reaffirming that host states bear primary responsibility for the safety of UN personnel, it urges all parties to cooperate with investigations.

The text asks the UN secretary-general to designate "a senior focal point" within the UN to coordinate efforts to improve accountability for crimes against peacekeepers.

It also encourages troop- and police-contributing countries to deploy investigators, at the request of host states, to assist inquiries and calls for an annual UN progress report on investigations and prosecutions.

Off-field issues add to Pakistan's World Cup woes



PTI

Lahore, Jun 24: The Pakistan women's cricket team is going through a harrowing time on the field in the Women's T20 World Cup in England, and to make matters worse, reports have emerged about disagreements and a tense environment in the squad.

Although the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has neither denied nor confirmed them, several posts and reports on social and mainstream media suggest problems within the team.

Pakistan suffered its fourth straight defeat in the World Cup against Australia on Tuesday night at Leeds. Since landing in Ireland before the mega event, the team

has yet to win a single match, and they were also winless in the triangular series they played against Ireland and West Indies prior to the tournament.

Last year also Pakistan finished at the bottom of the points table in the ICC 50-overs World Cup in India and Sri Lanka where the team played all its games in Sri Lanka.

Reports say that the there was a big disagreement between team mentor and unofficial head coach, Wahab Riaz, and captain Fatima Sana over selection matters.

Before the match against Bangladesh, Sana objected to the husband of senior player, Aaliya Riaz, staying in her room in the team hotel.

"It was on Sana's insistence that Ali Younis was asked to vacate the

room. Then, on the day before the game against Bangladesh, Aaliya and her husband went out for sightseeing when there was a team practice scheduled," one report said.

Apparently, when the playing XI for the Bangladesh match was being finalized, Sana wanted Aaliya out, but Wahab insisted on her selection. After Pakistan lost the game and Aaliya failed, Sana pointedly told Wahab in front of everyone that he was responsible for the defeat, as he had not adhered to the necessary disciplinary protocols.

Reports have also talked about groupings within the team and strained relations between some senior players and the coaches. The coaches are unhappy that whatever plans they give to the players are not executed in matches.

Ironically, this is not the first time such reports about problems within the Pakistan team have emerged. Even when the men's team failed to perform in the 2023 and 2024 ICC World Cups, similar stories about a strained dressing room environment surfaced, some of which were later confirmed as true.

Over the last 3-4 years, the PCB has constantly changed the head coaches of the women's team, with the revolving door including foreign coaches like Mark Coles, alongside various local coaches and staff such as Junaid Khan, Basit Ali Basit Ali, Saleem Jaffar, and Mohtashim Rashid, among others.

MOVIES SCHEDULE

THURSDAY • 25 JUNE

OBSESSION
(ENGLISH) (A)
11:10 AM

MAIN VAAPAS AUNGA
(HINDI) (U/A16+)
11:40 AM • 02:00 PM • 05:15 PM

COCKTAIL 2
(A)
HINDI ATMOS - 01:30 PM
HINDI - 11:00 AM • 03:15 PM • 05:20 PM

TOY STORY 5
(3D ENGLISH WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES) (U)
04:30 PM

WELCOME TO THE JUNGLE
(HINDI ATMOS) (U/A16+)
07:30 PM






INOX SRINAGAR
Call: 95416 13868
For Assistance With Tickets