



A JOURNEY OF DEVOTION TO THE SACRED AMARNATH CAVE



Do's for the Yatris

- It is mandatory for every yatri to get registered and to carry valid RFID card before starting the journey from Baltal/ Chandanwari.
- Yatris are required to collect their RFID card from designated locations in Jammu/Srinagar before embarking on the Yatra.
- Carry your aadhar details for collecting your RFID card.
- Wear the RFID card around your neck at all times during Yatra for safety & security.
- Do carry sufficient woolen clothing, umbrella, wind cheater, raincoat and waterproof shoes. Weather remains unpredictable and temperature may abruptly fall to below 5 degree Celsius.
- Walk slowly and steadily — don't rush on steep paths.
- Take regular breaks to avoid fatigue.

Don'ts for the Yatris

- No yatri shall be allowed to embark on the Yatra without mandatory registration and valid RFID card.
- Don't ignore the symptoms of high altitude illness.
- Don't drink alcohol, caffeinated drinks, or smoke.
- Don't stop at places with warning signs.
- Don't take shortcuts on the route—it's risky.
- Don't pollute or disturb the Yatra environment.
- Don't separate from your group — always stay with your companions.

May your journey be happy and auspicious!

Department of Information & Public Relations
Government of Jammu & Kashmir



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MP Mian Altaf calls for enhanced awareness of Govt Schemes

KT News Desk

KULGAM, JULY 02: Member of Parliament, Anantnag-Rajouri Parliamentary Constituency, Mian Altaf Ahmad, on Thursday visited Kulgam district and chaired a meeting of the District Development Coordination and Monitoring Committee (DISHA) at the Mini Secretariat, Kulgam.

Prior to the meeting, the MP, as per an official statement, visited the Drug De-addiction Centre, Kulgam, where he reviewed the facilities and services being provided to patients.

He also visited the Mission YUVA Small Business Development Unit (SBDU) and assessed the initiatives aimed at promoting entrepreneurship and self-employment among youth.

During the DISHA meeting, the MP took a detailed review of the implementation and progress of various centrally sponsored schemes and developmental programmes in the district. The Meeting was attended by



Chairs DISHA review meeting, distributes sanction letters among beneficiaries in Kulgam

MLA, Devsar, Peerzada Feroze Ahmad Shah; Deputy Commissioner Kulgam, Shahzad Alam, ADDC, ADC, JDP, SE, KPDCL, SDM, ACR, ASP, Executive Engineers, CEO, CMO and other officers, besides former District Development Council Chairperson, Mohd Afzal parrey. The MP reviewed the progress under PMAY-G, PMAY-U, Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS), PMGSY and other flagship schemes.

During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner briefed the chair about the progress and implementation status of schemes and programmes, through a detailed presentation. The MP stressed the need for effective coordination among departments, timely execution of projects and ensuring that the benefits of welfare schemes reach the intended beneficiaries. He also took stock of the staff position in the Health and Education departments and reviewed the status of vacant posts, emphasizing the need to address manpower gaps to improve service delivery.

The MP also called for enhanced awareness of Government Schemes to ensure maximum public benefit. During the meeting, MLA Devsar also raised various public issues and developmental requirements of the Devsar constituency and sought their timely redressal and consideration under different schemes and programmes.

During the programme, the MP distributed sanction letters among beneficiaries under different schemes and interacted with the public during a public interaction-cum-grievance redressal session.

He also listened to issues and suggestions raised by the people and assured them that their genuine concerns would be taken up for appropriate redressal.

During his visit, the MP also inspected departmental exhibition stalls and visited the Digital Centre of Excellence and the UMEED SHG Canteen, appreciating the efforts being made towards digital empowerment and women-led self-help initiatives.

Land Records Digitization: VC LCMA reviews progress in Pulwama



KT News Desk

PULWAMA, JULY 02: Vice Chairman, Lakes Conservation and Management Authority (LCMA), Khurshid Ahmad Shah, who has been nominated as District Mentor for Pulwama to monitor the digitization of revenue records, Thursday chaired a review meeting at the Circuit House, Pulwama, to assess the progress achieved under the Digitization of Land Records Programme.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by the Additional Deputy Commissioner, Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Tehsildars and other concerned Revenue officers of the district.

During the meeting, the Vice Chairman conducted a detailed review of the progress made in digitization of revenue records and emphasized the need for timely completion of the process while ensuring accuracy, transparency and strict adherence to the prescribed standards.

He directed the concerned officers to complete all pending digitization work within the stipulated timelines and instructed them to follow the prescribed standards, formats and protocols while digitizing revenue records.

Stressing the importance of quality assurance, Khurshid Ahmad Shah called for regular verification and quality checks of digitized records to eliminate discrepancies. He also directed the officers to resolve field-level issues on priority and immediately report unresolved matters to the Revenue Department for timely intervention.

The Vice Chairman underscored the need for close coordination among all Revenue officers to ensure seamless implementation of the programme. He also emphasized regular monitoring at the tehsil level and accountability at every stage to achieve the objectives of the Digitization of Land Records Programme in an efficient and time-bound manner.

Speaking on the occasion, Khurshid Ahmad Shah said that the digitization of land records is a key governance initiative aimed at enhancing transparency, ensuring easy access to land records, minimizing disputes and improving public service delivery.

Amarnath Ji Yatra

DC Srinagar, SSP welcome first batch of pilgrims at Panthachowk



KT News Desk

SRINAGAR JULY 02: Srinagar District Administration on Thursday welcomed the first batch of Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra pilgrims at Byepass, Pantha Chowk, as the annual pilgrimage commenced amid a spirit of devotion and enthusiasm.

Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Akshay Labroo, as per an official statement, along with Senior Superintendent of Police, Sundee Chakravarthy, received the pilgrims on their arrival and conveyed best wishes for a safe and spiritually fulfilling journey. The Officers also reviewed the arrangements put in

place to ensure the comfort and convenience of the yatrīs.

Senior Officers of the District Administration, Srinagar, SMC and the Police Department were present at the venue to facilitate the arrival of the pilgrims and oversee the smooth management of the facilities.

Speaking at the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner said the Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra holds immense religious significance and that the Administration has made extensive preparations to ensure the pilgrimage is conducted in a safe, seamless and well-coordinated manner.

The DC added that comprehensive arrangements, including security, accommodation, sanitation, healthcare and other essential services have been put in place so that pilgrims can undertake the sacred journey with confidence and peace of mind.

The DC and the SSP accompanied by local residents, extended a heartfelt welcome to the yatrīs and prayed for the safe, smooth and peaceful conduct of the annual Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra.

The pilgrims acknowledged the warm reception and hospitality extended to them and the arrangements made by administration.

Additional Deputy Commissioner, Aadil Fareed, IAS Probationer, Thomas Alfred, SP Headquarter, Umar Shah, SDM East, Zubair Ahmad, SDPO Panthachowk, Zuhair Ahmad, Tehsildar Panthachowk, Muzamil Zaman, Assistant Commissioner Food Safety, Yamin ul Nabi and other Officers and Official were present on the occasion.

DC Srinagar reviews progress of Phase-3 heritage conservation projects

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR JULY 02:- Deputy Commissioner(DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo Thursday reviewed the progress of heritage conservation projects being executed across the District at a meeting held in the Conference Hall of the DC Office Complex.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by Additional District Development Commissioner, Rifat Aftab Qureshi, Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar, Superintending Engineer R&B North, Shabir Ahmad, Superintending Engineer R&B South, Tatheer Manzoor, Executive Engineers of R&B Divisions of Dalgate, Rajbagh, Karannagar and Core besides other concerned.

At the outset, the Deputy Commissioner was briefed on the status of ongoing conservation and restoration works being carried out for the preservation, revival, restoration and maintenance of several heritage and religious sites, including Ziyarat Makhdoom Sahib, Narian Temple, Sharika Devi Temple, Shrine of Syed Yaqoob Sahib, heritage structure of "Kalai Wall" at Shahr-e-Khaas, Shiv temple, Khankahi Moula, Imambara Hasanabad, Hazratbal Shrine, Hari Parbat fort, Vasanta School, Mian Shah Sahib shrine, Heritage of Kashapa building, Raghunath Mandir, Siraj udin shrine, Gopi Nath Terath, Shri Anandishwar Bhairav Asthapan, Shrine of Noor

Shah and various other projects.

During the review, the DC emphasized the need for close coordination and collaborative efforts among all line Departments, executing agencies, stakeholders and the District Administration to ensure that restoration and preservation works are carried out in accordance with established heritage conservation practices. He stressed that the architectural integrity and historical significance of the sites must be preserved while undertaking restoration and maintenance works.

The DC directed the concerned officers to expedite the works and ensure timely initiation and consequential completion of all approved Phase-3 projects.

On the occasion, the DC also reviewed new heritage conservation projects identified for the current financial year. He instructed the concerned departments to complete all requisite formalities and initiate the projects at the earliest.

During the meeting, the DC further took stock of the progress of fencing works being executed on Budshah Bridge over the Jhelum River in the City centre and directed the concerned agency to maintain quality standards and complete the work expeditiously within the stipulated time frame.

Government of Jammu and Kashmir OFFICE OF THE CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROJECT OFFICER POSHAN PROJECT KUPWARA

Subject: Advertisement for Recruitment of Sanginis (Anganwadi Workers) in Anganwadi Centres of Poshan Project Kupwara.

Ref: 1. Govt. Order No. 222- JK (SWD) of 2022 dated 30-11-2022.
2. Govt. order No. 103- JK (SWD) of 2023 dated 28-04-2023.

Advertisement No: 05- CDPO-KUPWARA of 2026
Dated: 02-07-2026

Approval has been accorded vide Mission Director Poshan J&K letter No: MD/Poshan/22263-73 Dated: 18-06-2026 followed by District Programme Officer Poshan Project Kupwara letter No. DPO/POSHAN/Kup/26/4749-59 Dated: 19-06-2026 for filling up of vacancies of Sangini's (Anganwadi workers) in below mentioned Anganwadi Centres of Poshan Project Kupwara and as such applications on prescribed Proforma (Annexure-I) are hereby invited from the eligible female candidates of the Panch wards/Municipal Wards shown against the below mentioned Panchayat Halqas for the engagement of Sanginis(AWWs) against these Anganwadi Centres of POSHAN Project Kupwara on "Honorarium basis". The applications along with required documents shall be deposited in the Office of undersigned i.e., the Child Development Project Officer Poshan Project Kupwara within 15 days from the date of Publication of this advertisement notification in leading newspapers, against proper receipt.

a) Date of commencement for submission of application forms :- 04-07-2026
b) Last date for submission of applications is:- 18 -07-2026

S. No	District	Project	Name of Panchayat	Vacancy of Sanginis (Anganwadi workers)	Name of Anganwadi Centre
				Panch Ward no.	
1	Kupwara	Kupwara	Drugmulla	6	Chopan Mohalla Drugmulla
2	Kupwara	Kupwara	Dedikoot	2	Dedikoot Payeen

Criteria for Selection of Sanginis (Anganwadi Workers) Shall remain as envisaged in the Govt. Order No. 222-JK(SWD) of 2022, Dated:30-11-2022 and Order no. 103-JK(SWD) of 2023 Dated 28.04.2023 i.e.,

- Women candidates in the age group of 18-37 years shall be eligible (age shall be calculated on the 1st day of calendar year i.e 01-01-2026).
- The candidate should be a domicile of the UT of J&K.
- The candidate should be a resident of the Electoral Ward where AWC is situated. Name in the voter list for the ward shall be considered as the proof of residence of the candidate. In case the name of the candidate appears in the voter list along with her parents, then she must provide certificate of being un-married issued by the concerned Tehsildar. Where ever, there in any dispute as to residence for any reason, then a residence proof certifying the ward of residence from the concerned SDM/ACR shall be considered.
- Minimum Education qualification should be 10+2 and maximum graduation.
- Weight age shall be given on the basis of marks obtained in 10+2 and selection shall be granted purely on academic merit basis & there shall not be any interview.
- In case eligible candidate is available within the family of retired AWW/AWH the said candidate shall qualify for additional two percent points.
- Candidates with qualification higher than graduation shall not be considered.
- In case of tie in merit of the eligible candidate, candidate with higher age will be preferred.
- Self-attested copies of documents to be attached with the application form:
- Panch Ward Certificate and voter list issued by BDO/EO concerned.
- Unmarried certificate issued by Tehsildar, if name of candidate appears with parents in voter list.
- Domicile Certificate issued by Tehsildar concerned.
- Date of Birth Certificate.
- Academic Qualification Certificates with Marks card of 10+2.
- If candidate belongs to family of retired AWW, Copy of document proof.
- Non employment Certificate from Gazetted Officer.
- Self-Addressed envelope with post age stamp of Rs: 5/-.
- Affidavit from first class magistrate stating following facts.
- All Documents submitted along with the application form for engagement of Sangini (AWW) are correct, without any mismatch, duplicity or fallacious in nature. If found incorrect or in any of the above stated situation the candidature of deponent may be cancelled and liable to action under law.
- Maximum qualification is Graduation for vacancy of Sanginis (AWWs) and this is as per facts and onus of proving it to be true lies with the deponent.
- The deponent has read the HR policy no.222-JK(SWD) of 2022 dated: 30-11-2022 and is well versed with all salient features of the policy and shall be applicable to the deponent in case of selection as Sangini (AWW)

Child Dev. Project Officer Poshan Project Kupwara

(ANNEXURE-I)

Advt Notification No. & Date Form Sr. No.
APPLICATION FORM FOR ENGAGEMENT OF SANGINI(ANGANWADI WORKER)

- Name of the District: Kupwara
- Name of the Poshan(ICDS) Project: KUPWARA
- Name of the Anganwadi Centre for which engagement sought.....
- Panch Ward No.....of Panchayat Halqa.....
- Name of the Candidate (In Block Letters).....
- Fathers Name (In Block Letters).....
- Marital Status :-(Married/Un-Married).....
- Husband's Name(if married).....
- Permanent Address: Mohalla..... Village.....Panch Ward no..... Name of the Panchayat Halqa.....Block:Pincode:.....
- Mobile No:.....Email ID:.....
- Date of Birth:/(in words).....
- Age as on01-01-2026:.....Years.....months Days
- Academic Qualification:

Photograph of the applicant duly attested by Gazetted Officer

S.No	Examination passed	Board/School	Year of passing	Marks Obtained	Max. Marks	%age
1	10+2					
2	Graduation					

Does candidate belong to family of retired AWW(Yes/No).....

1. Documents attached.
- Panch Ward Certificate and voter list issued byBDO/EO concerned.
 - Domicile Certificate issued by Tehsildar concerned.
 - Date of Birth Certificate.
 - Un-married certificate issued by Tehsildar concerned, if the name of candidate appears with parents in the voter list.
 - Academic Qualification Certificates with Marks card of10+2.
 - If candidate belong to family of retired AWW/AWH, then copy of e-ticket of ration card.
 - Non-employment Certificate.
 - Self-Addressed envelope with post age stamp of Rs5/-.
 - Affidavit.

Signature of Candidate

UNDERTAKING

I.....D/o, W/o.....R/o.....do hereby certify that the contents of the application given above are correct and True to the best of my knowledge. In case any of the above contents is found incorrect, the selection committee shall have the right to reject my application and similarly evoke my engagement order.

DIPK-2776/26
Dated: 02.07.2026



AMARNATH YATRA 2026 COMMENCES

- LG Sinha flags off first batch of 4822 pilgrims from Jammu
- Devotees get traditional welcome in Kashmir
- 'Pilgrimage sacred path where devotion meets spiritual awakening'

Umaisar Gull Ganaie

Srinagar, Jul 02: The Amarnath Yatra 2026 formally commenced on Thursday with the first batch of 4,822 pilgrims entering Kashmir after being flagged off by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha from Bhagwati Nagar Yatri Niwas in Jammu amid unprecedented multi-layered security arrangements.

Officials told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that the convoy, comprising 259 vehicles, departed from Jammu early Thursday morning and entered the Valley through the Navyug Tunnel in Qazigund before proceeding towards the twin base camps at Baltal in Ganderbal and Nunwan in Pahalgam.

Official figures accessed by KNO revealed that 2,510 pilgrims are travelling through the traditional 48-kilometre Pahalgam route, while 2,312 have opted for the shorter but steeper 14-kilometre Baltal route. The first batch comprises



3,707 male pilgrims, 816 female pilgrims, 16 children, 246 sadhus and 37 sadhvis.

The convoy included 106 buses, 39 medium motor vehicles (MMVs), 111 light motor vehicles (LMVs) and three two-wheelers. Officials said the Baltal-bound convoy left

Bhagwati Nagar at 6:10 a.m., while the Pahalgam-bound convoy departed at 6:35 a.m., both under heavy security escort.

Flagging off the Yatra, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha extended his best wishes to the pilgrims and said

elaborate arrangements have been made by all departments to ensure a safe, smooth and hassle-free pilgrimage.

He said adequate security, healthcare, accommodation, sanitation, drinking water, power supply and other essential facilities have been put

in place in coordination with all stakeholder agencies. "Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra is a sacred path where devotion meets spiritual awakening. I wish all devotees a safe, comfortable, blissful and spiritually fulfilling journey. May this holy pilgrimage bring immense joy and divine peace to all," the Lieutenant Governor said.

PILGRIMS ACCORDED WARM WELCOME IN KASHMIR

As the convoy entered the Valley through the Navyug Tunnel in Qazigund, the pilgrims were accorded a warm and traditional welcome by the District Administration Kulgam led by Deputy Commissioner Shahzad Alam, senior police officers and local residents.

The reception was marked by showering of flowers and traditional greetings, symbolising the Valley's age-old tradition of welcoming the annual pilgrimage.

The convoy later passed through Srinagar, where another reception was organised by the | [More on P6](#)

Ensure pilgrim-friendly security checks: DGP to officers

Reviews arrangements at Nunwan Base Camp



KNO Desk

Srinagar, Jul 02: Director General of Police Nalin Prabhat on Thursday directed the officers to ensure thorough yet pilgrim-friendly security checks and maintain seamless movement of Amarnath Yatris.

According to the details available with the news agency—Kashmir

News Observer (KNO) DGP Prabhat today visited the Nunwan Base Camp at Pahalgam to review the arrangements made for the smooth, safe, and hassle-free conduct of the ongoing Amarnath Yatra.

He stressed the need for close coordination among all security agencies and civil administration to ensure a secure, peaceful, and hassle-free | [More on P6](#)

Omar advocates Ind-Pak dialogue, asks why J&K leaders criticised for peace calls

Vows strict action against sale of substandard pesticides damaging Kashmir's apple industry

Jahangeer Ganaie

Shopian, Jul 02: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Thursday advocated dialogue between India and Pakistan, saying the two neighbouring countries should work towards resolving their differences through peaceful engagement and improving bilateral relations.

Speaking to reporters here after chairing a district review meeting, Abdullah, as reported by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said there should be no objection to anyone appealing for better relations between India and Pakistan, stressing that peace and dialogue remain the only sustainable way forward.

He said tensions between the two countries are not new and have existed for decades, adding that the situation became more strained following last year's Pahalgam incident.

Referring to a recent letter written to the Prime Minister urging improved India-Pakistan relations, the Chief Minister said such an appeal should not invite criticism. He questioned why similar statements made by leaders from Jammu and Kashmir often become controversial, while comparable remarks by senior leaders of the RSS do not attract the same reaction.

Recalling the vision of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, | [More on P6](#)

CM dedicates 13 key projects to Shopian

Assures farmers of priority action on horticulture concerns

KT News Desk

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Thursday chaired a comprehensive review meeting of District Shopian to assess the progress of developmental works, implementation | [More on P6](#)



NEP focussing on developing creative, responsible citizens: LG Sinha

Says when teachers are empowered, students gain confidence



Yogesh

Jammu, Jul 02: Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha on Thursday said that National Education Policy focuses on developing creative and responsible citizens.

Addressing 'One Day Capacity Building Programme' organised by Bharti Airtel Foundation, State Council of Educational Research and Training, J&K and School Education Department

here, LG Sinha, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, "Under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the National Education Policy's aim is to develop citizens who are creative, responsible, innovative, compassionate and self-reliant."

The Lieutenant Governor said the initiative is a collective pledge and rooted in a fundamental truth that when we | [More on P6](#)

LG pays obeisance at Shri Ram Mandir at Purani Mandi

KT News Desk

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Thursday paid obeisance at the ancient Shri Ram Mandir at Purani Mandi Jammu. He prayed for the happiness, well-being and prosperity of all. During his visit, | [More on P6](#)

LG flags off HDFC Parivartan's Mobile Medical Care Unit Van



Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Thursday flagged off a Mobile Medical Care Unit van, supported by HDFC Bank Limited under its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative, 'HDFC Parivartan'. The Lieutenant Governor | [More on P6](#)

Cabinet expansion: Limits, indications & possibilities

KNO Special Correspondent

Srinagar, Jul 02: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah's announcement of a reshuffle and expansion in the cabinet, timed around the party's protest on statehood in New Delhi, has shifted the entire focus to the proposed rejig in the council of ministers.

In an interview on Wednesday, CM Omar Abdullah said that the cabinet reshuffle and expansion would take place around the party's Jantar Mantar protest programme. Since the CM's announcement, speculations have been swirling about the contours of the rejig.

The news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) looks at the law regarding the size of the council of ministers, possible inductions, and emerging possibilities.

Limit on cabinet size Under the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019, the Union Territory cannot have more than nine ministers, as the permissible limit is capped at ten per cent of the total number of members in the Legislative Assembly.

Section 53 of the Act states: "There shall be a Council of Ministers consisting of not more than ten | [More on P6](#)

Rain brings relief from heatwave in J&K

Hot & humid weather likely to return from Jul 5

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Jul 02: Rainfall across several parts of Jammu and Kashmir brought relief from the recent heatwave on Thursday, with maximum temperatures settling at or below normal in most places.

According to data accessed by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) Srinagar recorded a maximum temperature of 29.1 degrees Celsius, 0.5 degrees below normal, while Jammu registered 34.5 degrees Celsius,

1.5 degrees below normal. Other major stations in Kashmir recorded 28.5 degrees Celsius in Qazigund, 28.7 degrees in Kupwara, 27.6 degrees in Kokernag, 22.1 degrees in Pahalgam and 21.6 degrees in Gulmarg.

In the Jammu region, Banihal recorded 28 degrees Celsius, Batote 25.1 degrees, Bhaderwah 26.5 degrees and Katra 32 degrees Celsius, all remaining below normal for this time of the year.

The improvement in weather followed rainfall in several districts over the | [More on P6](#)

Hot weather brings high risk of heatstroke, food infections: GMC Sgr

'Avoid street food, cut fruits, cooked rice/meat left for hours, cream pastries'

Jahangeer Ganaie

Srinagar, Jul 02: As Kashmir continues to witness rising summer temperatures, health experts have issued a comprehensive public health advisory urging people to take precautions against heat-related illnesses and food-borne infections, which become increasingly common during hot weather.

The advisory, issued for public health awareness by Dr S. Muhammad Salim Khan, Professor in the Department of Community Medicine at Government Medical College Srinagar, highlights that increasing temperatures can significantly raise the risk of dehydration, heat exhaustion, heat stroke, and infections caused by contaminated food and water. Health experts warned that

prolonged exposure to high temperatures can lead to several heat-related conditions. Heat exhaustion is characterised by heavy sweating, weakness, dizziness, and nausea, while dehydration presents with excessive thirst, dry mouth, dark-coloured urine, and reduced urine output.

The advisory, accessed by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), warns that heat stroke is the most dangerous heat-related illness, with symptoms including a body temperature exceeding 40 degrees Celsius, confusion, loss of consciousness, rapid pulse, and collapse, requiring immediate hospital care. People are also advised to protect themselves against sunburn and heat rash.

Doctors have urged the public to seek medical help immediately in cases of persistent

vomiting, bloody diarrhoea, high fever, severe abdominal pain, prolonged diarrhoea lasting more than 48 hours, or signs of severe dehydration such as dizziness, confusion, and very dark urine. "Early medical care can save lives. Delaying treatment may lead to serious complications," the advisory states.

The advisory warns that hot weather creates ideal conditions for bacteria to multiply rapidly in food left at room temperature, increasing the risk of food poisoning, acute gastroenteritis, typhoid fever, cholera, hepatitis A and E, and dysentery. People have been advised to avoid uncovered street food, cut fruits sold in the open, chutneys and sauces kept without refrigeration, cooked rice, meat, chicken, kebabs, and biryani left outside for several hours. | [More on P6](#)

'Bangladesh of Kashmir': Zurimanz sees tourism boom with shikara rides

Locals rue poor road connectivity limiting village's tourism potential

Waris Fayaz

Srinagar, Jul 02: Zurimanz, a small village on the banks of Wular Lake, is steadily emerging as a tourism destination, with shikara rides creating new livelihood opportunities for residents who have traditionally depended on fishing and water chestnut cultivation.

Popularly known as the "Bangladesh of Kashmir", located between the towns of Sopore and Bandipora, the village post development of scenic attractions, including a selfie point and a boardwalk, has become a favourite stop for both local and non-local visitors, many of whom enjoy shikara rides that offer panoramic views of the lake and its surroundings. Residents told the news



agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that tourism has begun transforming the local economy. While fishing and

water chestnut cultivation remain the primary occupations for hundreds of households, shikara rides have emerged as

an additional source of income for at least two dozen families.

The growing tourist footfall has also created opportunities for local youth, many of whom have set up food stalls and small businesses around the tourist site.

According to locals, the village receives an average of over 300 visitors daily, while the number crosses 1,000 on weekends and public holidays.

Despite the encouraging growth, residents said poor road connectivity continues to limit the village's tourism potential.

Mohammad Aamir, a resident, said the existing road has remained in poor condition since it was constructed around 2001.

"Tourists are coming, but many hesitate because of the road | [More on P6](#)

EDITORIAL

Friday Brief: Islam Emphasises Flexibility With Wisdom

Islam's emphasis on adapting to the changing demands of time, guided by wisdom, is a profound aspect of its teachings. The Quran and Hadith underscore the importance of flexibility and rationality in applying religious principles to diverse contexts, ensuring that faith remains relevant and beneficial. The Quran advocates for a balanced approach to life, emphasising ease and

discouraging hardship. In Surah Al-Baqarah (2:185), Allah states, "Allah intends for you ease; He does not intend for you hardship." This verse highlights the importance of accommodating circumstances while maintaining faith. It encourages Muslims to seek solutions that align with divine guidance but are adaptable to societal changes. The Hadith further reinforce this perspective.

The Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) said, "Make things easy, not difficult, and give good tidings and do not make things difficult for people" (Bukhari). This teaching underscores the importance of wisdom and compassion when addressing the evolving needs of communities. The Prophet (PBUH) himself demonstrated adaptability, such as allowing concessions during times

of hardship and adjusting practices to suit different situations. Islamic jurisprudence (Fiqh) exemplifies this principle through Ijtihad—independent reasoning—enabling scholars to interpret and adapt laws in response to new challenges. This dynamic process ensures that Islamic principles serve the best interests of society without compromising core values. In essence, Islam advocates a

balanced approach that combines adherence to divine guidance with rational adaptation. This harmony allows Muslims to navigate modern complexities while staying rooted in their faith. Wisdom, rooted in the Quran and Sunnah, thus becomes the guiding light for adapting to time's demands, ensuring that Islam remains a relevant, compassionate, and enlightened way of life.

AI, Faith, And The Future:

Understanding Islam’s Perspective

Islam teaches that knowledge is a blessing when accompanied by wisdom. As AI continues to evolve, this timeless principle remains as relevant as ever.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming the modern world at an unprecedented pace. From healthcare and education to finance and transportation, AI is reshaping how people live, work, and communicate. As this technology becomes more integrated into daily life, Muslims naturally ask an important question: How does Islam view artificial intelligence?

Islam does not explicitly mention AI, as it is a modern invention. However, the Qur'an, the Sunnah, and the principles of Islamic ethics provide guidance on how Muslims should develop and use new technologies. In Islam, technology itself is generally considered neutral; what matters is how it is used and whether it serves justice, compassion, and the common good.

AI as a Tool

Islam encourages the pursuit of knowledge and innovation. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) emphasized the importance of seeking knowledge, and throughout history, Muslim scholars made significant contributions to science, mathematics, medicine, and astronomy.

Artificial intelligence can be viewed as another tool created through human intelligence—an intelligence that Muslims believe is ultimately a gift from Allah. Like any tool, AI can be used for beneficial or harmful purposes.

Examples of beneficial uses include:

Improving medical diagnosis and patient care.

Enhancing education through personalized learning.

Assisting people with disabilities.

Supporting disaster response and humanitarian aid.

Increasing efficiency in agriculture and environmental protection.

When AI is used to benefit humanity, it aligns with Islam's emphasis on promoting welfare (maslahah) and preventing harm.



Ethical Concerns

Despite its potential, AI raises important ethical questions.

Justice and Fairness

Islam places great importance on justice. AI systems should not discriminate against people based on race, religion, gender, or social status. Developers and organizations have a responsibility to reduce bias and ensure fairness in AI decision-making.

Privacy

Islam teaches respect for personal privacy and dignity. AI systems often collect large amounts of personal data, making it essential to protect confidential information and

avoid unnecessary surveillance.

Truthfulness

AI-generated content—including text, images, audio, and video—can spread misinformation or create convincing fake media. Islam strongly condemns lying, deception, and false testimony. Muslims should use AI responsibly and verify information before sharing it.

Employment and Society

Automation may replace certain jobs while creating new opportunities. Islamic principles encourage compassion and social responsibility, meaning governments, businesses, and communities should support

workers affected by technological change.

Can AI Replace Human Judgment?

While AI can process vast amounts of information, it cannot replace human conscience, moral responsibility, or spiritual awareness.

In Islam, humans possess free will and are accountable before Allah for their choices. AI has no soul, moral accountability, or ability to understand faith, intention (niyyah), mercy, or worship. Therefore, AI should assist human decision-making rather than replace human ethical judgment.

AI in Religious Practice

AI can support Islamic learning in many

ways:

Translating Islamic texts.

Helping students learn Arabic.

Organizing prayer schedules.

Assisting with Qur'an memorization.

Answering basic educational questions about Islam.

However, AI should not replace qualified Islamic scholars when issuing religious rulings (fatwas). Islamic jurisprudence requires deep knowledge of the Qur'an, Hadith, legal methodology, language, and context—areas where human scholarship remains essential.

Responsible Innovation

Islam encourages balance (wasatiyyah) and responsibility. Developers, governments, and users should ensure AI is designed and used according to ethical principles that respect human dignity, protect the vulnerable, and promote justice.

Muslims working in AI have an opportunity to contribute by developing systems that reflect values such as honesty, accountability, fairness, and compassion.

Artificial intelligence is one of the defining technologies of the twenty-first century. From an Islamic perspective, AI is neither inherently good nor inherently evil. Its moral value depends on how humans choose to create and use it.

If guided by Islamic ethical principles—including justice, honesty, mercy, and respect for human dignity—AI can become a powerful tool for improving lives and serving society. At the same time, Muslims should remain vigilant against its misuse, ensuring that technological progress never comes at the expense of moral responsibility or spiritual values.

Ultimately, Islam teaches that knowledge is a blessing when accompanied by wisdom. As AI continues to evolve, this timeless principle remains as relevant as ever.

Courtesy: [IslamicCity](#)

GAGAN: Navigating India’s Skies With Precision

Press Information Bureau

GAGAN (GPS Aided GEO Augmented Navigation) is India's indigenous Satellite-Based Augmentation System developed by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and the Airports Authority of India. It enhances GPS accuracy and provides integrity information for safer aircraft navigation. Certified to international standards, GAGAN supports satellite-based landing and serves sectors beyond aviation. By strengthening indigenous navigation capabilities, GAGAN reinforces India's vision of technological self-reliance and global leadership in satellite navigation.

The Need for Precise Navigation: Why India Created GAGAN

Aviation requires highly accurate navigation, where even slightest positioning errors can affect flight safety. While Global Positioning System (GPS) helps aircraft determine their position, its signals can be affected by atmospheric conditions and other sources of error. As India spreads its wings as a major aviation market, the need for precise and reliable navigation has become a national priority.

To address this need, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and the Airports Authority of India (AAI) jointly developed the GPS Aided GEO Augmented Navigation (GAGAN) system. It is a Satellite-Based Augmentation System (SBAS), a technology that improves GPS by providing real-time correction and integrity information. Integrity information alerts pilots if a GPS signal is unsuitable for navigation.

The GAGAN project has been fully

operational since 2015. It has placed India among a select group of countries with an operational SBAS, alongside the United States, Europe, and Japan. Today, GAGAN supports safer aircraft operations across Indian airspace and has applications beyond aviation. It also strengthens India's indigenous navigation capability and advances the country's vision of Aatmanirbhar Bharat.

GAGAN in India's Navigation Ecosystem

Since its launch, GAGAN has steadily evolved into a globally recognised Navigational Satellite. Over the years, it has achieved key certifications and operational milestones. Its latest achievement came in June 2026, when the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) successfully conducted India's first satellite-based landing system approach on a commercial jet aircraft using GAGAN.

Key Elements of GAGAN

GAGAN operates through an integrated network of ground stations, communication systems, and geostationary satellites. These elements monitor GPS signals in real-time, calculate corrections, and broadcast enhanced navigation information to aircraft.

The system deploys 15 Indian Reference Stations (INRES) that continuously monitor GPS signals across the country and detect any errors. It operates 2 Indian Master Control Centres (INMCC) that process data received from all reference stations, calculate signal corrections, and generate integrity information. The network includes 3 Indian Land Uplink Stations (INLUS) that transmit correction and integrity

information from the ground to GAGAN satellites. Four communication networks connect all GAGAN stations and enable secure, real-time transmission of navigation data. Additionally, 3 Geostationary Satellites with GAGAN Payloads broadcast corrected navigation signals across the service area.

Did you know? Geostationary satellites orbit at the same speed as the Earth's rotation, making them appear fixed over the same location. GSAT-8, GSAT-10, and GSAT-15 are India's geostationary satellites that carry GAGAN payloads. These are specialised navigation systems that broadcast GAGAN's correction and integrity information to users.

By enhancing navigation accuracy and seamless operations across the region, it continues to reinforce India's leadership in satellite-enabled aviation services.

India's Indigenous Navigation Ecosystem

The integrated architecture of GAGAN forms an important part of India's broader satellite navigation programme. Alongside GAGAN, India has developed the Navigation with Indian Constellation (NavIC), its indigenous regional navigation satellite system. While NavIC provides positioning, navigation and timing services, GAGAN enhances GPS signals to support precise aircraft navigation and landing.

GAGAN is a Satellite-Based Augmentation System (SBAS) that improves GPS through real-time corrections and integrity information, supporting civil aviation across the Indian Flight Information Region. In contrast, NavIC is an independent regional navigation satellite system that provides positioning,

navigation and timing services, with coverage area including India and a region up to 1500 km beyond the Indian boundary.

Did You Know? In 2025, India signed an agreement with South Africa to establish a NavIC reference station. This initiative will strengthen the performance and reach of India's indigenous satellite navigation system beyond national boundaries. The partnership enhances navigation cooperation and demonstrates growing international confidence in India's space-based positioning and timing capabilities.

Interoperable to the Global Navigation Network

GAGAN has been developed in accordance with international civil aviation standards and is interoperable with foreign systems which improve the accuracy of GPS signals. These include the United States' Wide Area Augmentation System (WAAS), the European Geostationary Navigation Overlay Service (EGNOS), and Japan's Multi-functional Satellite Augmentation System (MSAS). GAGAN is also the first SBAS certified for the equatorial region, making India one of the few countries with an operational satellite-based augmentation system.

By combining indigenous innovation with international standards, GAGAN is strengthening India's aviation safety and navigation services.

GAGAN in Action: Multi-Sectoral Applications Beyond Aviation

Although GAGAN was developed primarily for civil aviation, its high-accuracy positioning and navigation capabilities

support several other sectors. By improving the accuracy and reliability of GPS signals, GAGAN enables safer operations, better planning, and more efficient service delivery.

In maritime navigation, it enables more accurate positioning in coastal and offshore waters. In road transport and highways, it supports intelligent transport systems and fleet management. The railways sector benefits through improved operational efficiency and safety. During disaster management, GAGAN enables accurate location tracking during emergencies and natural disasters. In defence and security, it strengthens navigation for defence operations. Telecommunications infrastructure benefits through reliable synchronisation, while surveying and mapping applications see improved accuracy of land surveys and geospatial mapping.

By extending benefits of precise satellite navigation beyond aviation, GAGAN is contributing to more efficient public services.

The Road Ahead

Going forward, GAGAN will continue to strengthen India's satellite navigation ecosystem by supporting safer air navigation, improving air traffic management, and expanding satellite-based navigation services across the country. Alongside NavIC, it will play an important role in advancing indigenous navigation technologies and reducing dependence on foreign systems. With growing applications in transportation, disaster management, surveying, and other sectors, GAGAN is poised to remain a key pillar of India's journey towards a connected, self-reliant, and technology-driven future.

AMARNATH JI YATRA 2026

First batch of pilgrims arrives at Base Camp Nunwan

DC, SSP accord warm welcome to Yatris

KT News Desk

ANANTNAG, JULY 02: Amid deep spiritual fervor, the first batch of Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra-2026 pilgrims travelling through Pahalgam Axis Thursday arrived at Base Camp Nunwan, Pahalgam.

The Yatris, as per an official statement, were warmly welcomed by Deputy Commissioner, Anantnag (Yatra Officer), Dr. Bilal Mohiuddin Bhat, Sr. Superintendent of Police, Amod Ashok Nagpure, Camp Director, Atul Kumar, senior officers from civil and police administration and representatives of various socio-religious organisations.

Interacting with the devotees, the DC and other officers wished them a smooth and blissful journey to the Holy Cave.

Earlier in the day, the pilgrims were accorded a grand reception at Walnut Factory Qazigund by SDM Dooru along



with senior officers and officials of line departments.

The reception ceremonies were held in a vibrant and colorful manner, witnessing showering of flowers on the Yatris. They were also provided on spot assistance on accommodation, langars and other essential services.

Notably, the administration has made comprehensive arrangements including accommodation, health care transportation, sanitation, drinking water and langars for the Yatris. Many service providers have made multiple essential items like sim cards, clothes, trekking utilities and shoes available at designated stations enroute for the ease and convenience of the devotees.

The pilgrims expressed satisfaction on the overall arrangements and were highly enthusiastic as they prepare to commence their sacred pilgrimage to the Holy Cave in the early hours of July 03.

DIG North Kashmir, DC Bandipora, SSP review security, facilities at Shadipora Transit Camp

Welcomes Yatris with warmth

KT News Desk

BANDIPORA, JULY 02: The first batch of Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra (SANJY)-2026 pilgrims received a warm, traditional welcome at the Shadipora Transit Camp on Thursday, as Deputy Inspector General of Police, North Kashmir Range, Dr. Vinod Kumar; Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib; and Senior Superintendent of Police, Ajaz Ahmad Zargar, greeted the yatris with flowers and good wishes for a safe and spiritually fulfilling journey.

The officers, as per an official statement, interacted with pilgrims, enquired about their well-being, and reaffirmed the District Administration's commitment to a comfortable, hassle-free pilgrimage.

Ahead of the reception, the DC and the SSP carried out a detailed inspection of camp arrangements, reviewing accommodation, sanitation, drinking water, healthcare, electricity,



traffic management, and security deployment. Expressing satisfaction with the preparations made by the District Administration, Police, and line departments, they directed all stakeholders to maintain close coordination, respond promptly to requirements, and ensure uninterrupted services through the Yatra period, upholding the highest standards of hospitality and security.

Pilgrims spoke positively of the facilities and thanked the administration and police for

their efforts. The DC reiterated the district's resolve to ensure the safety, comfort and well-being of yatris through efficient service delivery and inter-departmental coordination.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Zaffar Husson Shawl, SDM Sumbal Murtaza Ahmad Sheikh, and senior officers from the civil administration, security establishment and various line departments were present, actively overseeing the reception and overall Yatra arrangements.

ACR Kulgam flags off 84 women for exposure tour to Centre of Excellence Zawoor

KT News Desk

KULGAM, JULY 02: Promoting women empowerment and enhancing awareness among women farmers, Assistant Commissioner Revenue (ACR) Kulgam, Reyaz Ahmad Shah Thursday flagged off an exposure tour of 84 women to the Centre of Excellence for Horticulture at Zawoor, Srinagar.

The one-day exposure visit, as per an official statement, was organised by the Department of Horticulture under J&K Competitiveness Improvement of Agriculture and Allied Sectors Project (JKCIP) as part of the Fruit Tree Management programme.

Women empowerment is one of the key pillars of the scheme, with a special focus on enhancing their knowledge, skills, and participation in the horticulture sector.

The tour, the first of its kind in District Kulgam exclusively for women, aims to provide participants with firsthand exposure to modern horticulture practices, advanced fruit cultivation techniques, high-density plantation

methods, nursery management, and innovative orchard management technologies being adopted at the Centre of Excellence.

Speaking on the occasion, ACR Kulgam appreciated the Department of Horticulture for organising the exposure visit and said such initiatives would help women farmers gain practical knowledge, improve productivity, and encourage greater participation of women in the horticulture sector. He urged the participants to make the best use of the opportunity and share the knowledge gained with other women in their respective villages.

Chief Horticulture Officer, M. R. War said the programme has been organised under the JKCIP initiative with the objective of building the capacity of women farmers through practical exposure to scientific horticulture practices.

He said the department is committed to promoting women-led development by providing training, awareness, and exposure visits that enable women to adopt modern technologies and improve their livelihoods.

NMJKA: DIPR's Cultural Unit Kashmir organises awareness programmes in educational institutions

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, JULY 02: The Cultural Unit Kashmir of the Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR) organised awareness programmes under the Nasha Mukht Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyan (NMJKA) at Government High School (Brane) and Government High School Dalgate on Thursday.

The programmes, as per an official statement, witnessed enthusiastic participation from students, who took part in speech competitions highlighting the devastating effects of drug abuse on individuals, families, and society. The speakers stressed the importance of adopting a healthy lifestyle and staying away from substance abuse.

Speaking on the occasion, Cultural Officer, Abdul Raqib Bhat and AECO, Syed Shakeel Shan emphasised the crucial role of parents in preventing drug abuse. They urged parents to maintain close



supervision over their children, keep a vigilant watch on their activities, and remain particularly alert in vulnerable areas to protect them from the menace of drugs.

The headmasters of both schools also addressed the students, advising them to stay away from drug abuse and focus on their education and overall development. They appreciated the Department

of Information and Public Relations for organising the awareness programmes and thanked the department for its sustained efforts to spread awareness against the growing menace of drug addiction among the youth.

The programmes concluded with a renewed pledge by students and teachers to work collectively towards building a drug-free society.

JKAACL hosts inspiring 'Meet the Eminent Writer' programme

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, JULY 02: Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages (JKAACL) Thursday organized an enriching literary interaction under its flagship "Meet the Eminent Writer" series, featuring eminent Kashmiri writer and literary personality G.R. Hasrat Gadda at the Conference Hall of Government Girls Higher Secondary School, Kothi Bagh, Srinagar.

The programme brought together an impressive gathering of eminent writers, scholars, academicians, students, literary enthusiasts and members of civil society, reflecting the growing interest in literary and cultural pursuits across Jammu and Kashmir.

The event commenced with an introduction to the life and literary achievements of G.R. Hasrat Gadda, whose contributions to Kashmiri literature have earned him widespread recognition for their depth, humanism and artistic excellence. His literary journey, spanning several decades, was highlighted as an inspiration for aspiring writers and readers alike.

In his address, G.R. Hasrat Gadda shared his experiences as a writer, reflecting on the changing landscape of literature, the enduring relevance of the Kashmiri language, and the pivotal role of writers in preserving the cultural ethos of society. He



stressed the need to encourage reading habits among the younger generation and urged budding writers to remain rooted in their language, culture and values while embracing contemporary literary trends.

The interactive session witnessed lively participation from students, scholars and members of the literary fraternity, who engaged the distinguished writer on a wide range of subjects, including his creative process, literary influences, contemporary challenges facing regional languages, and the future of Kashmiri literature. Gadda responded to the queries with thought-provoking insights, making the session both informative and inspiring.

Speaking on the occasion, the speakers underscored

the significance of initiatives such as the "Meet the Eminent Writer" series in fostering meaningful interaction between established literary figures and emerging talent. They observed that such programmes not only celebrate the achievements of distinguished authors but also create an environment conducive to intellectual exchange, literary appreciation and cultural continuity.

The participants appreciated the Academy's sustained efforts to promote Kashmiri literature and languages through regular literary interactions, seminars, book discussions and cultural programmes, describing these initiatives as vital for nurturing creative expression and preserving the rich literary heritage of Jammu and Kashmir.

DILRMP DG Libraries reviews progress of revenue records in Kupwara



KT News Desk

KUPWARA, JULY 02: Director General, Libraries, Mohammad Rafi, who is also the District Mentor for digitization of revenue records, Thursday chaired a review meeting of concerned officers at the DC Office Complex, Kupwara, to assess the progress of digitization of land records being carried out under the Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (DILRMP).

During the meeting, the Director General, as per an official statement, reviewed the status of digitization of land records, scanning of revenue documents, data verification and updation of cadastral maps across the district. He took a detailed appraisal of the progress achieved under the programme and sought updates from the concerned officers regarding the completion of various components of the digitization process.

Emphasizing the importance of maintaining accuracy and transparency, Mohammad Rafi directed the concerned officers to expedite

the digitization process while ensuring strict adherence to the prescribed guidelines and quality standards. He stressed that timely completion of the exercise is essential for strengthening land governance and improving the delivery of public services through a modern, transparent and efficient land records management system.

ACR Kupwara, Peerzada Mumtaz Ahmad briefed the chair about the progress made so far, the issues being faced in implementation and the measures being taken to achieve the stipulated targets within the prescribed timeline.

The Director General urged all stakeholders to work in close coordination and ensure the successful implementation of the Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme in the district, enabling hassle-free and transparent access to land records for the public.

The meeting was attended by ADC Kupwara, Gulzar Ahmad Khan, ACR Kupwara, SDM Karnah, Tehsilidars, and other concerned officers.

District Admin Kulgam welcomes first batch of Pilgrims at Navyug Tunnel

KT News Desk

KULGAM, JULY 02: The District Administration Kulgam Thursday accorded a warm welcome to the pilgrims of the first batch of the Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra (SANJY) 2026 upon their

arrival at the Navyug Tunnel.

Deputy Commissioner Kulgam, Shahzad Alam, along with other district officers and members of civil society, warmly received the yatris and extended their best wishes for a safe, smooth and spiritually fulfilling pilgrimage.

DC Baramulla inspects construction work on Pattan-Baramulla Bypass

KT News Desk

BARAMULLA, JULY 02: Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, Dr. S.F Hamid, accompanied by Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Pattan, Gulzar Ahmad, Thursday inspected the ongoing construction work on the Pattan-Baramulla Bypass to review the pace and quality of execution.

During the inspection, the Deputy Commissioner assessed the progress of the project and interacted with officials and representatives of the executing agency. He emphasized the importance of maintaining high construction standards while ensuring the timely completion of the project.

The DC directed the

executing agency to expedite the pace of work and made it clear that any avoidable delay in the execution of the project will not be tolerated. He instructed the concerned officials to closely monitor the progress and promptly resolve any bottlenecks affecting the work.

The Deputy Commissioner observed that the bypass project is of significant public importance and, once completed, will improve connectivity, reduce traffic congestion, and facilitate smoother movement of commuters.

He also directed the executing agency to strictly adhere to all prescribed safety protocols and minimize inconvenience to the public during the construction period.

2.05 lakh livestock to be vaccinated in Kathua for Foot and Mouth Disease

KT News Desk

KATHUA, JULY 02: Deputy Commissioner Kathua Rajesh Sharma Thursday flagged off the Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) Vaccination Van under the National Animal Disease Control Programme (NADCP), a Centrally Sponsored Scheme, from the DC Office Complex here.

The district-wide vaccination campaign, as per an official statement, being conducted under the eighth phase of the nationwide programme, will run from July 2 to August 15 to protect livestock from Foot and Mouth Disease and contribute to the national goal of making India FMD-free by 2030.

Speaking on the occasion, the DC said Foot and Mouth Disease is a highly contagious viral disease that commonly affects livestock during the rainy season, causing substantial economic losses to dairy farmers through reduced milk production, poor growth and decline in animal productivity. He said the vaccination drive is a significant preventive measure to contain the spread of the disease and safeguard livestock health and informed that nearly 2.05 lakh eligible

animals across Kathua district will be vaccinated free of cost during the campaign.

The Deputy Commissioner appealed to livestock owners to extend full cooperation to the Animal Husbandry Department by presenting all eligible animals above six months of age for vaccination, saying active participation of farmers is essential to achieve the target of an FMD-free India by 2030.

Chief Animal Husbandry Officer (CAHO) Dr Yugal Kishore Gupta said the FMD vaccine is administered twice a year at an interval of six months under NADCP to provide sustained immunity against the disease. He urged livestock farmers to ensure timely vaccination of their animals and report suspected cases immediately to the nearest veterinary institution, adding that the campaign is being conducted free of cost across the district through dedicated field teams and mobile vaccination units.

Among others, Additional Deputy Commissioner Kathua Mahima Madan and Assistant Commissioner Revenue Vishav Partap Singh along with officers and officials of the Animal Husbandry Department were present on the occasion.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

AMARNATH YATRA

District Administration at Panthachowk Bypass.

Deputy Commissioner Srinagar Akshay Labroo and Senior Superintendent of Police Sundeeep Chakravarthy welcomed the pilgrims and reviewed the arrangements made for their convenience.

The officers, along with local residents, extended their best wishes to the yatris and prayed for the safe, smooth and peaceful conduct of the annual pilgrimage.

The Pahalgam-bound pilgrims later reached the Nunwan Base Camp in Anantnag district, where they were warmly received by Deputy Commissioner and Yatra Officer Dr Bilal Mohiuddin Bhat, Senior Superintendent of Police Amod Ashok Nagpure, Camp Director Atul Kumar, senior civil and police officers and representatives of socio-religious organisations.

The officers interacted with the devotees and assured them that all arrangements had been made for their stay and onward journey to the holy cave shrine.

Officials said elaborate arrangements have been put in place at both Baltal and Nunwan base camps and all along the Yatra route, including accommodation, healthcare, transportation, sanitation, drinking water, electricity, communication facilities and langars.

Authorities have also established facilitation centres where essential items, including SIM cards, warm clothing, trekking gear and footwear, are available for the convenience of pilgrims.

AMARNATH YATRA WITNESSING TECHNOLOGY-DRIVEN SECURITY DEPLOYMENTS THIS YEAR

This year's Amarnath Yatra is also witnessing one of the most technology-driven security deployments in recent years, blending traditional security measures with advanced surveillance and digital monitoring systems.

Officials said nearly 670 additional companies of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) have been deployed across Jammu and Kashmir to strengthen the security grid along the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway, both pilgrimage routes, base camps and other vulnerable locations.

Authorities have intensified aerial surveillance through drones at key transit points, highways, base camps and sensitive areas, while AI-assisted monitoring systems are being used for crowd management, movement analysis and real-time response coordination.

Pilgrims are being monitored through Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tags, enabling authorities to track their movement in real time and improve emergency response during adverse weather conditions or medical emergencies.

To further streamline the pilgrimage, Jammu and Kashmir Police has launched the 'PEHCHAAAN' mobile application, providing pilgrims with real-time information, emergency assistance and other essential services aimed at ensuring a digitally connected and hassle-free Yatra experience.

Authorities have also deployed 30 Mountain Rescue Teams (MRTs) across the Baltal and Nunwan-Pahalgam routes. Equipped with specialised mountaineering equipment, medical supplies and communication systems, the teams will remain stationed at vulnerable locations to respond swiftly to accidents, weather-related incidents and health emergencies.

Meanwhile, helicopter services for the pilgrimage have been suspended this year as part of enhanced security measures, with all pilgrims undertaking the journey by road to the respective base camps before commencing the trek.

Officials said the multi-layered security architecture has been designed through close coordination among the Jammu and Kashmir Police, Central Armed Police Forces, Army, intelligence agencies and the civil administration to ensure the safe and peaceful conduct of the annual pilgrimage.

The annual Amarnath Yatra will formally begin from the twin routes of Pahalgam and Baltal on July 3 and is scheduled to continue for 57 days. (KNO)

Ensure pilgrim

pilgrimage.

The DGP appreciated the dedication and commitment of the police personnel and other security forces deployed on Yatra duty. He urged them to remain alert, responsive, and compassionate while performing their responsibilities, ensuring that every pilgrim feels safe and well-assisted throughout the pilgrimage.

The DGP conducted a comprehensive inspection of the Base Camp and took stock of the facilities and arrangements made for the yatris. He reviewed the security arrangements, access control measures, deployment of police personnel, traffic regulation, emergency response preparedness, and other logistical arrangements to ensure the safety, security, and convenience of the pilgrims.

The DGP also interacted with police personnel deployed at the Base Camp and appreciated their dedication, professionalism, and unwavering commitment towards ensuring the successful conduct of the Yatra. He emphasized the importance of maintaining the highest standards of vigilance while adopting a pilgrim-friendly approach in the discharge of their duties.

CHAIRS SECURITY REVIEW MEETING AT NUNWAN BASE CAMP

Later, DGP Prabhat chaired a security review meeting at the Nunwan Base Camp, attended by senior police officers. The meeting focused on the prevailing security scenario, operational preparedness, deployment strategy, area domination, intelligence coordination, contingency planning, and measures to strengthen the overall security grid along the Yatra route.

The DGP directed the officers to maintain round-the-clock alertness, ensure effective supervision at all levels, and uphold close

coordination among field formations for prompt response to any contingency.

He stressed that every possible measure should be taken to provide a safe, secure, and seamless pilgrimage experience for the yatris. (KNO)

Cabinet expansion:

per cent of the total number of members in the Legislative Assembly, with the Chief Minister at the head to aid and advise the Lieutenant Governor in the exercise of his functions in relation to matters with respect to which the Legislative Assembly has power to make laws, except in so far as he is required by or under this Act to act in his discretion or by or under any law to exercise any judicial or quasi-judicial functions."

With Jammu and Kashmir having a total of 95 MLAs, the permissible number of ministers under the Act works out to 9.5. Since the figure includes a fraction, the rule is that if the fraction is 0.5 or below, it is rounded down to the nearest whole number. Therefore, 9.5 becomes 9. On the other hand, if the fraction is 0.6 or above, it is rounded up to the next whole number, making it 10.

So, J&K cannot have more than nine ministers. With six ministers currently in place, three slots remain vacant in the council of ministers.

Indications & possibilities

The cabinet expansion is taking place after ruling National Conference's brainstorming session at Dachigam on June 03. The Chief Minister himself said that he feels it necessary to move forward with cabinet expansion and reshuffle after Dachigam meeting. What transpired at Dachigam is now widely known. The main highlight of the meeting was that Deputy CM Surinder Kumar Choudhary faced a torrent of criticism from NC legislators over fund allocation as well as his behaviour with legislators.

Two other ministers-Javid Rana and Satish Sharma-also faced criticism during the session.

The biggest possibility is that Surinder Kumar Choudhary may lose the key portfolio of the Roads & Buildings Department currently held by him. However, chances of him being dropped from the council of ministers or divested of the position of Deputy CM are slim, given that he is the seniormost Hindu MLA from Jammu region within the party.

The likelihood of a rejig in the portfolios of almost all ministers, including the Chief Minister, is very high. It is widely expected that Sakina Masood Ittoo and Javid Dar may be divested of less significant portfolios, considering their conduct over the past 20 months. Sakina Ittoo is regarded as one of the most effective ministers in the government and has played a key role in countering opposition parties.

Known for his quiet and diligent style of working, Javid is considered one of the most accessible ministers to MLAs.

The possibility of one minister being dropped from Jammu and replaced by someone from the region cannot be ruled out. However, that remains an even chance.

There is also a likelihood that two to three new faces from the Kashmir Valley could find a place in the cabinet. It will be interesting to watch whether Omar Abdullah keeps one berth vacant for the Congress in the government or fills it with a nominee from the NC.

All indications suggest that one new face each could be inducted from Central Kashmir and South Kashmir, where the party would not find it difficult to make its choices. There could also be one new face from North Kashmir, though the chances are not very high. Six MLAs from the region are reportedly eyeing induction in the council of ministers. (KNO)

Rain brings

past 24 hours. Kathua received the highest rainfall in the Union Territory at 85.8 mm, followed by Katra with 39 mm, Ramban 34.5 mm and Kishtwar 25 mm.

In the Kashmir Valley, Batkoot recorded 27 mm of rain, Pampore 24.5 mm, Pahalgam 13.2 mm, Kokernag 11.7 mm, Sonamarg 11.5 mm and Qazigund 9 mm. Srinagar received 2.4 mm of rainfall during the period.

The MeT office said the current spell has been caused by the interaction of active monsoon winds with a series of weak western disturbances affecting the region.

It said hot and humid conditions are likely to return between July 5 and July 8, although scattered rain and thunderstorms are expected to continue, particularly over parts of the Jammu division.

He cautioned that while widespread flooding is not anticipated, short-duration intense rainfall and isolated cloudbursts could trigger localized flash floods, waterlogging, landslides and a rise in water levels in streams and nallahs. (KNO)

NEP focussing on

empower teachers, we inspire confidence in our students.

"When teachers are empowered, students gain confidence. When schools are strengthened, society becomes more resilient and when education moves in the right direction, Jammu Kashmir and the nation advance toward a brighter, safer and more prosperous future.

We must remember that the ultimate purpose of education is transformation. When learning connects with lived experiences, it sparks generational change. The greatest power of education does not lie in exam results but in its ability to change lives. A dedicated teacher shapes destiny. I want schools in Jammu Kashmir to focus on this aspect and become laboratories of life-building," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The one-day capacity-building programme is also linked to the broader "Drug-Free Jammu & Kashmir" campaign. Its aim is to improve teaching methods and protect students from the challenges today's youth face. The Lieutenant Governor said that rising trends in drug abuse, mental stress, social pressure, digital-world risks and changing lifestyles have made the school's role more important than

ever. He said teachers are being provided with modern tools and training so they help build students' personalities and empower them to face life's challenges.

"Every student is born with unique talents. Our duty is to recognise each child's talent and provide resources and tools to grow. I ask every teacher, with a strong sense of responsibility, to remember that education is not merely competition but an ongoing journey of self-development. In this journey you must respect and encourage each student's individuality.

Education today cannot be restricted to measurable academic achievement alone. The challenges of modern life are far more complex than before. Pressure from competition, societal expectations, stress, peer influence and the growing danger of substance abuse, are realities our children face daily. In such circumstances life-skills education becomes essential, and schools should focus on self-awareness, emotional balance, problem-solving, creativity and critical thinking. We must teach children practical lessons for living so they learn with greater confidence and contribute to building a healthy society," the Lieutenant Governor said.

He commended the initiative of the Directorate, School Education Jammu to start online classes for grades 11 and 12 across ten districts. He said this is an important step toward educational equality and through this initiative even students in remote villages can access quality learning.

"Success of these efforts will be measured by the confidence of our students and their contribution to a self-reliant Jammu Kashmir. Many countries have shown that in times of crisis the younger generation becomes our greatest hope. Beyond the standard curriculum, learning must include how to overcome hardships, help rebuild communities and support one another. Life-skills-based education can reduce social divides and strengthen the values of diversity.

The purpose of education is the upliftment of all humanity. Today Jammu Kashmir is making its important contribution to this global endeavour. Every positive step taken here can reshape the lives of millions of children in the years ahead. This initiative also reflects the spirit of long-term collaboration among government, teachers, parents, industry and society. All the stakeholders must come together to build a Jammu Kashmir where every student feels safe, respected and inspired, where every teacher, through knowledge, compassion and dedication, shapes the next generation and where education becomes the primary means of transformation, confidence, social harmony and hope," the Lieutenant Governor said.

On the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor felicitated the meritorious students and winners of Tobacco-Free Educational Institution (TOFEI) initiative. Several books on life-skills were also released.

The event served as a formal platform for the launch of instructional resources jointly developed by the three institutions aimed at strengthening the professional capacities of teachers and enriching the overall quality of school education across the Union Territory.

Rakesh Bharti Mittal, Co-Chairman Bharti Airtel Foundation; Ram Niwas Sharma, Commissioner Secretary, School Education Department; Ramesh Kumar, Divisional Commissioner Jammu; Nuriya Ansari, CEO, Bharti Airtel Foundation; Dr. Naseem Javaid Chowdhary, Director School Education Jammu, senior officials, heads of educational institutions, prominent citizens, teachers and students were present. (KNO)

LG pays obeisance

the Lieutenant Governor also extended his heartfelt best wishes to the Sadhus and Sadhvis who are embarking on the holy annual pilgrimage of Shri Amarnath Ji.

Mahamandleshwar Mahant Shri Rameshwar Dass; Yudhvir Sethi and Kuldeep Raj Dubey, Members of Legislative Assembly; religious leaders and senior officials accompanied the Lieutenant Governor.

LG flags off HDFC

appreciated HDFC Bank Limited for this noble initiative, which is slated to operate in Jammu division for a period of 27 months. The programme, focusing on Ramban district, is designed to complement and strengthen the public health infrastructure of the region.

Operating on a roster-based schedule, the Mobile Medical Care Unit will deliver doorstep primary healthcare services to the communities. It will be staffed by a qualified medical team, including a Doctor (MBBS), Community Health Officer, Nursing Staff, and a Community Mobilizer.

The vehicle is equipped with 84 essential medicines and facilities for point-of-care tests like Hemoglobin, Blood Sugar, Urine Pregnancy Test, Chikungunya, Malaria, Typhoid, and Dengue. Along with daily OPD services, the core focus will be on Maternal & Child Health, Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs), Seasonal, Water Borne and Vector Borne Diseases. The team will also provide curative antenatal/postnatal care and regular screenings for diabetes and hypertension. Furthermore, the initiative will feature quarterly specialized health camps with visiting specialist doctors and health awareness activities as well as school health programmes for children in the coverage areas, effectively bridging critical healthcare gaps.

Ramesh Kumar, Divisional Commissioner Jammu; Sachin Mahajan, Zonal Head, HDFC Bank; Ms Meera Choudhary, J&K Head, HDFC Bank, Abhishek Khajuria, Cluster Head, HDFC Bank; Satnam Singh, Head, Health -Smile Foundation and other members of HDFC Bank Limited and Smile Foundation were present at the flag-off ceremony at Lok Bhavan Jammu.

Omar advocates

Omar Abdullah quoted his famous observation that "friends can be changed, but neighbours cannot", saying the objective should always be to foster better relations with

neighbouring countries through dialogue and peaceful means.

Meanwhile, the Chief Minister chaired a comprehensive review meeting in Shopian to assess the progress of developmental projects and public welfare initiatives in the district.

Speaking about the meeting, Abdullah said the administration reviewed the work carried out over the past year while identifying areas requiring greater attention.

He expressed satisfaction over the functioning of the district administration, stating that Shopian has a capable team of officers who are working sincerely to address public grievances and accelerate developmental activities.

Expressing serious concern over the sale of substandard pesticides in Kashmir, particularly in the apple-growing belt, the CM said those responsible would face strict legal action.

The use of inferior-quality pesticides has caused significant losses to the horticulture sector and adversely affected apple growers. The government, he added, is determined to ensure accountability and protect the interests of farmers.

CM Abdullah revealed that investigations had found instances where pesticide products carried two different expiry dates—one printed on the outer packaging and another visible upon scanning the product—describing it as a serious irregularity warranting stringent action.

He reiterated that the government would not spare anyone involved in the manufacture or sale of such fraudulent products, assuring orchardists that all necessary measures would be taken to prevent similar incidents in the future and safeguard Kashmir's vital horticulture industry. (KNO)

CM dedicates 13 key

of key government schemes and the overall delivery of public services, while reiterating his government's commitment to ensuring balanced and equitable development across the district.

During his visit, the Chief Minister dedicated development projects worth over 76 crore to the people of Shopian, laid the foundation of major infrastructure works and interacted with farmers, fruit growers and public delegations to take stock of their concerns.

The review meeting was attended by Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary, Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education Sakina Itoo, Minister for Agriculture Production Department Javid Ahmad Dar, Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, Members of Legislative Assembly Shabir Ahmad Kullay (Shopian) and Showkat Hussain Ganai (Zainapora).

Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Dheeraj Gupta, Deputy Commissioner Shopian, Heads of Departments, district officers and other senior officials also attended the meeting.

The meeting focused on accelerating infrastructure development, strengthening essential public services and ensuring the timely completion of ongoing developmental projects so that their benefits reach the people without delay.

Deputy Commissioner Shopian gave a detailed presentation highlighting the district profile, progress achieved under centrally sponsored schemes, physical and financial status of various departments, and the implementation of major developmental projects currently underway.

Addressing the meeting, the Chief Minister commended the Deputy Commissioner and his entire team for their efforts in implementing developmental programmes in the district.

Describing Shopian as a geographically small but strategically significant district with unique developmental challenges, Omar Abdullah observed that its identity is intrinsically linked to its world-renowned apple industry, scenic beauty and the historic Mughal Road. He said the government is committed to further strengthening these assets through focused investments and sustained developmental interventions.

The Chief Minister acknowledged the prevailing financial constraints facing Jammu and Kashmir but asserted that these would not become an obstacle to the district's progress.

"There will be no injustice with Shopian or with any Assembly constituency of the district despite our financial limitations," he said, assuring the elected representatives that every issue and demand raised during the meeting had been carefully noted and would be addressed in a time-bound manner.

He directed officers to immediately rectify shortcomings wherever identified and expedite action on the developmental demands projected by the legislators.

Emphasising effective implementation of projects sanctioned under the Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment (SASCI), the Chief Minister asked the Deputy Commissioner to personally monitor these works to ensure timely execution.

He observed that the scheme carries strict timelines and requires close supervision to maintain the pace of implementation.

Expressing satisfaction over the overall developmental progress reflected during the review, the Chief Minister appreciated the constructive feedback provided by the legislators and assured them that all genuine public grievances would be addressed to the fullest extent possible.

He also thanked the elected representatives for their active participation in the review meeting and appreciated the district administration for its dedicated efforts towards public service delivery.

Earlier, the Chief Minister dedicated and laid the foundation of 13 developmental projects with a cumulative cost of 76.45 crore, spanning the sectors of roads, bridges, drinking water supply, urban development, rural infrastructure and horticulture.

The projects inaugurated included the upgradation of the Shirmal-Wathoo-Matipora

road, water supply schemes at Shadab Karewa, Domwani, Adijen Gadipora and Rebon Khojpora, construction of residential accommodation for Panchayati Raj Institution members at Gagren, the Trenz-Sheikhpora Bridge and the upgradation of the Safanagri-Lamine Darbagh Wachi Road.

The Chief Minister also laid the e-foundation for construction of the Doozpura multi-cell causeway, beautification of Shopian town through improved drains, lanes and street lighting, establishment of a mechanical wind-row composting unit at the Mega Fruit and Vegetable Mandi Aglar, and a pasteurised compost making unit at Allowpora.

At Aglar, he physically laid the foundation stone for the construction of an auction platform at the Mega Fruit and Vegetable Mandi, aimed at strengthening post-harvest infrastructure and improving marketing facilities for growers.

While interacting with representatives of the Fruit Mandi Association, farmer groups and horticulturists at Aglar, the Chief Minister reaffirmed the government's commitment to reducing the hardships faced by the farming community.

He said agriculture and allied sectors remain the backbone of Jammu and Kashmir's economy and assured that the government is fully focused on strengthening the sector through better infrastructure, market access and farmer-centric interventions.

Responding to issues raised by the representatives, Omar Abdullah assured that concerns relating to controlled atmosphere (CA) storage facilities, availability of shops, marketing infrastructure and other genuine demands would be addressed on priority.

He further assured growers that the government would take concrete measures to tackle the menace of spurious pesticides and work towards introducing effective solutions for weather-based crop insurance, hailstorm protection nets and other risk mitigation measures to safeguard the interests of farmers and fruit growers.

Earlier, representatives of the Fruit Mandi Association highlighted several issues affecting the horticulture sector and sought the government's intervention for improving marketing facilities, storage infrastructure and farmer welfare.

Later in the day, the Chief Minister met several public delegations from different parts of Shopian district, who apprised him of various local issues, developmental demands and public grievances.

Giving a patient hearing to the delegations, he assured them that all genuine issues would be examined and addressed on priority.

The Chief Minister also visited exhibition stalls put up by various government departments and local entrepreneurs, where he inspected locally produced agricultural, horticultural and value-added products, appreciating the efforts being made to promote local enterprise and rural livelihoods.

Hot weather brings

Milk products, cream pastries, improperly stored ice cream, unpasteurised milk, and fresh juices prepared with contaminated water have also been identified as high-risk items.

Health experts advise drinking 2.5 to 3.5 litres of water daily, monitoring urine colour, and carrying drinking water in steel or glass bottles instead of single-use plastic. Other preventive measures include eating freshly prepared hot food, washing hands before meals, cleaning fruits and vegetables thoroughly, refrigerating leftovers promptly, avoiding raw or undercooked meat and seafood, and using Oral Rehydration Solution (ORS) at the first sign of diarrhoea. The advisory also discourages excessive consumption of alcohol, sugary soft drinks, tea, and coffee.

Special care has been advised for young children, elderly persons, pregnant women, individuals with chronic illnesses, and outdoor workers. Recommendations include avoiding direct sunlight between 11 am and 4 pm, wearing loose cotton clothing, caps and sunglasses, taking breaks in shaded areas, using fans and coolers effectively, and keeping homes well ventilated. People have also been reminded never to leave children, elderly individuals, or pets inside parked vehicles.

"A healthy Kashmir begins with safe choices. Stay cool, stay hydrated, eat safe, and protect yourself as well as your loved ones. A little caution today can prevent serious illness tomorrow," Dr Khan said. (KNO)

‘Bangladesh of

conditions. Better connectivity will bring more visitors and strengthen the local economy. We request the Deputy Commissioner Bandipora and our MLA to improve the road and provide basic infrastructure so that this place can become a major tourism and livelihood hub," he said.

Tourists visiting the village praised both the natural beauty of Wular Lake and the hospitality of residents.

Balvinder Singh, a tourist from Punjab, said he discovered the destination through social media and was impressed by the peaceful atmosphere.

"This is my first visit here. The place is beautiful, and the weather is much more pleasant than many parts of the country facing intense summer heat. People from across India should visit and experience the beauty of Wular Lake," he said.

Another visitor, Anmol Singh from Amritsar, who has been touring Kashmir for the past 15 days, described Zurimanz as one of the most peaceful places he visited during his trip. "The environment here is calm and refreshing. People should come here and enjoy the beauty of Wular and the shikara ride," he said.

Locals, however, believe improved roads and better public amenities can help Zurimanz realise its full potential as a sustainable rural tourism destination while creating more employment opportunities for the communities living along the shores of Wular Lake. (KNO)

India, Japan unveil transformative initiatives to boost ties

PTI

New Delhi, Jul 2: India and Japan on Thursday unveiled a raft of landmark initiatives including an economic partnership framework and defence pact to co-develop military hardware following summit talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Japanese counterpart Sanae Takaichi.

The major outcomes from the meeting included a declaration on economic security, a joint statement for cooperation in the field of artificial intelligence and a document to bolster engagement in the energy supply chain.

The two prime ministers carried out a comprehensive review of India-Japan ties in areas of trade and investment, economic security, energy, emerging technologies, defence and people-to-people exchanges.

"The economies of India and Japan are complementary. From cultural values to modern technology, there is similarity in our thinking and approach as well," Modi said in his media statement.

"And above all, the foundation of our relations rests on unbreakable mutual trust," he said, reflecting the growing congruence in ties between the two countries.

Modi said the two sides have prepared a joint roadmap for economic security.

"Through this, we will



strengthen supply chain resilience in strategic areas such as semiconductors, quantum, and advanced materials," he said.

Modi said India and Japan have also taken several important decisions in the field of energy security.

"Through the India-Japan bio-gas Initiative, we will set up one thousand bio-gas and organic fertiliser plants in India."

"This will give new strength to sustainability, prosperity, and rural livelihoods in India's villages," he said.

Both Modi and Takaichi witnessed the exchange of key MoUs and agreements spanning economic security, clean energy, critical technologies and research and development.

India and Japan also agreed on a list of activities for celebrating the 75th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations,

external affairs ministry spokesman Randhir Jaiswal said.

In his remarks, Modi also highlighted the strength and significance of India-Japan ties.

"Just a few days ago, at the G7 Summit, I had said that in today's atmosphere of global upheaval, mutual trust is our greatest strategic asset."

"And I am proud that the India-Japan partnership stands fully tested on this touchstone," he said.

Modi note that the convergence of Japan's precision technology and India's software capabilities will give a new momentum and strength in artificial intelligence.

"In the field of defence, we have signed an agreement on the first co-development project between India and Japan," he said.

The Japanese prime minister, who is on a three-day visit to

India, said both sides are focusing on economic growth through investment and innovation collaboration.

"I am committed to realising a strong economy and aiming to enhance Japan's supply chain and technological capabilities through investment in 17 strategic areas."

"Prime Minister Modi launched Viksit Bharat, a national goal to make India a developed nation by 2047 and is strongly driving India's growth," she said.

"In this way we share the goal of making our countries strong and prosperous through investments in the future," she added.

There has been an upswing in India-Japan ties.

The relationship was elevated to a Special Strategic and Global Partnership in 2014.

As the two countries approach the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations in 2027, cooperation continues to deepen across a wide range of sectors, including trade and investment, economic security, defence and security, science and technology, culture, and people-to-people ties. The bilateral framework now comprises over 70 dialogue mechanisms.

Modi visited Japan for the 15th Annual Summit in Tokyo in August last year. The annual summit remains the flagship platform driving the strategic agenda of the partnership.

WhatsApp issues FAQs on username feature amid govt scrutiny over fraud risks

PTI

New Delhi, Jul 02: Meta-owned WhatsApp has come out with a detailed set of frequently asked questions (FAQs) on the controversial username feature, outlining details on how it plans to address concerns around impersonation, scams and unwanted contact as users begin reserving usernames.

The FAQs come amid the Centre's notice to Meta flagging concerns over potential fraud and impersonation risks, and warning against a roll out of the feature till consultations on the issue are completed "to the satisfaction of the government".

Put simply, the new feature will allow users to create unique usernames that can be used for connecting on WhatsApp without sharing phone numbers.

The FAQs say usernames will be optional, cannot be searched by strangers, and that users can add an additional 'username key' requiring both the username and the key before someone can contact them.

WhatsApp said well-known names, including those of public figures, celebrities, government entities and Meta-verified accounts, have been reserved so they can only be claimed by legitimate owners. It also said users linking their Instagram or Facebook accounts can claim matching usernames to help verify ownership, while retaining the option to unlink those accounts later.

The messaging platform said it will monitor 'blocks' and 'reports' to act against scammers, while cautioning that claims about reserving popular or well-known usernames are false. Only legitimate account owners can claim protected names, it asserts.

Here is a look at the key clarifications and safeguards outlined by WhatsApp in its FAQs:

Q: Are usernames mandatory?
A: Nope, they are optional.

Q: What if the username I want isn't available?

A: There are a few reasons you might not be able to reserve the username you want:

1) It's an existing Instagram or Facebook username; these are



reserved for their owners.

2) We've held well-known names and some variations of them -- like public figures, celebrities, government entities and Meta-verified accounts -- so they can only be claimed by their legitimate owners. If you try to reserve those, the system will say it's not available.

3) Someone already claimed a common name, in that case use the username generator.

Q: What if someone creates a username similar to mine to impersonate me or run a scam, how do you stop someone from pretending to be me?

A: Usernames are not available for messaging yet. When they are, and you get a message from someone new, we'll let you know the country origin, and a warning for first time outreach. Well-known public-figure names and their variations are held for verified owners. We're also keeping a close eye on blocks and reports to take action against scammers.

Q: Can random people message me if they know or guess my username?

A: Just like you can't search for a phone number in WhatsApp, you can't search for a username. The best way to prevent someone from contacting you is to add a username key and to choose a username that is unique to WhatsApp.

All the current measures remain in place to prevent unwanted contact, including warnings with details about unknown senders (whether they're a new account, if you

share groups, what country they're in) and the ability to block and report.

Q: What is a username key?

A: An extra layer of protection you can enable with your username, so that another user will have to know both your username and your username key to contact you. You can reset your key at any time to stop new inbound contact through your username.

Q: Do I have to link my other Meta accounts?

A: If you want the same username as your Instagram or Facebook account, you'll have to link them. This is one of the ways to reduce impersonation and to make sure you're the legitimate owner of the account. But after that, you can unlink the account if you want, or you can choose a username unique to WhatsApp.

Q: Can I change my username later?

A: Yes, as long as the new one you want is available.

A few more things to keep in mind...people are making false claims about reserving popular or well-known usernames - this isn't true, only the legitimate account owners are able to reserve well-known public-figure names.

We enabled reservations before usernames launch later this year because we think people will feel strongly about what username they want on WhatsApp. We're taking our time and listening to feedback so that when it rolls out later this year we get it right.

Cal HC asks private bank to disclose corpus in TMC bank accounts



PTI

Kolkata, Jul 2: Hearing a petition by the Mamata Banerjee-led faction of the Trinamool Congress challenging the debit freeze of the party's bank accounts, the Calcutta High Court on Thursday directed the private bank authority to disclose the corpus held in those accounts.

Justice Saugata Bhattacharyya also allowed the Bidhannagar Police to place records before it on the next date of hearing regarding the complaint before it and the investigation into the resultant FIR.

The court directed the concerned private bank authority to disclose before it the corpus lying in the three accounts of the TMC by July 7.

Justice Bhattacharyya directed that the matter will be heard again on July 8.Representing the Bidhannagar Police, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta requested the court to defer passing any interim order in the matter for a few days. Stating that the police have conducted an investigation, Mehta said that he will place before the court records to show that money was being siphoned off. Mehta said the question is which of the two TMC factions can operate the bank accounts.

Justice Bhattacharyya said the court is contemplating whether these three accounts can be allowed to be operated by joint special officers, who would be retired judges of the court, during the pendency of the petition.

The court noted that the FIR was registered on June 18 at 6 pm and the bank wrote to the Mamata Banerjee-led faction the next day that their accounts were debit-frozen.

Justice Bhattacharyya asked in what haste this was done and what prima facie materials were there before the investigating agency. The SG said that he will place on record materials before the court that may shock the court's conscience. Appearing for the petitioner, senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi asked whether a running political party can be paralysed by freezing its funds and rendering the level playing field uneven.

Amit Shah's 3-day Odisha visit from Jul 3 postponed

PTI

Bhubaneswar, Jul 2: Union Home Minister Amit Shah's scheduled three-day visit to Odisha from July 3 has been postponed due to official engagements in New Delhi, state BJP president Manmohan Samal said.

"The home minister's Odisha visit is postponed due to some engagements in Delhi. The next date of the tour will be announced later," Samal said. Shah was scheduled to arrive in Jharsuguda on July 3 and inaugurate Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd's (BPCL) Rs 1,775-crore bio-ethanol plant at Baulsingha village.



He was also slated to lay the foundation stones for other developmental projects in Bargarh before travelling to Sambalpur on July 4 for public meetings, and interaction with BJP workers and

local leaders.

Besides, the home minister was also scheduled to attend the President's Colour presentation ceremony of the Odisha Police in Bhubaneswar on July 5.

India's electric mobility transition to build sustainable industrial ecosystem: Env Min



PTI

New Delhi, Jul 2: India's transition to electric mobility is not merely about replacing one technology with another, it is about building a sustainable industrial ecosystem that strengthens manufacturing, creates green jobs and supports Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of Viksit Bharat by 2047, Environment Minister Bhupendra Yadav said on Thursday.

"As we accelerate this transition, our focus must remain on green growth, resilient infrastructure, transparent governance and a circular economy that ensures long-term environmental sustainability," he added.

The minister made these comments during his address at the inauguration of a conference on "Electric Mobility: Building India an Electric Mobility Hub for Viksit Bharat", convened by the Associated Chambers of Commerce and

Industry of India (ASSOCHAM).

Yadav also highlighted that the government has undertaken a series of reforms to simplify environmental clearances, digitise approval systems through the PARIVESH portal, rationalise compliance requirements and promote ease of doing business, without compromising environmental safeguards.

He noted that these these reforms are enabling faster investments while ensuring responsible development.

The minister added that industry, policymakers and institutions must work together to build an innovation-led ecosystem that positions India as a global hub for clean mobility.

"Ecology and economy must progress together, and through collaborative action. India can emerge as a global leader in sustainable manufacturing, green mobility and climate-conscious development," he said.

Sensex jumps over 375 points in early trade

Nifty tops 24,100 on IT stocks, lower crude



PTI

Mumbai, Jul 2: Market benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty rallied in early deals on Thursday amid softening crude oil prices following positive development on the geopolitical front and buying in blue-chip IT stocks.

The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 377.40 points to 77,269.54 early trade. The 50-share NSE Nifty rallied 106.70 points to 24,113.25.

"Qatar has stated that the latest round of indirect US-Iran talks has made 'positive progress', keeping hopes of a broader diplomatic resolution alive," Ponmudi R, CEO of Enrich Money, an online trading and wealth-tech firm, said.

From the Sensex pack, Infosys, HCL Tech, Tata Consultancy Services, Tech Mahindra, Eternal and Inter-Globe Aviation were among the major winners.

NTPC, Bajaj Finance, Larsen & Toubro and Bharat Electronics were among the laggards.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, traded 1 per cent lower at USD 70.79 per barrel.

"There are some positive trends that are providing near-term support and strength to the market. One, crude continues to fall with Brent below USD 71 now. This will further strengthen India's macros and help in achieving higher growth while keeping inflation in check. "Two, the auto sales numbers in June was strong. This indicates that the demand momentum in the economy continues to be strong," VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

He further said that the AI trade in South Korea is weakening as indicated by the 11.5 per cent correction in Kospi last month. This is positive for non-AI markets like India, Vijayakumar noted.

"Fourth, the FI selling is tapering off giving an upper hand to the DIs (Domestic Institutional Investors)," he added.

Passenger vehicle sales in the country are estimated to have grown nearly 25 per cent in June to about 4 lakh units, led by the likes of Maruti Suzuki, Tata Motors PV and Mahindra & Mahindra.

EC announces bypolls to 3 assembly seats in Bihar, MP, Gujarat on Jul 30

PTI

New Delhi, Jul 2: The Election Commission on Thursday announced the schedule for bypolls to three assembly constituencies in Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat, with polling slated for July 30.

The bypolls will be held in Bankipur in Bihar, Datia in Madhya Pradesh and Manjalpur in Gujarat, the Commission said.

The vacancies arose following the resignation of BJP president Nitin Nabin as an MLA in Bihar, the disqualification of Madhya Pradesh Congress legislator Rajendra Bharti after his conviction in a fraud case, and the death of Gujarat BJP MLA Yogeshbhai Narandas Patel.

According to the schedule, the gazette notification for the bypolls will be issued on July 6, while July 13 is the last date for filing nominations. Scrutiny of nomination papers will be held on July 14 and the last date for withdrawal of candidature is July 16.

Counting will be held on August 3.

The Model Code of Conduct has come into force with immediate effect in the districts where the whole or part of the assembly constituencies going to the polls are situated, the commission said.

The EC said electronic voting machines (EVMs) and VVPATs will be used at all polling stations. It also reiterated that candidates with criminal antecedents and the political parties nominating them will have to publish details of such antecedents in newspapers, television channels and on their official websites in accordance with Supreme Court directions.

‘Positive progress’ in US-Iran indirect talks in Doha: Qatar

AFP

Doha, Jul 2: US and Iran negotiators made “positive progress” during indirect talks in Doha, with the next round expected after the late Iranian supreme leader’s funeral, Qatar’s foreign ministry spokesman said.

“Qatar & Pakistan mediators concluded separate meetings with the US & Iranian negotiators in Doha today, with positive progress made on issues related to the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding, building on the outcomes of the Lake Lucerne Summit,” foreign ministry spokesman Majed Al-Ansari said Wednesday on X.

“The parties agreed to continue discussions over the coming period, with the next meeting to be scheduled at the earliest possible time following the funeral processions of the former Iranian Supreme Leader.”

US President Donald Trump hailed the progress of indirect talks between the United States and Iran in Qatar, as the sides aimed to push forward negotiations and quell tensions following exchanges of fire.

Iran’s Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi, who led Tehran’s delegation, later said the



talks had concluded and that the sides had agreed to establish a communication channel by Thursday to report and record violations of their initial memorandum of understanding.

Iran had insisted there would be no direct negotiations in Doha on the deal, which aims to end the war that began with US-Israeli strikes on Iran in late February.

The memorandum of understanding, mediated by Qatar and Pakistan and sealed at a summit last month in Lucerne, Switzerland, includes a

60-day ceasefire, the reopening of the blockaded Strait of Hormuz and a timetable for a final deal on the war and Iran’s nuclear program.

The Qatar discussions, held at a lower level and focused on implementing the memorandum, were meant to “build on the progress made at the Lake Lucerne Summit,” a diplomat told AFP on condition of anonymity.

The discussions also covered frozen Iranian assets, whose release Tehran has demanded as part of any settlement.

‘Over 2 million military casualties in Ukraine war’



AFP

Washington, Jul 2: Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has caused more than two million military casualties, with Moscow’s forces bearing the brunt of the losses, according to a study published Wednesday by a US think tank.

“Combined Russian and Ukrainian casualties have exceeded 2 million,” the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) said.

It estimated that between 400,000 and 450,000 Russians have been killed since Moscow invaded Ukraine in February 2022, out of a total of 1.4 million casualties — killed, wounded and missing — among Russian troops.

Ukrainian forces have meanwhile suffered between 525,000 and 625,000 casualties and between 125,000 and 150,000 fatalities during the same period, CSIS said.

“Russian fatalities in Ukraine are more than four times greater than all US fatalities in all wars combined since World War II,” while the ratio of Russian to Ukrainian casualties has likely risen to around 8 to 1 in the first half of this year, it added.

US nears AI model standards deal with OpenAI, Google, Anthropic: Report



REUTERS

Washington, Jul 2: The United States government is in advanced discussions with leading artificial intelligence companies to establish voluntary standards governing the release of new AI models, with an announcement potentially coming as early as next week, the Financial Times reported on Wednesday, citing sources.

The proposed framework comes as Washington steps up oversight of advanced AI systems amid concerns that cutting-edge models could be misused by military intelligence agencies in China, Russia and other countries of concern.

According to the Financial Times, the standards would establish benchmarks for advanced AI models and define timelines for their release, while also clarifying who can access them in the

United States and overseas.

Reuters could not independently verify the report. The White House, Anthropic and OpenAI did not immediately respond to Reuters’ requests for comment outside regular business hours.

The move follows an executive order signed by U.S. President Donald Trump in June directing federal agencies to work with leading AI developers to test advanced models before their release and draft standards for their deployment.

Google has been in discussions with the U.S. government ahead of the release of its advanced coding models with enhanced capabilities, a source told Reuters on Wednesday, adding that the company is also participating in broader industry-wide talks on AI standards. The Financial Times first reported those details.

Google loses final EU appeal against 4.1 billion euro Android antitrust fine



REUTERS

Brussels, Jul 2: Alphabet’s Google on Thursday lost its fight against a record fine imposed by EU antitrust regulators eight years ago for using its Android mobile operating system to block rivals, a court ruling likely to boost Europe’s crackdown on Big Tech.

The European Commission had originally handed out a €4.34 billion fine to Google in 2018 for its agreements which forced phone manufacturers to pre-install

Google Search, the Chrome browser and the Google Play app store on their Android devices and prevented them from using rival Android systems.

A lower tribunal subsequently trimmed the fine to €4.1 billion in 2022 after the world’s most popular search engine challenged the EU penalty. Google then appealed to the Luxembourg-based Court of Justice of the European Union, Europe’s highest. The court sided with the EU antitrust enforcer.

“The appeal brought by Google

and its parent company Alphabet against the judgment of the General Court is dismissed, thereby confirming the penalty imposed for Google Search’s abuse of a dominant position in the context of the Android operating system,” judges said.

A Google spokesperson said that the judgment failed to take into account its investment to ensure Android remains open, interoperable and free.

“In any event, we adapted our agreements to comply with the initial decision back in 2018 and we remain focused on continued innovation and openness for our users, partners and developers”, Google said.

Google has racked up close to €11 billion in EU fines in the last decades for various antitrust infringements.

It will likely see more fines in the near future for allegedly favouring its own services and products in search results and for practices related to its app store, both of which fall under the Digital Markets Act aimed at reining in the power of Big Tech.

Big wildfire hits southern France



AFP

Oupia (France), Jul 2: A large wildfire raged in southern France on Wednesday, forcing scores of people to be evacuated, emergency services said.

Hundreds of firefighters mobilized to battle the blaze in the Hérault and Aude departments, fueled by drought and

the prefecture told AFP around 11:00pm (2100 GMT), but “it is not under control.”

Conditions on the ground were difficult for firefighters, with no access routes in the hilly terrain. Water-dumping aircraft were being used.

Temperatures of around 30C combined with strong wind gusts drove the spread of the fire through low, very dry vegetation.

About 200 people were evacuated or confined in the communes of Pouzols-Minervois and Mailhac, officials said.

“The smoke was so thick, so suffocating that firefighters told us to leave,” said one evacuated woman, Danielle, 99, from Pouzols.

Two smaller blazes broke out in Rognac and Lançon-Provence near Marseille, according to local firefighters.

UK govt to apologise for state's role in decades of forced adoptions

AP

London, Jul 2: The British government will make a formal apology on Thursday for separating tens of thousands of unmarried mothers from their babies, a practice that lasted for decades until the 1970s.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer, in the final weeks of his premiership, will make a statement in the House of Commons acknowledging the state’s role in forced adoptions and apologising to survivors.

Britain is one of several countries reckoning with the legacy of social norms, religious practices and government policies that heaped shame on unwed mothers, hid them away in institutions while pregnant and took their children to be adopted by married couples.

An estimated 185,000 babies of unmarried mothers were adopted in England and Wales between 1949 and 1976. Campaigners have fought for years for acknowledgment that women were pressured, deceived and threatened into giving up their babies.

We’re ready & confident: India on revamped Olympic host selection process for 2036



PTI

New Delhi, Jul 2: Confident of measuring up to the revamped Olympic host selection process of the International Olympic Committee, first-time bidders India would be reaching out to the IOC through “various channels” to build their case.

India, in 2024, submitted the letter of intent to host the 2036 Games in Ahmedabad. The host selection process was then put on hold in 2025 by new IOC president Kirsty Coventry, who formed a working group to reassess the entire mechanism.

Earlier this month, the new host selection process was unveiled and approved by an IOC session. The host of the 2036 Games will be known in mid-2029 and India’s negotiations will

be led by the Indian Olympic Association in collaboration with the Gujarat government.

“We cannot reach out to IOC members individually at a governmental level but there are various other channels through which we can start building our case,” said a well-placed source without elaborating any further.

The IOC has added a Strategic Dialogue phase in between the Continuous Dialogue and the final Targetted Dialogue with interested parties. During the Strategic Dialogue phase the candidate nations will have to provide “core financial guarantees” among other requirements.

The candidate cities will also have to meet the criteria related to cost control, and clear time-lines for

completion of project milestones among other aspects. India is currently in the Continuous Dialogue stage.

Under the new process, Interested Parties from the Continuous Dialogue pool will enter Strategic Dialogue in 2027. India faces its biggest competition from Qatar while bids are also expected from Turkey and South Africa.

The Future Host Commission will also make site visits to the proposed host cities. After the Strategic Dialogue phase, the Targetted Dialogue will begin in 2028.

At the end of the Targetted Dialogue, the IOC Members will receive a report from the Future Host Commission. Following this, in mid-2029, the IOC Executive Board will select Preferred Hosts to be “put forward for election by the IOC Session to become the host of the 2036 Olympic Games.”

Amended Anti-doping bill in monsoon session

The amended National Anti-Doping Bill to criminalise trafficking and distribution of prohibited substances to athletes with a jail term of up to five years is set to be tabled in the upcoming Monsoon Session of the Parliament.

The public consultation, for which the amended bill was posted online till June 18, has been completed. The Monsoon session of the Parliament begins on July 20.

“Efforts would be made to table it in the Parliament during the upcoming session,” the ministry source said.

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