



## PM Modi urges Amarnath Yatris to spend on local products

Issues 5 pledges for pilgrims: cleanliness, safety, local livelihoods, environment, nation-first; admin distributes PM's message pamphlets at Nunwan, Baltal base camps

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Jul 03: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday urged devotees undertaking the annual Shri Amarnath Yatra to observe five pledges centred on cleanliness, safety, environmental protection, support for local livelihoods and nation-building, describing the pilgrimage as a symbol of India's spiritual heritage, cultural unity and selfless service.

According to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the Prime Minister's special message was distributed among pilgrims by the Jammu and Kashmir administration through pamphlets at the Nunwan and Baltal base camps on the opening day of the pilgrimage.

In his message, Modi extended his greetings and best wishes to all pilgrims,



saying participation in the Shri Amarnath Yatra in Jammu and Kashmir is a matter of great fortune and a deeply spiritual experience.

He noted that the annual pilgrimage, which begins with the first worship on the auspicious occasion of Guru Purnima,

attracts devotees from every corner of the country who undertake the difficult journey with unwavering faith to seek the blessings of Baba Barfani.

"The yatra has, over the years, emerged as a living expression of India's unity in diversity, bringing together people from

different regions, languages and traditions with a shared resolve to worship Lord Mahadev," the PM said, adding that the pilgrimage reflects the enduring strength of Sanatan culture and reinforces the country's spiritual and cultural bonds.

Modi commended the efforts of the Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board (SASB) and the Jammu and Kashmir government for the management of the annual pilgrimage. He acknowledged the contribution of the Indian Army, Central Armed Police Forces, Jammu and Kashmir Police, disaster response agencies, healthcare professionals, administrative officials, sanitation workers and thousands of personnel engaged in ensuring the safety, security and smooth conduct of the yatra.

The Prime Minister also praised the hospitality extended by the people | [More on P6](#)

### Pre-registered Yatris to be prioritised: Div Com

Umair Gull Ganie

Srinagar, Jul 03: Divisional Commissioner (Div Com) Kashmir Anshul Garg on Friday said the Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra is being conducted strictly in accordance with the Supreme Court-mandated carrying capacity of the track, with pre-registered pilgrims being given priority, while a token system has been introduced for those arriving without prior registration.

Addressing reporters at Nunwan base camp in Pahalgam, the Div Com, as reported by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said that pilgrims who have completed online registration, eKYC and possess RFID cards are being allowed to proceed first. Those reaching through the Jammu convoy after completing RFID registration are also being accorded priority.

"The remaining daily quota is being utilised for on-the-spot registration," Garg said.

In view of the heavy rush of pilgrims, | [More on P6](#)

## Breakthrough in Centre-Ladakh talks Ladakh to get UT-level elected body with legislative powers



KNO Special Correspondent

Srinagar, Jul 03: In a major development, representatives of the Union Home Ministry, the Leh Apex Body (LAB), and the Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) on Friday finalized the minutes of the sub-committee meeting held on May 22, in which both sides reached consensus on key issues ranging from constitutional safeguards to elected governance in the Union Territory.

Additional Secretary, MHA, Prashant Lokhande, today met representatives of LAB and KDA to finalize the minutes of the sub-committee constituted by the high-powered committee set up by the Ministry of Home Affairs.

As per the minutes of the meeting signed by both sides, Ladakh will have a UT-level elected body with executive,

financial, and legislative powers.

"After detailed deliberations, it was unanimously decided that while statehood would remain the long-term aspiration of Ladakh, in the present situation, as a first step, an appropriate customized model of governance by establishing a UT-level elected body with executive, financial, and legislative powers would be established," the document, as per news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) reads.

The minutes further state that, in terms of functions and civil servants for the subjects under the purview of the UT-level elected body, control and supervision—including the Annual Performance Appraisal Report—will be exercised by the elected executive body. Further details will be finalized in future | [More on P6](#)

### 12,168 pilgrims pay obeisance at Holy Cave on first day

- Second batch of 3,865 devotees arrives in Kashmir
- Admin urges pilgrims to follow allotted travel dates

Umair Gull Ganie

Srinagar/Jammu, Jul 03: A total of 12,168 pilgrims paid obeisance at the Holy Cave Shrine on the opening day of the annual Amarnath Yatra on Friday, as the pilgrimage commenced from the twin base camps of Baltal and Nunwan (Pahalgam), while the second batch of 3,865 pilgrims left Jammu for Kashmir under elaborate security arrangements.

Officials told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that the pilgrimage began in the early hours from both the traditional 48-km Nunwan-Pahalgam route and the shorter 14-km Baltal route despite intermittent rainfall.

They said pilgrims, including men, women and sadhus, started their journey towards the 3,880-metre-high Holy Cave Shrine amid chants of "Bum Bum Bhole" after being flagged off by the respective Deputy | [More on P6](#)

## Foul smell from Achan dumping site sickens patients, staff at SKIMS Soura

Jahangeer Ganaie

Srinagar, Jul 03: The persistent foul smell emanating from the Achan dumping site has once again become a major source of concern for patients, attendants and healthcare workers at Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS), Soura, with the problem intensifying during the ongoing summer season.

Patients and attendants, speaking to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), expressed frustration over the continued neglect of the issue, saying the smell becomes unbearable during the afternoon and evening hours.

"My father has been admitted here for over a week. During the daytime, especially when the temperature rises, the smell becomes so strong that it makes us nauseous. A hospital should provide a healing atmosphere, but this foul

odour only adds to our stress," said an attendant from north Kashmir.

Another attendant from south Kashmir said, "We are already going through emotional and financial hardship while caring for our patient. The unbearable smell makes it difficult to even sit outside the wards for a few minutes. Authorities must resolve this issue without further delay."

A patient undergoing treatment at SKIMS said the persistent stench often causes discomfort and loss of appetite. "The smell is overwhelming at times. It affects our peace of mind and makes recovery even more difficult," he said.

Hospital staff also voiced concern, saying they have been facing the problem for years. "The foul smell is more intense during the summer months. Doctors, nurses, support staff and even those living in the residential | [More on P6](#)

## Raabita: MLAs, trade, tourism delegations call on CM Omar

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Jul 03: Several public representatives and delegations and various stakeholders on Friday called on Chief Minister Omar Abdullah at Raabita, during which a wide range of issues relating to development, public welfare, trade, tourism and business were discussed.

MLA Jasrota Rajiv Jasrotia, MLA Habba Kadal Shamima Firdous and MLA Doda Mehraj Malik, called on the Chief Minister and apprised him of the developmental priorities and public welfare concerns of their respective constituencies.

The legislators highlighted various issues requiring the government's attention, including infrastructure development, delivery of public services, implementation of ongoing development projects and other constituency-specific matters aimed at improving the quality of life of the people.

The Chief Minister gave a patient hearing to their concerns and assured them that all genuine issues would be examined for appropriate



action.

A delegation led by President Kashmir Traders and Manufacturers Federation (KTMF), Mohammad Yaseen Khan, met the chief minister and raised issues concerning the trade and business community.

Another delegation led by Chairman of the Tourist Trade Interest Guild, Zahoor Ahmed Karnai, also met the Chief Minister.

The delegation discussed measures for the promotion of tourism in Kashmir. Various initiatives aimed at boosting tourist inflow, expanding outreach and strengthening the tourism sector were also deliberated upon.

The Chief Minister appreciated the constructive suggestions put forward during the meetings and reiterated the government's commitment to maintaining | [More on P6](#)

## Rain, thunderstorms likely across J&K till Jul 5

Srinagar records 31.7°C

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Jul 03: The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Friday forecast light to moderate rain and thundershowers across many parts of Jammu and Kashmir over the next three days, with the possibility of heavy rainfall at a few places that could trigger localised flash floods and landslides.

According to the Meteorological Centre, Srinagar, one or two spells of light to moderate rain and thundershowers are likely at many places from July 4 to 5, mainly during the late afternoon, evening, and late night or early morning hours. Heavy rainfall or brief intense showers accompanied by thunderstorms are expected at a few locations.

According to the forecast, accessed by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), from July 6 to 9, the

weather is expected to remain generally hot and humid, although many places may continue to witness brief spells of light to moderate rain and thundershowers, with isolated intense showers.

The MeT department advised people to stay away from nallas, streams, and landslide or mudslide-prone areas, warning that heavy rainfall at vulnerable locations could lead to localised flash floods and landslides.

During the past 24 hours, Udhampur recorded the highest rainfall at 85 mm, followed by Kathua ARG with 41.5 mm and Rajpura ARG with 27 mm, while light to moderate rain was reported from several other stations.

Despite the rain forecast, temperatures remained above normal in most parts of the Valley and Jammu region.

Srinagar recorded a maximum temperature of 31.7 degrees | [More on P6](#)

## Gandhi Global Family Kashmir lauds NBA impact



KT News Desk

Srinagar, Jul 03: A delegation of Gandhi Global Family Kashmir led by its J&K President Padma Shri Dr SP Varma on Friday called on Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and lauded the widespread impact of Nasha Muk

Jammu Kashmir Abhiyaan in tackling substance abuse.

The Lieutenant Governor appreciated the organization's social initiatives and urged the members to continue their dedicated endeavours toward promoting peace, communal harmony, environmental conservation, youth and women empowerment.

## BPCR can transform maternal, child health in J&K through better planning, timely care

Health experts call for birth preparedness, complication readiness as key strategy to reduce maternal, newborn deaths

Jahangeer Ganaie

Srinagar, Jul 03: Birth Preparedness and Complication Readiness (BPCR) is emerging as one of the most effective public health strategies to improve maternal and child health indicators in Jammu and Kashmir by ensuring that every pregnancy is planned, every delivery is safe, and medical emergencies are managed without delay.

According to the details available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) health experts believe that proper birth planning, coupled with timely access to healthcare services, can significantly reduce preventable maternal and neonatal deaths, particularly in geographically challenging



regions such as Jammu & Kashmir, where difficult terrain, harsh winters, seasonal road closures and long travel distances often delay access to emergency obstetric care.

Notably, the BPCR is a comprehensive plan jointly prepared by a pregnant woman, her family and healthcare

workers to ensure safe pregnancy, childbirth and newborn care. The approach focuses on identifying a suitable health facility for delivery, arranging transportation before labour begins, saving money for emergencies, identifying compatible blood donors, ensuring regular antenatal check-ups and

recognising danger signs during pregnancy, labour, the postnatal period and in newborns.

As per public health experts, BPCR directly addresses the "Three Delays" that contribute to maternal and newborn deaths. These include delays in deciding to seek medical care, delays in reaching an appropriate healthcare facility and delays in receiving quality treatment after arrival. Through better awareness, advance planning and early referrals, these delays can be substantially reduced.

The strategy holds particular significance for Jammu & Kashmir due to its unique geographical and climatic challenges. Remote habitations, difficult mountain terrain, prolonged travel time to referral hospitals,

delayed ambulance access during adverse weather conditions and a high prevalence of anaemia among pregnant women make advance planning essential for ensuring safe motherhood.

Health officials said that effective implementation of BPCR can substantially improve maternal health indicators across the Union Territory. Early registration of pregnancy and regular antenatal care enable timely screening of high-risk pregnancies and ensure that women receive at least four to eight recommended antenatal care contacts. Increased institutional deliveries under the supervision of skilled birth attendants improve the management of obstetric emergencies, including haemorrhage. | [More on P6](#)

## Amarnath Ji Yatra-2026

### First batch of pilgrims flagged-off from Baltal Base Camp



KT News Desk

GANDERBAL, JULY 03: The Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra-2026 commenced Friday with the ceremonial flagging-off of the first batch of pilgrims from the Baltal Base Camp in Ganderbal district amid an atmosphere of devotion and enthusiasm.

The flag-off ceremony, as per an official statement, was led by Rahul Yadav, Managing Director, J&K Power Development Corporation and Nodal Officer for the Baltal Axis, along with Deputy Commissioner (DC) Ganderbal, Jatin Kishore; Deputy Inspector General of Police (Armed) Kashmir, Maqsood-ul-Zaman; Senior Superintendent of Police Ganderbal, Sudhanshu Dhama, besides officers from the Civil and

Police Administration.

On the occasion, the officers extended their best wishes to the pilgrims and prayed for a safe, peaceful and spiritually fulfilling pilgrimage.

The Baltal Base Camp resonated with chants of "Bam Bam Bhole" and "Har Har Mahadev" as devotees including men, women, elderly pilgrims and sadhus, began their onward journey to the Holy Cave Shrine of Shri Amarnath Ji.

The commencement of the Yatra marks the beginning of one of the country's most revered spiritual pilgrimages and reflects the coordinated efforts of the administration and all stakeholder departments to facilitate a secure, seamless and memorable pilgrimage experience for every devotee.

### DC, SSP Anantnag flag off Yatra along Pahalgam Axis from Nunwan Base Camp



KT News Desk

ANANTNAG, JULY 03: Amid jubilation and devotional fervor, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Anantnag (Yatra Officer), Dr. Bilal Mohiuddin Bhat and Senior Superintendent of Police, Amod Ashok Naggure, jointly flagged off the Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra 2026 along the Pahalgam Axis in the wee hours Friday from the Nunwan Base Camp, Pahalgam.

Camp Director Atul Kumar, SDM Pahalgam, Additional Camp Directors,

and senior officers from the police and line departments were present during the flag-off ceremony.

Following their departure from the Nunwan Base Camp, the pilgrims, as per an official statement, were ferried in vehicles to Chandanwari via a special shuttle service provided by the Motor Vehicles (MV) Department.

To ensure a blissful and enriching spiritual experience for the Yatri, adequate arrangements have been put in place at various camps, stations and places of

importance enroute the Holy Cave. All essential facilities will be provided to the pilgrims during the pilgrimage period so that it is conducted in a smooth, and successful manner. Besides, service augmentation and other necessary safety and security measures along the track were planned and executed in advance. The Yatri expressed their satisfaction with the overall arrangements and were highly motivated as they began their spiritual journey to the Holy Cave.

### Akashvani Srinagar inaugurates special transmission

KT News Desk

Srinagar, July 3: Akashvani Srinagar Friday inaugurated its Special Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra (SANJY) 2026 Transmission with the commissioning of a dedicated, state-of-the-art broadcast studio established exclusively for the annual pilgrimage. The facility has been set up to provide seamless, high-quality radio and digital broadcast services to Yatri and devotees across the globe throughout the Yatra period.

The dedicated studio, as per PIB statement, was formally inaugurated by Gurbinder Singh, Deputy Director General (Engineering) and Head of Office, Akashvani Srinagar, in the presence of Ghulam Rasool Akhoun, Head of Programmes (Assistant Director, Programme); Suresh Chand Meena, Programme Executive; and other senior officers from the Engineering and Programme Wings.

Addressing the gathering, Gurbinder Singh described the Special SANJY Transmission as a unique broadcasting initiative covering one of the country's most challenging pilgrimage routes along both the

Baltal and Pahalgam axis. He termed the dedicated studio a significant technological advancement in pilgrimage broadcasting, equipped with the latest digital audio technology to ensure uninterrupted, high-quality transmission for the benefit of Yatri, devotees, and all stakeholders associated with the annual pilgrimage.

He said, "Our objective is to make the broadcast accessible not only to pilgrims on the ground but also to devotees across the country and around the world through multiple terrestrial and digital platforms." Gurbinder Singh further informed that the Special SANJY 2026 broadcasts will be available through 103.7 MHz FM Baltal, 100.1 MHz FM Pahalgam, the WAVES OTT Platform, DTH Services, the NewsonAir Android and iOS App, and the Akashvani Aradhana Channel. To strengthen connectivity and ensure uninterrupted coverage in the challenging Himalayan terrain, two special FM transmitters have been installed at Baltal and Pahalgam, providing reliable transmission along the entire pilgrimage route to the Holy Cave, including remote and high-altitude locations.

### Fast-Track CAPEX Works

## Commissioner SMC holds high-level review, directs for timely tendering

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, JULY 03: In a significant move to accelerate infrastructure development and ensure the timely execution of public works, Commissioner, Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC), Faz Lul Haseeb, on Friday chaired a high-level review meeting to comprehensively assess the tendering status of Capital Expenditure (CAPEX) works across the city.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by the Financial Advisor/Chief Accounts Officer, Executive Engineers, and officials responsible for uploading Notices Inviting Tenders (NITs) on the e-Procurement Portal from all Engineering Divisions. A detailed division-wise review was undertaken, during which officers presented the progress achieved in the tendering process and the status of ongoing and proposed CAPEX works.

The Commissioner carried out a comprehensive assessment of works already tendered, projects awaiting tendering, tenders opened, and newly sanctioned



works requiring immediate initiation of the tendering process. He critically reviewed the reasons for pendency and directed the concerned officers to remove procedural bottlenecks, streamline the tendering process, and adhere to clearly defined timelines to ensure that all pending works are tendered without delay.

Emphasizing that timely tendering is fundamental to the successful execution of developmental projects, Haseeb, instructed all Engineering Divisions to undertake daily monitoring of the tendering process and ensure strict adherence to Government guidelines and established procedures while framing and issuing NITs. He stressed that

efficient and transparent tendering is essential for the timely delivery of quality civic infrastructure and public services.

The Commissioner further directed all Executive Engineers to closely monitor the progress of works within their respective jurisdictions and ensure that all tender documents, records, and e-Procurement processes remain updated, transparent, and fully compliant with the prescribed norms. He called upon the Engineering Divisions to maintain close coordination and adopt a proactive approach to achieve the developmental targets within the stipulated timelines.

Reaffirming SMC's unwavering commitment to transparency, accountability, and efficient governance, the Commissioner emphasized that expediting the implementation of CAPEX works remains a top priority of the Corporation. He reiterated that timely completion of developmental projects will not only strengthen Srinagar's civic infrastructure but also enhance the quality of urban services and significantly improve the quality of life for the citizens of Srinagar.

### UNION TERRITORY GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

## OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (R&B) DIVISION RAJBAGH SRINAGAR.

H.Q's: Lal Mandi, Near L.D Hospital Srinagar-190008.

0194-2310283

NOTICE INVITING TENDERS

E-NIT No. 40/R&B/RAJ of 2026-27 issued under Endorsement No: 3282-92 Dated: 02.07.2026.

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, UT J&K, e-tenders (In Single Cover System) are invited on Percentage Basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with J&K Govt., CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for the following works:-

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Name of Work	Base Cost Excl. GST (in Lacs)	TOTAL / Adv. Cost (Base Cost + GST) (in Lacs)	Cost of T/Doc.	Earnest Money Deposit	Time of Completion	Major Head	Class of Contractor / Agency
1.	1.21	1.42	200/-	2850	07 Days	M & R 023	"DEE"

Position of AAA: **Accorded vide No.DAI/Estt/328 Dated:-28.04.2026.**

Position of TS: **Accorded**

Position of Funds: **Budgeted / Committed.**

The Bidding documents Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Drawings, bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental website [www.jktenders.gov.in](http://www.jktenders.gov.in) as per schedule of dates given below:-

1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	02.07.2026.
2	Period of downloading of bidding documents	03.07.2026.from 10:00 PM
3	Bid submission Start Date	03.07.2026.from 10:00 PM
4	Bid Submission End Date	08.07.2026 Up to 02:30 PM
5	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	08.07.2026 at 03:00 PM in the office of Executive Engineer R&B Division Rajbagh Srinagar.

1. Bids must be accompanied with the cost of Tender document in the shape of Treasury Challan under M.H-0059 in favour of the Executive Engineer R&B Division Rajbagh Srinagar (Tender inviting Authority) (The Date of Treasury Challan & EMD should be between the Date of Start of Bid and Bid Submission End date) pledged to the Executive Engineer R&B Division Rajbagh Srinagar (Tender Receiving Authority).

2. At the time of tendering, all bidders must upload Earnest Money/Bid security as mentioned above in the form of CDR/FDR/TDR/BG pledged to the Tender Receiving Authority, i.e. Executive Engineer R&B Division Rajbagh Srinagar. The Earnest Money/Bid security will be released to the successful bidder only after the submission of Performance and Additional Performance Security (if applicable) and Drawl of Agreement as per FORM-25 (Double Cover).

\*Abnormally Low Bid Price :

As per the Circular instructions of Finance Deptt. Vide NO.FD-Code/441/2021-02-158 Dated:08.08.2025, which is reproduced as :-

➤ Where the bid price is below 10% but not below 20% of the Project Cost put to bid, the additional Performance Guarantee/ Security Percentage shall be incremented by 0.1% for every percentage of bid price below 10% of the project cost put to bid starting at 11% with the additional bid performance guarantee being 0.1% and this additional performance guarantee percentage shall be applied on the bid price.

➤ Where the bid price is 20% or more below of the project cost put to bid, the additional performance guarantee percentage shall be incremented by 0.2% for every percentage of bid price below 20% of the project cost put to bid in addition to 1% of the bid price and this additional performance guarantee percentage shall be applied on the bid price.

➤ The additional performance security shall be treated as part of the performance security & shall be released after the DLP is over successfully.

3. The date and time of opening of Bids shall be notified on Web Site [www.jktenders.gov.in](http://www.jktenders.gov.in) and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The bids of Responsive bidders shall be opened online on same Web Site in the Office of the Executive Engineer R&B Division Rajbagh Srinagar (Tender Receiving Authority).

4. The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of Technical bids.

5. Instruction to bidders regarding e-tendering process.

6. Bidders are advised to download bid submission manual from the "Downloads" option as well as from "Bidders Manual Kit" on website [www.jktenders.gov.in](http://www.jktenders.gov.in) to acquaint bid submission process.

7. To participate in bidding process, bidders have to get 'Digital Signature Certificate (DSC)' as per Information Technology Act-2000. Bidders can get digital certificate from any approved Vendor.

8. The bidders have to submit their bids online in electronic format with digital Signature. No bid will be accepted in physical form.

9. Bids will be opened online as per time schedule mentioned in Para-1.

➤ Bidders must ensure to upload scanned copy of all necessary documents with the technical bid.

10. All other terms conditions shall remain as per the J&K Engineering Manual 2020 and other standing Guidelines of the Govt. of India / Govt. of J&K UT and as per PWD FORM (25) Double Cover.

### GOVERNMENT OF (U.T) JAMMU & KASHMIR

## OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER JAL SHAKTI (PHE) DEPTT.

### Ground Water Division Srinagar Baghi-Ali-Mardan, Nowshara Srinagar.

E-mail:- [hakeemmushtaq.75316@jk.gov.in](mailto:hakeemmushtaq.75316@jk.gov.in)

Tel./Fax-

No: 0194-2411285

### Extension Notice 4<sup>th</sup>

Subject: Construction of Gravel Packed Production Tube Wells at Nundresh Colony Gabarpora, Pulwama.

.Reference: This office e-NIT No. 14/JS-PHE/GWDS/Mech. of 2026-27, issued vide endorsement No: JS-PHE/GWDS/26-27/Camp/1636-47, dated: 18-05-2026. Bearing Tender ID No.2026\_PHE\_310256\_1.

Due to "NO Response" for the above mentioned works advertised vide e-NIT No. and Tender ID No's under reference. Which was scheduled to be downloaded till 02-07-2026 Up to 02:00 PM are extended as per the details given below:-

Due to "NO Response" for the above mentioned works advertised vide e-NIT No. and Tender ID No's under reference. Which was scheduled to be downloaded till 02-07-2026 Up to 02:00 PM are extended as per the details given below:-

S. No.	Item	Fresh Date
1.	Last date & Time of submission of bids	14-07-2026 Up-to 01:00 PM
2.	Date & Time of opening of tenders	15-07-2026 01.00 PM

NOTE:

All other terms and conditions shall remain same as laid down in the aforesaid e-NIT issued vide above referred endstt: nos.

Executive Engineer  
Jal Shakti (PHE) Deptt.  
Ground Water Division Srinagar.

No: JS-PHE/GWDS/26-27/Camp./3636-47  
Dated: 02-07-2026.

DIPK-2840/26  
DATED: 03-07-2026

No. 3282-92  
Dated : 02.07.2026.

DIPK-2824/26  
DATED: 03-07-2026

Sd/-  
Executive Engineer,  
R&B Rajbagh Division Srinagar

## Div Com Kashmir visits Nunwan base camp

Inspects facilities, interacts with pilgrims

KT News Desk

Anantnag, July 03: In order to take the stock of facilities along Pahalgam Axis of Yatra, the Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg, on Friday visited various facilities including the Frisking Point, Nunwan Base Camp, Hikers Park and the Club to inspect overall arrangements during the departure of first batch of Yatis through the route.

Accompanied by Deputy Commissioner Anantnag Dr. Bilal Mohiuddin Bhat, Chief Executive Officer, Pahalgam Development Authority, Additional Deputy Commissioner, SDM Pahalgam and other senior officers, the Divisional Commissioner assessed the preparedness of departments to ensure the smooth movement of pilgrims. During the visit, Garg



inspected the frisking point, eKYC verification and RFID registration counters, and reviewed the overall pilgrim facilitation system. He also interacted with yatis to obtain first-hand feedback on the facilities and services being provided.

Directing officers to maintain seamless coordination, the Divisional Commissioner emphasised the need to ensure efficient, hassle-free arrangements and the availability of all essential facilities for pilgrims, with special focus on their safety, comfort and convenience throughout the Yatra.

Taking note of the heavy influx of unregistered pilgrims, Garg instructed the concerned officers to streamline the on-the-spot registration process to minimise waiting time

and facilitate quicker registration. He also directed officials to provide proper guidance and assistance to pilgrims requiring on-the-spot registration.

At Hikers Park, the Divisional Commissioner reviewed the token-based RFID registration facility, while at the Club he inspected the on-the-spot RFID registration and eKYC updation process. Appreciating the efforts of the RFID teams, he directed officials to ensure timely completion of the daily registration quota. Stressing that a large number of pilgrims are expected to undertake the pilgrimage in the coming days, Garg directed all departments to keep the arrangements fully functional and responsive to ensure a safe, smooth and convenient Yatra experience for the devotees.

## Delegations call on LG Sinha



KT News Desk

Srinagar, July 03: M. Yousuf Bhat, Executive Member, BJP J&K called on Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Friday.

He raised the issues pertaining to the sale of substandard and counterfeit pesticides in District Shopian, and also put forth welfare measures for affected farmers and orchardists.

The Lieutenant Governor assured him that the matter would be examined thoroughly and appropriate

action to be taken in the interest of the farming community. In the meantime, Mahant Rohit Shastri, President, Kailakh Jyotish and Vedic Sansthan Trust, called on Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and discussed various important matters pertaining to preservation and promotion of Sanskrit language and Vedic studies in the UT.

He also expressed his gratitude to the Lieutenant Governor for the creation of Sanskrit faculty posts

*Continued on*  
[www.kashmirthunder.in](http://www.kashmirthunder.in)

## Northern Railway bolsters pilgrim facilities at Jammu Tawi station

Naveed Ul Haq

Jammu, July 03: With the annual Amarnath Yatra underway, the Jammu Division of Northern Railway has made elaborate arrangements at Jammu Tawi Railway Station to facilitate the smooth movement of pilgrims arriving from across the country.

According to a statement, Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, Jammu, Uchit

Singhal, along with commercial and operating officials, inspected the railway station to review facilities and assess preparedness for the yatra.

"The railway authorities have established a fully covered passenger holding area equipped with seating, lighting, fans, coolers and drinking water facilities. Round-the-clock housekeeping services have also been deployed to maintain cleanliness, while

additional staff have been stationed to ensure timely water supply to trains," the statement said. It said a 24x7 help desk has been set up at the station where railway personnel, along with Scouts and Guides, are assisting pilgrims with train schedules, platform information, medical aid and other services.

To ensure security and effective crowd management, additional ticket checking

staff, commercial officials and Railway Protection Force (RPF) personnel have been deployed, while CCTV surveillance and continuous monitoring from the railway war room have also been put in place.

Meanwhile, Platform Nos. 4 and 5 at Jammu Tawi Railway Station have been commissioned for train operations, with Train No. 13152 becoming the first train to operate from the newly commissioned

platform on Friday, the statement said. The railway administration has appealed to pilgrims to undertake the journey only after completing registration, purchase tickets from authorised counters, avoid accepting food or beverages from strangers, refrain from unnecessary crowding on platforms, and contact the Rail Madad Helpline 139 or the station help desk for assistance—(KNO)

## 2-day seminar guides Ladakh youth to IIT, NDA



KNO

Ladakh, Jul 03: The 2-day career seminar organised by Career Defence School (CDS) at Leh and Kargil concluded on Friday.

In a statement, organisers said the event provided a roadmap to students from the Union Territory of Ladakh to pursue admissions to

premier institutions such as IITs and the NDA. It said the seminar witnessed participation from a large number of students and focused on creating awareness about competitive examinations, career planning and opportunities in higher education.

*Continued on*  
[www.kashmirthunder.in](http://www.kashmirthunder.in)

## KMDA calls off strike post Punjab Govt assurance

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, July 03: The Kashmir Mutton Dealers Association (KMDA) on Friday called off its strike after the Punjab government issued a communication addressing concerns over the movement of livestock vehicles through the state. However, the association said the order does not fully meet its demand.

KMDA General Secretary Mehraj-ud-Din said the association received a letter from the Directorate of Rural Development and Panchayat, Punjab, following intervention by the Jammu and Kashmir government.

However, he said the communication was not the specific order the association had been seeking, as it does not explicitly exempt livestock vehicles transiting through Punjab from the cattle fair levy.

"We had requested the Punjab government to issue clear orders that cattle fair charges



should not be imposed on livestock vehicles merely passing through Punjab. The letter does not categorically state that. Instead, it focuses on grievance redressal, proper documentation and appointment of nodal officers," Mehraj-ud-Din said. He added that despite its reservations, the association decided to withdraw the strike after being informed that the Punjab government had directed authorities not to unnecessarily stop livestock vehicles at checkpoints. "We were

initially reluctant to accept the communication because it was not what we had expected. However, we have called off the strike for now and will closely monitor the situation on the ground. The real picture will become clear only after these directions are implemented," he said.

The letter, issued by the Punjab government and accessed by KNO, states that the Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir forwarded a representation regarding the transportation of livestock from

different states to Jammu and Kashmir. It has been alleged that while livestock-carrying vehicles pass through Punjab as a transit corridor, contractors operating cattle fair checkpoints collect fees from them.

The letter states that if livestock is purchased or sold within Punjab, the prescribed fee should be paid and the necessary documents obtained to avoid inconvenience during transportation.

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[www.kashmirthunder.in](http://www.kashmirthunder.in)

## Kashmiris must learn from Iran: Dr Farooq



Waris Fayaz

Tangmarg, July 03: Urging Kashmiris to draw lessons from Iran's unity and pray for the success of the Omar Abdullah led government, National Conference president Dr Farooq Abdullah on Friday said a nation can succeed only when its people remain united.

Addressing a public gathering here in North Kashmir, Dr Farooq, as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said there was no reason to fear anyone as "Allah alone is the supreme power." He appealed to people to seek the Almighty's guidance for peace, prosperity and progress and pray that the present government is blessed with the wisdom and strength to serve the people effectively.

"A nation succeeds only when its people stand together. Iran showed the

power of unity despite facing immense external pressure. Kashmiris should also remain united because nothing can be achieved without collective resolve," he said.

Referring to the global situation, Abdullah said several Muslim countries, including Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran and Lebanon, were facing difficult times. He said the challenges confronting the Muslim world were a reminder that people must remain steadfast on the path of Almighty Allah.

He said Iran demonstrated resilience by standing united against the United States, adding that the country's people stood firmly with their nation despite the odds.

"Until people show resistance and unity, nothing can be achieved. Unity is our greatest strength," Dr Farooq said—(KNO)

## Staff shortages being addressed at fast pace: Sakina Itoo



WARIS FAYAZ

Tangmarg, Jul 03: Health and Education Minister Sakina Itoo on Friday said the government is filling vacancies at a fast pace, despite it inheriting acute manpower shortages in the health and education sectors from erstwhile regimes.

Speaking to reporters here in North Kashmir, Minister Itoo said around 400 newly recruited doctors are set to join the health department and will be posted in areas facing manpower shortages.

"We will try to adjust these 400 doctors and fill gaps wherever necessary especially in remote rural areas," she said.

The Minister said the government faced major challenges after assuming office due to a large number of vacant posts in different departments.

"This government started from the zero. We had major challenges because of vacancies, but around 1,000 doctors have been recruited through the Public

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## KTMF delegation calls on CM Omar

Seeks immediate resolution of traders, artisans, workers issues

KNO

Srinagar, Jul 03: A delegation of the Kashmir Traders & Manufacturers Federation (KTMF), led by President Mohammad Yaseen Khan, on Friday called on Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and sought his immediate intervention to resolve their long-pending issues.

In a statement issued, a KTMF spokesperson said a high-level delegation of Federation led by its President Mohammad Yaseen Khan, met Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, and held an extensive meeting on several long-pending issues concerning traders, traditional artisans and workers across Kashmir.

He said the delegation discussed issues



affecting traders, traditional artisans and workers, including rehabilitation of displaced shopkeepers, protection of Kashmir's copper craft and settlement of pending rental disputes.

The delegation comprised senior KTMF functionary Qazi Tauseef; Gulam Hassan Parra, President, Ganderbal Traders Federation; Mehrajuddin Sheikh, Vice President, Ganderbal Traders Federation; Jan Mohammad Misgar, Chairman, Kashmir Copper Workers Trade Union; and Arshid Ahmad Khan, President, Kashmir Copper Workers Trade Union.

"During the meeting, the Ganderbal Traders Federation raised serious concerns regarding the proposed displacement of several shopkeepers due to ongoing and upcoming developmental

works. They urged the Chief Minister to ensure that no trader is deprived of their livelihood and called for a comprehensive rehabilitation package, including suitable relocation before any displacement is undertaken," the spokesperson said. He said the Kashmir Copper Workers Trade Union, representing nearly 50,000 workers, highlighted the alarming decline of Kashmir's centuries-old copper craft. The union strongly demanded an immediate ban on machine-made copper products, stating that such products have severely impacted the livelihoods of thousands of local craftsmen and artisans.

The traders urged the government to

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## EDITORIAL

### The Spirit Of Hospitality Must Continue

The annual Amarnath Yatra began. More than a pilgrimage, it is a reaffirmation of faith, a test of endurance, and a symbol of India's pluralistic spirit. Kashmir once again demonstrated that its heart beats with the rhythm of hospitality, harmony, and hope. The grand welcome accorded to the yatri was a powerful reminder that Kashmir's age-old tradition of warmth transcends politics and prejudice. Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha's flag-off of the convoy from Jammu set the tone for

a pilgrimage marked by meticulous planning and spiritual fervour. The administration's extensive arrangements, from healthcare and accommodation to sanitation and power supplies, reflect a commitment to ensuring that devotees can focus on their spiritual quest without distraction. The deployment of over 670 paramilitary companies, AI-powered surveillance, drones, and RFID tracking underscores the priority placed on safety. The launch of the 'PEHCHAAN' mobile app and

the positioning of 30 Mountain Rescue Teams along the routes further demonstrate a tech-driven, pilgrim-centric approach. Yet, what truly set this year's commencement apart was the warmth of the people. Officials, residents, and volunteers lined the routes, welcoming pilgrims with garlands, flowers, and sweets. For many first-time visitors, this hospitality exceeded expectations. The pilgrims praising the warmth shown by Kashmiris is the real victory of this pilgrimage. Authorities

must ensure that this spirit of hospitality and seamless arrangements continues. Security must remain robust yet pilgrim-friendly, as emphasised by the police chief. Coordination between police, civil administration, and local communities must stay flawless. The suspension of helicopter services this year makes road and trek management even more critical. Every pilgrim, whether young or elderly, must feel safe, supported, and spiritually enriched. Kashmir has once again proven that it is not

just a destination of breathtaking landscapes but also a land of open hearts. The Amarnath Yatra is a sacred journey, but it is also an opportunity to showcase the Valley's enduring tradition of coexistence. The administration, security forces, and citizens must continue to work in unison to ensure this pilgrimage remains smooth, safe, and spiritually uplifting. The message is clear: Kashmir welcomes all with open arms, and this welcome must never fade.

## Bringing Ease To Citizens And Businesses - The 11-Year Legacy Of Digital India

Just over a decade ago, a farmer in a remote village in Uttar Pradesh had to navigate a maze of paperwork to receive subsidies. Today, the same farmer can access support for his crops, and subsidies are deposited directly into his bank account without middlemen. Walk down any street and you will witness another quiet revolution - a local fruit seller or an autorickshaw driver now proudly points to a QR code hanging from his cart. India today stands empowered by a staggering 102.86 Crore connected citizens.



S. Krishnan

Just over a decade ago, a farmer in a remote village in Uttar Pradesh had to navigate a maze of paperwork to receive subsidies or seek advisories to improve his yield. It was an era when waiting in line was the norm. Today, the same farmer can access support for his crops, and subsidies are deposited directly into his bank account without middlemen.

Walk down any street and you will witness another quiet revolution, one that has fundamentally redefined the ease of living. A local fruit seller or an autorickshaw driver who once relied entirely on the physical exchange of cash, now proudly points to a QR code hanging from his cart/autorickshaw.

India today stands empowered by a staggering 102.86 Crore connected citizens, supported by a massive broadband subscriber base of 99.56 Crore. With the cost of mobile data at an ultra-affordable 8 to 10 per GB, individual monthly data usage has scaled to an extraordinary 24.01 GB. This digital foundation has completely reimagined the relationship between the citizen and the state, anchoring it in trust, transparency, and digital autonomy.

Under the leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, Digital India has proven that technology must act as a democratic equalizer for citizens bringing them ease of living and ease of doing business.

Bridging the Divide

The first step in this revolution was



democratizing access and building a robust, indigenous digital identity framework that guarantees technological self-reliance. The BharatNet initiative was deployed at scale, successfully connecting nearly 2.2 Lakh Gram Panchayats with high-speed broadband, ensuring that geography is no longer a barrier to economic opportunity.

This infrastructural leap, coupled with the generation of 144+ Crore Aadhaar identities, powered the Jan Dhan, Aadhaar, and Mobile (JAM) Trinity. By utilizing this sovereign digital identity framework, the government has successfully transferred 51.5 Lakh Crore directly to citizens through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT). This system has effectively eliminated leakage, removed middlemen, and dramatically improved the ease of living for millions of households by putting financial autonomy directly into their hands.

The DPI Phenomenon: Transforming Daily Life and Enterprise

Once the foundation was laid, India's Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) changed the everyday lives of citizens by creating solutions to solve real-world problems. Platforms like DigiLocker have radically streamlined processes for citizens and businesses alike. Boasting 70+ Crore registered users holding over 900+ Crore documents, it has eliminated the friction of physical paperwork, making KYC processes and document verification instantaneous. For enterprises, this has translated into a tangible reduction in the cost and time of onboarding banks, telecom operators, and fintechs now verify a customer in seconds rather than days.

Through the Government e Marketplace (GeM), the government has conducted over 19.51 Lakh Crore worth of procurement. For a small manufacturer or a first-time vendor, this has translated into a business opportunity to win government contracts, without having to navigate layers of

intermediaries.

For accessing public services remotely, the UMANG application has brought central and state government services directly to the citizen's palm. It now serves 11.6+ Crore registered users, offering access to 2,572 government services and facilitating 797.84 crore transactions to date.

The crown jewel of this ecosystem is the Unified Payments Interface (UPI). What empowers that street-side fruit seller's QR code is a sovereign payment rail that now processes a staggering 75 Crore transactions daily. Today, India accounts for nearly half of all real-time digital payments on the planet, with the IMF recognizing UPI as the world's largest real-time payment system.

It has become an anchor of indispensability for the 24 Nations with which India has formally signed Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) for the replication and adoption of its digital governance platforms. Furthermore, UPI now is LIVE in 9 Countries, including the UAE, Singapore, and France.

This philosophy of treating technology as a public good extends directly to health equity facilitating ease of living. Through the eSanjeevani platform, India has delivered over 48+ Crore free tele-consultations allowing patients in remote, underserved areas to consult specialists. Similarly, the world's largest vaccination drive was powered by an indigenous platform. Over 220 crore COVID-19 vaccine doses were administered and tracked transparently through CoWIN, establishing a robust digital backbone that healthcare systems across the globe studied.

Looking at the Horizon

As Digital India completes its 11th year, the mission is firmly pivoting toward frontier technologies, ensuring they are harnessed as public goods to solve challenges for India and the Global South.

For years, the massive cost of computing power kept brilliant young innovators in

smaller towns away from advanced technology. Under the IndiaAI Mission, India is systematically dismantling this barrier to boost the ease of doing business for startups. The government has established a massive, shared compute facility to democratize access. By offering world-class computing capacity to homegrown startups and students at just 65 per hour, the aim is to spark grassroots innovation. The goal is to make India the AI Applications capital of the world with our talented workforce transforming service delivery and boosting productivity in enterprises in all sectors at home and abroad.

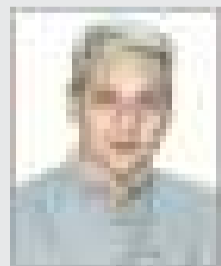
Simultaneously, India is securing its hardware future. Under the Semicon India Programme, 12 Semiconductor manufacturing and packaging projects with an investment of 1.65 Lakh Crore have now been approved across the country. Building on this momentum, the Union Budget 2026-27 announced the India Semiconductor Mission (ISM) 2.0. This new phase goes beyond manufacturing by focusing on semiconductor equipment and materials, designing full-stack Indian Intellectual Property (IP), and fortifying global supply chains. With 24 semiconductor design startups approved under the scheme, India is rapidly translating its capacity creation into deep technological depth, nurturing a vibrant domestic fabless ecosystem that designs the very chips powering the modern world.

The true legacy of this initiative is in the mindset of a nation that now expects innovation, seamless business operations, and governance to be at its fingertips. By ensuring that technology acts as a tool for inclusion, accessibility, and sovereign strength, Digital India is quietly architecting the Viksit Bharat we envision for 2047.

The author is Secretary, Electronics and Information Technology

## Empowering The Last Mile, Enabling Every Dream Through Post-Matric Scholarships

As Bharat advances towards the vision of Viksit Bharat, our department remains dedicated to empowering the last mile by ensuring access to quality education and enabling the nation's youth through inclusive and impactful scholarship support. The Department has earmarked an estimated budget of Rs. 1300 crore for the Post Matric Scholarship Scheme for OBCs, EBCs, and DNTs for the year 2026-27.



Sudhansh Pant

As Bharat advances towards the vision of Viksit Bharat, our department remains dedicated in its commitment towards empowering the last mile by ensuring access to quality education and enabling the Nation's Youth through inclusive and impactful scholarship support.

Demonstrating its firm commitment towards educational empowerment and social inclusion, the Department has earmarked an

estimated budget of Rs. 1300 crore for the Post-Matric Scholarship Scheme for OBCs, EBCs and DNTs for the year 2026-27. Over the last five years, the scholarship scheme has benefited more than 107 lakh students, with a total fund release of over Rs. 5,350 crores, reflecting its sustained focus on supporting eligible students across the country.

In line with the vision of the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment to build an inclusive society where disadvantaged and vulnerable communities can lead productive, safe, and dignified lives, several transformative initiatives have been undertaken to strengthen educational and social empowerment.

These efforts are focused not merely on scheme implementation, but on building trust, awareness, and accessibility among vulnerable communities.

However, as highlighted in the Impact Assessment Report by NITI Aayog, awareness of welfare schemes at the grassroots

level continues to remain a challenge, even in the digital era. Recognising this critical gap, the Department has adopted innovative outreach strategies to ensure that the benefits of scholarship and welfare schemes effectively reach the last mile.

The transformative impact of the Department's scholarship initiatives is reflected in the journey of Mahesh Appaiya Nandi Kolmat, a fourth-year BBA student at Alva's College (Autonomous), Sundari Ananda Alva Campus, Moodubidire, Dakshina Kannada District, Karnataka. Sharing his experience, he said that the Post-Matric Scholarship has greatly helped him in paying his hostel and college fees, enabling him to continue his studies without financial burden.

Another inspiring example of the Department's inclusive educational outreach is the story of Sakshi Thakur, a Class 12 student studying at Government Senior Secondary School, Khalag, Shimla, Himachal

Pradesh. Sharing her experience, she said that she received an amount of Rs. 5,000 under the PM-YASASVI Post-Matric Scholarship Scheme, which greatly supported her studies. She expressed her gratitude to the Government of India for the valuable assistance provided through the scholarship.

In order to further strengthen the effectiveness, efficiency and outreach of the Post Matric Scholarship, the Department periodically undertakes a comprehensive impact assessment of the schemes in collaboration with NITI Aayog and independent third-party agencies. The assessment aims to evaluate the on-ground implementation of the schemes, identify existing gaps and operational challenges, and understand the experiences of beneficiaries at the grassroots level. The findings of this exercise support policy makers and the officials in enhancing transparency, improving service delivery mechanisms, refining outreach strategies, and ensuring that the benefits of

the schemes reach every deserving student efficiently.

This evidence-based approach reflects the Department's commitment towards continuous improvement, accountability, and building a more inclusive and responsive welfare ecosystem.

The continued efforts of officials at every level from policy formulation to grassroots implementation reflect a collective effort to transform scholarships into effective instruments of educational empowerment and social inclusion. Through sustained outreach, transparent governance, and citizen-centric implementation, the Department aims to create a future where every young individual, irrespective of background, has the opportunity to realise their aspirations and contribute meaningfully to the nation's progress.

The author is Secretary, Department of Social Justice & Empowerment Government of India

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PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana

## Clear installation backlog, speed up disposal of cases: DC Budgam

KT News Desk

BUDGAM, JULY 03: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam Athar Aamir Khan chaired a review meeting on Friday to assess the implementation of the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana across the district.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by the Additional District Development Commissioner, Superintendent Engineer KPDCI, Executive Engineer, Electric Division Budgam, Lead District Manager (LDM), Deputy CEO JAKEDA and empaneled regional vendors.

During the meeting, the DC reviewed the physical and financial progress achieved under the scheme besides assessing consumer registrations, rooftop solar installations, disbursement of Central Financial Assistance (CFA), status of government building solarisation,



cases sanctioning, and installation progress.

The DC was apprised that the district has registered encouraging progress under the scheme across all subdivisions of the district. He was further informed

buildings have been solarised.

Taking stock of the implementation, the DC directed the concerned officers to ensure early installation of smart meters at all solarised government buildings and expedite completion of the remaining pending sites.

Reviewing the banking component of the scheme, the DC instructed the Lead District Manager to facilitate prompt disposal of pending applications and resolve rejected cases in coordination with the concerned banks to ensure hassle-free consumer onboarding.

The DC further directed the empaneled vendors to clear all pending installations within the stipulated timeline. He stressed coordination among KPDCI, JAKEDA, banks and vendors to remove bottlenecks, expedite implementation and achieve targets within this financial year.

## DC Kulgam visits Eklavya Model Residential School

Reviews developmental works

KT News Desk

KULGAM, JULY 03: Deputy Commissioner Kulgam, Shahzad Alam, who is also the Chairperson of Eklavya Model Residential School (EMRS), visited the EMRS campus on Friday and reviewed the progress of various infrastructure and developmental works being undertaken at the institution.

During the visit, the Deputy Commissioner, as per an official statement, inspected the facilities available at the school and took stock of the ongoing works aimed at strengthening residential and educational infrastructure.

He directed the concerned departments to complete all pending necessities in the Boys' Hostel within ten days to facilitate the shifting of students,



staff and mess facilities.

He also reviewed the provision of furniture for the Boys' Hostel and the Principal's quarters and instructed the concerned authorities to ensure its timely availability.

Emphasising the need for timely completion of projects, he directed that the construction work on the Girls Hostel be completed by October 2026. He further stressed the

need for early completion of landscaping and development of the school playground.

The Deputy Commissioner also reviewed the proposal for the installation of a hybrid solar power system at the institution and directed the concerned department to expedite the process. He further instructed the concerned authorities to issue and install a dedicated electricity meter for the school.

## Commissioner JMC visits Ward No 61, reviews ongoing development works

KT News Desk

JAMMU, JULY 03: Commissioner, Jammu Municipal Corporation (JMC), Dr Devansh Yadav on Friday undertook an extensive tour of Ward No. 61, covering Laxmi Vihar, Tomal Colony, Anand Nagar, Bohri and adjoining localities to assess the status of civic infrastructure, review ongoing development works and interact directly with residents to address their grievances.

During the visit, residents of Lane No. 4-A, Laxmi Vihar submitted a memorandum highlighting several long-pending civic issues, including inadequate and choked drainage, damaged internal roads, waterlogging during rainfall, irregular drinking water supply and the recurring flooding caused by the overflow at the confluence of the Muthi/Udhawala Main Nallah and the Om Nagar Nallah near the Tomal Colony Shamsan Ghat.

The Commissioner, as per an official statement, carried out a detailed inspection of the affected areas and reviewed the ongoing drainage improvement works being executed at various locations across Ward No. 61 and its adjoining areas. Emphasizing the need for timely execution and quality of works, Dr. Devansh Yadav directed the executing agencies to ensure that all works are completed within the stipulated timeframe while strictly adhering to prescribed



quality standards.

Taking serious note of the grievances raised by the residents, the Commissioner issued on-the-spot directions to the concerned officers to initiate immediate remedial measures. He instructed officials to undertake regular desilting of drains, prepare comprehensive proposals for strengthening the drainage network, expedite the repair and reconstruction of damaged roads and formulate long-term measures to effectively mitigate flooding. He further directed the concerned officials to maintain close coordination with the respective departments for early resolution of issues relating to drinking water and power supply.

Reaffirming the Jammu Municipal Corporation's commitment to responsive, transparent and citizen-centric governance, Dr. Devansh Yadav assured the residents that all genuine public concerns would be addressed on priority. He reiterated that the Corporation remains committed to strengthening civic infrastructure, enhancing public amenities and ensuring a better quality of life for the people.

Senior officers and officials of the Jammu Municipal Corporation accompanied the Commissioner during the inspection. The Commissioner directed all concerned officers to ensure prompt follow-up and time-bound implementation of the instructions issued during the visit.

Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan

## J&K Science Technology & Innovation Council organises Youth Parliament

KT News Desk

JAMMU, JULY 03: A Youth Parliament on Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan was successfully organised Friday at Padma Shri Padma Sachdev Government College for Women (PSPS GCW), Gandhi Nagar, Jammu.

The programme was jointly organized by Jammu & Kashmir Science, Technology and Innovation Council (JKST&IC), Department of Science and Technology, Government of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir and PSPS Government College for Women Gandhi Nagar Jammu.

The event, as per an official statement served as a sensitization programme for newly admitted students of the 2026 academic session as well as Principals of colleges from across the Jammu Division. The primary objective was to create awareness about the growing menace of drug abuse and to promote the vision of a drug-free India under the Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan.

The Principal of the College Dr. Kulvinder Kour emphasized the pivotal role of educational institutions in building a drug-free



society. She urged students to become Brand Ambassadors of the Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan in their respective colleges and communities by spreading awareness and encouraging healthy, drug-free lifestyles.

Deputy Director Jammu & Kashmir Science, Technology and Innovation Council (JKST&IC), Department of Science and Technology, Jammu Shrutika Khanna highlighted the importance of educational institutions in preventing substance abuse through awareness, education and collective action. Principals from colleges

across the Jammu Division, students from various institutions and faculty members actively participated in the deliberations. The Youth Parliament provided a vibrant platform for young minds to discuss, debate and propose actionable strategies to curb substance abuse within educational institutions and society at large.

The programme concluded with a collective pledge by all participants to stay away from drugs and to actively spread awareness about the harmful effects of substance abuse, reaffirming their commitment to the vision of a drug-free India.

## DC Ramban flags off Door-to-Door garbage collection vehicle

KT News Desk

RAMBAN, JULY 03: Deputy Commissioner Ramban, Mohammad Alyas Khan, Friday flagged off a Door-to-Door Garbage Collection Hydraulic Vehicle for Block Ramban under the initiative of the Rural Development Department to strengthen rural sanitation and promoting effective solid waste management.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Varunjeet Singh Charak, Assistant Commissioner Development Sheraz Ahmed, Tehsildar Ramban Deep Kumar, Block Development Officer Ramban Sunil Kumar, Block Development Officer Batote Farman-Ul-Din, Block Development Officer Headquarters Shalini Chandel, along with other officers and officials, were present on the occasion.

The vehicle has been deployed to ensure collection and scientific disposal of household waste, contributing to cleaner villages and improved public health. The initiative is aimed at enhancing sanitation services at the grassroots level and reinforcing the objectives of the Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen).

The Deputy Commissioner, as per an official statement, emphasized the importance of community participation in maintaining cleanliness and urged the public to cooperate with the sanitation staff by ensuring proper segregation and timely disposal of household waste. He reiterated the district administration's commitment to creating a clean, healthy and sustainable environment across the district.

Indigenous Animal Genetic Resources

## SKUAST-K conducts Animal Healthcare Programmes in Gurez

KT News Desk

BANDIPORA, JULY 03: Reinforcing its commitment to sustainable livestock development and conservation of indigenous animal health, Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-K) organized a series of Awareness-cum-Input Distribution and Animal Healthcare Programs at Gurez.

The programs, as per an official statement, were organized by the Division of Animal Genetics & Breeding, Faculty of Veterinary Sciences & Animal Husbandry, Shuhama, under the ICAR-NBAGR Network Project on Animal Genetic Resources, in collaboration with Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), Gurez, and the Department of Animal Husbandry. The initiative aimed to promote conservation of indigenous animal genetic resources, improve livestock productivity, and strengthen the livelihoods of tribal farming communities in the region.

Held under the leadership of Vice-Chancellor, Prof. (Dr.) Nazir Ahmad Ganai, the outreach program brought together scientists, veterinary experts, extension professionals, and livestock farmers to promote scientific livestock management and climate-resilient farming practices.

Dr Ravinder Kumar, Principal Scientist at ICAR-Central Institute for Research on Cattle,



attended as chief guest and highlighted the immense value of indigenous livestock genetic resources in ensuring sustainable livestock production, climate resilience, and nutritional security. He emphasised the need to adopt scientific and innovative livestock technologies to improve productivity and contribute to the vision of a "Viksit Gurez".

Guest of Honour, Dr Mahesh Dige, Senior Scientist at ICAR-National Bureau of Animal Genetic Resources, stressed the importance of conserving local animal genetic resources and appreciated SKUAST-K's sustained efforts in strengthening the livestock sector through scientific interventions, farmer awareness, and capacity-building initiatives in remote tribal areas.

Earlier, Prof. (Dr) Syed Shanaz Shafi, Professor & Head, Division of Animal Genetics & Breeding, underscored the urgent need for scientific conservation and sustainable management of indigenous animal genetic resources.

She noted that native livestock and poultry breeds are invaluable genetic assets naturally adapted to the harsh agro-climatic conditions of the Kashmir Himalayas and are critical for sustainable livelihoods, biodiversity conservation, and climate-resilient farming systems.

A major highlight of the programme was the distribution of livestock inputs to beneficiaries. A total of 100 indigenous Kashmiri poultry birds were distributed under the ICAR-NBAGR Network Project to promote the conservation and multiplication of indigenous poultry germplasm.

Additionally, 300 Keystone Golden birds were distributed under the ICAR-All India Coordinated Research Project (AICRP) on Poultry under the guidance of Dr Azmat Alam, Principal Investigator, to encourage backyard poultry farming, particularly among women's Self-Help Groups, thereby improving livelihood opportunities and household nutritional security. Further strengthening animal

health interventions, around 50 livestock farmers received deworming medicines and mineral mixtures free of cost to improve animal health and productivity.

During the technical session, Dr Shahid Ahmad Shergoijy, Associate Professor, Division of Animal Genetics & Breeding, sensitized farmers on the importance of conserving indigenous poultry breeds, scientific breeding strategies, genetic improvement, and sustainable livestock management. He highlighted the significant role of native poultry in improving household nutrition, strengthening rural livelihoods, and generating supplementary income for tribal farming families.

Scientists also conducted practical demonstrations and provided expert guidance on scientific feeding, breeding, healthcare, disease prevention, and climate-resilient livestock production practices. Farmers actively participated in interactive discussions, sharing their experiences and seeking scientific solutions to challenges affecting livestock production.

The program was attended by Dr. Izhar Ahmad, BVO Gurez; Dr. Ishaq Ahmad, VAS; Dr. Jauhar Rafeeq; Dr. Shahada; scientists and officials from KVK Gurez; officers from the Department of Animal Husbandry; and a large number of progressive livestock farmers and women beneficiaries from across Gurez Valley.

## DC Doda chairs 3rd District Road Safety Committee Meeting

KT News Desk

DODA, JULY 03: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Doda and Chairman, District Road Safety Committee Krishan Lal, on Friday chaired the meeting of 3rd District Road Safety Committee to review the road safety scenario in the district and assess the implementation of measures aimed at reducing road accidents and improving traffic safety.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner Anil Kumar Thakur, Chief Planning Officer Manesh Kumar, ASP Headquarters Mohd Aslam, ACR Ashraf Pervaz, Superintending Engineer, PWD (R&B) Atul Gupta, DySP Traffic Shokat Ali, Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Er. Anil Kumar Mehar, Chief Medical Officer Dr. Vinod Sharma, Motor Vehicle Inspector and other line departments. ADC Baderwah Sunil Kumar Bhutyal, Sub Divisional Magistrates ARTO and other officers attended the meeting through virtual mode.

During the meeting, the DC directed NHIDCL, PMGSY, BRO and PWD to submit detailed reports of road accidents to the Superintending Engineer, PWD (R&B), who is the secretary of the District Road Safety

Committee, along with timely Action Taken Reports (ATRs).

A detailed review of the 14 identified accident hotspots in the district was conducted. The DC directed the concerned agencies to ensure installation and regular maintenance of crash barriers, rumble strips, cautionary signages and other road safety measures at all vulnerable locations. He further instructed PMGSY, PWD, NHIDCL and BRO to undertake road safety audits of all roads under their jurisdiction, identify additional accident-prone spots and submit a comprehensive mitigation plan.

Emphasising regular monitoring, the DC directed all concerned departments to remove encroachments and clear construction or dumping material lying along roadsides, particularly on single-lane roads, to prevent accidents and ensure smooth traffic movement.

The DC instructed SDMs and the ADC Baderwah to closely monitor roadside encroachments and ensure that no construction material or debris obstructs public roads. He directed them to identify suitable locations along highways and in town peripheries for parking accidentally damaged vehicles so that they do not pose a risk to commuters. The meeting also reviewed

the status and maintenance of crash barriers installed at accident hotspots, with directions for their regular inspection and upkeep. The functioning of roadside toilet complexes established by NHIDCL was also reviewed.

The DC directed the concerned authorities to ensure an uninterrupted water and power supply besides proper maintenance of these facilities for the convenience of travellers.

Reviewing the enforcement measures, the DC assessed the challans issued for rash and negligent driving, helmetless riding and uninsured vehicles. He directed the ARTO and Traffic Police to intensify enforcement drives and take strict action against traffic violators to improve compliance with road safety regulations.

Reviewing road safety awareness programmes being conducted across the district, the DC directed ARTO, Traffic Police and Health Department to work in close coordination to strengthen public awareness, emergency response and post-accident care. He further instructed the Health Department to ensure that benefits under the PM Rahat Scheme are extended promptly to every eligible road accident victim to facilitate timely medical treatment.

## Satish Sharma listens to public grievances, assures time-bound redressal

### Pampore Industrial Estate, Fair Price Shop Association, kerosene dealers call on minister

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Jul 03: Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Information Technology, Youth Services & Sports, and Science & Technology, Satish Sharma, on Friday met several public delegations from different parts of Jammu and Kashmir and patiently heard their grievances and developmental concerns, reaffirming the government's commitment to responsive, transparent and people-centric governance.

A core group of the Brick & Tile Factory Industrial Estate, Pampore, led a delegation of 118 lessees and apprised the Minister of the prolonged delay in the handing over of possession of industrial land. The delegation informed the Minister that despite completing the required formalities, the matter has remained

unresolved for nearly four years, causing immense hardship to entrepreneurs and adversely affecting industrial growth and employment generation in the region.

Giving a patient hearing to the delegation, Satish Sharma assured the members that the issue would be taken up at the highest level and that every possible effort would be made to settle the issue. He said that the government is committed to promoting entrepreneurship, creating employment opportunities and ensuring that genuine investors and industrial stakeholders are not made to suffer because of procedural delays.

The Minister observed that industrial development plays a crucial role in strengthening the economy of Jammu and Kashmir and emphasized that genuine concerns of entrepreneurs deserve timely attention. He assured the delegation that



the government would work in close coordination with the concerned departments to facilitate an expeditious settlement of the issue within the framework of rules.

The Minister also met a

delegation of the Fair Price Shop Association, which raised issues pertaining to the functioning of ration depots, timely release of commissions and other operational matters concerning the Public Distribution System.

Satish Sharma assured the association that their genuine demands would be examined sympathetically and appropriate steps would be taken to further strengthen the delivery mechanism of essential commodities

across the Union Territory.

A delegation of the Kerosene Dealers Association also called on the Minister and highlighted various issues affecting dealers and consumers. The Minister assured them that the concerns raised would be discussed with the concerned authorities to arrive at practical solutions in the larger public interest.

Representatives of the NYCs also met the Minister and submitted a memorandum regarding issues concerning their welfare and functioning. Satish Sharma assured them that the government remains committed to constructive engagement with youth and would examine their demands on merit.

Besides these, several other delegations and individuals from different districts of Jammu and Kashmir met the Minister and projected issues relating to public infrastructure, civic amenities, sports facilities, consumer

affairs, road connectivity, drinking water, electricity and other developmental matters.

Interacting with the delegations, Satish Sharma reiterated that the Omar Abdullah-led Government is committed to ensuring responsive governance by maintaining direct engagement with the people. He said that public grievances are being addressed on priority and every effort is being made to ensure timely redressal through coordinated action among departments.

The Minister assured all the delegations that each issue brought to his notice would be taken up with the concerned departments for appropriate action. He reiterated that the government remains dedicated to safeguarding public welfare, promoting inclusive development and ensuring that the benefits of governance reach every section of society.

## Union minister Margherita, Bihar gov attend Khamenei's funeral ceremony in Tehran

PTI

New Delhi, Jul 03: Union minister of state Pabitra Margherita and Bihar Governor Syed Ata Hasnain attended the funeral ceremony of Iran's late Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Friday and paid their respects on behalf of the government and the people of India.

Khamenei, who ruled Iran for last three decades, was killed on February 28, the first day of massive US and Israeli air strikes on Tehran.

"Hon'ble @GovernorBihar and I represented India at the funeral ceremony for Grand Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, former Supreme Leader of Iran, in Tehran. Conveyed our respects on behalf of the Government and the people of

India. @PMOIndia @MEAIndia," Minister of State for External Affairs Margherita posted on X and also shared some photos of the ceremony.

The Bihar Lok Bhawan in a post on X said the governor also extended deepest condolences to the families of those who have lost their lives in the recent conflict in West Asia.

"Represented India at the funeral ceremony of His Eminence Grand Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei in Tehran today, along with MoS External Affairs @PmargheritaBJP. Also extended deepest condolences to the families of those who lost their lives in the recent conflict. @MEAIndia @atahasnain53," the governor's office posted.

It also shared some photos of the solemn ceremony.

The Embassy of Iran in India



also issued a post sharing visuals of Hasnain and Margherita offering their respects in a hall where the ceremony to mourn his death was held.

"The Special Representatives of the Government of the Republic of India, Bihar Governor Lieutenant General

(Retd.) Syed Ata Hasnain and Mr. Pabitra Margherita, Minister of State for External Affairs, paid tribute to the martyred Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei," and also shared a video carrying the visuals.

Iran President Masoud Pezeshkian had invited Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the funeral.

Former external affairs minister Salman Khurshid is representing the Congress party at the funeral ceremony.

External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal at his weekly media briefing was asked who represented India at the ceremony as many persons are attending it.

"As far as the government of India is concerned, we issued a press statement on it that from our side. Bihar Governor Lt Gen Syed Ata Hasnain (ret'd)

and along with him Minister of State for External Affairs Pabitra Margherita, they are in Tehran today to represent India there (at the burial ceremonies)... for Iran's late Supreme Leader's," he said. "The high-level representation in the ceremony underscores the importance of civilizational ties, including people-to-people connection, between the two countries, providing a robust foundation to political and economic engagements," the MEA said in its July 2 statement.

The main funeral procession in the Iranian capital is scheduled for July 6, according to Iran's state-run media.

On July 7, ceremonies will be held in the holy city of Qom, and the burial in Khamenei's hometown of Mashhad is scheduled for July 9.

## Former DDC chairperson Safina Baig to join NC on Jul 8

Waris Fayaz

Srinagar, Jul 03: Former chairperson of district development council Safina Baig is joining National Conference on July 08. Sources told news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that Safina Baig will join the party on 8th of this month in presence of NC president Dr. Farooq Abdullah.

Safina's induction in NC is expected to strengthen the party in Baramulla district as well as in other Pahari-majority areas of Jammu & Kashmir.

Wife of former deputy CM Muzaffar Hussain Baig, Safina Baig has played a key role in development of Baramulla district during her tenure as DDC head. (KNO)

## CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

### PM Modi urges

of Jammu and Kashmir and the voluntary service rendered by local residents and organisations running community kitchens (langars) and service camps for pilgrims along the routes.

Describing the tradition of selfless service as a reflection of India's civilisational values and the ideal of "Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah", Modi called upon devotees to make this year's pilgrimage a model of responsible citizenship and national service.

He urged every pilgrim to undertake five pledges during the yatra.

Under the first pledge, he asked devotees to maintain cleanliness by adhering to sanitation norms and helping keep the pilgrimage routes free of litter.

The second pledge called upon pilgrims to strictly follow all directions issued by the administration, comply with traffic regulations and safety advisories, remain vigilant during adverse weather conditions and take precautions against slippery terrain and cold weather.

As part of the third pledge, the Prime Minister appealed to pilgrims to support local livelihoods by spending at least 10 per cent of their pilgrimage expenditure on locally made products under the "Vocal for Local" initiative to strengthen the livelihoods of families and youth in Jammu and Kashmir.

The fourth pledge focused on environmental conservation, urging devotees to present a sapling to their brother or sister on Raksha Bandhan, the concluding day of the yatra, in support of the "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam" campaign.

The fifth pledge called on pilgrims to uphold the spirit of "Nation First" by performing their duties with sincerity throughout the year and contributing towards the vision of a "Viksit Bharat".

Expressing confidence that the 2026 Shri Amarnath Yatra would become a celebration of faith, national unity and selfless service, PM Modi prayed for the blessings of Baba Amarnath upon all devotees.

He wished every pilgrim a safe, peaceful and spiritually enriching journey and expressed hope that the pilgrimage would inspire renewed devotion, energy and commitment towards national development.

The Jammu and Kashmir administration distributed the Prime Minister's message in the form of pamphlets to pilgrims at both the Nunwan and Baltal base camps.

The pilgrims welcomed the Prime Minister's message and described it as a thoughtful gesture that strengthened their spiritual resolve and enthusiasm for undertaking the pilgrimage. (KNO)

### Pre-registered Yatris

the Anantnag district administration has introduced a token system to allot slots for the next few days, enabling pilgrims to report on their designated date instead of waiting at the base camp every day.

The Div Com said elaborate arrangements,

including accommodation, community kitchens (langars) and security, have been put in place at the base camp and transit locations to ensure that pilgrims do not face inconvenience.

Appealing for patience and cooperation, he said the administration is making every effort to facilitate the maximum number of pilgrims within the prescribed carrying capacity of the route.

"The quota for on-the-spot registration is likely to increase in the coming days, depending on the number of pre-registered pilgrims reporting for the Yatra," he said. "Yesterday, around 1,000 pilgrims were registered on the spot, while today nearly 2,000 are being accommodated. The number may increase further in the coming days."

Garg said the registration process has been open across the country since March and has remained streamlined over the years. However, some people may not have been aware of the process, while others who arrived in Kashmir as tourists later decided to undertake the pilgrimage.

He said the administration has enhanced the capacity of transit camps across Srinagar, Ganderbal, Bandipora and Anantnag, with accommodation arrangements for nearly 80,000 pilgrims.

Reiterating the administration's commitment, the Divisional Commissioner said every effort is being made to ensure that all pilgrims undertake the Yatra safely and have smooth darshan of Baba Barfani while adhering to the prescribed carrying capacity. (KNO)

### 12,168 pilgrims pay

Commissioners and Senior Superintendents of Police from the two base camps.

According to officials, 12,168 persons performed darshan at the Holy Cave till 7:00 pm on Friday. The figure includes 9,354 male pilgrims, 2,250 female pilgrims, 219 children, 71 sadhus, nine transgender devotees and 265 security personnel.

Meanwhile, the second batch of pilgrims left the Bhagwati Nagar Yatri Niwas in Jammu in two escorted convoys.

According to official figures, 1,735 pilgrims bound for the Baltal route departed at 3:13 am, while 2,130 pilgrims heading towards the Pahalgam route left at 3:38 am, taking the total strength of the second batch to 3,865.

Officials said the batch comprised of 2,965 male pilgrims, 618 women, 230 sadhus, 48 sadhis and four children.

The pilgrims were travelling in 201 vehicles, including 83 buses, 14 medium motor vehicles (MMVs) and 104 light motor vehicles (LMVs). Of these, 115 vehicles were part of the Baltal-bound convoy, while 86 vehicles are heading towards the Pahalgam base camp, officials said. "With the departure of the second batch on Friday, a total of 8,687 pilgrims have left the Bhagwati Nagar Yatri Niwas in Jammu for the Kashmir Valley over the past two days to undertake the annual Amarnath Yatra."

'UNDERTAKE PILGRIMAGE ONLY AFTER COMPLETING ADVANCE REGISTRATION'

Meanwhile, the Jammu and Kashmir administration issued an advisory urging devotees to undertake the pilgrimage only after completing advance registration and to strictly adhere to their allotted travel dates.

The administration said that in accordance with the directions of the Supreme Court, a daily ceiling has been fixed on the number of pilgrims permitted on the Yatra routes to ensure the safety of devotees and the smooth conduct of the annual pilgrimage.

Officials said advance registration had been made available well before the commencement of the Yatra through designated bank branches across the country and online platforms, with a majority of pilgrims already availing the facility.

The administration clarified that the Tatal or on-the-spot registration facility has only limited slots and cannot accommodate thousands of unregistered pilgrims arriving in Jammu and Kashmir. Devotees without prior registration have been requested to wait for their allotted date and travel only as per the schedule issued by the authorities.

The advisory further noted that several registered pilgrims have been reaching Jammu and Kashmir before their scheduled travel dates. Authorities reiterated that no pilgrim would be allowed to proceed on the Yatra before the date mentioned on the registration slip.

The administration assured that every registered devotee would get an opportunity to undertake the Yatra in accordance with the prescribed procedure and the daily carrying capacity. Pilgrims have been urged to maintain discipline, cooperate with the authorities and follow all guidelines for the safe and orderly conduct of the pilgrimage.

Authorities have put in place multi-tier security arrangements, with personnel from the J&K Police, CRPF and other security agencies deployed along both routes to ensure the safe and smooth conduct of the annual pilgrimage.

The 57-day pilgrimage is scheduled to conclude on August 28. (KNO)

### Ladakh to get

meetings as per the Transaction of Business Rules, the minutes state.

According to the minutes, a customized sui generis model will be adopted for Ladakh.

"During the meeting, the model of constitutional safeguards under Article 371 was also discussed. There have been instances of invoking Article 371(A to J), and it was agreed that a customized sui generis model most suitable for Ladakh would be adopted. It was decided that a draft proposal covering the powers and functions (executive, financial, and legislative) of this UT-level elected body, in harmonious relation with the PRIs, would be prepared for further discussion and fine-tuning," the document states.

The sub-committee also noted "the substantial support extended by the Government to Ladakh in recent years through dialogue initiatives, protective legislation in terms of domicile criteria and reservations, employment

measures, developmental interventions, infrastructure expansion, cultural recognition, and administrative reforms." (KNO)

### Rain, thunderstorms

Celsius, which was 2.1 degrees above normal, while the minimum settled at 19.3 degrees Celsius, two degrees above normal.

Qazigund recorded 30.6 degrees Celsius, Pahalgam 25.1 degrees Celsius, Kupwara 30.7 degrees Celsius, Kokernag 29.9 degrees Celsius, and Gulmarg 20.2 degrees Celsius.

In the Jammu region, Jammu city recorded a maximum of 37.3 degrees Celsius, Banihal 31.7 degrees Celsius, Katra 33.7 degrees Celsius, Batote 28.2 degrees Celsius, and Bhaderwah 29.6 degrees Celsius.

The MeT department said humidity levels remained high across the region, adding to the prevailing hot and humid conditions, particularly in the Jammu division. (KNO)

### Raabita: MLAs, trade

regular engagement with public representatives, trade organisations and other stakeholders to ensure responsive governance, inclusive development and sustained economic progress across Jammu and Kashmir.

### Foul smell from

quarters have to endure it almost every day. It is not only unpleasant but also affects the overall working environment," a staff member said on condition of anonymity.

Medical Superintendent, SKIMS, Prof Farooq Ahmad Jan, has written to the Commissioner of the Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC), urging immediate intervention to address the issue, stating that the foul odour continues to cause immense inconvenience and poses a potential health risk to critically ill patients admitted to the premier tertiary care hospital.

According to the letter accessed by KNO through an RTI by activist M M Shuja, SKIMS had earlier raised the issue with the SMC. However, despite repeated representations, the problem has persisted. In another communication issued this year, the Medical Superintendent reminded the civic body that the unbearable stench continues to affect patients, attendants and hospital staff, particularly during the summer months when rising temperatures intensify the smell from the dumping site.

The hospital administration said numerous complaints have been received from attendants who spend days and nights with their loved ones undergoing treatment. The unpleasant odour, it noted, not only causes discomfort but also creates an unhealthy environment for patients battling serious illnesses. Staff members residing in the nearby residential quarters are also facing the same problem on a daily basis.

"We have repeatedly requested the Srinagar Municipal Corporation to take urgent and effective remedial measures to mitigate the foul smell from the Achan dumping site but no action has been taken as of now," an official said.

The issue is directly impacting patient welfare, attendants and hospital staff. Early

intervention is essential in the larger public interest.

The SKIMS administration has urged the Srinagar Municipal Corporation to take concrete and lasting measures to control the odour and improve waste management practices at the Achan dumping site, stressing that safeguarding the health and dignity of patients should remain a top priority. (KNO)

### BPCR can transform

eclampsia, sepsis and obstructed labour. The programme is also expected to significantly improve child health outcomes. Skilled care at birth, immediate newborn resuscitation where required, thermal protection, early initiation of breastfeeding and prompt immunisation contribute to reducing Neonatal Mortality Rate (NMR), Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) and Perinatal Mortality Rate. Early breastfeeding within the first hour of birth strengthens newborn immunity, while postnatal follow-up ensures timely identification and treatment of illnesses.

Experts note that several important maternal and child health indicators are likely to improve through widespread adoption of BPCR. These include higher antenatal care coverage, increased institutional delivery rates, improved skilled birth attendance, better postnatal care, timely referral of obstetric emergencies, early breastfeeding initiation, improved immunisation coverage and better identification and management of low birth weight newborns.

Community health workers, including ASHAs and ANMs, play a pivotal role in the successful implementation of BPCR. They counsel families during home visits, prepare individualised birth preparedness plans, identify high-risk pregnancies, coordinate transport and referral services, and educate families about postpartum care and newborn health.

Public health experts stress that the involvement of husbands, elders and other family members is equally important, as collective decision-making during emergencies often determines how quickly medical care is sought.

Professor Dr. S. Muhammad Salim Khan, Department of Community Medicine, Government Medical College Srinagar, who issued the public health advisory, emphasised that effective Birth Preparedness and Complication Readiness can save lives by ensuring that families are prepared well before delivery.

He underscored that good planning before childbirth, early recognition of danger signs and prompt medical intervention can prevent many maternal and newborn deaths, leading to healthier families and stronger communities across Jammu & Kashmir.

Health authorities have urged expectant mothers and their families to prepare well in advance for childbirth, avoid unnecessary delays during emergencies and seek medical care at the earliest signs of complications. They reiterated that timely planning today is the foundation for safer motherhood, healthier children and improved health indicators for the Union Territory. (KNO)

## Highly successful summit; 75 yrs of India-Japan ties to be celebrated in 2027: MEA

PTI

New Delhi, Jul 3: As Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi concluded her official visit to India on Friday, the Ministry of External Affairs said it reaffirmed the commitment of the two sides to nurture a partnership pivotal to the shared growth and prosperity of both countries.

The India-Japan partnership is also an anchor for promoting peace, prosperity and stability in the Indo-Pacific and beyond, the MEA said, and asserted that the 16th India-Japan annual summit here was "highly successful".

"A memorable visit concludes, advancing India-Japan partnership towards shared horizons. PM @takaichi\_sanae of Japan departs from India following the highly successful 16th India-Japan Annual Summit. She was seen off by Minister of State @DrjtiendraSingh," External Affairs



Ministry Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal posted on X.

He also shared some photos of the send-off in Delhi.

Takaichi visited the country at the invitation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, from July 1 to 3 for the 16th India-Japan annual summit.

The two leaders held talks at the Hyderabad House here on Thursday to strengthen bilateral

cooperation.

India and Japan unveiled a raft of landmark initiatives, including an economic partnership framework, a defence pact to co-develop military hardware and steps to enhance energy ties to tackle oil shocks, as Prime Minister Modi held summit talks with his Japanese counterpart Takaichi, focusing on enhancing mutual trust to effectively

navigate global uncertainties.

"The visit reaffirmed the commitment of both sides to nurture a partnership pivotal to the shared growth and prosperity of both countries and an anchor for promoting peace, prosperity and stability in the Indo-Pacific and beyond," Jaiswal posted.

The Japanese prime minister was on Thursday morning according to a warm ceremonial welcome

at the forecourt of the Rashtrapati Bhavan. Prime Minister Modi was present on the occasion.

This was Takaichi's first official visit to India.

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri on Thursday told reporters at a briefing that overall the visit was "extremely successful", and cited the "exceptional breadth and depth" in the outcomes of the summit. He also said the two leaders talked about the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries next year, adding that 2027 will be commemorated as the India-Japan Year of Shared Horizons. Jaiswal in a post on X on Thursday said, "Taking forward a partnership anchored in trust, shared values and strategic convergence".

On Wednesday, the MEA said that the visit marked an "important step" in taking forward the Special Strategic and Global Partnership between India and Japan.

## Ritabrata faction takes over TMC headquarters

PTI

Kolkata, Jul 3: The struggle for control of the Trinamool Congress entered a new phase on Friday with the rebel faction led by Leader of the Opposition Ritabrata Banerjee taking possession of the organisational headquarters in Kolkata, a day after staking its claim to the party's name and symbol before the Election Commission.

The Metropolitan office has served as the party's operational headquarters since 2022, when the TMC shifted there after its original office on the EM Bypass was taken up for reconstruction. By moving into the premises, the dissidents sought to reinforce their claim to organisational

legitimacy amid an escalating battle with the Mamata Banerjee-led faction.

Accompanied by senior leaders, including Firdhad Hakim, Javed Khan, Sandipan Saha and Akhruzzaman, Ritabrata visited the office and held a meeting there, asserting that his camp represented the "real" Trinamool Congress.

Leaders of the faction said they had completed the necessary agreement with the owners of the premises and would henceforth function from the office.

"We are the Trinamool Congress and this office belongs to the Trinamool Congress. There is an emotional connection between the party and this office," Akhruzzaman told reporters.

## Modi to visit Indonesia, Australia, NZ from Jul 6-11

PTI

New Delhi, Jul 3: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will embark on a three-nation visit to Indonesia, Australia and New Zealand from July 6-11 to deepen India's engagement with the three countries, the MEA said on Friday.

The first leg of his visit will be to Indonesia, after which he will travel to Australia, where his main engagements will be held in Melbourne. He will conclude the tour with a visit to New Zealand.

Talking to reporters, Secretary (East) in the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Rudrendra Tandon, said Modi's visit to New Zealand would be special as it would be the first by an Indian prime minister in nearly



40 years.

Modi will make his first official visit to New Zealand next week, the country's Prime Minister Christopher Luxon announced earlier in the day. "I'm delighted to announce Indian Prime Minister @narendramodi will make his first

official visit to New Zealand next week," Luxon posted on social media without disclosing the actual date of the visit.

Calling India one of the world's largest and fastest-growing economies, Luxon said India is of enormous importance to New Zealand's

economic prosperity.

"We are taking the two countries' relationship to the next level with our New Zealand-India Free Trade Agreement, signed in April, which will deliver more jobs, higher exports and stronger economic growth for New Zealand," he said.

Luxon said the deal will unlock new opportunities, opening a market of 1.4 billion people for goods and services from New Zealand, "bringing more money into Kiwi communities, creating jobs and lifting wages".

India and New Zealand signed a free trade agreement (FTA) earlier this year to boost two-way commerce in goods and services and promote investments.

## Govt orders removal of three Chinese apps used to remotely disable battery-powered vehicles



PTI

New Delhi, Jul 3: The government has ordered the removal of three Chinese mobile applications - BAT-BMS, Lossy and Epoch-i-ion - from app stores after they were allegedly misused to remotely disable battery-operated vehicles in India, official sources said on Friday, amid heightened concerns over cybersecurity vulnerabilities in internet-connected mobility systems.

The action follows the emergence of multiple videos on social media showing electric rickshaws being rendered inoperable through a remote shutdown feature linked to the BAT-BMS application. The videos triggered concerns over the ability of third-party applications to remotely access and control critical vehicle functions, raising questions about the cybersecurity safeguards built into battery management

systems used in electric vehicles. Government sources said the three applications were found to be misused to remotely disable battery-operated vehicles and have been ordered to be removed from app stores. They added that authorities would also move to block any other application found to be facilitating similar misuse.

The government is also engaging with app marketplace operators to prevent the distribution of applications that could pose cybersecurity risks, the sources said. BAT-BMS is a Bluetooth-enabled battery management application developed by China's Shenzhen Grenergy Technology Co. Ltd. for monitoring and managing compatible lithium battery packs. The app allows users to view battery parameters such as charge level, voltage, current and temperature, and to control charging and discharge functions on

compatible batteries.

Concerns centre on the lack of authentication in some Bluetooth-enabled battery management systems used in low-cost e-rickshaws, which allegedly allowed unauthorised users within Bluetooth range to disable vehicles remotely.

BAT-BMS works within a Bluetooth range of roughly 15 metres and can connect to multiple batteries simultaneously. The app itself is marketed as a battery monitoring and management utility rather than a vehicle control application.

Lossy and Epoch-i-ion (Epoch Li-ion) are similar BMS applications used with Bluetooth-enabled lithium batteries from other manufacturers.

The viral videos showed individuals approaching e-rickshaws, pairing with compatible batteries over Bluetooth and switching off the battery's discharge output, leaving vehicles stranded. Some reports also alleged that pranksters subsequently offered to "fix" the vehicles for a fee after restarting them using the same app.

Some BMS units lacked password protection or robust authentication, allowing anyone within Bluetooth range to pair with the battery and disable its discharge function, effectively immobilising the vehicle.

## PM to visit Rajasthan, Gujarat today

PTI

New Delhi/Jaipur, Jul 3: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Rajasthan and Gujarat on Saturday to inaugurate the country's first greenfield integrated refinery-cum-petrochemical complex in Baltora and a semiconductor assembly and test facility in Sanand.

The prime Minister will begin the

Rajasthan leg of his visit from Jodhpur, where he is scheduled to inaugurate the new terminal building of Jodhpur Airport and launch the modified UDAN scheme aimed at strengthening regional air connectivity. The new airport terminal, built at a cost of Rs 480 crore, has been designed to handle up to 20 lakh passengers annually. Spread over more than 23,000 square metres, it incorporates modern passenger

facilities and sustainable features.

Under the modified UDAN scheme, the Centre has earmarked Rs 28,840 crore over the next 10 years to expand regional aviation. The scheme envisages development of 100 aerodromes from existing unserved airstrips, construction of 200 helipads, operational support for regional airports and continued viability gap funding for airlines, an official statement said.

## Govt says ethanol blending prog backed by global practice, scientific studies

PTI

New Delhi, Jul 3: The government on Friday issued a detailed rebuttal to what it described as misinformation circulating on social media about the country's E20 ethanol blending programme, rejecting claims ranging from excessive water consumption and engine damage to insurance invalidation and environmental harm.

In a 10-point clarification, the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas said the programme, under which petrol contains up to 20 per cent ethanol, is supported by scientific studies, international experience and regulatory safeguards.

Rejecting claims that producing one litre of ethanol consumes 10,000 litres of water, the ministry said only surplus rice, cleared after meeting national food security requirements, is diverted for ethanol production.

It added that ethanol distilleries consume about 3-5 litres of processed water per litre of ethanol and increasingly operate Zero Liquid Discharge systems to recycle water.

The ministry also said maize, which now accounts for more than 40 per cent of ethanol



supplied under the programme, requires significantly lower irrigation than paddy and is being promoted through higher minimum support prices.

The government also dismissed assertions that E20 is an untested fuel, noting that ethanol-blended fuels have been used internationally for decades. It cited countries, including the United States, Brazil, Canada, Thailand, Japan and several European nations, as having adopted ethanol

blending at varying levels. Addressing concerns over vehicle performance, the ministry said Automotive Research Association of India (ARAI)-led trials covering about 40,000 kilometres in passenger cars and 20,000 kilometres in two-wheelers found no significant adverse impact on drivability or fuel efficiency, with only "marginal" changes in mileage.

It added that vehicles calibrated for E20 could benefit from ethanol's higher octane rating. On allegations that E20 damages engines or corrodes components, the ministry cited studies conducted by ARAI in collaboration with Indian Oil Corporation, the Indian Institute of Petroleum and the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers.

The studies found no issues relating to drivability or compatibility of metal and plastic components, although certain rubber parts in older vehicles

may require earlier replacement. The ministry also rejected claims that the use of E20 fuel could void vehicle warranties or insurance coverage, saying automobile manufacturers and insurers have clarified that vehicles designed or approved for E20 remain covered under applicable warranty and insurance terms.

Responding to viral social media posts suggesting ants and bees are attracted to E20 fuel because it contains sugar, the ministry said fuel-grade ethanol undergoes distillation that removes residual sugars and contains denaturants that repel insects. It also said petrol's hydrocarbon odour dominates the blended fuel.

The government further denied claims that it had described the E20 programme as an "experiment" before the Supreme Court, saying the court proceedings related to contractual provisions governing ethanol procurement rather than the merits of the blending programme.

It cited a clarification issued by the Office of the Attorney General stating that media reports suggesting otherwise were inaccurate.

## Delhi HC awards Rs 1 cr compensation to kin of engineering student who died in road accident

PTI

New Delhi, Jul 3: The Delhi High Court has awarded compensation of more than Rs 1 crore to the kin of a fourth-year engineering student at Netaji Subhash Institute of Technology, who died in a road accident in 2017.

The court also awarded over Rs 84 lakh as compensation to the kin of a third-year student who also died in the same accident.

Justice Anish Dayal passed the judgment on pleas by the kin of the two deceased students seeking enhancement of the compensation awarded to them by the Motor Accident Claims Tribunal in September 2020.

Senior advocate Sumeet Verma appeared for the family of the deceased persons in the high court. The tribunal awarded Rs 38.50 lakh and Rs 83.86 lakh to the kin of Prabhleen Kaur and Vinay Khurana. The accident happened in February 2017 when the two were travelling to Delhi in a car driven by a mutual friend.

It was alleged that the car, driven at a very high speed in a rash and negligent manner, hit the railing on the divider, resulting in the

demise of the two students.

The insurance company, ICI-CL Lombard General Insurance Company, filed appeals seeking a reduction of the compensation awarded by the tribunal.

In the judgement passed on July 1, the court observed that both deceased persons were bright and meritorious students who were studying at a premium engineering college after scoring good marks in the JEE examination.

It observed that the FIR and chargesheet filed in the case clearly established that the offending vehicle had struck the road divider with considerable force, resulting in the death of the two students.

The court said that although the car was under the exclusive control of the driver, neither he nor the owner of the car entered the witness box to explain how the accident occurred or to rebut the allegation of rash and negligent driving.

It rejected the driver's stand in the written submissions that he lost the car's balance due to sunlight reflection, stating that the explanation was "implausible", and that the surrounding facts were sufficient to draw an inference of negligence against him.

## Iran's slain leader Khamenei laid in state in Tehran for week of mass funeral events

REUTERS

Dubai, Jul 3: The body of Iran's slain Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei was lying in state in a vast hall in Tehran on Friday as clerics, officials, foreign dignitaries and other mourners paid their respects after his 37-year rule.

Iran is staging a week of mass funeral processions for Khamenei — killed in February by US and Israeli airstrikes at the start of a four-month war — in a show of public devotion to the Islamic Republic's theocratic state and revolutionary fire. Khamenei's body was expected to be taken to Qom, Najaf and Kerbala, the great Shiite centers of Iran and Iraq, before being laid to rest on Thursday in Mashhad, home to the country's holiest pilgrim shrine.

Critical moment for Islamic Republic

His coffin was unveiled late on Thursday to a throng of sobbing supporters, swaying and beating their heads in time to a sung lament as flowers were thrown from the bier into the crowd. On Friday the coffin — and those of family members killed with him — was laid in state in the great prayer hall built to honor his predecessor, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

The funeral comes at a critical moment for Iran, where the clerical rulers backed by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps are riding high from surviving what they saw as an existential war against their

greatest and most powerful foes. But nearly five decades after the 1979 revolution, and for all the official proclamations of national unity in the run-up to Khamenei's funeral, the Islamic Republic has rarely been so internally fractured.

Support for the clerical leadership is paper thin, analysts say, and the new Supreme Leader, Khamenei's son Mojtaba Khamenei, has not been seen in any new image since being wounded in the strike that killed his father.

Years of crippling sanctions have paralyzed the economy as accelerating bouts of mass nationwide protests have been put down by security forces with increasing force — culminating in the killing of thousands of demonstrators in January.

Those deep problems have been brushed aside this week, with the authorities mounting a display of state power and mass support, mobilizing what they hope will be millions of mourners to take part in the funeral.

Tehran streets were tightly controlled, with military and police vehicles lining the major roads and police and members of the black-shirted volunteer Basij paramilitary force patrolling on motorbikes. Iran warned the United States and Israel against any attacks during the funeral.

After the coffins arrived on Friday, borne high across the upraised hands of a waiting crowd, they were laid in the prayer hall on a



white, stepped, dais before a high, intricately tiled, arched recess, flanked by national and black mourning flags.

A black turban, worn by clerics claiming descent from Islam's Prophet Muhammad, lay on the coffin on a folded chequered scarf, a symbol in Iran of militant revolutionary ideals and solidarity with Palestinians.

Representatives from Russia and China were expected to attend. Top Iraqi, Armenian and Pakistani politicians arrived in Tehran for the funeral.

Families of Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah and senior commander Imad Mughniyeh, close Lebanese allies of Iran killed in Israeli strikes, attended the ceremony.

Iran's own political leaders — the president, parliament speaker, foreign minister and others — filed in

to weep and pray on Friday morning.

Sobbing crowds, funeral tour of Iran and Iraq in Iran's theocratic system, Khamenei was not only head of state and leader of a revolutionary movement, but the representative on earth for Shiite Islam's 12th imam, who disappeared in the ninth century. His death in an enemy attack plays into a powerful Shiite tradition of martyrdom and mourning, in which processions of flagellants beat their chests or backs. That potent symbolism has been evident in the black funeral flags hanging over city streets since his death referencing the seventh-century martyrdom of Shi'ism's third imam, Hossein.

In central Tehran overnight, a crowd stood sobbing and chanting, led by a Basij member, as others handed out posters of the late Khamenei. "God willing, only

by avenging his blood, demanding justice for it, and ensuring that our leader's blood is not left unavenged, can this sorrow of the people be somewhat alleviated," said Mobina Razaaghi, an 18-year-old student from Isfahan, attending the funeral events with classmates.

Killed alongside Khamenei, and displayed in coffins next to his, were his daughter, son-in-law and baby granddaughter, as well as the wife of his son Mojtaba.

Burial postponed due to war  
Burials are meant to be conducted within a day of death in Islam, but because of the risks of holding a big funeral during the war it was postponed until after last month's interim truce deal was agreed.

Hotels are offering 50 percent discounts, schools, mosques and sports halls have been prepared to house mourners, and bus and rail networks are being diverted to serve the main events.

After what authorities are billing as a massive procession in central Tehran on Monday, the remains will be taken to the seminary city of Qom, the center of Iran's Shiite hierarchy, for ceremonies on Tuesday.

Ceremonies will then be held in Iraq's shrine cities of Najaf and Kerbala on Wednesday with prominent attendees from Iran's regional network of Shiite proxies.

He will be buried on Thursday, after another procession, in Mashhad near the tomb of the Imam Reza, a figure of great devotion in Iran.

## Strong El Nino will develop rapidly over coming months, says UN weather agency



REUTERS

Geneva, Jul 3: The United Nations weather agency on Friday raised its forecast for the rapid emergence of a strong El Niño in the coming months, warning that the phenomenon is likely to drive global temperatures higher.

El Niño is a periodic warming of sea surface temperatures in the central and eastern Pacific Ocean, which typically lasts between nine and 12 months, that can drive up global temperatures and increase the risk of extreme weather, according to the World Meteorological Organization (WMO).

"El Niño conditions have emerged in the Equatorial Pacific, and there is a remarkable agreement between forecast models that this will be a strong El Niño," said Alvaro Silva, a scientist at the WMO.

The intensity of

El Niño is important because it increases the likelihood of extreme weather and climate events in different parts of the world, Silva said.

In early June the WMO had forecast a moderate or possibly a strong El Niño but it said recent forecasts had given it more confidence that strong El Niño conditions are developing in the equatorial Pacific. The WMO said it could further revise up its forecast if information later in the summer points to a very strong El Niño.

Seasonal forecasts indicate a strong and robust typical pattern of El Niño, including drier than normal conditions in parts of the world, such as Central America, Caribbean, North and South America, and drier patterns in South Asia during the monsoon season in parts of Indonesia and South East Asia, according to the WMO.

## 'Ireland will be more acceptable as opposition after series win over India'

PTI

Bengaluru, Jul 3: Cricket Ireland president Bryan O'Donnell believes that the "impactful" T20 International series win over India recently will transform the national team into a "more acceptable opposition" globally, and open avenues for challenging assignments.

Ireland stunned India 2-0 recently at Belfast to register their first ever series win over the reigning T20 world champions in any format.

"Well, it's going to be fairly instantaneous because it is a huge lift for our players and on that basis, they will probably become available in other areas of the game," O'Donnell told PTI. "A huge amount of impact because it elevates the players. It lifts the potential performance of Irish cricket hugely," he added.

But the real impact of the win over a storied opponent, O'Donnell thought, will be the changed



perception around Irish cricket.

"I think we would be more acceptable as opposition than we may have been heretofore. So, you know, it is a moving elevation.

"It is showing a return on the level of input that Cricket Ireland are willing to put into the game in this country with the help of the ICC and all of these people. At present, a large investment is going on into the infrastructure surrounding

Irish cricket," he said. O'Donnell hoped that the strong Irish presence in the upcoming European T20 Premier League will benefit the country's cricket.

"Absolutely. Providing the opposition is of a certain level, you know, it has to be beneficial and it is also opening potential for other income streams for the players in the higher echelons of the game."

He felt involvement of legends like Steve Waugh, Rahul Dravid

and R Ashwin in the ETPL will help Irish players learn the game's nuances.

"They will learn from observation. They will learn from meeting these legends and picking their brains and possibly pick up tips for the benefit of our players. They (Irish players) are very anxious to move with the game and have the game up to speed in this country.

"So, if that can carry forward to all the players, all the way down the line, then I think we're on a progress path," he said.

Indian-born pacer Jai Moondra was the star of Ireland's series win over Shreyas Iyer's side, and O'Donnell was happy to welcome more expats into the Irish cricketing environment.

"We're open to all talent providing they would qualify as such either through living in Ireland or through the relationship of grandparents or aunts and uncles, etc. as are required. Yes, we're an open book.

## France deaths rose by 30 pc during heatwave

AFP

Paris, Jul 3: France endured a rise of nearly 30 percent in the number of deaths recorded during the week starting June 22, the peak of a record-breaking heatwave that battered the country, the public health authority said Friday.

The number of deaths increased by 62 percent in the Paris region over the same period, Public Health France said in a new report. A similar spike has been recorded in the western region of Pays de la Loire.

Officials expect the tally to rise further. The government of Prime Minister Sebastien Lecornu faces a no-confidence vote in parliament, possibly on Monday, over its handling of June's heatwave, when temperatures climbed above 40C in many places. The extreme heat disrupted daily life, forcing schools to close and trains to be canceled. On Friday, Public Health France said there had been "an increase of 29.1 percent, corresponding to 2,025 additional deaths compared with the previous week" while noting that the figure was probably "an underestimate."

The increase in deaths is concentrated almost entirely among people aged 45 and over.

## Iran opens oil sale talks with Japan

REUTERS

Tehran, Jul 3: Iran has begun talks with Japanese companies under a U.S. sanctions waiver allowing it to resume oil sales, though prospective buyers are seeking a longer waiver and reassurances about ship safety, three Iranian and Western sources said.

The waiver, part of 60-day peace talks between Tehran and Washington, was issued on June 22 and expires August 21. Three Japanese buyers were looking at possible crude oil purchases from Iran, their first since 2019, said two Iranian sources, who declined to be identified due to the sensitivity of the issue.

Japanese and Iranian officials were in initial talks about possible oil sales, a Western industry source familiar with the matter said separately.

An official at Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI), which oversees fuel supply infrastructure, said he was unaware of any such matter. Japan's foreign ministry and the U.S. Treasury did not immediately respond to Reuters requests for comment.

Japan, South Korea, India and European countries stopped buying Iranian oil when U.S. sanctions tightened following U.S. President Donald Trump's withdrawal from Iran's nuclear pact in 2018.

## Gukesh rises to joint second spot in Grand Chess Tour Croatia

PTI

Zagreb (Croatia), Jul 3: World champion D Gukesh made good use of his white pieces to beat Dutch Grandmaster Anish Giri in the final game of the day to rise to joint second spot after the second day of the Zagreb leg of the Grand Chess Tour here.

Iranian Grandmaster Firouzja Alireza is at the top by extending his lead by a huge three points.

With 10 points in his kitty out of a possible 12, Alireza is far ahead of his rivals -- Vincent Keymer of Germany, Maxime Vachier-Lagrave of France, Deac Bogdan-Daniel of Romania and Gukesh, who all have identical seven points.

Another half point behind are India's R Praggnanandhaa, Giri and Nodirbek Abdusattorov of Uzbekistan while Croatian Ivan Saric and Dutchman Jorden van



Forest are at the bottom of the table with just two points apiece.

Gukesh made most of his opportunities against Giri in a Ruy Lopez exchange variation.

For once, the Dutch Grandmaster of Nepalese origin was seen lost from his prep book as Gukesh launched an attack against his king and never looked back.

Winning an exchange, the youngest ever world champion did nothing

wrong in wrapping up a fine victory.

The day could have been better for Praggnanandhaa but Alireza simply had the Caissa on his side.

After reaching a probable draw out of a game that had fluctuating fortunes, Praggnanandhaa was the last one to make a blunder and lost from what was a theoretically drawn endgame.

Earlier in the day, Gukesh started off with an uncharacteristic loss

against Bogdan-Daniel but followed it up with a win over Forest.

Much like the first day when he beat Keymer in the opener, Praggnanandhaa won the first game of the day against Forest but ended up losing the next two starting with Abdusattorov.

With three rounds still remaining in rapid, Alireza seems all set to win the section but there are still 18 games to come in the blitz that will decide the final outcome on the last two days.

Standings (After Rd-6 rapid):

1. Firouzja Alireza (FRA, 10) 2-5; Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (FRA); D Gukesh (IND) Deac Bogdan-Daniel (ROU); Vincent Keymer (GER) 7 each; 6-8: R Praggnanandhaa (IND); Anish Giri (NED); Nodirbek Abdusattorov (UZB) 6 each; 9-10. Jorden van Forest (NED); 10. Ivan Saric (CRO) 2 each.

**NOW SHOWING**

# Movies SCHEDULE

**SATURDAY, 4TH JULY**

<b>WELCOME TO THE JUNGLE</b> (HINDI) (U/A 16+)	
02:20 PM, 06:20 PM	
<b>ALPHA</b> (U/A 16+) HINDI ATMOS -	
10:45 AM, 01:35 PM, 04:25 PM, 07:15 PM	
HINDI - 08:15 PM	
<b>MAIN VAAPAS AAUNGA</b> (HINDI) (U/A 16+)	
01:00 PM	
<b>COCKTAIL</b> (HINDI) (A)	
11:20 AM	
<b>MINIONS AND MONSTERS</b> (U/A 7+) ENGLISH WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES -	
04:20 PM	
HINDI - 11:00 AM	
<b>BABY DO DIE DO</b> (HINDI) (A)	
05:35 PM	

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