



Mission far from complete: LG Sinha on 100 days of drug-free J&K campaign

Reaffirms govt's resolve to neutralize drug cartels, narco-terror networks

'2,581 traffickers arrested, 1,431 kg narcotics seized, over Rs 188.89 crore assets confiscated'

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Jul 21: Reaffirming the Government's resolve to neutralize drug cartels and narco-terror networks that target youth, Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha on Tuesday said that dismantling illicit trafficking ecosystems, enhancing public awareness, and providing robust rehabilitation to help affected individuals are the top priorities of the administration.

Addressing the valedictory function of the 100-day 'Drug-Free J&K campaign' at the Sher-i-Kashmir International Conference Centre (SKICC) here, the Lieutenant Governor, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, "The first 100 days of the campaign laid the foundation for the rigorous path ahead. The road ahead will certainly be tough, but our resolve to completely wipe out narco-terrorism is stronger than ever."

He said, "We are determined to neutralise the drug cartels



and narco-terror networks that target our youth. We continue to strengthen our key priorities of dismantling illicit trafficking ecosystems, enhancing public awareness, and providing robust rehabilitation to help affected individuals reintegrate into society."

Terming the completion of 100 days of the 'Drug-Free J&K campaign' as a significant milestone, LG Sinha said, "It marks significant progress but our mission is far from complete."

The Lieutenant Governor said that during this 100-day campaign, he

Shakti Peethas powerful symbols of national unity: LG

'Many ancient manuscripts, inscriptions fading; need preservation'

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Jul 21: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Tuesday addressed the "Shakti Mimamsa" national symposium, a collaborative initiative by the Central Sanskrit University (Jammu Campus), Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board, and Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University, saying the deliberation on the spiritual heritage of the 51 Shakti Peethas over next 4-days will allow us to reconnect with the ancient Sanatana consciousness that has long defined India's soul.

"Shakti is the very heartbeat and sustaining consciousness of the cosmos. | More on P6

Massive flash floods ravage Beerwah, Khag; man swept away

Heavy rains batter Jammu for 3rd consecutive day; LG assesses situation, directs officials to help victims; search for missing persons continues in Poonch, CM sanctions ex-gratia relief; Minister Sharma reviews relief ops in Rajouri

Sajid Raina/
Naveed UI Haq Ganaie

Srinagar, Jul 21: Torrential rains triggered massive flash floods in Beerwah and Khag areas of Central Kashmir's Budgam district on Tuesday, sweeping away a man and causing widespread damage to markets and residential areas, while rescue teams intensified the search for missing persons in the flood-hit districts of Poonch and Rajouri in Jammu division.

An official told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) a man identified as Shabir Ahmad Poswal, of Drang village in Khag, was swept away near Gujarpatti, Drung Khag. "He is feared dead and search for the body is on," the official added.

In Budgam's Beerwah town, the Sukhnag stream overflowed following incessant rain, triggering flood-like conditions that swept away dozens of shops along its banks and caused extensive damage to public infrastructure.

Officials and local residents



said the swollen stream washed away several shops, including parts of a municipal shopping complex near the main bus stand, forcing traders to scramble to shift their goods to safety.

The floodwaters also damaged a temporary alternative road serving as the only link connecting Beerwah with Budgam and Khanshib while a new bridge is under construction. Vehicular movement was disrupted after the road suffered extensive damage.

A drinking water supply pipeline was also damaged,

affecting potable water supply to parts of the area. Embankments along the stream were eroded, raising fears of further flooding if rainfall persists.

Residents urged the administration to restore road connectivity, repair the damaged water supply network and strengthen flood protection measures. Officials said an assessment of the damage was underway.

HEAVY RAINS BATTER JAMMU FOR 3RD CONSECUTIVE DAY

Meanwhile, heavy rains lashed | More on P6

Adverse weather forecast

All depts on high alert, 24x7 control rooms activated, says Div Com Kmr

'Amarnath Yatra decisions to follow IMD advisories, safety of pilgrims top priority'

Umaisar Gull Ganie

Kulgam, Jul 21: The Kashmir administration on Tuesday placed all departments on high alert and activated round-the-clock control rooms across the Valley in view of the adverse weather forecast, with Divisional Commissioner (Div Com) Kashmir Anshul Garg saying the entire administrative machinery has been mobilised to respond to any emergency.

Talking to reporters in Kulgam, Garg, as reported by the news agency—Kashmir

News Observer (KNO), said district administrations, disaster management authorities, police, emergency services and other line departments have been directed to maintain close coordination and remain fully prepared to deal with any weather-related situation.

"All departments have been put on high alert and asked to remain prepared. We have activated 24x7 control rooms across Kashmir to monitor the situation and ensure a prompt response wherever required," he said.

Garg said field officers have been instructed to keep constant watch on vulnerable areas and take timely measures to minimise any loss of life or property.

On the ongoing Shri Amarnath | More on P6

Govt to assess rain losses; provide relief as per norms: CM

Says Smart City works to undergo third-party audit

KCCI welcomes compensation, Smart City audit assurance

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Jul 21: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday said the government will assess the losses suffered by people affected by the recent rains and provide relief as per the prescribed norms. He further said an inquiry into the widespread waterlogging in Srinagar, assuring that Smart City works will undergo a third-party audit.

Replying to questions during a press conference here,



Abdullah, as reported by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said the administration would begin assessing losses once the weather improves and provide compensation to affected

families in accordance with the existing guidelines.

"As far as compensation is concerned, the losses suffered by people will be assessed, and relief will be provided as per the prescribed | More on P6

Govt extends summer vacation till Jul 26

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Jul 21: The government Tuesday extended summer vacation for schools of Kashmir division and winter zones of Jammu division till July-26.

According to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Education Minister Sakina Itoo said that the schools shall reopen on July-27.

Taking to microblogging platform X the minister said, "Keeping the safety and well-being of students, teachers, and their families as our foremost priority, the summer vacation for all Government and recognized private schools in the Kashmir Division and Winter Zones of Jammu Division is hereby extended up to 26th July, 2026."

"Schools will now reopen on Monday, 27th July, 2026," she said.

The ministry requested the people to stay safe, remain vigilant, and follow the advisories issued by the concerned authorities. "Wishing everyone good health and safety."

Earlier on July-18, the government had already extended summer vacation for all schools of Kashmir division and winter zones of Jammu division till July-22 in view of prevailing heat weather conditions and inclement weather advisory.

The Education Minister earlier had said that the summer vacation was extended by three days for schools in Kashmir division and winter zones of Jammu division.

The government had earlier announced summer vacations for all schools in the Kashmir Division and winter zones of the Jammu Division from July 6 to July 19. | More on P6

Delhi protest just beginning, NC to intensify statehood campaign: Omar

Says statehood foundation for reclaiming 'special status'; slams rivals for 'tweet politics'

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Jul 21: National Conference (NC) Vice-President and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday said the party's Delhi protest for restoration of Jammu and Kashmir's statehood is just the beginning of a sustained political campaign.

The NC, he asserted, would continue reminding the centre of its promises until statehood is restored, adding that statehood is the constitutional foundation for reclaiming the region's special status.

Addressing a press conference here a day after the NC-led

protest in New Delhi, the CM, as reported by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said the party would not dilute its political agenda to appease the BJP and would continue its struggle under the leadership of NC president Dr Farooq Abdullah.

"Yesterday's protest was just the beginning, not the end. The next phase of the movement will be decided by the organisation, but there will be no let-up in our struggle. We will continue reminding the Centre of the promises it made to the people of Jammu and Kashmir," he said.

Rejecting criticism that the NC had abandoned | More on P6

LoP Sharma slams Omar for 'political posturing' in New Delhi

BJP demands Rs 20 lakh relief for flood, cloudburst hit people

Yogesh

Jammu, Jul 21: Launching a scathing attack on the ruling National Conference (NC), the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Tuesday accused Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and the party leadership of indulging in

"political theatrics" in New Delhi while Jammu and Kashmir was grappling with one of the worst rain-related tragedies in recent years.

Addressing a press conference here, Leader of Opposition in the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, Sunil Sharma along with former Minister and MLA, Shama Lal Sharma, MLA, Mohan Lal Bhagat, party vice | More on P6

Cyber crime cases cross 1 lakh in 2024; J&K records 114, Ladakh one: MHA

Raja Syed Rather

Srinagar, Jul 21: Cyber crime cases across the country crossed the one-lakh mark in 2024, with the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) registering 1,01,928 cases, according to data tabled in the Lok Sabha by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).

Replying to an unstarred question in Parliament, the Ministry said Jammu and Kashmir recorded 114 cyber crime cases in 2024, compared to 185 in 2023, while Ladakh reported one case during the year.

According to the NCRB figures, accessed by the news agency—Kashmir News



Observer (KNO), J&K registered 120 cases in 2020, 154 in 2021, 173 in 2022, 185 in 2023 and 114 in 2024, whereas Ladakh reported one, five, three, one and one case respectively during the same period.

The Ministry informed Parliament that the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) has launched the National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal and the Citizen | More on P6

Cold storage infrastructure game changer for Kashmir's plum growers

Plums now reach Kolkata markets; fetch better prices

Jahangeer Ganaie

Srinagar, Jul 21: Improved cold storage infrastructure is proving to be a game changer for Kashmir's plum growers, enabling them to preserve fruit

quality for longer periods, access distant markets and secure better prices for their produce.

Officials from the Horticulture Planning and Marketing Department told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that the limited shelf life of soft fruits such as plums and cherries had long restricted growers to nearby markets, often

resulting in heavy post-harvest losses. However, the availability of modern cold storage facilities has significantly reduced wastage and opened new marketing opportunities across the country.

"Short shelf life was one of the biggest challenges for growers of soft fruits. Cold storage facilities have helped address this issue by preserving freshness and allowing



traders to transport produce to far-off markets," a horticulture department official said.

Fruit exporters also acknowledged the positive impact of the improved storage network.

Basharat Ahmad, a fruit exporter from Srinagar, said that earlier, plums often spoiled before reaching distant destinations, forcing traders to sell quickly at lower prices.

"Now we are able to maintain the quality and freshness of the fruit even while transporting it to markets as far as Kolkata. This has expanded our market base, improved returns for growers and enhanced the reputation of Kashmiri produce," he said.

The department is working to further strengthen the cold storage network across Kashmir | More on P6

CS Atal Dulloo participates in Murti Pratishthan Divas celebrations at Uma Bhagwati Shrine Anantnag

‘Government remains committed to safeguarding such places of immense historical and spiritual importance’

KT News Desk

ANANTNAG, JULY 21: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, Tuesday visited the Mata Uma Bhagwati Shrine at Umanagri, Brariangan, Shangus, to participate in the celebrations of the Murti Pratishthan Divas, being observed with religious fervour through a two-day Yagya and other spiritual programmes organised by the Uma Bhagwati Asthapan Trust here.

The Chief Secretary, who graced the occasion as the Chief Guest, paid obeisance at the shrine and sought the blessings of the deity for peace, prosperity and well-being of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. He also participated in the Kalash Pooja and the sacred rituals performed as part of the Murti Pratishthan celebrations.

Deputy Commissioner Anantnag, Dr. Bilal Mohi-ud-Din Bhat, along with senior officers of the district administration and a large gathering of devotees and members of the Trust, was also present on the occasion.

Referring to the ongoing heritage conservation initiatives at the shrine, the Chief Secretary, as per an official statement, said that the Government remains committed to safeguarding



such places of immense historical and spiritual importance. He added that the project being undertaken for the shrine would be incorporated with additional works required for improving facilities and preserving the sanctity of the shrine in a holistic manner. On this occasion, the Uma Bhagwati Asthapan Trust expressed its gratitude to the Chief Secretary for sparing time to participate in the celebrations and for his assurance

of continued support towards the preservation and development of the historic shrine.

The Trust also placed on record its appreciation for the proactive role played by the Deputy Commissioner, Anantnag, in ensuring effective coordination among all concerned departments for making comprehensive arrangements for the smooth and successful conduct of the religious function.

Div Com Kashmir reviews flood preparedness in Kulgam



Directs for high-level readiness

KT News Desk

KULGAM, JULY 21: In view of the prevailing inclement weather conditions, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg, on Tuesday chaired a comprehensive review meeting in Kulgam to assess the district's preparedness for potential weather-related emergencies and evaluate the readiness of the District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA).

At the outset, Deputy Commissioner Kulgam, Shahzad Alam, as

per an official statement, presented a detailed overview of the district's preparedness, highlighting department-wise mitigation strategies and the operational readiness of relief, rescue, and rehabilitation mechanisms.

Reviewing the flood protection and mitigation measures undertaken by various departments and agencies, the Divisional Commissioner directed all concerned officers to maintain a high level of preparedness and ensure the immediate deployment of field teams to effectively respond to any emergency.

He emphasized the need for continuous monitoring of water

levels, vulnerability mapping of flood-prone villages, strategic deployment of manpower and machinery, and ensuring the full operational readiness of the disaster response system and the district control room.

The Divisional Commissioner also reviewed the status of essential public services, including telecommunications, healthcare, drinking water supply, electricity, and the availability of essential commodities across the district. He instructed the concerned departments to ensure uninterrupted services during any adverse weather situation.

Highlighting the importance of timely communication, he stressed the need for issuing public advisories and strengthening awareness initiatives among vulnerable communities to minimize the impact of any potential flood situation.

The meeting was attended by the Additional Deputy Commissioner, Additional Commissioner Revenue, Additional Superintendent of Police, Assistant Commissioner Development, and other district and sectoral officers.

Earlier, the Divisional Commissioner visited Mata Kulwagishori Temple at Bungam and Mata Katyani Temple at Kakran to review the arrangements for the smooth and successful conduct of the upcoming Annual Maha Yagya.

100 Days NMJKA Campaign

District Admin Bandipora participates in UT-level valedictory function

KT News Desk

BANDIPORA, JULY 21: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, along with SSP Bandipora, Ajaz Ahmad Zargar, and senior officers from the civil and police administration participated virtually in the UT-level valedictory function of the 100 Days Nasha Mukht Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyan (NMJKA), presided over by the Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha at SKICC Srinagar.

The UT-level function, as per an official statement, marked the successful culmination of the 100-day campaign launched across Jammu and Kashmir to strengthen awareness, prevention and community participation against drug abuse.

Speaking after the culmination of the UT level event, the DC said that the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan has emerged as a strong platform for promoting awareness and mobilising communities against the menace of drug abuse. She said sustained awareness, active public participation and coordinated efforts of all stakeholders are essential to achieve the vision of a drug-free society.

Successful wildlife operation concludes in Ompora, 3 leopards captured, public safety restored



KT News Desk

BUDGAM, JULY 21: In a successful wildlife operation, three leopards were safely captured at Housing Colony Ompora, Budgam.

The Wildlife Department in close coordination of District Administration Budgam safely captured two leopards during the intervening night of July 19 and 20, taking the total number of leopards captured from the area to three. One leopard was captured on June 21, following sustained surveillance and coordinated field operations.

Ompora and its adjoining localities had remained a persistent hotspot for leopard movement, prompting the Department of Wildlife Protection to establish a temporary Man-Animal Conflict (MAC) Camp in the area in May. In view of continued leopard sightings and growing public concern, the camp was subsequently upgraded into a 24x7 MAC Control Room.

The MAC team, as per an official statement, remained stationed at Ompora for nearly three months, carrying out round-the-clock surveillance, responding promptly to public reports and maintaining trapping arrangements under

challenging field conditions.

The operation was led by Range Officer Sajid Farooq, while the field team was headed by Block Officer Bashir Ahmad. Their sustained efforts, professional handling of the situation and close coordination with supporting agencies were instrumental in the successful completion of the operation.

The District Police Budgam, district administration and local authorities extended vital support in ensuring public safety and facilitating field operations.

The coordinated efforts of all the participating departments ensured the safe and humane capture of the three leopards, significantly reducing the immediate threat to residents of Ompora and adjoining areas.

Appreciating the dedication and professionalism of the MAC team of the Wetlands Division, Kashmir, and all supporting agencies, Wildlife Warden, Wetlands Division Kashmir, Altaf Hussain, said the successful operation exemplifies effective interdepartmental coordination in managing human-wildlife conflict while ensuring the safety of both people and wildlife.

ADDC Budgam chairs review meeting on Mission Yuva

KT News Desk

BUDGAM, JULY 21: A review meeting was held under the chairmanship of the Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC), Budgam, Vivek Agarwal to assess the pendency of cases in banks under Mission Yuva. During the meeting, the ADDC reviewed the branch-wise status of pending cases and emphasized the need for timely disposal to ensure eligible beneficiaries receive financial assistance without unnecessary delay.

The bank Branch Managers, as per an official statement, were instructed to expedite the processing of pending applications and maintain close coordination with the concerned departments.

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR INDUSTRIAL TRAINING INSTITUTE BUDGAM (KMR)

Email address: itibudgam123@gmail.com, itibudgam@yahoo.com

Provisional Selection List

Subject:- Round 1st Provisional Selection list for Admission session 2026-27/28. The Round 1st selection list of candidates provisionally selected for admission ii dif-ferent trades at ITI Budgam has been issued by Directorate of Skill Development. Thi se-lection is subject to the verification of following documents in original.

- (1) Marks Certificate.
- (2) Discharge Certificate from the institute last attended.
- (3) Date of Birth Certificate.
- (4) Domicile Certificate.

The detailed provisional Selection list is available at the Institute. The candidates figuring under select category are informed to complete their admission formalities at the training section of ITI Budgam by or before 30.07.2026, as after expiry of last date operation of said provisional selection list shall cease to operate.

For any query please contact:
7006683392, 7006049446

Er. Imran Wajahat
Principal

Govt. Industrial Training Institute, Budgam Skill Development Department

No: ITI/Bdg/2026/302-312
Dated: 21-07-2026

DIPK-3526/26
DATED: 21-07-2026

GOVERNMENT OF UNION TERRITORY OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT COMMISSIONER, GANDERBAL (Mini Secretariat Complex, Duderhama, 191201)

Subject: Appointment Order for Contractual Engagement for the position of “SBDU-Enterprise Development Expert” under Mission YUVA.

ORDER

In pursuance of Mission YUVA Operational Guidelines issued vide No. ED/Plan/Mission YUVA/233/368-414 dated 18-07-2025, and on the basis of the re-advertisement notification issued vide No. ADDC/GBL/Mission-YUVA/2026-27/416-21 dated 15.05.2026 & ADDC/GBL/Mission-YUVA/2026-27/568-73 dated 06.06.2026 regarding temporary engagement of personnel for SBDU-Enterprise Development Expert under Mission YUVA, it is hereby notified as follows:

A total of 46 applications were received through the online Mission YUVA Portal, out of which 05 candidates were provisionally shortlisted by the District Selection Oversight Committee based after cross verification of the automated profile evaluation Sheet. After detailed verification of credentials, 05 candidates were shortlisted by the District Selection Oversight Committee for interview. Subsequently, this office issued an Interview Notification vide No. ADDC/GBL/Mission-YUVA/2026-27/866-72 dated 14-07-2026, and interviews were conducted on 20-07-2026 at the VC Room, DC Office Complex, Ganderbal. Out of the shortlisted candidates, 04 candidates appeared before the Interview Committee.

The claims and supporting documents relating to work experience submitted by the candidates were examined in accordance with Clause 4.5.3 of the Mission YUVA Operational Guidelines for SBDUs and BHDs. Based on the recommendations of the District Selection Oversight Committee and the merit secured by the candidates, final selection has been made against the single sanctioned post of SBDU Enterprise Development Expert.

Consequently, sanction is hereby accorded to the appointment of the following candidate for contractual engagement under Mission YUVA against the post of SBDU Enterprise Development Expert, as indicated below:

S.	Name of Candidate	Father's Name	Address	District	Mobile No.
1	Burhan Muzafar	Muzafar Ali Khan	Jawahar Nagar	Srinagar	7006361090

Now in view of standing Guidelines of Mission YUVA a waiting list equivalent to 50% of total sanctioned Posts is hereby notified as mentioned below. The said waiting list shall remain in force for a period of Six (06) Months from the date of issuance of this selection order.

S. No	Name of Candidate	Father's Name	Address	District	Mobile No.
1	Aadil Shaban Lone	Muhammad Shaban Lone	Manigam	Ganderbal	9596158623

1. Nature of Engagement

The engagement shall be purely contractual and governed by Mission YUVA Operational Guidelines. The appointment shall not confer any right to permanent absorption or continuation beyond the approved project period.

2. Duration of Contract and Renewal

- The initial engagement period shall be 11 months from the date of joining.
- Performance shall be reviewed as per predefined KPIs of Mission YUVA.
- Renewal for an additional 11 months may be granted based on satisfactory performance and approval of the competent authority, subject to the project life cycle.

3. Roles and Reporting

- The selected personnel shall perform duties and report as prescribed in the Mission YUVA Operational Guidelines.

4. Terms and Conditions

1. The selected candidates shall report to the Assistant Director Employment, DE&CC Ganderbal (Member Secretary Mission YUVA) within 07 days of issuance of this order, along with the following original documents for verification and completion of joining formalities:

- Domicile Certificate
- Date of Birth Certificate
- All Qualification Certificates
- Experience Certificates
- Undertaking
- Character Certificate issued by competent authority
- Cross Verification of Salaries Drawn from respective companies

2. Failure to report within the stipulated time shall be construed as unwillingness to join and shall render the appointment liable to cancellation without any further notice.

3. The selectee shall execute a contractual agreement outlining:

- Terms of engagement and service conditions
 - Roles, responsibilities, and deliverables
 - Performance evaluation parameters
 - Compensation and payment terms
 - Disciplinary and termination clauses
4. Monthly consolidated remuneration shall be paid as per Mission YUVA norms, subject to verification of all documents.
 5. Engagement shall be subject to verification of character, antecedents, and document authenticity.
 6. The appointee shall maintain utmost integrity, discipline, and confidentiality in official duties.

5. Termination of Contract

The contract may be terminated at any time under the following circumstances:

- Poor performance or failure to meet KPIs
- Misconduct, indiscipline, or violation of code of conduct
- Submission of false or misleading documents
- Unauthorized absence exceeding seven consecutive working days
- Activities inconsistent with the objectives of Mission YUVA.

The CEO Mission YUVA / Director Employment / SPV, on the recommendation of the District Nodal Officer, may terminate the services of any SBDU/BHD personnel at any time during the contract period, with appropriate notice as per the contractual agreement.

All other terms and conditions shall remain governed strictly under Mission YUVA Operational Guidelines for SBDU and BHD engagements.

Sd/-
District Development Commissioner,
Ganderbal.

No: ADDC/GBL/Mission-YUVA/2026-27/938-44
Dated: 20/07/2026

DIPK-3549/26
DATED: 21-07-2026

From The Parliament

J&K gets 19 crop storage projects: GoI



Raja Syed Rather

Srinagar, Jul 21: The Central government on Tuesday in-formed Parliament that Jammu and Kashmir has been sanctioned 19 crop storage infrastructure projects with a cumulative storage capacity of 99,937 metric tonnes under the Agricultural Marketing Infrastructure (AMI) scheme as part of efforts to strengthen post-harvest infrastructure and reduce losses.

According to a written reply tabled in the Lok Sabha by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, the Centre is implementing the AMI sub-scheme under the Integrated Scheme for Agricultural Marketing (ISAM), the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF) and the Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH) to enhance warehousing, cold storage and marketing in-frastructure for farmers across the country.

The reply stated that under the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund, Jammu and Kashmir has been sanctioned 33 cold storage and cold chain projects besides 16 warehouse projects.

It further said that under the Mission for Integrated De-velopment of Horticulture (MIDH),

Continued on
www.kashmirthunder.in

‘No separate Ladakh quota at NIFT Srinagar’

■ 35% seats reserved for J&K, Ladakh domiciles: Centre

Raja Syed Rather

Srinagar, Jul 21: The Government of India (GoI) on Tues-day in-formed Parliament that there is no separate or ex-clusive quota for students from the Union Territory of Ladakh at the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT), Srinagar, stating that a common 35 per cent Special Preferential Quota has been earmarked for eligible domicile candidates from both Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

In a written reply to an unstarred question in the Lok Sa-bha, the Ministry of Textiles said NIFT Srinagar reserves 35 per cent of its total seats under the Special Preferential Quota for domicile candidates from the Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, besides registered



Kashmiri migrants.

The Ministry clarified that no separate "Home State" or "State Quota" has been earmarked exclusively for candi-dates domiciled in Ladakh after the bifurcation of the erstwhile

State of Jammu and Kashmir. It said the existing quota is intended to facilitate access to quality education in design, fashion and textile-related disciplines for eligi-ble candidates from both Union Territories—(KNO)

J&K completes drone survey in 4,497 villages

Raja Syed Rather

Srinagar, Jul 21: The Central government on Tuesday in-formed Parliament that drone-based land surveys have been completed in all 4,497 notified villages of Jammu and Kashmir under the SVAMITVA Scheme, with 81,305 property cards prepared across 2,130 vil-lages to facilitate rural

property ownership and improve land record man-agement.

In a written reply to an unstarred question in the Lok Sa-bha, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj said that nationwide drone surveys have been completed in over 3.30 lakh vil-lages, while 3.24 crore property cards have been prepared for nearly 1.97 lakh villages under the SVAMITVA Scheme.

The Ministry said that in Jammu and Kashmir, the highest number of property cards has been entrusted with exam-ining all aspects of the matter and preparing a comprehensive proposal for the career progression of Panchayat Accounts Assistants serving in the department. The committee will be headed by the Director, Rural Development, Kashmir, as

Bandipora and Baramul-la districts.

For Ladakh, the Min-istry said drone surveys have been completed in all 232 notified villag-es. Property cards have been prepared for 225 villages, with 18,788 property cards issued, including 9,831 in Leh and 8,957 in Kargil. The Minis-try, however, said

Continued on
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Jailed MP begins barefoot march from Tihar to Parliament

■ AIP chief presses for restoration of J&K rights

Waris Fayaz

Srinagar, Jul 21: Jailed Baramulla Member of Parliament Er Rashid on Tuesday began a symbolic bare-foot march from Tihar Jail to Parli-ament while observing a day long hunger strike, pressing for a meaningful, time bound and result oriented dialogue on Jammu and Kashmir.

The AIP chief spokesperson Inam Un Nabi said that the protest is aimed

at urging the Government of India to initiate dialogue with elected rep-resentatives and other legitimate stakeholders of Jammu and Kash-mir to address the region's political issues. The party said Er Rashid is also demanding the restoration of Article 370 and Article 35A, along with the restoration of all democratic and constitutional rights of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Continued on
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Govt forms panel for Panchayat accounts assistants

KT News Desk

Srinagar, July 21: In a significant step towards addressing the long-pending service concerns of Panchayat Accounts Assistants (PAAs), the Jammu and Kashmir government has constituted a high-level committee to exam-ine and finalize a comprehensive proposal on the Assured Career Progression (ACP) of the cadre.

The move is expected to provide a major impetus to resolve

the long-pending service mat-ters of nearly 1,700 Panchayat Accounts Assistants, who have been awaiting a structured career progression framework, including service rules and pro-motional avenues, since their recruitment through the Jammu and Kashmir Services Selection Board (JKSSB).

According to Government Order No. 109-JK (RD&PR) of 2026, issued by the Sec-etary, Rural Development and

Panchayati Raj Department, Mohammad Aijaz Asad, the five-member committee has been entrusted with exam-ining all aspects of the matter and preparing a comprehensive proposal for the career progression of Panchayat Accounts Assistants serving in the department. The committee will be headed by the Director, Rural Development, Kashmir, as

Continued on
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Terror facilitator held in Kishtwar: Police

KNO

Jammu, Jul 21: In a major break-through, Jammu and Kashmir Police on Tuesday arrested an alleged terror facilitator in Kishtwar, who acted as a key support link for foreign terrorists operating in the Chatroo area.

In a statement, a police spokesperson said the accused was arrested in Kishtwar district. He described the action as a significant breakthrough against anti-national elements.

He said Mohd Rafiq Naik, a resident of Dwather, Singhpur, was arrested for his alleged involvement in providing logistical support to foreign terrorists. Police said his role surfaced during the investigation of FIR No. 03/2026 registered at Police Station Chatroo under Sections 61(2), 109, 147 and 148 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), Sections 13, 16, 18, 19 and 20 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), and Sections 7/27 of the Arms Act.

The spokesperson said Senior Super-intendent of Police (SSP) Kishtwar Naresh Singh stated that following a meticulous investigation and targeted operations, police arrested the accused for his alleged role in facilitating foreign terrorists.

“Preliminary investigation has revealed that Naik was allegedly acting as the main handler of the Saifullah Group in the Chatroo area and had provided active assistance to the foreign terrorist group operating in the region,” he said.

The spokesperson said the arrest marks a significant development in the ongoing investigation. Further investigation is underway to ascertain the full extent of his involvement, network and links with the foreign terrorist group.

He added that police had earlier
Continued on
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Modern footbridge to replace Sopore's historic Bakhshi-era bridge



Waris Fayaz

Sopore, Jul 21: More than two decades after the historic Bakhshi-era Chankhan bridge was declared unsafe for vehicular traffic, and years after it was completely abandoned, Sopore town is set to get a modern footbridge.

The new Chankhan to Ashpeer footbridge will replace the iconic bridge built over river Jehlum in 1953 during the tenure of the then Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, Ghulam Mohammad Bakhshi. MLA Irshad Rasool Kar, while calling the bridge a lifeline for the people said that the Rs 9.16 crore

project would restore a vital pedestrian link and improve connectivity for thousands of residents living on either side of the river.

The old Chankhan bridge had served the people of Sopore for decades before it was declared unsafe for vehicular traffic in 1999. Despite the restriction, it continued to be used by pedestrians until 2019, when authorities stopped movement after the bridge developed major cracks and its central pillar collapsed. The abandoned structure suffered further damage on the intervening night of March 20,

Continued on
www.kashmirthunder.in

LG Sinha condoles passing of Ramprasad Kabra

KT News Desk

Srinagar, July 21: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha has condoled the passing away of Ramprasad Kabra, father of Shaleen Kabra, Additional Chief Secretary, Jal Shakti De-partment.

In a post on X, the Lieuten-ant Governor said, "My deepest condolences to Shri Shaleen Kabra, Additional Chief Sec-etary, on the sad demise of his father Shri Ramprasad Kabra. I pray to the Almighty to grant



strength to the be-reaved fam-ily members to bear this loss. May the depart-ed soul rest in eternal peace."

Delegations call on LG Sinha

KT News Desk

Srinagar, July 21: Faisal Mir, BJP leader called on Lieu-tenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha on Tuesday and pro-jected various develop-ment issues of Habba Kadal area.

Subsequently, Rohit Bhat, Chairman, Khushaal Kasheer

Educational Trust, Bandipora also called on the Lieuten-ant Governor. He was accompanied by Shri Rashid Fayaz, Joint Sec-etary of the trust.

In the meantime, Faisal Mir, BJP leader called on Lieuten-ant Governor Manoj Sinha and projected various devel-opment issues of Hab-ba Kadal area.

J&K cognisable crimes drop to 22,577 in 2024: NCRB



Raja Syed Rather

Srinagar, Jul 21: Jammu and Kashmir recorded 22,577 cognizable crimes under the IPC/BNS in 2024, marking a decline from 25,127 cases in 2023 and 25,915 in 2022, according to the latest National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data tabled in the Lok Sabha on Tuesday. Ladakh reported 460 cognizable crime cases in 2024, marginally up from 459 in 2023 and 439 in 2022.

The figures were shared by

the Ministry of Home Affairs in response to an unstarred question in Parliament.

The Ministry said the latest published NCRB report per-tains to the year 2024 and is compiled after collecting and validating crime data digitally from all States, Union Territories and metropolitan cities through a dedicated software application.

Uttar Pradesh registered the highest number of

Continued on
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Government of Jammu & Kashmir Higher Education Department Civil Secretariat

Mr.Anoop Kumar Sharma,
S/o Mr.Sumer Nath,
R/o 263/A,Amphalla Jail Road,
Opp.Astha Nursing Home, Jammu.

Subject:NOTICE.

Whereas, the Jammu and Kashmir Public Service Commission has vide Letter No. PSC/DR- HE/ AP- Associate Prof/2023 Dated 09- 01- 2026 recommended you for the post of Associate Professor (Architecture) under O.M Category in School of Architecture in the Higher Education Department; and Whereas, vide this Department's Notice Dated 28- 01- 2026, you were advised to furnish your Bio- data including E- mail Id and Contact Number for conducting of the CID verification about the Character and Antecedents; and

Whereas, after the receipt of CID Verification Report, vide Government Order No. 151- JK (HE) of 2026 Dated 01- 06- 2026, formal appointment order were issued in your favour as Assistant Professor (Architecture) under the O.M Category; and

Whereas, the Principal, School of Architecture, Jammu had vide office Letter Dated 02- 07- 2026 intimated that Mr. Anoop Kumar Sharma S/o Shri Sumer Nath Sharma R/o 263/A, Amphalla Jail Road, Opposite Astha Nursing Home, has not reported to the Institution for joining within a stipulated joining period of 21 days i.e, upto 22- 06- 2026 from the date of issuance of the Government Order, instead, the appointee has submitted an Email dated 17- 06- 2026 to the Higher Education Department, requesting the extension of the joining period upto 05- 07- 2026, copy thereof to the said Institution.

Now therefore, consequent upon the above, through the medium of this Notice, you are being afforded a last and final opportunity to submit your joining in the office of Principal, School of Architecture, Jammu within a period of seven (7) days positively, failing which it will be presumed that you are not interested to join on the said post and your appointment made on the recommendations of the Jammu and Kashmir Public Service Commission vide Government Order No.151- JK (HE) of 2026 dated 01- 06- 2026 as Assistant Professor (Architecture) in the Department shall and shall be deemed to have been cancelled ab- initio without any further notice in this regard.

No:HEd- GAZ/25/2026- 04 (7721018)

DIPK-3521/26
DATED: 21-07-2026

Syed Ishrat Parvez
Under Secretary to the Government

EDITORIAL

Why Srinagar Continues To Drown

The sight of Srinagar's roads turning into rivers after just a few hours of rainfall has become a depressingly familiar monsoon ritual. Monday's downpour submerged key areas, leaving commuters stranded, businesses counting losses and residents questioning. Over 792 crore rupees has been spent under the Srinagar Smart City Project since its inception, while the overall proposal envisages projects worth more than 3,600 crore rupees. The Centre

also sanctioned nine stormwater drainage projects worth 76.79 crore rupees under the AMRUT scheme. Yet, after every heavy spell, the city's drainage system fails spectacularly. What makes this crisis particularly infuriating is the passing of the buck. The Srinagar Smart City Limited distances itself, saying the inundated roads were "not executed" by them. The Roads & Buildings Department built this stretch. The existing drainage network was already there. Everyone

points fingers. Everyone denies responsibility. Meanwhile, citizens wade through knee-deep water, patients struggle to reach hospitals and schoolchildren remain stranded. The Srinagar Municipal Commissioner blames the rainfall for exceeding the drainage capacity. This is not an acceptable answer when the city has been redeveloped under a flagship central mission, and when over 800 crore rupees of public money has been spent on infrastructure projects. If the drainage

capacity is still inadequate, why was it not addressed? If the affected roads were outside Smart City's scope, why were they not covered under other schemes? Where is the integrated planning? The government has already ordered an external audit of the Smart City project. This is a welcome step, but it cannot be the only one. What is needed is a comprehensive, time-bound drainage master plan that looks beyond cosmetic beautification and addresses the city's core

infrastructure. Accountability must be fixed. Departments must coordinate. Citizens deserve permanent solutions, not temporary dewatering operations after every shower. Srinagar has the potential to be a world-class city. But it cannot get there on crumbling drainage and institutional apathy. The people who built this city with their taxes demand answers. Will the administration listen, or will they wait for the next rainfall to prove them wrong once again?

Fragmented Climate Responses Won't Work

For much of the past three decades, climate change occupied a distinct corner of public policy

Siddharth Roy

For much of the past three decades, climate change occupied a distinct corner of public policy. It was largely discussed through the lens of environmental conservation, carbon emissions and international climate negotiations. Governments treated it as an ecological challenge while economists, urban planners and public health experts often addressed it separately within their respective domains.

That distinction is no longer sustainable. Climate change has evolved into a systemic risk that increasingly shapes economic growth, public health, national security and social stability. Treating it as a specialised environmental issue understates both its scale and its consequences. The evidence is visible across India. Record-breaking heatwaves, erratic monsoons, flash floods, prolonged droughts and coastal erosion are no longer isolated events but recurring features of an altered climate. Cities from Delhi to Guwahati have experienced extreme rainfall that overwhelms drainage systems, disrupts transport and damages infrastructure. Geographic Reference

Himalayan States confront landslides and glacial risks with increasing frequency, while coastal communities face stronger cyclones and rising sea levels. These events are not simply environmental disasters; they impose heavy economic costs and expose the vulnerability of existing development models. Agric ulture illustrates this transformation most clearly. Despite structural changes in the economy, millions of Indians continue to depend directly or indirectly on farming for their livelihoods. Unpredictable rainfall, rising temperatures and changing pest patterns reduce crop productivity and



increase uncertainty for farmers. The consequences extend far beyond rural incomes.

Food inflation, supply chain disruptions and fiscal pressures frequently follow climatic shocks, affecting consumers and policymakers alike. Climate resilience has therefore become integral to food security and macroeconomic stability. Urban India faces an equally complex challenge. Rapid urbanisation has expanded economic opportunities but has also increased exposure to climate-related risks. Heatwaves raise electricity demand as cooling requirements grow, placing additional pressure on power systems. Flooding damages transport networks, disrupts businesses and imposes significant repair costs on municipal authorities. Water scarcity threatens both households and industries, while poorly planned

construction often amplifies the effects of extreme weather.

Climate resilience can no longer remain an optional consideration in urban planning; it must become one of its central organising principles. Public health presents another compelling reason to rethink climate policy. Rising temperatures increase heat-related illnesses, particularly among children, older persons, outdoor workers and economically vulnerable populations. Air pollution interacts with higher temperatures to aggravate respiratory and cardiovascular diseases. Changes in climatic conditions also influence the spread of vector-borne diseases, creating new burdens for healthcare systems already under pressure.

Climate adaptation, therefore, is inseparable from preventive healthcare and public health preparedness. The social consequences of

climate change are equally profound. Environmental shocks rarely affect all sections of society in the same way. Small farmers, informal workers, fishing communities, tribal populations and low-income urban households often bear the greatest burden despite contributing the least to global greenhouse gas emissions. Climate change therefore raises questions not only of sustainability but also of equity. Policies that overlook these disparities risk widening existing inequalities and undermining inclusive development.

These realities demand a broader policy response. Mitigation remains indispensable because reducing emissions is essential for limiting long-term warming. Yet adaptation deserves equal priority. India must invest in climate-resilient infrastructure, water conservation, sustainable agriculture and early

warning systems that minimise loss of life and livelihoods. Urban development plans should integrate heat-action strategies, flood-resilient drainage, green public spaces and nature-based solutions instead of relying solely on conventional engineering interventions. Geographic Reference

Such investments should be viewed not as environmental expenditure but as economic safeguards that reduce future losses. India has already demonstrated leadership in renewable energy and international climate diplomacy. Initiatives such as the International Solar Alliance and the expansion of solar and wind capacity reflect a commitment to balancing development with environmental responsibility. However, climate considerations must now extend beyond the energy sector. Decisions relating to transport, housing, industrial policy, financial regulation, healthcare and disaster management increasingly have climate implications. A whole-of-government approach is therefore essential. The private sector also has a pivotal role.

Climate risks are no longer abstract concerns confined to sustainability reports. They directly affect supply chains, insurance costs, infrastructure, labour productivity and long-term profitability. Businesses that integrate climate resilience into investment decisions are likely to remain more competitive in an increasingly uncertain global economy. Financial institutions must similarly strengthen climate-risk assessment so that capital flows support resilient infrastructure and sustainable economic activity. Equally important is recognising climate change as a governance challenge. Effective adaptation depends upon stronger coordination among the Union, States and

local governments.

Municipal bodies require greater technical capacity and financial resources to implement climate-resilient urban planning. Panchayats must be equipped to support local adaptation measures, while scientific institutions should work more closely with policymakers to translate climate projections into practical planning tools. Fragmented responses will prove inadequate against a challenge that cuts across every sector. The debate is often framed as a choice between economic growth and environmental protection. That binary has become increasingly misleading.

Climate resilience is now a prerequisite for sustained economic development. Infrastructure repeatedly damaged by floods, declining agricultural productivity, rising healthcare costs and disrupted supply chains ultimately impose far greater economic burdens than preventive investments ever would. Climate change has outgrown the confines of environmental policy. It now influences fiscal stability, food security, public health, urban governance, infrastructure planning and social justice.

India's development trajectory will increasingly depend on how effectively these interconnected risks are addressed. The question is no longer whether climate policy deserves a place in economic planning. It is whether economic planning can remain credible without placing climate resilience at its very centre.

The writer is a civil engineer, and consultant (invitee) to Rashtriya Raksha University under the Ministry of Home Affairs. The views are personal. He can be reached at siddharth001.roy@gmail.com. Courtesy: The Statesman

Seeing Green: Nature Immersion Has Its Benefits

Nature immersion may be a potent behavioral immunogen

Noam Shpancer

Can nature heal? Human history regarding the relationship with nature is paradoxical. On one hand, the notion that time in nature may confer healing properties is intuitive: Nature is where we're from as a species. Our systems have evolved to fit that environment, and we should feel at home in it. Indeed, nature fascinates us and produces experiences of awe; visiting nature is a favored pastime. Many people, when they seek to relax, recharge, or set their mind right, will opt to spend time in nature—hiking, viewing, camping, gathering, meditating, etc.

On the other hand, if nature is so great, why have we as a species labored so hard to escape it? The story of humanity is that of fearing, seeking to tame, exploit, and distance ourselves from nature.

By the evidence of day-to-day life in the civilizations that we have constructed, we seek to deny nature. We do not wish to rise with the sun and go to sleep at nightfall; we do not wish to experience wild shifts in temperature; we do not prefer living "one with the elements." We seek to affect the natural environment by our actions, not vice versa. Our cultural innovations go counter to nature: There is no medicine in nature, only disease; there's no equality in nature, only hierarchy; there is no justice, or art, or mercy in nature; there is only nature in nature.

The question arises: How does nature immersion affect our well-being? For people like us, who have labored to distance themselves from nature, does getting back to nature feel like returning home or like getting lost in the wilderness?

Psychological Research on Nature



Immersion

Over the last 35 years, psychologists have become increasingly interested in the potential therapeutic effects of nature immersion and begun looking systematically into this question. Nature, for the purpose of such research, may be defined as an organic environment that includes major ecosystem and life-cycle processes such as birth, death, reproduction, and inter-species relations. Nature immersion research in psychology has focused mainly on three modes of contact with nature: viewing nature, being in nature, and active engagement in nature-related activities (e.g., meditation in forests, gardening). Results have tended to converge on the benefits of nature exposure for individuals' physical, psychological, and physiological well-being.

For example, a study by Australian researcher (2016) Danielle Shanahan and

colleagues found a dose-response relationship between frequency and duration of nature exposure and health outcomes such as blood pressure and depression, noting that "up to a further 7% of depression cases and 9% of high blood pressure cases could be prevented if all city residents were to visit green spaces at least once a week for an average duration of 30 minutes or more."

A 2019 meta-analysis by University of Utah's Nancy Qwynne Lackey of the potential mental-health benefits of nature-based recreation reviewed 51 articles, 90 percent of which reported at least one positive association between nature-based recreation and mental health.

Gregory Bratman of the University of Washington and colleagues (2019) reviewed the existing evidence and drew several scientific consensus conclusions, including:

Evidence supports an association between

common types of nature experience and increased psychological well-being

Evidence supports an association between common types of nature experience and a reduction in risk factors and burden of some types of mental illness

The authors note: "The findings strengthen the case for integrating natural environments into mental-health strategies and urban planning policies, although rigorous trials are needed to guide practice and policy."

A 2021 review from Marcia Jimenez of Harvard and colleagues found "evidence for associations between nature exposure and improved cognitive function, brain activity, blood pressure, mental health, physical activity, and sleep." In particular, the authors reviewed experimental studies that provide evidence that the link is causal: Exposure to natural environments causes improved mental health and cognitive function.

Nature immersion may exert its effects even virtually. A recent study (2025) by Chinese researcher Chen Gao and colleagues found that psychiatric patients exposed to a short-term virtual reality (VR) nature immersion protocol exhibited "significant reductions in perceived stress, depression, and anxiety, along with significantly lower heart rates (compared to the controls), a significant improvement in positive emotions, and reduced negative emotions."

A 2026 global review of more than 3,800 studies involving more than 10 million people, published in the journal Nature, found that "contact with nature reduces symptoms of anxiety and depression while promoting relaxation."

These positive effects are predicted by the "biophilia" hypothesis, which argues that we

have an innate affinity for the natural world, an inborn tendency to focus on life and life-like processes. Indeed, research has linked nature exposure to increased positive emotion. Nature exposure appears to promote parasympathetic activation, lowering heart rates and blood pressure. In addition, immersion in nature has been linked to decreased amygdala activation, reductions in cortisol levels, and decreased cerebral activity in the prefrontal cortex, all relaxation indicators.

Another potential explanation is proposed by Attention Restoration Theory (ART), which argues that mental fatigue and concentration can be improved by contact with nature, because natural environments tend to neutralize "directed attention fatigue" experienced by our common immersion in day-to-day routine urban and digital environments. Yet the data on how nature exposure affects attention are far from conclusive.

Implications

In sum, there is now robust evidence to suggest that experiences of nature immersion deliver positive mental health effects for many people across cultures. These data have important implications for how we should design living quarters and public spaces, as well as school curricula and mental health interventions. Nature immersion may be viewed as a trans-diagnostic protective factor, a "behavioral immunogen," alongside other well-documented factors such as sleep, physical activity, and social connectedness.

Noam Shpancer, Ph.D., is a professor of psychology at Otterbein University and a practicing clinical psychologist in Columbus, Ohio. Courtesy: Psychology Today

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

Distribution of Foodgrains for Aug–Oct 2026

FCS&CA department to undertake advance lifting

Decision taken as a precautionary measure to address any logistical,

transportation challenges that may arise during rainy season

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, JULY 21: In a significant step to ensure uninterrupted availability of foodgrains to beneficiaries during the forthcoming monsoon season, the Department of Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs (FCS&CA), J&K has decided to undertake the advance lifting and distribution of foodgrains allocated under the National Food Security Act (NFSA) and Non-Priority Household (NPHH) schemes for the months of August, September and October 2026.

The decision, as per an official statement, has been taken as a precautionary measure to address any logistical and transportation challenges that may arise during the rainy season and to ensure uninterrupted food security across the Union Territory.

Accordingly, the Department has made advance allocation of foodgrains for the three months, enabling the beneficiaries to receive their entitled ration through a single transaction. The entire distribution process has been targeted for completion on or before 31st August, 2026.



To facilitate smooth implementation of the initiative, the NIC, J&K has been requested to enable the one-time transaction facility in the e-PoS devices for distribution of foodgrains pertaining to the months of August, September and October 2026.

The Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, while speaking in this regard, said that the advance lifting and distribution of foodgrains would strengthen the departmental preparedness and enable an effective response to any situation arising during the monsoon season.

He said that the initiative would ensure uninterrupted availability of foodgrains and safeguard the food security of eligible beneficiaries throughout the Union Territory.

The Commissioner Secretary, Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer

Affairs Department, reiterated that the advance lifting, transportation and distribution of foodgrains shall be undertaken in close coordination with all the stakeholders, including the Food Corporation of India (FCI), the Jammu & Kashmir Road Transport Corporation (JKRTC) and the district administration.

Necessary instructions were passed on to the Director, FCS&CA, Jammu and the Director, FCS&CA, Kashmir to personally monitor the lifting, transportation and distribution of the allocated foodgrains. This will ensure that the exercise is completed within the stipulated timeline and that no eligible beneficiary is deprived of his or her entitlement, he added. The Department issued necessary directions to all concerned officers, Fair Price Shop dealers

100-Day Nasha Mukht Abhiyan

87 drug peddlers arrested, Rs 1.5 Crore property attached in Budgam

6 illegal assets demolished, around million awareness-cum- outreach activities held

KT News Desk

BUDGAM, JULY 21: District Administration Budgam and Police has achieved significant success under the 100-Day Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan, intensifying its crackdown on drug peddlers and strengthening preventive, enforcement and rehabilitation measures across the district.

During the 100 day campaign, launched by Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, as per an official statement, across Jammu and Kashmir on April 11 this year, as many as 87 drug peddlers were arrested, while nine notorious offenders were detained under the PIT-NDPS Act.

During the crackdown, six properties both movable and immovable worth Rs 1.50 crore belonging to drug peddlers were attached, while six illegally constructed properties were demolished. During the campaign, 89 cases under the NDPS Act were registered against drug peddlers in the district.

Deputy Commissioner Budgam, Athar Aamir Khan said the fight against the drug mafia will continue with full vigour. He appealed to parents, educational institutions, community leaders and society at large to actively contribute towards making Budgam a drug-free district.

He said that the campaign received massive public



participation, with rigorous, a million awareness cum outreach activities including seminars, essay, painting competition, interactive sessions, door to door campaigning, debates, plantation, cleanliness drives, sports events etc, were conducted by various departments across the district on day basis during the 100-day programme.

The Pad Yatra organised on May 5 further re-energised the anti-drug campaign and reinforced the message of collective responsibility.

The campaign launched under the leadership of the Lieutenant Governor, witnessed massive public participation across Budgam District, with people from different walks of life volunteering to contribute to curb the drug menace in the society.

Among other strict

administrative measures taken during the campaign, 136 Aadhaar numbers were recommended for flagging, two passports were recommended for cancellation, one arms licence and one driving licence were suspended, while 20 vehicle registrations were suspended or blacklisted.

To curb the illegal sale of narcotic substances through medical outlets, 47 pharmacy licences were suspended, 30 unlicensed medical shops were sealed, and three drug licences were cancelled. Besides, four FIRs were registered for serious violations of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act.

In its drive against illegal cultivation of narcotic crops, the administration registered six FIRs against poppy cultivators and destroyed illegal poppy and cannabis cultivation spread

over more than 56 kanals of land across the district.

On the rehabilitation front, the Deputy Commissioner said 48 patients are currently undergoing treatment through OPD and IPD services at the Drug De-addiction Centre, while 12 recovered individuals have been rehabilitated under various self-employment schemes during the campaign. At the Addiction Treatment Facility, 93 patients were registered, and 3,450 psychological and clinical follow-up sessions were conducted.

The Deputy Commissioner further said that nearly 100 CCTV cameras have been installed at identified drug hotspots jointly by the civil administration and police to strengthen surveillance. Intensive awareness campaigns were also conducted through eight Nasha Mukht Panchayats, five Urban Local Bodies, 296 Youth Clubs and 285 Mahila Samitis, ensuring widespread community participation in the movement against drug abuse.

The Deputy Commissioner reiterated that the administration, in close coordination with the police and all stakeholders, will continue its sustained and uncompromising campaign against drug trafficking while simultaneously focusing on awareness, prevention, treatment and rehabilitation to build a drug-free Budgam.

ADC Handwara reviews revenue matters, stresses timely disposal of pending cases

KT News Desk

HANDWARA, JULY 21: Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Handwara, Javed Naseem Masoodi, Tuesday chaired a comprehensive review meeting with all Tehsildars of Sub-Division Handwara to assess the progress of key revenue matters and ensure the effective implementation of various government initiatives.

During the meeting, the ADC, as per an official statement, conducted a detailed review of several important revenue-related issues, including the digitization of Jamabandis, rectification of Jamabandi errors, disposal of backlog mutations, grievance redressal, digitization and authentication of revenue maps, issuance of SVAMITVA Property Cards, Kahcharai and State Land matters, Section 27 cases, RCCM court cases, Jal Shakti assets, land acquisition cases, grievances received through JK Samadhan, CPGRAMS and Migrant Grievance Portals, besides cases under the Public Services Guarantee Act (PSGA).

The ADC emphasized the need for timely disposal of all pending revenue cases, strict adherence to timelines, and greater accountability in the implementation of government programmes. He directed the Tehsildars to ensure regular monitoring of all revenue matters, improve public service delivery, and maintain transparency and efficiency in revenue administration.

In view of the prevailing weather conditions and the possibility of heavy rainfall, the ADC also reviewed flood preparedness measures and issued necessary directions to

all Tehsildars. He instructed that Tehsil-level Control Rooms be activated immediately and asked the field functionaries to identify vulnerable mohallas and houses located along nallahs and in landslide-prone areas, ensuring that timely alerts are issued through Lambardars and other field-level staff.

The ADC further directed that three-hourly situation reports from every Tehsil be submitted to the District Control Room. He also called for the immediate activation of field response teams comprising officers and officials of the Irrigation & Flood Control Department, Rural Development Department, Public Works Department, Public Health Engineering Department, Border Roads Organisation (BRO), Power Development Department, Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs Department, and Health Department to ensure swift response in case of any emergency.

He also instructed all Tehsildars to keep relief shelters identified and ready for activation on a Tehsil-wise basis, wherever required, so that prompt assistance can be provided to the affected population in the event of any exigency.

The meeting also focused on strengthening the monitoring mechanism, expediting the resolution of public grievances, and enhancing coordination among field officers to achieve better governance outcomes across the Sub-Division.

All Tehsildars of Sub-Division Handwara attended the meeting and presented agenda-wise progress reports and updates on the matters under their respective jurisdictions.

SKUAST-K trains IFS Officers from 14 states in AI-led Forest & Wildlife Conservation

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, JULY 21: Thirty senior Indian Forest Service (IFS) officers from 14 states are undergoing a five-day national training program at Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-K) on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and emerging technologies for forest and wildlife conservation, reinforcing the University's growing role in technology-driven environmental governance.

The program, as per an official statement, "Smart Conservation: Technological Solutions for Forest and Wildlife Protection," is being organized by the Division of Basic Sciences and Humanities, Faculty of Horticulture, SKUAST-K, in collaboration with the Research & Training Division of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), Government of India.

Held from July 20 to 24, it brings together senior forest administrators, including Principal Chief Conservators of Forests (PCCFs), Conservators of Forests, Divisional Forest Officers (DFOs) and Assistant Conservators of Forests (ACFs), for training in AI, Remote Sensing, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), drones, satellite monitoring and other digital tools for sustainable forest governance.

The inaugural session was presided over by Vice Chancellor, SKUAST-K, Prof. Nazir Ahmad Ganai, while Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Head of Forest Force, Jammu & Kashmir, Sarvesh Rai, attended as the Guest of Honor.

Delivering the keynote



address, Prof. Nazir Ahmad Ganai stressed that conservation in the 21st century requires the convergence of forestry, agricultural sciences, climate science, data analytics and digital technologies. Highlighting SKUAST-K's strengths in Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, drone technology, precision agriculture and remote sensing, he said these innovations are transforming wildlife monitoring, habitat assessment, forest health surveillance, climate-risk prediction, forest fire management and ecosystem restoration.

Emphasizing the vulnerability of the Himalayan region, Prof. Ganai said mountain ecosystems require science-based, technology-enabled management and called for stronger collaboration among universities, forest departments, research institutions and policymakers to accelerate climate-resilient conservation.

Addressing the gathering, Sarvesh Rai, highlighted the Jammu & Kashmir Forest Department's use of geospatial mapping, smart forest surveillance systems, and community-based conservation models to protect forests and wildlife. He urged participants to actively engage in the practical sessions and replicate

successful conservation practices in their respective states.

Course Director Prof. Javed Iqbal Ahmad Bhat said the program marks the third consecutive batch of IFS officers being trained at SKUAST-K under the aegis of the MoEFCC, reflecting the University's emergence as a national capacity-building partner in environmental governance. He said the program integrates advanced technologies with ecological principles and policy frameworks to address climate change, biodiversity loss and habitat degradation through technology-enabled conservation.

The program combines expert lectures, laboratory demonstrations and field-based learning. Participants will visit the Center for Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning (CAIML), SKUAST-K Innovation, Incubation and Entrepreneurship Center (SKIE) and the Faculty of Forestry, besides undertaking field visits to Dachigam National Park and Wildlife Rescue Center, Wular Lake conservation projects, Gulmarg Biosphere Reserve and the protected forests of the Zabarwan Hills to gain first-hand exposure to ecosystem restoration, biodiversity management and smart conservation practices.

Training on implementation of e-Office 2.0 held in Kupwara

KT News Desk

KUPWARA, JULY 21: On the directions of Deputy Commissioner Kupwara, Shrikant Suse, a training session on the implementation of e-Office 2.0 was Tuesday conducted at the RDD Complex Kupwara.

The training, as per an official statement, aimed at enhancing digital governance and streamlining official processes, was imparted by ICT official, Fayaz Ahmad from the IT Department, Civil Secretariat

Srinagar.

The session focused on equipping officials with the necessary skills to effectively utilize the e-Office platform for day-to-day operations. Officials from various departments across the Kupwara district actively participated in the training session.

The engagement underscored the local administration's commitment to adopting the upgraded digital system as directed by the UT administration.

SWD Srinagar holds awareness programme on PC&PNDT Act for teachers



KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, JULY 21: Social Welfare Department (SWD), SANKALP-HEW, Srinagar organized a one-day awareness programme on Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Prohibition of Sex Selection) Act, 1994 (PC&PNDT Act) for teachers of Government and Private educational institutions.

The programme, as per an official statement, held at Government Girls Higher Secondary School, Kothi Bagh, Srinagar, was aimed at sensitizing teachers about the objectives and provisions of the PC&PNDT Act and highlighting their vital role in promoting gender equality, protecting the rights of the girl child, and creating awareness against sex selection and female foeticide. As educators and opinion leaders, teachers were encouraged to foster positive social attitudes towards the girl child and disseminate awareness among students, parents, and the community.

Resource persons from the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Srinagar, and the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Office, Srinagar, delivered informative sessions on the legal, medical, and social

dimensions of the PC&PNDT Act. They elaborated on the objectives of the Act, its key provisions, the legal consequences of violations, and the collective responsibility of society in preventing gender-biased sex selection. The speakers also emphasized the importance of coordinated efforts by educational institutions, government departments, and the community to safeguard the rights and dignity of the girl child.

The programme witnessed active participation from teachers representing Government and Private schools, who engaged in interactive discussions and reaffirmed their commitment to spreading awareness through school-based activities and community outreach initiatives.

Speaking on the occasion, Staff of SANKALP-HEW Srinagar reiterated that awareness and education are essential tools in addressing gender discrimination and ensuring the effective implementation of the PC&PNDT Act. The Department of Social Welfare, Srinagar, remains committed to organizing such awareness and capacity-building programmes to promote gender justice and uphold the rights of women and girls.

District Admin Bandipora releases Coffee Table Book

Screens documentary on culmination of 100 Days NMBA Campaign

KT News Desk

BANDIPORA, JULY 21: District Administration Bandipora organised a function at the Mini Secretariat, Bandipora to mark the culmination of the 100 Days Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan (NMBA) Campaign, during which a Coffee Table Book documenting the district's achievements under the campaign was released and a documentary showcasing its impact was screened.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, as per an official statement, along



with Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Bandipora, Ajaz Ahmad Zargar, presided over the function.

On the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner, as per an official statement, released the Coffee Table Book prepared by

the Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR), Bandipora, highlighting the major activities, achievements and milestones recorded during the 100-day campaign through the coordinated efforts of various departments

and stakeholders across the district.

A documentary titled "Andheroon Se Ujalon Tak (From Darkness to Light)", also produced by the DIPR, Bandipora, was screened during the programme. The documentary showcased the collective efforts and achievements of the District Administration, Police Administration, law enforcement agencies, educational institutions and other stakeholders in generating mass awareness against drug abuse and advancing the vision of a

drug-free society.

Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner appreciated the efforts of the Department of Information and Public Relations for effectively documenting the campaign through the Coffee Table Book and documentary. She also commended the dedicated contribution of Police, civil administration, educational institutions, PRIs, volunteers and civil society organisations in ensuring the successful implementation of the campaign across the district.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Mission far from

traveled across every region of the Union Territory, connecting with communities in all 20 districts through Padyatra. He recalled meeting many parents burdened by fear for their children's futures.

"Standing alongside families in their darkest moments allowed me to truly grasp the depth of their anguish. Yet amid that pain, I saw an unwavering hope of a shared conviction that our youth can break free from addiction and reclaim their lives. During my Padyatra, I saw both pain and courage. I witnessed despair and also glimpses of hope, and I can proudly say that such unprecedented public support for this campaign has never been seen in the history of Jammu Kashmir.

Padyatra in every district sent a strong message that we will not allow our youth or our future to be stolen. Over the past 100 days, we backed that resolve with decisive action. 2,581 drug traffickers arrested, nearly 1,431 kg of narcotics including 23.29 kg heroin seized, and over Rs. 188.89 crore in assets confiscated to cripple narco-terror financing.

By revoking hundreds of driving licences, vehicle registrations, recommending suspension of hundreds of passports and by taking action against non-compliant pharmacies, we have sent a clear message that no offender is above the law. Most importantly, thousands of young people have received treatment and are now rebuilding their lives in the mainstream," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor stated that rehabilitation transforms lives, restores families, and secures our future. He observed that the administration will soon launch the "Rehabilitation and Socio-Economic Reintegration Scheme for Drug Abuse Victims, 2026," starting with a pilot in the two sensitive districts of Jammu as well as Kashmir Division.

He observed that the initiative, built on a structured 3-year cycle, guides individuals through medical care and therapy in Phase 1, education and employment in Phase 2, and long-term relapse prevention with community support in Phase 3.

"The past 100 days have awakened a new consciousness among the people of Jammu Kashmir, and with their cooperation narco-terrorists will be wiped out and their networks dismantled link by link. The foundation on which smugglers built their empire of narco-terror will be completely destroyed. Those who have ruined the future of our young people will receive such severe punishment that future generations will remember it. I consider this justice and a strong warning against crime. My message is absolutely clear that if you ruin others' lives, the law will not spare your future either," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor also called upon people to speak up against drug abuse. He said the government needs support of entire community.

"We need every citizen to speak up, report local drug activity, and help those affected by addiction. If someone in your community is suffering, don't walk away. Guide them toward treatment, support their recovery, and help them start fresh. Young people trapped by addiction are victims of circumstances and therefore need support, not ostracism, and they need the trust of society. Our goal of a drug-free Jammu Kashmir is perfectly clear. This is not merely a dream but our national resolve. We are working to establish more rehabilitation centres. Consultancy services are being strengthened, and skill development and employment opportunities are being provided to youths who complete rehabilitation," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor also called upon youth to become the greatest strength of the nation and do not sacrifice their dreams to drugs. Never let a drug dealer dictate the course of your life.

"Your energy is meant for building, your talent for creation, and your courage for moving forward. Take pride in your culture, your heritage, and who you are, and step confidently into a brighter future. I also appeal to the parents to never ignore any signs of drug use in their son or daughter. We must remember that seeking help in time is wisdom. History bears witness that whether it was terrorism or narco-terror, silence has caused the greatest harm to society. So, break the silence and spread awareness so we can save millions of lives.

I also urge all teachers and leaders of religious and social organisations to sustain the energy you have shown in these 100 days. You shape lives so keep instilling discipline and confidence in the youth and make them aware of the harmful effects of drugs. Let us pledge to turn this campaign into one of India's broadest and most effective mass movements. Let us pledge to reach every person in need. Let us pledge to hold the hand of every young person who wants a new beginning. Let us pledge to dismantle every drug cartel that spreads poison in society and together create a Jammu Kashmir that is drug-free, terror-free, and full of hope, development and trust," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor expressed his heartfelt gratitude to all the officials of civil administration, Police, law enforcement and security agencies, volunteers, social and religious organisations, youth and Nari Shakti and all the stakeholders for their valuable contribution to the Drug-Free J&K Campaign.

The Lieutenant Governor felicitated outstanding performers and released a special DIPR-compiled Coffee Table Book, highlighting the widespread impact of Nasha Mukti Jammu Kashmir Campaign.

The event also featured an impactful documentary screening by Directorate of Information & Public Relations (DIPR), an engaging short skit by J&K Academy of Art, Culture & Languages (JKAACL), and presentations by J&K Police and Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS) J&K Chapter.

A Two- minute silence was observed in the memory of citizens who lost their lives in the

recent natural calamities in J&K.

Dr Syed Darakhshan Andrabi, Chairperson, J&K Waqf Board; Atal Dulloo, Chief Secretary; Nalin Prabhat, DGP; S.J.M. Gillani, Special DG Coordination PHQ; Chandekar Bharti, Principal Secretary Home; Dr Mandeep K. Bhandari, Principal Secretary to Lieutenant Governor; Sarmad Hafeez, Commissioner Secretary, Social Welfare; Shreya Singhal, Director Information; Divisional Commissioners; Deputy Commissioners; public representatives; heads of educational institutes; senior officials; members of civil society and various social organisation; prominent citizens and youth in large from across the UT attended the ceremony, in person and through virtual mode. (KNO)

Shakti Peethas

It manifests in all motion and creation, shining through compassion, knowledge, love, patience, and life itself. From Vedic hymns and Upanishadic philosophy to the Devi Mahatmya, every facet of India's spiritual heritage highlights that the Supreme Reality and Shakti are eternally inseparable," the Lieutenant Governor said.

He said the Indian philosophy and spirituality are not just found in ancient texts but they live in our everyday traditions.

"One can see this in village prayers, household Navaratri rituals, and our natural respect for motherly power. In our villages, countless women who have never read a word of Sanskrit embody the true spirit of Shakti through their daily lives. This is the heartbeat of India's cultural and spiritual continuity. The Shakti Peethas are powerful symbols of our national unity and beacons of our shared cultural consciousness. A nation's unity is built from shared memories, shared faiths and shared cultural journeys. The Shakti Peethas have carried out this work for centuries. They have united India not merely geographically but emotionally and spiritually as well," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor said that an academic focus on the Shakti Peethas is more urgent today than ever, driven by several key goals. He said, we must revive our ancient knowledge system and our youth need to realize that these sacred sites are living libraries of Indian philosophy, architecture, art, music, science, and history.

"Our ancestors chose these locations not just for spiritual reasons, but for their natural and cultural importance. Studying these sacred places is rigorous research that helps us understand India's ancient knowledge traditions on their own terms. The second dimension is the renaissance of feminine consciousness.

Massive flash floods

Jammu city and several parts of the region for the third running day on Tuesday, disrupting normal life, inundating roads, and prompting authorities to maintain a high alert amid forecasts of continued moderate to heavy rainfall over the next two days.

According to the details accessed by the KNO the India Meteorological Department (IMD) recorded the highest rainfall in Katra, the base camp for the Mata Vaishno Devi pilgrimage, which received 107.1 mm of rain during the 24-hour period ending at 8.30 a.m.

Poonch recorded 61.5 mm, followed by Reasi with 54.5 mm, Rajouri 49 mm and Jammu city 35 mm during the same period.

Heavy rainfall since early morning caused widespread waterlogging in several parts of Jammu city, affecting vehicular movement and disrupting daily life. Roads in many localities remained submerged, while overflowing drains and nallahs raised concerns in low-lying areas. Authorities advised residents in vulnerable locations to remain vigilant as water levels could rise further if the rainfall persists.

The ongoing wet spell has compounded the impact of the extreme weather witnessed over the past three days. According to officials, at least 23 people have lost their lives and seven others remain missing in rain-related incidents in Poonch, Rajouri and Doda districts since Sunday.

At least 23 people have died and seven others are missing in rain-related incidents in Poonch, Rajouri and Doda districts since Sunday.

However, as a precautionary measure, the Amarnath Yatra, Mata Vaishno Devi Yatra, Shiv Khori Yatra and Machail Mata Yatra remained suspended for the third consecutive day due to persistent rainfall, landslides and the heightened risk of flash floods. Pilgrims have been advised to remain at designated shelters until weather conditions improve and the routes are declared safe.

Several highways, roads and link roads across the region continued to remain affected by landslides, mudslides and shooting stones. Restoration work is underway, although intermittent rainfall has slowed efforts to clear debris and restore normal connectivity.

The administration said the situation is being monitored round the clock, with district authorities, disaster response teams and other agencies remaining on the highest level of preparedness in vulnerable areas.

The Meteorological Centre, Srinagar, has forecast generally cloudy weather with intermittent spells of light to moderate rain and thundershowers across Jammu and Kashmir till July 23.

The weather office has also warned of isolated to scattered intense showers that could trigger flash floods, landslides, mudslides, shooting stones and a rise in water levels in rivers, streams and nallahs, particularly in vulnerable areas of the Jammu division. Authorities have advised the public to avoid unnecessary travel, stay away from water bodies and landslide-prone areas, and follow official advisories.

SEARCH FOR MISSING CONTINUES IN POONCH

Meanwhile, search and rescue operations entered the third consecutive day in Surankote area of Poonch district, with teams of the police and the National Disaster Response Force

(NDRF) continuing efforts to trace missing persons in rain-hit areas.

Officials said operations were underway despite challenging weather conditions after flash floods and landslides caused extensive damage to roads and infrastructure across the district.

The Jammu-Poonch National Highway also remained closed after a landslide at Shiendra Maidana in Surankote triggered by heavy rain. Clearance operations were underway and commuters were advised to avoid the route.

In another incident, a 60-year-old man was injured after his mud house collapsed in Arai village of Mandi area. He was shifted to the district hospital in Poonch for treatment.

LG SINHA ASSESSES SITUATION

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha assessed the situation in flood hit regions and directed the officials to ensure prompt relief to the victims.

LG Sinha in a statement said, " I spoke with senior officials and the DCs of Rajouri and Poonch to assess the damage to houses and key public infrastructure caused by heavy rains, flash floods, and landslides."

He said, "The Divisional Commissioner and IG Jammu are currently on the ground, and I have instructed all departments to work around the clock in close coordination to manage rescue, relief, and restoration efforts."

"Our main focus is reopening key roads and restoring power and water supplies. I was informed that out of 435 damaged roads, 356 have already been restored. I urge citizens to avoid non-essential travel in vulnerable areas and strictly follow safety advisories issued by local district administration.

Teams from the SDRF, NDRF, Army, BRO, NHAI, J&K Police, and Civil Defence are working together, while Quick Response teams are deployed in vulnerable areas," the Lieutenant Governor said, adding, "I am deeply anguished by the tragic loss of lives in this natural calamity. My heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families. Prayers for the swift recovery of all those injured."

CM OMAR ANNOUNCES Rs 6 LAKH EX GRATIA FOR VICTIMS' FAMILIES

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has expressed profound grief and anguish over the tragic loss of seven lives in a landslide at Domail Dhok in the Nandichool area of Loran, Poonch district. He conveyed his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families and prayed for eternal peace to the departed souls.

The Chief Minister said the tragic incident has caused immense sorrow and expressed solidarity with the affected families in this hour of grief. He prayed for strength and courage to the bereaved families to bear the irreparable loss.

As an immediate measure of support, the Chief Minister announced an ex gratia relief of 6 lakh for the next of kin of each deceased. The assistance will comprise 4 lakh from the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) and 2 lakh from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund (CMRF).

To ensure close supervision of relief and rehabilitation measures, the Chief Minister has deputed Ministers Javed Ahmed Rana and Satish Sharma to visit the affected areas in Rajouri and Poonch. The Ministers will assess the ground situation, oversee the ongoing relief efforts and ensure that all necessary assistance reaches the affected families without delay.

Govt extends

Meanwhile, the Meteorological Department has forecast the inclement weather and warned of heavy rainfall and the possibility of flash floods between July 20 and July 23. (KNO)

Govt to assess

guidelines," he said.

The Chief Minister said an inquiry would be conducted after the weather improves to identify shortcomings and determine the corrective measures required to prevent such incidents in future. "Let the weather improve. We will conduct an inquiry and decide what corrective action needs to be taken," he said.

Expressing regret over the situation, Omar described the flooding of the Civil Secretariat as "a matter of shame", saying it was unacceptable that even the ground floor of the Secretariat was inundated.

"It is a matter of shame for us that even the ground floor of the Civil Secretariat was under water. This is not a normal situation," he said.

The CM said the government was using all available resources to improve Srinagar's drainage system, but the problem had accumulated over decades and could not be resolved overnight.

"This is such an old problem. Those before us neither resolved it nor seriously attempted to. It cannot be fixed overnight," he said.

Taking a swipe at the previous administration over the Smart City project, Abdullah said those responsible for planning and implementing the project should explain how the funds were utilised.

"Those who brought the Smart City project here, implemented it and left the remaining work for us to complete should be asked where the Smart City money went, apart from the footpaths built along the Jhelum," he said.

He said the Cabinet had already decided to order a third-party audit after finding a gap between the Smart City project's stated objectives and its actual outcomes. The order is yet to be implemented, but it will be taken forward, he said.

The Chief Minister said the government would continue using all available resources to improve the city's drainage network while addressing long-pending deficiencies in urban infrastructure.

The response came a day after multiple parts of Srinagar were submerged following hours of intense rainfall, disrupting normal life, triggering protests by residents and renewing scrutiny of the city's drainage infrastructure despite years of investment under the Smart Cities Mission.

The Kashmir Chamber of Commerce & Industry (KCCI) has welcomed Chief Minister Omar Abdullah's assurance that traders whose

shops, business establishments and goods were damaged due to waterlogging during the recent rains in Srinagar will be adequately compensated.

In a statement issued to KNO, the Chamber said the announcement provides much-needed relief to the affected trading community, which suffered significant losses as several commercial areas remained inundated following a couple of hours of rain.

KCCI welcomes CM's assurance of compensation for waterlogged traders

KCCI also welcomed the CM's decision to subject the Smart City projects to a third-party audit, saying the Chamber has consistently been advocating for an independent technical audit of the inadequately designed drainage and stormwater network, as recurring incidents of waterlogging have exposed serious shortcomings in the planning, design and execution of the drainage infrastructure.

"A comprehensive technical audit should not be confined to the faulty Smart City projects alone but should extend to the entire drainage network across Srinagar and other urban centres in Kashmir," it said.

The government, KCCI said, must undertake a scientific assessment of the existing drainage infrastructure, identify the gaps in it and implement a comprehensive upgradation plan to ensure that cities are equipped to handle increasingly intense rainfall events.

KCCI further stressed that every major infrastructure and urban development project undertaken by the Government should be preceded by a comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and all necessary environmental clearances.

Development projects, it said, must be in harmony with the region's natural drainage systems, rivers, wetlands, water bodies and ecological landscape, rather than disrupting them.

"The increasing frequency of flash floods, urban flooding and extreme weather events clearly demonstrate the growing impact of climate change on Jammu & Kashmir. This makes it imperative that all future planning incorporates climate resilience, scientific hydrological studies and sustainable urban development principles," it said.

The Chamber also urged the government to protect green belts, wetlands, floodplains, playgrounds and other natural water absorption areas from encroachment or conversion for construction activities. These ecological assets play a vital role in absorbing excess rainwater, recharging groundwater and reducing the risk of urban flooding, it said. (KNO)

All depts on high alert

Ji Yatra, the Divisional Commissioner said all decisions regarding the movement of pilgrims and conduct of the pilgrimage would be taken strictly in accordance with weather advisories issued by the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

"The safety and well-being of pilgrims remains our highest priority. Every decision regarding the Yatra will be based on the prevailing weather conditions and official IMD forecasts," he said.

Appealing to residents and pilgrims to follow only official advisories, the Div Com urged people not to pay heed to rumours, saying the administration is continuously monitoring the weather situation and will issue timely updates whenever required. (KNO)

Delhi protest just

its stand on Article 370, Omar said the party had remained committed to its agenda while others had compromised theirs. "When did we abandon our agenda? When others left their own agenda and joined hands with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the BJP, we stood firmly by ours," he said.

Describing Statehood as the first constitutional step, Abdullah said the restoration of Article 370 or any future special constitutional arrangement would have little meaning without a state. "What is the meaning of Article 370 or Article 371 without a state? Special status is about constitutional power-sharing between the Centre and a state. Without statehood there is no State List and no meaningful power-sharing," he said.

He said the Assembly had already passed a resolution seeking restoration of Jammu and Kashmir's "special status" with constitutional guarantees and insisted the party had not moved away from that commitment.

Omar said the Delhi agitation was deliberately kept focused on statehood, saying combining it with the demand for Article 370 would only provide the Centre with an excuse to delay restoration of statehood. "We know this government will not restore Article 370. Statehood is the foundation. Once that promise is fulfilled, we will continue our constitutional and political struggle," he said.

Recalling the Assembly's autonomy resolution, the CM alleged it had been deliberately misrepresented to weaken Jammu and Kashmir's political aspirations and said similar attempts to divide the region's political voice were continuing.

He said restoration of statehood is an issue concerning the entire Jammu and Kashmir and not the National Conference alone.

"We invited every political party to join us because this is the issue of all the people of Jammu and Kashmir. Unfortunately, some parties neither joined us nor launched any campaign of their own. Instead, they ridiculed our efforts," he said.

Abdullah said Congress leaders also stood with the NC throughout the protest, while CPI and CPI(M) also extended support. He said leaders of some other opposition parties could not reach the venue because of restrictions in Delhi and the party would engage with them separately.

On opposition unity, he said, "You can take a horse to water, but you cannot force it to drink." Omar said those unwilling to confront the

BJP preferred social media over public mobilisation. "Those who did not want to upset the BJP stayed indoors, posting tweets and using social media. The people of Jammu and Kashmir have now seen who is prepared to fight on the ground and who prefers to remain behind a mobile phone," he said.

Defending the scale of the protest, he said every participant travelled voluntarily without financial support from the party. "Not a single worker was sponsored by the party. We did not pay for flights, trains or vehicles. Everyone travelled at their own expense because they believed in this cause. Nobody was forced or brought there by us," he said.

The 90-year-old leader, Dr Farooq Abdullah, leading the march in Delhi, symbolised the party's commitment to the cause, he added.

Referring to the Centre's assurances, the Chief Minister said the BJP-led government had promised the Supreme Court that Jammu and Kashmir's statehood would be restored "at the earliest" and the NC would continue reminding it of that commitment.

Questioning the security argument against statehood, he said if courts acknowledged improvement in the situation, the Centre could not continue using security as a reason to delay restoration.

"If the situation has improved enough for the High Court to say there is no terrorism in Srinagar, why is the Centre still denying statehood on security grounds? And if security is the issue, law and order is not under our control, so who is responsible?" he asked.

Omar Abdullah also criticised suggestions that security agencies, rather than the elected political leadership, should decide the timing of statehood restoration, saying such a stand contradicted the assurance given by the Centre before the Supreme Court and undermined the political process. (KNO)

LoP Sharma slams

president, Dr Shenaaz Ganaie, general secretary, Gopal Mahajan, spokesperson, Zorawar Singh Jamwal, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) alleged that the National Conference had chosen "politics over humanity" by organising and participating in a protest in the national capital at a time when flash floods, cloudbursts and landslides had claimed several lives across the Union Territory, particularly in Poonch and Rajouri districts.

Sunil Sharma said that as the head of the government, Omar Abdullah's foremost responsibility was to remain in Jammu and Kashmir, personally monitor rescue and relief operations, and ensure that all available resources were mobilised to save lives and assist the affected families.

The BJP leaders demanded Rs 20 lakh compensation for those who lost their lives in cloud burst and flash floods besides 6 months ration, immediate rehabilitation of rain affected families, re-establishment of damaged religious institutions and temporary houses for those families living in slum areas of district Rajouri who have lost everything including utensils and clothes in flash floods. They also demanded similar compensation and relief to those who lost their lives in shooting stones in Ragi Nullah in Doda district and structures damaged in Kyar Dachhan belt of Kishtwar district.

Lambasting Omar Abdullah led J&K government, Sunil Sharma pointed out that, "The events of July 20 have laid bare the stark moral and operational bankruptcy of the National Conference (NC) leadership and the Omar Abdullah-led administration".

"When devastating flash floods and cloudbursts struck the Rajouri and Poonch districts, resulting in tragic loss of life, extensive destruction of property, and widespread distress among our citizens, the choice before NC leadership was simple: Humanity or Politics? Omar chose politics over humanity and its irony," highlighted Sunil Sharma. (KNO)

Cyber crime cases

Financial Cyber Fraud Reporting and Management System (CFCFRMS). Till June 30, 2026, the system has helped save more than 11,158 crore in over 32.80 lakh complaints. From 2021 to 2025, more than 65.89 lakh financial fraud complaints involving over 55,050 crore were reported, while more than 8,189 crore was marked under lien and over 1.95 lakh FIRs were registered.

The Centre said it has strengthened cyber crime investigation through initiatives including the Samanvaya platform, Sahyog portal, Joint Cyber Coordination Teams, CyTrain training portal, Cyber Commando programme, National-Digital Investigation Support Centres and financial assistance of 132.93 crore to States and Union Territories for cyber forensic infrastructure and capacity building. (KNO)

Cold storage

under various centrally sponsored schemes to reduce post-harvest losses and improve marketing infrastructure for horticultural produce.

Experts believe that with sustained investment in storage and supply chain infrastructure, Kashmir can diversify beyond its traditional apple industry and establish itself as a major supplier of premium soft fruits, particularly plums and cherries, to markets across India and abroad.

Irfan Ahmad a fruit trader at Fruit Mandi Shopian said that demand for Kashmiri plums has witnessed a significant rise this season, resulting in better prices for farmers.

"Growers are receiving encouraging returns for their produce. The improved demand is certainly helping, but the expansion of cold storage facilities has also played a crucial role in ensuring that farmers can market their fruit more efficiently and profitably," he said.

Growers and traders are hopeful that the continued expansion of cold storage infrastructure and improved market connectivity will make Kashmir's perishable fruit sector more competitive, profitable and sustainable in the coming years. (KNO)

PM asks NDA MPs to reach out to people, speak about govt's achievements



PTI

New Delhi, Jul 21: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday asked NDA MPs to dedicate themselves to the welfare of the nation and highlight the achievements of the government.

Speaking to reporters after the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) meeting, BJP national general secretary Tarun Chugh said Modi stressed that the nation must always come first and called upon MPs to work for its progress and prosperity.

"The prime minister asked all NDA MPs to dedicate every moment of their lives to the welfare of the nation. The nation comes first, and we must work for its progress and prosperity," Chugh told reporters in Parliament House complex.

He said Modi also spoke about India's growing global stature, asserting that the country's

youth are making their mark worldwide.

"Today, the entire world is hearing the voice of India's youth. India is progressing faster than ever. Whether it is our economy, our defence policy, or our welfare schemes, the whole world is appreciating them. Agreements signed with countries across the world will take India further on the path of development," Chugh quoted the prime minister as saying.

Chugh added that under the prime minister's leadership, NDA workers are working with the resolve of building a "Viksit Bharat".

BJP MP Shashank Mani Tripathi said the prime minister emphasised national welfare and urged MPs to remain closely connected with the people.

"Prime Minister Modi spoke about the welfare of the nation and about the positive spirit of our meeting.

He spoke about the enthusiasm with which our youth are working and how India's achievements are making their mark across the country and abroad," Tripathi said.

He said Modi advised MPs to "go among the people and stay connected with them with warmth and affection".

"After this guidance, all of us have been filled with renewed energy under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi and Nitin Nabin," he added. BJP MP Kangana Ranaut said the prime minister spoke about challenges facing the youth and asked MPs to engage with them and address those issues.

"He spoke about what our responsibility is in this regard, and how we should tackle these issues," she said.

According to Ranaut, Modi also asked MPs to speak more about India's achievements in areas such as science and infrastructure.

"He said we should also talk in detail about our own achievements, whether in the field of science or projects like the hydrogen train. He also expressed concern about the lack of discussion on these achievements," she said.

She added that the prime minister also spoke about preparations for the Independence Day celebrations on August 15.

Responding to questions on the protest by members of the Cockroach Janata Party (CJP) near Parliament on Monday, Ranaut said the situation was quite tense.

"You were all inside and saw how parliamentarians became anxious. The gates were closed, all the parliamentarians were confined inside, and none of us could move. You saw how the mob tried to attack us. At one point, many of us were frightened that we might be attacked," she said.

Praising the Delhi Police, Ranaut said, "They acted as a shield for us, took the stones and injuries upon themselves, and ensured that no harm came to the public."

Strong action taken to ensure no one plays with future of youth: PM

PTI

New Delhi, Jul 21: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday asserted that strong action was taken against those involved in the NEET paper leaks so that no one plays with the future of the youth, and said states should join hands with the Centre to tackle the menace in national interest.

Modi made the remarks at a meeting of the NDA MPs here, a day after thousands of students led by the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) took part in the 'Sansad Chalo' march against irregularities in the NEET exam and to demand Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation.

Briefing journalists after the meeting, which was named 'Mangal Milan', Union Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju said the prime minister told MPs that the government acted immediately after reports of the paper leak surfaced, and 13 people were arrested and sent to jail.

"At the same time, the prime minister said, to ensure that students' future was not affected, the NEET re-examination was given priority, conducted successfully, and the results were declared without delay," Rijiju said after the hour-long meeting.

He said the prime minister also said that strict steps have been taken to prevent such paper leaks in the future. Modi told the NDA MPs that those found involved in the paper leak racket have been arrested and jailed.

The prime minister also told the ruling alliance's MPs that those guilty in paper leaks should be given the strictest possible punishment, with the support of the country's top lawyers, so that those involved in such a grave offence face exemplary action and such incidents do not recur.

"The prime minister said strong action has been taken to ensure that no one plays with future of youth. The prime minister also said that to ensure that no future paper leaks take place, all state governments and the Centre must join hands irrespective of party. This is not a matter of party politics but matter of national interests," Rijiju said.

India approves its first dengue vaccine



PTI

New Delhi, Jul 21: The government on Tuesday said Takeda Biopharmaceuticals India's dengue vaccine, QDenga, has been granted market authorisation after a comprehensive scientific evaluation of its quality, safety and efficacy.

This is the first dengue vaccine approved in the country for the prevention of the disease, the Health Ministry said.

Takeda Biopharmaceuticals India Pvt Ltd on Monday said it has received market authorisation from the drug regulator for its dengue prevention vaccine.

In a statement, the Health Ministry said the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) has granted marketing authorisation for the dengue tetravalent vaccine manufactured by Takeda GmbH, Germany and to be imported by M/s Takeda Biopharmaceuticals India Pvt. Ltd.

The approval has been granted after a comprehensive scientific evaluation of the vaccine's quality, safety and efficacy in accordance with the provisions of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940

and the Drugs Rules, 1945, it said.

QDenga is a live, attenuated tetravalent dengue vaccine developed using recombinant DNA technology.

The vaccine is produced in Vero cells, with genes encoding serotype-specific surface proteins engineered into a dengue virus type-2 backbone. The product contains genetically modified organisms (GMOs).

It is supplied as a freeze-dried powder for reconstitution and is administered as a subcutaneous injection, the statement said.

The vaccine is indicated for the prevention of dengue disease in individuals 4 to 60 years of age. The recommended immunisation schedule consists of two doses of 0.5 ml each, administered at an interval of three months (0 and 3 months).

The approval is supported by evidence generated through an extensive global clinical development programme evaluating the vaccine's safety, immunogenicity and efficacy across both dengue-endemic and non-endemic regions, the statement said.

CJP protest: Delhi Police registers 4 FIRs, more cases likely

PTI

New Delhi, Jul 21: Delhi Police has registered four FIRs so far and is in the process of filing two more in connection with violence, vandalism and other incidents during the "Sansad Chalo" march organised by the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) and farmers' groups on July 20, sources said on Tuesday.

The cases were registered at Parliament Street, Connaught Place and other police stations, and invoke multiple provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), the Arms Act and the Prevention of Damage to Public Property Act, they said.

One FIR was lodged in connection with the violence and stone-pelting near Regal Cinema at Connaught Place, while separate cases relate to unlawful assembly, unauthorised flying of a drone during the Parliament session and an alleged conspiracy behind the violence, a police source said.

Two more FIRs are being prepared in connection with assault, taking the law into one's own hands and other related offences, he said.

According to police sources, the FIR filed at the Parliament Street station was under BNS Sections 223(b) (disobedience of lawful

orders); Section 221 (hindering public servants from imparting their duties); Section 132 (assault or use of criminal force against a public servant); Section 121(1) (unlawful assembly); Sections 189(3), 190, 191(2), 191(3) and 192 dealing with unlawful assembly, rioting and violence; Sections 324(5), 109(1), 125 and 3(5) relating to common intention; and Section 61(2) pertaining to criminal conspiracy.

The FIR also invokes provisions of the Prevention of Damage to Public Property Act.

According to the FIR, the accused persons allegedly formed an unlawful assembly, disrupted public order, obstructed government officials from discharging their duties, indulged in violence and caused damage to public property.

Another FIR has been registered against unidentified persons in connection with the violence, stone-pelting and vandalism of police vehicles near Regal Cinema at the Outer Circle of Connaught Place during the march, the source said.

During the violence, protesters allegedly pelted stones at police personnel and damaged several police vehicles deployed in the area, he said.

BRICS meeting on traditional, complementary and integrative medicine begins in Chandigarh

PTI

Chandigarh, Jul 21: The BRICS meeting on traditional, complementary and integrative medicine (TCIM) began here on Tuesday on the inaugural day of the four-day BRICS health ministerial meeting.

Participating delegates will discuss and finalise the terms of reference for the expert working group on traditional, complementary and integrative medicine.

The day will also witness side event sessions on capacity building, education and human resource development in TCIM.

Members from 21 countries are participating in the ministerial meeting, an official statement said.

The meeting will reinforce collective efforts towards resilient health systems, innovation, stronger cooperation, and sustainable healthcare. Through dialogue and collaboration, member countries will work towards advancing shared priorities that contribute to better health outcomes for all.

Notably, Chandigarh is hosting the BRICS 2026 health meetings.

BRICS is a multilateral organisation comprising eleven major emerging economies, including Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

Adani Total Gas Q1 revenue rises 27 pc to Rs 1,910 crore; PAT at Rs 133 crore



IANs

Ahmedabad, July 21: Adani Total Gas Limited (ATGL) on Tuesday reported a 27 per cent year-on-year (YoY) growth in its standalone revenue at Rs 1,910 crore for the first quarter of FY27, while posting an EBITDA of Rs 281 crore and a profit after tax (PAT) of Rs 133 crore.

The company said its operational performance remained strong during the quarter, with combined

standalone CNG and PNG sales volumes rising 13 per cent year-on-year to 303 million metric standard cubic metres (MMSCM).

Commenting on financial performance Sanjay Pandita, CEO, ATGL said that the company yet again, delivered robust growth in volumes up by 13 per cent YoY and revenue up by 27 per cent during Q1 FY27, driven by strong operational performance, and increasing consumer

preference for cleaner fuels.

"The operating environment remained dynamic, with elevated gas prices, higher Brent crude prices, compounded by currency volatility, and geopolitical developments negatively impacting global energy supplies," he stated.

"While these factors exerted pressure on gas sourcing strategy for CGD Industry, our focus remained ensuring supply continuity, enhancing operational efficiency,

safeguarding CNG and PNG consumers from undue risks and creating long-term value for customers and stakeholders," Pandita mentioned.

ATGL continued to expand its distribution network during the quarter by adding five new CNG stations, taking the total number to 707.

The company also added 38,243 new PNG household connections, raising the total to 11.41 lakh.

Its industrial and commercial customer base increased by 448 consumers to 10,422, while the cumulative steel pipeline network expanded to nearly 15,987 inch-km.

Including its joint venture IndianOil-Adani Gas Pvt Ltd (IOAGPL), the company's pan-India footprint continued to grow.

Combined CNG and PNG volumes rose 13 per cent year-on-year to 496 MMSCM, while the total network expanded to 1,167 CNG stations after the addition of six new outlets.

Across its combined network, PNG household connections crossed 13.75 lakh, serving more than six million people daily.

'Night owls may have more belly fat, higher blood sugar, poorer lipid profiles'

PTI

New Delhi, Jul 21: Night owls, who tend to consume foods high in energy, carbohydrates and fats late at night, could be associated with a greater body fat percentage, belly fat, and higher blood sugar and lipids, according to a study.

"Chronotypes influences our preferences for food intake, our behaviours and our metabolism," author Rozanne Kruger, from Griffith University's school of allied health, sport and social work, said. "Both Morning-types and Evening-types consumed similar amounts of food or energy across the day, but it was the timing of eating that was

crucial," Kruger said.

The study, published in the journal Frontiers in Nutrition, looked at 287 European and Pacific New Zealand women aged 18-45 years and assessed if they were morning chronotypes (early bird) or an evening chronotype (night owl).

Evening-types consumed less food between 3 am and 9:59 am but more food between 8 pm and 2:59 am, while the opposite was true for morning-types.

Night owls were more likely to consume lower energy and protein intakes in the morning, and ate foods that were high in energy, carbohydrates and fats late at night.

"The ET (evening types) women consumed



less energy and less micronutrient-dense food than the MT-IT (morning types and

intermediate chronotypes)," the authors wrote.

"The ET had lower dietary intake in the morning but higher intake in the evening, with an inverse pattern observed among MT-IT. Higher energy and macronutrient intake in the evening was significantly associated with a higher BF% (body fat per centage) and AG (android-to-gynoid) ratio in ET, suggesting a potentially greater susceptibility to obesity," they said.

Consuming food at night, when we are supposed to be fasting and sleeping, means we store more food rather than use it, which may increase susceptibility to obesity and cause worsen health outcomes, the authors

explained.

The women who naturally preferred a later bedtime and wake time were also more likely to have poorer lipid profiles, and less favourable indicators of glucose regulation, compared to morning-types.

"The research highlights that when people eat may be just as important as what they eat. Targeting meal timing, particularly reducing late-night eating, could be an important strategy for improving health amongst people with an evening chronotype," Kruger said.

"It reinforces the role of chrononutrition and the role it plays in obesity and metabolic disease prevention," the author said.

Trump administration opens investigation into Harvard’s financial aid for international students

AP

Washington, Jul 21: The Justice Department is investigating whether Harvard University is allowing Chinese donors to create scholarships that exclude American students, adding to the barrage of federal inquiries the Trump administration has opened in its battle against the Ivy League school.

Justice Department officials announced the new review Monday, saying Harvard's foreign funding disclosures "raised concerns" about possible discrimination against US students. The agency did not specify which scholarship programs are being targeted and emphasized it "has not reached any conclusions."

The investigation is aimed at Harvard's "China-based financial aid programs," the Justice Department said. The agency said Chinese donors have given money to Harvard to support financial aid programs limited to students from certain countries. That restriction could amount to illegal discrimination based on country of origin, the department said.

"Schools cannot take federal dollars and then turn around and accept money from foreign sources to give financial aid that deliberately excludes American citizens — doing so is illegal, and we will stop it wherever we find it," said Harmeet Dhillon, who leads the department's Civil Rights Division.

Harvard said it was reviewing the Justice Department notice.

"Harvard follows the law for required reporting of donations and, consistent with our legal obligations



under Title VI, does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, or national origin in allocating financial aid," the university said in a written statement.

In a statement, Liu Chang, a spokesperson for the Chinese embassy in Washington, said China-US education cooperation is mutually beneficial. "China maintains that normal education and academic exchange should not be disrupted for political purposes," Liu said.

Like many US universities, Harvard accepts foreign funding through direct donations or contracts. The Trump administration has pushed for greater transparency around outside money, warning that accepting funding from foreign adversaries is a national security risk.

Federal disclosures from Harvard show it has accepted \$630 million from Chinese sources over a period of decades. Overall, it has reported

about \$4.5 billion in foreign funding. The Justice Department cited those figures but did not single out any donors or programs being reviewed.

The investigation is a compliance review, meaning it's initiated by the federal government rather than responding to an outside complaint.

Unlike the vast majority of US universities, Harvard and a small number of other schools provide need-based scholarships to international students on the same basis as US students. Grants and other aid from the federal government are reserved for American students, but Harvard "has its own job and scholarship money available to foreign students," according to a Harvard financial aid website.

In some cases, foreign donors have given money to be used for international students.

In 2014, Pan Shiye and Zhang Xin, a Chinese couple that co-founded

the real estate company SOHO China, donated \$15 million to Harvard to provide financial aid for Chinese students. Their gift drew blowback from critics in China who said it was a betrayal to give money to foreign schools instead of Chinese universities.

The Justice Department's announcement makes the unusual legal argument that steering private funding to students of certain countries amounts to a civil rights violation for US students.

"Harvard appears to be accepting these funds and, in adherence to their restrictions, providing student financial aid to foreign students, presumably Chinese, based on their national origin — to the potential detriment of students of other national origins, including American citizens," the agency said.

The Trump administration has repeatedly opened new federal investigations against Harvard in its battle to win obedience from the nation's oldest university.

Harvard has been a prime target in the administration's push to end "wokeness" and fight alleged antisemitism in American higher education. A federal judge has blocked the White House from cutting billions of dollars in federal research funding from Harvard amid the feud.

Even as the legal battle continues, the government has sought new lines of attack, seeking to limit Harvard's ability to enroll foreign students and US military members, and launching investigations into the school's admissions process.

Iran Guards say hit US military targets in Bahrain, Kuwait



AFP

Tehran, Jul 21: Iran's Revolutionary Guards said on Tuesday they hit US military targets including air defense systems in Bahrain and Kuwait, state news agency IRNA reported. The Guards said they struck two air defense systems and a radar installation at two different US outposts in Bahrain,

as well as missile defense systems and radars and satellite reception systems in Kuwait.

"With this radar sweep, the enemy should prepare for even more decisive and powerful waves of drone and missile attacks," the Guards said in a statement carried by IRNA.

The announcement came as the United States said it struck Iranian

military command centers, air defense systems and missile launch sites in overnight attacks.

Iran's army said it targeted "three major US bases in Kuwait" with kamikaze drones.

Targets including administrative buildings and direction-finding antennas at Camp Arifjan, a helicopter parking area at Camp Al Udayri and "the troop accommodation building" at Ahmad Al Jaber Air Base, according to Iranian state TV IRIB.

Meanwhile, Jordan's military said Tuesday it had intercepted five drones launched by Iran targeting the kingdom.

The military made the announcement through the state-run Petra news agency.

Oil prices ease as mediators propose US-Iran ceasefire



REUTERS

Singapore, Jul 21: Oil prices fell on Tuesday, with markets weighing reports of mediation efforts between the US and Iran against an exchange of fresh attacks between the two and threats of a naval blockade of Saudi Arabia by Yemen's Houthis.

Brent crude futures fell 96 cents, or 1.1 percent, to \$88.26 per barrel by 09:30 a.m. Saudi time. US West Texas Intermediate crude was down 73 cents, or 0.9 percent, to \$82.50 per barrel, while the more active contract for September delivery slipped 57 cents, or 0.7 percent, to \$81.91 a barrel.

"There's some hope of de-escalation between the US and Iran. Reports are that mediators are proposing a 10-day ceasefire, which could put the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) back on track," ING analysts said in a note, referring to the June interim deal. However,

this won't be easy as major differences remain between Washington and Tehran, while Trump has warned of retaliation after several US soldiers were killed, ING added.

A senior Iranian official told Reuters Tehran had received a proposal from mediators for a 10-day ceasefire in efforts to salvage the deal signed on June 17, intended to pave the way for a lasting agreement to end the war that began on Feb. 28 with US-Israeli attacks on Iran.

The diplomatic push followed another night of US strikes on Iranian cities and attacks by Iran's Revolutionary Guards on US military assets across the region. Later on Monday, US Central Command said it had begun another round of strikes on Iran.

A tanker in the Strait of Hormuz reported being struck by an unknown projectile, forcing its crew to abandon ship and board a lifeboat, the UK Maritime Trade Operations agency said on Tuesday. Vessel crossings via the strait also dropped further amid growing caution following fresh attacks between the US and Iran.

Additionally, Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthis said on Monday they would impose a naval blockade on Saudi Arabia, opening a potential new front against the US in its war on Iran and raising the threat to global energy supplies and trade beyond the Gulf.

"The threats of a naval blockade on Saudi Arabia by the Houthis are significant because they raise the risk of disruption to another major oil exporter," said Tim Waterer, chief market analyst at KCM Trade.

Australia’s Cummins, Hazlewood, Lyon back for Bangladesh Test series

AFP

Melbourne, Jul 21: Australia's veteran bowling trio, captain Pat Cummins, Josh Hazlewood and Nathan Lyon, have returned from injury and were all on Tuesday named in the Test squad to face Bangladesh next month.

Ashes pace hero Michael Neser was left out of the 13-man party for the two-match series in Darwin and Mackay



beginning on August 13, with Scott Boland named as the fourth seamer.

Cummins, Hazlewood and Lyon have all been

plagued by injury over the past 12 months.

The 35-year-old pace bowler Hazlewood missed the Ashes and the

subsequent T20 World Cup in India, his last Test appearance for Australia coming in July 2025.

Fast bowler Cummins and spinner Lyon played just three of the five home Ashes Tests between them.

The 33-year-old Cummins has not played for Australia in any format since the third Test against England in Adelaide in December 2025 because of a back stress complaint.

India name 20-member squad for Hockey World Cup, Harmanpreet Singh to lead

New Delhi, Jul 21: India on Tuesday named a 20-member squad for next month's FIH Men's Hockey World Cup, with four players from the side who featured in the European leg of the Pro League missing out owing to the tournament's squad-size limit. Defender Amandeep Lakra, midfielders Raj Kumar Pal and Rabichandra Singh Moirangthem, and forward Selvam Karthi were the four players omitted from the 24-member Pro League squad.

India endured a disappointing FIH Pro League campaign last month, winning four, drawing five and losing seven matches to finish eighth among nine teams, just above Pakistan.

Thousands welcome home Argentina squad, without Messi, despite World Cup loss



AFP

Ezeiza (Argentina), Jul 21: Thousands of fans braved the cold and rain Monday to give a rapturous welcome to the Argentine football squad who landed back home without star Lionel Messi, after their World Cup final loss to Spain.

It was not the homecoming Argentines had hoped for, four years after millions celebrated their team's tournament victory in 2022, but fresh scenes of joyful chaos filled the street as they danced, sang and set off fireworks to thank the players.

The Argentine Football Association (AFA) said earlier that some squad members would not be on the flight, and iconic team captain Messi was not seen descending from the aircraft in images broadcast on local television.

Coach Lionel Scaloni and the rest of the team were welcomed with a red carpet

outside the aircraft and a military band.

They then boarded a bus, waving to frenzied fans along the way.

Despite falling short of a second straight championship, "Argentines will celebrate anyway," said housewife Margaledezma. The 36-year-old thanked Messi for "all the years he made us happy," urging him not to quit playing for Argentina, but admitting this would be difficult as he was 39.

Argentina lost 1-0 to Spain in a game that has been criticized in international media for a plethora of fouls and displays of poor sportsmanship from the Albiceleste. "I think they criticize us because we know what it's like to suffer, that we get up, we fall down again, and we keep going," said Ledezma.

Many fans highlighted that the real victory for Argentina was the 2-1 semifinal win over England, played against

the backdrop of a lingering dispute between the countries over the sovereignty of the Falkland Islands.

Some carried flags declaring "The Falklands are Argentine." FIFA is investigating the Argentine team after players held up a banner bearing the phrase after their win against England which sparked a backlash from London.

'The pain is immense'

"This team united us all, and we should be grateful for that. We will always be there for them, rain or shine. I would say thank you to Messi and that he gave it his all," said Leonardo Barrientos, 36, who works in a textile workshop.

Maria Ortiz, 28, came to welcome the team with her two-year-old, and said Spain "deserved the win" but she was "happy for what the team gave us." Messi wrote on Instagram on Monday that "the pain is immense and it's going to take a long time for this wound to heal."

"I'll also hold on to all the good memories," he wrote alongside a photo of himself. "Today it's hard to appreciate what we achieved, but this squad reached two consecutive World Cup finals."

With the tournament over, President Javier Milei announced that a future date agreed with the team would be set as a public holiday to celebrate their performance in the World Cup. No further details have been announced.

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