



Martyred cop's devotion to duty, motherland will inspire generations: LG Manoj Sinha

Visits bereaved family of Head Constable Ashiq Hussain Qureshi, assures all possible support

Naveed Ul Haq Ganaie

Srinagar, Jul 24: Stating that entire nation is proud of brave-heart Ashiq Hussain Qureshi, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Friday said that his courage, sacrifice and devotion to duty will remain etched in our collective memory forever.

According to the details available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), LG Sinha visited Lalpora, Beerwah, Budgam to meet the family members of martyr J&K Police's Head Constable Ashiq Hussain Qureshi, who laid down his life in the line of duty during a terror attack in Anantnag earlier this week.

The Lieutenant Governor paid heartfelt tributes to the brave policeman and conveyed his deepest condolences to the



bereaved family.

He said the entire nation is proud of brave-heart Ashiq Hussain Qureshi. "Martyr's

ideals of love for duty and honor for the motherland will continue to inspire generations in building | [More on P6](#)

Amit Shah speaks to slain cop's son, assures full support

LoP Sharma visits bereaved family, expresses solidarity

Naveed Ul Haq Ganaie

Budgam, Jul 24: Leader of Opposition in the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, Sunil Sharma, on Friday visited the residence of slain Head Constable Ashiq Hussain at Lolipora in Beerwah area of Central Kashmir's Budgam district to express condolences with the bereaved family.

Pertinently, Hussain was killed in a terror attack near Lal Chowk | [More on P6](#)

Kashmir no longer valley of blasts, gunfire: Omar to Bollywood

Says some films misrepresent Kashmir for propaganda, many celebrate humanity

Assures local filmmakers of dedicated platform, awards at first IFFJK

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Jul 24: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Friday urged Bollywood to move beyond conflict-driven portrayals of Kashmir and instead showcase the Valley's changing reality.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the of a function at the Royal Springs Golf Course here, Omar, per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said, "Films have too often projected the region through gunfights, explosions and violence despite the situation having transformed over the years."

He said, "Some filmmakers have distorted Kashmir's image for propaganda or commercial gains. Some people misrepresent Kashmir. They glamorise violence and create a false picture only for



propaganda. Some do it because they think it will help their films perform better, while others do it to please the powers that be."

The Chief Minister, said it would be unfair to judge the entire film industry on that basis. "That doesn't mean all of Bollywood is bad. There are many filmmakers who tell beautiful stories that connect people and celebrate humanity. We want more such films

to be made in Kashmir," he said.

Referring to movies shot in the Valley, Omar said many filmmakers use Kashmir's breathtaking landscapes but continue to portray it as a place consumed by violence.

"They shoot here but show the locations as somewhere else. And when they do show Kashmir, it is often only through gunfights, houseboat explosions | [More on P6](#)

Flood scare: 'Overall decreasing trend intact, no need to panic'



Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Jul 24: After receding through most of the day, the River Jhelum recorded a fresh rise at key gauge stations on Friday evening, with the water level at Ram Munshi Bagh in Srinagar remaining above the flood declaration mark, while officials maintained that the river is expected to follow an overall receding trend.

According to the gauge update issued by the Irrigation & Flood Control (I&FC) Department and accessed by the news agency—Kashmir

News Observer (KNO), the water level at Ram Munshi Bagh stood at 18.96 feet and was on an increasing trend. The gauge remained above the flood declaration mark of 18 feet, but below the danger mark of 21 feet.

The Sangam gauge also registered a fresh increase, reaching 19.77 feet, while Pampore remained stable at 5.09 metres.

Further downstream, the river was rising at Asham, where the level reached 12.74 feet, while the Wular Lake level increased to 1576.10 metres. Both, remained below their respective flood | [More on P6](#)

Govt approves augmentation of Kathua Grid Station

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Jul 24: The Jammu & Kashmir Government has approved the augmentation of the Grid Station at Kathua by enhancing its capacity from 3x50 MVA to 4x50 MVA, along with the execution of allied infrastructure works, at an estimated cost of 15.22 crore.

The project is aimed at strengthening the power transmission network in the region to meet the growing electricity demand and ensure a more robust and reliable power infrastructure.

The augmentation will significantly improve the reliability and stability of the transmission system, reduce overloading, and enhance the overall quality of electricity supply to consumers in Kathua and adjoining areas.

The initiative | [More on P6](#)

Remain mission-focused, vigilant to safeguard peace: DGP to officers

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Jul 24: Director General of Police Nalin Prabhat on Friday asked all officers to remain mission-focused, vigilant and responsive to safeguard peace and public confidence across Jammu and Kashmir.

Chairing a high-level security review meeting at Police Control Room (PCR) Kashmir, here DGP Prabhat, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, "Coordinated action and sustained preparedness are essential to maintain peace."

During the meeting the DGP assessed the prevailing security scenario and other emerging challenges across the Union Territory. The meeting was attended by



Special DG Coord J&K, ADGP HQ J&K, ADGP CID J&K, IGP POS, IGP Kashmir Zone, IGP Jammu Zone, IGP Security J&K, IGP Railways J&K, IGP Traffic J&K, IGP CID J&K, IGP Crime J&K, DPT J&K, DIG CID Kashmir, all Range DIGs of J&K, DIGs Traffic Kashmir/Jammu, DIG Pers PHQ, DIG Hqr PHQ, DIG Crime J&K, DIG IR Jammu, DIG Security J&K, DIG Railways J&K, SSP PCR Kashmir, all District SSPs of J&K, all Commandants

of JKAP/IRP Bns of J&K, AIG (CT. & Int.) PHQ J&K, SSPs APCR Jammu/Kashmir, SSPs Telecom Jammu/Kashmir, SSP Cargo Srinagar/Jammu and other officers.

The participating officers presented a comprehensive assessment of the prevailing security scenario across the Union Territory, including the current operational environment, threat perception and preparedness of field formations. | [More on P6](#)

'Amarnath Yatra to resume today'

Umaisar Gull Ganie

Srinagar, Jul 24: The Amarnath Yatra, which remained suspended for six days due to inclement weather, will resume on Saturday from Pahalgam and Baltal routes, officials said on Friday.

A top official told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that preparations are underway for the resumption of the pilgrimage following an improvement in weather conditions.

The yatra was suspended earlier this week after incessant rainfall rendered the tracks unsafe for pilgrims.

The official said the pilgrimage will resume on both the traditional Pahalgam route and the shorter but steeper Baltal route tomorrow.

The official said that the decision to resume yatra was taken after weather | [More on P6](#)

POST-PAHALGAM ATTACK...

India raised cross-border terror issue to 33 nations: GoI

Raja Syed Rather

Srinagar, Jul 24: The Government of India (GoI) on Friday said it has consistently raised the issue of cross-border terrorism, with a particular focus on Jammu and Kashmir, at bilateral and multilateral forums, while seven parliamentary delegations visited 33 countries following the April 2025 Pahalgam terror attack to present India's perspective on terrorism.

Replying to an unstarred question in the Lok Sabha, Minister of State for External Affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh,



as reported by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said the government closely monitors

developments in the neighbourhood that have a bearing on national security and continues to take | [More on P6](#)

SEXUAL OFFENCE CASES

J&K HC directs strict adherence to victim identity protection

Pulls up presiding officers of trial courts, warns disciplinary action for violation

KNO Legal Correspondent

Srinagar, Jul 24: The High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh has directed presiding officers of trial courts to strictly adhere to the provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, which prohibit the disclosure of the identity of victims of sexual offences.

In a circular, as per news agency—Kashmir News Observer

(KNO), the High Court cautioned that any violation of this provision would attract disciplinary action as warranted under law.

"Now, therefore, all the Presiding Officers of the trial courts of the UTs of J&K and Ladakh are hereby impressed upon to ensure that they scrupulously adhere to the provisions of Section 72(1) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, which prohibit disclosure of the identity of victims of sexual offences. Any violation in this regard shall entail disciplinary action as warranted under law," the circular states.

The move follows reports that, in certain | [More on P6](#)

Kashmir reopening doors to global cinema, will make filmmaking easier, affordable: CM Omar

IFFJK to revive Valley's film legacy, build global festival brand | Must move beyond scenic beauty to become filmmaker-friendly

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Jul 24: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Friday said Jammu and Kashmir is entering a new phase in its relationship with the film industry, asserting that the government is committed to making the Union Territory an easier, more affordable and professionally equipped destination for filmmakers.

He expressed hope that the International Film Festival of Jammu and Kashmir (IFFJK) will grow into a globally

recognised platform.

Launching the logo of the 1st International Film Festival of Jammu and Kashmir (IFFJK) 2026 at the Royal Springs Golf Course here, Omar, per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said Kashmir once occupied a special place in Indian cinema and the government's effort is to restore that legacy.

"There was a time when filmmaking in Bollywood and Kashmir was synonymous. No film was considered complete unless it had at least one



sequence shot in the Valley.

Even if an entire film wasn't

shot here, at least one song was," he said.

He said decades of turmoil disrupted that historic bond between Kashmir and the film industry, forcing filmmakers to look elsewhere.

"Our loss became many other countries' gain. I don't think too many people would have bothered filming in Switzerland had Kashmir remained open for business," CM Omar said.

Referring to filmmaker Muzaffar Ali's long-delayed film 'Zooni', the Chief Minister

said he was delighted to learn that Ali's son had completed the unfinished project.

"If what he has done is even a patch on what his father had started, I have no doubt it will present Kashmir in a way it hasn't been presented in the last four decades," he said, recalling that the original film featured late actor Vinod Khanna and actor Dimple Kapadia.

Omar said showcasing the completed film during the inaugural festival would give the event a unique identity while reconnecting audiences with

Kashmir's cinematic heritage.

Calling the film festival a major step towards rebuilding ties with the film fraternity, the Chief Minister said the initiative is aimed at restoring the long-standing relationship between Jammu and Kashmir and the Indian film industry.

"The idea behind this film festival is to rebuild that bond which existed between this part of the country and the film industry. I believe we are again at the cusp of restarting that relationship," he said.

He, stressed | [More on P6](#)

CS Atal Dulloo reviews arrangements for 80th Independence Day celebrations

District administrations directed to issue invitations to public representatives, freedom fighters, ex-servicemen, families of martyrs, eminent citizens and other invitees

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, JULY 24: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, on Friday chaired a high-level meeting of senior officers of the Civil Administration and Police to review the preparations for the 80th Independence Day celebrations across the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by Administrative Secretaries, Divisional Commissioners, ADGPs, IGP, Deputy Commissioners, SSPs, Director Information, Directors of School Education (Jammu/Kashmir), Directors of Health Services (Jammu/Kashmir), senior officers of the Police and Civil Administration, besides representatives of various security agencies.

The Chief Secretary took a comprehensive review of the arrangements being put in place for the main Independence Day functions at Srinagar and Jammu, besides celebrations to be held at the district, sub-division, tehsil, block and Panchayat levels across the Union Territory.

Emphasising the significance of the national occasion, Dulloo directed all the concerned departments to ensure meticulous planning and seamless coordination for the successful conduct of the celebrations. He stressed that all arrangements should be completed well in advance to facilitate smooth participation of dignitaries, students and the general public.

Reviewing the cultural programmes, the Chief Secretary called for showcasing the rich cultural heritage and



composite traditions of Jammu and Kashmir through high-quality performances. He emphasised greater participation of school students and youth to instil patriotism and national pride.

He also directed the Police and Traffic authorities to ensure comprehensive security arrangements and effective traffic management around all venues so that participants and visitors do not face any inconvenience.

In view of the prevailing weather conditions, Dulloo instructed the concerned departments to make adequate arrangements for drinking water, shaded seating, medical assistance and emergency response facilities, particularly for school children and other participants.

The Chief Secretary further stressed upon maintaining high standards of sanitation, uninterrupted power supply, proper illumination and beautification of venues. He directed the concerned departments to ensure that all public utilities remain fully functional during the celebrations.

He asked the Information Department to install and thoroughly test

the Public Address System (PAS) and other audio-visual equipment well before the full-dress rehearsal, while maintaining adequate backup arrangements to address any unforeseen eventuality.

Dulloo also instructed all Heads of Departments, Divisional Commissioners and Deputy Commissioners to illuminate major government buildings, offices, bridges and other iconic public infrastructure to commemorate the 80th Independence Day celebrations.

He directed the district administrations to issue invitations to public representatives, freedom fighters, ex-servicemen, families of martyrs, eminent citizens and other invitees well in advance to facilitate their participation in the celebrations.

During the meeting, officers informed that contingents of the Jammu and Kashmir Police, Armed Police, CRPF, BSF, IRP, Lady Police, Fire & Emergency Services, NCC, NSS and various educational institutions would participate in the ceremonial parade and cultural programmes at the main venues.

DC Kulgam takes on-ground assessment of rainfall scenario

KT News Desk

KULGAM, JULY 24: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Shahzad Alam Friday visited the flood-prone areas of Gudder and Laisoo to take an on-ground assessment of the prevailing rainfall situation and review the preparedness of the district administration in view of the ongoing inclement weather.

During the visit, the Deputy Commissioner, as per an official statement, inspected vulnerable locations and inspected road damages, reviewed the water level in the Vishow river and assessed the precautionary measures put in place by the concerned departments to safeguard lives and property. He directed the officers to remain vigilant and ensure round-the-clock monitoring of all flood-prone areas, besides maintaining close coordination for timely response to any



emergency.

The DC appealed to the public to avoid venturing near rivers, streams, and other water bodies during the ongoing spell of heavy rainfall and urged them to follow the advisories issued by the district administration.

Later, the DC visited Rescue Centre located in Government Middle School Gudder, where nomadic families have been temporarily accommodated as a precautionary measure. He interacted with the families, enquired about their well-being and inspected the facilities being provided at the shelter.

The Deputy

Commissioner directed the concerned officers to ensure the availability of all essential amenities, including safe drinking water, food, electricity, sanitation, healthcare, bedding, and other basic necessities for the relocated families.

The DC was accompanied by the Additional Deputy Commissioner, Vikar Ahmad Giri; Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM), D H Pora, Bashir ul-Hassan; AEE, PMGSY D H Pora; AEE, Flood Control and officers from concerned departments, who briefed him about the preparedness measures and the ground situation.

FDA conducts 118 inspections, 54 food samples lifted for quality testing

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, JULY 24: Food & Drugs Administration (FDA) conducted 118 inspections of Food Business Establishments and lifted 54 enforcement samples of various food articles for laboratory analysis to assess their quality and safety.

In addition, 16 surveillance samples, as per an official statement, were lifted from ICDS Centres to assess the quality and safety of food being served to beneficiaries. Three Improvement Notices were also issued to Food Business Operators for deficiencies observed during the inspections.

Further, FDA, J&K, has conducted 1,642 inspections with effect from 1st July 2026 till date and lifted 878 enforcement samples and 223 surveillance samples, comprising of 250 samples of Milk and Milk Products, 217 samples of Oils and Fats, 178 samples of Cereals and Cereal Products, 243 samples of Spices, and samples of other food commodities. 89 Improvement Notices were also issued to Food Business Operators.

Consumers are requested to report any suspected cases of unsafe or adulterated food through Toll-Free Helpline No. 104 or by email at cfsjandk.fnd@jk.gov.in.

IN THE COURT OF EXECUTIVE
MAGISTRATE 1st CLASS SOPORE

In the case of: Firdous Bashir Dar S/o: Bashir
Ahmad Dar R/o: Reban.

Versus
C.E.O Municipal Council Sopore/BDO Sangrama/BDO
Sopore
(Registrar of Birth and Death)

...Non Applicant

NOTICE TO PUBLIC AT LARGE

Whereas, the above titled case is under process in this court, seeking direction therein to the non-applicant u/s 13(3) of the Registration of Births & Deaths Act, 1969 for registration of **Birth** event of the applicant's Son namely Mohd usman Dar S/o: Firdous Ahmad Dar as 26-09-2012 at M.C.H Sopore.

Whereas through the medium of this proclamation the public at large is informed that in case any one has any objection for issuance of direction with respect to the registration of aforementioned **Birth** event he /she shall file the same before this court in person or through counsel within 7 days from the date of the publication of this proclamation.If the date fixed is declared holiday,the matter will be taken on the next working day.

Executive Magistrate 1st Class, Sopore

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Sopore
(Registrar of Birth and Death)

...Non Applicant

NOTICE TO PUBLIC AT LARGE

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Whereas through the medium of this proclamation the public at large is informed that in case any one has any objection for issuance of direction with respect to the registration of aforementioned **Birth** event he /she shall file the same before this court in person or through counsel within 7 days from the date of the publication of this proclamation.If the date fixed is declared holiday,the matter will be taken on the next working day.

Executive Magistrate 1st Class, Sopore

Government of Jammu & Kashmir

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER MECHANICAL
AND HOSPITAL DIVISION ANANTNAG

-----E mail Id xenmhd-ang@jk.gov.in-----

GIST of short e-NIT No MHDA/TS/31 of 2026-27 DATED: 23-07-2026

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, J&K UT short term e-tenders are invited on percentage basis from Registered contractors/Firms having experience in executing mechanical works for the below mentioned works:

S. No.	Name of the Work	Estimated Cost (In Rs)	Cost of Tender Doc. (In Rs)	EMD in Rs	Time of completion (Days)
1	Repairs to departmental Soil Compactor EC-5250 of Mechanical and Hospital Sub Division 2nd Pulwama.	47400.00	200.00	950.00	10
2	Repairs to departmental Tandem Vibratory Roller HD-85 of Mechanical and Hospital Sub 2nd Pulwama.	33200.00	200.00	660.00	10

• Position of Administrative Approval: Accorded vide No. M&HED/KI/Acctt/33 of 2026-27 dated 30-04-2026 by Chief Engineer Mechanical and Hospital Engineering Directorate Kashmir.

• Position of Technical Sanction: Accorded

• Position of Funds: Available

1. Downloading of Bids: The Tender document Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the Govt. website [www.jktenders.gov.in](#) from 23-07-2026 (16:00Hrs)

2. Submission of Bids: The bidders shall deposit their bids in electronic format on the above website from 23-07-2026 (17:00Hrs) to 30-07-2026 (14:00Hrs) in two covers.

3. Opening of Bids: The bid uploaded on the Web Site up to due date and time will be opened on 31-07-2026 (14:00Hrs) in Office of the undersigned.

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
Mechanical and Hospital
Division
Anantnag

DIPK-3657/26
DATED: 24-07-2026

No: MHDA/ TS-446/1272-73
Dated: 23-07-2026

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER MECHANICAL &
HOSPITALS DIVISION BARAMULLA

e-mail, id, xenmhd.bla@jk.gov.in

TENDER NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER

M&HDB/TS/2026-27/38/1188-92
22-07-2026

For and on behalf of the Lieutenant Governor of Jammu & Kashmir, Executive Engineer, Mechanical & Hospitals Division Baramulla, invites online e-bids in Two Cover system on percentage wise basis from Authorized Service Providers of OEMs /Registered / Listed Contractors for the below mentioned works:

S. No	Name of Work	Estimated Cost (Rs. in Lacs)	Cost of T/Doc. (In Rupees)	Earnest Money Deposit	Time of Completion
01.	Preventive / Corrective maintenance to snow clearance Machine No.46 Tata LPT-715 pertaining to Mechanical and Hospitals Sub Division 1 st Baramulla	1.66797	200.00	3336/-	10 days

Note: -

• AAA: - Administrative Approval accorded by Chief Engineer M&HD Kashmir vide No. M&HED / K / Acctt / 29 of 2026-27 Dated: - 30-04-2026.

• Technical Sanction: - Technical Sanction Accorded by Executive Engineer Mechanical & Hospitals Division Baramulla vide No. M&HDB/TS/26 of 07/2026; Dated: - 21-07-2026.

• Executing Agency: - Executive Engineer, Mechanical & Hospitals Division Baramulla.

1.	Date of issue of Tender Notice	22-07-2026
2.	Period of downloading of the bidding document	From 22-07-2026 to 29-07-2026
3	Bid Submission Start Date	From 22-07-2026 (18:00 HRS)
4.	Bid Submission End Date	03-08-2026 (18:55 HRS)
5.	Date of Opening of Cover 1 st	04-08-2026 (13:00 HRS)

The bidders are required to submit their offers in two (02) covers.

Cover-I shall contain: Scanned copies of following documents:

01.	Tender Fee	Tender Fee equivalent to Rs. 200.00 (Rupees Two hundred Only) has to be deposited in the Departmental Common Pool Account maintained in Jammu & Kashmir Bank, Branch Residency Road Srinagar, under Account No: 0005010200000355 (IFSC Code: JAKA0CHINAR). Proof of the said Electronic / Digital Transfer has to be uploaded in Cover-I documents.
02.	EMD	Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) equivalent to 02% of value of the advertised cost has to be deposited in the Departmental Common Pool Account maintained in Jammu & Kashmir Bank, Branch Residency Road Srinagar, under Account No: 0005010200000355 (IFSC Code: JAKA0CHINAR). Proof of the said Electronic / Digital Transfer has to be uploaded in Cover-I documents.
03.	Terms & Conditions	Scanned copy of the Annexure- "A" & "B" duly accepted by the bidder.
04.	Tax Clearance	Registration Certificate of Sales Tax Department quoting GST Number.
05.	GST	Scanned copies of PAN Card / GST Registration / Latest GST clearance certificate or acknowledgement of latest returns.
06.	Undertaking	Undertaking as per format at Annexure "C" that the bidder has not been blacklisted or debarred by any Govt./Semi Govt. Department.
07.	Contractor Registration	Scanned copy of valid Contractor Registration on JKPWDOMS of PWD J&K.
08.	Eligibility / Work Experience Certificate	The Bidder Shall submit documentary proof of having successfully executed similar nature of work amounting to 80% of the estimated cost in single contract or 50% of the estimated cost in two contracts each or 40% of the estimated cost in three contracts each in last 07 years in any Govt. / Semi Govt./Autonomous institutions alongwith satisfactory performance certificate issued by a competent authority not below the rank of Executive Engineer.

Note: -

> The successful bidder has to furnish EMD document physically to the Divisional office alongwith fee receipt within three days from the date of opening price bid, without which his bid shall not be accepted for further processing of contract in his favour.

> No EMD exemption shall be given to bidders.

> Bidders / Firms shall refrain from uploading irrelevant documents.

> Contractor/ Firm shall upload the contact / communication details separately on single page.

A. Cover-II shall contain:

01. Price bid, as per BOQ uploaded by this department. In no case, financial bid will be accepted in physical form.

02. The bids for the work shall remain valid for 180 days and the contract shall be valid for one complete year, starting from the date of allotment of the said contract.

03. The complete bidding process will be online.

04. The Financial bid of only qualifying bidders shall be opened online in the Office of the Executive Engineer M&HD Baramulla after evaluation of technical bid and decision thereof.

05. Bidder shall be penalized as per tender conditions if they withdraw their bid during the period of bid validity or make any modifications in the terms and conditions of the bid.

06. Bidders are advised not to make any change in BOQ (Bill of Quantities) contents. In no case they should attempt to create similar BOQ manually. The BOQ downloaded should be used for filling the rate below %age inclusive of all taxes and it should be saved with the same name as it contains.

07. The cost of tender documents is non-refundable and the tender shall in no case be accepted if submitted by any firm other than the purchaser.

08. Any tender found to have been submitted by the firm by furnishing false information to the department shall be cancelled and the firm shall be penalized as and when it comes to the notice of the Department even during the currency of the contract. The department reserves the right to debar / blacklist such firm(s).

09. Conditional tenders shall not be entertained.

10. Unbalanced Bid: In case bid of the lowest bidder is found unbalanced, the successful bidder shall have to deposit additional performance security as per the Circular directives of the J&K U.T Finance Department issued vide No. FD-Code/441/2021-22-158; Dated: - 08.08.2025.

11. The tenders should be addressed to the Executive Engineer M&HD Baramulla.

No: - M&HDB/TS/e-tender-38/1188-92 Dated: - 22-07-2026

DIPK-3679/26
DATED: 24-07-2026

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
Mechanical & Hospitals Division
Baramulla

From The Parliament

‘CA cases in J&K rise from 13,060 to 14,493’



Raja Syed Rather

Srinagar, Jul 24: The Centre has informed Parliament that the estimated number of cancer cases in Jammu & Kashmir increased from 13,060 in 2021 to 14,493 in 2025, according to data compiled under the Indian Council of Medical Research's National Cancer Registry Programme (NCRP).

Replying to an unstarred question in the Lok Sabha, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare said cancer screening for oral, breast and cervical cancers is being carried out

under the National Programme for Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases (NP-NCD), with services available through Ayushman Arogya Mandirs and trained frontline health workers.

The ministry also said a nationwide HPV vaccination campaign for around 1.2 crore eligible 14-year-old girls was launched on February 28, 2026, while cancer treatment is being supported through Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY, Jan Aushadhi, AMRIT pharmacies and the expansion of cancer care infrastructure across the country—(KNO)

373 Jan Aushadhi Kendras functional in J&K: GoI

Raja Syed Rather

Srinagar, Jul 24: The Government of India (GoI) on Friday informed Parliament that 373 Jan Aushadhi Kendras (JAKs) are currently functional in Jammu & Kashmir and three in Ladakh as part of the Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP), aimed at providing affordable generic medicines.

Replying to an unstarred question in the Lok Sabha, Union Minister for Chemicals and Fertilisers Jagat Prakash Nadda said a total of 20,149 Jan Aushadhi Kendras were operational across the country as on June 30, 2026. The government has set a target of opening 25,000 Kendras by March 2027.

The minister said the PMBJP currently offers 2,110 medicines and 315 surgical, medical consumables and devices, with prices around 50 to 80 per cent lower than branded medicines. He added that the scheme has significantly improved access to affordable quality medicines, including in rural and remote areas—(KNO)

AIIMS Jammu faces 395 staff vacancies

Raja Syed Rather

Srinagar, Jul 24: The Centre on Friday informed Parliament that 69 faculty and 326 non-faculty posts are lying vacant at AIIMS Jammu during the current financial year (2026–27), while recruitment to sanctioned posts remains a continuous process.

Replying to an unstarred question in the Lok Sabha, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare said AIIMS Jammu has 183 sanctioned faculty posts, of which 114 are filled, while 985 of 1,311 sanctioned non-faculty posts are occupied. The ministry said vacancies depend on factors such as the availability of eligible candidates, reservation roster and the institute's location.

The Centre said several measures have been taken to expedite recruitment, including Standing Selection Committees, recruitment examinations, engagement of retired faculty on contract and visiting faculty schemes, besides technology-driven initiatives to improve patient care and hospital services—(KNO)

J&K sees over 20 lakh eSanjeevani teleconsultations

Raja Syed Rather

Srinagar, Jul 24: The Government of India (GoI) on Friday informed Parliament that more than 20.05 lakh teleconsultations have been conducted through the eSanjeevani National Telemedicine Service in Jammu & Kashmir, aimed at improving access to healthcare in remote and border areas.

Replying to an unstarred question in the Lok Sabha, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare said Jammu & Kashmir has 512 operational hubs and 1,903 operational spokes under the eSanjeevani platform. Of the total teleconsultations, 18.58 lakh were provided through Ayushman Arogya Mandirs, while 1.46 lakh consultations

were conducted through the eSanjeevani OPD service.

The ministry said the eSanjeevani service is operational across all States and Union Territories, including remote and border areas, and is supported by regular training, specialist consultations and an AI-based Clinical Decision Support System to strengthen digital health infrastructure and improve access to quality healthcare—(KNO)



ported by regular training, specialist consultations and an AI-based Clinical Decision Support System to strengthen digital health infrastructure and improve access to quality healthcare—(KNO)

No data on Indian students in Pak Med colleges Pre-2022 advisory: GoI

Raja Syed Rather

Srinagar, Jul 24: The Centre on Friday informed Parliament that the National Medical Commission (NMC) does not maintain data on the number of Indian students who had taken admission in medical colleges in Pakistan before the advisory issued on

April 28, 2022.

Replying to a question by Srinagar MP Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi in the Lok Sabha, Union Health Minister Jagat Prakash Nadda said the NMC seeks security clearance from the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) for students who had secured admission in medical colleges in

Pakistan before April 13, 2022, from time to time.

The minister said the MHA issues security clearance based on inputs received from security agencies. After receiving the clearance, the NMC processes the applications expeditiously for the issuance of Eligibility Certificates (ECs), the House was informed—(KNO)

J&K has 4 fast track special courts: Centre

Raja Syed Rather

Srinagar, Jul 24: Jammu & Kashmir has four functional Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs), including two Exclusive POCOS Courts, the Centre informed Parliament on Friday, saying the centrally sponsored scheme has been temporarily extended till September 30, 2026 to ensure speedy trial of rape and child sexual abuse cases.

Replying to a starred question in the



Lok Sabha, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Law and Justice Arjun Ram Meghwal said that 775 Fast Track Special Courts, including 398 Exclusive POCOS Courts, are functional across 29 States and Union Territories as of April 30, 2026. The scheme, launched in October 2019, has been extended twice and was last valid till March 31, 2026, before being temporarily extended till September 30 this year.

The minister informed the House that

the Centre has released ₹2.32 crore in 2023–24, ₹1.48 crore in 2024–25 and ₹1.74 crore in 2025–26 to Jammu & Kashmir under the Fast Track Special Courts Scheme.

"Since the inception of the scheme, the Centre has released ₹1,259.51 crore to States and UTs for the smooth functioning of FTSCs," the minister said. "The government is also conducting regular review meetings with States, UTs and High Courts

to improve case disposal and ensure compliance with timelines prescribed under the POCOS Act and the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita."

The minister added that recruitment of judges and court staff is the responsibility of the respective State/UT governments and High Courts, while the Centre continues to provide financial assistance for strengthening judicial infrastructure across the country—(KNO)

Delegations call on LG Sinha



KT News Desk

Srinagar, July 24: Zubair Ganie, senior BJP leader and former District President Kulgam called on Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Friday and discussed various issues of public importance.

Furthermore, a delegation led by Shafqat Abdullah, BJP Youth President Baramulla also called on Lieutenant Governor and

projected various issues related to development of sports infrastructure, welfare of minority communities, youth empowerment and other development issues of Baramulla.

Meanwhile, a delegation of J&K Bharat Scouts & Guides, led by its Senior Vice President, Prof. Dr. Fayaz Ahmad Nikka, called on Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha.

The members of the

delegation projected various important matters pertaining to strengthening of Bharat Scouts & Guides movement in the Union Territory, including establishment of a dedicated Training Centre, enhancement of Grant-in-Aid, inclusion of Bharat Scouts & Guides under sports category, and creation of Scouts & Guides Fund on the pattern of Red Cross Fund.

BJP Minority Morcha pays tributes to slain Policeman

Holds candlelight march in Chadoora

Naveed Ul Haq Ganaie

Budgam, Jul 24: The BJP Minority Morcha on Friday evening organised a protest and candlelight march in Chadoora area of Central Kashmir's Budgam district to pay tribute to martyred Head Constable Ashiq Hussain, who was killed in the recent terror attack in Anantnag.

The programme was led by Bhat Imtiyaz, General Secretary of BJP Minority Morcha, Jammu and Kashmir, and was attended by party workers and local residents, who condemned the terror attack and offered prayers for the departed soul.

Speaking to media, Bhat Imtiyaz said the supreme sacrifice of Head Constable Ashiq Hussain would always be remembered and that the nation stands with his family.

He strongly condemned the terror attack, saying such acts would not weaken the resolve of the country. He said Prime Minister Narendra



Modi has transformed the security situation in Jammu and Kashmir and asserted that anyone attempting to disturb peace or indulge in terrorist activities would face a strong and befitting response.

"The sacrifice of our brave personnel will
Continued on
www.kashmirthunder.in

DSEJ issues flood safety measures for schools

YOGESH

Srinagar, Jul 24: The Directorate of School Education Jammu (DSEJ) has issued safety measures for reopening of all educational institutes in flood affected areas of the division. DSEJ in a circular said that the decision was taken in view of the recent spell of heavy rainfall and the consequent flooding across various parts of the Jammu Division.

"It has been reported by several Chief Education Officers that a number of educational institution buildings have sustained structural damage, rendering them unsafe for occupation by students and staff," reads the circular.

DSEJ said that in these prevailing circumstances, the safety, security and wellbeing of students, teachers and all personnel shall remain the paramount consideration in the resumption of academic activities.

"Accordingly, no government or private educational institutions including coaching institutes and centres (Herein after referred as Institutions) shall resume physical classes unless the structural integrity and overall safety of its premises have been thoroughly assessed and found satisfactory," it reads.

It also said that if any institute that has been inundated sustained structural damage or exhibits signs of structural distress or any other potential safety hazard shall remain closed and shall not be occupied until it has been inspected and declared fit for use by the competent authority.

"Under no circumstances shall the safety of students, teachers or staff be compromised and every possible precautions shall be taken to ensure that school premises are structurally safe, secure, hygienic and fully prepared before reopening for academic activities," the circular said.

DSEJ said that in order to ensure the safe resumption of academic activities, all CEO's of the Jammu Division shall ensure strict implementation of the safety measures.

The directorate said that all Heads of Institutions (Hol's) shall conduct a comprehensive inspection of their respective institutions before resumption of physical classes.

"The inspection shall include the school buildings, classrooms, boundary walls, furniture, electrical installations, drinking water facilities, sanitation blocks, playgrounds, and

Continued on
www.kashmirthunder.in

Kashmiri youth among brightest creative minds: Imtiaz Ali

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Jul 24: Acclaimed filmmaker Imtiaz Ali on Friday described Kashmiri youth as among the brightest creative minds in the country. He expressed hope that the first International Film Festival of Jammu and Kashmir (IFFJK) would inspire more young people from the region to pursue careers in cinema and the creative arts.

Speaking at the unveiling of IFFJK's logo at Royal Springs Golf Course here, Ali said he was fortunate to work in Jammu and Kashmir, where he witnessed not only breathtaking landscapes but also the warmth and artistic richness of its people.

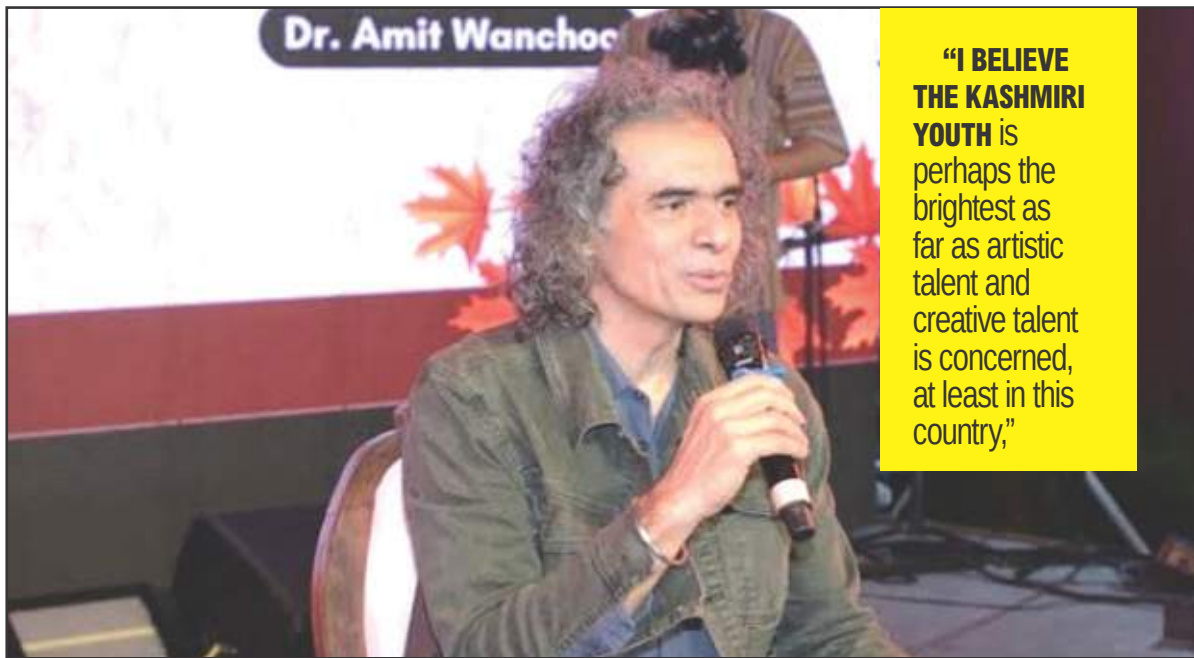
"I believe the Kashmiri youth is perhaps the brightest as far as artistic talent and creative talent is concerned, at least in this country," he said, adding

that the region possesses a rich human resource capable of making a meaningful contribution to the world through art and storytelling.

Ali said he hoped his experience of shooting films in Jammu and Kashmir would encourage more local youngsters to become part of the creative industry.

Reflecting on his long association with the region, the filmmaker said every day spent in Kashmir had been "a day well spent" and expressed gratitude for the affection he had received from its people. "I have received a lot of love from all of you, and I hope I can be of service and deserve this recognition," he said.

The first International Film Festival of Jammu and Kashmir (IFFJK) is scheduled to be held in September this year as the Union Territory's first international film festival—(KNO)



"I BELIEVE THE KASHMIRI YOUTH is perhaps the brightest as far as artistic talent and creative talent is concerned, at least in this country,"

EDITORIAL

The Fearless Path To Innovation

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah had a simple but powerful message for the young entrepreneurs of Jammu and Kashmir at the ASCEND J&K 2026 Startup Summit in Srinagar: do not be afraid to fail. He reminded everyone that innovation cannot grow without taking risks. His words come at a time when the region is slowly waking up to the power of startups.

Right now, Jammu and Kashmir has around 1,300 to 1,400 startups. But the goal is to double that number by next year. This is not just a number. It is a sign that young people are ready to build, create, and solve problems. The fear of failure has held back too many brilliant minds. Young people worry about what others will say. They worry about losing money. They worry

about being laughed at. So they never try. But history tells us that every great success came after many failures. Thomas Edison did not succeed the first time he tried to invent the light bulb. He learned from each attempt and kept going until he got it right. That is the spirit we need today. The innovations on display at the summit show that our youth are already thinking about

real problems. Some have created sensor-based systems to stop pipes from freezing in winter. Others have made smart water meters to reduce waste. There are hail-storm protection nets for farmers, carbon monoxide detectors, and gas safety devices. These are solutions born from everyday life. The government has promised to back risk-taking entrepreneurs. Seed funds have

been distributed. Idea challenges have been launched for school and college students. Mentorship and market access are being provided. But governments can only do so much. The real change must come from young people themselves. Keep dreaming, keep trying, and never be afraid to fail. Your future, and the future of Jammu and Kashmir, depends on it.

Saving Soil, Securing Farms Beneath Every Harvest Lies Healthy Soil

Press Information Bureau

Soil is a strategic national resource that supports agricultural productivity, food security, and rural livelihoods in India. National initiatives are promoting scientific soil management through soil testing, balanced nutrient use, and climate-resilient farming practices. The Soil Health Card Scheme has generated over 25.89 crore cards, supporting informed nutrient management. The National Mission on Natural Farming has expanded to 18,786 clusters covering 8.80 lakh hectares. Public outreach efforts, including the Khet Bachao Abhiyan, are encouraging wider adoption of sustainable practices. Digital platforms, geospatial mapping and artificial intelligence are improving soil assessment and advisory services, strengthening productivity, resilience and long-term agricultural sustainability.

Soil as a Strategic National Resource

Soil forms the very foundation of India's agricultural systems, supporting crop production, sustaining ecosystems, and securing livelihoods. More than 46 percent of the workforce is employed in agriculture and allied activities. As a result, soil health has a direct influence on rural incomes, food systems, and overall economic stability.

According to the Land Use Statistics 2022-23, the total reported area of India is 306.65 million hectares, of which nearly 59 per cent is under agriculture. This highlights the critical role of soil in sustaining productivity and meeting the nutritional needs of a growing population. Healthy soil enables higher yields and reduces dependence on external inputs. In this context, soil security and sustainability are vital for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030. This is particularly important for those related to zero hunger (SDG 2) and climate action (SDG 13).

Recognising this strategic importance, India has expanded its focus on sustainable soil and land management. National efforts span climate resilience, natural farming, soil mapping, and digital agriculture. Initiatives such as the National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA) and the National Mission on Natural Farming (NMNF) promote resilient and resource-efficient agricultural practices. The Soil Health Card Scheme further supports informed nutrient application through soil testing and advisory services. These efforts reflect the journey of soil science evolving from traditional farming practices to modern scientific approaches.

Alongside institutional interventions, recent awareness initiatives such as the "Khet Bachao Abhiyan" are also strengthening public engagement. This is helping in soil conservation, balanced use of fertilisers and sustainable agricultural practices.

Soil Diversity: Foundation of Agricultural Strength

India's varied climate, geology, and relief have resulted in a wide range of soils that support region-specific agricultural practices. These soils differ in composition and fertility, enabling diverse cropping patterns and improving resilience across regions.

Alluvial soils are found in the Indo-Gangetic and Brahmaputra plains and the deltas of rivers like Mahanadi, Krishna and Godavari covering states like Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Assam, West Bengal, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh. These soils are fertile and widely distributed across river plains. Black soils in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, and Gujarat are clayey, retain moisture, and are rich in lime and calcium. Red soils are spread across parts of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, north-east Andhra Pradesh, eastern Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, and Rajasthan. These soils vary in colour due to iron content and are generally porous and low in key nutrients.

Laterite soils are predominantly found in Eastern Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Assam, and parts of Maharashtra. They develop under conditions of high rainfall and intense leaching, which removes soluble nutrients from the soil. Desert soils, in Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Leh-Ladakh, are characterised by their sandy texture, low moisture retention, and the presence of soluble salts. Forest and hill soils are distributed across the Himalayan and North-Eastern regions, varying according to altitude, climate,

and vegetation cover.

Saline and alkaline soils are found in the arid and semi-arid regions, coastal and delta regions or areas with prolonged poor drainage and waterlogging. These include parts of Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Bihar, Rajasthan, coastal Odisha, the Sundarbans of West Bengal, Kutch region of Gujarat. These soils are characterised by surface salt accumulation, which can affect crop productivity. Marshy soils occur in parts of Tamil Nadu, Bihar, and Uttar Pradesh, where prolonged waterlogging results in high organic matter content. Such wide range of soil types across the country reflects India's diverse agro-climatic landscape and underpins varied cropping systems.

Soil and Climate Action: Building Resilience

Soil plays a critical role in climate change mitigation and adaptation by acting as a significant natural carbon sink. Soils absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and store it as soil organic carbon. This process is facilitated by vegetation growth, roots, and soil microorganisms. The stored carbon can remain in the soil for long periods, helping reduce greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere. In addition, higher soil organic carbon levels improve soil structure, enhance moisture retention capacity, and increase nutrient availability. This further strengthens soil fertility and resilience to climate variability. Moreover, carbon farming is emerging as an important component of climate-smart agriculture. It focuses on removing atmospheric carbon and storing it in soils through sustainable land management practices.

In this context, government interventions support practices that increase soil organic carbon and enhance long-term carbon storage. These include the National Mission for a Green India, National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture, National Mission on Natural Farming, and the Carbon Credit Trading Scheme. Their interventions align closely with the principles of carbon farming.

National Mission for a Green India

The National Mission for a Green India (GIM) is one of the initiatives under the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC). It addresses climate change through actions that enhance ecosystem services, particularly carbon storage in forests and trees. Forests play a vital role in climate mitigation by absorbing carbon dioxide and improving natural carbon sinks. The mission focuses on increasing and improving forest and tree cover, including on-forest and degraded lands. This strengthens carbon sinks and supports India's climate commitments. In pursuance of India's commitments under its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), the mission aims to create an additional carbon sink of 2.5-3.0 billion tonnes of CO₂ equivalent by 2030. As per the India State of Forest Report (ISFR) 2023, an additional carbon sink of 2.29 billion tonnes of CO₂ equivalent was created between 2005 and 2021, demonstrating significant progress towards this goal. These interventions also enhance soil and biomass carbon while improving ecosystem resilience.

National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC)

NAPCC provides a comprehensive framework to address climate change while facilitating sustainable development. It promotes actions that deliver both developmental benefits and climate outcomes, with a focus on adaptation and mitigation.

The Plan is implemented through eight national missions. These missions cover areas such as solar energy, water, green India, agriculture, ecosystems and knowledge systems, providing a comprehensive framework for climate action.

National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture

Sustainable agriculture strengthens climate resilience while improving soil health, resource efficiency, and long-term farm productivity. To advance these objectives, in 2014-15, the National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA) was launched as a key component of NAPCC. It focuses on promoting sustainable farming through improved soil health, efficient water use and adoption of climate-resilient

practices. The mission facilitates farmers through financial assistance and incentives to adopt better soil management and water conservation measures. Since 2014-15, Rs.2,119.84 crore has been released under Rainfed Area Development, covering 8.50 lakh hectares and benefiting 14.35 lakh farmers through Integrated Farming System. These interventions are enhancing soil organic carbon and supporting practices aligned with carbon farming.

National Mission on Natural Farming

The National Mission on Natural Farming, launched in 2024, promotes sustainable agricultural practices through scientifically informed approaches that strengthen soil health and enhance climate resilience. The mission focuses on reducing farmers' input costs while encouraging safe, environmentally responsible food production. It represents a shift towards nature-based farming systems that improve soil organic carbon and support long-term farm viability.

The mission has expanded significantly, with 18,786 clusters covering 8.80 lakh hectares and over 18.19 lakh farmers enrolled as of March 2026. This reflects the growing adoption across States.

Capacity building remains a key component. 33,676 trained Community Resource Persons and a wide network of training institutions support knowledge dissemination on natural farming bio-inputs at the grassroots level.

The mission also contributes to the development of local input systems through Bio-input Resource Centre (BRC) and certification mechanisms. Bio-input Resource Centres are local facilities that supply ready-to-use natural farming inputs such as Beejamrit and Jeevamrit to farmers. They also provide training and demonstrations to farmers to adopt natural alternatives to chemical fertilisers and pesticides. This encourages farmers to adopt sustainable practices while strengthening the overall agricultural ecosystem.

Carbon Credit Trading Scheme

Carbon markets create financial incentives for activities that reduce, avoid, or remove greenhouse gas emissions. The Carbon Credit Trading Scheme, adopted in 2023, enables farmers and organisations to undertake greenhouse gas mitigation activities. It also enables them to earn tradable carbon credit certificates through voluntary carbon markets (VCM). Each carbon credit represents one metric tonne of carbon dioxide equivalent that is reduced, avoided, or removed. Verified standards such as the Verified Carbon Standard (VCS) and Gold Standard provide frameworks for measuring and validating emission reductions in agriculture. By adopting sustainable, eco-friendly practices and obtaining proper verification, farmers can generate carbon credits. They can further sell them to entities seeking emission offsets, thereby enabling climate mitigation while creating an additional income stream.

Integrated Approaches to Soil Health and Fertiliser Management

Soil Health and Fertility Scheme, launched in 2015, promotes scientific soil management by assessing soil nutrient status and guiding farmers on balanced fertiliser use. It provides Soil Health Cards with crop-specific recommendations to improve soil health and productivity. Training and demonstration programmes further support farmers in adopting the judicious use of chemical fertilisers. This includes secondary and micronutrients, along with organic manures and bio-fertilisers. The School Soil Health Programme further extends this effort by engaging students. Students participate in soil sample collection, testing, and preparation of Soil Health Cards. This enables them to support advisory services for farmers.

As of 13 March 2026, a total of 25.89 crore Soil Health Cards have been generated since inception. Around 7.17 lakh demonstrations have been conducted to promote balanced fertiliser use. These demonstrations were conducted through advisories supported by the Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA) and Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs). In addition, 70,002 Krishi Sakhis have been trained to support the dissemination of soil health advisories at the grassroots level. The School Soil Health Programme has registered 4,430 schools and 1,29,167 students in 2025-26.

From Soil Testing to Higher Yields: A Farmer's Experience

Shri Nirapado Gorai, a farmer from Dhanbad district, Jharkhand, adopted Soil Health Card recommendations on his 3-acre farm. Prior to this, his nutrient management practices relied largely on nitrogen and phosphorus, with limited use of other essential nutrients. Based on the soil health advisory, he shifted to balanced fertiliser application, including potash and lime. He also applied urea in split doses at different stages of crop growth.

This transition reduced fertiliser costs from Rs.1,910 to Rs.1,190 per acre, resulting in savings of Rs.720 per acre. At the same time, paddy yield increased from 1,000 kg to 1,320 kg per acre, along with visible improvement in plant health.

Reflecting on the change, he observed less infestation of disease and insect pests. He observed that this was probably due to the judicious use of nitrogenous fertilisers and application of potash.

Balanced Nutrient Management

India has taken significant steps to improve fertiliser management through reforms that promote efficiency and transparency.

The Nutrient Based Subsidy (NBS) scheme links subsidy support to the nutrient content of fertilisers, encouraging balanced nutrient application. Under this scheme, the government provides subsidies on 28 grades of Phosphatic and Potassic (P&K) fertilisers, including Diammonium Phosphate (DAP), to farmers at subsidised prices through fertiliser manufacturers and importers. The subsidy rates are notified separately for the two major cropping seasons. The Kharif season rates are applicable from 1 April to 30 September, while the Rabi season rates apply from 1 October to 31 March.

Aadhaar-linked Point of Sale (PoS) devices authenticate beneficiaries and enable real-time tracking of fertiliser sales. Under the Direct Benefit Transfer in Fertilisers system, subsidies are released based on actual sales through PoS devices. Fertiliser subsidy disbursements totalled Rs.6.77 lakh crore between 2022-23 and July 2025.

Neem-coated urea slows nitrogen release, improves nutrient-use efficiency, and reduces diversion for non-agricultural purposes. The Government mandated a 100 per cent neem coating on all domestically produced urea.

The Integrated Fertiliser Management System further strengthens monitoring and logistics, ensuring better control over fertiliser availability and use.

Khet Bachao Abhiyan: Promoting Balanced Fertiliser Use

To further strengthen balanced fertiliser use, the Government intensified awareness efforts through the Khet Bachao Abhiyan. The campaign promoted scientific nutrient management practices among farmers.

Led by Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and the DA&FW, the campaign involved the entire National Agricultural Research, Education and Extension Systems (NAREES) and was held during June 1-30, 2026. It promoted soil test-based nutrient management so as to reduce overdependence on chemical fertilisers through camps, demonstrations, and farmer outreach activities. The campaign also raised awareness of alternative agricultural practices in low-rainfall conditions.

A total of 99,489 interaction meetings and events, 25,178 awareness camps were organised. In addition, 6,721 training programmes and 96,227 field demonstrations on green manuring and bio-fertilisers were conducted to promote balanced nutrient management. The campaign strengthened grassroots participation through 4,916 Janpratinidhi Sammelans, including fertiliser and input dealers. These activities directly engaged around 1.07 crore farmers/other stakeholders, and about 4.5 crore citizens through social media.

These reforms and awareness initiatives are strengthening balanced fertiliser use, improving nutrient efficiency, and supporting long-term soil sustainability.

Building a Digital Soil Ecosystem

India is advancing towards a data-driven approach to soil management by integrating geospatial mapping, digital platforms, and

artificial intelligence.

Geospatial Soil Mapping and Resource Assessment

The Nationwide Soil Resource Mapping project, implemented by the Soil and Land Use Survey of India (SLUSI), is generating high-resolution soil profile maps. They combine satellite imagery with field observations to create village-level soil inventories. The inventories support scientific land use planning and informed crop selection.

As of September 2024, around 29 million hectares had been mapped. The target is 142 million hectares of agricultural land. To accelerate this effort, Rs.1,076 crore was provided to six States. These include Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, and Andhra Pradesh. The support is strengthening the creation of reliable soil resource datasets across regions.

Integrating Soil, Land, and Farmer Data

Digital technologies are transforming agricultural decision-making through integrated data systems and targeted advisory services. The Digital Agriculture Mission is building a unified data framework by linking soil information with land and crop datasets. Platforms such as AgriStack are enabling the integration of farmer, land, and soil data to support targeted advisory services. As part of this effort, as of 27 November 2025, over 7.63 crore Farmer IDs have been generated. During Rabi 2024-25, 23.5 crore crop plots were surveyed. This has enabled mapping soil information to individual land parcels, supporting more accurate, location-specific advisories.

AI and Precision Soil Management

Artificial intelligence is transforming soil management by converting complex data into actionable insights for farmers. Under the Digital Agriculture Mission, platforms such as the Krishi Decision Support System (KDSS) integrate soil, weather, and crop data. These platforms generate location-specific advisories for crop planning and nutrient management.

This integration of data and technology is improving soil assessment and supporting informed farm-level decisions.

AI-based soil diagnostics use satellite imagery, remote sensing, and farm-level data to identify nutrient deficiencies. They also detect soil stress and support timely corrective action.

AI-enabled precision farming supports site-specific application of water and fertilisers based on local soil conditions. This improves resource efficiency, reduces input costs, and minimises environmental impacts.

AI-driven advisory systems help farmers make decisions on crop selection, sowing time, and nutrient management.

Advances in agri-robotics are promoting operations such as analysis, planting, and field management. Technologies, including autonomous tractors, use GPS, cameras, and AI for greater precision. Institutions such as ICAR-Indian Agricultural Research Institute are also developing robotic systems for sampling and crop monitoring.

These advancements are enhancing precision, improving productivity, and strengthening the foundation for sustainable and climate-resilient agriculture in India.

Unlocking the Potential Beneath Our Feet

Soil remains one of India's most valuable natural resources, sustaining agriculture, livelihoods, and food security. Scientific assessment, sustainable farming practices, and improved nutrient management are strengthening its long-term health. Through initiatives such as the Soil Health Card Scheme, NMSA, NMNF, and Green India Mission, the country is promoting scientific and sustainable soil management.

Efforts to improve soil health have encouraged balanced nutrient use, enhanced resource efficiency, carbon storage, and supported climate-resilient farming. At the same time, geospatial mapping, artificial intelligence, and digital agriculture platforms are enabling more precise and data-driven farm decisions. As awareness grows through efforts such as the Khet Bachao Abhiyan, India is steadily unlocking the true potential of soil as a critical national resource.

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

Technology-enabled projects should remain focused on improving ease of living for citizens: CS Dulloo

Reviews progress of BISAG-N-supported IT-enabled governance projects across departments

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, JULY 24: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, Friday chaired a high-level review meeting to assess the progress of various Information Technology (IT) and e-Governance projects being implemented across multiple departments of the Government of Jammu and Kashmir taken-up in collaboration with the Bhaskaracharya National Institute for Space Applications and Geo-informatics (BISAG-N).

The meeting, as per an official statement, besides the Commissioner Secretary, IT, Saurabh Bhagat; and Special Director General, BISAG-N, Vinay Thakur; was attended by the concerned Administrative Secretaries, Heads of Departments, senior police officers, representatives from the National Informatics Centre, and other stakeholder agencies.

A comprehensive department-wise review was undertaken to evaluate the implementation status of ongoing digital governance projects, identify bottlenecks, review timelines and accelerate completion of technology-enabled initiatives aimed at improving governance, enhancing transparency and making public services more accessible, efficient and citizen-friendly.

During the meeting, the Chief Secretary underscored that digital transformation is a key pillar of governance reforms and directed departments to ensure close coordination with BISAG-N for timely completion of all pending modules. He emphasized that every digital intervention must ultimately translate into improved public service delivery, simplified procedures, enhanced



accountability and greater convenience for citizens.

He further emphasized that all technology-enabled projects should remain focused on improving ease of living for citizens by ensuring transparent, efficient and time-bound delivery of public services.

He took the occasion to impress upon the departments to adhere strictly to project timelines and ensure seamless integration of departmental databases for effective implementation of digital governance initiatives. He stressed the need for continuous monitoring, timely resolution of technical issues and adoption of emerging technologies, including Artificial Intelligence, wherever feasible to improve governance outcomes.

Reviewing the progress of the Finance Department's AI-based GST Analytics and Fraud Detection Portal, the meeting was informed that the platform has significantly strengthened tax compliance through advanced analytics and fraud detection mechanisms. More than 4,300 notices have been issued based on analytics generated by the portal, resulting in substantial revenue recovery. The system has also been strengthened through enhanced reporting

modules, Action Taken Report monitoring and improved processing capabilities.

While reviewing the End-to-End Energy Tracking and Management System (EETMS) of the Power Development Department, the meeting was informed that the project has entered the operational deployment phase with live dashboards, role-based access and Management Information System (MIS) reports across power sector corporations. API-based data integration and automated alerts are being operationalized, while future phases will incorporate Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning for demand forecasting, predictive maintenance and advanced decision support.

The meeting also reviewed the implementation of the Integrated Mining Surveillance System (IMSS) developed for the Mining Department. The project uses satellite imagery and geo-spatial technologies for detection of illegal mining activities and GPS-enabled monitoring of mineral transportation vehicles. Thousands of mineral transport vehicles have already been integrated with the surveillance platform, enabling automated alerts and improved

enforcement.

Reviewing initiatives in the School Education Department, the meeting was informed that the JK e-Pathshala Educational Television Channel is broadcasting curriculum-based educational content round the clock and has considerably expanded access to quality learning resources, particularly for students in remote areas.

The Tourism Department presented the progress achieved in development of the redesigned JK Tourism Web Portal and Mobile Application, equipped with an AI-powered chatbot, integrated tourist information, itinerary planning, hotel and transport onboarding and digital payment facilities. The platform is expected to significantly improve the overall visitor experience while promoting tourism destinations across the Union Territory.

The meeting also reviewed progress on several important digital initiatives of the Agriculture Production Department, including Kisan Khidmat Ghar, Kisan Sathi, Daksh Kisan and the JKIP Portal, which are aimed at strengthening digital agriculture services, improving scheme implementation, enhancing monitoring mechanisms and

providing technology-enabled support to farmers.

Reviewing the JK Samadhan grievance redressal platform, the Chief Secretary was informed that substantial progress has been achieved in addressing system improvements and implementation of new functionalities. He directed the concerned agencies to ensure expeditious completion of all remaining action points to further strengthen public grievance redressal.

The Revenue Department presented the status of modernization of land records, digitization of Jamabandis, workflow automation and mutation management systems designed to improve transparency, efficiency and accessibility of revenue services.

The meeting also reviewed the implementation status of several other important digital governance initiatives, including the Single Window System for Recruitment Rules, Unified Cooperative Dashboard, PMAY-Urban 2.0 Household Survey Application, Mission YUVA Mobile Application, JK SeHAT Mobile Application, District Good Governance Dashboard, Digital Digest of Statistics, Village Planning Portal, Family ID Project, Industrial Mapping Application, Forest e-Behak System, Anganwadi GIS Tracking Platform, PWD Digital Project Monitoring System, Youth Engagement Portal and other GIS-enabled platforms being developed for various departments.

The meeting concluded with detailed directions for early completion of pending deliverables, enhanced inter-departmental coordination and periodic review of all ongoing digital governance projects to ensure their timely operationalization across the Union Territory.

DC Ramban assesses restoration of National Highway

Reviews public safety measures, restoration of essential services



KT News Desk

RAMBAN, JULY 24: Amid continuous heavy rainfall over the past three days, Deputy Commissioner Ramban

Mohammad Alys Khan Friday conducted an on-the-spot inspection from Nashri to Ramsuo to assess the impact of the inclement weather and review the progress of restoration works being carried out by various executing agencies, particularly along the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway (NH-44).

The Deputy Commissioner, as per an official statement, was accompanied by Senior Superintendent of Police Arun Gupta, along with senior officers of the civil and police administration.

He visited vulnerable stretches of the National Highway where restoration and debris clearance operations are being carried out by the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI). He reviewed the deployment of men and machinery and directed the executing agencies to expedite clearance works while ensuring the safety of the personnel engaged in restoration activities.

The DC directed all departments concerned to maintain close coordination and ensure that vehicular movement on the National Highway resumes only after the Traffic Department issues the necessary clearance and travel advisory. He appealed to commuters to strictly follow the

advisories issued by the Police and Traffic authorities through official communication channels and to avoid non-essential travel until the weather improves and the highway is declared safe for traffic.

Reviewing the situation arising from the continuous rainfall and the rising water level in the Chenab river, local nallahs and streams, the Deputy Commissioner instructed the departments concerned to intensify public awareness campaigns and prevent people from venturing near water bodies. He urged citizens to stay away from rivers, nallahs and other vulnerable locations to avoid any untoward incident.

Taking stock of the restoration of internal roads and essential public services, the Deputy Commissioner directed the Public Works Department (PWD), Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) and Border Roads Organisation (BRO) to intensify restoration works by deploying adequate manpower and machinery for the early reopening of all blocked roads and the officers of Jammu Power Distribution Corporation Limited (JPDC), Jal Shakti Department and other line departments to restore electricity supply, drinking water facilities and other essential services on priority.

Restoring road connectivity to the affected areas, he said, remains a priority to minimise public inconvenience and ensure the movement of essential services.

JKBOSE postpones exams scheduled for July 25

KT News Desk

JAMMU, JULY 24: The Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education has postponed the Annual (Private)/Bi-Annual 2026 examinations of Class 11 (HSP-I) scheduled for July 25. Fresh dates for the postponed

examinations will be notified separately.

As per the notification issued, the examination of the Jammu and Kashmir State Open School (JKSOS Class 12), as per an official statement, will be held on the dates already notified, at the Jammu, Srinagar, Leh and Kargil centres.

PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan District-level capacity building workshop held in Ramban



KT News Desk

RAMBAN, JULY 24: A district-level capacity building workshop on the PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan (PMGS-NMP) was organised Friday at the Conference Hall, Ramban, under the guidance of Deputy Commissioner Ramban Mohammad Alys Khan.

Officers and representatives of various line departments attended the workshop, besides General Manager District Industries Centre Ramban Ravinder Kumar along with his staff.

Addressing the participants, Chief Planning Officer Ramban Dr Shakeeb Ahmed Rather said the PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan fosters integrated infrastructure planning, data-driven governance and co-ordinated decision-making. Effective utilisation of the GIS-enabled PM Gati Shakti Portal would facilitate better project planning, reduce implementation delays and ensure optimal use of public resources.

The concerned departments, as per an official statement, were directed to obtain access to the PM Gati Shakti Portal and use the platform for the planning, monitoring and implementation of developmental

projects and to nominate appropriate officers as Maker, Checker and Approver for the timely, accurate and authenticated uploading of departmental data.

The technical team of the Industries & Commerce Department, the nodal department for implementation of PM Gati Shakti in Jammu and Kashmir, conducted training sessions and presentations on various components of the portal. The sessions covered an overview of the National Master Plan, portal access procedures, live demonstrations of portal functionalities, the Data Upload Management System (DUMS), analytical tools and the overall data management framework.

Technical Experts (PM Gati Shakti, J&K) Santosh Kumar Rai and Naseer Mir conducted the training, providing hands-on guidance to the participants and addressing their queries on the use of the portal.

Participants interacted with the resource persons and discussed departmental requirements, operational challenges and measures for strengthening the implementation of the PM Gati Shakti initiative at the district level.

The workshop concluded with a vote of thanks.

DAJ reviews functioning of testing laboratories

Calls for transparency, quality standards

KT News Desk

JAMMU, JULY 24: Director Agriculture Jammu Anil Gupta Friday reviewed the functioning and quality control mechanisms of the Soil Testing Laboratory (STL), Pesticide Testing Laboratory (PTL) and Fertilizer Quality Control Laboratory (FQCL) working under the Agriculture Chemist, Directorate of Agriculture, at Krishi Bhawan, Talab Tillo, Jammu.

He inspected all three laboratories, examining testing procedures, analytical facilities, record maintenance, laboratory hygiene, equipment functionality, compliance with quality control protocols and workflow and discussed operational challenges with the laboratory personnel.

The Director, as per an official statement, instructed the officers concerned to achieve the assigned testing targets within the stipulated timeframe while maintaining technical efficiency, scientific accuracy and transparency. Laboratory reports, he said, must be generated strictly as per the prescribed quality protocols to ensure the credibility of analytical results.

He directed the Analysts



to bring additional pesticide molecules under the scope of analysis at the Pesticide Testing Laboratory so that a wider range of formulations can be monitored and called for strengthening the Mini Soil Testing Laboratories established under HADP as well as facilities for testing organic fertilisers, bio-fertilisers and pesticide residues. Robust testing infrastructure, he said, would ensure the quality and safety of agricultural inputs and support sustainable farming practices.

Agriculture Chemist Roshan Lal informed the Director that all three laboratories have been accredited by the National

Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL) and are continuously upgrading their infrastructure, analytical capabilities and quality assurance practices to provide accurate and timely testing services to the farming community.

The Director was accompanied by Agriculture Chemist Roshan Lal, SMS-RL Krishan Kant, Assistant Soil Chemist (STL) Chander Shekhar, Assistant Agriculture Chemist (PTL) Ravinder Gupta, Assistant Biochemist (FQCL) Deepak Singh, Analysts, besides other officers and staff of the department.

DDC Poonch visits flash flood-hit Hari-Marhote villages in Surankote subdivision

Reviews relief restoration measures

KT News Desk

POONCH, JULY 24: District Development Commissioner Poonch Ashok Kumar Sharma Friday visited the flash flood-affected villages of Hari-Marhote in Tehsil Surankote to assess the damage caused by the recent calamity and review the relief, rescue and restoration measures being undertaken by the district administration.

The DDC, as per an official statement, reached the affected area early in the morning, accompanied by SDM Surankote Mohammed Farooq Khan, Assistant Commissioner (Development) Shakeel Ahmed, Executive Engineers of PWD (R&B), Jal Shakti Department



and Irrigation & Flood Control, besides other officers concerned.

He inspected the damage to roads, shops, school buildings, protection bunds along the riverbed, agricultural land, standing crops, horticulture, irrigation channels and other public and private infrastructure. He also interacted with affected families and local residents,

heard their grievances and obtained first-hand feedback on the losses suffered and the immediate requirements of the people.

The DDC sought detailed reports from the departments concerned on the extent of damage, the progress of restoration works and the measures being taken to restore normalcy in the affected villages. He directed all

departments to work in close coordination and restore damaged roads, public utilities and other essential infrastructure immediately so that public inconvenience is minimised. He issued on-the-spot directions to the officers concerned to expedite restoration works on priority and instructed SDM Surankote to personally monitor the relief and restoration operations and ensure inter-departmental coordination for the timely completion of all works.

The DDC assured the affected families that the district administration stands firmly with them and that all possible assistance, as per the prescribed norms, will be extended to the affected households. He reiterated that every genuine case of damage would be assessed properly and relief provided without delay.

Meanwhile, the district administration has remained on alert continuously for the past five days, since the flash floods struck the subdivision. Senior officers and field functionaries have been working round the clock, moving from village to village and house to house to assess the situation, rescue stranded persons wherever required, document losses, provide immediate relief, restore essential services and ensure that no affected family is left unattended. Teams from various departments have maintained a constant field presence despite difficult weather and terrain to facilitate relief, rehabilitation and restoration works at the earliest.

The DDC appreciated the efforts of all departments, field staff and emergency response teams engaged in the relief operations.

ADC Bhaderwah reviews arrangements for Independence Day 2026 celebration



KT News Desk

BHADERWAH, JULY 24: Additional Deputy Commissioner Bhaderwah Sunil Kumar Bhutyal Friday chaired a meeting at Dak Bungalow, Bhaderwah, to review and finalise arrangements for the celebration of Independence Day 2026.

The meeting, as per an official statement, discussed all necessary arrangements for the main function which will be organised at the New Bus Stand, Kotli, near the ADC Office Bhaderwah.

Officers were directed to ensure the illumination of all government buildings and offices and the Municipal Committee

Bhaderwah to maintain cleanliness across the town, with special focus on the venue and surrounding areas.

Among those present were Principal Government Degree College Bhaderwah, Commanding Officer 4RR Bhaderwah, Deputy Commandant 33 Battalion CRPF, SHO Bhaderwah, Executive Engineer I&FC Division, Principals of Boys and Girls Higher Secondary Schools, CDPO ICDS, ZEO, ZPEO, Assistant Executive Engineers of PDD and PMGSY, Assistant Engineer R&B, Block Medical Officer Bhaderwah, Livestock Development Officer Bhaderwah and representatives of various other departments.

ASCEND J&K 2026 concludes on high note; two startups secure funding, investment

20 startups pitch before 14 investors; seven shortlisted for further evaluation

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Jul 24: Jammu and Kashmir's largest-ever Startup Ecosystem Summit, "ASCEND J&K 2026 – Where Mountains Meet Momentum," concluded at the Sher-i-Kashmir International Convention Centre (SKICC), Srinagar, on Friday, marking a major step towards connecting promising startups from the Union Territory with national investors, accelerators, mentors and ecosystem leaders.

Organised by the Jammu and Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI) under the aegis of the Industries and Commerce Department, the two-day summit witnessed high-level panel discussions, startup pitching sessions, investor meetings, masterclasses and networking engagements aimed at strengthening the innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem in Jammu and Kashmir.

The summit generated significant investment interest, with 20 startups from Jammu and Kashmir pitching their business ventures before 14 investors and investment networks. Seven startups were shortlisted for further evaluation and due diligence, creating



potential pathways for investment, acceleration and strategic partnerships.

Among the major outcomes, two startups secured funding support and investment commitments of up to 1 crore, reflecting growing investor confidence in ventures emerging from Jammu and Kashmir.

Srinagar-based startup EcoBuddy received an investment commitment in the range of 75 lakh to 1 crore from LetsVenture, a leading technology-enabled platform for investment in early-stage startups across sectors.

Founded by Muhammad Farukh Usman, Eco Buddy

provides technology-driven waste-management solutions and eco-friendly packaging materials, addressing emerging environmental and sustainability challenges.

Another Srinagar-based startup, Curve Electric, attracted funding support from Build3 Accelerator and angel investor Komal Nailwal, further strengthening the region's startup investment landscape.

The concluding day commenced with a panel discussion on "Role of Incubators in Scaling J&K's Startup Ecosystem." Moderated by Chintan Bakhshi of IIM Ahmedabad, the session brought together incubation leaders from prominent national and local incubation centres.

The panellists deliberated on the evolving role of incubators in nurturing innovation, providing technical and managerial support, facilitating technology transfer, enabling market access and helping startups scale sustainably. They emphasised the need for stronger collaboration among academia, industry, government institutions and incubators to build a vibrant and globally competitive entrepreneurial ecosystem in the Union

Territory.

The second panel discussion, titled "From Mountains to Momentum: Building the Next Generation of Startup Ecosystems," featured successful founders from Jammu and Kashmir who shared their entrepreneurial journeys, challenges and experiences of building enterprises from the region.

Moderated by Shradha Sharma, Founder of YourStory, the session highlighted how startups from Jammu and Kashmir are developing innovative solutions across diverse sectors and expanding their presence at the national level. The founders encouraged aspiring entrepreneurs to remain resilient, strengthen their business models and leverage technology, mentorship and market networks to achieve sustainable growth.

The summit concluded with an interactive masterclass on "How to Be Investment-Ready," delivered by noted investor and entrepreneur Shanti Mohan.

The masterclass offered practical guidance on building scalable business models, understanding investor expectations, preparing for fundraising,

strengthening financial and operational planning and developing compelling investment pitches. The session helped participating startups identify gaps in their investment preparedness and better position their ventures for future growth.

Running parallel to the panel discussions and masterclasses, structured investor-pitching sessions and one-on-one meetings enabled startup founders to directly engage with venture capital firms, angel investors, accelerators and investment networks.

The interactions focused on business models, market potential, scalability, revenue strategies, funding requirements and long-term growth plans. These engagements provided founders with valuable feedback and opened opportunities for further discussions, mentorship and investment partnerships.

The second day witnessed enthusiastic participation from startup founders, investors, incubators, mentors, industry experts, academicians and ecosystem stakeholders from across the country. The quality of discussions and investment engagements reaffirmed ASCEND

J&K 2026 as a significant platform for connecting local innovation with national capital, expertise and markets.

ASCEND J&K 2026 brought together startups, venture capital funds, investors, policymakers, industry leaders, academicians, incubators, mentors and ecosystem enablers on a common platform, transforming the summit's theme, "Where Mountains Meet Momentum," into meaningful investment conversations and growth opportunities.

Organised under the J&K Startup Policy, the summit reflects the Government's commitment to building a robust, inclusive and innovation-driven startup ecosystem that enables young entrepreneurs to transform ideas into sustainable enterprises, attracts private investment and generates employment opportunities across Jammu and Kashmir.

With startups securing funding support, investment commitments and further investor consideration, ASCEND J&K 2026 concluded as a landmark initiative in Jammu and Kashmir's journey towards becoming an emerging hub of entrepreneurship, technology and innovation.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Martyred cop's

a peaceful and prosperous Union Territory," LG Sinha said.

He assured the family that the administration stands firmly with them and will ensure their well-being and dignity. The Lieutenant Governor also assured full support to the family until martyr Ashiq Hussain Qureshi's son finishes his studies and becomes eligible for a compassionate government appointment.

The Lieutenant Governor highlighted the significant progress achieved under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in dismantling the terror ecosystem and reaffirmed his resolve to eliminate terrorism from Jammu Kashmir.

He urged the entire society, especially youth of Jammu Kashmir, to draw strength from the martyr's dedication and devotion to Maa Bharti and remain united in the fight against terrorism. (KNO)

Amit Shah speaks

in Anantnag on Wednesday while performing his duties.

Talking to reporters after meeting the family, Sharma, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, "The martyred policeman made the supreme sacrifice in the service of the nation. Two generations of the same family dedicated their lives to the country and entire nation stands with the bereaved family members."

Sharma said Union Home Minister Amit Shah spoke to the slain policeman's son over the phone during the visit and conveyed his heartfelt condolences. "The Home Minister assured the bereaved family of all possible support from the Central Government."

According to Sharma, the family also shared its concerns directly with the Home Minister, who assured them that the Centre stands firmly with them in this difficult time and would ensure every possible assistance. "The Government of India is committed to standing by the family of the martyr. They will receive all the support they deserve," Sharma said.

He said the sacrifice of Head Constable Ashiq Hussain would be remembered with honour and dignity. Sharma said efforts would be made to commemorate the martyr's service by naming a school or another public institution after him as a lasting tribute to his bravery and sacrifice.

Describing the attack as a cowardly act, Sharma said such sacrifices strengthen the nation's resolve against terrorism and reaffirmed the commitment of security forces to safeguarding peace.

Head Constable Ashiq Hussain, a resident of Lolipora, Beerwah, was shot at point-blank range by terrorists near Lal Chowk in Anantnag while on duty. He later succumbed to his injuries. He is survived by his wife, three children, his widowed mother, a brother and three sisters.

His father, Head Constable Ghulam Mohiuddin Qureshi, had also lost his life while on official duty in 1995, making Ashiq the second generation of the family to lay down his life in service of the nation. (KNO)

Kashmir no longer

and firing, Kashmir is no longer that place. The story of Kashmir has changed, and we want filmmakers to show that changed reality to the world," he said.

CM Omar said the upcoming International Film Festival of Jammu and Kashmir aims to encourage authentic storytelling while giving long-overdue recognition to local talent.

"Our local filmmakers and documentary makers possess immense talent but rarely get a platform. That is why the festival will have a

dedicated section and special awards for them so they can showcase their work before a wider audience," he said.

He said the government hopes the festival will inspire filmmakers from across India and abroad to tell stories that capture the region's beauty, culture and changing social landscape instead of relying solely on conflict narratives.

Responding to a question on the ongoing protests in New Delhi, CM Omar said the Centre should engage with the protesters rather than allow the situation to drag on.

"I think the Centre should talk to these youngsters. From what I have seen, this protest has gone beyond any one organisation. Many of those on the streets are ordinary young people expressing their anger. It is now for the Centre to decide how it wants to address their concerns," he said. (KNO)

'Amarnath Yatra

improved and restoration work on the tracks was completed.

The Official advised pilgrims to follow directions issued by the administration and security agencies and undertake the yatra only as per the scheduled arrangements.

Pertinently, a robust security framework has been put in place, with thousands of personnel from the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Jammu and Kashmir Police, and other security agencies being deployed along the routes.

Around 20,000 pilgrims are camping at different locations and are eagerly awaiting the resumption of the yatra.

So far, more than 3.9 lakh pilgrims have paid obeisance at the Holy Cave Shrine during the ongoing pilgrimage.

The 57-day pilgrimage commenced on July 3 and will conclude on August 28, coinciding with Shravan Purnima and Raksha Bandhan. (KNO)

Remain mission

DGP Prabhat directed the officers to intensify area domination and night domination, particularly in vulnerable and urban areas, to deter anti-national elements and maintain a strong police presence. The DGP emphasized strengthening the security grid around critical infrastructure while reinforcing intelligence collection and coordination among all security and intelligence agencies.

Reviewing the counter-terrorism framework, the DGP instructed officers to intensify intelligence-led operations to identify, track and neutralize residual terror networks. He stressed the importance of close coordination among all stakeholders to facilitate swift operational responses and effectively counter any attempt to disturb public order or undermine the security environment.

Highlighting the critical role of reliable communication in policing, DGP Prabhat stressed the need to ensure uninterrupted telecommunication connectivity and resilient communication networks across all police formations.

Furthermore, the DGP called for heightened situational awareness across all formations and directed officers to maintain continuous oversight of weather-related preparedness. The DGP also emphasized that communication networks and field-level coordination must remain fully operational to address any emergencies arising out of inclement weather. (KNO)

Govt approves

forms part of the Government's sustained efforts to modernize and expand Jammu & Kashmir's power infrastructure, ensuring dependable, efficient, and quality electricity supply while supporting the region's economic growth and development.

India raised

all necessary measures to safeguard the country's interests.

The minister said India has placed high emphasis on international cooperation to combat terrorism, including cross-border terrorism, and has consistently highlighted its impact on the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir at all relevant international platforms. "The Ministry of External Affairs has established Joint Working Groups on Counter-Terrorism with 31 partner countries and actively participates in various multilateral groupings where such issues are regularly discussed," he said.

The government further informed the House that following the Pahalgam terror attack in April 2025, seven parliamentary delegations were sent to 33 countries to present India's position on the menace of cross-border terrorism before the international community.

The minister said the government accords high priority to the safety, welfare and development of people living in the border areas of the Jammu region. (KNO)

J&K HC directs

cases involving sexual offences, trial courts had disclosed the identity of victims in judicial orders and judgments, in blatant violation of statutory provisions and the law laid down by the Supreme Court.

The circular was issued on the directions of the Acting Chief Justice, who expressed displeasure over the manner in which trial courts were disregarding statutory safeguards, and directed that a suitable circular be issued to ensure strict compliance. (KNO)

Flood scare: 'Overall

declaration levels.

Among the tributaries, Vishow Nallah at Khudwani receded to 7.05 metres, Lidder Nallah at Batkoot fell to 0.96 metres, while Rambiyara Nallah at Wachi remained stable at 2.27 metres.

Earlier in the day, the I&FC Department had said that moderate to heavy rainfall over the southern catchment of the Jhelum basin during the morning led to a marginal rise in tributary levels, slowing the rate of recession at Sangam.

It had stated that the slowdown would also reflect at Ram Munshi Bagh over the following hours, but stressed that the river was still expected to maintain an overall receding trend.

The department said the situation is being closely monitored and urged people not to panic or pay heed to rumours circulating on social media or other unofficial sources. It advised the public to rely only on official updates, remain vigilant and cooperate with the administration.

Independent weather forecaster Faizan Arif Keng said intermittent rain is likely to continue in parts of Jammu and Kashmir through the night, with isolated heavy showers remaining possible.

He cautioned that intense spells of rain could trigger localised flash floods, landslides, shooting stones and a sudden rise in streams and nallahs, urging people to avoid vulnerable areas and follow official advisories. (KNO)

Heavy rain eases,

(KNO), said weather has improved across most places as expected after the extended rainfall event.

The department said brief spells of rain and thundershowers are likely over the next few days, with a fresh wet spell expected to affect Jammu and Kashmir from July 28.

The cumulative rainfall data for the period from July 19 to July 24 showed that Reasi recorded the highest rainfall in Jammu and Kashmir at 473.2 mm, followed by Udhampur

(417.5 mm), Rajouri (349.9 mm), Ramban (293.4 mm), Poonch (290 mm), Kathua (270.4 mm), Jammu (262.6 mm), Samba (213 mm), Doda (120.1 mm) and Kishtwar (77 mm).

In Kashmir division, Kulgam recorded the highest cumulative rainfall at 201.1 mm, followed by Shopian (145.2 mm), Srinagar (144.7 mm), Pulwama (136.8 mm), Anantnag (130.8 mm), Baramulla (119.7 mm), Kupwara (115.9 mm), Ganderbal (115.9 mm), Bandipora (63.7 mm) and Budgam (37.3 mm).

The latest update comes days after the Meteorological Centre Srinagar had issued a weather advisory forecasting a major wet spell between July 19 and July 23 due to moisture incursion from the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal, coupled with the northward shift of the monsoon trough.

The advisory had warned of widespread moderate to heavy rainfall, isolated extremely heavy rainfall over Reasi and Udhampur, flash floods, landslides, mudslides, shooting stones, waterlogging in low-lying areas, disruption of surface transport and a significant rise in water levels of rivers and streams.

The forecast largely materialised as heavy rains lashed Jammu and Kashmir over the past five days, triggering flash floods and landslides in several districts, damaging roads and public infrastructure, inundating low-lying areas, swelling rivers and streams, forcing repeated closure of the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway and leading to the suspension of the annual Amarnath Yatra for nearly a week.

JAMMU-SRINAGAR HIGHWAY REMAINS CLOSED

Meanwhile, the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway (NH-44) remained closed for vehicular movement on Friday afternoon due to intermittent landslides and shooting stones at multiple locations caused by the recent heavy rainfall.

Traffic Police said restoration work was underway but advised commuters to avoid travel until the highway is declared safe for movement, warning of the possibility of fresh landslides and shooting stones. The authorities also urged people to rely only on official traffic advisories and verified updates regarding the road status.

Official weather observations showed that Srinagar recorded a maximum temperature of 24.8 degrees Celsius, which was 5.1 degrees below normal, while Qazigund, Pahalgam, Kukernag, Banihal, Batote and Bhaderwah also recorded significantly below-normal daytime temperatures.

The Meteorological Department has advised people, particularly those living in flood- and landslide-prone areas, to remain vigilant and continue monitoring weather updates as rainfall activity is expected to increase again from July 28. (KNO)

Kashmir reopening

that natural beauty alone is no longer enough to attract filmmakers in today's competitive environment.

"We have to offer much more than breathtaking landscapes. We need to make it easier for filmmakers to come here, cheaper for them to shoot here and ensure that trained local youngsters are available to support every aspect of filmmaking," Omar said.

He said the government has already initiated efforts in that direction and expressed confidence that the festival, scheduled for September, would strengthen those initiatives.

Describing IFFJK as the beginning of a long journey, Omar said the government's vision is to develop it into a respected international film festival.

"This is the first edition, but certainly not the last. Film festivals develop their own identity

and become global brands. We want filmmakers from across the world to look forward to participating in Kashmir," he said.

He said future editions would also include chapters in Jammu, with the long-term goal of competing with the country's leading film festivals and eventually earning international recognition. "The intention is there, the history is there and the relationship is there. It only needs to be taken forward in a new light," he added.

The Chief Minister also revealed that uncertainty over the proposed closure of Srinagar Airport during the festival period had briefly threatened the event's planning.

"We were worried because we couldn't expect busy filmmakers and actors to remain stranded in Srinagar for two extra days if the airport was closed. Thankfully, the Government of India decided not to go ahead with the closure. That was a huge relief for us," he said.

Expressing confidence that the remaining preparations would proceed smoothly, Omar thanked filmmakers Muzaffar Ali, Imtiaz Ali and Sajid Ali for supporting the initiative.

"It is not just your words but your work that has shown your friendship with Jammu and Kashmir. Your association with this festival gives us tremendous encouragement and confidence," he said, while inviting the film fraternity to return to Kashmir for the inaugural festival in September.

CURTAIN RAISER CEREMONY HISTORIC OCCASION: CHIEF SECY

Addressing the gathering, Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo said that this curtain raiser ceremony is a historic occasion which reminds the great partnership of J&K with Bollywood. He added that this platform is a great occasion to establish the bond with Bollywood.

The Chief Secretary also said that J&K has a goldmine of talent and potential and we need to give platform like this to our budding filmmakers to showcase their talent.

Padma Shri awardee and noted film maker, Muzaffar Ali, while speaking on the occasion highlighted that Kashmir has special place in the Bollywood from the very beginning. He also remembered his association with the Kashmir while shooting for various remarkable films here.

KASHMIRI YOUTH BRIGHTEST: IMTIAZ ALI
In his address, renowned filmmaker and writer Imtiaz Ali said that Kashmiri youth are brightest as far as talent is concerned. He also remembered his association with Kashmir while shooting for various Bollywood blockbusters in the valley.

Earlier, in her welcome address, Director Information, Shreya Singhal said that this curtain raiser ceremony will set the centre stage for homecoming of cinema to Jammu and Kashmir.

The Director Information highlighted that this film festival aims to establish J&K as a prime film shooting destination in the country. She added that till date around 400 entries from over 25 countries in different formats have been received for screening during the festival and the entry for film submissions will close on 30th July, 2026.

During the event, the Chief Minister also unveiled the merchandise of the Film Festival.

Pertinently, the first International Film Festival of Jammu & Kashmir (IFFJK), scheduled to be held from 7th to 10th September 2026, is envisioned as a premier platform celebrating cinema, culture and creativity while showcasing the region's breathtaking landscapes, artistic heritage and emerging filmmaking ecosystem. The festival is expected to bring together filmmakers, artists, industry leaders and cinema enthusiasts from India and around the world, reaffirming Jammu and Kashmir's place on the global cinematic map. (KNO)

10 years jail, Rs 1 crore fine: Centre's anti-paper leak law notified in 2024

PTI

New Delhi, Jul 24: The Union Cabinet on Friday approved a draft bill to ensure stricter punishments for paper leaks, hours after Prime Minister Narendra Modi made an announcement.

The Centre had brought out a new law in 2024 as well when it was faced with raging paper leak controversies.

Nearly four months after President Droupadi Murmu gave assent to The Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024, the Bill was notified in June 2024 when tempers were high due to alleged NEET and NET paper leaks.

Before this legislation, there was no specific substantive law to deal with unfair means adopted or offences committed by various entities involved in the conduct of public examinations by the central government and its agencies.

The Act aims to prevent unfair means in the public examinations conducted by the Union Public Service Commission



(UPSC), the Staff Selection Commission (SSC), the railways, banking recruitment examinations and the National Testing Agency (NTA) among others.

The earlier Bill had provisions for a minimum of three to five years of imprisonment to curb cheating and those involved in organised crimes of cheating will face five to 10 years of imprisonment and a minimum fine of Rs 1 crore.

The Bill had provisions for

"engagement of services of other government agencies by public examination authority", "preparation of norms, standards and guidelines" and "reporting of incidents of unfair means or offences" among others.

Pre-examination activities such as pre-audit for the examination readiness of the public examination centres, candidate check-in, biometric registration, security and screening, seat allocation, question paper

setting and loading, invigilation in the examination, post-examination activities and guidelines for providing scribes were also part of norms.

The Bill outlines 15 illegal acts including leaking question papers, tampering with OMR sheets, creating fake websites and issuing fake admit cards.

Paper leaks are again at the centre of controversy with student-led protests over the NEET-UG examination snowballing into a nationwide agitation, driven by paper leaks, alleged police crackdowns on demonstrators and ongoing demands for accountability.

Opposition parties have joined the chorus and are demanding Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation besides a debate in Parliament on the issue.

In a late night video message for protesting students on Thursday, Prime Minister Modi announced that a bill containing provisions for strong action against paper leaks will be introduced in Parliament next week.

Rajya Sabha washout continues for 5th day; adjourned till Monday



PTI

New Delhi, Jul 24: Rajya Sabha on Friday failed to transact any significant business, except for the introduction of a bill to make insult to the national song Vande Mataram a criminal offence, as the first week of the Monsoon Session was virtually a washout amid uproar by the opposition over the NEET paper leak issue and demand for Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation. The House was

adjourned within minutes of assembly till 12 noon after Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge sought to raise the issue of lathicharge on students who are protesting against the paper leak and pressing for the resignation of Pradhan.

The proceedings were further adjourned till 2 pm as the Opposition protest continued. Opposition members are also pressing for the resignation of the Education Ministry before discussion on the issues

around paper leaks and students' protest.

At 2 pm, Deputy Chairman Harivansh Asked Minister of State for Home Affairs Nitayanand Rai to introduce 'The Prevention of Insults to National Honour (Amendment) Bill, 2026', a decision vociferously opposed by the opposition, including Left parties.

The Chair permitted John Brittas (CPI-M) and Sandosh Kumar P (CPI) to express their opposition to the proposed legislation.

However, the proposed legislation was introduced after a voice vote.

As the Chairman urged the House to start discussion on the bill, the Opposition created an uproar, leading to adjournment of the proceedings.

The Upper House will meet next on Monday.

The Rajya Sabha could not conduct any major business during the first five days of the Monsoon Session, which started on Monday, due to repeated adjournments after Opposition protests and sloganeering.

Media reports 'reckless', no plea related to CJP protests filed: CJI



PTI

New Delhi, Jul 24: Chief Justice of India Surya Kant on Friday dismissed as "reckless" media reports that he had denied urgent hearing on a plea challenging the July 20 police action against students, saying it was only a representation and not a petition.

No such petition was filed, he stated.

"In the last two days, a completely false statement was made that a matter was filed, and the media is absolutely free from all responsibility and falsely reporting that the Chief Justice refused to list the matter," he said.

"Till morning 10 am, not a single page has been filed. It was one representation...sent by Mishra or someone. How can I treat the representation as a writ petition? And people start recklessly reporting this," the CJI

said while lawyers were mentioning their cases for urgent listing on Friday.

On Wednesday, a lawyer sought urgent hearing on the police action against students during the Cockroach Janta Party-led protest march here on July 20.

"I have the videos as well regarding police brutality... If it can be listed tomorrow (Thursday)... students are there," the lawyer had said.

He said the students had allegedly been subjected to police brutality during the protest.

The CJI had declined the request and made it clear that the bench was not inclined to examine video footage at the mentioning stage. "We are not interested in videos, we don't have time to watch... We don't want to watch videos," the CJI had said.

When the counsel reiterated that students had been beaten up and again referred to the video evidence, the CJI had said, "Don't waste our time. We don't want to watch any videos." The Cockroach Janta Party led march on July 20 witnessed clashes between protesters and security personnel, who used lathis and tear gas to disperse crowds attempting to move towards Parliament.

SC bars posting, uploading court proceedings on social media without prior permission

PTI

New Delhi, Jul 24: Observing that courts can't be a 24x7 entertainment channel, the Supreme Court on Friday barred posting and uploading of audio-video recordings of judicial proceedings on social media and other digital platforms without prior permission of the court administration.

Taking note of the misuse of audio-visual recordings of judicial proceedings, a bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana passed the interim order while agreeing to hear a plea seeking to restrain unauthorised extraction, modification, dissemination or monetisation of such recordings.

"As an interim measure, it is directed that there shall be no extraction, modification, dissemination, monetisation, posting, reposting and uploading of audio-video recordings of judicial proceedings on social media or other digital platforms without prior permission of the secretary general of this court or the registrar general of the jurisdictional high courts," the bench said. The bench, however, clarified that its order would not affect news reporting of court proceedings.

The top court also issued notices to the Centre and others, including some social media platforms, seeking their responses on the plea filed by journalist Harshita Grover.

Senior advocate Vikas Singh, appearing for the petitioner,



said the issue raised in the petition was very important.

Referring to the misuse of audio-video recordings of judicial proceedings, he said selective and edited clippings were being circulated on social media and other digital platforms. The bench said regulating digital data has become one of the biggest challenges.

"It can't be a 24x7 entertainment channel by the court," the bench observed, adding that there was a need to ensure limited access.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta agreed with Singh's submissions and said there has to be some regulation.

Singh referred to a July 10 incident when a litigant appearing in person before an apex court bench allegedly hurled abuses and threw his legal papers during the hearing of his petition. He said the video

of the incident was widely circulated on social media, turning it into a joke. Mehta said recordings of court proceedings were being misused and people were picking up a particular portion, giving it a particular narrative and colour and making it viral in the virtual world.

He also flagged the potential danger posed by artificial intelligence and other IT tools, which can manipulate videos by altering or changing the words spoken by judges or lawyers during court proceedings.

The CJI said that he has experienced how some of his comments were recently misreported.

"I have experienced this, not in video but in the print form. What I never said was thrust upon me," he said. He said recently, a mention was made before his bench to list a matter. "Till 10 am today, no petition

has been filed," the CJI said, adding that it was reported in the media that he refused to hear the matter.

When the bench said it was issuing notices on the petition, Singh said some interim order was needed to deal with the issue.

"We can't stop a demon which is out of the box," the bench observed, adding that there was a need to ensure that sanctity of the institution is maintained.

While passing the interim direction, the bench asked the secretary general of the apex court and the registrar generals of the high courts to display its order on the official court website for public information.

The plea said while live-streaming and videoconferencing of court proceedings were introduced to advance the principles of open justice, transparency and public access to the judicial process, the absence of any regulatory framework governing the re-publication and monetisation of such material has resulted in widespread misuse.

"Isolated courtroom exchanges, oral observations, and preliminary remarks are frequently extracted from lengthy hearings and circulated without the factual or legal context in which they were made," it said.

"Such clips are often accompanied by misleading captions, sensational commentary, and clickbait headlines designed to maximise public engagement and commercial gain," the plea said.

India's forex reserves jump USD 1.08 billion to USD 676.237 billion



PTI

Mumbai, Jul 24: India's forex reserves jumped by USD 1.08 billion to USD 676.237 billion during the week ended July 17, according to the RBI data released on Friday.

In the previous reporting week, the overall forex kitty had jumped by USD 964 million to USD 675.157 billion.

Forex reserves had expanded to an all-time high of USD 728.494 billion during the week ended February 27 this year before the onset of the Middle East conflict, which led to several weeks of a drop as the rupee came under pressure and the RBI had to intervene in the forex market through dollar sales.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has also made multiple public appeals starting May 11 to countrymen to conserve forex by cutting down on foreign travel, limiting fuel use and refraining from gold buys for a year.

For the week ended July 17, foreign currency assets, a major component of the reserves, increased by USD 4.549 billion to USD 551.057 billion, the central bank's data showed.

Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include effects of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units, such as the euro, pound, and yen, held in the foreign exchange reserves.

Value of gold reserves dropped by USD 3.48 billion to USD 101.749 billion during the week, the RBI said.

Stock markets extend losses for 5th straight day on US trade tariffs, West Asia tensions

PTI

Mumbai, Jul 24: Market benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty ended lower on Friday, extending the losing streak for the fifth consecutive session, as investors remained cautious due to rising oil prices amid geopolitical tensions in West Asia and renewed concerns over US trade tariffs.

Fresh foreign fund outflows and selling in blue-chip HDFC Bank also dented market sentiment.

The 30-share BSE Sensex declined 331.62 points, or 0.43 per cent, to settle at 76,059.77. During the day, it tanked 916.96 points, or 1.20 per cent, to 75,474.43.

The 50-share NSE Nifty



dipped 102.15 points, or 0.43 per cent, to end at 23,767.45.

From the Sensex pack, Eternal, Mahindra & Mahindra, Bajaj Finance, Bharti Airtel, Asian Paints and Infosys were among the major laggards.

IT services company Infosys

declined 1 per cent after it tempered the upper end of its full-year revenue forecast to between 1.5 per cent and 3 per cent amid continued macroeconomic uncertainty.

HCL Tech, ITC, Axis Bank and Tata Consultancy Services were among the winners.

"Indian equity markets extended their losing streak to a fifth consecutive session as investors remained cautious amid lingering geopolitical tensions in the Middle East and renewed concerns over US trade tariffs. Weakness across Asian markets reinforced the risk-off mood, prompting broad-based selling despite signs of easing pressure in energy markets," Ponmudi R, CEO of Enrich Money, an online trading and wealth tech firm, said.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, dropped 3.66 per cent to USD 96.98 per barrel on Friday, after surpassing USD 100 per barrel in the previous session.

"Market sentiment is likely to remain under pressure in

the near term, as sustained oil prices in a higher range could begin to adversely impact key macroeconomic indicators and growth dynamics. Washington's new tariffs on imports added another headwind for export-driven economies, with technology-heavy markets having been hit the most as higher rates weigh on growth and investors are increasingly seeking to diversify their concentrated exposure to other emerging market opportunities," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 2,999.23 crore on Thursday, according to exchange data.

Govt rolls out Rs 3,030-cr scheme for setting up 3 chemical parks

PTI

New Delhi, Jul 24: The government on Friday announced a new scheme to set up three chemical parks in the country with an outlay of Rs 3,030 crore.

The Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved Bharat Audyogik Vikas Yojana Rasayan, or BHAVYA-Rasayan Scheme, to establish three dedicated chemical parks in the country, I&B Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said.

The scheme, announced in the Union Budget of 2026-27 fiscal, will have a total financial outlay of Rs 3,030 crore.

Out of the total outlay, Rs 3,000 crore would be towards the cost of establishing the common infrastructure facilities and basic utilities inside the parks. The remaining Rs

30 crore will be for the administrative expenditure. The scheme would run for a period of 5 years from the current fiscal to 2030-31.

The minister said that the total investment for establishment of these three parks would be much higher and the Rs 3,030 crore support is for common infrastructure facilities.

Vaishnaw said that there are many sectors in the economy that are foundational and the chemical sector is one of them, as it provides basic raw materials for many other industries.

According to an official statement, the Centre would provide a grant of up to Rs 1,000 crore per park. This will be subject to the minimum contribution of Rs 500 crore by the concerned state government.

India to fund UN portal for global cyber security capacity building

Portal to include repository, capacity-building calendar, needs-based catalogue; New Delhi offers 50,000 training opportunities to Global South in last 5 years

PTI

United Nations, Jul 24: India has said it will fund a portal for the UN for global ICT security, which will bridge the capacity gap that continues to separate developed and developing States.

India also said digital technology benefits can only be fully realised when accompanied by robust security and the capability to defend against emerging threats. Scaled, demand-driven capacity-building for Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) for the Global South is both achievable and effective when pursued with sustained political will, India's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Ambassador Parvathaneni Harish said.

He was addressing the Plenary Session of the Global Mechanism on ICTs in the Context of International Security on Thursday when he also welcomed the establishment of a Dedicated Thematic Group on cyber capacity building.

The first substantive plenary meeting from July 20-24 of the UN's permanent cyber mechanism advanced plan for the global cyber capacity-building system with member states discussing topics, including



funding, implementation and fellowships for women.

"It is with particular happiness that my delegation recalls that the proposal for a dedicated Global ICT Security Cooperation and Capacity-Building Portal was originally an Indian initiative, first tabled in 2022," Parvathaneni said. "We are pleased to announce today that, having seen this idea through years of deliberation to consensus and eventual adoption, India will be providing the entire funding towards the operationalisation of this Portal as a Portal of the United Nations so that concrete, tangible action can finally follow

years of discussion," he said.

India's support will help enable the technical establishment of the Portal and its maintenance, ensuring that the platform envisaged, comprising a repository of resources, a capacity-building calendar, a needs-based catalogue of opportunities and an interactive discussion board, can move from design to reality, he said.

CERT India will undertake the technical consultancy work required for the Portal's testing and infrastructure development, he announced. CERT-In is India's national nodal agency for responding to computer security incidents as and when they happen.

"We believe this platform can play a meaningful role in bridging the capacity gap that continues to separate developed and developing States in the domain of ICT security, providing it is treated by all of us as a living tool rather than a static repository," Parvathaneni said.

For Global South, digital technology has been transformative - a genuine enabler of economic prosperity and accelerated progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), he said. India's own experience with open, inclusive digital public infrastructure has shown that technology's benefits can only be fully realised when accompanied

by robust security and the capability to defend against emerging threats, Parvathaneni said. "This is precisely why India has consistently emphasized that capacity-building cannot be treated as a residual or secondary pillar; it must be targeted, needs-driven, context-specific, politically neutral and transparent," he added.

The Ambassador gave the example of the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme, through which in the last five years alone, India has offered close to 50,000 fully funded training opportunities to professionals from Global South countries.

These training programmes spanned nearly 400 courses at over 100 premier Indian institutions, with a substantial and growing share dedicated specifically to ICT, cyber security, e-governance and emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and big data analytics, he said.

"We share this experience to underline that scaled, demand-driven capacity-building for the Global South is both achievable and effective when pursued with sustained political will," the Ambassador added.

'Bangladesh President Shahabuddin resigns'



REUTERS

Dhaka, Jul 24: Bangladesh President Mohammed Shahabuddin has resigned, local media reported on Friday.

Shahabuddin, who has been the president of the South Asian nation since April 2023, oversaw the country during a

volatile period after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was ousted in August 2024 by youth protesters and until a caretaker government was formed days later.

Bangladesh's president is the head of state, but the role is largely ceremonial, with executive power resting with the prime minister and cabinet.

Glasgow CWG make history with first-ever braille design medals



PTI

Glasgow, Jul 24: When medals are draped around the necks of Commonwealth Games podium finishers here, some winners would notice something unusual beneath their fingertips.

For the first time in the Games' history, the medals feature braille and tactile elements, making them accessible to visually impaired athletes. The move ties in with Glasgow 2026's emphasis on inclusion, reflected in a record 47 gold medals across six Para sports -- the biggest Para programme at a Commonwealth Games.

Overall, 215 gold medals will be

on offer across 10 sports and six Para sports.

While every host city puts its own stamp on the medals, Glasgow's design is a departure from the familiar circular shape. The medals are fashioned as a Reuleaux triangle, inspired by the city's coat of arms.

The patterns on the surface are drawn from the Finnieston Crane, one of Glasgow's best-known landmarks and a reminder of its shipbuilding past. The textured finish is inspired by tartan, a symbol closely associated with Scotland, while the three levels on the medal represent the three steps of the podium.

Hezbollah says Lebanon president's US visit 'submission' to foreign power



AFP

Beirut, Jul 24: The Iran-backed Hezbollah group has branded Lebanese President Joseph Aoun's recent visit to Washington a failure and said it showed the government's submission to a foreign power.

In a statement, the group's lawmakers said the visit revealed "the extent of subservience and submission to foreign tutelage," adding that it "failed to achieve... an American commitment to the withdrawal of the enemy from our land," referring to Israel.

The visit, according to the group, also failed to "stop the crimes of killing, bombing and bulldozing that this enemy continues to commit against our people, nor did it provide the possibility of a safe return for the displaced or the start of reconstruction."

US President Donald Trump received Aoun in Washington on Tuesday, where the Lebanese leader said he "stressed the urgent need for a full Israeli withdrawal from Lebanese territory."

Trump, when asked whether Washington would put additional pressure on Israel to withdraw, said: "We'll be looking at that."

India, Pak get direct quarterfinal entry in Asian Games cricket draw

PTI

New Delhi, Jul 24: Defending champions India and Pakistan have been given direct entry into quarterfinals of both the men's and women's cricket competition of this year's Asian Games.

The Indian women's team will open its campaign against Japan, while the men's opponents will be decided after the preliminary stage. The women will be up against either Bangladesh or China in the semifinals.

The men's cricket competition will start on September 24 and conclude on October 1. The men's team might face Pakistan in the semifinals.

The women's event will be held from September 17 to 22. The potential of a clash with Pakistan is not ruled out in the women's final.

UN rights chief Volker Turk faces opposition to new term

REUTERS

Geneva, Jul 24: United Nations Human Rights chief Volker Turk, an outspoken critic of Russia's war in Ukraine and Israel's conduct in Gaza, faces opposition from both countries to a second four-year term ahead of a vote on Friday, diplomats told Reuters.

Turk, a lawyer who has worked for the United Nations for decades in major offices such as Geneva and field locations including Kosovo, finishes his first four-year term in October.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, who has



worked closely with Turk in the past and steps down in December, has proposed another full term for the Austrian.

However, Russia has submitted a counter-proposal to extend his term by just

over two months to the end of 2026, according to a copy seen by Reuters. Three diplomats said Israel also opposed a four-year extension and that Washington had raised doubts, turning what had been expected to

be a consensus reappointment into a contentious vote.

Others have also privately said Guterres' successor should have a say.

UN HUMAN RIGHTS CHIEF IS DEFENDER OF FREEDOMS

Asked to comment, Russia's UN mission in New York agreed.

"Mr Turk's reappointment for four years deprives the new secretary-general of the opportunity to make his/her own choice for such an important post for a long period," it said. "It is an arbitrary idea given the sensitivity of the human rights architecture and its role in the United Nations in general."

India's F1 push: Sports Ministry grants NSF status to motor-sport body FMSCI



PTI

New Delhi, Jul 24: The Sports Ministry has provisionally granted the status of National Sports Federation (NSF) to the Federation of Motor Sports Clubs of India (FMSCI), a significant upgrade for the body that is coordinating with the government to bring Formula 1 back to the country.

The FMSCI had applied for recognition on June 11 this year and the approval of its request means that it would now be eligible for financial grants from the ministry.

"...the request of Federation of Motor Sports Clubs of India (FMSCI) for provisional recognition as National Sports Federation (NSF) has been considered and it has been decided to grant provisional recognition to FMSCI as an NSF with effect from the date of issue of this letter," the Ministry order dated July 23

stated.

The Ministry has asked FMSCI, which is based in Chennai and headed by Arindam Ghosh, to amend its constitution/Memorandum of Association (MoA) to conform with the provisions of the National Sports Governance Act and the rules framed in it within stipulated time-lines.

"Government is very keen to do all that is required to host F1 in India. It became important for them to actively involve us as the FMSCI is recognised by world body FIA," FMSCI council member Vicky Chandhok said. FMSCI has been in regular talks with the ministry on not just the issue of recognition but to also chart the way forward for F1's India comeback.

To grant recognition to the body which came into existence in 1971, the government has relaxed some norms related to the minimum state units affiliation required for NSF status.

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