



J&K heaven on earth, ethical tourism must be guiding principle: LG Sinha

Says development must proceed in balance with conservation; proposes certification for eco-homestays

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Jul 27: Terming Jammu and Kashmir as heaven on earth, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday said that ethical tourism must be the guiding principle for the future of Union Territory.

Addressing the "Ethical Tourism Conclave" organized by the Tourist Trade Interest Guild, J&K, underscoring the imperative of developing a tourism model that is responsible, sustainable, and inclusive, LG Sinha in his keynote address said, "Jammu Kashmir has historically been regarded as heaven on earth for the unique harmony between nature and culture. Tourism in the region must be seen as a celebration of this heritage, and ethical tourism must be the guiding principle for its future."

The Lieutenant Governor



extended heartfelt congratulations to the organizers for the conclave, which he described as a significant step in redefining tourism as a moral responsibility for the tourism stakeholders. He emphasized that the theme "Responsible Today, Sustainable Tomorrow, Beneficial for All"

reflects the collective duty of society to safeguard natural and cultural heritage for future generations.

The Lieutenant Governor highlighted the remarkable progress achieved in the tourism sector.

"Tourist arrivals have reached

record levels, confidence among domestic and international travellers has been restored, investments have increased, and employment opportunities have expanded. However, the true success lies not in numbers alone but in ensuring that prosperity reaches local communities and contributes to social inclusion," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor stressed that "Responsible Tourism" must ensure that every visitor departs with cherished memories while natural resources should also thrive. He called for heightened sensitivity towards forests, lakes, and rivers, and reiterated that development must proceed in balance with conservation.

He emphasized the importance of inclusivity, stating that boatmen of Dal Lake, pony owners serving mountain trails, artisans | [More on P6](#)

Authority to restore J&K's statehood lies with PM Modi, HM Shah, says CM Omar

Jahangeer Ganaie

Anantnag, Jul 27: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Monday said that the authority to restore Jammu and Kashmir's statehood lies exclusively with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Union Home Minister Amit Shah and they will take call at an appropriate time.

Talking to reporters at Halmula here in South Kashmir CM Omar, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said, "The authority to restore statehood rests with the Prime Minister and the Union Home Minister. They will take the decision whenever they deem appropriate, and that is why our protest was held in Delhi."

He said the opposition in Jammu and Kashmir has no role in the decision-making process, adding that this was the reason the National Conference chose to hold its protest in the National Capital instead of targeting the Leader of the Opposition (LoP) in the Assembly.

Responding to remarks



made by LoP Sunil Sharma in the Assembly, CM Omar said statehood would eventually be restored and maintained that the decision would come directly from the country's top leadership.

He added that the party would continue its campaign until Jammu and Kashmir regains full statehood.

The Chief Minister also criticised the People's Democratic Party (PDP) over the recent controversy involving party president Mehbooba Mufti, saying, "She should tender an apology instead of attempting

to shift the focus."

He said anyone can commit mistakes, but leaders should have the courage to acknowledge and correct them.

CM Omar alleged that the PDP initially attempted to dismiss the issue by claiming that the controversial content was generated through artificial intelligence, but later resorted to attacking the National Conference instead of offering an explanation.

He said either Mehbooba Mufti herself or PDP leader Waheed Para should apologise if the former | [More on P6](#)

LG chairs Governing Board meet of Gandhi Memorial College Sgr

NEP-aligned courses, infrastructure augmentation discussed



KT News Desk

Srinagar, Jul 27: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday chaired the introductory meeting of the newly constituted Governing Board of Gandhi Memorial College Srinagar, at Lok Bhavan.

The meeting was attended by Additional

Chief Secretary, Finance Department, Shailendra Kumar; Commissioner/Secretary, Higher Education Department, Ram Niwas Sharma; Commissioner/Secretary, Department of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, Achal Sethi; Director Colleges, Prof. (Dr.) S. Ajaz Bashir; President, | [More on P6](#)

CM assures full support to safeguard Kashmir's cricket bat industry

Promises sustainable willow plantation, uninterrupted power for bat makers



KT News Desk

Sangam (Bijbehara), Jul 27: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Monday reaffirmed his

government's commitment to protecting and strengthening Kashmir's iconic cricket bat industry, asserting that it is the government's | [More on P6](#)

Raabita: CM meets industry leaders

Discusses startup ecosystem, skill dev initiatives

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Jul 27: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Monday met public representatives, entrepreneurs and industry leaders at Raabita here, holding discussions on a range of issues concerning public welfare, economic growth, entrepreneurship, trade and skill development.

Former MLA Dr. Chaman Lal Bhagat called on the Chief Minister and discussed key issues pertaining to his area.

Founder and CEO of YourStory and The Bharat Project, | [More on P6](#)

Amarnath Yatra: 4.26 lakh pilgrims pay obeisance in 25 days

Umaisar Gul Ganaie

Srinagar, Jul 27: With the Pahalgam route remaining temporarily closed for repair and maintenance, the annual Amarnath Yatra continued smoothly through the Baltal axis on Monday, taking the total number of pilgrims who have paid obeisance at the holy cave shrine to 4,26,339 in the first 25 days of the pilgrimage.

Official figures available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) reveal that 11,996 pilgrims paid obeisance on Monday.

Those who performed Yatra are 7,714 male pilgrims, 3,675 female pilgrims, 247 children, 76 sadhus, three sadhvis, two transgender devotees and 279 security personnel.

Meanwhile, the 20th batch of pilgrims left the Bhagwati

Nagar Yatri Niwas in Jammu for the Baltal base camp in the early hours of Monday under multi-layer security arrangements and arrived in Kashmir.

According to details available with KNO, the convoy comprising 140 vehicles, including 82 buses, 20 medium motor vehicles (MMVs) and 38 light motor vehicles (LMVs), departed at 2:47 am.

The batch consisted of 3,823 pilgrims, including 2,882 men, 838 women, two children, 84 sadhus and 17 sadhvis. No pilgrims were scheduled to travel via the Pahalgam route as it remained closed for maintenance.

Officials said the total number of pilgrims who have departed from the Bhagwati Nagar base camp in Jammu since the commencement of the pilgrimage | [More on P6](#)

Haj-2027: J&K registrations reach 4,693

Srinagar tops with 1,152 applications; process completed: CEO

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Jul 27: Jammu & Kashmir has recorded 4,693 registrations for Haj-2027, with Srinagar emerging as the highest contributor with 1,152 applications, while the overall number of registrations remains almost on a par with last year's 4,717 pilgrims who undertook the annual pilgrimage.

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the J&K Haj Committee, Dr. Shujaat Ahmad Qureshi, told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that a total of 4,693 intending pilgrims from the Union | [More on P6](#)

Stranded vehicles allowed to move on landslide-hit Jmu-Sgr NH

No fresh traffic from Qazigund, Udhampur; full restoration expected today

Umaisar Gull Ganie

Udhampur, Jul 27: Thousands of vehicles stranded on the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway are being allowed to move on priority through available road stretches after landslides and shooting stones damaged the highway at multiple locations in Udhampur and Ramban districts on Monday, officials said.

An official told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that stranded traffic between Udhampur and Ramban is being cleared through a single carriageway while restoration work on the damaged stretch is underway.

He said passenger vehicles are being given priority to facilitate the movement of stranded commuters, while heavy machinery has been pressed into service to restore the affected road.

The official said no fresh traffic from Udhampur towards Srinagar, Doda, Ramban and Patnitop, or from Qazigund towards Jammu, will be allowed until the restoration work is completed and the highway is declared safe for vehicular movement.

He said the highway is expected to be fully restored by Tuesday, subject to favourable weather conditions.

"The weather is | [More on P6](#)

'GoI sanctions multiple tourism projects for J&K under central schemes'

Raja Syed Rather

Srinagar, Jul 27: The Government of India (GoI) has sanctioned multiple tourism infrastructure projects for Jammu and Kashmir under various flagship schemes, including Swadesh Darshan and PRASHAD, with several destinations across the Union Territory receiving central financial assistance.

According to information tabled in the Lok Sabha by the Ministry of Tourism, accessed by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the primary responsibility for developing tourism destinations rests with States and Union Territory administrations, while the Centre supplements



these efforts through schemes such as Swadesh Darshan, Swadesh Darshan 2.0, PRASHAD, Challenge Based Destination Development (CBDD) and SASCI.

The ministry said these schemes focus on improving tourism infrastructure, connectivity, sanitation, safety and visitor amenities

while promoting sustainable and responsible tourism. It also informed Parliament that the National Board for Sustainable Tourism has been constituted to coordinate sustainable tourism initiatives, while the Travel for Life programme encourages environmentally responsible tourism practices. | [More on P6](#)

World Head & Neck Cancer Day: 'J&K faces rising burden, early detection key'

Awareness, tobacco control can save lives: Dr Aamir Yousuf; announces UT to host FHNO Kashmir 2026 Conference in Sep

Jahangeer Ganaie

Srinagar, Jul 27: On the occasion of World Head and Neck Cancer Day, a leading ENT and Head & Neck Surgical Oncologist has called for greater public awareness, early diagnosis, and stronger preventive measures to tackle the growing burden of head and neck cancers in Jammu and Kashmir.

As per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), in a message marking the day, observed globally on July 27 under the theme "Raising Awareness, Inspiring Hope, Building a Better Tomorrow", Dr Aamir



Yousuf, Associate Professor and Head of the Department of ENT and Head & Neck Surgery at Government Medical College (GMC) Anantnag, said that while head and neck cancers remain a major public health concern, they are among the

most preventable and curable cancers if diagnosed at an early stage.

Drawing from his clinical experience, he said the contrast between patients diagnosed early and those seeking treatment at advanced stages

is striking. "Many patients are completely cured because they approach doctors when the disease is still in its initial stages. Unfortunately, many others arrive months later, when treatment becomes more complicated, expensive, and less successful. Awareness is often the deciding factor," he said.

According to Global Cancer Observatory (GLOBOCAN) 2022 estimates, nearly 9.4 lakh new head and neck cancer cases are reported globally every year, leading to around 4.8 lakh deaths annually. Dr Yousuf said India bears one of the highest burdens, with lip and oral cavity cancers accounting for

nearly 1.44 lakh new cases and around 80,000 deaths annually. Nearly one-third of the world's oral cancer cases occur in India, accounting for about 30 per cent of all cancers among Indian men.

He said the high incidence was primarily due to tobacco use in both smoking and smokeless forms, gutka, khaini, areca nut (supari), excessive alcohol consumption, poor oral hygiene, HPV infection, and delayed medical consultation. "Nearly 70 per cent of patients in India are diagnosed only after the disease has progressed to Stage III or Stage IV, making treatment more | [More on P6](#)

'J&K received 9 central env clearances in 5 years'

Raja Syed Rather

Srinagar, Jul 27: Jammu and Kashmir received nine Environmental Clearances (ECs) from the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change at the Central level during the last five financial years, the Union Government informed Parliament on Monday.

Replying to an unstarred question in the Lok Sabha, Minister of State for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Kirti Vardhan Singh, as reported by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said proposals requiring Environmental Clearance are appraised

under the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification, 2006 by the Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC) at the Central level and the State Expert Appraisal Committee (SEAC) at the State/UT level after examining environmental impacts and issues raised during public consultation.

The minister said environmental clearances are granted after incorporating necessary environmental safeguards and mitigation measures under the Environmental Management Plan (EMP). He added that the EIA Notification mandates prior Environmental Clearance for projects | [More on P6](#)

Create comprehensive digital health records for every citizen in J&K: CS Atal Dulloo

Reviews implementation of Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, JULY 27: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, Monday chaired a review meeting to assess the implementation of the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM) across Jammu and Kashmir, with particular focus on the progress achieved under its key components, adoption of digital health solutions, and their impact on healthcare delivery at the grass-roots level.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by Commissioner Secretary, Health & Medical Education Department; Mission Director, National Health Mission; Managing Director, ABDM J&K; Principal, GMC, Srinagar/Jammu; Director, Health Services, Jammu; senior officers of the Health & Medical Education Department, and other concerned officers.

During the review, the Chief Secretary underscored that the core objective of the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission is the creation of comprehensive digital health records for every individual, and stressed that all efforts under the Mission must remain aligned with this fundamental goal.

He observed that while substantial progress has been achieved in creation of ABHA IDs and digital health infrastructure, the ultimate measure of success would be the availability of complete, secure and interoperable digital health records for every citizen.

To realise this objective, Dulloo directed the Mission to put in place a well-defined implementation strategy with clearly identified milestones for progressively enhancing the generation and linkage of electronic health records across the Union Territory.

He emphasised that implementation of the Hospital Management Information System (HMIS) should be expedited in all healthcare institutions, with primary focus on public health facilities, so that every patient interaction contributes



towards building comprehensive digital health records.

He further directed that the number of ABHA IDs created should progressively be brought at par with the number of Ayushman Bharat Golden Cards issued in the Union Territory, with targets fixed and closely monitored as important milestones towards achieving universal digital health coverage.

The Chief Secretary also stressed the need to maximise utilisation of citizen-centric services available through the JK Sehat App. He called upon the department to promote greater public uptake of home healthcare services, online doctor appointment booking, tele-consultation facilities and doorstep delivery of medicines through local pharmacies, observing that these services have immense potential to improve accessibility, convenience and quality of healthcare delivery for the people.

Appreciating the JK Sehat App as a comprehensive digital healthcare platform, the Chief Secretary observed that the Department has developed an excellent online product catering to the needs of citizens as well as healthcare professionals.

He directed that the application should be further strengthened by enriching its knowledge repository with additional academic resources, digital library content and medical courses for undergraduate

and postgraduate medical students, thereby transforming it into a robust learning and knowledge-sharing platform alongside its healthcare service delivery functions.

The Chief Secretary further instructed the department to undertake a comprehensive assessment of operational bottlenecks affecting implementation of various digital health initiatives and resolve them in close coordination with all stakeholders, including healthcare institutions, technical agencies and implementing partners, so as to ensure seamless delivery of services and achievement of the Mission objectives within the prescribed timelines.

During the meeting, the Commissioner Secretary, H&ME, M.Rajuremarked that Jammu and Kashmir has made significant strides in implementing the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission and has emerged as one of the leading performers in the country.

He apprised that the Union Territory was recently conferred the National Award by the Health Authority for achieving the highest Health Record Linking per lakh population among medium-sized States and Union Territories. Earlier this year, J&K was also recognised for its best-performing model healthcare facilities under the Mission.

Reviewing the progress achieved since the last assessment, the Chief Secretary was informed by MD, ABDM, Ananth Dwivedi that over 1.12 crore ABHA (Ayushman Bharat Health Account) IDs have been created in the Union Territory, covering nearly 83 percent of the estimated population. The number of ABHA-linked electronic health records has increased substantially, while more than 1.34 crore Scan & Share tokens have been generated, reflecting increased citizen adoption of digital healthcare services.

He further divulged that 100 percent registration of public healthcare facilities, doctors and nurses on the Health Facility Registry (HFR) and Health Professional Registry (HPR) has been achieved, ensuring complete onboarding of the public healthcare ecosystem onto the national digital health platform. The action points identified during the previous review meeting, including universal registration of public doctors, generation of unique health records and integration of radiology and imaging reports with ABHA IDs, have also been successfully accomplished.

Reviewing district-wise performance, the Chief Secretary directed the Deputy Commissioners, Chief Medical Officers and district health authorities to intensify focused campaigns in districts requiring further improvement

DC Kulgam reviews arrangements for Independence Day celebrations



During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner, as per an official statement, undertook a comprehensive review of all preparations and finalized the District Police Lines (DPL), Kulgam, as the main venue for the district-level function. The National Flag will be hoisted by the Chief Guest, followed by march past.

KT News Desk

KULGAM, JULY 27: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Shahzad Alam, Monday chaired a meeting of officers of district administration, Kulgam to review the arrangements for the smooth and successful celebration of 79th Independence Day 2026 across the district.

During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner, as per an official statement, undertook a comprehensive review of all preparations and finalized the District Police Lines (DPL), Kulgam, as the main venue for the district-level function. The National Flag will be hoisted by the Chief Guest, followed by march past.

A detailed deliberation was held on all aspects of the event, including security arrangements, traffic management, seating plans,

Full Dress Rehearsal, venue decoration & branding, cultural programmes, public address system, uninterrupted power and drinking water supply, transportation, sanitation, illumination, medical facilities, parking management, and other logistical arrangements to ensure the successful conduct of the celebrations.

The Deputy Commissioner assigned specific responsibilities to the departments and directed them to put in place comprehensive, foolproof, and well-coordinated arrangements well in advance. He emphasized the importance of close inter-departmental coordination and timely execution of all assigned tasks to ensure that the national celebration is conducted in a befitting,

dignified, and grand manner.

Besides the district level function, the sub divisional, block and institutional level functions shall also be held across the district to mark the celebration of 79th Independence Day.

The meeting was attended by Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC) Altaf Ahmad, Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Viqar Ahmad Giri, Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Noorabad Bashir-ul-Hassan, Assistant Commissioner Revenue (ACR) Riyaz Ahmad Shah, Assistant Commissioner Development (ACD) Bilal Ahmad Kamgar,

Chief Planning Officer (CPO) Malik Suheel, Tehsildars, Executive Engineers of R&B and Jal Shakti Departments and other officers from civil and police administration.

ADC Sopore visits Flood Prone Areas of Sub-division

Stresses proper strengthening, maintenance of flood protection bund



KT News Desk

BARAMULLA, JULY 27: Additional Deputy Commissioner Sopore, Dr. S.A. Raina, along with a team of officers, Monday conducted a comprehensive field visit to Warpora and adjoining areas of Sub-Division Sopore to inspect flood protection bunds along the River Jhelum and Wular Lake.

The ADC, as per an official statement, conducted an on-site assessment of the bund and interacted with the concerned officers regarding its present condition and the progress of maintenance works.

Stressing the importance of timely preventive measures, the ADC directed the concerned departments to ensure proper strengthening and maintenance of the flood protection bund to minimise the risk of inundation during the heavy rainfall spells.

The ADC also emphasized close coordination among all stakeholder departments for the timely completion of necessary works and instructed officials to remain vigilant and respond promptly to any emerging situation.

One-Day Training Programme under JKCIP 2026-27 held at Directorate of Agriculture Kashmir

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, JULY 27: The Agriculture Department Kashmir, under the Jammu & Kashmir Competitiveness Improvement of Agriculture and Allied Sectors Project (JKCIP), organised a One-Day Training Programme at the Directorate of Agriculture Kashmir, Srinagar, to strengthen technical capacity and ensure effective implementation of project interventions.

The programme, as per an official statement, was hosted by Chief Agriculture Officer, Srinagar, Ajaz Ahmad Mir, and was attended by Joint Director

Extension Agriculture Kashmir, Joint Director Inputs Agriculture Kashmir, Joint Director Engineering Agriculture Kashmir, Agriculture Chemist Kashmir, District Agriculture Officer Extension Srinagar, Area Development Officer, Vegetable Srinagar, and other officers and officials.

The training covered key aspects of JKCIP, sustainable agricultural practices, improved farm management, extension services, project implementation and reporting.

Sheikh Imran, Agriculture Chemist Kashmir, delivered a technical lecture on sustainable

agriculture, soil health management, judicious use of agricultural inputs and natural farming practices. He stressed the importance of scientific advisory services, proper monitoring and documentation for effective implementation of departmental interventions.

A dedicated practical session was conducted on the JKCIP Portal, wherein all participants were provided hands-on orientation on portal navigation, use of various features, data entry, updating of information, monitoring and reporting of project activities.

UNION TERRITORY OF JAMMU & KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PW(R&B) DIVISION AWANTIPORA BOHU, AWANTIPORA, PULWAMA-192122

No: T-1/EEA/3688-89

Dated: 27/07/2026

M/S Dar Constructions.
Prop: Mohammad Yousuf Dar. R/O: Nunner Ganderbal

FINAL NOTICE

Subject: Development of Park at Z/S Sheikh-ul-Alam Ladhoo. Reference's:

- This office Allotment No. T-1/EEA/2377-79 Dated: 14-07-2025.
- This office notice No's: T-1/EEA/9416-17 dated: 24-01-2026 and T-1/EEA/10079-80 dated: 16-02-2026.
- Assistant Executive Engineer (R&B) Sub-Division Pampore's Notice No: N-13/P/1112-13 dated: 20-01-2026, N-13/P/1134-35 dated: 02-02-2026, N-13/P/1169-70 dated: 12-02-2026 and Final Notice No: N-13/P/557-58 dated: 21-07-2026.

In connection with the above mentioned subject and reference's, it is to convey that the execution of above subject work stands entrusted to you vide above quoted reference. The alignment of work was provided to you but due to some unknown reasons the execution of work was stopped.

Whereas you were directed through above referred Notices to resume the work but you have paid no heed towards the direction and did not start the work. The delay on your part will definitely hamper the target of completion of work.

In this regard, you are hereby given last opportunity through this Final notice to start the work within Two days positively failing which action as warranted under rules shall be initiated against you, which may include termination of contract and balance work will be put to fresh tender at your risk and cost.

It is pertinent to mention here that if you fail to resume the work within Two days there will be no further communication with you from this office and it will be presumed the you are not interested to start the work and action under rules will be initiated against you with you should note.

DIPK-3758/26
DATED: 27-07-2026

Executive Engineer
R&B Division Awantipora

JAMMU AND KASHMIR UNION TERRITORY OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER IRRIGATION DIVISION SHOPIAN.

Phone/ Fax No.: 01933261312

Extension Notice

Subject: Extension of Date for Public Auction under Public Auction NIT No. 01 of 2026-27.

Reference: 1. This office NIT No 01 of 2026-27 issued vide endorsement No: No:2078-88 Dated: 15-07-2026.

2. This office extension Notice No: SID:2464-66 Dated: 24-07-2026 In continuation to the Public Auction NIT No. 01 of 2026-27 referred to above, it is hereby notified that due to certain administrative reasons, the date of the public auction has been further extended up to 05-08-2026 instead of 29-07-2026.

The venue, time, and all other terms and conditions of the Public Auction NIT shall remain unchanged.

Sd/-
Executive Engineer,
Irrigation Division Shopian.

No: SID:2500-2502
Dated: 27-07-2026

DIPK-3777/26
DATED: 27-07-2026

GOVERNMENT OF (U.T) JAMMU & KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER JAL SHAKTI (PHE) DEPTT.

GROUND WATER DIVISION SRINAGAR

BAGHI-ALI-MARDAN, NOWSHARASRINAGAR.

E-mail:- hakeemmushtaq.75316@jk.gov.in
Tel./FaxNo:- 0194-2411285

Extension Notice 6th

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

Reference: This office e-NIT No. 14/JS-PHE/GWDS/Mech. of 2026-27, issued vide endorsement No: JS-PHE/GWDS/26-27/Camp/1636-47, dated: 18-05-2026. Bearing Tender ID No. 2026_PHE_310256_1.

Due to "NO Response" for the above mentioned works advertised vide e-NIT No. and Tender ID No's under reference. Which was scheduled to be downloaded till 25-07-2026 Up-to 01:00 PM are extended as per the details given below:-

S. No.	Item	Fresh Date
1.	Last date & Time of submission of bids	07-08-2026 Up-to 01:00 PM
2.	Date & Time of opening of tenders	08-08-2026 01.00 PM

NOTE:

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

No: -JS-PHE/GWDS/26-27/Camp./5659-70
Dated: 25-07-2026.

DIPK-3751/26
DATED: 27-07-2026

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

CM Omar slams Mehbooba's 'use of force' against Kashmiris

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Jul 27: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Monday questioned PDP president Mehbooba Mufti on how she justified the use of force against Kashmiris during the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) protests at Jantar Mantar, New Delhi.

Speaking to reporters, Omar said that she surely had not gone to Jantar Mantar for Kashmir. "She did not go to Jantar Mantar for Jammu and Kashmir. Why did she go there? She would be in a better position to explain the intent" he said.

Omar questioned Mehbooba on how she justified the use of force against Kashmiris. "What she said there - the wrong use of force, arrests, and justifying such actions by claiming there is militancy in Kashmir - how is this justified?" he asked.

"Should the law of the land not be implemented here because there is militancy? Does militancy mean that youth should be denied justice? Does militancy mean that passports should be stopped? How is this justified?" Omar asked.

Accusing her of "not forgetting the habit of



saying one thing in Kashmir and another in Delhi," the Chief Minister said she seemed to have made such statements only to please certain people.

The CM said Mehbooba should have apologized for her statement. "When she realized that her remarks were wrong and that people had not taken them in the right way, she should have apologized. It would not have diminished her stature had she admitted that the statement was made emotionally and expressed regret," Omar asserted.

Omar said that she had rubbed salt into the wounds of the people of Jammu and Kashmir by dismissing the remarks as an AI-generated video. "Rather than tendering an

apology, she rubbed salt on wounds by telling people through one of her MLAs that it was an AI-generated video. Are we fools? The media of the entire country was present there, and the microphones of news channels are clearly visible in the byte. There is not just one reel; there are many reels. It is very unfortunate," Omar said.

Omar further said that Mehbooba did not apologize for her past actions and remarks, including the controversial Doodh-Toffee (Milk-Toffee) comment. "You did not apologize for the BJP accord in 2015. You did not even express regret for the 2016 situation, let alone an apology. You spoke of 'Doodh-Toffee' and repeatedly justified it," he said—(KNO)

Amarnath Yatra crosses 4.22 lakh mark

Baltal route open, work on to restore Pahalgam path: Div Com

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Jul 27: Divisional Commissioner Kashmir Ashul Garg on Monday said that the annual Amarnath Yatra has crossed the 4.22 lakh pilgrim milestone, with the pilgrimage continuing through the Baltal route.

Addressing reporters here, Div Com Garg said over 4.22 lakh devotees have paid obeisance at the Holy Cave Shrine till Monday afternoon, while the Yatra was proceeding smoothly through the Baltal axis. He said the pilgrimage is being regulated strictly under the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), under which the India Meteorological Department (IMD) weather advisories and the condition of the tracks remain the key factors in deciding whether the Yatra will be allowed to proceed.

"The Yatra is allowed only after assessing the IMD weather advisory and the condition of the tracks. As witnessed over the past few days, the pilgrimage remained suspended due to adverse weather. Subsequent inspections revealed that repair work was required on the Pahalgam axis, which is presently being carried out by the Border



Roads Organisation (BRO)," he said.

Garg said that despite the closure of the Pahalgam route, the pilgrimage has been running smoothly through the Baltal axis for the past two days. "A total of over 4.22 lakh pilgrims have paid obeisance at the Holy Cave Shrine till today," he said.

He credited the smooth conduct of the pilgrimage to the coordinated efforts of the Mountain Rescue Teams (MRTs), health teams, sanitation staff, camp commanders, the district administration and other departments, saying all agencies have maintained constant

supervision throughout the Yatra.

Referring to the IMD advisory forecasting adverse weather conditions and heavy rainfall between July 28 and July 31, the Divisional Commissioner said review meetings are held every evening with all stakeholder departments, including the Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board, to assess the weather forecast and track conditions before deciding the next day's movement of pilgrims.

"The competent authority of the Shrine Board is part of these meetings. A conscious decision is

taken after reviewing the weather forecast and the condition of the track and accordingly the strategy for the following day is finalised," he said.

On the restoration of the Pahalgam route, Garg said the maintenance work is progressing, but its completion depends largely on the weather.

"If there is fresh rainfall in the coming days, the restoration work may take longer. The Pahalgam track is a long stretch, unlike the shorter Baltal route, and a decision on reopening it will be taken only after the track is fully restored and declared fit for movement," he said.

The Divisional Commissioner said there is no pilgrim currently stranded at the Nunwan base camp, as all yatris who were earlier halted there have already been facilitated for the pilgrimage.

"As of now, no pilgrim at Nunwan is awaiting the Yatra. All fresh convoys arriving from Jammu, including pilgrims reaching by train over the past two days, are being sent directly to the Baltal base camp under the advisory so that they do not face any inconvenience," he said. On the arrangements at Baltal, Garg said the administration had earlier enhanced the holding capacity of the base camp to 40,000-45,000 pilgrims to cater to the influx of unregistered yatris.

"At present, the daily load at Baltal is around 15,000 to 20,000 pilgrims, which is only about 50 per cent of its capacity. We have also witnessed a slight decline in daily arrivals over the past few days. Therefore, the Baltal base camp is adequately equipped to handle all incoming pilgrims. If the inflow increases in the coming days, further decisions will be taken accordingly," he added—(KNO)

SDG Kumar Hails CRPF's Anti-Terror Role in J&K



Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Jul 27: Describing CRPF's 88-year journey as one of courage, sacrifice and service to the nation, Special Director General (SDG), J&K Zone, CRPF, Rajesh Kumar on Monday said the force played a pivotal role in curbing terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir.

Addressing the 88th Raising Day celebrations at the Group Centre (GC) CRPF Srinagar, Rajesh Kumar extended warm greetings and heartfelt congratulations to all CRPF personnel.

He said the Force has built a glorious legacy over the past 88 years through its unwavering commitment to safeguarding the country's internal security.

The SDG lauded CRPF's commendable operational role in Punjab, Left Wing Extremism (LWE)-affected areas,

the Northeast and Jammu & Kashmir, saying the Force has consistently discharged its responsibilities with dedication, professionalism and valour under challenging circumstances.

Highlighting the situation in Jammu and Kashmir, Rajesh Kumar said the CRPF has played a vital role in curbing terrorism by working in close coordination with sister security agencies.

He also paid rich tributes to the brave-hearts of the Force, remembering the supreme sacrifices made by CRPF personnel in the line of duty for the nation.

Later, Rajesh Kumar, accompanied by senior CRPF officers, paid solemn homage to the martyrs at the Shaheed Smarak located inside the Group Centre campus.

A Sainik Sammelan was also organised during the celebrations, where recipients of the

Shaurya Chakra, Gallantry Medal and Director General's Disc were felicitated for their outstanding service, devotion to duty and operational excellence.

Various sports events and the traditional Bara Khana were organised to mark the occasion and boost the morale of the troops.

It is important to mention, the event was attended by Inspector General, Srinagar Sector, Pawan Kumar Sharma, Inspector General, Kashmir Operations Sector, Vineet Brij Lal, and other senior CRPF officers.

Meanwhile, Director General of CRPF G.P. Singh extended greetings to the entire CRPF family on the Force's 88th Raising Day and reiterated the Force's unwavering commitment to safeguarding the nation and overcoming all internal security challenges—(KNO)

Kashmir schools reopen after 21 days summer break



Riyaz Bhat

Srinagar, Jul 27: All government and private schools of Kashmir division reopen on Monday after a 21-day summer break that was extended twice due to the heatwave and inclement weather advisory.

The government on June-03 had announced summer break for all schools of Kashmir division and winter zones of Jammu from July-06 to July-19.

However, in view of heat weather conditions and inclement weather advisory, the government on July-18, extended the vacation till July-22.

Later, the government further extended the summer break for all government and

recognized private schools in the Kashmir division and winter zones of Jammu division up to July-26-2026.

On extension of summer vacations, the Jammu and Kashmir Education Minister had said that the break was extended in view of the safety and well-being of students, teachers, and their families.

The government had also said that the health well-being of the concerned stakeholders of the education sector was its foremost priority.

Pertinently, the Meteorological Department has forecast the inclement weather and warned of heavy rainfall and the possibility of flash floods between July 28 and August-02—(KNO)

5 Kashmiri Journalists among 40 picked for MHA National Security workshop

KNO

Srinagar, Jul 27: Five journalists from Kashmir are among 40 journalists from across the country selected to participate in an 11-day National Security Journalism workshop being organised by Rashtriya Raksha University (RRU) at Gandhinagar, Gujarat under the aegis of the Ministry of Home Affairs.

The capacity building programme commenced on Monday and will continue till August 6. It aims to equip journalists with the knowledge and practical skills required to report on national security issues with accuracy, responsibility and strategic understanding.

The participants from the Valley are KNO's Waris Fayaz, Editor Kashmir Convener Sheikh Saleem, GK Correspondent Syed Rizwan Geelani, Suhail Khan and Muneeb ul Haq. The inaugural day, organizers said, featured expert sessions focusing on the evolving landscape of national security



journalism and its relevance for journalists reporting from conflict affected and sensitive regions. The discussions also covered the media's role in addressing contemporary national security challenges.

Addressing the inaugural session, RRU Vice Chancellor Prof. (Dr.) Kalpesh H. Wandra said the programme has been designed to develop journalists capable of reporting on India's national security with professionalism, contextual understanding and factual accuracy.

He said the training combines expert lectures, interactions with security practitioners, case based learning, practical reporting tools and structured field exposure to

strengthen participants' understanding of security related issues.

The workshop will cover subjects including defence, internal security, terrorism, border management, coastal security, cyber incidents, public order, disaster response and protection of critical infrastructure.

The participants will also visit key national security institutions to gain first hand exposure to operational aspects of the country's security framework.

The Vice-Chancellor said national security reporting has become increasingly important in the digital era, where misinformation and hostile narratives can spread rapidly. He said the programme seeks

From The Parliament

Srinagar records 230 good AQI days in 2025: GoI

Raja Syed Rather

Srinagar, Jul 27: Srinagar recorded 230 days with 'Good' air quality and only four 'Bad' air quality days during 2025, while Pampore was brought under the national ambient air quality monitoring network for the first time this year, the Union Government informed Parliament.

Replying to an unstarred question in the Lok Sabha on air pollution, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change placed city-wise Air Quality Index (AQI) data for 2023, 2024 and 2025. According to the



data, Srinagar recorded 92 Good, 105 Satisfactory, 33 Moderate and four Poor AQI days in 2025, with no Very Poor or Severe air quality days. Overall, the city registered 230 Good AQI days (AQI 0-100) and four Bad AQI days (AQI above 100) out of 234

monitored days this year.

The data also showed that Srinagar's air quality improved in 2025 compared to the previous two years. In 2024, the city recorded 138 Good AQI days with no Bad AQI day across 138 monitored days, while in 2023 it registered 206 Good AQI days and one Bad AQI day out of 207 monitored days.

Meanwhile, Pampore figures in the AQI database for the first time in 2025. The monitoring station recorded four Good, four

Continued on
www.kashmirthunder.in

J&K, Ladakh see rise in school enrolment

Raja Syed Rather

Srinagar, Jul 27: Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh have registered improvements in several key school education indicators, including Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) and girls' retention rates, according to the latest UDISE+ data tabled in Parliament by the Union Ministry of Education. Replying to an unstarred question on the closure of government schools, the ministry said the data relates to school education indicators for 2024-25 and 2025-26 across the country.

Continued on
www.kashmirthunder.in

J&K Logs 3 wildlife crime cases since 2021

Raja Syed Rather

Srinagar, Jul 27: Jammu and Kashmir has not reported any organised wildlife crime case to the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) in the last three years, according to data tabled in the Lok Sabha by the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. Replying to Unstarred

Question on "Data on Wildlife Crimes," Minister of State for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Kirti Vardhan Singh, as reported by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 mandates the WCCB to collect and collate intelligence related

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EDITORIAL

PM's 'Visit Border Villages' Is A Vision Worth Applauding

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call for youth to visit border villages is a necessary step toward building a deeper, more meaningful connection with the nation. In an age where virtual experiences often replace real ones, his vision of "stepping onto the ground to understand India" is both timely and transformative. The Viksit Vibrant Village programme, under which over 400 young participants

from every state and UT lived in 74 border villages across Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttarakhand, offers more than just a tour. It provides a window into the lives of those who guard our frontiers—people for whom, as Modi rightly observed, "the country matters more than themselves." This is about understanding. In these remote villages, participants witnessed world-class mobile networks, UPI

payments, and road infrastructure—proof that development has reached the last mile. They also experienced the warmth of homestays, the pride of local artisans, and the discipline of ITBP personnel. These are lessons no textbook can teach. What makes this programme truly significant is its focus on Gen Z—a generation often accused of being disconnected from ground realities. By living with local communities,

participating in Swachhta drives, cultural exchanges, and Mini Model Panchayat simulations, these young Indians are not just observing; they are learning to contribute. They return with a stronger resolve to "live for the country". Border villages are not the end of India; they are its beginning. They are the first line of defence and the first face of development. PM's emphasis on treating them as "the country's first

village" is a shift in mindset—from viewing borders as peripheries to recognising them as priorities. The VVV programme is a powerful reminder that patriotism is also knowing the land, understanding its people, and strengthening the resolve to serve. When the youth connects with the land, it makes the vision of a developed India even more expansive. That is a vision worth applauding.

Beyond Borders: Inspiring A New Generation Through Jammu & Kashmir's Agricultural Exports

When a young entrepreneur witnesses locally grown cherries commanding premium prices in Singapore or saffron reaching markets across the Middle East, agriculture acquires a new identity—a business of ideas, technology, branding, and international commerce. The future belongs not only to farmers, but also to agri-entrepreneurs, exporters, food technologists, supply-chain specialists, and digital marketers. The story of Jammu and Kashmir's agricultural exports is no longer defined by harvests alone; it is a story of vision, innovation, and opportunity for the next generation.

Sehreena Maqbool

There is something extraordinary about the orchards of Jammu & Kashmir. Every spring they burst into bloom, and every harvest season they produce fruits and crops that are admired not only across India but increasingly in markets around the world. From crisp apples and succulent cherries to the world's finest saffron, walnuts, almonds and honey, the region possesses an agricultural legacy that few places can rival.

Yet, even as global consumers seek premium, authentic and sustainably produced food, many young people in the region are turning away from agriculture in search of opportunities elsewhere.

This presents one of the defining questions of our time.

How do we transform agriculture from being viewed as a profession of necessity into one of ambition, innovation and global opportunity?

The answer lies not merely in producing more, but in creating greater value. It lies in connecting our farms with international markets, our growers with global consumers, and our youth with a vision of agriculture that is modern, entrepreneurial and internationally competitive.

Changing the Narrative

For generations, agriculture has often been associated with uncertainty and modest returns. That perception no longer reflects reality.

Today's agriculture is powered by technology, precision farming, quality certification, branding, food processing, logistics, digital commerce and international trade. Success is no longer measured solely by the quantity harvested but by the value created throughout the supply chain.

A premium carton of Kashmir produce displayed on a supermarket shelf in international marketplace represents far more than the harvest. It embodies scientific cultivation, careful post-harvest management, world-class packaging, international quality standards and the confidence to compete on

a global stage.

Agriculture today is not simply farming, it is entrepreneurship with global reach; and exports are making that transformation possible.

Exports as a Catalyst for Rural Prosperity

Agricultural exports do much more than generate foreign exchange. They create opportunities.

Every successful export strengthens an entire ecosystem of growers, Farmer Producer Organisations, packhouses, transporters, laboratories, logistics providers, exporters and countless rural families whose livelihoods depend upon agriculture.

More importantly, exports reward quality. They encourage innovation, improve price realisation and reduce dependence on traditional domestic markets, giving farmers the confidence to invest in better practices and higher standards.

For Jammu & Kashmir, where horticulture forms the backbone of the rural economy, exports represent not merely commercial success but sustainable rural transformation.

APEDA: Opening Doors to Global Markets

Recognising this immense opportunity, the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), under the Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India, has been steadily strengthening India's agricultural export ecosystem.

From developing export infrastructure and quality assurance systems to promoting traceability, branding, market access and buyer engagement, APEDA works to ensure that Indian agricultural products meet the highest international standards.

Its efforts extend beyond facilitating exports; they build confidence among farmers, exporters and international buyers alike, creating pathways for Indian produce to reach premium markets across the Gulf, Europe, Southeast Asia and beyond.

From Kashmir's Orchards to the World's Tables

Few achievements capture this transformation more vividly than the export of

premium Areko Cherries and Scentrose Plums from Shopian and Pulwama to Singapore. Building upon earlier promotional consignments to the United Arab Emirates, these exports demonstrated that Kashmir's temperate fruits possess the quality, consistency and distinctiveness demanded by discerning international consumers.

Behind every successful shipment is an ecosystem built on collaboration—progressive farmers, exporters, logistics providers, regulatory agencies and overseas buyers working together to deliver excellence.

Supported by APEDA's interventions in quality assurance, traceability, export facilitation and market development, these partnerships have strengthened international confidence in Jammu & Kashmir as a reliable source of premium horticultural produce.

Today, the region's global footprint extends well beyond cherries and plums. GI-certified Kashmir Saffron is reaching Middle Eastern markets; premium apples and black carrots are finding buyers in Saudi Arabia; snow peas have entered the United Kingdom; and the celebrated GI-tagged Mushqubudji rice is being promoted in Japan. Alongside these, walnuts, almonds, Bhaderwah Rajmash, Sulai Honey and several other niche products continue to expand their presence in international markets.

Each export carries with it the identity, heritage and craftsmanship of Jammu & Kashmir.

Building an Export Ecosystem

Sustaining this momentum requires much more than market access. It demands world-class infrastructure, scientific quality assurance and a resilient export ecosystem.

To strengthen these foundations, APEDA has supported the establishment of the Regional Cum Referral Quality Assessment (RCRQA) Laboratory at SKUAST-Kashmir, significantly enhancing the region's capacity for internationally compliant testing and certification.

Equally important are the continuous investments in people. Through export awareness programmes, buyer-seller meets,

stakeholder consultations and capacity-building initiatives, APEDA equips farmers, Farmer Producer Organisations and exporters with the knowledge and skills required to meet evolving global standards.

Together, these initiatives are strengthening quality, improving supply chains, reducing post-harvest losses and reinforcing international trust in the region's agricultural excellence.

Beyond the Apple Economy

One region. Many treasures. Endless possibilities.

While apples will always remain the backbone of Jammu & Kashmir's horticultural economy, our future cannot rest on a single crop alone. Overdependence on apples limits our ability to fully realise the region's immense agricultural potential. Blessed with a unique agro-climatic advantage, Jammu & Kashmir can cultivate a remarkable range of premium products—from cherries and plums to saffron, walnuts, honey and GI-tagged specialty crops—that few regions in the world can produce with the same quality and authenticity. By embracing this diversity and expanding our export basket, we can build a more resilient, profitable and globally competitive agricultural economy.

"The future of Jammu & Kashmir's agriculture will not be defined by one iconic crop, but by the extraordinary diversity that the world is only beginning to discover."

Reimagining Agriculture for the Next Generation

Perhaps the greatest challenge before us is not increasing production, it is changing perception.

Young people must begin to see agriculture not as a profession inherited by circumstance, but as a sector driven by innovation, enterprise and global opportunity.

When a young entrepreneur witnesses locally grown cherries commanding premium prices in Singapore or saffron reaching discerning consumers across the Middle East, agriculture acquires a new identity. It becomes a business of ideas, technology, branding and international commerce.

Start-Up Village Entrepreneurship Programme Catalysing Rural Economies Through Grassroots Entrepreneurship

The Start-up Village Entrepreneurship Programme (SVEP) supports non-farm enterprises through training, finance, mentoring, and community-led institutional support. By June 30, 2026, SVEP had supported 4.32 lakh rural enterprises across the country. The programme has strongly focused on social inclusion and equitable access to entrepreneurship opportunities. Around 86% of entrepreneurs belong to SC, ST, Minority, and OBC communities. Through SHGs, CRP-EPs, bank linkages, and convergence with schemes like Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana, SVEP has emerged as an effective grassroots model for poverty reduction, local employment generation, and rural economic development.

Enterprise-Led Rural Transformation in India

India has the third-largest start-up ecosystem in the world, thriving with the support of favourable government policies. However, most Indian start-ups are based in urban areas. To promote entrepreneurship in rural areas, the government launched the Start-up Village Entrepreneurship Programme (SVEP) in 2016.

SVEP is a sub-scheme of the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM). The programme supports Self Help Groups (SHGs) and their family members in establishing small enterprises in the non-farm sector. It provides financial assistance, institutional support, business management training, soft skill development, and business development services, promoting sustainable livelihoods and self-employment opportunities in rural areas.

SVEP also facilitates access to banking

linkages and convergence with government schemes. A key feature has been community-based decision-making for funding and supporting enterprises locally.

Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission

DAY-NRLM is one of the world's largest livelihood initiatives, mobilizing rural poor households into SHGs, predominantly women. As of mid-June 2026, more than 10.29 crore rural households have been mobilized into SHGs under DAY-NRLM.

Scaling Rural Entrepreneurship Across India

SVEP has adopted an all-inclusive approach, with a strong focus on supporting women, marginalized communities, and individuals with limited educational attainment. Since its inception till June 15, 2026, the programme has supported over 4.32 lakh rural enterprises. Assam, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh have recorded the highest number of enterprises.

From SHG Member to Rural Business Leader

Ms. Bhagyashri Londhe from Maharashtra began her journey by joining an SHG in 2014. Participation in SHG and Village Organization activities strengthened her leadership and business skills. She started producing masala, papad, and pickles. A 45,000 Community Enterprise Fund loan under SVEP enabled her to scale up production. Her efforts gained recognition at Mahalaxmi Saras 2019-20, where she earned 5 lakh in revenue within ten days.

She completed her Class 10 education

through an open university while managing her enterprise. Training under NRLM and Krishi Vigyan Kendra enhanced her business literacy and technical capabilities. Her enterprise now produces large volumes daily, generating regular income and creating employment for rural women.

Financial Support and Implementation

To support SVEP's expansion, the government has released a cumulative central share of 942.09 crore up to February 2026—nearly 738% higher than the 112.39 crore released between 2016 and January 2018.

SVEP is implemented through State Rural Livelihoods Missions (SRLMs), with a provision of 6.50 crore per block and an average investment of 27,083 per enterprise.

Institutional Framework

At the block level, Block Resource Centres-Enterprise Promotion (BRC-EPs) coordinate implementation. Trained Community Resource Persons-Enterprise Promotion (CRP-EPs) provide technical assistance. Banks extend financial support to eligible entrepreneurs. SHGs and their federations help identify potential entrepreneurs. Community institutions facilitate enterprise establishment, manage loans through the Community Enterprise Fund, and regularly monitor performance.

CRP-EPs are selected jointly by SRLMs and Project Implementing Agencies. At least 90% are selected from SHG households, with women constituting a minimum of 60% of the cadre. Each CRP-EP mentors up to 50 enterprises.

From SHG Member to Best Performing CRP-EP

Ms. Poonam from Uttar Pradesh overcame social and financial barriers to become a successful CRP-EP. After joining an SHG, she completed a 54-day CRP-EP training programme. She now supports nearly 40 enterprises by assisting with business planning, facilitating credit access, establishing market linkages, and providing mentorship. Poonam credits SVEP for her financial independence and the opportunity to help others grow their businesses.

Entrepreneurs are identified by community institutions based on need, poverty status, and entrepreneurial potential. The programme mandates that at least 60% of beneficiaries are women, while ensuring representation of persons with disabilities and SC/ST/minority communities.

Impact of SVEP on Rural Livelihoods and Entrepreneurship

The Quality Council of India conducted a mid-term evaluation of SVEP in 2019. Key findings include:

- 99% of SVEP-supported enterprises were profitable
- SVEP enterprises contributed 57% of total household income
- Average monthly enterprise revenue was about 39,000
- Manufacturing enterprises recorded the highest average revenue at 47,800 per month
- 96% of entrepreneurs reported increased savings
- 75% of enterprises were owned or managed by women
- SVEP encouraged women and disadvantaged communities to become

first-generation entrepreneurs. Beneficiaries reported improved confidence, livelihood security, better education, nutrition, health, and sanitation outcomes. Many gained stronger business management and financial skills, while increased savings and reinvestment supported long-term enterprise growth. The programme also enhanced the social standing of beneficiaries within their communities.

From Welfare to Enterprise-Led Development

SVEP has demonstrated that rural entrepreneurship can act as a powerful driver of inclusive economic growth when supported by strong community institutions. By empowering women, SC/ST communities, and first-generation entrepreneurs, the programme has transformed local aspirations into sustainable enterprises, leading to higher incomes, increased savings, and improved household well-being.

Entrepreneurial talent exists in every village and can flourish when provided with the right ecosystem. As India advances towards becoming a global start-up hub, programmes like SVEP are laying the foundation for a vibrant rural start-up ecosystem—generating employment, strengthening local economies, and unlocking new opportunities for millions of rural families, contributing to the vision of a self-reliant and developed India.

Disclaimer: This is an abridged version of the original PIB article. All significant points and key messages have been retained. For complete details, please refer to the full release on the PIB website.

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Govt focused on upgrading educational infrastructure, ensuring higher educational institutions equipped with modern facilities: Sakeena Itoo

Visits GDC Women Zakura Srinagar, announces Rs. 529 lakhs new Academic-cum-Library Block for College

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, JULY 27: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo Monday announced the construction of Academic Block with Library at GDC (Women) Zakura" at an approximate cost of Rs. 529.02 lakhs.

The Minister, as per an official statement, made this announcement during her visit to Government Degree College (GDC) Women Zakura here Monday.

The Minister was accompanied by MLA Hazratbal Salman Ali Sagar; Director Colleges, Prof. (Dr.) Sheikh Ajaz Bashir and other senior officers of Higher Education Department and other line departments during the visit.

During the visit, the Minister reviewed the academic and infrastructural requirements of the college and held detailed discussions with the college



administration regarding its future developmental needs. She said that the newly sanctioned Academic-cum-Library Block would significantly augment the institution's infrastructure, provide improved learning facilities and cater to the growing academic requirements of students.

Interacting with students from various departments, Sakeena Itoo encouraged them to pursue academic excellence

with dedication and discipline. She urged them to embrace innovation, strengthen their skills and contribute meaningfully towards the progress of society and the nation. The Minister also listened to the students' aspirations and suggestions, assuring them that the Government remains committed to creating a conducive environment for quality higher education.

Speaking on the occasion,

the Minister reiterated that the Omar Abdullah-led Government is focused on upgrading educational infrastructure and ensuring that higher educational institutions are equipped with modern facilities to meet contemporary academic standards. She said that investment in education is an investment in the future and remains among the Government's highest priorities.

MLA Hazratbal Salman Ali

Sagar appreciated the efforts of the college administration in promoting quality education and expressed confidence that the new Academic-cum-Library Block would further strengthen the institution's academic ecosystem.

Director Colleges, Prof. (Dr.) Sheikh Ajaz Bashir, also highlighted the importance of continuously improving educational infrastructure and assured all possible support for the overall development of the college.

Principal of the college, along with the faculty and staff, expressed gratitude to the Minister for sanctioning the new Academic-cum-Library Block and for her continued support towards the growth of higher education. They said the new facility would greatly enhance the teaching-learning environment and benefit generations of students.

Baramulla hosts Provincial Subroto Cup 2026, 6 districts compete in U-15 Championship

KT News Desk

BARAMULLA, JULY 27: The Under-15 Inter-District Provincial Level Boys Subroto Cup Football Tournament 2026 commenced Monday at St. Joseph's Higher Secondary School, Baramulla, with six districts competing for top honours.

Organised by the Department of Youth Services & Sports, District Baramulla, the championship, as per an official statement, was inaugurated by the Principal of the host school in the presence of Mushtaq Ahmad Pampori, DYSSO Baramulla, along with sports officials, coaches, teachers and spectators.

Addressing the participants, DYSSO Baramulla welcomed the teams and urged the young players to uphold sportsmanship, discipline, teamwork and fair play.

The participating districts include Baramulla, Shopian, Kulgam, Budgam, Srinagar and Anantnag. On the opening day, Baramulla defeated Shopian 5-0, with Umer Farooq scoring a hat-trick, while Tawqeer Hassan and Danish Maqbool scored one goal each. In the second match, Anantnag defeated Kulgam 4-1.

The tournament will continue over the coming days, with teams competing for the provincial title and progression to the next stage of the Subroto Cup 2026.

Free health check-up, screening camp organised in Doda villages



KT News Desk

DODA, JULY 27: A free health check-up-cum-screening camp was organised under the Mobile Medical Unit (MMU) initiative at villages Sharni and Panchayee in Medical Block Thathri, District Doda Monday.

Organised under the supervision of Block Medical Officer Thathri Dr Shakeel Ahmed Kichloo, the camp aimed to bring quality healthcare services to the doorsteps of the rural population, facilitate early detection of diseases and promote awareness of preventive healthcare.

A comprehensive range

of services, including general health check-ups, Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD) screening, laboratory investigations and medical consultations, was provided to the people of the area. More than 140 patients availed the free services.

The medical team was led by Dr Mansoor Ganaai and assisted by the local health staff along with the MMU team from the CMO Office, Doda.

The health team distributed free medicines and provided counselling on healthy lifestyle practices, disease prevention and the importance of regular health check-ups.

J&K Amateur Kabaddi Association hails Shariya Manzoor's historic Asian Kabaddi League Selection

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, JULY 27: The J&K Amateur Kabaddi Association has expressed immense pride and happiness over the selection of Shariya Manzoor from Pulwama for the first-ever Asian Kabaddi League (Women - Chapter 1), marking a historic achievement for Jammu & Kashmir and Indian women's kabaddi.

Congratulating Shariya on her remarkable accomplishment, Dr. Kuldeep Kumar Gupta, General Secretary, J&K Amateur Kabaddi Association, as per an official statement, said that her selection is the result of years of hard work, dedication, and disciplined training. He also congratulated her coach, Arshid Rather, under whose guidance and coaching Shariya honed her skills and developed into an elite kabaddi player capable of competing at the international level.

He appreciated the Sports Council's continued efforts in the



effective functioning of Khelo India Centres and PMDP Centres, which have played a vital role in nurturing young sporting talent across the Union Territory. He further lauded the recent decision of the Secretary, J&K Sports Council, to sanction 10 new Kabaddi Centres across Jammu & Kashmir, stating that the initiative will significantly strengthen grassroots development and provide aspiring players with greater opportunities to excel in the sport.

Dr. Kuldeep Kumar Gupta also highlighted that Jammu & Kashmir kabaddi is witnessing unprecedented growth. He

noted that two players from the Union Territory participated in the Pro Kabaddi League (PKL) in 2026, and Shariya's selection for the inaugural Asian Kabaddi League further reflects the steady rise of kabaddi talent from J&K on national and international platforms.

The J&K Amateur Kabaddi Association extended its best wishes to Shariya Manzoor for a successful campaign in the Asian Kabaddi League and expressed confidence that she will make the nation and Jammu & Kashmir proud through her outstanding performances.

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR JULY 27: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo on Monday chaired a comprehensive meeting of the District-Level NCORD Committee here at Meeting Hall of the DC Office to review the progress of the intensified anti-drug enforcement drive launched under the 100-Day Jammu & Kashmir Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan in the District.

Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Srinagar, Dr. Sundeep Chakravarthi, also attended the meeting, which assessed the impact of coordinated enforcement measures against drug trafficking and substance abuse.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by Regional Transport Officer Kashmir, Qazi Irfan, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Aadil Fareed, SP Headquarter, Umar Shah, Joint Commissioner SMC, Nuzhat Khurshid, IAS Probationer, Alfred Thomas, SDM West, Irfan Bahadur, SDM East Zubair Ahmad, Chief Education Officer, Ghulam Mohi-Din, DSWO, Mohammad Yousuf and Officers from Excise, Drug Control Organisation, DYS&S, heads of ATFs and Officers of other concerned departments.

At the outset, the meeting undertook a comprehensive assessment of the District's anti-drug strategy, focusing on enforcement measures, preventive interventions, rehabilitation measures and the outcomes of the recently concluded 100-day Jammu and Kashmir Nasha Mukht Abhiyan.

During the meeting, it was informed that the intensified



enforcement operations, coupled with coordinated efforts by the Police, Civil Administration, and other stakeholder departments, have yielded significant outcomes across Srinagar district.

The multi-pronged action has focused on dismantling drug trafficking networks, disrupting the financial ecosystem supporting illicit activities, and ensuring strict legal action against those involved in the illegal trade of narcotics.

The NCORD Committee was informed that the ongoing crackdown has resulted in the registration of 169 FIRs and the arrest of 238 alleged drug peddlers. In addition, illegal movable and immovable properties worth about Rs 103 crore linked to drug traffickers have been attached, while 89 bank accounts have been frozen as part of financial investigations.

The Committee was further informed that 101 driving licences, 59 vehicle registration certificates (RCs) and 70 chemist licences have been suspended for violations related to narcotics.

The enforcement agencies also reviewed action taken to dismantle drug supply networks through coordinated legal, financial and administrative measures

GCW Parade commemorates Kargil Vijay Diwas

KT News Desk

JAMMU, JULY 27: Government College for Women, Parade, Jammu observed Kargil Vijay Diwas to honour the courage and sacrifice of the soldiers of the Indian Armed Forces who secured India's victory in the Kargil War of 1999.

The programme commenced with the National Anthem, followed by the ceremonial lighting of the lamp by Principal Dr Naveen Anand. NSS PO Dr Atiya Syed delivered the welcome address, paying homage to the martyrs whose sacrifices continue to inspire every Indian.

The NSS Volunteers and NCC Cadets presented a patriotic song composed by Parvinder Singh. An NSS volunteer delivered a tribute speech highlighting the bravery and service of the Kargil heroes, followed by a dramatic skit depicting the valour and martyrdom of the

soldiers and a poetic tribute to the fallen heroes.

Principal Dr Naveen Anand paid tributes to the martyrs and said Kargil Vijay Diwas is not merely a remembrance of military victory but a celebration of the spirit, discipline and commitment of the Indian Armed Forces. He urged students to imbibe patriotism, integrity, courage and selfless service and become responsible citizens dedicated to the progress and unity of the nation.

Dean Academic Affairs Prof Anjali Abrol interacted with the volunteers and encouraged them to maintain their dedication.

NSS PO Dr Gurpreet Kour proposed the vote of thanks, expressing gratitude to the Principal, faculty members, participants, NSS Volunteers, NCC Cadets and the organising committee.

The NSS Unit and NCC Unit of the college coordinated the event.

Govt. approves Rs 16.36 crore for restoration of historic Jamia Masjid Shopian, Chaumanda Mata Mandir Ramban

Projects to preserve religious, cultural, architectural heritage across Jammu & Kashmir



KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, July 27: The Government of Jammu & Kashmir, led by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, has approved two major heritage conservation projects worth 16.36 crore for the revival and restoration of the historic Jamia Masjid Sharief in Shopian and the Sarvadhara Chaumanda Mata Mandir in Ramban.

The Government, as per an official statement, has sanctioned Rs 6.05 crore for the revival and restoration of its historic Jamia Masjid Sharief

in Shopian on heritage lines. The project aims to preserve the mosque's distinctive architectural character while safeguarding its rich cultural and historical legacy for future generations.

In another significant decision, the Government has approved 10.31 crore for the revival and restoration of the Sarvadhara Chaumanda Mata Mandir in Ramban. The project seeks to conserve and strengthen the temple's historic and religious significance while ensuring the preservation of its architectural heritage.

J&K BOSE notifies revised date-sheet for the Annual (Private)/Bi-annual 2026 exams

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, JULY 27: The Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education (J&K BOSE) has notified the revised date sheet for the conduct of Annual (Private)/Bi-annual 2026 examinations of Secondary School Examination (10th Class), Higher Secondary Part-I (11th Class), Higher Secondary

Part - II (12th Class) and Jammu & Kashmir State Open School (JKSOS 12th Class) which were postponed earlier.

Accordingly, the Board, as per an official statement, has advised the entire stakeholder to take necessary steps for the smooth and fair conduct of the examination at the designated examination centres as per the revised date-sheet.

ADC Sopore holds meeting with fertilizer dealers, stresses quality, fair pricing

KT News Desk

BARAMULLA, JULY 27: Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Sopore, Dr. S.A. Raina Monday chaired a meeting with all fertilizer dealers of Sub-District Sopore to review the quality, pricing and standard weight of fertilizers being supplied to farmers.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was held to ensure that farmers receive quality agricultural inputs at government-approved rates and in prescribed quantities. The ADC stressed that all fertilizer dealers must strictly adhere to the notified rates, maintain standard weights and ensure the supply of genuine and quality products.

He warned that any deviation from the prescribed norms or involvement in overcharging, underweight supply or sale of substandard products would invite strict legal action.

Dr. Raina directed the concerned stakeholders to maintain transparency in their business



practices and cooperate with the Agriculture Department and enforcement agencies in safeguarding the interests of the farming community.

The meeting was also attended by Law Enforcement Inspector, Baramulla, Hilal Ahmad, who emphasized the importance of strict compliance with the relevant laws and regulations governing the sale and distribution of fertilizers.

The participants assured the chair that they would fully comply with the prescribed guidelines and continue to provide quality services to the farming community.

Court of Adjudication acts tough on food safety violators in Shopian

KT News Desk

SHOPIAN, JULY 27: The Court of adjudication under the Food Safety and Standards Act was convened Monday by the Adjudicating Officer (Additional Deputy Commissioner) Shopian, Dr. Zakir Hussain Faaz during which 12 cases related to violations of food safety norms were disposed of.

During the proceedings, a total penalty of Rs 62,000 was imposed on food business operators found selling substandard milk and edible oil, besides committing other violations under the Food Safety and Standards Act.

The ADC, as per an official statement, emphasized that

there will be zero tolerance for the sale of substandard and unsafe food items, warning that strict legal action, including hefty penalties, will be taken against anyone found violating food safety regulations.

The Court directed the Food Safety Department to continue intensive market inspections across the district to ensure the availability of safe and quality food products for consumers. Food business operators were instructed to strictly adhere to prescribed food safety standards, failing which stringent action will follow.

The District Administration reiterated its commitment for safeguarding public health through regular market

DMRR&R frames five-pronged roadmap for strengthening disaster management across J&K

CS calls for time-bound implementation to enhance disaster resilience of each district

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Jul 27: Chief Secretary Atal Dullloo on Monday assessed the progress achieved by the Department of Disaster Management, Relief, Rehabilitation & Reconstruction (DMRRR) on the implementation of its comprehensive five-pronged roadmap for strengthening the disaster management framework across the districts of J&K.

The meeting besides ACS PWD; Principal Secretary, Home; and Commandant, SDRF was attended by Commissioner Secretary, H&UDD; Divisional Commissioners; Secretary, RDD; Commissioner, JMC/SMC; Director, IMD; Chief Engineer, I&FC; Representatives from BRO, NHAI, NHIDCL and other concerned officers. Deputy Commissioners attended the meeting through virtual mode.

During the meeting, the Chief Secretary conducted a comprehensive review of the Action Taken Report (ATR) on the decisions taken during the previous review meetings and assessed the progress achieved by various departments in implementing key disaster risk reduction initiatives.

The Chief Secretary reiterated that investments made in



disaster risk reduction today would significantly reduce future economic losses, safeguard critical infrastructure and save precious human lives. He called upon all departments to adopt a whole-of-government approach in implementing the roadmap and work to build a safer, more resilient and disaster-ready Jammu and Kashmir.

Emphasising the urgent need for strengthening disaster resilience in Jammu and Kashmir, the Chief Secretary observed that the Union Territory remains highly vulnerable to a wide spectrum of natural hazards including earthquakes, floods, landslides, cloudbursts, Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs), avalanches and forest fires. He said that our strategic geographical location demands a proactive, scientific and future-oriented disaster management framework capable of reducing

risks before disasters occur.

While speaking the Principal Secretary, DMRR&R, Chandraker Bharti stated that substantial progress has been made on several priority initiatives, including formulation of Standard Operating Procedures under the Disaster Management Act, preparation of Detailed Project Reports for landslide mitigation measures in vulnerable districts.

Additionally he revealed that a Memorandum of Understanding is being finalised with the Geological Survey of India for establishment of a comprehensive landslide forecasting system across Jammu and Kashmir. He also threw light on the progress achieved in initiation of Digital Terrain Modelling (DTM) and Digital Elevation Modelling (DEM) for highly vulnerable districts, strengthening of flood protection measures, submission of mitigation projects by

District Disaster Management Authorities and advancement of several institutional reforms aimed at enhancing disaster preparedness across the Union Territory.

A detailed presentation was made on the comprehensive roadmap, which is structured around five strategic pillars designed to transform disaster management in Jammu and Kashmir into a resilient, data-driven and development-oriented system.

Moreover it was highlighted that the Department has formulated a comprehensive five-pronged roadmap to strengthen the disaster management framework across Jammu and Kashmir through scientific risk assessment, targeted mitigation measures, institutional capacity building, community participation and risk-informed development.

The roadmap envisages preparation of a GIS-based Multi-Hazard Risk Atlas, strengthening of critical infrastructure, deployment of modern technologies, enhancement of emergency preparedness and promotion of localized early warning systems to minimise disaster risks and improve response capabilities.

Panchayati Raj knowledge exchange

J&K hosts South Goa Zilla Panchayat delegation

Exposure visits foster mutual learning, stronger local governance: Dir RDD

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Jul 27: The Department of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj (RDD&PR), Jammu & Kashmir on Monday hosted a high-level delegation from the South Goa Zilla Panchayat at Panchayat Bhawan, Budgam, as part of an inter-state knowledge exchange programme aimed at strengthening Panchayati Raj Institutions through mutual learning and the sharing of best practices.

The delegation was led by Siddharth Dessai, Chairperson, South Goa Zilla Panchayat, Vikas Kamble, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Agostinho Fernandes, Chief Accounts Officer, along with 19 elected members of the South Goa Zilla Panchayat.

The visiting delegation was welcomed by Director, Rural Development Department & Panchayati Raj Riyaz Ahmad Wani, Joint Director (Administration) RDD Kashmir, Nasir Mahmood Khan along with senior officers of the department, members of the State Panchayat Resource Centre (SPRC), and representatives of award-winning Panchayats from Jammu & Kashmir.

The technical session commenced with a detailed



presentation by experts from the State Panchayat Resource Centre (SPRC), highlighting the structure, functioning, achievements, innovations and best practices of the Panchayati Raj system in Jammu & Kashmir. The presentation showcased the UT's initiatives in strengthening grassroots governance, improving rural service delivery, promoting transparency and encouraging community participation.

The programme also featured an inspiring experience-sharing session by award-winning Panchayat representatives who shared successful initiatives and innovative governance practices implemented at the grassroots level.

Members of the South Goa Zilla Panchayat delegation interacted with officers and Panchayat representatives during an open discussion, exchanging experiences, ideas and practical approaches to strengthening local self-governance. The interactive session provided a valuable platform

for cross-learning and exploring opportunities for adopting best practices across states.

Addressing the gathering, Director RDD, Riyaz Ahmad Wani, emphasized the importance of collaborative learning among Panchayati Raj Institutions and underscored the role of such exposure visits in enhancing governance, capacity building and rural development.

He highlighted Jammu & Kashmir's commitment to empowering Panchayats and promoting inclusive, participatory and transparent rural governance.

"The District Development Council has played a significant role in strengthening grassroots democracy. Although the elected bodies have recently completed their tenure and we are in the process of fresh elections, these institutions have contributed immensely to deepening democratic values, promoting transparency, and accelerating rural development," he said.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

J&K heaven on earth

engaged in crafts such as pashmina and papier-mache, and families running homestays in Gurez and Bangus must be equal stakeholders in the tourism journey.

"Profits should not remain confined to large enterprises. Tourism must provide dignified incomes, training, and opportunities to all stakeholders to ensure sustainability. Together, let us ensure that prosperity reaches to the last village, the last family, and the last citizen in the queue," he said.

Highlighting the dimension of "Beneficial to All," the Lieutenant Governor stated that the success of tourism can be achieved when lives of artisans and small entrepreneurs are transformed and the sector provides fair value for local labour and creates dignified livelihood opportunities for youth and women.

The Lieutenant Governor also observed that sustainable tourism is an approach where nature and progress are partners. He urged that infrastructure such as roads, hotels, and facilities must be developed with zero ecological impact. He called for eco-friendly tourism to become a mass movement, encouraging tourists and stakeholders to adopt practices such as avoiding single-use plastics, proper waste management, prudent use of water and energy, and respect for wildlife.

The Lieutenant Governor urged all stakeholders to translate discussions at the conclave into concrete action plans with clear goals, timelines, and evaluation mechanisms. He proposed certification standards for eco-friendly homestays and hotels to encourage healthy competition, comprehensive training programmes for youth to become protectors of nature and guardians of culture, and use of digital platforms to connect tourists directly with local communities.

"If local communities and youth combine innovation with sensitivity, link technology with culture, and development with environmental conservation, then I am confident that Jammu Kashmir can emerge as a model of sustainable tourism for the entire nation," the Lieutenant Governor said.

Zahoor Ahmed Karnai, Chairman, Tourist Trade Interest Guild; Prof. Nilofer Khan, Vice Chancellor University of Kashmir; Prof. Shakil Ahmad Romshoo, Vice Chancellor IUST; Anshul Garg, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir; Rajiv Pandey, DIG CKR; Dr. G.V. Sundeeep Chakravarthy, SSP Srinagar; Akshay Labroo, Deputy Commissioner Srinagar; industry leaders, heads of various business organizations, members of Tourist Trade Interest Guild, and prominent citizens from different walks of life were present.

Authority to restore

chose not to do so.

The Chief Minister said that although Mehbooba Mufti had been invited to join the National Conference's protest in Delhi over the statehood issue, she chose not to participate. He claimed that had she joined the protest in support of the restoration of statehood, the controversy surrounding her remarks could have been avoided.

Commenting on the proposed Vande Mataram Bill, CM Omar said the legislation would be debated in the Assembly before any decision is taken.

He observed that Vande Mataram already enjoys a respected place in the country and said the House would discuss the provisions of the proposed legislation before it is considered for implementation.

CM Omar said the democratic process would determine the fate of the Bill after discussion in the legislature. (KNO)

Amarnath Yatra:

has reached 1,27,326.

The administration has temporarily

suspended movement on the Pahalgam axis to facilitate repair and maintenance works, while the Yatra continues uninterrupted through the Baltal route under strict security arrangements. (KNO)

CM assures full

responsibility to ensure the traditional sector not only survives but flourishes for generations to come.

Interacting with members of the Cricket Bat Manufacturers Association at the Hallamulla Sangam Industrial Estate here, the Chief Minister said the government would take all necessary steps to address the concerns of manufacturers, particularly regarding the sustainable availability of willow wood, uninterrupted power supply, infrastructure support and ease of doing business.

Responding to the concerns raised by the association, the CM said that immediate steps were necessary to safeguard the cricket bat industry, adding that preserving traditional industries was as important as attracting new ones.

Describing the cricket bat industry as one of Jammu and Kashmir's unique strengths, Omar Abdullah said it is backed by locally available raw material, skilled craftsmen and a well-established market across the country and abroad.

The Chief Minister said that the industry possessed all the strengths needed to succeed, including locally available raw material, skilled workers and a ready market, and that the government was committed to ensuring its continued growth.

Addressing the key concern of shrinking willow resources, the Chief Minister observed that the demand for scientific willow plantation was reasonable and that continuous harvesting without replantation posed a serious threat to the industry's future.

Drawing examples from international best practices, he said the government would promote systematic replantation of willow trees to ensure a continuous and sustainable supply of raw material.

He added that the government would ensure systematic replantation of willow trees and examine improved varieties to secure a sustainable supply of raw material.

The Chief Minister also assured the manufacturers that the government would take effective measures to curb illegal movement of willow clefts by strengthening monitoring mechanisms and check-posts.

Responding to demands for better infrastructure, Omar Abdullah said a proposal for improving electricity supply to the industrial estate would be prepared and taken up with the Power Development Department for approval.

He further assured that workers employed in the industrial estate would be provided better medical support in case of accidents and that the demand for a fire and emergency unit would also be addressed.

On the proposal for revival of Common Treatment Facility Centre in the vicinity, the Chief Minister asked the Industries Department and the local MLA to jointly examine the requirement and identify a suitable location for the facility.

He also directed the Industries Department to simplify procedural requirements and remove unnecessary bottlenecks to facilitate the smooth functioning and expansion of the cricket bat industry.

He said that the government's objective was to ensure the sustained growth of the cricket bat industry and reaffirmed its full support for the sector.

Later, the Chief Minister visited a cricket bat manufacturing unit in the industrial estate, where he observed the intricate process of cricket bat production from willow clefts to finished bats. He interacted with workers and artisans engaged in various stages of manufacturing, appreciating their craftsmanship and contribution

to preserving Kashmir's globally acclaimed cricket bat industry. The Chief Minister also enquired about their working conditions and reiterated the government's commitment to strengthening the sector through sustained policy support and improved infrastructure.

Earlier, members of the Cricket Bat Manufacturers Association highlighted several issues before the Chief Minister, including sustainable willow plantation and availability of raw material, allocation of compartments for willow harvesting, uninterrupted 24x7 power supply with an essential feeder to the industrial estate, establishment of a permanent Fire and Emergency Services unit, medical facilities for workers in case of accidents and measures to check illegal movement of willow clefts.

Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary, Minister for Forests, Ecology and Environment Javed Ahmed Rana, MLA Bijbehara-Srigufwara Dr. Bashir Ahmad Shah Veeri, Director Industries Kashmir, Chief Executive Officer JKBOCVWB, Director Rakhs and Farms, Director Handloom and Handicrafts, representatives of the Cricket Bat Manufacturers Association and other senior officers were present on the occasion.

Raabita: CM meets

Shradha Sharma, met the Chief Minister to deliberate on Jammu and Kashmir's startup and entrepreneurship ecosystem, innovation-driven initiatives and the Government's efforts to promote inclusive economic growth.

President, Jammu Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Arun Gupta, also called on the Chief Minister and discussed issues concerning trade, commerce and industrial development in Jammu and Kashmir.

Managing Director and CEO, Infinites Services and Solutions, Saiyed Owais Ahmad, met the Chief Minister and discussed proposals for implementing industry-led skill development and higher education initiatives in Jammu and Kashmir through partnerships with leading global technology companies.

The Chief Minister assured the visiting public representatives and industry leaders that the Government remains committed to fostering inclusive development, strengthening entrepreneurship and industry, promoting trade and commerce, and expanding employment and skill development opportunities for the youth of Jammu and Kashmir through collaborative partnerships.

LG chairs Governing

Hindu Education Society Kashmir, Prof. B. L. Zutshi; other members including Prof. Ashok Aima, Prof. Veena Pandita, Prof. Verinder Rawal, VK. Raina, M. K. Jalali; Dean Academic Affairs, University of Kashmir, Prof. Shariefuddin Pirzada; Dean, College Development Council, University of Kashmir, Prof. (Dr.) Aneesa Shafi, Principal, Gandhi Memorial College, Prof. Masood Ahmad Malik and other senior officials.

The Governing Board, which met under the chairmanship of Lieutenant Governor, discussed various matters of academic and administrative importance, to further improve the overall functioning of the College.

The Lieutenant Governor directed for laying out a comprehensive policy aimed at streamlining the administrative and operational framework across the institution.

The Board also held detailed deliberations on adoption of the Rules of Business of the Governing Board; Grant-in-Aid to G. M. College of Education, Bantalab, Jammu; streamlining recruitment process; pensionary benefits for existing staff and retired employees w.e.f. 2002; augmentation of campus infrastructure; revision of existing curriculum, and the introduction of new courses aligned with the National Education Policy (NEP).

Haj-2027: J&K registrations

Territory have registered for Haj-2027.

According to the district-wise figures, Srinagar accounted for the highest 1,152 applications, followed by Baramulla (595), Anantnag (420), Budgam (404), Pulwama (361), Kupwara (323) and Kulgam (265). The remaining registrations were received from other districts across Jammu and Kashmir.

Dr Qureshi said the registrations from J&K form part of the 2,01,725 Haj applications received across the country after the Haj Committee of India extended the registration period.

"The registration process has been completed smoothly. The remaining Haj-related formalities will now be carried out as per the schedule notified by the Haj Committee of India," Dr Qureshi said. (KNO)

'Gol sanctions multiple

As per the annexure to the parliamentary reply, Jammu and Kashmir received sanction for several projects under the Swadesh Darshan Scheme. These include development of the Jammu-Srinagar-Pahalgam-Bhagwati Nagar-Anantnag-Salamabad Uri-Kargil-Leh circuit at a sanctioned cost of 77.33 crore, development of tourist facilities in Jammu-Rajouri-Shopian-Pulwama at 81.60 crore, construction of tourism assets damaged in the 2014 floods under the Prime Minister's Development Package at 90.43 crore, development of tourist facilities at Mantalai and Sudhmahadev at 91.99 crore, tourism infrastructure in Anantnag-Pulwama-Kishtwar-Pahalgam-Zaskar Padum-Daksum-Ranjit Sagar Dam at 86.39 crore, and development of tourist facilities in Gulmarg-Baramulla-Kupwara-Kargil-Leh at 96.75 crore.

The ministry further informed Parliament that under the PRASHAD scheme, the Centre sanctioned 40.46 crore for the development of Hazratbal Shrine in Srinagar, of which 34.30 crore has been released and utilised.

The reply also noted that no project from Jammu and Kashmir figures in the lists of projects sanctioned under Swadesh Darshan 2.0, CBDD and SASCI included in the latest parliamentary statement. (KNO)

Stranded vehicles

currently cloudy in Udhampur. Restoration work is progressing, and stranded vehicles are being cleared on priority," the official said.

He advised commuters to avoid travelling on the highway until further orders, warning that fresh landslides and shooting stones could occur at vulnerable locations. (KNO)

Day temps above

normal, while Jammu registered 35.3 degrees Celsius, 1.9 degrees above the seasonal average.

Qazigund recorded 30.5°C (2.6°C above normal), Banihal 30.8°C (2.5°C above normal), Katra 32.2°C (2.7°C above normal), Bhadarwah 31.6°C (1.2°C above normal), Batote 27.6°C (1.2°C above normal) and Kukernag 28.7°C (1.3°C above normal). Kupwara recorded 30.2°C, 0.9°C below normal, while Pahalgam and Gulmarg settled at 25.6°C and 20.7°C, respectively, both marginally below normal.

The MeT office said minimum temperatures also remained close to or slightly above normal at most places, with Srinagar recording 18.9°C and Jammu 25.8°C.

The department has forecast light to moderate rain and thundershowers at most places across Kashmir division from July 28 to 31, with the possibility of brief intense showers in a few districts, particularly during the early morning and late afternoon/evening hours.

For Jammu division, it predicted light to moderate rain at most places, with heavy to torrential rain likely at a few locations. Udhampur and adjoining areas are expected to receive heavy to very heavy rainfall, especially on July 30, when weather activity is likely to peak.

The MeT has warned that intense rainfall between July 28 and 31 could trigger flash floods, landslides and mudslides at vulnerable locations and advised tourists, travellers and transporters to follow official advisories.

Rain and thundershowers are expected to continue at many places during August 1-2, while another spell of heavy rain is likely over a few districts of Jammu division during August 3-4, the department said. (KNO)

World Head & Neck

extensive and survival comparatively lower," he said.

Highlighting the regional scenario, Dr Yousuf said Jammu and Kashmir presents a distinct pattern of head and neck cancers. Based on studies conducted at tertiary healthcare institutions, including SKIMS and GMC Srinagar, and the team's experience of treating over 800 head and neck cancer patients, cancers involving the thyroid, larynx, hypopharynx, and salivary glands are more frequently seen in Kashmir than oral cavity cancers.

"Increasing tobacco use, smoking, poor oral hygiene, nutritional deficiencies, and delayed diagnosis contribute significantly to the regional disease burden. Environmental and occupational exposures, particularly among farming communities, are also being studied for their possible role," he said.

Dr Yousuf said that people should immediately consult an ENT specialist if symptoms such as persistent mouth ulcers, sore throat, hoarseness, difficulty swallowing, neck swelling, unexplained ear pain, loose teeth, bleeding from the mouth, or unexplained weight loss continue for more than two weeks.

"Many head and neck cancers can be prevented by avoiding tobacco and areca nut, limiting alcohol intake, maintaining good oral hygiene, consuming a healthy diet rich in fruits and vegetables, receiving HPV vaccination where appropriate, and using protective equipment while handling agricultural chemicals," he said.

According to Dr Yousuf, modern management now includes minimally invasive surgery, reconstructive microvascular procedures, precision radiotherapy, chemotherapy, targeted therapy, immunotherapy, and comprehensive speech and swallowing rehabilitation. "When diagnosed in the early stages, cure rates for many head and neck cancers exceed 80 to 90 per cent while preserving normal speech and swallowing functions. Early diagnosis means simpler treatment, lower costs, and significantly better outcomes," he said.

Dr Yousuf also announced that Jammu and Kashmir will host the Foundation of Head and Neck Oncology (FHNO) Kashmir 2026 conference from September 10 to 13 at SKICC, Srinagar, bringing together leading surgeons, oncologists, radiologists, pathologists, and researchers from across India and abroad.

Urging collective efforts, he said: "Head and neck cancer is no longer a disease to be feared in silence. With awareness, prevention, and timely treatment, thousands of lives can be saved. Let us build a tobacco-free and healthier society where hope replaces fear and early diagnosis replaces delay." (KNO)

'J&K received 9

falling under 38 specified categories.

As per the state-wise data annexed to the reply, Jammu and Kashmir was granted nine Environmental Clearances by the ministry between FY 2021-22 and FY 2025-26.

Regarding compliance with National Green Tribunal (NGT) orders, the Ministry said all directions issued by the Tribunal are followed up by the concerned divisions and sectors for necessary action and compliance, while the Tribunal is informed of the action taken wherever required. (KNO)

Right to peaceful protest guaranteed, agitation can't justify police excesses: SC

PTI

New Delhi, Jul 27: Police excesses or a 'lathi charge' cannot be justified merely because there is an agitation, the Supreme Court said on Monday while observing that the right to peaceful protest is "absolutely guaranteed".

A bench headed by Chief Justice Surya Kant also said it will hear on Tuesday a batch of pleas alleging police excesses against students protesting over exam irregularities and the NEET paper leak during the just concluded agitation spearheaded by the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP). Besides, the bench, also comprising Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana, agreed to take up a separate plea filed by a few family members of those police personnel who were attacked during the protest along with other listed petitions.

The CJP-led march on July 20 in Delhi saw clashes between protesters and security personnel, who used lathis and teargas shells to disperse crowds attempting to move towards Parliament.

"The right to peaceful protest



is absolutely guaranteed. That cannot be denied. Merely because there is agitation cannot justify police excesses," the CJI said.

"If there is excess committed, it should be independently examined. It's not only a case of Delhi. Uniformity in protocol required... Discipline is integral to the democratic process," the bench observed.

The life of every individual irrespective of who they are is important, the bench asserted when a lawyer said police personnel were also beaten up.

"Injury to individuals, be it to policemen or (students), is of equal concern. We may call upon the state to concern why adequate equipment is not given to police to handle such...they should have helmets," Justice Bagchi said.

"Just because there is agitation does not mean there is 'lathi charge'... self-evolved discipline is needed which is essential to democratic process," the CJI said and urged parties to assist the bench. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, said he will assist the court

dispassionately.

During a brief hearing, lawyer Fauzia Shakil said police in Bihar allegedly used AK-47 on protesters.

Senior advocate Vikas Singh added that Bihar had also seen a lot of attacks on students.

Earlier, the top court had agreed to hear on Monday the pleas alleging police excesses against protesting students.

One petition seeks nationwide guidelines to regulate police action during public protests, including a prohibition on the deployment of plainclothes personnel for crowd-control duties, safeguards on the use of prohibitory orders under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), and an independent probe into the police action during the July 20 protest in Delhi.

Filed by Shailendra Mani Tripathi through advocate-on-record Chand Qureshi, the plea has made the Centre, the Delhi government, the police commissioner and all states and union territories as respondents.

It seeks enforcement of fundamental rights under Articles 14, 19 and 21 of the Constitution. It

alleges that the demonstration at Delhi on July 20 was met with heavy police deployment, barricading, teargas, baton charges and mass detentions, resulting in injuries to at least 60 protesters.

It also alleges assaults, gender-based misconduct against female protesters and the use of force by unidentified or plainclothes personnel.

The student-led protests, which spread to several cities, were centred around the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan.

The agitation, which started in Jantar Mantar on June 20, was called off on Saturday after Pradhan resigned and the government accepted its other demands.

On July 22, the Delhi High Court sought responses from the Centre and the Delhi Police on two separate pleas alleging excessive use of force against protesters during the July 20 march to Parliament.

The high court had directed the authorities to preserve all relevant records in relation to the police action, including CCTV camera footage and any videography.

Bhagwat backs marriage, says live-in relationships lack responsibility



PTI

Hyderabad, Jul 27: RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat on Sunday said marriage is a discipline which instils dharma, while the reality of live-in relationships can be seen all over the world.

Speaking at an event on 'contemporary motherhood' organised by Vishwa Mangalya Sabha here, he also said Gen Z is imitative, emotional and does not think with a calm mind, and what comes across to them as genuine appeals.

"Marriage is a discipline which instils dharma. Its alternative is live-in relationship. Modernity. What are its consequences? We don't want responsibilities but happiness. Stay together when it is wanted and part ways when not wanted. No responsibilities. What will grow with it? What is growing, look around the world," he said.

He, however, said modernity is also needed and changing with times is also a rule in the country's traditions.

In an apparent reference to live-in relationships, he said it is degradation and blind imitation of Western culture, while modernity

is welcome.

He also said LGBTQ is a part of our society and that they should not be looked down upon.

Bhagwat favoured following mobile phone discipline by parents and stressed the importance of conversation among family members to answer the questions of new generation children and to address various family-related issues.

Addressing parents' concerns over the new generation's lifestyle, including excessive mobile phone use, he said elders must embody what they want to see in the new generation.

"Be the change you want to see in society. Reduce your time on social media. Follow mobile discipline. We look to the government. In our tradition, the government is second; society is first. (We say) the government should make this law or that law... we can do that at our home," he said.

"We tell children about mobile discipline, but we are attached to mobiles. So much so that a mother gives a mobile to a child if the child is crying," Bhagwat said.

CJP seeks written assurance on withdrawal of FIRs

PTI

New Delhi, Jul 27: The Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) on Monday said it was awaiting the government's promised written agreement on the withdrawal of criminal cases against protesters and organisers, and warned that it would be forced to resume its agitation if the assurance was not received by Tuesday.

Addressing a press conference, CJP national spokesperson Ashutosh Ranka said the issue was discussed during the third round of talks with the

government before the 36-day protest at Jantar Mantar was called off.

"In the third round of talks, we had agreed that all FIRs filed against protesters and organisers across the country would be withdrawn and no new FIR would be filed against any organiser and protester in future," Ranka said.

He said the CJP had submitted a draft agreement to Union ministers J P Nadda and Jitendra Singh, and it was agreed that the government would share a written agreement by Tuesday after

legal consultations.

"We are waiting for the government to share the written agreement. We hope a senior Cabinet minister will honour the agreement and FIRs will be withdrawn, no protester or organiser would be harassed, and no cases would be filed in future," he said.

Ranka said if the written agreement was not received by Tuesday and protesters and organisers arrested in connection with the agitation were not released, the outfit would be "forced to protest again".

LS stalemate likely to end; House to discuss anti-paper leak Bill today



PTI

New Delhi, Jul 27: The stalemate in the Lok Sabha is likely to end on Tuesday as Speaker Om Birla has convinced leaders of all political parties to take up discussion on the Bill to amend the anti-paper leak law, parliamentary sources said. "All political parties

have agreed to discuss the anti-paper leak bill on Tuesday. Following Om Birla's initiative and sustained dialogue, floor leaders of political parties have agreed to commence discussion on the Public Examination (Prevention of Unfair Means) Amendment Bill 2026," a source said.

The Centre on Monday introduced

a Bill in the Lok Sabha to amend the anti-paper leaks law with stricter punishment of up to 10 years in jail and Rs 50 lakh fine, days after nationwide student protests over the NEET fiasco that led to Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation as education minister.

The proposed legislation was introduced by Minister of State for PMO Jitendra Singh amidst protests and sloganeering by the Opposition demanding a response from the government over the police crackdown on students during the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP)-led July 20 protest march to Parliament.

However, no discussion could take place on the Bill as opposition refused to relent from its demand of seeking response from the government over police action on the protesters at Jantar Mantar here and other parts of the country.

Since the Monsoon Session began on July 20, the opposition has been raking up the NEET paper leak issue due to which no legislative business could be taken up so far, except for the introduction of two Bills.

Gold rebounds Rs 2,440 to Rs 1.49 lakh/10g; silver climbs Rs 5,300



PTI

New Delhi, Jul 27: Gold prices rebounded by Rs 2,440 to Rs 1.49 lakh per 10 grams while silver prices climbed Rs 5,300 to Rs 2.3 lakh per kg in the national capital on Monday following strong trends in global markets.

Gold of 99.9 per cent purity jumped Rs 2,440 to Rs 1,49,640 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes), according to the All India Sarafa Association. The metal traded at Rs 1,47,200

per 10 grams in the previous session.

Silver prices also rebounded by Rs 5,300 to Rs 2,30,000 per kg (inclusive of all taxes) from Friday's closing level of Rs 2,24,700 per kg.

Traders said both precious metals rebounded after two consecutive sessions of losses amid easing inflation concerns as crude oil prices retreated, boosting investor sentiment.

"Gold gained on Monday as easing tensions

in West Asia triggered a sharp decline in crude oil prices, easing inflation concerns, while a weak US dollar and lower Treasury bond yields provided further support for bullion," said Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst - Commodities at HDFC Securities.

He, however, added that gains in the domestic market remained limited as the Indian rupee strengthened against the US dollar.

In the global markets, spot gold gained USD 42.13, or 1.04 per cent, to USD 4,095.30 per ounce, while silver rose 1.47 per cent to USD 59.04 per ounce.

"Spot gold hovered near USD 4,100 per ounce on Monday, while silver extended gains to USD 59 per ounce in the international markets," Kaynat Chainwala, AVP Commodity Research, Kotak Securities, said.

India summons Ukraine envoy

PTI

New Delhi, Jul 27: India summoned Ukrainian Ambassador Oleksandr Polishchuk on Monday and lodged a strong protest over killing of an Indian seafarer in an attack on a merchant vessel in the Black Sea last week.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said it conveyed to the envoy New Delhi's serious concern over the incident and condemned such attacks on commercial shipping in the strongest terms.

The vessel MV Omorfi reportedly came under Ukrainian drone strikes amid fresh hostilities between Russia and Ukraine.

"Today, the Ambassador of Ukraine to India, Oleksandr Polishchuk, was summoned to the Ministry of External Affairs in connection with the attack on the commercial vessel MV Omorfi which resulted in the tragic death of an Indian national," the MEA said.

"The ministry conveyed its serious concern over the incident and condemned such attacks on commercial shipping in the strongest terms, underscoring their adverse impact on the safety of maritime navigation, freedom of navigation, and international commerce," it said in a statement.

'Why some smokers don't develop lung cancer, while non-smokers do'

PTI

New Delhi, Jul 27: A study has found the first direct evidence of how one's genetic makeup can influence DNA damage through exposures such as cigarette smoke or sunlight and alter how many mutations accumulate.

Findings published in the journal Nature could explain aspects including why most smokers do not develop lung cancer, while some non-smokers develop lung cancer.

Researchers, including those at the University of Cambridge, said the reason why is almost certainly related to our inherited genetic makeup, but finding direct evidence has proved challenging in patient cohort studies.

Even though many studies have suggested that inherited genetic differences affect cancer risk, proving this link has been difficult because



individuals within -- and between -- human populations vary in lifestyle,

environment, and exposure history, they said. Senior author Duncan Odom,

who led the research while at the Cancer Research UK (CRUK) Cambridge Institute at the University of Cambridge, said, "Cancer does not arise entirely by chance. Although tumours often reach the same biological endpoint, the path to that endpoint is determined by an individual's genetic background."

"We've been able to show for the first time the extent to which genetic background influences both the mutation processes and the pathways leading to tumour development," Odom said.

The researchers said the findings have implications for cancer screening and precision medicine, adding that prevention and screening strategies may need to account more carefully for inherited genetics and population diversity.

The researchers bred four strains of mice with a varying susceptibility to

liver cancer, spanning a level of genetic diversity comparable to that seen in human populations.

The mice were then exposed to a single dose of the liver carcinogen diethylnitrosamine (DEN). DEN is found in tobacco smoke and certain processed foods and is known to cause DNA damage in liver cells, leading to mutations that can initiate tumour growth, the researchers said.

Because every mouse received the same dose at the same age under controlled conditions, the team eliminated the environmental variation that confounds studies in humans.

They then sequenced genomes of almost 600 tumours and analysed gene activity that developed, along with examining the untreated mice to compare spontaneous tumour formation across strains. Using the data, the

researchers reconstructed how each tumour evolved from its original cancer-causing mutation.

Across all mouse strains, cancers nearly always acquired a cancer-driving mutation that activated the same cancer-promoting signalling system, called the MAPK pathway -- a multi-step cascade of molecular signals that controls important life processes, including cell growth, and plays a key role in numerous types of cancer.

However, depending on the genetics of a mouse, the acquired mutation altered the activity of other signalling pathways associated with cancer, and also caused a striking tendency for a duplication of the whole-genome -- where an organism gets an extra set of all its chromosomes and extra gene copies are free to mutate and take on new jobs.

Iran warns of ‘unforeseen’ consequences after Ukraine attack on Caspian Sea ship



AFP

Tehran, Jul 27: Iran's foreign ministry warned on Monday of "unforeseen" consequences following Ukraine's attack on an Iranian vessel in the Caspian Sea over the weekend.

"This action by Ukraine was an absolutely illegal and unjustified act, contrary to the Charter of the United Nations, as well as a dangerous act of adventurism that will certainly not go unanswered by us," the ministry's spokesman Esmail Baqaei said in a weekly press briefing, adding that the consequences of Ukraine's action "will certainly

be unforeseen."

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi on Sunday warned that his country would respond to a deadly attack by Ukraine on an Iranian ship in the Caspian Sea.

It came after Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said Kyiv had carried out long-range strikes in the Caspian Sea against vessels transporting military cargo involving Iran, underscoring the increasingly international dimensions of Russia's war in Ukraine.

"Zelensky has attacked an Iranian commercial vessel, killing a sailor," Araghchi said on X,

describing it as "a blatant UN Charter violation done at Israel's behest to drag Europe into its war."

He added that, during calls with the European Union's Kaja Kallas and Russian top diplomat Sergey Lavrov, he "made clear that what the freeloader in Kyiv did CANNOT GO UNANSWERED."

Iran's foreign ministry said the attack caused the ship "to explode, killing one sailor and injuring several others."

The Islamic republic "has never intervened in the conflict between Russia and Ukraine," the ministry said in a statement.

On Saturday, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said on social media that armed forces had achieved "very strong results with long-range strikes in the Caspian Sea — including vessels used in military cargo shipments involving Iran, as well as a warship."

Ukraine's intelligence services, for their part, reported on Telegram that drone attacks had been carried out against "cargo vessels under international sanctions that were used to transport military cargo between Iran and Russia."

According to Iranian state television, the foreign ministry summoned the Ukrainian charge d'affaires in Tehran on Saturday to protest this "hostile and criminal act."

Netanyahu says Iran is top agenda in meeting with Trump

REUTERS

Jerusalem, Jul 27: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu departed to Washington on Monday, where he said he would meet US President Donald Trump for their first face-to-face talks since the start of their conflict with Iran.

It will be Netanyahu's eighth meeting with Trump since the US president returned to office, and their first since February, right before Israel and the United States launched a joint aerial campaign against Iran.

"In these complex times, you need to act with both great determination and great wisdom. We will discuss all the issues on the agenda, primarily Iran. Of course, our goal is to protect our security and also to expand the circle of peace around us," Netanyahu said in a video statement upon departure.

Israel had not taken part in a two-week US bombing campaign this month that provoked Tehran to fire on US bases in response.

Trump halted the campaign over the weekend. Iran said it would suspend its own attacks for as long as the US pause endures. Israel has warned Tehran that any attack would trigger a forceful Israeli response. Netanyahu has in recent weeks acknowledged that he and Trump have had some differences, as Israeli and US interests in the region appeared to diverge.

An acrimonious phone call in June where

the president called the prime minister "f***ing crazy," first leaked to the media and later publicly confirmed by Trump himself, laid bare the strains that have at times emerged between the two leaders.

In an apparent gesture to Trump on Sunday, Israel said it would allow a multinational security force to enter Gaza as proposed under Trump's peace plan for the enclave.

On July 21, Israel announced that it had



redeployed some of its forces in southern Lebanon, as part of the US-backed agreements reached with Lebanese authorities in recent weeks.

A meeting with Trump that showcases what has traditionally been a close relationship between the two leaders could help Netanyahu at home, where he is facing an October 27 election and is struggling in opinion polls.

It also comes as support for Israel in the United States has been falling.

Sports Minister felicitates para-powerlifter Jhandu Kumar for CWG bronze



PTI

New Delhi, Jul 27: Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Monday felicitated para-powerlifter Jhandu Kumar with a cash prize of Rs 10 lakh for his bronze-winning performance that opened India's account in the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow.

The felicitation took place at the minister's residence here.

Jhandu won bronze in the men's heavyweight category with a best lift of 190kg.

He hails from Nalanda district in Bihar and sold vegetables and even rode an e-rickshaw to support his family in Harnaut town.

He was selected by chief para coach Rajender Rahelu to train at the Sports Authority of India's National Centre of Excellence in Gandhinagar back in June 2023.

"Dr Mandaviya asked me about my experience in Scotland. It was a great feeling to interact with him," Jhandu was quoted as saying in a statement issued by Sports Ministry.

"I have not had much sleep since the time I have won a medal, due to the excitement and adrenaline rush. My phone has been buzzing throughout," the 29-year-old added.

Prior to glory at Glasgow, the powerlifter won back-to-back silver and gold medals in the Khelo India Para Games' 2024 and 2025 editions respectively. He has now trained his eyes on the upcoming Asian Para Games scheduled from October 18 to 24, 2026, in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan.

"I will go to my hometown for a brief period to meet my family members before returning to Gandhinagar in order to prepare for Asian Para Games. China are a strong contender but I will do my best to secure a medal for my country, I promise," he said.

Thank you VVS sir for inspiring us: Iyer after ‘flawless’ Zimbabwe triumph



PTI

Harare, Jul 27: Shreyas Iyer found VVS Laxman's mentorship inspiring, while Laxman marvelled at the young batter's infectious confidence as India's T20 captain and its interim head coach applauded

each other's role in the 3-0 sweep of Zimbabwe here.

A relatively new-look India, which did not have several regular stars such as Sanju Samson, Axar Patel, Arshdeep Singh and Harshit Rana, hammered the home team and comfortably clinched the series, closing it with a 35-run win in the third and final T20I on Sunday.

In a dressing room video released by BCCI, Laxman spoke at length about Iyer's tough mindset.

"I would like to specially congratulate Shreyas because he had a rough start to his captaincy career but the way he came back, right from the first day when he joined us one day before the first game, he was very optimistic," Laxman said referring to the 0-4 loss to England earlier this month, which was Iyer's first as India's T20 captain.

France says monster fire that forced 220,000 people to flee stopped growing

• Spain battling biggest-ever fires

AP

Lege-cap Ferret (France), Jul 27: France's interior minister said Monday that a monster wildfire has stopped growing after forcing 220,000 people out of their homes in the country's southwest but cautioned that it isn't yet beaten.

"It hasn't progressed during the night," the minister, Laurent Nunez, said. "We have to remain very concentrated, very determined, to go to any moment."

He spoke after French President Emmanuel Macron held a crisis meeting Monday focusing on the massive firefighting effort in the Gironde



region and on wildfires elsewhere. The Gironde blaze has burned an area four times the size of Paris. The region's prefecture said the situation overnight had remained "globally stable" — a change from previous days where the giant blaze raging since last week edged closer to the

wine region city of Bordeaux.

In the adjacent southwestern Landes region, where hundreds of firefighters have been making progress against another virulent but smaller fire, the prefecture said some rain fell overnight and described the conditions as "favourable" for firefighting

but also cautioned that they could change.

No new evacuations were announced. But with France about to enter its peak August tourist season, Gironde authorities took more steps to keep vacationers away, banning holiday camps for children and for people with disabilities.

With thousands of firefighters on the ground and rotations of water- and retardant-dropping aircraft in the air, the massive firefighting effort was engaged in a race against time, battling to make progress before a forecast surge in temperatures from Tuesday that could make fighting flames more difficult.

Vaibhav's maturity, game awareness skyrocketed in last six months: Laxman

PTI

Harare, Jul 27: Impressed with Vaibhav Sooryavanshi's temperament, India's interim head coach VVS Laxman says the teenager's game awareness has "skyrocketed" in the last six months and he is becoming increasingly adept at handling pressure situations.

The 15-year-old prodigal talent capped a memorable tour of Zimbabwe by winning both the Player of the Match and Player of the Series awards as India completed a 3-0 sweep with a 35-run victory in the final T20I here on Sunday.

"What is really impressive is the way he's evolved as a person. The maturity level, the understanding, and the awareness over the last six months has actually skyrocketed. And that's why he's been able to handle tough situations," said Laxman, during the post-match press conference.

Sooryavanshi made 151 runs in three innings at an average of 50.33, with his sparkling 81 in the series finale laying the foundation for India's victory.

This came after the teenager endured a forgettable debut series against England, managing scores of 13, 14 and 15 before being dropped from the fifth and final T20I as India slumped to a 0-4 series defeat.

Asked whether he expected such a strong comeback from Sooryavanshi after his underwhelming show in England, Laxman said he never doubted the teenager's ability to bounce



back because he had repeatedly shown the temperament to thrive under pressure in the IPL.

"It (performance) was on expected lines...last year when he played for Rajasthan Royals for the first time, I think the way he handled pressure, because I believe that any IPL match is equivalent to an international match," he said.

"And at the age of 14 or 15, when you're playing an IPL match, either you can be overawed by the big occasion or absorb and embrace the pressure. And I think he's taken the second option where he embraced the pressure. So, I'm not at all surprised the way this series has gone," added Laxman, who is filling in for regular head coach Gautam Gambhir.

Gambhir has taken some time off before India's two-Test tour of Sri Lanka next month.

Laxman said Sooryavanshi's hunger to improve was evident in his attitude throughout the series, pointing to an incident where the youngster, despite

being injured, was keen to stay on the field and contribute to the team.

"We have to also remember that he's just 15 years old. He's a very young boy. And he himself wants to get better in every aspect of the game. And if you see it, even today's game, he was taking the hot spot.

"Even though he got injured, he still wanted to be on the field. But it was our physio who actually asked him to come out. So, that's the eagerness and the earnestness he has to do and contribute in every possible way to the team," said Laxman.

Laxman revealed that Sooryavanshi was disappointed after missing out on a century in the final T20I, but said the youngster was quickly reminded that he has a long career ahead with plenty of opportunities. "...we mentioned to him that it's not going to be the first time or the last time he'll get an opportunity to score 100. He's got a long career. And he's got the attitude and the mindset to get better each and every day.

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