



Amarnath Yatra: 4.41 lakh pilgrims pay obeisance in 27 days Over 6,100 have darshan on Wednesday



Umair Gull Ganie

Srinagar, Jul 29: As many as 4,41,577 pilgrims have performed darshan at the holy Amarnath cave shrine since the commencement of the annual pilgrimage on July 3, with 6,165 devotees paying obeisance at the holy cave shrine on Wednesday.

According to details available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) pilgrims who paid obeisance on Wednesday included 4,098 men, 1,620 women, 143 children, 67

sadhvis, seven sadhvis and 230 security personnel.

Meanwhile, a fresh batch of 2,051 pilgrims left the Bhagwati Nagar Yatri Niwas in Jammu early Wednesday for the Baltal base camp under tight security arrangements.

Officials said the 22nd batch departed at 2:45 a.m. in a convoy of 82 vehicles comprising 48 buses, eight medium motor vehicles (MMVs), 25 light motor vehicles (LMVs) and one two-wheeler.

The batch | [More on P6](#)

Chhari Mubarak begins final pilgrimage to Amarnath cave shrine

Holy mace taken to Pahalgam for traditional rituals; to follow age-old route, reach holy cave shrine on Shravan Purnima



Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Jul 29: The traditional Chhari Mubarak, the holy mace of Lord Shiva and the most revered symbol of the annual Amarnath Yatra, on Wednesday commenced its ceremonial pilgrimage to the holy cave

shrine with the sacred mace being taken from the historic Dashnami Akhada at Maisuma here to Pahalgam for the first leg of the age-old rituals.

The procession, as per the details available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), | [More on P6](#)

IFFJK receives overwhelming global response

875 film entries received from around 50 countries

Submissions open till Jul 30

Festival scheduled from Sep 7 to 10

KT News Desk



Srinagar, Jul 29: The 1st International Film Festival of Jammu and Kashmir (IFFJK) 2026 has evoked an enthusiastic response from filmmakers across the globe, with 875 film submissions received from around 50 countries so far, reflecting the growing international interest in the J&K Government's flagship cinematic initiative.

The film submission window for the festival will remain open till tomorrow i.e; July 30, 2026, providing filmmakers with the final opportunity to register their entries for participation in the inaugural edition of the festival.

The IFFJK, organised by the Department of Information

and Public Relations (DIPR) in collaboration with National Film Development Corporation (NFDC), is scheduled to be held from September 7 to 10, 2026. The festival aims to establish Jammu & Kashmir as a vibrant destination for cinema, creativity and cultural exchange while providing a prestigious platform for filmmakers from across the world to showcase their work.

The encouraging response from both national and international filmmakers underscores the growing confidence in Jammu & Kashmir as an emerging hub for film production, cinematic excellence and creative collaboration. The diversity of submissions received from around 50 countries is expected to enrich the festival with a wide spectrum of storytelling traditions, | [More on P6](#)

Rain keeps temps below normal across J&K

MeT warns of heavy showers, flash floods till Aug 5

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Jul 29: Day temperatures remained several degrees below normal across Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday following widespread rainfall, while the Meteorological Department (MeT) forecast continued wet weather with the possibility of heavy to torrential showers, flash floods and landslides in vulnerable areas over the next several days.

According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), Srinagar recorded a maximum temperature of 25.7 degrees Celsius, 4.2 degrees below normal, while the minimum settled at 20.8 degrees Celsius, which was 2 degrees above normal. The city recorded only a trace of rainfall during the day, with relative humidity ranging between 84 per cent in the morning and 71 per cent in the evening.

As per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Qazigund recorded a maximum of 24.4 degrees Celsius, Pahalgam 20.6 degrees Celsius, Kupwara | [More on P6](#)

Forest Dept issues SOP for solid waste management at tourist destinations

Naveed Ul Haq Ganaiee

Srinagar, Jul 29: In a major step towards protecting ecologically sensitive tourist destinations, the Jammu and Kashmir Forest Department has issued a comprehensive Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the management of solid waste in and around tourist destinations falling within or adjoining Reserve Forests.

The circular, issued by Chief Conservator of Forests Kashmir, Irfan Rasool Wani, a copy of which lies with news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) lays down a 10-point action plan aimed at scientific waste management, reducing plastic pollution and conserving the

fragile Himalayan ecosystem.

According to the SOP, all major tourist destinations will have destination-specific master plans incorporating carrying-capacity assessments to regulate tourist inflow and ensure that ecological limits are not exceeded.

PREPARE SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT PLANS

Authorities have also been directed to prepare comprehensive Solid Waste Management Plans covering waste generation, segregation, collection, transportation, processing and scientific disposal.

The Forest Department has proposed a complete ban on the sale, storage, distribution and use of | [More on P6](#)

CM congratulates KU on securing UGC Category-I status

'Recognition reflects university's academic excellence, research strength, institutional growth'

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Jul 29: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has congratulated the University of Kashmir on being accorded the prestigious Category-I status by the University Grants Commission (UGC) under the UGC (Categorisation of Universities for Grant of Graded Autonomy) Regulations, 2018, describing the achievement as a landmark milestone for higher education in Jammu and Kashmir.

Congratulating the Vice Chancellor, faculty, students and the entire University



fraternity, the Chief Minister said the recognition is a testament to the University's sustained commitment to academic excellence, quality research and institutional

development.

He said the achievement reflects the hard work and dedication of generations of educators, researchers, scholars and students who have contributed to building the University's reputation as one of the country's leading centres of higher learning.

The University of Kashmir has been granted the highest level of regulatory freedom under the UGC's graded autonomy framework. With Category-I status, the University will be empowered to | [More on P6](#)

Selection committee meeting for induction of JKP officers into IPS on cards

MHA determines 5 more vacancies for 2025

KNO Special Correspondent

Srinagar, Jul 29: The Selection Committee meeting for induction of officers from the Jammu & Kashmir Police into the prestigious Indian Police Service (IPS) is expected to be held in the first week of August, sources disclosed.

Sources told news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that the meeting will consider induction against eight vacancies already determined for 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2024.

As per procedure, the Union Public Service Commission convenes a Selection

Committee meeting with all stakeholders, where officers' service records and Annual Confidential Reports (ACRs) are scrutinized in accordance with Regulation 5(4) of the Promotion Regulations. Based on the Committee's recommendations, the officers included in the Select List are appointed to the Indian Police Service by the Union Government.

According to official figures, the authorised strength of the AGMUT Cadre (J&K segment) as on January 1, 2026, is 47 posts, of which 34 are presently filled, leaving 13 clear vacancies. Of these, eight | [More on P6](#)

87.5% villages in J&K, Ladakh have 4G connectivity: GoI

Says BharatNet expansion underway

Raja Syed Rather

Srinagar, Jul 29: The Government of India (GoI) on Wednesday informed the Lok Sabha that a majority of villages in the hilly Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh have been covered with mobile and 4G connectivity, while the BharatNet programme continues to expand high-speed broadband infrastructure in remote and difficult terrains.

The information was provided by Minister of State for Communications and Rural



Development, Dr Pemmasani Chandra Sekhar, in a written reply to Lok Sabha raised by Shri Manickam Tagore B regarding internet services in hilly and high-altitude areas.

Replying to the query, the

minister, as reported by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said that as of May 2026, 87,485 of the 89,959 villages located in predominantly hilly States and Union Territories have mobile coverage, while 86,538 villages have access to 4G connectivity.

For Jammu & Kashmir, the government said that out of 6,474 villages, 6,228 villages have mobile network coverage and 6,210 villages are connected with 4G services. In Ladakh, 233 of 243 villages have mobile connectivity, while 229 villages have access to 4G services.

The GoI said mobile connectivity in uncovered areas is being | [More on P6](#)

Govt sanctions Rs 91.2 lakh climate research project on GLOF risks in J&K

Raja Syed Rather

Srinagar, Jul 29: The Government of India (GoI) on Wednesday informed the Lok Sabha that it is undertaking a major climate change research project in Jammu and Kashmir under the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES), aimed at assessing the risks of Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs) across the Indian Himalayan Region.

The information was provided by Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science & Technology and Earth Sciences, Dr Jitendra Singh, in a written reply to the Lok Sabha raised by Jugal Kishore on "Research Projects in Jammu



and Kashmir".

Replying to the query on whether the government is conducting research projects in various regions of the country, including Jammu and Kashmir,

to study the impacts of climate change, the minister, as reported by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said that under the Hydrology and Cryosphere Programme,

the ministry sanctioned a joint project in 2022 to the University of Kashmir and IIT Roorkee titled, "Identifying current and future GLOF risk over contrasting topographic and climate zones of Indian Himalaya using Earth observation data and modelling." The project has been approved at a total cost of Rs 91.2 lakh.

The minister said the study aims to develop and implement a comprehensive methodological approach to investigate glacial lakes across different time scales and assess their hazard potential using physically based models in contrasting climatological, geomorphological and topographic | [More on P6](#)

Almond harvest begins 20 days early in Kashmir, farmers blame climate change

Growers seek long-term measures to safeguard Valley's almond industry

Jahangeer Ganaie

Pulwama, Jul 29: Despite a healthy almond crop this season, farmers in Kashmir are increasingly worried about the long-term impact of climate change after the harvest



commenced nearly 20 days earlier than usual.

Pulwama and Budgam, particularly its famous Karewa belts, are one of Kashmir's major almond-producing regions, where thousands of kanals are under cultivation. The sector supports the livelihoods of thousands of farmers, labourers and traders, making it an important contributor to the local economy.

Growers, speaking with the news agency—Kashmir

News Observer (KNO), said the unusually high temperatures accelerated the ripening process, forcing them to begin harvesting almost three weeks ahead of the traditional schedule.

Farmers believe the changing weather pattern is a clear indication of the growing impact of climate change on horticulture in the Valley.

Traditionally, almond trees bloom in March, while the nuts mature | [More on P6](#)

Arms, ammo seized in Kulgam orchards

Umair Gull Ganie

Kulgam, Jul 29: Security forces on Wednesday recovered arms and ammunition during a joint search operation in the Tantrypora-Sursnoo orchard area of south Kashmir's Kulgam district.

Sources told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that acting on specific intelligence shared by the Jammu and Kashmir Police, a joint search operation was launched by Kulgam Police, the 34 Rashtriya Rifles and the



18 Battalion of the CRPF in the Tantrypora-Sursnoo orchards.

They said the joint team recovered a huge cache of arms and ammunition from the area during the operation. | [More on P6](#)

CS Atal Dulloo assesses progress of RIDF projects worth over Rs 4,300 Cr

‘RIDF emerging one of the most significant sources of institutional finance for strengthening rural infrastructure in J&K’

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, JULY 29: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, on Wednesday chaired a meeting of the High Powered Committee (HPC) constituted for reviewing the implementation of NABARD projects being executed under various tranches of the Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF).

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by Additional Chief Secretary, Agriculture Production Department; Additional Chief Secretary, Public Works (R&B); Additional Chief Secretary, Finance; Director General, Resources; Chief General Manager, NABARD; and senior officers from Health, Jal Shakti and other concerned departments.

The Chief Secretary impressed upon the concerned departments to maintain a ready shelf of projects complete in all respects, including Administrative Approval and Technical Sanction, so that the same can be submitted to NABARD immediately upon the opening of a new RIDF tranche or receipt of sanction, thereby ensuring timely appraisal, approval and commencement of works without any avoidable delay.

The Chief Secretary emphasised



that RIDF has emerged as one of the most significant sources of institutional finance for strengthening rural infrastructure in Jammu and Kashmir. He observed that the successful implementation of these projects is vital for improving rural connectivity, irrigation facilities, agricultural

productivity, drinking water infrastructure, horticulture, fisheries and other essential public services.

He further instructed the departments to closely monitor the physical and financial progress of each project, conduct periodic field inspections, strengthen inter-departmental

coordination and ensure compliance with NABARD guidelines. The executing agencies were also advised to maintain the highest standards of quality, transparency and accountability during project implementation.

On this occasion the Additional Chief Secretary, Finance, Shailendra Kumar underscored the need for regular monitoring at all administrative levels so that the benefits of RIDF investments reach efficiently to the intended beneficiaries. He suggested constitution of District level monitoring Committees under the respective Deputy Commissioners for time-bound implementation of such projects here.

A detailed presentation was made by CGM, NABARD informing the Committee that 908 projects sanctioned under RIDF Tranches XXVIII to XXXI involve a cumulative loan assistance of ₹4,303.08 crore, against which an amount of ₹2,301.48 crore has been disbursed so far. Additionally out of the total sanctioned projects, 157 projects have been completed, while 751 projects are presently under execution.

The Committee also reviewed the department-wise implementation status of RIDF projects. It was

informed that the Public Works Department (PWD) accounts for the largest share with 660 projects involving a total loan assistance of 2,987.25 crore, followed by the Jal Shakti Department with 36 projects worth 491.93 crore, the Agriculture Production Department (APD) with 110 projects involving ₹414.27 crore, the Horticulture Department with 19 projects worth ₹104.52 crore, the Animal/Sheep Husbandry & Fisheries Department with 63 projects amounting to ₹190.14 crore, and H&ME with 20 projects involving 114.97 crore.

Overall, 908 projects with a cumulative loan assistance of ₹4,303.08 crore have been sanctioned under RIDF Tranches XXVIII to XXXI, against which ₹2,301.48 crore has been disbursed. A total of 157 projects have been completed, while 751 projects are under execution, with 193 Scheme Monitoring Proformas (SMPs) currently under monitoring.

The meeting concluded with a comprehensive review of department-wise progress, identification of critical issues requiring immediate intervention, and issuance of directions for ensuring timely completion of all ongoing RIDF projects across the Union Territory.

NCORD Meeting

Facilitate unemployed drug victims access to livelihood opportunities under employment schemes: DC Shopian

KT News Desk

SHOPIAN, JULY 29: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shopian, Shishir Gupta Wednesday chaired the monthly District Level NCORD (Narco Coordination Centre) meeting here at the Mini-Secretariat to review the district's efforts against drug abuse and narcotics trafficking.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Shopian, Mushtaq Ahmad Choudhary; ADC, Dr Zakir Hussain Faaz; ACR, Shakoor Ahmad; SDM Zainapora, Bilal Ahmad; CMO, CEO, DIO, CAO, Tehsildars, representatives of enforcement agencies and other members of the District Level NCORD Committee.

During the meeting, the DC reviewed the Action Taken Reports (ATRs) on the decisions taken in the previous NCORD meeting and assessed the progress made by various departments in implementing anti-drug initiatives.

Emphasizing a coordinated and multi-pronged approach to combat the drug menace, the DC directed all stakeholder



departments to strengthen awareness campaigns, intensify enforcement measures, monitor vulnerable areas and ensure effective rehabilitation and counselling of affected individuals.

He stressed the importance of close coordination among enforcement agencies, educational institutions, health authorities and civil administration to eradicate drug abuse from the district.

During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner also reviewed the functioning of the District Drug De-addiction Centre. He directed the concerned officers to facilitate unemployed drug victims access to sustainable livelihood and income-generating opportunities under various Government employment schemes.

Deputy Commissioner Budgam directs early completion of remaining NGT works

Reviews progress, stresses inter-departmental coordination for timely execution



KT News Desk

BUDGAM, JULY 29: Deputy Commissioner Budgam, Athar Aamir Khan, Wednesday chaired a review meeting to assess the progress of works being executed under the directions of the National Green Tribunal (NGT) across the district.

During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner, as per an official statement, reviewed the department-wise status of ongoing NGT-related works and directed all executing agencies to expedite the remaining projects and ensure their completion within the stipulated timelines.

He laid emphasis on the early completion of Grey Water Treatment works through the construction of grit chambers, sedimentation tanks, community soakage pits and leach pits at various locations along Doodhganga and Mamath Khul.

The Deputy Commissioner also reviewed the progress of the development of a public park and Budgam View Point at the old dumping site near Mamath Bridge being executed

by the Municipal Council Budgam. He instructed the concerned authorities to accelerate the pace of work and complete the project at the earliest.

Reviewing the issue of pesticide and chemical fertilizer contamination in Mamath Khul, the Deputy Commissioner directed the Agriculture and Horticulture Departments to intensify awareness among farmers on the judicious use of agrochemicals and take necessary measures to prevent contamination of water bodies.

He stressed that all departments must work in close coordination to ensure effective implementation of NGT directions, safeguard the environment and improve sanitation and ecological health in the district.

Among others, the meeting was attended by Additional District Development Commissioner Vivek Agarwal, Assistant Commissioner Development, Assistant Commissioner Panchayat, Executive Engineers of R&B and REW, Chief Agricultural Officer, Chief Executive Officer Municipal Council Budgam, Executive Officer Municipal Committee Chandpora and other concerned officers.

10 Kanals of Kahcharai Land retrieved in eviction drive in Handwara

KT News Desk

KUPWARA, JULY 29: In a major operation aimed at retrieving encroached government land, the Revenue Team of Tehsil Handwara Wednesday successfully conducted an eviction drive at Bagathpora, Handwara.

The drive was carried out under the directions of Deputy Commissioner Kupwara and under the close supervision of Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Handwara.

During the operation, 10 kanals of prime Kahcharai (grazing) land were retrieved from illegal encroachment, thereby resolving a long-standing possession dispute involving several families.

The eviction drive was conducted peacefully, with the Revenue Team receiving full support and assistance from the Municipal Committee Handwara and Police Handwara. The coordinated efforts of all agencies involved ensured the smooth and successful execution of the operation.

The administration reiterated its commitment to safeguarding government and Kahcharai land from encroachment and assured that such drives shall continue against illegal occupation of state land across the district.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have changed my name from (old name) Qaisar Amin to (New Name) Qaiser Nizami. In future I will be known as Qaiser Nizami. If anybody is having any objection he/she may Contact Passport office, Srinagar within 7 days. After Seven days no objection will be accepted.

Qaisar Nizami
S/O Mohammad Amin Nizami
R/O Firdous Colony Chandpora Harwan Sgr

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER SEWERAGE & DRAINAGE DIVISION No. IIND SRINAGAR.

Phone/Fax No. 0194-2950058

GIST _ OF _ E-NIT _ No :- 17 _ S&D IIND OF 2026-27
DATE :- 28 - 07 - 2026

For and on behalf of the Commissioner Srinagar Municipal Corporation, e- tenders are invited on Percentage basis from the Registered PWD Civil Contractors whose registration cards are valid in terms of standing rules, for the below mentioned works strictly as per the terms and conditions given hereunder:-

Sl. No.	Name of work	Estt. Cost of work incld. Depttl. materials (Amount in lacs)	Earnest Money	Class of Contractor	Time of completion.	Cost of Tender Document in the shape of Treasury Challan (Rs.)	Head of Account
1.	Construction of Drainage network system in Shah Colony Fruit Mandi Parimpora Srinagar	Rs.7.00	Rs.14000-	CEE/DEE	15 Days	Rs.220/-	District Capex 2026-27

The NIT Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Bill of quantities(B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in as per the schedule of dates given hereunder:-

01.	Date of issue of Tender Notice	28.07.2026
02.	Period of down loading of bidding documents	29.07.2026 from 10.00 A.M to 07.08.2026 up to 4.00 PM
03.	Bid Submission Start Date	29.07.2026 from 10.30 P.M
04.	Bid Submission end Date	07.08.2026 up to 4.00 PM
05.	Date & time of opening of Bids on line	08.08.2026 at 11.30 AM in the office of Executive Engineer, Sewerage & Drainage Division No. II, SMC, Daresn Kadal Srinagar or any subsequent date convenient date to the tender Opening Authority Scanned copy of Treasury challan (cost of tender document) with Sl. No. of NIT/ Name of the work (without overwriting). Scanned copy of CDR/ FDR/BG (Earnest Money) (without Over writing). Scanned copy of GST Registration with latest clearance and PAN Card. Scanned copy of JKPWDOMS Registration card with latest renewal on JKPWDOMS PORTAL, Cell No./ e-mail ID and correspondence address. NIT (Terms and conditions) duly signed by the bidder. BOQ.
06.	List of soft copies to be uploaded	

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- In case the bids are found unbalanced / abnormally low bid price, the Successful bidder has to produce/ deposit Performance Security/additional performance security in shape of FDR/CDR/BG pledged to Executive Engineer Sewerage & Drainage Division 2nd. SMC Srinagar within three days after opening the bids, as per the circular instructions of the Finance Department Circular No. FD-Code/441/2021-02-158 Dated:- 08.08.2025. The Performance Security /Additional performance security shall be released after the successful completion of Defective Liability (DLP) period of the work on the recommendation of AEE concerned.
- Where the bid price is below 10% but not below 20% of the Advertised cost put to bid, the additional performance guarantee / security percentage shall be incremented by 0.1% for every percentage of Bid Price Below 10% of advertised cost put to bid starting at 11% with the additional bid performance guarantee being 0.1% and this Additional Performance Guarantee percentage shall be applied on the bid Price.
- Where the Bid Price is 20% or more below the advertised cost put to bid the Additional Performance Grantee percentage shall be increment ed by 0.2& for every percentage of Bid Price Below 20% of project cost put to bid in addition to 0.1% of the bid price and this additional performance guarantee percentage shall be applied on the bid price.
- Additional Performance Security shall be treated as part of Performance Security.
- In case of tie bids the department shall identify the tied bidder and shall select the L1 based on the draw lots, in presence of tied bidders, if they chose to be present
- The Successful Bidder has to produce Hard Copies within three days after opening of Bids.
- Bidders are advised to read the NIT carefully before participate in the Bidding process.
- Treasury Challan (Tender Document Fee) should be a fresh i.e, between the date of issue of tender notice & bid submission end date.
- The payment of work on account of work done shall be made under rules subject to availability of funds under the prescribed head of account.
- The tender receiving authority reserves the right to accept or reject or cancel any bid / tender / NIT or all tenders without assigning any reason thereof.
- In terms of Government order Circular No.01 (Adm) FD of 2025 Dated:- 08.07.2025 that "Every participating supplier/contractor to mandatory disclose the bank account number which is linked with their GSTIN at the time of bid submission. No payment shall be released by the Government Department /Agency to any other bank account except the one linked with the GST registered number of the successful bidder"
- XIII Additional Terms & Conditions in terms of Circular Instructions issued under No. 7760278-HUD-Plan/106/2026-01 Dated:- 06.06.2026 shall also be applicable which are as under.

INDICATIVE TIME LINE FOR EXECUTION OF DEVELOPMENT WORKS.

Sr No.	Estimated Cost	Execution Period
1.	Up to ₹2.00 lakh	1 month
2.	₹2.00 lakh – ₹10.00 lakh	Up to 2 months
3.	₹10.00 lakh – ₹25.00 lakh	2-3 months
4.	Above ₹25.00 lakh – ₹1.00 crore	3-4 months
5.	Above ₹1.00 crore – ₹5.00 crore	4-8 months
6.	Above ₹5.00 crore – ₹20.00 crore	8-12 months
7.	Above ₹20.00 crore – ₹100.00 crore	12-18 months
8.	Above ₹100.00 crore	18-24 months

Sr No.	Project Type	Execution Period
1.	Small office building / health centre	6-9 months
2.	School building	6-9 months
3.	District office complex	6-12 months
4.	Hospital building	6-12 months
5.	Multi-storey office complex	6-12 months
6.	Large institutional campus	6-18 months

Additional Conditions.

- Additional time may be allowed for scattered works, congested sites, difficult terrain, or specialized services if justified ground.
- Start of work: generally, start within 7 days of the notice to proceed.
- Milestones are prescribed during execution (¼, ½, and ¾) progress stages.
- Defect Liability Period: minimum 3 years.
- Liquidated damages: 1% of contract value per week of delay, subject to a maximum of 10%.
- Time of treated as an essential condition of the contract.
- Extension of time (EOT) may be granted where justified by hindrances or Departmental delays.

DIPK-3855/26

Dated: 29-07-2026

SD/-
Executive Engineer,
S&D Division IInd, Sgr.

From The Parliament

J&K adds 174 MW Renewable Energy capacity in 5 years



Raja Syed Rather

Srinagar, Jul 29: In past five years, Jammu and Kashmir has witnessed an increase of 174.37 MW of Renewable Energy (RE) capacity, the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) informed the Lok Sabha on Wednesday.

The house was also informed that during the period up to June 2026; the UT of Ladakh has also added 24.57 MW of RE.

According to the data tabled in Parliament, Jammu and Kashmir's renewable energy addition comprises 125.78 MW of solar power, 5 MW of bio power and 43.59 MW of small hydro power, taking the total capacity added to 174.37 MW.

Ladakh during this period added

18.42 MW of solar power and 6.15 MW of small hydro power.

The Ministry said India has installed 297.36 GW of non-fossil fuel-based electricity capacity as of June 30, 2026, including 288.58 GW from renewable energy sources.

It also said that a total of 146.5 GW of renewable energy capacity has been added across the country during the last five years including in ongoing fiscal.

The ministry further said that Gol is in progress of achieving 500 GW of non-fossil fuel-based installed electricity capacity by 2030.

The house was also informed that renewable electricity generation in Jammu and Kashmir continues to be dominated by large hydro projects—(KNO)

All-Weather tunnel push for Tangdhar, Gurez cleared

Sajid Raina

New Delhi, Jul 29: The Centre on Wednesday said it has initiated the process for developing all-weather road connectivity to the border areas of Tangdhar and Gurez in Jammu and Kashmir by advancing plans for strategic tunnel projects aimed at reducing the impact of prolonged winter closures.

Replying to a question in the Rajya Sabha, Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari said consultancy work for preparing the Detailed Project Report (DPR) of the proposed 'Sadhna Tunnel' on the Kupwara-Tangdhar section of National Highway-701 has already been awarded.

For Gurez, Gadkari said the ministry has floated a tender to appoint a consultant for preparing the DPR for a proposed tunnel beneath 'Razdan Pass', which remains snowbound for

several months every year.

The Minister was responding to an unstarred question by Rajya Sabha member Chowdry Mohammad Ramzan on measures being taken to provide year-round connectivity to seasonally cut-off border regions.

The government, however, said it was not in a position to specify the cost or timeline for completion of the proposed tunnel projects at this stage.

The ministry also clarified that Gurez and the Marwah-Warwan region are not part of the National Highway network, and therefore tunnel development in those areas does not fall directly under the National Highways programme.

Pending the execution of long-term infrastructure projects, the government said the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) continues to undertake snow-clear

Continued on
www.kashmirthunder.in

ISRO monitors Ladakh glaciers, avalanches via space technology



Raja Syed Rather

Srinagar, Jul 29: The Centre on Wednesday informed the Lok Sabha that the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is extensively using satellite and

geospatial technologies to monitor glaciers, glacial lakes, snowfall, water resources, landslides, avalanches and other natural hazards in Ladakh, while several satellite-based projects are underway to strengthen disaster management and climate resilience in the Union Territory.

The information was provided by Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office, Dr Jitendra Singh, in a written reply to a question raised by Mohmmad Haneefa in the Lok Sabha on "Space Technology for Disaster Management in Ladakh".

Replying to the query, the minister said
Continued on
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J&K has 37.90 lakh DigiLocker users

Raja Syed Rather

Srinagar, Jul 29: The Centre on Wednesday said Digital India initiatives have significantly expanded digital access and public service delivery in Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, with over 37.90 lakh DigiLocker users in J&K and 39,029 users in Ladakh, while 37 departments/institutions in J&K and 10 in Ladakh have been integrated with the platform.

The information was provided by Minister of State for Electronics and Information Technology Jitin Prasada in a written

reply to the Lok Sabha raised by Shri Lavu Sri Krishna Devarayalu on the impact of Digital India initiatives.

The government said the Digital India programme has strengthened Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) across the country through platforms such as Aadhaar, UPI, DigiLocker, UMANG and Common Services Centres (CSCs), improving governance, financial inclusion and digital access, particularly in rural and remote areas.

According to the reply, Aadhaar has
Continued on
www.kashmirthunder.in

Div Com reviews compassionate appointment cases progress

Assesses grievance redressal, SVAMITA cards progress
KT News Desk

Srinagar, July 29: Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg on Wednesday chaired a meeting with Deputy Commissioners to review the progress of key matters, including the clearance of compassionate appointment cases, disposal of public & migrant grievances, revenue appeals, issuance of SVAMITA cards, and land transfer issues.

During the meeting, the Divisional Commissioner directed all Deputy Commissioners to expedite the processing of pending compassionate appointment cases in coordination with the concerned authorities and ensure the preparation of the final list of eligible beneficiaries at the earliest.

He also instructed the Deputy Commissioners to dispose of pending migrant and other public grievances in a time-

Continued on
www.kashmirthunder.in

Mehbooba visits slain policeman's family

Naveed Ul Haq Ganaiee

Budgam, Jul 29: Former Chief Minister and People's Democratic Party (PDP) president Mehbooba Mufti on Wednesday visited the residence of slain Head Constable Ashiq Hussain at Lolipora in Beerwah area of central Kashmir's Budgam district to express condolences with the bereaved family.

Mehbooba met the family members, offered her sympathies over the loss and prayed for eternal peace to the de-parted soul.

She also expressed solidarity with the family and con-veyed her condolences over the killing of the policeman, who lost his life in a terror attack earlier this month near Lal Chowk in Anantnag while on duty.

Later, the PDP president visited the flood-affected Beerwah market, where a shopping complex was washed away in the recent flash floods, causing extensive damage to shops and business establishments.

During her visit, Mehbooba interacted with affected shopkeepers and traders who narrated the losses they had suffered in the disaster. She listened to their grievances, inspected the damaged site and assessed the extent of de-struction caused by the flash floods.

Continued on
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Dr Farooq raises PoJK issues, urges cen-tre's response

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Jul 29: National Conference (NC) president Dr Farooq Abdullah on Wednesday urged the Central government to speak up on developments in Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir (PoJK), saying New Delhi cannot remain silent if it considers the region an integral part of India. He also defended the growth of hotels in Jammu and Kashmir.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a function here, Dr Abdullah said he had appealed to the Prime Minister and the External Affairs Minister to raise the issue. "If PoJK is an integral part of India, then the government must speak up about what is happening there. I have not heard it raise its voice on the issue. The UN Human Rights Commission should also take note of the develop-ments there," he said.

The former J&K Chief Minister said stronger intervention was needed until the concerns of the people living in PoJK were addressed.

On the student protests in Delhi, he said the agitation would continue



if the authorities failed to address the students' demands.

"If the promises made to them are not fulfilled and in-stead they are met with FIRs, arrests and harassment, this movement will continue," Dr Abdullah said.

Replying to another query on the alleged crackdown following the recent Delhi protest, the NC president said the families of those booked in different cases were being harassed and called it a serious issue requiring immediate attention. "The families are being harassed. This is a big issue, and the government must take it seriously," he said.

Continued on
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Legislators call on CM Omar



KT News Desk

Srinagar, July 29: Several legislators from different parts of Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday called on Chief Minister Omar Abdullah at the Civil Secretariat here and apprised him of various developmental issues and public concerns pertaining to their respective constituencies.

Among those who met the Chief Minister were Member of Legislative Assembly Kathua Dr. Bharat Bhushan, MLA Kalakote-Sunderbani Randhir Singh, MLA Kishtwar Shagun Parihar, MLA Uri Dr Sajad Shafi, MLA Lolab

Qaysar Jamshaid Lone, MLA Kangam Mian Mehar Ali, MLA Tangdhar Javid Mirchal and former MLC Advocate Rattan Lal Gupta.

During the meetings, the legislators highlighted a range of developmental priorities, infrastructure requirements and public grievances concerning their constituencies. They sought the Chief Minister's intervention for timely re-dressal of the issues and expedited implementation of various developmental initiatives.

The Chief Minister gave a patient hearing to all the visit-ing
Continued on
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GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PWD(R&B) DIVISION ANANTNAG

NIT 56 OF R&B/Anantnag/2026-27 /E-TENDERING/4657-66, DATED 29-07-2026

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, Union Territory of J&K e-tenders are invited on %age basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with J&K Govt. CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for each of the following works:-

S. No	Name of Work	Estimated Cost (Rs in Lacs)	Cost of T/Doc.(in Rs)	Earnest Money (In Rs)	Time of Completion	Class of Contractor
1.	Making Necessary Arrangements on eve of Independence day on 15-08-2026 at different spots in District Anantnag.	20.50 Lacs Contract Price exclusive of GST: 17.37 + 18% GST Amount 3.13)	800	41000/-	03 Days	BEE, CEE Class & MSME's Only

1. The NIT Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms-and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental websitewww.jktenders.gov.in as per schedule of dates given below:

S. No.	Particulars	Dated
1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	29-07-2026
2	Period of Downloading of bidder documents	From 29-07-2026 (01:00 PM) To 04-08-2026 (04:00 PM)
3	Bid submission Start Date	From 29-07-2026 (01:00 PM)
4	Bid Submission End Date	To 04-08-2026 (04:00 PM)
5	Date and time of opening of bid(online)	05-08-2026 (10:30 AM) In the office of Executive Engineer PWD(R&B) Division Anantnag.

1. Bids must be accompanied with cost of tender document in shape of Treasury Challan / receipt (Under MH- 0059 PWD) in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Division Anantnag [Tender Inviting Authority] (NIT No. Name of Work/Item No. to be mentioned on the Treasury Challan / Receipt) (The Date of Treasury Challan should be between the date of Start of Bid and Bid Submission End Date) and EMD (2% of advertised Cost) in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG pledged to Executive Engineer PWD(R&B) Division Anantnag (Tender receiving Authority). (The Date of EMD(CDR/ FDR/BG) should be between the date of Start of Bid and Bid Submission End Date and validity of EMD at the time of opening of Bids shall be a period of 45 Days beyond Bid Validity of 120 Days). The same EMD should not be used in more than one Tender/Bid.

2. All the Bidders have to submit Earnest Money/Bid Security (EMD@2% of Advertised Cost) in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG. Non submission of Earnest Money/Bid Security shall render the bidder as No-responsive.

3. The 1st lowest responsive (Successful) Bidder has to produce an amount equal to 5% of contract as Performance Security in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Division Anantnag (Tender receiving authority) within 03 Days before fixation of Contract and shall be released 60 days after successful completion of Defect Liability Period (DLP) of the work. The date of Performance Security (CDR/ FDR/BG) should be after the date of issuance of letter/LOI to deposit the performance security. Failure to produce Performance Security shall render the L1 as non-responsive and case for debarring of the Contractor be forwarded to Higher Authorities for a period of 01 Year.

4. The Earnest Money Deposit (EMD@2% of Advertised Cost) in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG of the successful Bidder shall be released after receiving Performance security @5% of the allotted cost in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG and same shall be released 60 Days after successful completion of Defect Liability Period (DLP) of the work.

5. The date and time of opening of Bids shall be notified on Web Site www.jktenders.gov.in and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The bids of Responsive bidders shall be opened online on same Web Site in the Office of Executive Engineer R&B Division Anantnag

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

1. Instruction to bidders regarding e-tendering process.

a. Bidders are advised to download bid submission manual from the "Downloads" option as well as from "Bidders Manual Kit" on website www.jktenders.gov.in to acquaint bid submission process.

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

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

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

e. Bidders must ensure to upload scanned copy of all necessary documents with bid.

f. Bidders must ensure to upload scanned copy of all necessary documents including tender document fee in terms of soft copies with technical bid.

Note: - Scan all the documents on 100 dpi with black and white option.

7. The department will not be responsible for delay in online submission due to any reasons.

8. Scanned copy of cost of tender document in the shape of Treasury Challan / Receipt in favour of Executive Engineer PWD(R&B) Division Anantnag (The Date of Treasury Challan should be between the date of Start of Bid and Bid Submission End Date) and EMD in the shape of CDR/ FDR/BG pledged to Executive Engineer PWD(R&B) Division Anantnag must be uploaded with the documents of the bid. The Original Treasury Challan (Cost of Tender Document), EMD and other relevant bid documents shall be obtained from the lowest bidder before the fixation of the Contract.

9 Bidders are advised not to make any change in BOQ (Bill of Quantities) contents. In no case they should attempt to create similar BOQ manually.

10 Price escalation and taxes: The %age quoted by the bidder entirely in Indian Rupees, shall be deemed to include price escalation upto completion of the work. Deduction on account of taxes shall be made from the bills of the contractor on gross amount of the bill as per the rates prevailing at the time of recovery.

1. Bidders are advised to use "My Documents" area in their user on R&B e-Tendering portal to store such documents as are required.

2. All other terms and conditions are as same as laid in PWD Form 25.

EDITORIAL

Kashmir's Youth Deserve Broader Opportunities

The recent mega job fair in Srinagar, which saw nearly 900 young men and women either secure employment or reach the final stages of recruitment, is a welcome step in the right direction. Yet, it also serves as a reminder that such efforts must become the norm rather than the exception. Government jobs alone cannot solve the unemployment crisis. While the government must continue to create opportunities, the solution lies in a broader approach—one

that includes private sector recruitment, entrepreneurship, skill development, and meaningful industry partnerships. The encouraging outcome of this job fair—with over 50 reputed employers participating, including companies with operations in the Gulf and Middle East—demonstrates the immense potential of structured campus recruitment in Jammu and Kashmir. Nearly 5,300 registered candidates, 470 job offers, and another 430 candidates in the final stages of recruitment

are an impressive success rate for an initiative still in its early stages. But this should not be a one-off event. Universities and colleges must institutionalise campus recruitment, ensuring that students get employment opportunities before they complete their studies. The responsibility of higher educational institutions extends beyond awarding degrees; they must actively support students in transitioning from education to employment. Equally important is the

promotion of entrepreneurship alongside employment. Strengthening the startup ecosystem, connecting young entrepreneurs with venture capital, and providing handholding support are essential steps toward creating a self-sustaining economy where youth are not just job seekers but job creators. The government cannot simply tell young people to look elsewhere for opportunities. It must create those opportunities through private sector engagement, skill development,

and industry partnerships. The youth of Jammu and Kashmir possess immense talent; what they require is greater exposure and wider opportunities. This job fair has shown what is possible when institutions, industry, and government work together. The challenge now is to build on this momentum and ensure that every young person in Jammu and Kashmir has access to opportunities comparable to those available elsewhere in the country and abroad.

Protecting Tigers, Preserving Ecosystems India Leads The Wilderness In Tiger Conservation

Press Information Bureau

India has emerged as a global leader in tiger conservation through science-based policies and strong institutional support. The country is now home to nearly 70% of the world's wild tigers. Technology driven monitoring, effective governance and community participation have strengthened conservation outcomes. India is also advancing global cooperation to secure the future of tigers and their habitats.

Thriving Tigers, Resilient Ecosystems
International Tiger Day, observed every year on 29 July, highlights the global importance of tiger conservation. For India, it reaffirms the Government's long-standing commitment to science-based conservation and sustainable development. The day also showcases India's remarkable conservation achievements. Today, India is home to the world's largest wild tiger population, accounting for nearly 70% of all wild tigers globally. This success reflects decades of sustained policy support, scientific management and community participation, positioning India as a global leader in tiger conservation.

This achievement is rooted in India's deep cultural and ecological connection with the tiger. For centuries, ancient coins, royal seals and temple carvings have portrayed the tiger as a symbol of strength and sovereignty. Recognising this enduring legacy, the Government declared the Royal Bengal Tiger as the National Animal in 1972. Today, the tiger continues to represent India's rich biodiversity, ecological wealth and shared natural heritage across diverse landscapes.

Beyond its cultural significance, the tiger plays a vital ecological role. As an apex predator and umbrella species, it helps maintain healthy forest ecosystems. Conserving tiger habitats protects forests, rivers and countless other species. These forests regulate water, conserve soil, support pollination and moderate local climates. They also reduce disaster risks and provide ecosystem services that sustain rural livelihoods and urban economies. By protecting tigers and their habitats, the Government is strengthening biodiversity conservation, enhancing ecological security and advancing the vision of Viksit Bharat through sustainable development.

Did You Know? International Tiger Day traces its origins to the Saint Petersburg Tiger Summit held in November 2010. Leaders from 13 tiger-range countries, including India, adopted the ambitious Tx2 goal to double the global wild tiger population by 2022. Today, it serves as a global platform to review conservation progress, strengthen international cooperation and raise awareness. In 2010, only about 3,200 wild tigers were estimated to remain globally. By 2022, improved conservation and scientific monitoring increased the estimate to around 4,500, with a plausible range of 3,700–5,600 tigers. According to recent global estimates, approximately 5,711 wild tigers remain worldwide, representing an increase of around 78% since 2010.

Rise in the Tiger Numbers: From Crisis to Recovery

India's tiger conservation efforts have emerged as a global model of wildlife recovery. The country has more than doubled its scientifically assessed tiger population since 2006. The All India Tiger Estimation (2022) places India's tiger population at 3,682. The 2022 All India Tiger Estimation covered 20 States and surveyed over 6.41 lakh kilometres on foot. It is among the world's largest and most comprehensive wildlife assessments. This remarkable recovery reflects sustained policy support, science-based conservation and strong institutional governance. Long-term habitat protection, rigorous monitoring and coordinated implementation continue to strengthen tiger conservation across India.

Robust Governance Architecture for Tiger Conservation

India's policy framework for tiger conservation combines long term vision with sustained institutional support at national and state levels. Project Tiger, the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) and Tiger Conservation Plans together provide a robust, science-based governance architecture



for tiger habitats.

Project Tiger is a flagship Centrally Sponsored Scheme of the Government of India. It is implemented by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC). The scheme aims to secure viable tiger populations in their natural habitats. It provides financial and technical assistance to tiger range States for conservation efforts. The programme combines habitat protection, scientific management and regular field-based monitoring. This approach has strengthened conservation measures over time.

According to the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) Report (2023), Project Tiger has established a network of 58 tiger reserves across 18 tiger-range States. These reserves cover around 84,500 square kilometres, which is about 2.56% of India's geographical area. Today, Project Tiger remains a cornerstone of India's wildlife conservation efforts and reflects the Government's long-term commitment to protecting tigers and their habitats.

Did You Know? Section 38 V (3) of the Wildlife Protection Act, (WPA), 1972 requires every State Government to prepare a Tiger Conservation Plan for each tiger reserve. Such plans must ensure protection of tiger reserves and provide habitat inputs to maintain viable populations of tigers, co predators and prey animals

National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)

NTCA oversees the implementation of Project Tiger and related conservation initiatives. NTCA provides scientific, technical and financial guidance to tiger range States. It approves Tiger Conservation Plans and issues standard operating procedures for reserve management. The Authority also monitors the management of tiger reserves through periodic assessments. Its science-based approach improve habitat protection, improves conservation outcomes and supports the long-term survival of wild tigers across India.

Did You Know? NTCA is chaired by the Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change. It also includes Members of Parliament, senior government officials and experts. The Authority guides tiger conservation, oversees tiger reserves and ensures effective implementation of Project Tiger across the country.

Tiger Task Force

The Government of India constituted the Tiger Task Force to re-examine conservation policies

and recommend reforms. The Tiger Task Force reviewed India's tiger conservation framework and recommended key policy reforms. It brought together administrative experts, ecologists and community representatives. The Task Force emphasised transparency, community participation and stronger institutional support for Project Tiger. Its recommendations shaped a more robust conservation framework. They led to significant amendments to the Wildlife (Protection) Act in 2006. The amendments established the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) and the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) as statutory bodies.

India's tiger conservation framework reflects a strong governance model built on institutions and cooperative federalism. This integrated approach is helping secure the future of tigers while advancing India's biodiversity.

Did You Know? India's tiger reserves follow a landscape-based conservation approach. Each reserve includes a Core Area (also known as Critical Tiger Habitat) and a Buffer Area. Core Areas receive the highest level of protection. Buffer Areas balance conservation with sustainable livelihoods. Also, Wildlife corridors connect tiger reserves, enabling safe movement and maintaining healthy tiger populations across landscapes.

Monitoring and Evaluation of Tigers in India

India has developed a robust, science-based system to monitor and evaluate its tiger population. The approach combines field surveys, camera traps, digital technologies and scientific analysis. It generates reliable data on tiger populations, prey species and habitat quality. This information guides evidence-based conservation planning and adaptive management. Continuous monitoring strengthens

habitat protection and enables informed management decisions across tiger landscapes.

All India Tiger Estimation (AITE): The World's Largest Biodiversity Survey

AITE is the world's largest biodiversity survey. Conducted every four years, it is led by the NTCA in collaboration with the Wildlife Institute of India (WII). It estimates tiger populations, co-predators, prey species and habitat quality across all tiger bearing States. The 2022 assessment also included India's first nationwide survey of ungulates. The exercise highlighted the importance of healthy prey populations for sustaining viable tiger populations.

Did You Know? The All India Tiger Estimation is recognised as the world's largest biodiversity survey. The NTCA's camera trap survey also holds a Guinness World Record as the world's largest camera trap wildlife survey. Together, advanced technologies and scientific monitoring make India's tiger estimation among the most rigorous in the world.

Technology Driven Monitoring

India has integrated advanced digital technologies into every stage of tiger monitoring. The Monitoring System for Tigers – Intensive Protection and Ecological Status (M-STrIPES) uses GPS, GPRS and remote sensing technologies for field monitoring. GPS tagged photographs improve data accuracy and reduce human error. The platform integrates field observations into a central database for scientific analysis and informed decision making. Artificial intelligence further strengthens monitoring. The Camera Trap Data Repository and Analysis Tool (CaTRAT) automatically classify camera trap images by species. ExtractCompare identifies individual tigers using their unique stripe patterns. Collectively, these tools improve the accuracy and reliability of tiger population estimates.

Management Effectiveness Evaluation (MEE)

The MEE assesses how well tiger reserves are managed. The framework evaluates planning, protection, management processes and conservation outcomes. It helps identify management gaps and reinforce accountability. By 2022, 51 tiger reserves had been evaluated under the framework. Twelve reserves received "Excellent" ratings, while the average management score reached 78%. The findings guide policy decisions, strengthen reserve management and support long-term conservation planning.

India's Global Leadership in Tiger Conservation

India is actively collaborating with countries across the world to strengthen tiger and wildlife conservation. Key partnerships include transboundary biodiversity

conservation with Nepal and Bhutan. Collaboration with Myanmar focuses on combating timber trafficking and conserving tigers and other wildlife. India also cooperates with Russia on camera trap data management and through the Indo-Russia Working Sub-Group on Tiger and Leopard Conservation. Partnerships with Botswana, South Africa, Guatemala, Cambodia, Kenya and Namibia strengthen wildlife conservation, management and sustainable biodiversity use. India has also established bilateral cooperation with China on tiger conservation. These partnerships reinforce India's commitment to global wildlife conservation through science, cooperation and shared action.

International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA)

IBCA is a global coalition of 95 big cat range and partner countries, scientific organisations and conservation partners. The Alliance promotes cooperation for conserving seven big cats—tiger, lion, leopard, snow leopard, cheetah, jaguar and puma. The Union Cabinet approved its establishment on 12 March 2024, with its Secretariat headquartered in India. Building on India's globally recognised tiger conservation experience, the IBCA strengthens international collaboration to protect big cats and their habitats.

Global Tiger Forum (GTF)

GTF is the world's only intergovernmental organisation dedicated exclusively to tiger conservation. Headquartered in New Delhi, it brings together 13 tiger range countries—Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Russia, Thailand and Vietnam. The Forum promotes a common approach to conserving tigers, their prey and habitats. It supports landscape-scale conservation, regional capacity building and technological innovation to strengthen tiger conservation across member countries. Through knowledge sharing and international cooperation, the GTF reinforces India's leadership in global tiger conservation.

Integrated Tiger Habitat Conservation Programme (ITHCP)

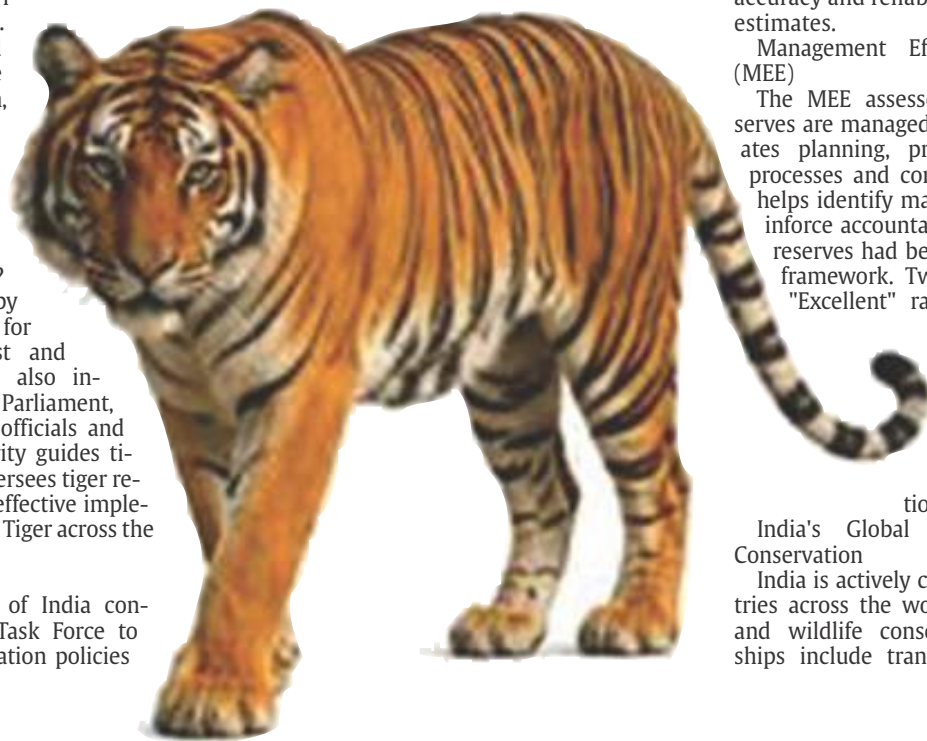
ITHCP is the International Union for Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) flagship tiger conservation initiative. It is funded by the German Government through KfW Development Bank. The programme supports science-based conservation projects across priority tiger landscapes in Asia. It promotes habitat protection, landscape level conservation and international collaboration. India actively participates in ITHCP programmes, strengthening regional efforts to conserve tigers and their habitats.

Did You Know? Conservation Assured Tiger Standards CA/TIS is a global certification system that ensures effective management specifically of tiger conservation areas. Launched at the 1st Asian Parks Congress in Japan in 2013. It sets benchmarks for protection, habitat management, community involvement, and wildlife monitoring. CA/TIS supports efforts to create safe, sustainable environments for tigers and preserve global biodiversity. CA/TIS has accredited 23 Indian tiger reserves ensuring global best practices in conservation.

India's international partnerships are strengthening collective action for tiger conservation across borders. By sharing knowledge, technology and best practices, India continues to advance global efforts to protect tigers and their habitats.

Towards a Secure Future for Tigers

Tiger conservation remains a dynamic and evolving priority for the India. Looking ahead, India's vision is to secure connected, climate resilient tiger landscapes that support both wildlife and people. Continued investment in data driven monitoring, technology-enabled protection and capacity building of frontline staff will support this vision. Cooperation with other tiger range countries and global partners will also help share knowledge and reinforce collective conservation gains. International Tiger Day offers a recurring opportunity to engage citizens, particularly youth, in this forward-looking agenda. By combining strong policy direction with sustained implementation, India aims to keep its tiger conservation journey on a path of global leadership.



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Sakeena Itoo reviews progress of SASCI, CAPEX, other flagship schemes across Health, Social Welfare, education departments

Ensure timely completion of all sanctioned projects without compromising on quality standards

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, JULY 29: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo, Wednesday chaired a comprehensive review meeting at Civil Secretariat here to assess the physical and financial progress achieved under the Strengthening and Augmentation of State Capabilities for Citizen-Centric Infrastructure (SASCI), CAPEX Budget and other flagship developmental schemes being implemented by the Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education departments besides implementation of key budget announcements in these departments.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by Commissioner Secretary Social Welfare, Sarmad Hafeez; Commissioner Secretary Education, Ram Niwas Sharma; Mission Director ICDS, Mission Director RUSA, Mission Director Samagra Shiksha, Director School Education Jammu/Kashmir, Director Health Jammu/Kashmir, Special Secretaries of concerned departments, Director Planning/Finance of concerned departments, and other senior officers.

The Minister conducted a detailed department-wise review of the status of ongoing infrastructure projects, expenditure under CAPEX allocations, implementation of

SASCI initiatives and other flagship programmes aimed at strengthening the public service delivery across Jammu and Kashmir.

Sakeena Itoo directed the officers to ensure timely completion of all sanctioned projects without compromising on quality standards. She stressed that every developmental initiative must translate into tangible benefits for the people and contribute towards strengthening essential public infrastructure here.

The Minister underscored the importance of effective planning, inter-departmental coordination and regular monitoring to achieve the desired outcomes. She instructed the officers to remove bottlenecks delaying execution of projects and adopt a result-oriented approach for ensuring optimal utilisation of funds.

Sakeena Itoo reiterated the government's commitment towards transparent, accountable and people-centric governance, asserting that development projects must be executed efficiently to maximise public benefit.

"Maintain strict financial discipline, adhere to prescribed timelines and ensure regular monitoring of the progress of all projects to avoid cost and time overruns", she said.

The Minister directed the departments to strengthen the field-level supervision, improve coordination among



executing agencies and ensure periodic reviews so that all flagship schemes are implemented effectively and their intended objectives are achieved within the prescribed timeframe.

Taking stock of the School and Higher Education Departments, the Minister highlighted the importance of upgrading educational infrastructure and creating a conducive learning environment for students. She directed the officers to expedite construction and upgradation works, ensuring that educational institutions are equipped with the necessary facilities to support quality education.

Regarding the education department, the Minister was informed that 24228 schools, both public and private are operational in Jammu and Kashmir, including 37 KVVs, 20 JNVs and six schools of Tribal affairs department, with total enrolment of about 2657883 students. It was also given out that among 1421 works proposed under UT CAPEX 2026-27, 786 works are targeted for completion with 90 works already stand completed.

It was also informed that under SASCI, a total outlay of Rs 2648.89 lakh has been proposed for various kinds of works across UT. Under Samagra Shiksha, it was

revealed that 3019 Civil works have been completed in last one and half years. It was also informed that skill education has been introduced in 1350 high and higher secondary schools, besides 3008 digital Labs have been established while as 2388 ICT Labs and 4597 smart classrooms are in the process of establishment. The meeting was also informed that 396 schools have been approved for upgradation under PM-SHRI scheme while 45 Atal Tinkering Labs and 159 STEM Labs have already been established in approved schools under this scheme.

Regarding higher education department, the Minister

was informed that for the year 2026-27, Rs. 468 crore have been approved for allocation, with Rs. 227.71 crore available for spending. It was given out that under PM-USHA RUSA for the year 2026-27, Rs. 75.35 crores have been outlayed for various works. The meeting was also informed that some major projects have been targeted for completion during 2026-27 under Capex like Construction of five College Buildings, 14 New Additional Blocks/ Administrative Block, 4 Science Blocks, 12 Additional Classroom Blocks, 11 Automation of libraries, 8 Multipurpose Halls, two Library Blocks, three Girls/ Boys Hostels and 12 Smart Classrooms. Under SASCI, it was informed that 21 works with an outlay of Rs. 71.77 crores will be carried out during 2026-27.

Reviewing the Health and Medical Education Department, Sakeena Itoo emphasized the need to accelerate the pace of infrastructure development in hospitals and health institutions besides ensuring availability of quality healthcare services. She directed the concerned officers to closely monitor all ongoing works under SASCI and CAPEX and complete them within the stipulated timelines.

The Minister was informed that 64 Dialysis centers, with 2 each in 32 SDHs/CHCs of various districts have been established. It was also informed that Cath Labs for GMC Doda and GMC Baramulla will be established during the current

fiscal besides PET scan at an estimated cost of Rs. 35 crore will also be established in GMC Srinagar and GMC Kathua. The meeting was also informed that 51 AI X-ray machines at a cost of Rs. 2.50 crore have been proposed for the current fiscal as well as lift and oxygen plant maintenance for Rs. 9.50 crore.

While reviewing the Social Welfare Department, the Minister called for effective implementation of welfare schemes and directed officials to ensure that benefits reach all eligible beneficiaries in a transparent and time-bound manner. She also stressed the need to strengthen the institutional infrastructure for improved delivery of social welfare services.

The Minister emphasized that sustained monitoring, accountability and efficient execution remain key to achieve the developmental goals envisioned by the Government, while reiterating her commitment to improve healthcare, education and social welfare infrastructure across Jammu and Kashmir.

During the meeting, senior officers briefed the Minister about the current status of ongoing projects, financial expenditure, achievements made so far and challenges being faced during implementation. They assured the Minister that all necessary efforts are being made to expedite execution of developmental works and ensure timely completion of projects in accordance with the Government's priorities.

HADP, JKICP reshaping agriculture landscape in Budgam: DC

KT News Desk

BUDGAM, JULY 29: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Athar Aamir Khan, Wednesday chaired a meeting to assess the implementation and progress of the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) and the Jammu & Kashmir Competitiveness Improvement Project (JKICP) in the district.

The meeting was attended by Additional District Development Commissioner Vivek Agarwal, Chief Planning Officer, Chief Agriculture Officer, Chief Horticulture Officer, Chief Animal Husbandry Officer, Chief Sheep Husbandry Officer and officers from concerned departments.

At the outset, the Deputy Commissioner, as per an official statement, reviewed physical and financial progress under HADP and JKICP, covering application status, approvals, establishment of beneficiary units, financial utilisation, PM-DAKSH skilling, Kisan Khidmat Ghars (KKGs), e-KYC, credit linkages and other project-wise achievements.

He emphasized on robust functioning of Common Service Centres and Kisan Khidmat Ghars to strengthen their role



in farmer registration, digital services, awareness generation and e-KYC completion.

Reviewing the implementation of JKICP, the DC stressed the need for expediting field-level execution of approved cases and ensuring timely delivery of benefits to genuine farmers.

"HADP and JKICP are transforming the agriculture and allied sectors by promoting entrepreneurship, enhancing productivity and creating sustainable livelihood opportunities for farmers and rural youth," the DC said.

Describing HADP and JKICP as a major push of economic growth and livelihoods of farmers, he instructed Officers, "ensure speedy disposal of cases under both schemes for better economic prospects and progressive farming practices in the district."

University of Kashmir enters new era of academic autonomy with UGC Category-I Status

KT News Desk

Srinagar, July 29: In a landmark achievement that underscores its sustained pursuit of academic excellence, the University of Kashmir (KU) has been accorded the prestigious Category-I status by the University Grants Commission (UGC) under the UGC (Categorisation of Universities for Grant of Graded Autonomy) Regulations, 2018.

According to an official communication issued by the UGC Secretary, Prof. Shyama Rath (D.O. No. 91-1/2024(SU-1)/142186), the decision was approved during the Commission's 598th meeting held on July 6, 2026, making the University eligible for enhanced academic, administrative, and financial autonomy available to India's top-performing higher education institutions.

"The University shall now be eligible for all the benefits as stipulated under Clause 4, i.e., Dimensions of Autonomy for Category-I Universities, of these Regulations," the UGC communication states.

Expressing her delight over the achievement, Vice-Chancellor Prof. Nilofer Khan described the recognition



as a defining moment in the University's journey towards academic excellence.

"The grant of Category-I status by the UGC reflects the University's sustained academic progress and our collective commitment to quality. I sincerely thank our Hon'ble Chancellor, Shri Manoj Sinha, Pro-Chancellor, Mr. Omar Abdullah, and Minister for Higher Education, UT of J&K, Ms. Sakina Itoo, for their continued guidance and support in strengthening higher education in Jammu and Kashmir. I also congratulate our students, scholars, faculty and non-teaching staff, whose dedication and unwavering

commitment have made this recognition possible. We will utilise the enhanced autonomy to further expand academic opportunities, research, innovation, and institutional collaborations," she said.

Prof. Khan, as per KU statement, further noted that the Category-I status would significantly enhance the University's global academic footprint by enabling collaborations with leading international universities, facilitating the engagement of foreign faculty, admitting international students, and offering new Open and Distance Learning (ODL) programmes in accordance with UGC regulations.

She said the enhanced autonomy would further strengthen research, innovation, interdisciplinary learning, and internationalisation initiatives.

The recognition follows the University's outstanding performance in the NAAC Re-accreditation Cycle (2025), in which it secured an A++ Grade with a CGPA of 3.68—the highest accreditation score in the University's history. Under the UGC Regulations, Category-I status is conferred on universities that achieve a NAAC score of 3.51 or above.

MLA Devsar, DC Kulgam visits flash flood affected areas of Dardgund, Bangdar

KT News Desk

KULGAM, JULY 29: Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) Devsar, Peerzada Feroze Ahamad and Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Shahzad Alam Wednesday visited the flash flood-affected areas of Dardgund, Bangdar and adjoining localities of Tehsil Devsar to take stock of the situation arising out of the sudden cloudburst that hit the area yesterday.

During the visit, the duo, as per an official statement, interacted with

the affected families and undertook an on-the-spot assessment of the damage caused to residential structures, agricultural land, orchards and public infrastructure due to the flash floods triggered by the cloudburst.

They were accompanied by Tehsildar Devsar, Block Development Officer (BDO) and officers of various line departments, who briefed them on the extent of damage and the immediate relief and restoration measures being undertaken in the affected areas.

Mobile Passport Van Services underway in Kargil from July 29-31

KT News Desk

Srinagar, July 29: The Passport Seva Project (PSP) under the Ministry of External Affairs is providing Mobile Passport Van services in Kargil to facilitate passport related services for applicants in the region.

The Mobile Passport Van, as per a PIB statement, operated by the Regional Passport Office, Srinagar, is stationed at the Tourist Facilitation Centre, Bemathang, Kargil, from July 29 to July 31, 2026.

Applicants from Kargil and nearby areas can avail passport services by booking an

appointment through the Passport Seva portal. Applicants are required to select "Passport Van" as the service option and choose an available appointment slot for the scheduled dates.

Applicants are advised to report at the designated venue on the date and time of their appointment and contact the Mobile Passport Van team (PB65BF1377) for further assistance. The Mobile Passport Van initiative has been introduced by the Ministry of External Affairs to provide passport related services in remote areas and improve accessibility for citizens.

Committee on Estimates reviews functioning of Health & Medical Education department

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, JULY 29: The Committee on Estimates of the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly Wednesday convened a meeting under the Chairmanship of Nazir Ahmad Khan (Gurezi) to review the overall functioning of the Health and Medical Education Department, with emphasis on strengthening healthcare delivery and assessing the availability of medical manpower across the Union Territory.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by members of the Committee including Ghulam Ahmad Mir, Balwant Singh Mankotia, Ali Mohammad Dar, Javid Hassan Beigh, Irshad Rasool Kar, Sajad Shaheen, Sunil Bhadraraj and Pyare Lal Sharma. Commissioner Secretary, Health and Medical Education, M. Raju, Director SKIMS, Managing Director, National Health Mission, Principals of various



Government Medical Colleges, Secretary, J&K Legislative Assembly, Manoj Kumar Pandita, besides other senior officers of the Health and Medical Education and Legislative Assembly were also present.

During the deliberations, the Committee undertook a comprehensive review of the department's functioning, focusing on healthcare infrastructure, availability of human resources, quality of service delivery and the effectiveness of administrative mechanisms across Jammu and Kashmir.

The Committee sought detailed information regarding the sanctioned strength of doctors in

all District Hospitals, Sub-District Hospitals and Medical Blocks across the Union Territory. It directed the department to furnish district and block-wise data on the sanctioned posts of doctors to facilitate a detailed assessment of healthcare staffing.

To evaluate the existing human resource scenario in the health sector, the Committee further called for block-wise details of filled and vacant posts in these health institutions for the last five years. The information will enable the Committee to examine trends in manpower deployment, identify critical gaps and recommend appropriate measures for improving

healthcare services across Jammu and Kashmir.

Speaking during the meeting, Chairman Nazir Ahmad Khan Gurezi reiterated the need for timely availability of accurate data to support evidence-based planning and policy interventions aimed at enhancing the efficiency, accessibility and quality of public healthcare services across J&K. He directed the Health department for immediate posting of doctors in rural and underserved areas.

The Chairman also called for timely interventions like installation of CCTVs to enhance status of security and monitoring mechanisms in public health institutions. With a focus on strengthening administrative accountability, the Committee also sought information on the measures taken by the Health Department to implement online/Biometric Attendance systems for employees working across healthcare institutions in Jammu and Kashmir.

DC Srinagar reviews progress, implementation of Mission YUVA scheme

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, JULY 29: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo, on Wednesday chaired a comprehensive review meeting of Officers of line Departments and Bankers at the Meeting Hall of the DC Office Complex to assess the progress and implementation of the Mission YUVA scheme in the District.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by Additional District Development Commissioner, Rifat Aftab Qureshi, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Mir Imtiaz Ul Aziz, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Aadil Fareed, Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar, General Manager DIC, Abid Hussain, SDM West, Irfan Bahadur, Deputy Director Employment, Shubi Tabasum, Zonal Head Jammu and Kashmir Bank, senior Officers from concerned departments,



representatives of various banks, SBDUs and other stakeholders associated with the implementation of the scheme.

During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner reviewed the status of applications received, cases approved by the District Level Implementation Committee (DLIC), and the progress made in sanctioning and disbursing financial assistance to eligible beneficiaries under Mission YUVA.

The DC directed the concerned Bank Officials and SBDUs to expedite the processing of DLIC-approved cases and ensure timely financial support to aspiring entrepreneurs. He emphasized

the need for close coordination among all stakeholders to remove procedural delays and facilitate smooth implementation of the scheme on the ground.

Highlighting the importance of Mission YUVA in promoting entrepreneurship and self-employment opportunities, the DC stressed that all eligible beneficiaries should be provided necessary support within stipulated timelines. He called for proactive engagement with applicants and regular monitoring and clearance of pending cases to achieve the set targets under the scheme.

The DC further directed the concerned Officers to intensify awareness and outreach activities to encourage more youth to avail the benefits of Mission YUVA and establish sustainable livelihood and self-employment ventures. He emphasized the need to ensure that maximum eligible young entrepreneurs across the district are covered under the scheme.

PM FB post issue: Meta writes to govt, outlines rigorous safeguards for posts by prominent accounts

PTI

New Delhi, Jul 29: Meta wrote to the government on Wednesday outlining the specifics of enhanced and rigorous safeguards it has now implemented for content posted by the Prime Minister and other prominent accounts, according to sources.

Meta has informed the IT Ministry that posts by the Prime Minister and prominent accounts will have additional oversight on the platform and that multiple checks will take place at levels of senior company officials, sources said, citing the social media firm's communication to the ministry.

Meta team is likely to meet government officials later this week or early next week over the Prime Minister's Facebook post issue, sources added.

An email sent by PTI to Meta seeking comments did not elicit a response.

The government on Tuesday summoned a top Meta executive after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent post addressing India's youth and promising stringent measures



against paper leaks was briefly restricted by Facebook, and although the US-headquartered social media giant blamed it on a technical glitch and apologised, the IT Ministry had found the explanation "inadequate".

Prime Minister Modi's Instagram post of July 23, later shared on Facebook, marked his first direct selfie video aimed at engaging with the youth and underscoring the government's commitment to crack down on paper leaks amid students' protests, was restricted briefly by Meta on Facebook.

Following this, the global head of public policy of Meta

(Facebook and Instagram) was summoned by the IT Ministry.

IT Secretary S Krishnan on Tuesday said that while Meta has apologised and admitted that they have made a mistake, the Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY) is not happy with the explanation given and is seeking more details from the company.

"It is good that they have apologised and admitted what they did was a mistake. But we are not happy with the explanation...it is not adequate, and we are seeking more details," Krishnan had said.

Meanwhile, sources had said

Meta has told the government that a glitch in its automated content filters caused the removal of Prime Minister Modi's Facebook post for a brief while.

According to a Meta spokesperson, the content was removed "in error" and has since been restored on the platform.

IT Ministry sources had said on Tuesday that Meta's explanation to the government, citing a technical glitch in the automated content filters, was "not reasonable", and that the matter was "not settled and done".

They further said that if indeed a glitch in the automated system caused the error, then Meta, being a technology company, must hasten to improve its tools.

Meta officials, it is learnt, attributed the error to AI-powered automated content filters that were reviewing shared posts and subsequent content that circulated following the original post by the Prime Minister.

Sources had said that Meta claimed that its automated filters inadvertently ended up briefly removing the original post itself.

Relief & Rehabilitation Comm'r reviews essential services, dev works in migrant camps

KT News Desk

Jammu, Jul 29: A meeting was held under the chairmanship of Relief and Rehabilitation (M), J&K, Dr Arvind Karwani to review the delivery of essential services in the migrant camps, ongoing developmental works and budgetary provisions for routine maintenance, upkeep and repair works for the financial year 2026-27. The extension of social sector schemes to eligible migrant beneficiaries was also reviewed.

Reviewing the status of basic amenities such as safe drinking water, power supply and sanitation, the Relief & Rehabilitation Commissioner instructed the officers of the Jal Shakti Department to take all requisite measures to ensure uninterrupted water supply in the camps and press adequate water tankers into operation to supplement the shortage. The Executive Engineers concerned apprised the meeting of the short-term and long-term measures being taken to redress the water supply issue.

Dr Karwani stressed conducting water quality tests at frequent intervals to ensure clean



and hygienic drinking water. The Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) was instructed to ensure repair and renovation works are taken up in order of priority, to be fixed in consultation with the public and the camp commandants concerned.

The Deputy Commissioner Relief and Assistant Commissioners Relief were asked to ensure weekly visits to the camps assigned to them as per the duty roster and take stock of all development works and grievances of the camp inmates, including those related to immovable properties in the Kashmir Valley. The officers were also directed to supervise the door-to-door campaign launched recently to reach all potential eligible beneficiaries of social sector and welfare schemes

and facilitate them with documentation and filling of online applications.

Dr Karwani directed all officers to ensure due adherence to the directions issued by the General Administration Department regarding the responsibilities of Transit Migrant Camps at Jammu and Kashmir assigned to various Government departments.

Among those present were Deputy Commissioner Relief, Assistant Commissioners Relief, Chief Accounts Officer, Camp Commandants and Nodal Officers (Executive Engineers) from different wings of the Jal Shakti Department, Public Works Department (R&B), Jammu Power Development Corporation and Urban Environmental Engineering Department.

Bangladesh 'reviewing' Modi's invitation to PM Rahman to visit India: FM

PTI

Dhaka, Jul 29: Bangladesh is "reviewing" Prime Minister Narendra Modi's invitation to his counterpart Tarique Rahman to visit India, a senior minister said here on Wednesday.

Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman made the comments when asked about India's invitation to PM Tarique Rahman to attend the upcoming 18th BRICS Summit in Delhi.

"We are currently reviewing it (invitation)," Rahman told reporters after High Commissioner Dinesh Trivedi paid a courtesy call on him five weeks after his arrival as the Indian envoy here.

In a post on X, the Indian High

Commission in Dhaka said the envoy "reaffirmed India's commitment to a positive, constructive and forward-looking partnership with Bangladesh, rooted in mutual interest and mutual benefit, and to deepening people-centric cooperation across all sectors."

He also met State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shama Obaid Islam for a wide-ranging exchange on strengthening bilateral ties, it added.

Rahman said the premier has received several invitations for overseas visits, while he is scheduled to attend the UN General Assembly in New York.

"So, we have to consider all these engagements together," he added.

PM Modi first invited his Bangladesh counterpart to visit India along with his family in February. Modi sent the subsequent special invitation last week to attend the upcoming BRICS Summit, according to officials here.

Trivedi, who arrived in Bangladesh on June 12, 2026, and presented his credentials to the then-President Mohammed Shahabuddin on June 25, said this visit is "entirely an issue of (Bangladesh) prime minister's prerogative and decision. But on our part, we could say we are eagerly looking forward to welcoming the head of the Bangladesh government."

"We hope the visit will take place very soon," Trivedi added.

Talking to reporters after the meeting, Rahman said that the two sides agreed that "our two countries' relations should move forward keeping mutual interests at the forefront and, as I always say, based on sovereign equality."

The minister, who was joined by the premier's foreign affairs adviser Humayun Kabir, said there were some "irritants" in Bangladesh-India relations that needed to be addressed.

"He (envoy) knows about them, and I know about them. It is very important that these irritants are addressed," Rahman said.

"We will discuss all the issues between our two countries in the coming days," he said when asked if the issue of

returning deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina from India was discussed.

Hasina, 78, has been living in India since she fled Dhaka following the collapse of her government in August 2024 in the face of a massive anti-government agitation.

Dhaka has been urging New Delhi to extradite her to face the law.

Trivedi described his meeting with the foreign minister as "very good" and said he was looking forward to a relationship "firmly founded on mutual benefit and stronger people-to-people ties".

The envoy said the engagement could expand across

diverse areas, including culture, music and cricket, describing the current interaction as only the beginning of deeper cooperation.

The relations between India and Bangladesh witnessed a major downturn after the interim government headed by Muhammad Yunus came to power following the collapse of Hasina's government in August, 2024.

The two sides initiated efforts to stabilise the relations after Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, accompanied by Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri, represented India at the inauguration of Tarique Rahman as the prime minister in Dhaka on February 17.

Rahman became the prime

minister following his party's landslide victory in the parliamentary polls. Hasina's Awami League party was barred from contesting the polls.

In April, Foreign Minister Rahman visited India as part of efforts to repair the strained bilateral ties following more than 18 months of heightened diplomatic tension.

It was the first high-level visit to India by a senior member of the new Bangladesh Nationalist Party government.

Trivedi's meeting with the foreign minister came a day before US President Donald Trump's Special Envoy for South and Central Asia Sergio Gor's scheduled Dhaka tour.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Amarnath Yatra:

included 1,570 male pilgrims, 369 women, two children, 58 sadhus, 21 sadhvis, one sadhu child and 30 foreign nationals, including 14 men and 16 women. No convoy was scheduled for the Pahalgam route as the pilgrims are travelling only through the Baltal axis.

With the latest batch, a total of 1,32,406 pilgrims have departed from the Jammu base camp for the holy cave shrine during this year's Yatra, officials added.

The 57-day annual Amarnath Yatra, which commenced on July 3, is scheduled to conclude on August 28, coinciding with the festival of Raksha Bandhan. (KNO)

Chhari Mubarak

was led by the custodian of the Chhari Mubarak, Mahant Deependra Giri. Sadhus and devotees accompanied the Mahant and chanted Vedic hymns amid religious fervour.

The saffron-robed silver mace of Lord Shiva was taken to the Gauri Shankar Temple in Pahalgam, where the traditional Bhoomi Pujan, Navgrah Pujan and Dhawajrohan rituals formally marked the beginning of the Chhari Mubarak pilgrimage in accordance with centuries-old traditions.

Mahant Giri said the holy mace would halt at the historic Martand Sun Temple in Mattan on its return journey to Srinagar later in the day for the customary holy bath before being taken back to its abode at the Dashnami Akhada.

The Chhari Mubarak will subsequently follow the traditional Amarnath Yatra route through Chandanwari, Sheshnag and Panchtarni before reaching the holy cave shrine on Shravan Purnima (Raksha Bandhan), marking the ceremonial culmination of this year's pilgrimage.

Devotees gathered at the Dashnami Akhada early in the morning to witness the departure of the sacred mace and offer prayers, while elaborate security arrangements were put in place to ensure the smooth conduct of the procession.

Pertinently, the Chhari Mubarak procession is one of the oldest and most significant traditions associated with the Amarnath Yatra, symbolising the formal and spiritual culmination of the annual pilgrimage to the Himalayan cave shrine dedicated to Lord Shiva. (KNO)

IFFJK receives

artistic perspectives and innovative filmmaking.

The four-day festival will feature screenings of selected films, interactive sessions, masterclasses, panel discussions and cultural engagements, offering opportunities for filmmakers, industry experts, students and cinema lovers to exchange ideas and explore new avenues of collaboration.

The IFFJK is envisioned as a significant step towards promoting artistic excellence, strengthening cultural dialogue and showcasing the rich heritage, scenic grandeur and creative potential of Jammu & Kashmir before a global audience.

The festival also aims to promote the culture of Jammu & Kashmir through Cinema, promote artistic excellence, cultural exchange, and cinematic innovation by exhibiting and recognising outstanding films from around the world.

It also envisions to contribute to the understanding and appreciation of film cultures of different nations within the context of their social and cultural ethos, besides promote friendship and cooperation among the people of the world through the medium of cinema.

Pertinent to mention, the curtain raiser ceremony of the festival was held on July 17, 2026, with Chief Minister Omar Abdullah formally launching the first-ever international film festival of Jammu & Kashmir and inviting filmmakers, artists, producers and cinema enthusiasts from around the world to participate in the landmark event.

Rain keeps temps

26.3 degrees Celsius, Kukernag 23.5 degrees Celsius, Gulmarg 18 degrees Celsius, Jammu 31.3 degrees Celsius, Banihal 26.1 degrees Celsius, Batote 25.1 degrees Celsius, Katra 28.2 degrees Celsius, and Bhaderwah 25.6 degrees Celsius, with all stations recording below-normal daytime temperatures.

During the past 24 hours ending at 8:30 am, Samba received 87 mm of rainfall, followed by Katra 71.2 mm, Udhampur 65 mm and Jammu 52 mm, making them the wettest places in the Union Territory. Other stations also recorded rainfall, including Kukernag (21 mm), Bhaderwah (9.2 mm), Gulmarg (7.8 mm), Batote (3.4 mm) and Qazigund (3.2 mm).

The MeT department said July 30 and 31 are likely to witness few spells of light to moderate rain or thundershowers at most places, with the possibility of brief intense heavy showers or torrential rain at a few places in the Jammu division, mainly during the early morning, morning and late afternoon or evening hours. A few places in the Kashmir division may also experience brief intense showers during this period.

For August 1 and 2, the department has forecast one or two spells of light to moderate rain or thundershowers at many places, accompanied by brief intense showers.

Between August 3 and 5, wet conditions are expected to persist, with light to moderate rain at many places and the possibility of heavy rain or brief intense to torrential showers over a few districts of the Jammu division. Some areas of the Kashmir division may also receive brief

intense showers.

The weather office has warned of the possibility of heavy rainfall in a few districts of the Jammu division over the next five days. It said torrential rain or brief intense heavy showers could trigger flash floods, landslides and mudslides at vulnerable locations between July 29 and August 2.

The MeT advised the general public, tourists, travellers and transporters to remain alert and strictly follow advisories issued by the local administration. (KNO)

Selection committee

have already been earmarked for the Select Lists of 2021–2024, while the remaining five vacancies arose in 2025 and are to be determined for the Select List of that year.

Of the five vacancies determined for 2025, three resulted from the cadre review of the AGMUT cadre notified on January 3, 2025, while two vacancies arose due to the retirement of promotee IPS officers during the same year. (KNO)

CM congratulates

independently manage academic programmes, introduce open and distance learning courses, establish collaborations, and recruit foreign faculty without requiring prior approval from the Commission.

Forest Dept issues

single-use plastic products at ecologically sensitive tourist destinations. Deputy Commissioners will be requested to issue prohibitory orders, while Anti-Polythene Check Posts will be established at major entry points to prevent prohibited plastic items from entering forest-based tourist destinations.

The SOP also mandates the constitution of Eco-Task Forces comprising Forest officers and field staff to conduct regular inspections of vendors, eateries and commercial establishments, seize banned plastic products and organise periodic cleanliness drives.

INSTALL SEPARATE WASTE BINS

To strengthen waste management infrastructure, the department has directed installation of separate biodegradable and non-biodegradable waste bins at parking areas, viewpoints, trekking routes, camping sites and other public places.

Adequate transportation and scientific processing facilities will also be established in coordination with Urban Local Bodies and other agencies.

BIODIVERSITY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES ASSIGNED KEY ROLES

Further, Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs) have been assigned a key role in monitoring sanitation activities,

coordinating waste collection and promoting community participation. The SOP also allows BMCs, wherever permissible under law, to levy sanitation or user charges from waste generators, with the revenue to be utilised exclusively for sanitation, waste management and environmental conservation.

The circular also stresses sustained awareness campaigns, behavioural change initiatives and the promotion of eco-friendly alternatives such as cloth, jute and other biodegradable products. Buy-back or deposit-refund mechanisms for plastic bottles and packaging materials may also be introduced to encourage recycling and reduce littering.

The implementation of the SOPs will be monitored periodically by the concerned Conservators of Forests, while compliance reports will be submitted to the Chief Conservator of Forests, Kashmir, every month, the circular states. (KNO)

Govt sanctions

zones across the Indian Himalayan Region (IHR).

According to the reply, the project is expected to improve understanding and prediction of glacial lake formation and assess the associated hazards and risks to downstream areas inhabited by human populations and critical infrastructure.

The government further informed Parliament that Rs 62.03 lakh has been released for the project during the last three years.

The questions raised by MP Jugal Kishore sought to know whether the government is conducting climate change research projects in Jammu and Kashmir and other regions of the country, the details of such projects, and the funds allocated for them during the last three years. (KNO)

87.5% villages in

provided by Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) based on techno-commercial viability. However, to improve connectivity in rural and remote regions, the Government is implementing various Digital Bharat Nidhi-funded schemes for installation of 4G mobile towers.

The minister further informed Parliament that the BharatNet project has been approved to provide high-speed fibre broadband connectivity to all Gram Panchayats and villages on demand. As of June 30, 2026, 2,15,250 Gram Panchayats had been connected under BharatNet Phase-I and Phase-II, while another 13,494 Gram Panchayats have been connected and upgraded under the Amended BharatNet Programme.

The reply came in response to questions on internet connectivity gaps in hilly and

high-altitude regions, the status of BharatNet implementation, communication infrastructure in border areas and measures to improve telecom services in difficult terrains. (KNO)

Arms, ammo seized

"The recovered material has been seized and further investigation has been taken up," the sources said. (KNO)

Almond harvest

by August before harvesting begins. However, this year, the crop ripened much earlier, prompting orchardists to complete harvesting well before the normal season.

Abdul Rashid Bhat, a grower from Parigam area of Pulwama, said the fluctuating weather conditions, including prolonged dry spells, rising temperatures and untimely rainfall, have adversely affected almond orchards.

Many reported premature leaf fall in several plantations, raising concerns about the health of the trees and the sustainability of future production.

According to farmers, although the weather conditions were far from ideal, the almond yield this year has been encouraging compared to previous seasons. However, if such climatic trends continue, they could pose a serious challenge to the industry's future, they said.

Horticulture Department officials acknowledged the changing weather patterns but maintained that the current season has witnessed a satisfactory harvest.

Fayaz Ahmad, an official of the department, said that almond production has remained good this year and there is no immediate cause for concern.

"The department is promoting improved and climate-resilient almond varieties, which are expected to enhance productivity and help growers adapt to changing environmental conditions," he said.

Experts believe that while this year's output has offered relief to farmers. However, the early maturity of the crop underscores the growing influence of climate change on Kashmir's horticulture sector.

They stressed the need for scientific orchard management, climate-resilient farming practices, improved irrigation facilities and the introduction of advanced almond varieties to protect the industry from future climatic uncertainties.

Almond cultivation remains a vital component of Pulwama and Budgam rural economy, and stakeholders say sustained government support, research and modern horticultural practices will be essential to ensure the long-term growth and resilience of the sector in the face of changing climatic conditions. (KNO)

Lok Sabha clears anti-paper leak amendment bill



PTI

New Delhi, Jul 29: Lok Sabha on Wednesday approved a bill to amend the anti-paper leak law with stricter punishment of up to 10 years' jail and a Rs 50 lakh fine, amid sloganeering by opposition parties.

The Public Examination (Prevention of Unfair Means) Amendment Bill, 2026, with stricter punishment, was introduced in the House

by Union Minister Jitendra Singh on July 27, days after large-scale student protests led by the Cockroach Janta Party forced Dharmendra Pra-dhan to resign as the education minister.

Speaking in Lok Sabha, Singh said the government acted swiftly in the NEET paper leak case, and as many as 52 FIRs have been lodged since the anti-paper leak law came into force in 2024.

The amendment bill

indicates that the government is open to learning from experience, he said, noting that the rate of suicide related to paper leaks has also reduced over the last few years.

He criticised Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, stating that he lacks knowledge of parliamentary norms and the functioning of the government.

Immediately after the passage of the bill, the Lok Sabha was adjourned for the day.

RS passes bill to make insult to 'Vande Mataram' criminal offence



PTI

New Delhi, Jul 29: The Rajya Sabha on Wednesday passed a bill to make insult to national song 'Vande Mataram' a criminal offence.

The Prevention of Insults to National Honour (Amendment) Bill, 2026 was passed with a voice vote.

As soon as the House convened in the post-lunch session, following two back-to-back adjournments earlier in the day, Deputy Chairman Harivansh urged protesting members to maintain decorum.

When the Chair took up the discussion on the bill that was listed for consideration and passing in the list of business, the Opposition parties continued to protest and shouted slogans. They were seeking a response from Union Home Minister Amit Shah over police action against those who had protested in the national capital over NEET paper leak. The Deputy Chairman went ahead with the proceedings of the House despite the protests and urged members to participate in the discussion.

The Opposition parties continued to raise their demand and later staged a walkout when Union Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment Ramdas Athawale was speaking on the proposed

legislation. In his reply to the bill, Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai said the Congress is trying to insult the country's honour -- its national song 'Vande Mataram' -- by resorting to appeasement politics.

He mentioned several instances where 'Vande Mataram' was used as the last words by many freedom fighters while sacrificing their lives for the country.

"One cannot understand the Congress' opposition to Vande Mataram...The country's youth are watching and the people of the country will teach them a lesson," Rai said.

He said 'Vande Mataram' is needed for the promise of 'Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat'.

The proposed legislation seeks to make desecration of or disrespect towards the country's national symbols, including the national flag, the Constitution, and the national anthem, a criminal offence, with a provision of up to three years' imprisonment.

The bill, which was introduced in the House on July 24, seeks to give Vande Mataram the same statutory protection as the national anthem, 'Jana Gana Mana'. This step by the government comes amid the year-long celebrations of the 150th anniversary of Vande Mataram.

'PM to launch 100-week campaign against drug abuse on Aug 2'



PTI

New Delhi, Jul 29: Concerned about the "rising drug abuse" in India, Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports Mansukh Mandaviya on Wednesday announced that a nationwide 100-week campaign to raise awareness against the menace will be launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on August 2.

'Nasha Mukta Yuva for Viksit Bharat Sankalp Abhiyaan' will rely on walkathons, sports activities, meditation sessions, street plays, and art competitions every Sunday to drive home the message of drug-free society.

"On 2 August 2026, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi will launch the 'Nasha Mukta Yuva for Viksit Bharat Sankalp Abhiyaan' and inspire the youth of the nation to contribute towards building a Drug-Free India," Mandaviya said.

"Responding to the Hon'ble Prime Minister's call, this campaign will be led by MY Bharat youth, with the objective of uniting young people across the country in a collective national mission against substance abuse," he added.

According to Narcotics Control Bureau's 2025 report, about 1.34 lakh kilograms of

narcotic drugs were seized across the country, with an estimated market value of around Rs 1,980 crore.

A record 42,282 acres of illegal opium cultivation was destroyed in the same year, a massive jump compared to only 10,000 acres in 2020.

Mandaviya expressed concern about the numbers that he is seeing.

"They are nothing short of shocking and it is very important that this problem is addressed aggressively. I urge all the youth of the country to become an active part of the 'Nasha Mukta Yuva for Viksit Bharat' campaign," he said.

On August 2, 10,000 locations across the country will participate simultaneously, with more than one crore (10 million) youth joining a national pledge against drug abuse, Mandaviya added.

The campaign will witness participation of MY Bharat Volunteers, Youth Clubs, Schools, Colleges, Universities, NGOs, and over 125 spiritual organisations.

More than one crore youngsters are expected to take the Nasha Mukti Pledge.

Volunteers and organisations making outstanding contributions to the campaign will be recognised and honoured at the 50th, 75th, and 100th Week Milestones.

Bill to make delayed registration of births, deaths more stringent introduced in LS

PTI

New Delhi, Jul 29: A Bill to amend the law for the registration of births and deaths was introduced in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday amid protests by the opposition, which sought the presence of the PM and the home minister in the House during the debate on the anti-paper leak Bill.

According to procedure, Speaker Om Birla called some opposition members to oppose the introduction of the Registration of Births and Deaths (Amendment) Bill, 2026. After none spoke, Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai introduced the Bill.

The Bill, which was cleared for introduction by the Union Cabinet on July 20, seeks to further amend Section 13(3) of the Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1969 (as amended in 2023), "in order to make provisions of delayed registration more stringent". Under the current

provisions of the Act, registrations delayed by more than one year require an order from the district magistrate (DM), sub-divisional magistrate (SDM), or an executive magistrate before they can be recorded.

The proposed legislation introduces a two-tier approval mechanism based on the duration of the delay.

According to the Bill, the system will largely remain unchanged for births or deaths reported between one and two years after the event. Applicants will continue to require approval from the DM, SDM or an executive magistrate having jurisdiction over the place where the birth or death occurred.

However, registrations delayed beyond two years will face significantly stricter scrutiny. In such cases, approval will be granted only on the orders of a first-class judicial magistrate, shifting the authority for very late registrations from the executive to the judiciary.

TN CM Vijay travels in Metro train in Chennai



PTI

Chennai, Jul 29: Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C. V. Vigneshwaran on Wednesday travelled in a Metro train to review its operations at its headquarters in Nandanam here, officials said.

He started his journey from the Omandurar station to Nandanam in the afternoon, and he was accompanied by officials.

The CM purchased ticket for the journey.

According to sources, Vijay is also expected to conduct further inspections between Porur and Poonamallee Metro stations.

Similarly, he is also scheduled to inspect the ongoing Metro Rail works at Kathipara.

Rijiju accuses Cong of avoiding debate on anti-paper leak Bill

PTI

New Delhi, Jul 29: Union Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju on Wednesday accused opposition parties of trying to divert attention from the anti-paper leak Bill by talking about unrelated issues during the debate in the Lok Sabha.

Rijiju said opposition leaders were busy doing politics during the debate and that he hoped that Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi would speak on the Public Examination (Prevention of Unfair Means) Amendment Bill, 2026, in the House on Wednesday.

A discussion on the Bill began in the Lok Sabha on Tuesday, with the government describing it as a reaffirmation of its commitment to safeguard the welfare of students.

The opposition, however, hit out at the Modi government over the lathi-charge on protesters during the BJP-led July 20 march to Parliament,



saying every blow hurt the government's prestige more than the backs of the youth.

Speaking to reporters in the Parliament House complex, Rijiju said, "Congress leaders did not speak on the Bill at all. They were only doing politics. We hope Rahul Gandhi and other opposition leaders will speak on the Bill today." "Such an important

Bill is being discussed, but they are trying to divert attention by talking about unrelated issues and politicising it," he said.

"This is a very good Bill brought in response to the demands of students. The prime minister has taken a major decision and it has instilled new confidence among the students. If the Congress has any suggestions

on the examination system, it is free to share them," he said.

The minister alleged that opposition leaders, including Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, spoke on unrelated issues during the debate.

"You heard Priyanka Gandhi yesterday. She spoke entirely outside the scope of the Bill. All the other opposition MPs also spoke on issues outside the (purview of the) Bill and not about the Bill," he said.

Rijiju said he hoped that Gandhi would devote a part of his speech to the Bill on Wednesday.

"I especially expect Rahul Gandhi to speak on the Bill today. Even if he speaks for 20 or 30 minutes, at least five minutes should be devoted to the Bill. It is such an important piece of legislation and not speaking on it is not appropriate," he said.

Rijiju also criticised Gandhi's choice of words in his political attacks, saying public discourse should remain civil.

Air pollution may affect male foetal development: Experts

PTI

New Delhi, Jul 29: Pollution has long been associated with respiratory and cardiovascular diseases but a possible link between exposure to polluted air during pregnancy and its influence on foetal development, especially in the formation of the male reproductive system, has become a matter of concern for doctors and researchers.

Doctors have called for more

research in the area but point to growing evidence which suggests that certain pollutants may interfere with hormones critical to foetal growth, raising questions about their possible role in congenital conditions such as hypospadias.

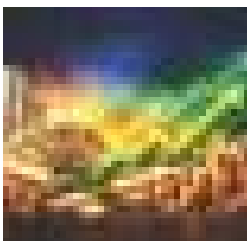
Hypospadias, one of the most common congenital abnormalities affecting boys, occurs when the urethral opening develops on the underside of the penis instead of at the tip during fetal development.

Stock markets rebound sharply; Sensex jumps 889 pts, Nifty ends at 24,250

PTI

Mumbai, Jul 29: Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty rebounded sharply and ended over 1 per cent higher on Wednesday, led by IT stocks, HDFC Bank and fresh foreign fund inflows.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 888.68 points, or 1.16 per cent, to settle at



77,654.60. During the day, it surged 999.57 points, or 1.30 per cent, to 77,765.49.

The 50-share NSE Nifty climbed 264.85 points, or 1.10 per cent, to end at 24,250.20.

From the Sensex pack, Hindustan Unilever surged 4.70 per cent and Infosys jumped 4.50 per cent.

Trent, Larsen & Toubro, Tata Steel, Bharti Airtel, Tata Consultancy Services, HCL Tech and HDFC Bank were also among

the gainers.

Adani Ports, Mahindra & Mahindra, Power Grid, Bharat Electronics and NTPC were the laggards.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) turned buyers on Tuesday. They bought equities worth Rs 755.33 crore in the previous trade, according to exchange data.

SC closes case against former PM Manmohan Singh in coal block allocation case



Singh, industrialist Kumar Mangalam Birla, ex-coal secretary P C Parakh and three others were summoned as accused by a special court in a coal scam case pertaining to allocation of Talabira-II coal block in Odisha in 2005.

PTI

New Delhi, Jul 29: The Supreme Court on Wednesday closed a criminal case against former prime minister Manmohan Singh in a coal block allocation case while setting aside a summoning order passed against him.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana accepted the CBI's closure report giving a clean chit to the former PM and others.

The top court said there was no reason for the trial court judge to turn down closure reports of CBI and take cognisance. "Due to unfortunate demise of the appellant, this appeal could be disposed of as infructuous. But with a view to consider the aspect of Id. spl. judge taking cognisance and summoning the appellant, we have gone through both closure reports filed by CBI.

"Having regard to the relevant parameters consistently laid down by this court on acceptance of reports of investigating agency, we are satisfied that there was no reason for Id. judge to turn down closure reports of CBI and take cognisance. We allow the appeal and set aside the impugned judgment. As a result, we accept the closure reports of CBI and close the matter," the bench said.

Singh, industrialist Kumar Mangalam Birla, ex-coal secretary P C Parakh and three others were summoned as accused by a special court in a coal scam case pertaining to allocation of Talabira-II coal block in Odisha in 2005.

The Supreme Court, however, intervened and stayed the directive.

Singh questioned the absence of the mandated sanction for prosecuting public officials like him, and denied any criminality in his decision concerning the coal block allocation.

Jordan intercepts Iranian missiles as US, Saudi Arabia launch strikes against militias in Iraq

AP

Cairo, Jul 29: Jordan intercepted missiles launched from Iran early Wednesday, hours after the US military said it knocked down another Iranian barrage launched against American forces in the Middle East, ending a brief pause in fighting between Tehran and Washington.

The US also said it worked with Saudi Arabia to fire on Iran-backed militias in Iraq that have targeted the kingdom in recent days. The militias said at least 20 of their fighters had been killed.

The fighting came after days in which mediators said some progress had been made in negotiations to end the war, which began February 28 with American and Israeli attacks on Iran.

Though the two sides signed an interim deal in June, intense bombing resumed this month over disagreements on how to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, the waterway crucial for the world's energy supplies that Iran effectively shut down during the war.

The attacks again highlight how difficult it has been for US President Donald Trump to end the war, which has caused the price of fuel and other basics to skyrocket far beyond the region and is deeply unpopular at home. In recent weeks, four US troops died during the fighting, while the Pentagon asked an increasingly sceptical Congress for money to cover the conflict's ballooning costs.

The renewed hostilities sent oil prices spiking. Brent crude, the international standard, jumped 3.1 per



cent to USD 84.58 a barrel.

Jordan intercepts missiles, and the US strikes militias in Iraq

The Jordanian military said five missiles had been "intercepted and destroyed." Iran's state-run IRNA news agency carried a statement from the paramilitary Revolutionary Guard saying the Guard's Aerospace Force fired ballistic missiles at the Muwaffaq Salti Air Base and the headquarters of the US military's Central Command in Jordan.

Hours earlier, the US Central Command said its forces "remain vigilant and at a high state of readiness."

In announcing the strikes against militias in Iraq, the US warned that further attacks on American troops or Saudi Arabia's energy infrastructure risked additional action.

Iraqi Prime Minister Ali al-Zaidi

called an emergency meeting of the country's National Security Council on Wednesday to discuss the strikes.

Two Iraqi government officials who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to comment publicly said a visit to Saudi Arabia by al-Zaidi that had been scheduled for Thursday had been postponed, without another date being set.

Saudi Arabia says it shot down drones

Saudi Arabia said Tuesday that it shot down drones fired by Iran-backed militias in Iraq for a second day, while Iran-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen claimed to have forced a Saudi oil tanker to turn around as part of their announced blockade of the kingdom.

On Monday, the Houthis said they had launched drones targeting oil facilities used to transport oil from Saudi

Arabia's Eastern Region to the Red Sea port city of Yanbu, a key bypass for Saudi exports blocked by Iran's chokehold on the Strait of Hormuz. The rebels said their attack was in response to a Saudi drone that they said breached Yemen's airspace.

Planet Labs satellite imagery from Monday, analysed by The Associated Press, showed damage to Saudi Aramco's Abqaiq oil processing facility in the kingdom's east. The facility, the world's largest crude stabilisation plant, is a cornerstone of Aramco's operations, with the capacity to process approximately 7 million barrels of crude oil per day.

Attacks on Abqaiq claimed by Houthi rebels in September 2019 disrupted production of 5.7 million barrels per day, spiking global oil prices and providing an initial demonstration of the vulnerability of Saudi oil facilities to missile and drone attacks.

Separately, a regional official said an Aramco oil company refinery in Jazan, on Saudi Arabia's Red Sea coast, has temporarily shut down due to damage sustained from a Houthi attack on Saturday. The official described the damage as "relatively significant," saying it would take several days to be repaired. The refinery produces 400,000 barrels per day.

The Texas-based IIR Energy consultancy agency said the Jazan oil processing facility shut down on Monday after initially operating at reduced rates since the attack two days earlier. Repairs and a tentative restart of the refinery were expected for Aug. 15, IIR Energy said.

Russia charges Telegram founder Pavel Durov with aiding terrorism, issues int'l wanted notice



AP

Russia's main domestic security agency said Wednesday that Pavel Durov, founder of the messaging app Telegram, has been charged with aiding terrorism and put on an international wanted list.

The charges against Durov, who was born and began his career in Russia but later moved abroad, came as the Russian authorities restrict Telegram, one of the most popular messaging apps in the country. It is part of a long-term

effort to bring the internet under the Kremlin's full control that has intensified since Moscow launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

Shortly after Russia charges him with facilitating terrorism, Telegram's X account posts image of Pavel Durov giving the finger.

The Federal Security Service, also known as the FSB, accused Telegram's administration in a statement of failing to remove "numerous channels, chats and bots" that are "actively used by

Ukrainian intelligence agencies, terrorist, and extremist organisations to prepare and coordinate acts of sabotage and terrorism, mass murder, and cyber-fraud" in Russia, which resulted in "numerous human casualties."

The agency accused Ukrainian security services of using a popular dating chat bot on Telegram to lure and recruit Russians for "sabotage and terrorist activities," and said 46 users of the chat bot, from 12 to 22 years old, have been detained across Russia since July 2025.

Durov earlier this year announced that the Russian authorities opened a criminal investigation against him and accused them of fabricating pretexts to restrict access to Telegram as part of an attempt to "suppress the right to privacy and free speech."

If convicted, Durov could face up to life in prison in Russia.

Wildfire response must evolve to keep pace with climate change, EU says



REUTERS

Brussels, Jul 29: The European Union's response to wildfires needs more funding, greater focus on forest management and enhanced education about fire risk as the climate changes, the head of the bloc's crisis response said, as France and Spain battle deadly blazes.

Wildfires have forced unprecedented evacuations of tens of thousands of people across France and Spain, and torn through a region already battered by a blisteringly hot and dry summer.

"Climate change is accelerating. So our response must evolve just as quickly," Hadja Lahbib, the EU's Crisis Management Commissioner, told Reuters. "We must prepare for risks before disasters strike, and not simply react afterwards."

Lahbib said it was not enough to just

purchase more firefighting equipment, and that countries should also be investing more of their EU funding in forest management practices that reduce wildfire risk, and should better educate citizens on "what behavior they absolutely must avoid," to reduce fire risk.

Around 90 percent of wildfires are started by human activities, such as campfires or discarded cigarettes.

However, the EU has a limited role in managing wildfires, responsibility for which lies with national governments.

Brussels coordinates the deployment of extra resources pooled from European countries, when a country requests emergency help. The EU also holds its own "RescEU" reserve fleet of 22 firefighting aircraft and five helicopters, contracted from its member countries.

As of Tuesday, the EU had coordinated the deployment of seven planes and four helicopters to France, and six planes and three ground forest firefighting teams to Spain.

Climate change is increasing the demands on the system. The EU stationed more than 770 firefighters across at-risk countries, a record number, ahead of this summer — reflecting how human-caused climate change is intensifying the heat and drought that allow wildfires to spread faster and burn longer.

EU officials have said they are preparing for fires to still be burning in November this year.

Shot putters Toor, Gill qualify for CWG finals

PTI

Glasgow, Jul 29: Indian shot putters Tajinderpal Singh Toor and Samardeep Singh Gill did not have to exert much as they qualified for the final round of the Commonwealth Games here on Wednesday. National record holder Toor took two attempts to breach the automatic qualification mark of 20m in Group A. His first effort measured 19.93m before coming up with 20.14m in his second throw.

It was the second best distance overall. He did not take the third attempt.

In qualification round Group B, Gill's best of the day was 19.95m which came in his opening attempt. His second throw measured 19.75m and the third a foul.

Gill finished fifth overall out of 15 who competed across the two groups. Group A had seven competitors and Group B had eight.

Fifa plans \$20 billion World Cup unit

Opens door to private equity investment; faces UEFA backlash

REUTERS

London, Jul 29: Fifa's push to open the World Cup to private equity marks a dramatic attempt to reshape the commercial landscape of global soccer, while opening a new front in a long-running battle with Europe for power and control over the massive wealth generated by the sport. The global governing body led by Gianni Infantino plans to create a \$20 billion subsidiary to run the World Cup and other Fifa events, offering stakes of up to 20% to external investors in a move condemned by UEFA as putting the game's "soul" up for sale.

Infantino, who is up for reelection as head of Fifa next year, cast the move as pushing global "democratisation" in the sport by



broadening access to its financial largesse.

The proposal offers member associations access to \$20 million in immediate funding for special projects and further grants of \$20 million and more in subsequent four-year cycles, a huge sweetener for small and emerging soccer nations who rely on Fifa for most of their income. European riches

Fifa already generates billions of dollars in revenue from broadcasting rights, sponsorship and other commercial deals, and is expected to top its \$13 billion target for the four-year cycle which finished with the recent World Cup and included last year's Club World Cup.

Yet those figures pale in comparison with the riches generated by European football.

UEFA reported in February that its elite club competitions generated €4.4 billion (\$5 billion) in the 2024/25 season alone.

Football competitions across the continent generated more than €40 billion in the same period, with the "Big Five" of the Premier League, Bundesliga, LaLiga, Serie A, and Ligue 1 accounting for just over half of that amount, Deloitte said in its annual review of football finance.

'RCB 1st cricket team to cross USD 300 million brand value'



PTI

New Delhi, Jul 29: Royal Challengers Bengaluru has become the world's first cricket team with a brand value of over USD 300 million while IPL's business enterprise value has climbed to a whopping USD 20.6 billion, according to study released by global investment bank Houlihan Lokey.

The bank's 2026 Brand Valuation Report said the IPL's value as a business grew 11.4 per cent year-on-year to USD 20.6 billion, marking a second successive year of double-digit growth.

The league's stand-alone brand value also rose by 10.3 per cent to USD 4.3 billion. Since 2023, the IPL has added more than USD 1.1 billion

in brand value.

RCB retained the No. 1 spot among IPL franchises with a value of USD 312 million, a 16 per cent jump from USD 269 million in 2025, becoming the first cricket team to breach the USD 300 million milestone. Mumbai Indians remained second with a brand value of USD 264 million, followed by Kolkata Knight Riders (USD 245 million) and Chennai Super Kings (USD 244 million).

The study noted that landmark ownership transactions during the year further strengthened the league's commercial appeal.

RCB was acquired by a consortium comprising Blackstone, Bolt Ventures, Aditya Birla Group and Times of India Group at a reported valuation of USD 1.78 billion while Rajasthan Royals changed

hands at a reported valuation of USD 1.65 billion, establishing new benchmarks.

The study also highlighted the IPL's growing digital footprint. According to official broadcaster JioStar's data, which has been cited in the study, the 2026 season reached 1.06 billion screens, with overall viewership increasing seven per cent year-on-year.

"I always believed the IPL would become one of the biggest sporting leagues in the world. I just didn't think it would happen this quickly," said Punjab Kings co-owner Ness Wadia, whose franchise's valuation has grown from USD 76 million in 2008 to USD 158 million in 2026.

"Today, when you see institutional investors looking at franchises and global capital entering the space, it validates the conviction we had back in 2008," he added.

Connected TV emerged as the fastest-growing platform with a 26 per cent rise in reach, even as linear television ratings declined by 18.8 per cent.

The digital-led growth, coupled with premium partnerships and media rights, helped push the league's total revenues beyond USD 1.8 billion during the season, further reinforcing the IPL's position as one of the fastest-growing sports leagues globally.

"The IPL has changed the way sport is viewed in India. It's created careers, inspired investment, encouraged other leagues and built sporting brands that millions of people genuinely care about," said Wadia.

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out of 15 who competed across the two groups. Group A had seven competitors and Group B had eight.

Those who breach 20m mark or the 12 best performers qualify for the finals to be held on Thursday. New Zealand's defending champion and title favourite Tom Walsh took the top spot over-all with his first round throw of 21.03m in Group A.

The 31-year-old Toor has a season's best of 21.03m while the national record in his name stands at 21.77m which he made in 2023.

Toor, a gold medalist in the last two Asian Games, is competing in his second Commonwealth Games, having finished eighth in 2018 in Gold Coast. He missed the 2022 edition due to a groin injury.

CWG 2026: After Vinesh Phogat's Paris heartbreak, India's athletes leave nothing to chance in weight battle

IANs

Glasgow, July 29: The battle for a Commonwealth Games medal begins long before athletes step onto the competition arena. For India's contingent in Glasgow, one of the toughest contests is taking place behind closed doors — on weighing scales.

The painful memory of wrestler Vinesh Phogat's disqualification at the Paris Olympics for being just 100 grams over the prescribed weight in women's 50kg has become a constant reminder for Indian athletes competing in weight-category events. Coaches and support staff say the incident has fundamentally changed the approach towards weight management, with athletes now treating every gram as crucial. Members of the Indian boxing team are following strict diet plans, scheduled workouts and carefully monitored recovery sessions to ensure they remain within their respective weight categories. "We haven't had the time to explore Glasgow because our competition is on and maintaining weight is equally important. We have to stick to our workouts, follow a disciplined diet plan and get proper rest. Right now, that's our only focus," a source within the Indian boxing team told IANs.

Officials accompanying the contingent said the lesson from Paris has not been forgotten.

"Earlier, athletes focused mainly on performance. Now they understand that making weight is the first challenge. Whether it is 10 grams or 100 grams, exceeding the limit can cost an athlete years of hard work. Everyone is extremely cautious," an official said.

The importance of weight management was underlined by Olympic champion Mirabai Chanu after winning the women's 48kg weightlifting gold medal in Glasgow. Speaking to IANs with tears in her eyes, she revealed the sacrifices she made to compete in her category.

"I didn't eat properly for the last three days. Maintaining the weight was very tough," Mirabai had said after dedicating her gold medal to her family.