



Met predicts wet weather across J&K till Aug 7

Heavy showers forecast in Jammu division; Sgr records 25.7°C, 4.2 degrees below normal

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Jul 30: Intermittent light to moderate rain and thundershowers are likely to continue across Jammu and Kashmir till August 7, with the India Meteorological Department (IMD) warning of brief intense heavy showers, torrential rain, flash floods and landslides in vulnerable areas of the Jammu division over the next few days.

An official of the Meteorological Centre Srinagar told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that one or two spells of light to moderate rain and thundershowers are expected at most places on July 31, mainly during the afternoon/evening and early morning hours. The weather office said a few places in the Jammu division could witness brief intense heavy showers or torrential rain.

On August 1, scattered places across the Union Territory are likely to receive a spell of light



rain or brief thundershowers, accompanied by isolated intense showers.

The MeT office has forecast light to moderate rain and thundershowers at many places from August 2 to August 4, particularly during the afternoon/evening and early morning hours, with the possibility of heavy rain and brief intense showers

or torrential rain over a few districts of the Jammu division.

From August 5 to August 7, scattered places are expected to receive light to moderate rain or thundershowers with brief intense showers.

The MeT has issued an advisory warning of heavy rain or brief intense heavy showers over a few districts of the

Jammu division on July 30, July 31, August 2 and August 3.

It cautioned that torrential rain or brief intense heavy showers could trigger flash floods, landslides, mudslides and shooting stones at vulnerable locations, urging people and authorities to remain vigilant.

Meanwhile, weather data released by the MeT office revealed that Srinagar recorded a maximum temperature of 25.7 degrees Celsius, which was 4.2 degrees below normal, while the minimum settled at 19.2 degrees Celsius, slightly 0.3 degrees above normal. The city recorded trace rainfall during the past 24 hours.

In Kashmir division, Qazigund recorded a maximum of 24.4°C, Pahalgam 20.6°C, Kupwara 26.3°C, Kokernag 23.5°C, Gulmarg 18.0°C, and Konibal 26.0°C. Trace rainfall was reported at Srinagar, Pahalgam and Konibal, while Gulmarg recorded 0.4 mm of rain.

In the Jammu | [More on P6](#)



Major General Mukesh Bhanwala, Inspector General (Operations), National Security Guard (NSG) called on Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Thursday

Single protest won't bring results: CM on statehood



Raja Syed Rather

Ganderbal, Jul 30: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Thursday said that a single protest cannot bring results and that repeated efforts and are required to make the demand heard.

Speaking with reporters in Ganderbal, CM Omar, per news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said they took the protest to Delhi knowing that they would not get anything from the first one. "A promise made to Jammu and Kashmir regarding statehood remains

unfulfilled," he said.

He said the National Conference did not wait for August 5 to raise the issue and the party went to Delhi to press for their demand. "The J&K Assembly had passed a resolution regarding the erstwhile state's special status and constitutional guarantees, which was forwarded to the Centre. Whatever steps were required on August 5 would be taken, but the party was not waiting for the date to act," he said.

On the situation in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK), | [More on P6](#)

'J&K records 1,109 highway accidents, 206 deaths in 2026'

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Jul 30: Jammu and Kashmir recorded 1,109 road accidents on National Highways in 2026, in which 206 people lost their lives, and 1,658 others were injured, according to data tabled by the Centre in the Lok Sabha on Thursday.

The figures, released by the Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, are based on information available with the government for National Highways and expressways. The ministry said the 2026 data has been sourced through the Electronic Detailed Accident Report (e-DAR) portal and may be subject to further reporting.

The data, accessed by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), indicates a steady decline in the number of reported road accidents in the Union Territory over the past five years. While 2,378 accidents were recorded in 2022, the number came down to 2,342 in 2023, 2,120 in 2024 and 1,867 in 2025 before dropping to 1,109 this year.

Fatalities, however, showed a mixed trend. | [More on P6](#)

Bear mauls two in Bandipora

KNO Correspondent

Bandipora, Jul 30: Two persons were injured in a bear attack in the Ketson area of Aloosa in north Kashmir's Bandipora district on Thursday, officials said.

An official told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that the incident took place in the Ketson area when a bear attacked the two individuals, leaving them injured.

He said the injured were immediately shifted to a nearby medical facility for treatment. Their identities and the nature of their injuries were not immediately known.

Meanwhile, officials said further details are awaited and an investigation has been taken up. (KNO)

Body recovered from Baba Demb canal

KNO Correspondent

Srinagar, Jul 30: An unidentified body was recovered from a water canal in the Baba Demb area of Srinagar on Thursday morning, eyewitnesses said.

An eyewitness told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that the body was found wrapped in a bathtub and floating in the canal, following which locals informed the police.

He said that soon after receiving the information, a police team rushed to the spot and is examining the body while awaiting the arrival of the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) team.

Police have launched an investigation to ascertain the identity of the deceased and the circumstances surrounding the incident. Further details are awaited. (KNO)

Man found dead in Baghat

KNO Correspondent

Srinagar, Jul 30: A 40-year-old man was found dead at his residence in the Rawathpora Baghat area of Srinagar on Thursday, officials said.

An official told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that the man was found with injuries reportedly caused by a sharp-edged object inside his house.

He said police rushed to the spot soon after the incident and took the body into custody.

The deceased was identified as Ajaz Ahmad Wani (40), son of Ghulam Mohammad Wani, a resident of Rawathpora Baghat.

Meanwhile, police have initiated proceedings to ascertain the circumstances surrounding the death. (KNO)

Govt committed to inclusive dev across J&K: CM Omar

Reviews key projects, public issues in Ganderbal, meets public deputations

KT News Desk

Ganderbal, Jul 30: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Thursday undertook an extensive tour of Ganderbal district, holding a series of public engagements and chairing a review meeting to assess the progress of key developmental projects and obtain a first-hand account of issues affecting the district.

Beginning his visit, the Chief Minister inspected the ongoing construction of the New Bus Adda Road, a vital infrastructure project expected to significantly ease traffic congestion in the area. Stressing the importance of timely



completion, he directed the executing agencies to expedite the pace of work so that the road could be dedicated to the public at the earliest.

During the inspection, the Chief Minister was

accompanied by his Advisor Nasir Aslam Wani, Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal Jatin Kishore, Chief Engineer, Roads & Buildings Department, and other senior engineers and officials | [More on P6](#)

Amarnath Yatra

5,211 pay obeisance on day 28; 4.46 lakh so far

Umairsar Gull Ganie

Srinagar, Jul 30: On the 28th day of the ongoing Amarnath Yatra 5,211 pilgrims paid obeisance at holy cave shrine, nestled in Himalayas, taking the total number of devotees who have completed the pilgrimage to 4,46,788.

According to figures available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) 3,766 men, 1,160 women, 126 children, 22 sadhus, 14 sadhvis, five transgender devotees, two foreign women pilgrims and 116 security personnel had darshan on Thursday.

The pilgrimage is now on the verge of | [More on P6](#)

Police attach properties of 5 Pak-based terror handlers in Reasi

Yogesh

Jammu, Jul 30: In a major blow to the terror ecosystem, Jammu and Kashmir Police have attached the immovable properties of five Pakistan-based terror handlers in Reasi district.

In a statement issued to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), an official spokesman said that the properties of five Pakistan-based terror handlers were attached during the investigation in a case registered under relevant sections at the Police Station in Mahore, district Reasi.

The attachment proceedings were carried out by a police team in the presence



of the Executive Magistrate, Mahore and local witnesses, it said.

The statement stated that immovable properties belonging to Alaf Din alias Mir Baj

Ghulam Mohd alias Gamma, Mohammad Asraf, Shabir Ahmad and Bihar Din, all residents of Mahore, Reasi were attached. "The identified persons intended | [More on P6](#)

Jmu-Sgr highway to remain closed today

Commuters advised to avoid travel

Umairsar Gull Ganie

Udhampur, Jul 30: The administration has ordered a complete suspension of traffic on the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway on July 31 to facilitate slope stabilisation and restoration works on the vulnerable Udhampur-Chenani stretch near Ladha, Samrol.

The order, a copy of which lies with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), was issued by the Additional District Magistrate, Udhampur, following a request from the Project Director, National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), PIU Ramban.

The NHAI reported that continuous rainfall since July 18 has triggered repeated landslides, mudslides and falling debris along the affected hillside, posing a serious threat to commuters and restoration workers.

According to the order, although two-way traffic has been restored after widening the valley-side carriageway, permanent slope stabilisation and widening of the hill-side carriageway require the deployment of heavy machinery to remove overhanging debris, which cannot be carried out safely under live traffic conditions. | [More on P6](#)

518 lakes disappeared or shrunk in J&K: Centre says CAG assessment based on satellite imagery

Ministry says region now has 1,793 wetlands, water bodies in revised inventory

Raja Syed Rather

Srinagar, Jul 30: The Centre on Thursday said the assessment cited in the CAG report that 518 out of 697 lakes in Jammu and Kashmir had disappeared or reduced in size was based on satellite imagery and was indicative in nature, and did not by itself constitute conclusive evidence of permanent disappearance, shrinkage, encroachment or unlawful conversion of wetlands.

The Ministry of Jal Shakti, in its reply to a starred question in the Lok Sabha, said

the assessment was based on an inventory of water bodies prepared by the Department of Environment & Remote Sensing, Jammu & Kashmir, using LISS-III satellite imagery with an approximate spatial resolution of 23 metres. It said such datasets provide preliminary technical information for administrators and researchers and indicate changes in water spread or land cover, but cannot independently establish substantial changes.

The ministry, as reported by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said

conclusions regarding disappearance, shrinkage, encroachment or unlawful conversion require correlation with land records, cadastral maps, notified wetland boundaries, field inspections and records maintained by competent custodial and enforcement authorities. Subsequently, the J&K Government undertook a comprehensive revision and expansion of the inventory using very-high-resolution satellite imagery, grid-based analysis, field verification and jurisdictional refinement.

According to the



revised inventory, Jammu and Kashmir now has 1,793

wetlands and water bodies. Of these, 1,499 are wetlands

below one hectare and additional wetland-like features, with 574 under forest/wildlife jurisdiction and 925 outside forest areas. Another 294 wetlands above one hectare were found present, including 113 inside forests, 54 within protected areas, three under LCMA/WUCMA jurisdiction and 124 outside forests.

On conservation measures, the government said the Union Territory Wetland Authority, chaired by the Chief Secretary, has been constituted in Jammu and Kashmir, while District Wetland | [More on P6](#)

CS Atal Dulloo calls for mission mode completion of housing projects across J&K

Takes stock of PMAY-U housing schemes for Urban Poor



KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, JULY 30: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, took a comprehensive review meeting of the Housing & Urban Development Department (H&UDD) to evaluate the implementation of housing schemes for the urban poor under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban (PMAY-U) in Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting was attended by the Additional Chief Secretary, Power Development Department; Commissioner Secretary, Housing & Urban Development Department; Commissioners of Jammu and Srinagar Municipal Corporations; Managing Director, J&K Housing Board; Director General, Codes; Chief Town Planners of Jammu and Kashmir; representatives of J&K Bank and other senior officers.

While speaking the Chief Secretary observed that access to affordable housing is one of the most fundamental aspirations and essential

needs of every family, particularly those belonging to the urban poor. He noted that for economically weaker households, a significant share of their income is often consumed in meeting housing-related expenses, leaving limited resources for other basic necessities.

He said that the PMAY-Urban serves as a transformative social welfare initiative by providing secure and dignified housing to eligible beneficiaries, thereby substantially reducing their financial burden. This, he added, enables such families to redirect their hard-earned income towards other critical needs such as education, healthcare, nutrition and improving their overall quality of life, ultimately contributing to their long-term socio-economic empowerment.

The Chief Secretary directed all Deputy Commissioners, Commissioners of Municipal Corporations to further mobilise field functionaries to expedite verification of applications, preparation and submission of

DPRs, and timely release of eligible instalments to beneficiaries strictly in accordance with the guidelines of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.

He emphasized that every eligible urban poor household should be covered under the scheme, while ensuring complete transparency, accountability and adherence to the standards specified in the scheme. He instructed officers to strengthen field-level monitoring through regular inspections and effective use of digital platforms for real-time tracking of progress.

The Chief Secretary further impressed upon the officers to resolve all pending issues proactively, enhance public awareness regarding the benefits of the scheme and facilitate eligible beneficiaries in completing all procedural formalities so that no deserving household is left out.

During the meeting, the Commissioner Secretary, H&UDD, Mandeep Kaur presented an overview of the implementation of PMAY-U

1.0 and PMAY-U 2.0, highlighting the physical and financial progress achieved across all districts of the Union Territory.

Highlighting the progress under PMAY-U 1.0, the Commissioner Secretary revealed that against the revised sanctioned target of 36,412 dwelling units, 31,663 houses have already been completed, registering an impressive completion rate of nearly 87 per cent, while the remaining houses are at various stages of construction and nearing completion.

The meeting also reviewed the implementation of PMAY-U 2.0, particularly under the Beneficiary Led Construction (BLC) component. It was divulged that 92 Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) involving 2,120 houses have been approved so far, with 1,379 houses already grounded and construction progressing steadily across different stages.

Taking stock of beneficiary verification, the meeting was apprised by the MD, Housing Board, Smita Sethi that under the BLC vertical, 23,256 applications have been received, of which 20,154 applications have already been verified, while the process of scrutiny of the remaining applications is underway.

The meeting further reviewed progress under the Affordable Housing in Partnership (AHP) and Interest Subsidy Scheme (ISS) verticals of PMAY-U 2.0. It was informed that verification of applications under these components is being carried out on priority to ensure timely approval of eligible beneficiaries and seamless implementation of the scheme.

The meeting concluded with a detailed district-wise review of implementation, during which the Chief Secretary issued specific directions to the concerned officers for accelerating the pace of execution, improving coordination among stakeholders and ensuring timely completion of all sanctioned housing projects under PMAY-U across Jammu and Kashmir.

DC Budgam chairs DLSCC meeting, clears SRO-43 cases



KT News Desk

BUDGAM, JULY 30: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Athar Aamir Khan on Thursday chaired a meeting of the District Level Screening-cum-Coordination Committee (DLSCC) to review and clear cases under SRO-43 for compassionate appointment in favour of the next of kin of terror victims in the district.

During the meeting, the committee, as per an official statement, recommended cases for compassionate appointment after a thorough scrutiny of the applicants' credentials and

verification reports. The cases have been referred to the General Administration Department (GAD) for further necessary action.

The cases were cleared after detailed deliberations and discussion by the committee members.

At the outset, the Deputy Commissioner stressed the need for the speedy disposal and clearance of such cases to ensure timely relief to the affected families. He observed that affected families have high expectations from the government and deserve prompt assistance and support.

The Deputy

Commissioner further directed all concerned departments to ensure that all required formalities and verifications are completed within the stipulated time-frame for timely disposal of cases at the District level.

The meeting was attended by the Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Budgam, Assistant Commissioner Revenue (ACR), senior officers from CRPF, District Information Officer (DIO), Deputy Superintendent of Police (Headquarters), Deputy Superintendent of Police, CID (CIK), Tehsildar Beerwah, and Tehsildar Budgam.

Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir

Office of the Executive Engineer Mechanical

Irrigation Divison Shadipora

Near Indoor Stadium Shadipora 193501

CORRIGENDUM

Subject: Design, Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of 20 Cusec Horizontal type pumping Equipment and allied items at Lift Irrigation Scheme Shadipora Main Under UT Capex 2026- 27 of MISD Shadipora.

Reference: This office e- NIT No.08 of 2026- 27 issued under endorsement No.MIDSh/Ts/1508- 13 Dated:20- 07- 2026.

Please read:

Pump Efficiency: Not less than 75- 85 % at Duty point (Page No.17 at Numbering V in tender document) Instead of:

Pump Efficiency: Not less than 82% at Duty point (Page No.17 at Numbering V in tender document)

All other terms and conditions shall remain unchanged.

No:MIDSh/Ts/1643- 47 Dated:29- 07- 2026.

DIPK-3913/26

DATED: 30-07-2026

Executive Engineer
Mechanical Irrigation Divison Shadipora

DC Kulgam reviews ULBs functioning, performance outcomes, ongoing developmental projects



KT News Desk

KULGAM, JULY 30: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Shahzad Alam Thursday reviewed the functioning of the Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) of the district, including Municipal Council Kulgam, Municipal Committees of Devsar, Yaripora and Frisal.

Detailed discussions were held on sanitation, solid waste management, revenue generation, civic amenities, and the progress of various ongoing developmental works of ULBs of the district.

The meeting, as per an official statement, assessed the status of major developmental projects under MC Kulgam, including the establishment of the vending zone at Kulgam, development civic works at Ziyarat Sharief at Kulgam, creation of on-street parking near District Hospital, and other infrastructure works.

The Deputy Commissioner directed the concerned officers to strengthen monitoring mechanisms, improve service delivery, address operational issues on priority, and ensure timely completion of all developmental projects while maintaining quality standards.

A detailed review of the Solid Waste Management system was also undertaken, including the operationalization of trommel machines and corresponding substantial increases in user charges. The DC

directed the concerned officers to ensure optimum utilization of available infrastructure and uninterrupted operation of facilities for scientific processing, segregation and disposal of municipal solid waste.

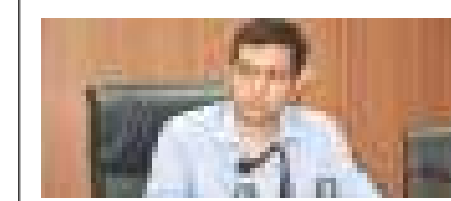
He emphasized achieving 100 percent door-to-door waste collection, strengthening source segregation, ensuring timely transportation of waste and proper waste disposal, and maintaining regular monitoring for improved sanitation and environmental sustainability.

The progress of the Solid Waste Management (SWM) project at Yaripora, which is nearing completion, was also reviewed. The Deputy Commissioner discussed the proposal for installation of a trommel machine at the Yaripora SWM facility and directed the concerned officers to expedite the necessary formalities for its establishment at the earliest to further strengthen the district's solid waste management infrastructure.

Ongoing works in MC Frisal and Devsar also came under review and performance outcomes of all municipalities assessed and instructions issued for enhancing the outcomes.

The meeting was also attended by ADC,Vikar Ahmad Giri; CPO, Malik Subheer; EO, MC Kulgam, Mohd.Irfan; EO MC, Frisal, Mohd.Rafiq and other concerned officers and officials.

DC Jammu reviews arrangements for Independence Day celebrations



KT News Desk

JAMMU, JULY 30: Deputy Commissioner Dr Rakesh Minhas on Thursday chaired a meeting to review arrangements for the upcoming Independence Day celebrations in the district and take stock of preparations for the event.

The DC, as per an official statement, reviewed venue preparations and directed the departments concerned to expedite work at the main function venue to ensure it is ready well in time. He also directed officers to ensure proper decoration and illumination of government offices and other places across the district.

The Deputy Commissioner reviewed the functioning of committees formed to oversee different aspects of the event, directing committee heads to coordinate closely and complete assigned tasks within the stipulated timeframe. Responsibilities for seating arrangements, cultural programmes and other logistical matters are to be discharged in a time-bound and co-ordinated manner.

The DC directed the police and civil administration to work in tandem for barricading, crowd management and security at the venue; Jammu Municipal Corporation to ensure cleanliness at the venue and surrounding areas besides making arrangements for drinking water and mobile toilets and the departments concerned to make proper refreshment arrangements.

Among those present were ADC Vidhu Shekhar, SSP Jammu Joginder Singh, Chief Planning Officer Ajaypal Singh, ASP Traffic Jammu City Arvinder Singh and senior officers from various line departments.

UNION TERRITORY OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT SOCIAL WELFARE OFFICER, SRINAGAR,

Old Sectt, Srinagar-190001,

Subject:- PM-YASASVI Scholarship Scheme (2026-27) for Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Pre-matric/Post-matric Scholarship for the students belonging to OBC, EBC & DNT categories on National Scholarship Portal for the year (2026-27).

Reference:-DSWK/Sch/PM-YASASVI/2026/1458-1460 Dated:- 22-07-2026.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Online Scholarship applications are invited from eligible students of the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir for the PM Young Achievers Scholarship Award Scheme for Vibrant India (PM-YASASVI) for the Academic Session 2026-27 through the National Scholarship Portal (NSP).

The scholarship is available to students pursuing studies in Government/Government-recognized educational institutions and fulfilling the eligibility conditions prescribed under the scheme.

Eligibility Criteria

Applicants must satisfy the following conditions:

- Must be an Indian National and a domicile/resident of the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir.
- Must belong to one of the following notified categories:
- Other Backward Classes (OBC)
- Economically Backward Classes (EBC)
- De-notified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes (DNT)
- Must be pursuing an approved course in a Government/Government-recognized institution in India.
- The annual family income from all sources must not exceed 2.50 lakh.
- Students already availing any other scholarship from the Central Government or the Government of Jammu & Kashmir are not eligible under this scheme.

Schedule for Online Applications

Scholarship Scheme	Portal Opening Date	Portal Closing Date
Post-Matric Scholarship for OBC, EBC & DNT	22 July 2026	31 October 2026
Pre-Matric Scholarship for OBC, EBC & DNT	22 July 2026	31 October 2026

How to Apply

Eligible students are advised to submit their applications online through the National Scholarship Portal (NSP) within the prescribed timeline.

Application Process

- Submit the online application through the National Scholarship Portal (NSP): <https://scholarships.gov.in>
- Upload original scanned copies of all required documents in the prescribed format, including:
- Income Certificate
- Caste/Category Certificate
- Other supporting documents as specified on the portal
- Ensure that all information furnished in the application is correct and complete. Incomplete or incorrect applications are liable to be rejected.

Important Instructions

- Students are advised to complete the application process well before the closing date to avoid last-minute technical issues.
- Applicants should regularly monitor the National Scholarship Portal for updates regarding verification and scholarship status.

Appeal to Educational Institutions

All Heads of Government and Government-recognized Schools, Colleges, Universities, and other Educational Institutions of District Srinagar, are requested to disseminate this notice widely among eligible students to ensure maximum participation under the scheme before the stipulated deadline.

DIPK-3901/26

No:-DSWK/PM-YASASVI/2026/782-86

Dated:- 30 . 07 . 2026

DATED: 30-07-2026

Sd/-
District Social Welfare Officer,
Srinagar

From the Parliament

J&K gets Rs 10,528 Cr for NH's in 2023-24



Raja Syed Rather

Srinagar, Jul 30: Jammu & Kashmir was allocated Rs 10,528 crore and the entire amount was utilised for development and maintenance of National Highways (NHs) during 2023-24, while Ladakh received an allocation of Rs 658 crore, of which the entire amount was also spent, the Centre informed the Lok Sabha on Thursday.

Responding to an unstarred

in 2024-25, against expenditure of Rs 10,204 crore, and Rs 8,083 crore in 2025-26, against expenditure of Rs 7,999 crore. In the current financial year 2026-27, Rs 1,846 crore has been allocated and Rs 1,484 crore spent up to June 30, 2026.

For Ladakh, Rs 794 crore was allocated in 2024-25 with expenditure of Rs 768 crore, while Rs 338 crore was allocated in 2025-26 and Rs 333 crore was spent. During 2026-27, Rs 70 crore has been allocated so far, with expenditure of Rs 20 crore recorded up to June 30.

The ministry also said funds are allocated and released to State Governments and Union Territories for development and maintenance of State roads, including inter-State bridges and roads of economic importance, under the Central Road and Infrastructure Fund (CRIF) Scheme.

Under the CRIF scheme, J&K had an accrual of Rs 128.67 crore and received Rs 206.67 crore in 2023-24; in 2024-25, both accrual and release stood at Rs 128.67 crore. In 2025-26, the accrual and release were Rs 141.54 crore each, while for 2026-27 the accrual stood at Rs 148.51 crore and Rs 125.73 crore had been released up to June 30. Ladakh had an accrual of Rs 326.41 crore in 2023-24 against a release of Rs 68.10 crore, while in 2025-26 it recorded an accrual of Rs 359.05 crore against a release of Rs 210.84 crore—(KNO)

question on financial assistance for construction of inter-State bridges and roads of economic importance, Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Jairam Gadkari said NH works, including inter-State bridges and economically important roads, are taken up based on traffic density, connectivity requirements, road condition and synergy with the PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan.

For J&K, the allocation for NH development stood at Rs 10,331 crore

J&K records 603 road fatalities so far this year

Raja Syed Rather

Srinagar, Jul 30: Jammu and Kashmir recorded 5,452 road accidents and 774 deaths in 2021, with fatalities rising to 984 in 2025, the Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways revealed in the Lok Sabha. Till July 27, 2026, the Union Territory witnessed 3,269 accidents, 603 fatalities, and 4,775 injuries.

The ministry furnished detailed data on road accidents, fatalities, and injuries in Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh in response to a question raised by Lok Sabha member Shyamkumar Daulat Barve.

According to the ministry's reply, Jammu and Kashmir recorded 5,452 road accidents, 774 fatalities, and 6,972 injuries in 2021; 6,092 accidents, 805 fatalities, and 8,372 injuries in 2022; 6,298 accidents, 893 fatalities, and 8,469 injuries in 2023; 5,808 accidents, 831 fatalities, and 7,820 injuries in 2024; and 5,318 accidents, 984 fatalities, and 7,594 injuries in 2025. Till July 27, 2026, J&K had recorded 3,269 accidents, 603 fatalities, and 4,775 injuries.

For Ladakh, the ministry reported 236 road accidents, 56 fatalities, and 242 injuries in 2021; 374

Continued on
www.kashmirthunder.in

J&K has 12.75 lakh ST population as per Census 2011

Raja Syed Rather

Srinagar, Jul 30: Jammu & Kashmir has a Scheduled Tribe (ST) population of 12,75,106, while Ladakh has 2,18,193 ST population as per the Census 2011, the Centre informed the Lok Sabha on Thursday.

The information was provided by Minister of State for Tribal Affairs Durgadas Uikey in response to an unstarred question by Lok Sabha MP Shri Rajkumar Roat regarding the Scheduled Tribe population in Union Territories and benefits being provided to tribal communities.

The ministry said the latest census-based figures of the ST population would be available after the release of the next population census. It added that the Government continues to support the welfare and socio-economic development of tribal communities through various schemes covering infrastructure, education, health, livelihoods and other basic services.

On reservation, the Centre said political reservation for STs in Union Territories is provided in proportion to their population under

Continued on
www.kashmirthunder.in

J&K gets 2 cold chain projects under PMKSY

KNO

Srinagar, Jul 30: Jammu & Kashmir has received two approved and operational cold chain projects under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana (PMKSY) during the last five years, with a total project cost of Rs 18.15 crore and government grant-in-aid of Rs 7.46 crore, the Centre informed the Lok Sabha on Thursday.

According to the Ministry of Food Processing Industries, J&K has 11 completed/operational projects under the Creation/Expansion of Food Processing and Preservation Capacities

Continued on
www.kashmirthunder.in

No climate impact study on Ladakh's Changpa community: GoI

Raja Syed Rather

Leh, Jul 30: The Ministry of Tribal Affairs has not undertaken any study to assess the impact of climate change, shrinking grazing pastures, changing snowfall patterns and declining livestock productivity on the livelihood and traditional nomadic lifestyle of the Changpa tribal community in Ladakh, the Centre informed the Lok Sabha on Thursday.

The information was given by Minister of State for Tribal Affairs Durgadas Uikey in response to a question by Lok Sabha member

Continued on
www.kashmirthunder.in

EOW books four in fake cooking oil company fraud

KNO

Srinagar, Jul 30: The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) Kashmir of the Crime Branch on Thursday said it has filed a chargesheet against four persons for allegedly cheating a Srinagar resident of Rs 15 lakh by posing as representatives of a fake cooking oil company and promising to supply mustard oil.

In a statement, a spokesperson said the Economic Offences Wing (EOW) Kashmir of Crime Branch J&K has filed a chargesheet in FIR No. 77/2022 under Sections 420 and 120-B IPC before the Court of the Chief Judicial Magistrate, Srinagar, against four accused in the cheating case.

He said the accused are Mohd Amin Bhat, son of Mohd Afzal Bhat, a resident of Khanyar, Srinagar; Khalid Hussain Khan, son of Ghulam Hassan Khan, a resident of Gasiyar Hawal, Srinagar; Anil Kumar Maheshwari, son of Ganpat Lal, a resident of A-38, Satiya Nagar, Ward No. 09, Jhotwara, Jaipur, Rajasthan; and Shashank Kumar, son of Surinder Singh, a resident of B-50, Uddai City, Palapuram-2, Modipuram, Meerut, Uttar Pradesh. The spokesperson said

Continued on
www.kashmirthunder.in

Delegations call on LG Sinha



KT News Desk

Jammu, July 30: Abhinav Anand, Co-Convenor Trade Cell BJP, J&K and President Traders Association Trikuta Nagar called on Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Thursday.

He extended his heartfelt appreciation to the Lieutenant Governor

led UT Administration for the impactful Drug-Free Jammu Kashmir campaign. In the meantime, Rahul Sahai, Chairman, Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC) Jammu called on Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha and projected several important matters pertaining to the promotion of trade and industrial sector in the Union Territory.

Div Com reviews alignment of flyovers, Srinagar Ring Road

KT News Desk

Srinagar, July 30: Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg on Thursday chaired a high-level meeting of key stakeholder departments to deliberate on the alignment and implementation of major road infrastructure projects, including the Parimpora-Dalgate Flyover, Panthachowk Flyover, and the Srinagar Ring Road stretch from Panthachowk to Pandach.

The meeting was attended by the Chief Conservator Forests, Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Commissioner Srinagar Municipal Corporation, Vice Chairman Srinagar Development Authority, Director Airport Authority, Senior Superintendent of Police (Traffic) Srinagar, Chief Engineers of KPDCL and Irrigation & Flood Control, along with senior officers from the Roads & Buildings Department, RTO, UEED, LCMA, Air Force, National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), BSF, and other concerned departments.

A threadbare deliberation was conducted on the proposed Parimpora-Dalgate Flyover, with discussions



focusing on its alignment, project cost, anticipated impact on traffic flow, and implications for existing city utilities. It was decided to constitute a committee comprising officers from the stakeholder departments to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the project's impact and submit recommendations.

The meeting also discussed construction of the two parts of the Panthachowk-Pandrethan Flyover and decided to move ahead with the execution of the project.

With regard to the Panthachowk-Pandach section of the Srinagar Ring

Road, the meeting decided to undertake a fresh study of the proposed alignments to minimise the impact on residential areas. NHAI officials were directed to carry out a comparative evaluation of the suggested alignments and submit recommendations for the most suitable option.

Earlier, the meeting also discussed the proposed road from Ring Road Part-I via Sheikhpura to Airport Road and its potential impact on adjacent BSF security establishments. On the occasion, the Divisional Commissioner

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GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR
OFFICE OF THE GENERAL MANAGER
DISTRICT INDUSTRIES CENTRE PULWAMA
NOTICE

Consequent upon the pending incentive claim applications under IDS- 2017 at applicant level on plea of various deficiencies raised for processing of the claims and till date these deficiencies have not been fulfilled/undertaken by the applicants as these applications are still pending that ought to be disposed off long ago. A combined notice is hereby published for information of following applicants/unit holders to complete the deficiencies, short comings within in Seven (7) from the date of publication of this notice, failing which the applications will be placed before the Secretary Level Committee (SLC) for rejection:-

Sr.	Name of Unit	Incentive	Claim Ref. No
1.	HUSSAINI INDUSTRIES	CII	IDS/CII/JK/2026/0803122959
2.	HUSSAINI INDUSTRIES	CII	IDS/CII/JK/2026/0703124642
3.	HUSSAINI INDUSTRIES	CII	IDS/CII/JK/2026/0803122734
4.	HUSSAINI INDUSTRIES	CII	IDS/CII/JK/2026/080312283
5.	HUSSAINI INDUSTRIES	CII	IDS/CII/JK/2026/0803122831
6.	Khyber Agro Farms Pvt. Ltd	CII	IDS/CII/JK/2024/1411121326
7.	Khyber Agro Farms Pvt	CII	IDS/CII/JK/2026/1411120848
8.	M/s Alamdar Cold Store	CII	IDS/CII/JK/2024/04079
9.	M/s Alamdar Cold Store	CII	IDS/CII/JK/2026/2703025951
10.	M/s Alamdar Cold Store	CII	IDS/CII/JK/2026/2703025922
11.	M/s Alamdar Cold Store	CII	IDS/CII/JK/2026/2703030020
12.	M/s Al-Amin Packaging Industries	CII	IDS/CII/JK/2023/0303
13.	M/s Al-Amin Packaging Industries	CII	IDS/CII/JK/2023/0302
14.	M/s Al-Amin Packaging Industries	CII	IDS/CII/JK/2026/3108115326
15.	M/s Al-Amin Packaging Industries	CII	IDS/CII/JK/2023/3108114346
16.	M/s Bashir Carpet Industries	CII	IDS/CII/JK/2025/1412101135
17.	M/s D R Industries	CII	IDS/CII/JK/2026/3103113153
18.	M/s D R Industries	CII	IDS/CII/JK/2016/3103113015
19.	M/s D R Industries	CII	IDS/CII/JK/2026/3103113406
20.	M/s D R Industries	CII	IDS/CII/JK/2016/3103113105
21.	M/s D R Industries	CII	IDS/CII/JK/2026/3103113311
22.	M/s D R Industries	CII	IDS/CII/JK/2016/3103112918
23.	M/s D R Industries	CII	IDS/CII/JK/2026/3103112806
24.	M/s Khan Printing Press	CII	IDS/CII/JK/2026/2703040355
25.	M/s Khan Printing Press		IDS/CII/JK/2016/2703040610
26.	M/s Khan Printing Press	CII	IDS/CII/JK/2026/2703040537
27.	M/s Khan Printing Press	CII	IDS/CII/JK/2016/2703040501
28.	M/s Khan Printing Press	CII	IDS/CII/JK/2026/2703040306
29.	M/s Khan Printing Press	CII	IDS/CII/JK/2016/2703034458
30.	M/s Khan Printing Press	CII	IDS/CII/JK/2026/2703034410
31.	M/s Khan Printing Press	CII	IDS/CII/JK/2016/2703040427
32.	M/s Mega Packing Industry	CII	IDS/CII/JK/2016/3103072937
33.	M/s Mega Packing Industry	CII	IDS/CII/JK/2016/0703122639
34.	M/s Mega Packing Industry	CII	IDS/CII/JK/2016/0703122228
35.	M/s Mega Packing Industry	CII	IDS/CII/JK/2026/0703122139
36.	M/s Mega Packing Industry	CII	IDS/CII/JK/2026/0703112255
37.	M/s Mega Packing Industry	CII	IDS/CII/JK/2026/0703122408
38.	M/S MEHBOOB-UL-ALAM ENTERPRISES, IGC LASSIPORA	CII	IDS/CII/JK/2026/2403123308
39.	M/S MEHBOOB-UL-ALAM ENTERPRISES, IGC LASSIPORA	CII	IDS/CII/JK/2026/2403123134
40.	M/S MEHBOOB-UL-ALAM ENTERPRISES, IGC LASSIPORA	CII	IDS/CII/JK/2026/2403123433
41.	M/S MEHBOOB-UL-ALAM ENTERPRISES	CII	IDS/CII/JK/2026/2403122945
42.	M/S MEHBOOB-UL-ALAM ENTERPRISES, IGC LASSIPORA	CII	IDS/CII/JK/2026/2403024531
43.	M/S MEHBOOB-UL-ALAM ENTERPRISES, IGC LASSIPORA	CII	IDS/CII/JK/2026/2403122627
44.	M/s Olive	CII	IDS/CII/JK/2026/3103022158
45.	M/s Olive	CII	IDS/CII/JK/2026/3103022108
46.	M/s Olive	CII	IDS/CII/JK/2026/3103015018
47.	M/s Olive	CII	IDS/CII/JK/2026/3103021853
48.	M/s Olive	CII	IDS/CII/JK/2026/3103022009
49.	M/s R.Y. Paper Industry, Naibasti Tral	CII	IDS/CII/JK/2021/0219
50.	M/S SHAHEEN AGRO FRESH PVT LTD UNIT II	CII	IDS/CII/JK/2024/0370

General Manager District Industries
Centre, Pulwama

No: DICPL/IDS-2017/Notice/2026/1266
Dated: 29/07/226

DIPK-3925/26
Dated: 30-07-2026

EDITORIAL

Friday Brief: In Every Drop, A Sign Of The Divine

Water is a divine gift and a communal trust. The Quran declares, “We have made every living thing out of water” (21:30), establishing a profound spiritual connection between water and all existence. Yet, rivers are being poisoned, lakes are shrinking, and groundwater is being contaminated at alarming rates. In a world gripped by water

scarcity, Islamic teachings offer clear guidance: conservation is not optional, but a moral and spiritual obligation. The Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) warned against both waste and pollution. He prohibited urinating into standing water, teaching that even a seemingly small act of contamination harms the community. He declared that “People are

partners in three things: water, grass of pasture and fire”, emphasising water as a shared resource—not a commodity to be exploited. To pollute it is to act against the common good, a clear “mischief on earth” which Allah forbids. Wastefulness is equally condemned. When the Prophet (PBUH) saw a man performing ablution, he asked, “What is this extravagance?”

When told there could be no waste in worship, he replied, “Yes, even if you are on the bank of a flowing river” (Ibn Majah). This is a powerful lesson: conservation must be practiced even in abundance, let alone in times of scarcity. The principle is clear—do no harm, waste nothing, and protect water for all. The draining of wetlands and dumping of industrial waste, which

threaten human health and ecosystems, are not just environmental failures; they are violations of sacred trust. We are God’s stewards, and water is entrusted to us for the benefit of all life, not for exploitation by a few. We must move beyond policy to conscience. Water is a blessing that carries a responsibility. To protect it is to protect life itself.

Oceans And The Current Surge Of Investigations In Ocean Conservation

Siraj Islam Mufti

Oceans were formed as their large gaseous solar predecessors cooled. The oceans are unique because they hold roughly 97% of global water and cover 71% of our planet's surface. They are the only known body of liquid water in our solar system and the planet's primary climate regulator and oxygen producer.

The ocean's most defining characteristics are the following:

Oceans are life-giving engines. The oceans produce over 50% of the earth's oxygen, generated by microscopic marine plants called phytoplankton near its surface.

Planetary climate control. The oceans absorb a quarter of all human carbon emissions, and 50 times more carbon dioxide than the atmosphere. They transport trapped heat from the equator to the poles , thus moderating global weather patterns. Oceans possess extreme biodiversity and mystery. The oceans harbor up to a million different marine species, and biologists have described only 10-25% of them. Over 90% of dep oceans are in perpetual darkness, and creatures there have evolved their own light through bioluminescence.

Oceans have immense depth and pressure. The global ocean's average depth is 12,100 feet (3,688 meters), and the deepest known point on earth known as the Mariana Trench is nearly 36,200 feet, far deeper than Mount Everest is tall.It is because of the above handicaps, except few a few superficial investigations are carried out on oceans as evidenced by the American Geographic society.

In view of the above, the Time Senior correspondent Justin Worland wrote an article on May 28, 2026 titled "A New wave of investment Sees Profit in Ocean Conservation." He described how Pierre Paslier, a plastic-packing engineer before he became an ocean entrepreneur. He took a break from his work and went to school and then with his cofounder Rodrigo Garcia Gonzales and formed a company in 2014 and with the support of standard Chartered Bank, capital started flow in, and today with more than \$780 million assets, he is optimistic about the future of seaweed-based investment future.

Oceans face severe, interconnected threats from human activity. The most pressing dangers include climate change (warming waters, sea level rise, and ocean acidification), widespread plastic and chemical pollution, overfishing, and destructive industrial practices like deep-sea mining and habitat degradation.

Last year, J.P. Morgan estimated the value of ocean-related activity, what is called the "the annual gross marine product", at \$2.5 trillion annually. And it noted that ocean-climate -related startups have raised over \$5 billion in venture funding over the past decade. Most is early-stage financing, meaning there may be much more to come as companies mature, and venture into ocean-related conservation activity.

Time has another great article on "The Power Hiding in underwater Forests" by Tatjana Baleta published on May 24, 2026. It describes at some length the Great African Sea-forest home to thousands of animals, many found nowhere else on earth, in kelp forests in the world, with the removal of a single predator has led to ecosystem collapse.

At the edge of Cape Town's city lights, one of the ocean's most intricate ecosystems is held together by creatures most people have never seen. Here beneath the swaying kelp canopy of the Great African Sea-forest, a helmet snail rises from the sand, siphon-probing like a periscope for the scent of sea urchins. It disarms their prickly spines with slime and liquefies their innards with acid, keeping the grazers in check and the forest from being devoured.

The snail, in turn, must evade the masterful octopus that creeps between the anemone-encrusted rocks, while above them sharks prowl through the kelp understory. Between urchin spines, tiny crabs and juvenile abalone take shelter while hungry fish swirl past.

Each is part of a living network of interactions. Remove enough strands, and the sea forest begins to unravel. Scientists say it is these intricate relationships that allow ecosystems like this to survive a warming ocean. Yet they remain dangerously overlooked, even as they die off. The Great African



Sea-forest is the world's only "sea bamboo" forest, a vast underwater jungle stretching more than 1,000 kilometers (621 miles) from Namibia's desert coast down to the tip of South Africa. Cold up-wellings rise from the deep, bringing nutrients that fuel an explosion of life, much of it found nowhere else on Earth. For at least 100,000 years, humans have lived alongside this ecosystem, foraging limpets and mussels from tidal pools and diving through the kelp for pearlescent abalone and fish. Today, the sea forest still sustains coastal communities and fisheries-a living system shaped by countless relationships between species, ocean currents, and people.

Despite our long history with this ancient ecosystem, "we are only beginning to grasp the magnitude of biodiversity yet to be discovered here," says Jannes Landschoff, marine biologist at Sea Change Project, the South African non-governmental organization behind My Octopus Teacher, which was filmed in the Great African Sea-forest. In partnership with the Save Our Seas Foundation, they are creating the 1001 Seaforest Species app to catalogue the science and stories of this kelp ecosystem.

From massive flying-saucer stingrays and inquisitive fur seals to minuscule, carnival-colored nudibranchs the size of a fingernail, and peacock feather duster worms flaring like underwater fireworks; the sea forest is the stage for a thousand stories whose complexity is easy to overlook from above the waves.

Underpinning the existence of all this life is the kelp itself: a large seaweed that grows in towering columns with long brown blades curling outwards like leaves. These tall steeples create a living architecture unlike anything else in the ocean. Like forests on land, kelp forms dense canopies at the sea surface that shade a mid-water understory while below, their gnarled root-like holdfasts sculpt the seafloor. Each layer supports its own community of organisms, each creature making a home, foraging for food while avoiding becoming it themselves, finding mates and caring for young.

The Great African Seaforest is not the planet's only sea forest. Kelp fringes nearly a third of the planet's coastlines and is an iconic feature of temperate waters, from California and Chile to Norway, Japan, and Australia. These ecosystems are as productive and important as rain forests or coral reefs, but much less well known or studied. "The only seaweeds most people know are the ones that wrap around their sushi," says Swati Thiyagarajan, nature storyteller at Sea Change.

What happens inside kelp forests shapes wider ocean health. They sustain coastal fisheries, cycle nutrients, and buffer coastlines from storms as sea levels rise and extreme weather intensifies. Kelp has also received growing attention as one of the planet's most efficient carbon absorbers. Unlike engineered climate solutions still on the horizon, kelp forests already function as living climate infrastructure. Scientists say these benefits-valued at over \$500 billion annually-depend on biodiversity.

And yet, kelp forests are disappearing fast. Roughly half have degraded in the last 50 years as marine heat waves push waters beyond kelp's thermal limits, pollution and coastal development degrade shoreline ecosystems, overharvesting rips forests from the seafloor, and overfishing disrupts the predator-prey relationships that keep these

systems in balance. "When you're face-to-face with what's happening, it's absolutely terrifying," says Craig Foster, Sea Change cofounder. "In my lifetime, half of kelp forests around the world: gone; and people don't even know about it."

"Kelp forests are the fabric that weaves together the ocean in our seas outside the tropics and so, when you start to pull apart the thread of that fabric, everything starts to unravel," says Aaron Eger, founder and program director of the Kelp Forest Alliance. Few places illustrate that unraveling more starkly than California in the mid-2010s.

Before 2014, bull kelp—a whip-like kelp with bulbous air bladders and trailing blades —stretched across Northern California's coastline in dense tangles. Within a decade, it had almost entirely vanished. In its place urchin barrens now carpet the seafloor; a spiny, silent landscape stripped of life. The ecological shock rippled ashore, collapsing the region's \$44 million red abalone fishery—once the largest in the world. Local businesses went with it.

The immediate culprits: a wasting disease that disintegrated urchin-eating sunflower sea stars and a prolonged marine heat wave that combined with an El Niño event to hike ocean temperatures. Freed from predation, purple urchins razed vast swaths of kelp unchecked. California's kelp had endured warming before, but this time, the loss of the sea stars proved fatal.

The collapse, however, had deeper roots. Over a century earlier sea otters, another key urchin predator, were extirpated by the fur trade, leaving the system precariously reliant on sea stars alone. And when they too disappeared, the entire system tipped. By 2019, 95% of the kelp forest, some 350 kilometers (217 miles), was gone.

Some organisms exert outsized influence, but every loss matters; each vanished species takes with it a role in keeping its ecosystem stable. "Biodiversity is the immune system of the planet. The more varied it is, the healthier the planet," says Thiyagarajan. Diversity-not just the number of species, but the web of relationships between them—allows ecosystems to absorb shocks and adapt to change. When that web frays, ecosystems lose their ability to store carbon and produce food, water, and oxygen, while withstanding climate stress.

The United Nations has called biodiversity "our strongest natural defense against climate change," yet it remains underemphasized in climate strategy even as it declines. "All carbon strategies focus on primary producers-trees, mangroves, seagrass-but a step above that is the biodiversity that maintains them, and that is rarely included in policy," says Eger.

Unlike coral reefs, no global laws or policies focus on kelp forests. Only 16% are in some form of protected area and fewer than 2% under the highest protections, which prohibit all extractive activities. "There's not often intention put into protecting kelp forests-they are just captured as part of the larger seascape when marine protected areas are created," says Eger. "But kelp forests are ecologically and biologically important areas that need to be protected in their own right."

Despite global decline, some kelp forests are remarkably stable. The Great African Seaforest is one of them. Kelp here has largely escaped overharvesting, and marine protected areas have preserved biodiversity

hotspots even as reef fish, rock lobster, and abalone have been overexploited. Though far from pristine and still facing growing threats, the forest is holding fast and extraordinary biodiversity continues to flourish in the kaleidoscope of light beneath its canopy.

If you are very lucky, you might witness the moment a mottled shyshark, denticle scales prickling for grip, wriggles free from her leathery egg; ending her five-month-long incubation and beginning life among furry sea fans and bright sponges. Nearby, an odd scrap of pink algae transforms, in a blink, to reveal itself as a tuberculate cuttlefish: an endemic shape-shifter that matches colors and textures to dissolve away into the reef mosaic. The abundance is dizzying, the beauty overwhelming. The wonder of it all inspires people to protect what remains.

Momentum is building. The 1001 Seaforest Species project is sharing data and stories that could help shape biodiversity-based policies to protect the sea forest and its inhabitants. Across the world, scientific mapping and community-led conservation are helping to safeguard some of the world's last intact kelp habitats. Patagonia's remote sea forests are recognised as climate refuges, and recent legislation in Argentina now protects most of the country's wild giant kelp. At the same time, initiatives like the global Kelp Forest Challenge are galvanising efforts to restore hundreds of forests that have already been lost.

For the local and Indigenous communities along its shores, the Great African Seaforest is living heritage, making its loss unimaginable. "These sea forests have maintained our ancestors' fabric of life and shaped our culture as we know it today," says Loyiso "the Kelp Keeper" Dunga. "If kelp forests could speak, they would tell us a story of who we truly are: species once connected to our wild-being." Dunga is a marine biologist and founder of ASILI BLUE REN, an organization uniting science and Indigenous knowledge to protect South Africa's kelp forests.

In the space between light-seeking fronds and rock-anchored holdfasts, sponge crabs are scuttling, jellyfish are pulsing, otters dance, and clouds of fish flash and flicker. Life is living a thousand unseen lives. "The Great African Seaforest is cold and cryptic and inspiring. I've been privileged enough to get to know many of its species," says Foster. "Our hope is that others will realize how precious this place is." In a warming world, this sea forest offers a glimpse of what remains possible if life, in all its spectacular forms, i

Here are single-paragraph summaries of the TIME articles found about kelp, seaweed, and ocean restoration:

The Power Hiding in Underwater Forests - Tatjana Baleta (May 28, 2026): This piece profiles the Great African Seaforest and uses kelp forests worldwide to show how intricate species relationships sustain coastal biodiversity and services-carbon storage, fisheries, and coastal protection-while documenting alarming declines (roughly half degraded in 50 years) driven by marine heat waves, pollution, overharvesting, and disrupted predator-prey dynamics; the article highlights community-led mapping, protection efforts, and restoration initiatives (including the 1001 Seaforest Species project and local marine protected areas) as critical but incomplete tools to preserve these underappreciated ecosystems.

Inside the Labs Racing to Save The World's Coral Reefs - Simmone Shah (May 28, 2026): Reporting from research labs in the U.K. and Germany, the story shows how scientists are attempting to bolster coral resilience-by bio-banking gametes, controlling spawning, and rearing threatened species-while stressing that restoration buys limited time at local scales and cannot alone reverse global reef decline driven by warming oceans.

How to Harness Mega Seaweed Blobs For a More Sustainable Future - Vincent Doumeizel (Mar 30, 2023): This article examines exploding sargassum blooms across the Atlantic-their ecological and economic harms when they reach coastlines-and explores responses from harvesting and industrial uses (biomaterials, construction bricks) to proposals for off-shore removal or sinking for carbon sequestration, stressing both opportunity and logistical, ecological, and governance challenges.

One Man's Quest to Heal the Oceans-And Maybe Save the World - Aryn Baker (Aug 24, 2023): A profile of Enric Sala and his Pristine Seas initiative, detailing how identifying and creating highly protected marine areas has restored biodiversity (including kelp and reef habitats), boosted fisheries through spillover effects, and provided a practical conservation strategy that can increase ecosystem resilience and carbon benefits when scaled and politically adopted.

The Ocean Farmers Trying to Save the World With Seaweed - Mélissa Godin (Sep 4, 2020): Through seaweed farmers' experiences, the article outlines kelp and seaweed's promise as fast-growing carbon absorbers and sustainable products (food, feed, bioplastics), the social and economic benefits for coastal communities, and the substantial technical, ecological, and policy hurdles to scaling seaweed farming or using it reliably as a carbon-removal strategy.

"We are only beginning to grasp the magnitude of biodiversity yet to be discovered here," says Jannes Landschoff in The Power Hiding in Underwater Forests.

"Biodiversity is the immune system of the planet. The more varied it is, the healthier the planet," says Swati Thiyagarajan in The Power Hiding in Underwater Forests.

"Kelp forests are the fabric that weaves together the ocean ... when you start to pull apart the thread of that fabric, everything starts to unravel," says Aaron Eger in The Power Hiding in Underwater Forests.

"I see Notpla as a good visible application to make the case for why it's worth spending more of our attention, brains, and dollars to the ocean space," says Pierre Paslier in A New Wave of Investment Sees Profit in Ocean Conservation.

"We need to continue growing an asset class that is not just for impact investors or philanthropic investors, but something that people look at as part of their portfolio," says Philippe Cousteau in A New Wave of Investment Sees Profit in Ocean Conservation.

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"I don't expect private equity to suddenly change and become pussycats and look after the environment," says Guy Standing in A New Wave of Investment Sees Profit in Ocean Conservation.

Therefore, we must treat Kelp forests as the future of the Oceanic world and encourage all investigations into it and utilize products associated with it.

Courtesy: IslamiCity

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

RAJYA SABHA

Government committed to sustainable tourism development in Kupwara: Union Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat

KT News Desk

Srinagar, July 30: The Government of India has reiterated its commitment to the planned and sustainable development of unexplored tourist destinations in Kupwara district, including Lolab Valley, Bangus Valley, Keran, Machil and Teetwal, through promotion of eco-tourism, border tourism, adventure tourism and community based tourism.

Replying to a question in the Rajya Sabha on Thursday, Union Minister for Tourism Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, as per a PIB statement, said that while development and promotion of tourism is primarily the responsibility of the State Government/UT Administration, the Ministry of Tourism extends financial assistance under schemes such as Swadesh Darshan, Swadesh Darshan 2.0, Challenge Based Destination Development (CBDD) and PRASHAD for creation of tourism infrastructure and amenities.

The Minister informed that



the Department of Tourism, UT Administration of Jammu & Kashmir has undertaken and proposed infrastructure development projects in Kupwara district involving an estimated investment of more than 58 crore. The projects include development and upgradation of Tourist Facilitation Centres, Tourist Reception Centres, tourist huts, guest houses, interpretation centres, cafeterias, public convenience facilities and other eco-tourism infrastructure at destinations such as Teetwal,

Keran, Karnah, Machil, Lolab, Bangus, Zachaldara, Langate and Handwara.

The House was informed that the UT Administration has also undertaken promotional initiatives including celebration of International Yoga Day, organization of Familiarization (FAM) Tours to Keran, the Annual Lolab-Bangus Festival, promotion of border destinations and participation in national and international tourism fairs to position Kupwara as a major border and eco-tourism destination.

Shekhawat said these initiatives are aimed at strengthening tourism infrastructure, improving visitor experience, generating local employment and promoting sustainable eco tourism and border tourism in the district.

The Minister further informed that the Ministry of Tourism promotes tourism destinations and experiences across the country, including the Jammu & Kashmir region, through various initiatives in important and potential markets. He also stated that Ministry schemes encourage State Governments and UT Administrations to undertake consultations with local communities and stakeholders while focusing on capacity building and local entrepreneurship, particularly among youth.

Details of tourism projects sanctioned by the Ministry in Jammu & Kashmir under the Swadesh Darshan and PRASHAD schemes, including projects covering Kupwara under the Himalayan Circuit were also shared.

Sahitya Akademi publishes works on Lal Ded, Habba Khatoon, Rupa Bhavani in multiple languages: Union Tourism Minister

KT News Desk

New Delhi, JULY 30: The Sahitya Akademi has undertaken translation and publication of works relating to iconic Kashmiri women poets and mystics, including Lal Ded, Habba Khatoon and Rupa Bhavani, in several Indian languages, the Minister of Culture and Tourism, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, informed the Rajya Sabha on Thursday.

Replying to a question regarding preservation of Kashmir's literary heritage, the Minister, as per a PIB statement, stated that Sahitya Akademi undertakes literary translations in 24 Indian languages recognised by it.

The Akademi has published the Hindi translation of the classical verses of Lal Ded under the title Lalleshwari Ke Vakh, edited by Radhavallabh Tripathi and translated into Hindi by Adwaitvadini Kaul. A monograph on Lal Ded has also been published in English, Hindi and Urdu.

A monograph on Habba Khatoon has been published in English, Hindi, Tamil and



Urdu, while a monograph on Rupa Bhavani has been published in English.

The Minister further stated that Gyan Bharatam, a flagship initiative of the Ministry of Culture, provides an institutional framework for the survey, documentation, conservation, digitisation, research and dissemination of India's manuscript heritage.

Research and academic engagement under the Mission are undertaken through

collaboration with centres, universities, scholars, experts and institutions, with support and assistance extended as per the applicable guidelines and approved provisions of the Mission.

As part of this initiative, financial grants were released to Gyan Bharatam Centres in Jammu & Kashmir during the last two financial years. A grant of 16.55 lakh was released in 2024-25, while 28 lakh was released in 2025-26.

DC Jammu felicitates young Taekwondo, Kick Boxing champions



KT News Desk

JAMMU, JULY 30: Deputy Commissioner Dr Rakesh Minhas on Thursday felicitated two promising sportspersons from Bishnah, Kanhaiya Choudhary and Jiya Choudhary for their outstanding performances in national and international Taekwondo and Kick Boxing championships.

Commending their dedication, discipline and consistent achievements, the Deputy Commissioner said the young athletes had brought laurels to Jammu district through their remarkable performances on competitive platforms. He expressed confidence that their success would inspire more youngsters to pursue sports and excel at higher levels.

As a mark of appreciation, Dr Minhas, as per an official statement, presented the two sportspersons with a cash reward of Rs 5,000 each and wished them success in their future sporting endeavours.

Kanhaiya Choudhary and Jiya Choudhary, children of

Ajay Choudhary and Rekha Choudhary of Bishnah have emerged as two outstanding athletes with an impressive record in national and international competitions.

In 2025, Jiya won silver medals at the 20th National Matsogi Do Championship and the Khelo India Asmita Kickboxing Zonal League. In 2026, she secured a gold medal at the 2nd PTF India Open International Championship, besides winning bronze medals at the 1st India Open International Kickboxing Cup and the 3rd International Matsogi Do Championship held in New Delhi.

Kanhaiya has also delivered commendable performances across various championships. In 2025, he won bronze medals at the 28th District Jammu Taekwondo Championship and the 20th National Qwan Ki Do Championship. In 2026, he clinched gold medals at the India Open International Taekwondo Championship and the International Matsogi Do Championship, further enhancing the district's sporting reputation.

Drugs & Food Control Organisation J&K intensifies market surveillance Draws 13 Medicine Samples for Quality Testing

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, JULY 30: In a major initiative to strengthen post-market surveillance of medicines, the Drugs & Food Control Organisation, J&K conducted a special sampling drive across the districts of Srinagar, Baramulla and Kupwara to ensure that only safe, efficacious and quality medicines are available to patients.

The special drive, as per an official statement, with more than 30 inspections in medical sale establishments was carried out by teams of Drugs Control Officers from the three districts, with a focused strategy of lifting statutory drug samples of medicines manufactured by various lesser-known pharmaceutical companies.

13 samples have been drawn for detailed quality testing and dispatched to notified Government Drug Testing Laboratories to ascertain their compliance with the prescribed quality standards under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 and the Rules.

During the drive, operation of one chemist M/s Aleena Medicate, near Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Hospital, Rainawari, was suspended for one day, for absence of qualified person.

The drive forms part of the Department's intensified market surveillance programme aimed at proactively monitoring the quality of medicines



available in the supply chain. By targeting products manufactured by lesser-known companies, the department seeks to strengthen regulatory oversight and ensure that medicines reaching the public conform to established standards of safety, efficacy and quality.

Khalid Jahangeer, Commissioner, Food and Drugs Administration, J&K, reiterated that the Department remains steadfast in its commitment to ensuring that every patient in the Union Territory has access to safe, effective and quality medicines. He said that surveillance and enforcement activities will continue to be intensified across Jammu and Kashmir and warned that stringent action under the provisions of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act will be taken against any manufacturer, distributor or retailer found dealing in drugs that fail to meet prescribed quality standards.

The special drive was

conducted under the overall supervision of Rajesh Kumar, State Drugs Controller, J&K, who stated that the Department has adopted a robust risk-based surveillance mechanism to safeguard public health. He emphasized that regular statutory sampling, rigorous quality testing and continuous market monitoring are essential to maintain the integrity of the pharmaceutical supply chain and protect patients from substandard or non-compliant medicines.

The Drugs & Food Control Organisation, J&K has appealed to all stakeholders in the pharmaceutical supply chain to adhere strictly to the statutory provisions governing the manufacture, distribution and sale of medicines. The Department also urged the public to purchase medicines only from licensed pharmacies and to report any suspected quality-related issues to the Drugs & Food Control Organisation, J&K for prompt action.

Director F&ES felicitates personnel with gallantry, meritorious service medals



KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, JULY 30: Director, Fire & Emergency Services (F&ES), J&K, Alok Kumar, Thursday felicitated seven serving and retired personnel of the Department by presenting them with Gallantry Medals (GM), Meritorious Service Medals (MMS) and appreciation certificates in recognition of their exceptional bravery, distinguished service and unwavering dedication to duty.

During the ceremony, the Director honoured Medal for Gallantry to Firdous Ahmad Khan (LFM-1449), Bashir Ahmad Ahanger (FM-1996) and Late S.K. Raina (Deceased), who was honoured posthumously.

The Medal, as per an official statement, for Meritorious Service

was conferred upon Puran Singh (LFM), Satpal Khujuriya (LFM), Abdul Rashid Ganie, Sub Officer (Retired), and Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Dar (SGFM).

Speaking on the occasion, the Director congratulated the awardees and appreciated their outstanding contribution towards protecting lives and property under challenging circumstances. He urged all personnel of the department to continue serving with dedication, discipline and compassion, while upholding the highest standards of professionalism in safeguarding the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

The ceremony concluded with the presentation of medals and certificates to the awardees amidst applause from the officials of department.

ADDC Shopian reviews JJM progress Directs expedited completion of pending works

KT News Desk

SHOPAIN, JULY, 30: Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC) Shopian, Dr. Nasir Ahmed Lone Thursday chaired a comprehensive review meeting to assess the progress of works under the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) across the district.

During the meeting, the ADC, as per an official statement, reviewed the physical and financial progress of all ongoing JJM schemes, including overhead tanks, borewells, Rapid Sand Filtration (RSF) plants, pipe network laying, ground service reservoirs, mechanical works, electrical installations and the certification status of villages.

It was informed that out of 62 JJM schemes, 23 have been completed, while the remaining schemes are at various stages of execution. The meeting also reviewed the progress of 121 overhead tanks, borewells, filtration plants, pipe network works, mechanical and electrical installations, besides the



status of village certification and Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTCs).

The district has achieved 42,234 Functional Household Tap Connections out of a target of 45,598, registering 92.62% coverage.

The ADC stressed the need for timely completion of all pending works and directed the concerned officers to remove bottlenecks, improve inter-departmental coordination and ensure adherence to project timelines. He emphasized that every effort should be made to provide safe and reliable drinking water

to all households at the earliest.

He also directed the Assistant Executive Engineers (Civil) to furnish estimates for constructing functional tube wells in the district to augment water supply, and instructed the Assistant Executive Engineer (Mechanical) to expedite mechanical works to ensure early commissioning of water supply schemes.

The meeting concluded with directions to all executing agencies to intensify field-level monitoring and submit regular progress reports to achieve the targets within the stipulated timeframe.

Sensitization Workshop on Tobacco Control held in Bandipora

KT News Desk

BANDIPORA, JULY 30: To strengthen tobacco control measures and promote a tobacco-free environment, a District-Level Sensitization Workshop for Heads of Institutions and key stakeholders under the National Tobacco Control Programme (NTCP) and the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA), 2003 was held on Thursday at the Conference Hall, Mini Secretariat, Bandipora.

The workshop was organised by the Tobacco Control Cell, Directorate of Health Services, Kashmir, in collaboration with the Health Department Bandipora. Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Bandipora, Dr. Bhajan Kour, presided over the programme.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Bhajan Kour highlighted the harmful effects of tobacco consumption on public health and stressed the importance of effective implementation of the provisions of COTPA, 2003. She called upon all stakeholders to work in close coordination to create greater



awareness, ensure compliance with tobacco control laws, and protect the younger generation from the ill effects of tobacco use.

The workshop was attended by officers from the National Tobacco Control Programme (NTCP), Directorate of Health Services Kashmir (DHSK), who delivered technical presentations

on tobacco control.

On the occasion, Dr. Nabeel, District Nodal Officer, NTCP Bandipora, delivered a comprehensive presentation on the health hazards of tobacco use, while officers from DHSK made presentations on the objectives of NTCP, the provisions of COTPA, 2003, and strategies for the effective implementation

and enforcement of tobacco control measures.

The workshop sensitised participants about the objectives of the National Tobacco Control Programme, the legal provisions of COTPA, 2003, and the role of various departments in enforcing tobacco control measures.

Discussions also focused on strengthening inter-departmental coordination for the effective implementation of the Act across the district.

Heads of Institutions and representatives from the Revenue, Police, Health, Drug and Food Safety, Education, Municipal Council, Municipal Committees, Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), and the Media participated in the workshop.

The participants reaffirmed their commitment to supporting tobacco control initiatives through sustained awareness, coordinated enforcement, and active community participation, with the aim of promoting a healthier and tobacco-free Bandipora.

Govt committed towards welfare of teaching fraternity: Sakeena Itoo

Addresses Teachers Convention at Srinagar | Distributes 55 promotion orders under various categories

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Jul 30: Minister for School Education, Higher Education and Social Welfare, Sakeena Masood Itoo on Thursday reaffirmed the, assuring that all genuine issues and long-pending concerns of teachers would be examined sympathetically and addressed on priority.

The Minister made these remarks while addressing a one-day Teachers' Convention organised by the Jammu & Kashmir Teachers Joint Action Committee (JKTJAC) at Teachers' Bhawan Bemina here today.

Addressing the gathering, Sakeena Itoo paid rich tributes to the invaluable contribution of teachers towards nation-building and societal progress. She said that teachers play a pivotal role in shaping the future of society by nurturing generations of students and instilling values, knowledge and character among them.

"The future of our nation rests in the hands of teachers, whose dedication and commitment have enabled countless students



to excel in different fields and contribute meaningfully to society," the Minister said.

Sakeena Itoo further highlighted that the School Education department has undertaken series of administrative reforms to strengthen human resource management, improve field administration and address long-pending service matters in a time-bound manner. She added that department has initiated the placement of eligible PG Masters/PG Teachers as In-charge Lecturers to address faculty shortages in

Higher Secondary Schools.

The Minister also said that in a major administrative achievement, updated final seniority lists for 31 out of 36 disciplines, covering 20,281 PG Masters/PG Teachers, have been issued after several years and the final seniority list of 3,509 Headmasters has also been notified.

"Department has further strengthened educational administration by placing 136 Senior Lecturers as In-charge Principals, 22 Principals as In-charge Chief Education Officers and 1,083 Masters as In-charge

Headmasters", she said.

"To fill vacant teaching positions, 594 Lecturer posts in 27 subjects were referred to the Jammu and Kashmir Public Service Commission, which has recommended 537 candidates in 26 subjects".

Expressing concern over issues confronting the teaching fraternity, the Minister observed that teachers who have devoted decades of their lives to imparting quality education deserve due recognition and fair consideration of their genuine concerns. She said the Government is fully aware of the challenges being faced by teachers and is committed to resolving them in a transparent and time-bound manner.

Referring to concerns raised regarding various service-related matters, Sakeena Itoo said that all genuine demands placed before the Government would be examined with empathy and seriousness. She reiterated that the School Education Department remains committed to protecting the interests of teachers while further strengthening the education sector in Jammu and Kashmir.

Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam

Acting Chief Justice Sanjeev Kumar leads plantation drive at High Court

KT News Desk

Jammu, Jul 30: Under the patronage and guidance of Acting Chief Justice, High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, Sanjeev Kumar, a vigorous plantation drive was organized today at the High Court Complex, Janipur, Jammu, in collaboration with the Jammu Forest Division, Jammu under the campaign "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam".

The event was attended by Justice Sindhu Sharma, Justice Rajnesh Oswal, Justice Mohd. Akram Chowdhary, Wasim Sadiq Nargal, Justice Rajesh Sekhri and Justice Sanjay Parihar, who actively participated in the plantation drive by planting saplings of various medicinal and ecologically significant tree species, including Rudraksh, Putranjiva and Sita Ashok. The initiative was aimed at promoting a cleaner, greener and healthier environment while encouraging collective responsibility towards preserving nature for the benefit of future generations.



M. K. Sharma, Registrar General, High Court of J&K and Ladakh, Officers of the Registry of the High Court, Nirmal Kotwal, President, Jammu & Kashmir High Court Bar Association, Jammu, Pardeep Wahule Conservator of Forest, East Circle, Members of the Executive Committee and the members of Bar Association also participated in the plantation drive.

On the occasion, Om Parkash Vidyarthi (Retd. IFS) delivered a tree talk highlighting the medicinal and religious significance of various tree saplings planted during the plantation

drive. Drawing upon his vast experience in forestry and environmental conservation, he highlighted the unique characteristics and traditional importance of Rudraksh, Putranjiva and Sita Ashok.

Speaking on the occasion, Acting Chief Justice Sanjeev Kumar, emphasized the vital role of afforestation in mitigating the climate change, enhancing biodiversity and fostering ecological balance. He stressed upon the importance of community participation in environmental protection and the collective endeavour to build a sustainable future.

Swachh Bharat Mission-Grameen

Secy RDD asks DCs to fast-track cluster-based waste management, door-to-door collection

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Jul 30: Secretary, Rural Development Department (RDD) and Panchayati Raj, Muhammad Aijaz Asad, on Thursday directed all Deputy Commissioners to fast-track implementation of the Swachh Bharat Mission-Grameen (SBM-G) by adopting cluster-based waste management systems, operationalising Door-to-Door (D2D) waste collection in every village, expediting sanitation infrastructure works and strengthening community participation to build clean, healthy and sustainable rural communities across Jammu and Kashmir.

Chairing a comprehensive

review meeting on the overall performance of SBM-G and implementation of District Sanitation Plans, the Secretary reviewed the physical and financial progress of sanitation projects across the Union Territory.

The meeting was attended by Director General, Rural Sanitation, all District Development Commissioners, Director Finance, RDD, Superintending Engineers, REW (Jammu/Kashmir), Deputy Directors, Rural Sanitation, Assistant Commissioners Panchayats and Executive Engineers of REW.

Appreciating the presentations made by Bandipora and Budgam, Aijaz Asad said the



innovative sanitation models adopted by the two districts have the potential to serve as templates for replication across Jammu and Kashmir. He advocated a cluster-based approach to solid waste management,

enabling adjoining blocks to pool financial resources, machinery and manpower for efficient and financially sustainable waste management systems.

The Secretary stressed the need to identify and map

village-level waste collection points, establish secondary collection centres wherever required and prepare scientific transportation routes for waste collection vehicles. He also encouraged districts to explore Public-Private Partnership (PPP) and Viability Gap Funding (VGF) models while making optimum use of departmental machinery and resources.

He further instructed all districts to prepare Gram Panchayat-wise inventories of sanitation assets, clearly assign operation and maintenance responsibilities and draw up monthly maintenance schedules to ensure the sustained functionality of completed

infrastructure.

Aijaz Asad directed all districts to operationalise Door-to-Door (D2D) waste collection in every village. He asked officials to finalise collection routes, map all households and commercial establishments, engage collection agencies and develop forward linkages with recycling industries, cement plants and other authorised agencies for scientific processing and disposal of waste.

To make sanitation systems financially sustainable, the Secretary instructed districts to generate own-source revenue through user charges and the sale of compost, recyclable material and e-waste. Emphasising the importance

of managing waste generated by institutions, markets and commercial establishments, Asad directed districts to identify and register all bulk waste generators. He also stressed greater community ownership of the mission by actively involving Self-Help Groups, NGOs, civil society organisations, religious leaders, social influencers and Swachhata Champions in sanitation campaigns.

The Secretary underlined user fee collection as a key component for ensuring the long-term sustainability of sanitation services and directed districts to create awareness regarding user charges through Panchayat by-laws.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Met predicts

division, Jammu recorded a maximum temperature of 31.3°C, followed by Kathua at 33.0°C, Katra 28.2°C, Banihal 26.1°C, Batote 25.1°C, and Bhaderwah 25.6°C. Rainfall during the past 24 hours measured 4.4 mm in Bhaderwah, 0.5 mm in Banihal, 0.2 mm in Batote, while Jammu, Katra and Kathua recorded no rainfall.

Among the other stations followed by Ramban at 35.2°C in the Jammu region. Sonamarg received 3.5 mm of rainfall, while Anantnag, Kishtwar and Doda recorded 1.0 mm each, Udhampur and Jammu received 0.6 mm and 0.4 mm respectively, and Awantipora and Srinagar recorded trace rainfall.

The highest rainfall was recorded at Amarnath, which received 11.5 mm during the past 24 hours, the MeT office said. (KNO)

Govt committed

associated with the execution of the project.

Later, the Chief Minister chaired a review meeting to take stock of the progress of major development initiatives and deliberate on long-pending public issues in the district. The meeting focused on road connectivity, irrigation infrastructure, flood protection measures, sewerage facilities, solid waste management, land acquisition and other critical projects aimed at improving public service delivery.

The meeting was attended by Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, Commissioner Secretary, Housing & Urban Development Department Mandeep Kaur, Managing Director, J&K State Power Development Corporation, Deputy Commissioners of Srinagar, Ganderbal and Bandipora, Director Tourism Kashmir, Chief Engineer R&B, Chief Engineer Irrigation & Flood Control, Secretary J&K Sports Council, district officers and other senior officials. The outstation officers attended the meeting via video conferencing.

At the outset, Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal presented a detailed overview of the district's priority development issues requiring urgent government intervention. He highlighted the need to expedite land acquisition for several road widening projects and the approach road to the Paribal-Takanawari bridge, to strengthen irrigation canals and power canal embankments, improving road connectivity to the Central University of Kashmir, development of tourism infrastructure and a Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) at Manasbal.

Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal also raised issues relating to the rehabilitation of shopkeepers displaced due to the widening of Ring Road Phase-II, construction of strategic link roads, establishment of an Integrated Solid Waste Management Plant, besides several other people-centric initiatives aimed at enhancing infrastructure and public services across the district.

After reviewing the projects in detail, the Chief Minister directed all concerned

departments to work in close coordination to remove bottlenecks, expedite pending approvals and ensure the time-bound completion of all ongoing and proposed developmental works.

He emphasized that delays in execution should be minimized and directed the departments to maintain close inter-departmental coordination so that the benefits of development reach the people without unnecessary delay.

The Chief Minister reiterated that the government remains committed to balanced and inclusive development across Jammu and Kashmir, with a focus on strengthening infrastructure, improving civic amenities and addressing genuine public concerns through efficient governance and coordinated action.

During his visit, the Chief Minister also met several public deputations and individuals at Dak Bungalow Ganderbal, and patiently heard their grievances and development-related demands.

The deputations represented various areas of the district, including Safapora, Nuner, Manigam, Lar, Sherpathri, Shallabugh, Waskura, Wakura, Manasbal, Gutlibagh, Beehama, Rangil, Saloor, Wayil, Batwina and other villages.

The deputations raised a wide range of issues concerning drinking water supply, irrigation facilities, desilting of canals, upgradation of educational and healthcare institutions, availability of adequate staff in health centres, development of playgrounds and new playfields, sports infrastructure, tourism-related facilities and other local development concerns.

The Chief Minister gave a patient hearing to all the deputations and directed the concerned officers to examine the issues raised and take appropriate action in a time-bound manner. He assured the people that their genuine concerns would be addressed on priority and reiterated his government's commitment to responsive, transparent and people-centric governance.

Single protest

CM Omar expressed concern over reports of force being used and innocent people being targeted. "We are all concerned. We can only hope that peace prevails there as well," he said. (KNO)

J&K records 1,109

Road accident deaths stood at 259 in 2022, rose to 294 in 2023, dipped to 271 in 2024, increased sharply to 431 in 2025 and declined to 206 in 2026.

According to the ministry, 17 victims killed in National Highway accidents this year were below 18 years of age. Another 25 were in the 18-25 age group, while 40 fatalities were reported among those aged between 25 and 35 years.

The data further showed that 29 people aged 35-45 years, 28 in the 45-60 age bracket and 12

above 60 years died in highway accidents during the year. The age of 55 victims could not be ascertained.

The ministry also shared details of the implementation of the PM-RAHAT (Road Accident Victims' Hospitalization and Assured Treatment) scheme, under which 472 claims were initiated by hospitals in Jammu and Kashmir till July 28.

Of these, 51 claims have been approved by the State Health Authority, while 43 have been settled. The annexure placed before Parliament showed no disbursement amount against the settled claims in the Union Territory.

In neighbouring Ladakh, 119 road accidents on National Highways claimed 17 lives and left 177 people injured during 2026. Under the PM-RAHAT scheme, all 12 claims initiated in the Union Territory were approved and settled, although the amount paid was listed as nil.

At the national level, the ministry said 77,234 road accidents on National Highways were reported in 2026, resulting in 34,610 deaths and injuries to 60,224 people.

The Centre said the PM-RAHAT scheme, launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on February 13 this year under the provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act, provides cashless treatment to road accident victims. It added that states and Union Territories have been advised to empanel more hospitals, particularly near accident-prone stretches, to ensure timely emergency care for victims. (KNO)

5,211 pay obeisance

crossing the 4.5 lakh mark despite weather-related disruptions and temporary suspension on several occasions due to landslides and restoration works along the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway.

Meanwhile, a fresh batch of 1,795 pilgrims left the Bhagwati Nagar Yatri Niwas in Jammu for the Baltal base camp in the early hours of Thursday under stringent multi-layer security arrangements.

According to details, the 23rd batch departed at 2:44 am in a convoy of 83 vehicles, comprising 41 buses, 11 medium motor vehicles (MMVs), 30 light motor vehicles (LMVs) and one two-wheeler.

The batch included 1,406 male pilgrims and 389 female pilgrims, while no pilgrims were scheduled to travel via the Pahalgam route on Thursday.

The total number of pilgrims who have left the Bhagwati Nagar base camp in Jammu for this Amarnath Yatra has reached 1,34,201. (KNO)

Police attach

to facilitate and finance terrorist activities through sale proceeds of these properties," it added.

The statement said, "During the investigation, credible evidence established that the accused persons had exfiltrated to Pakistan for

terrorist training and are presently operating as terror handlers from across the border, actively promoting, facilitating and coordinating terrorist activities."

"The investigation further revealed that these properties were liable to be alienated, with the proceeds intended to finance and sustain terrorist operations. Based on the findings, Police, after obtaining the requisite approval from the Police HQ J&K, attached the properties under the relevant provisions of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967, to prevent their misuse for terror financing," the statement said.

"The action reflects the firm resolve of Reasi Police to dismantle the financial infrastructure supporting terrorism. By targeting assets linked to terror operatives, the police aim to disrupt the terror ecosystem and deny anti-national elements the resources required to sustain their activities," it said. (KNO)

Jmu-Sgr highway

Invoking powers under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023, the district administration directed that vehicular movement on NH-44 shall remain completely suspended on July 31, 2026, to enable the NHAI to undertake intensive debris clearance, slope stabilisation and other restoration works for the safe and early reopening of the highway.

The administration has directed the Senior Superintendents of Police of Udhampur and Ramban, the Superintendent of Police (Traffic), NHW Ramban, and other field agencies to ensure proper traffic regulation, diversion arrangements and strict enforcement of the order.

The NHAI has also been asked to deploy adequate manpower, machinery and equipment, maintain close coordination with the district administration, police and traffic authorities, install warning signs and barricades at vulnerable locations, and keep emergency response teams, ambulances and disaster management resources on standby throughout the operation.

Senior Superintendent of Police (Traffic NHW), Raja Aadil Hamid, said the highway has suffered extensive damage at several locations due to heavy rains.

"Although repair work has been carried out at some places, complete restoration is still pending," he said.

He urged the public and tourists planning to visit Kashmir not to travel on July 31 to avoid inconvenience.

Meanwhile, the Traffic Police said the movement of all kinds of vehicles shall remain suspended between Jakheni (Udhampur) and the Navyug Tunnel (Banihal) to facilitate restoration works along the affected stretch.

Consequently, no vehicle shall be allowed to proceed beyond Nagrota (Jammu) towards Srinagar, Doda, Kishtwar, Ramban

and Patnitop, or beyond Qazigund towards Ramban, Udhampur and Jammu after 10:00 pm on Thursday (July 30), the Traffic Police said, adding that a detailed traffic advisory will be issued separately. (KNO)

518 lakes disappeared

Management Units have been established for coordinated planning, monitoring and conservation of water bodies at the district level.

The government further said that Wular Lake is being conserved and managed by the Wular Conservation and Management Authority (WUCMA), while Dal and Nigeen Lakes are managed by the Lake Conservation and Management Authority (LCMA). Manasbal Lake is managed by the Wular-Manasbal Development Authority (WMDA).

The Wildlife Protection Department is responsible for protection and management of ecologically significant wetlands including Hokersar, Haigam, Shallabugh, Surinsar-Mansar and Gharana Wetlands. Wetlands located within reserve forests and other forest lands are being protected by the Forest Department through regular surveillance and habitat conservation measures.

The J&K government has also undertaken periodic wetland inventory, mapping and monitoring using remote sensing supported by field verification, along with restoration and catchment conservation wherever required. Site-specific management plans are being prepared and implemented, while measures include selective de-siltation of critically silted areas, deepening and restoration of natural streams and nallahs, creation and maintenance of pools and navigational channels, and selective de-weeding.

Other measures listed by the government include development of roosting and nesting sites for waterbirds, construction of watch towers, strengthening surveillance through anti-poaching and anti-encroachment measures, solid waste collection and scientific disposal, maintenance of optimum water levels during high- and low-flow periods through hydrological management, and annual waterbird population estimation and biodiversity monitoring.

At the national level, the ministry said protection, conservation and management of wetlands, including lakes, is primarily undertaken by the respective State Governments and UT Administrations, as water is a state subject. The Central Government supplements these efforts through various programmes and interventions.

The ministry also said the first Census of Water Bodies was conducted in 33 States/UTs under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Irrigation Census, with 100 per cent Central assistance, with the objective of developing a national database covering details such as size, condition, encroachment status, use, storage capacity and filling status of water bodies. (KNO)

PM takes stock of geo-political situation, safety of seafarers, supply chain constraints

PTI

New Delhi, Jul 30: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday discussed with a group of senior ministers the prevailing geo-political situation in West Asia and measures to keep supply chains uninterrupted despite conflicts surrounding the Strait of Hormuz, the Black Sea, the Red Sea, and the Gulf of Aden.

The extended Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) meeting, chaired by the prime minister, was attended by permanent members, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Home Minister Amit Shah, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, as well as special invitees, Chemicals and Fertilisers Minister JP Nadda, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal, Shipping Minister Sarbananda Sonowal and Petroleum Minister Hardeep Puri, official sources said.

It is understood that a comprehensive discussion was held regarding the ongoing global conflicts, their security implications, and the resulting disruptions to India's imports and supply chains, most of which transit through these conflict zones.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi today chaired a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security to review the situation in the context of the ongoing West Asia conflict and measures taken by various Ministries and Departments. This was



the 4th special CCS meeting on the issue," a statement issued by the prime minister's office said.

Cabinet Secretary TV Somanathan briefed the CCS about the present geo-political situation and spoke about the initiatives taken to ensure adequate supply of petroleum products, including LNG/LPG and fertilisers, it said.

The cabinet secretary told the CCS that sources for procurement of LPG have already been diversified and the overall stock and supply positions of major petroleum products remain adequate.

Availability of adequate crude oil has enabled Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSE) refineries to operate at utilisation levels exceeding 100 per cent, ensuring continued production of petrol, diesel and

other petroleum products.

Initiatives have also been taken to expand Piped Natural Gas (PNG) connections, which have resulted in a substantial increase in subscriptions. The government is also facilitating industrial substitution of LPG through expansion of the National Gas Grid, augmentation of LNG import and re-gasification infrastructure, expansion of City Gas Distribution networks, and time-bound pipeline and last-mile connectivity approvals under the Pipeline Infrastructure Order, 2026.

"During the meeting, requirements for the fertilisers for the ensuing Rabi season was assessed and alternative sources of fertilisers were also discussed. The Prime Minister said that all measures be taken for ensuring

uninterrupted supply of fertilisers," the statement said.

The situation of seafarers serving on domestic as well as foreign-flagged vessels in conflict zones was also deliberated on. Modi directed the ministers to establish a mechanism to provide timely information, emergency assistance and counselling to seafarers and their families.

The PM said all efforts must be made to safeguard the citizens as well as the Indian diaspora from the impact of conflict. He said in order to ensure energy independence, emphasis should be laid on renewable energy sources, including solar energy and other non-fossil fuel-based sources.

Modi said that a whole of government approach should be adopted to tackle the challenges arising due to the crisis. He said that a unified coordinated mechanism should be put in place for regular monitoring of all the developments to ensure expeditious implementation of appropriate measures to safeguard the interests of the citizens, the statement said.

The ministers gave presentations on their respective ministries and steps taken by them to ensure uninterrupted import of all goods, including petroleum, natural gas and fertilisers, they said.

The prime minister is learnt to have given certain directions to the ministers to ensure the safety of Indians, India's economic interests

and find ways to the supply chain hindrance.

Before the US-Israel war with Iran, 40 per cent of India's energy imports came through the Strait of Hormuz. With the conflict not ending, India's energy imports from West Asia have been hit.

Last week, the Yemen-based Houthi militia announced that it will target Saudi Arabian tankers attempting to cross the Bab al-Mandab. The group also targeted a few ships following the announcement.

The Bab al-Mandab connects the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden and the Arabian Sea and is a critical transit point for global trade and energy supplies -- similar to the Strait of Hormuz.

According to the data available, the impact is already visible as ships crossing through the Bab al-Mandab decreased to an average 31 per day over the past three days in comparison to 43 per day in the first half of July.

Besides, Russian oil import through the Black Sea is also under pressure as the Russia-Ukraine war has intensified. There have been several attacks on ships passing through the Black Sea in the past few days.

India depends on imports to meet over 88 per cent of its energy requirements. The country also imports a large amount of fertilisers from various sources. Nearly one crore Indians live and work in West Asia.

E20 petrol can reduce fuel economy by 2-6 pc: Nitin Gadkari

PTI

New Delhi, Jul 30: Petrol blended with 20 per cent ethanol (E20) can reduce fuel economy by 2 to 6 per cent depending on the vehicle category and vintage, Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari informed Parliament on Thursday.

The Union Minister, however, argued that tests for engine durability on a dynamometer and on-road vehicle tests have not shown any failures due to E20.

In a written reply to the Lok Sabha, Gadkari said E20 fuel provides better acceleration, improved ride quality and approximately 30 per cent lower carbon emissions compared to E10 fuel.

Gadkari said a study to evaluate the effect of E20 on BS-III, BS-IV and BS-VI E10 (Gasoline) two-wheelers and four-wheelers was carried out jointly by ARAI, SIAM and Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOCL).

He said the study comprised of standard testing as per the respective certification requirements & customized test protocols developed along with the



Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs).

"The fuel efficiency of vehicles may be reduced by 2 to 6 per cent depending on the vehicle category and vintage. The tests for engine durability on a dynamometer and vehicle tests on road have not shown any failures due to E20," the minister said.

The rollout of E20 petrol (80 per cent petrol, 20 per cent ethanol) has drawn criticism from opposition parties and some consumer groups, who have raised concerns about its impact on older vehicles not specifically designed for 20 per cent ethanol blends. Critics have questioned

whether all vehicles are fully compatible with E20, flagged the possibility of reduced fuel efficiency and higher maintenance costs, and sought clarity on liability if engine or fuel-system problems arise.

The government has maintained that the transition has been phased and backed by extensive testing, while automobile manufacturers have said they continue to honour warranty claims for vehicles using E20 fuel. Opposition parties have repeatedly sought greater transparency on vehicle compatibility and consumer safeguards.

Parliament approves bill to grant Vande Mataram same status as Jana Gana Mana

PTI

New Delhi, Jul 30: Parliament on Thursday passed a bill that makes any insult to the national song Vande Mataram a punishable offence with Lok Sabha clearing the legislation amid din, a day when the House also saw frequent disruptions due to unrelenting protests and sloganeering by the opposition over various issues.

The Prevention of Insults to National Honour (Amendment) Bill, 2026 was approved by the Lok Sabha by voice vote after a very short discussion where only two members spoke.

The bill was approved by Rajya Sabha on Wednesday.

The legislation will also grant status to Vande Mataram on par with national anthem Jana Gana Mana once it is assented by President Droupadi Murmu.

Responding to a brief debate in the Lower House, Minister of State for Home Nityananda Rai said the Congress should have given Vande Mataram its due respect during its 76 years of rule, but instead it resorted to appeasement politics.

The Narendra Modi government is now giving the national song the respect it deserves, he said.

"For Ek Bharat, Shreshthra Bharat, we need complete (all six stanzas) Vande Mataram song," Rai said, as he concluded his brief reply to the bill with a chant of Vande Mataram.

The Prevention of Insults to National

Honour Act currently prohibits intentionally preventing the singing of the national anthem (Jana Gana Mana), or causing disturbance to any assembly engaged in such singing.

These offences are punishable with imprisonment up to three years, a fine or both. A second and every subsequent conviction is punishable with imprisonment of a minimum of one year.

The Prevention of Insults to National Honour (Amendment) Bill, 2026, extends these provisions to the national song (Vande Mataram).

The amendments moved by the Opposition were rejected by the House. A Raja of the DMK later tore some document and threw it towards the Well.

Earlier, DMK member K Kanimozhi opposed the bill, saying it is a "Hindutva agenda" masquerading as nationalism.

"It is against federalism. You cannot impose nationalism by bringing a law, the song goes against the secularism of the country. The founding fathers had the wisdom to stop only with 2 stanzas, but today you are trying to polarise the country by making it compulsory and making it a criminal offence if we do not sing all the 6 stanzas," she said.

Sambit Patra of the BJP said the Congress in its 76 years of rule did not give Vande Mataram the respect it deserved as a national song.

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

Delhi Police won't take adverse action against CJP protesters: Govt order

PTI

New Delhi, Jul 30: The Delhi Police will not take any legal adverse action against individuals who participated in the Cockroach Janta Party-led protest in the national capital, but those with criminal background will have to face action, according to a Delhi government order.

In its order, the home department said that with regard to arrests or detentions, if already made, in these cases, the process for reviewing the arrests and releasing the arrested persons will be undertaken expeditiously.

"Government of NCT of Delhi does not propose to take any further adverse action against the individuals involved in the protests, and the matter shall be treated as closed without any future proceedings on this account," the home department said in its order.

It stated that no adverse legal action will be taken by any of the police authorities within NCT of Delhi against those persons who have been involved in these protests.

The protection, however, shall not extend to persons having criminal antecedents, as mandated in the recent order of Supreme Court, the order said.

Gold rises Rs 1,000 to Rs 1.48 lakh/10g on fresh retail buying

PTI

New Delhi, Jul 30: Gold prices climbed Rs 1,000 to Rs 1.48 lakh per 10 grams in the national capital on Thursday, driven by fresh buying by jewellers and retailers amid firm global trends.

The yellow metal of 99.9 per cent purity had closed at Rs 1,47,000 per 10 grams in the preceding session.

However, silver dropped by Rs 600 to Rs 2,24,700 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes) from Wednesday's closing level of Rs 2,25,300 per kg, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

Traders said domestic gold prices edged higher on improved demand from jewellers and stockists; however, a stronger rupee capped further gains.

"Gold advanced on Thursday amid a pullback in the US dollar following the Federal Reserve's latest policy announcement,



increasing demand for the precious metal," said Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst - Commodities at HDFC Securities.

He added that the dollar index hovered around the 101 level after declining nearly 1 per cent in the previous session.

In the international markets, spot gold traded marginally higher at USD 4,071.55 per ounce and silver rose 1 per cent to USD 58.25 per ounce.

"Spot gold holds steady

near USD 4,060 an ounce, silver near USD 57.5, as market participants digest the Fed's status quo ahead of US personal consumption expenditures inflation and jobless claims data later in the day," said Kaynat Chainwala, AVP Commodity Research at Kotak Neo (formerly Kotak Securities).

She noted that precious metals are likely to stay volatile and range-bound in the near term, with Thursday's growth,

labour and inflation numbers set to shape whether the case for a September move builds or eases, while traders will keep a watch on the trajectory of the US-Iran conflict for the medium-term outlook.

Meanwhile, India's gold demand fell 6 per cent year-on-year to 131.4 tonnes in April-June, weighed down by seasonally subdued sales, higher customs duty and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's appeal to reduce purchases of the precious metal.

The total demand stood at 139.7 tonnes during the corresponding period last year, the World Gold Council said in a report.

Further, global gold demand remained flat year-on-year at 1,269 tonnes in the April-June quarter. The total demand for the yellow metal was at 1,268.6 tonnes during the corresponding quarter of 2025.

'Cong's petty mindset': BJP condemns Kcharge's remarks against Shah in RS

PTI

New Delhi, Jul 30: The BJP on Thursday hit out at Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge over his remarks against Home Minister Amit Shah in Rajya Sabha, saying it was a reflection of his party's "petty mindset".

The ruling party's response came after Kharge held Shah responsible for alleged police brutalities on protesting students and said that "Jan Shakti" (people's power) will "drag him out" one day to make him accountable. Speaking on the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Amendment Bill, 2026 in the Upper House, the leader of opposition (LoP) in the Rajya Sabha also criticised the absence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Shah from the House, saying neither had spoken despite so much unrest.

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Selection process for next UN chief begins

AFP

New York, Jul 30: The UN Security Council began the process of selecting the UN's next secretary-general, holding a first "straw poll" to gauge the seven candidates' support for the high-profile global statesman role.

Four women and three men are so far in the running to succeed Antonio Guterres, who will complete his second five-year term on December 31, 2026.

They are Michelle Bachelet of Chile, Maria Fernanda Espinosa of Ecuador, Rafael Grossi of Argentina, Rebeca Grynspan of Costa Rica, Olara Otunnu of Uganda, Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett of Guyana, and Macky Sall of Senegal.

Although Grossi, the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, has arguably the best name recognition, observers believe that for now there is no clear favorite in the race that could last several months.

"It's an important start to the process. It's important (we) select the best candidate," said Pakistan's ambassador to the UN Asim Ahmad as he arrived for the gathering.

Diplomats are reluctant to predict the outcome of the race because of the sway of the five permanent members of the Security Council — the United States, Russia, China, France, and the United Kingdom — which have not yet indicated their preferences.

"Your guess is as interesting



as mine," said one senior diplomat at the UN.

Even if a candidate bags the required nine votes from the 15 available in the Security Council, they must also avoid a veto by the five major powers, which are deeply divided.

Once a candidate clears those bars, their name will go to the General Assembly of all UN members for confirmation.

On Thursday, the Council's 15 members were meeting behind closed doors to test the waters with the first "straw poll," devised in the early 1980s in an attempt to break a deadlock between two candidates shut down by vetoes.

The informal mechanism has persisted, in various forms, in spite of criticism from countries opposed to the opaque process.

Time for a woman?

Each member state must

anonymously assign each candidate one of three labels: "encourage," "discourage," or "no opinion."

That would give those with no support the opportunity to withdraw — though they are not obliged. In the first round of a process expected to take several weeks, all ballots are the same color.

But after an unspecified number of votes, the ballots of the five permanent members will become a different color from those of the elected members, making it possible to identify potential vetoes, without knowing which country blackballed any given candidate.

"The straw polls may show that some candidates are just not viable, and allow them to bow out in a dignified manner," Richard Gowan of the International Crisis

Group told AFP.

"I would be surprised if any one candidate emerges with a decisive numerical advantage."

It is tradition that the UN's top job should rotate between different regions.

Under that premise, the role should go to a candidate from Latin America this time and there are many candidates from the region.

Panama's ambassador to the UN Eloy Alfaro de Alba said it was a priority that the winner be a woman from Latin America. Many states are also pushing for a woman to lead the UN for the first time.

Before this first vote, six of the candidates appeared for open public hearings held by the General Assembly, and private ones for the Council — with the exception of Olara Otunnu, who only recently announced his candidacy.

' Hamas moving toward Gaza disarmament deal'

AFP

Jerusalem, Jul 30: Palestinian Islamist movement Hamas is progressing toward a deal involving the decommissioning of its weapons, sources familiar with the ongoing talks with mediators in Cairo told AFP on Thursday.

A Hamas source added, however, that they were still in the process of making amendments to the proposal.

The thorny issue of Hamas's disarmament has been one of the key sticking points in the advancement of the ceasefire deal that has been in place between Israel and the group in Gaza since October.

Under US President Donald Trump's 20-point peace plan for Gaza, the second phase of the ceasefire was to involve Hamas's disarmament and a gradual withdrawal of Israeli forces from the territory.

The plan also provides for a group of Palestinian technocrats, the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza (NCAG), to assume day-to-day governance during Gaza's transitional phase out of war.

"We continue to advance the implementation roadmap that offers a balanced and pragmatic path forward, with all weapons decommissioned and a phased transition of responsibilities taking place to hand over full authority to the technocratic government," a diplomatic source told AFP.

The source, who spoke on condition of anonymity as he was not authorized to speak publicly on the matter, said there would be "no exceptions for certain weapons



A Palestinian girl child lies on a damaged mattress at the site of Wednesday's Israeli strike on a house whose residents were pre-warned by the Israeli military to evacuate, in Gaza City. (Reuters)

or certain people. One authority, one law, one weapon."

The roadmap would create "a process for the elimination of all tunnels, depots of weapons and any weapons production facilities," the source said.

"All weapons, heavy and light, will be under full control of the NCAG in coordination with and with the support of the ISF," the source added, referring to the International Stabilization Force, a fledgling body envisaged to comprise multinational troops operating under Trump's Board of Peace.

The source said a verification mechanism would ensure compliance by each side.

A Hamas source familiar with the talks told AFP that the movement is "awaiting the Israeli response to the amendments

we recently submitted to the mediators."

The source said the amendments concerned two articles in the roadmap presented by the Board of Peace.

Regarding the article concerning weapons, the Hamas source said that "some points were removed, and alternatives were proposed."

"There is broad understanding on the definition of heavy weapons, and a formula has been developed that emphasizes the concept of restricting and storing heavy weapons, disbanding armed groups and a simultaneous Israeli withdrawal," the Hamas source added.

Despite the ceasefire, violence has continued in Gaza, with Israeli strikes killing at least four people including two children on Thursday, according to health officials.

Mandaviya assures continued support to shooters Neeru, Esha

PTI

New Delhi Jul 30: Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Thursday assured history-making trap shooter Neeru Dhandra and pistol ace Esha Singh of the government's continued support in their pursuit for excellence.

Neeru made history earlier this month by becoming the first Indian woman trap shooter to win a gold medal at an ISSF World Cup, achieving the milestone in Lonato, Italy.

Esha, a multiple medallist at the Asian Games and ISSF World Cups, continued her impressive rise on the international stage by winning the women's 25m pistol gold medal at the recently concluded ISSF World Cup in Hangzhou, China. The triumph marked her second World Cup gold in the event this year, further cementing her status as one of India's brightest shooting talents.

"The government is pushing hard and leaving no stone unturned to ensure you don't stay behind by any means in giving your best from every tournament," Mandaviya told the two athletes.

India sweep men's, women's team titles at Commonwealth TT C'ships

PTI

New Delhi, Jul 30: Manush Shah produced a heroic performance as India's men's team overcame a resilient Malaysia 3-2 in the final to lift the 22nd Commonwealth Table Tennis Championships title here on Thursday.

Earlier, the women's squad thrashed Malaysia without breaking a sweat, wrapping up the final with a 3-0 verdict at the Thyagaraj Stadium.

It was a tricky final for the men's team, especially after their loss to Malaysia in the league phase.

India left out Harmeet Desai from the lineup, while the Malaysians brought in their second player to play the third rubber.



The tie appeared headed for a comfortable Indian win after Manav Thakkar raced to a 2-0 lead over left-handed Qi Shen Wong in the fourth rubber. However, the Malaysian, ranked No. 204, staged a remarkable comeback to beat world No. 41 Manav 2-3 and level the contest at 2-2, leaving the title to be decided by the

fifth and final rubber featuring world No. 40 Manush Shah.

Manush, who had earlier beaten Wong in a five-game battle after recovering from a 4-7 deficit in the decider by winning seven straight points, carried that confidence into the decisive match. He dominated from start to finish against Javen Choong, securing

a comfortable straight-game victory to seal the gold medal for India.

Earlier, Sathiyana lost badly to Hong Yu Tey, including the third deuce game (10-12) of the third rubber after being just a game point away (10-8).

In the women's final, India blanked Malaysia 3-0.

Though she dropped a game after leading 2-1, Swastika did well to put India up.

Sreeja Akula, who has dropped to No. 67 in the world rankings since her selection into the Asian Games squad, led 2-1 before letting Karen level at 2-2, then wrap up quickly in the decider.

Then Yashaswini, who is now No. 64, put aside the first-game loss before mustering the courage to send Alice Lee Sian Chang 3-1.

Iran FM presses European counterparts over use of bases in US operations



REUTERS

Dubai, Jul 30: Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi urged Bulgaria to reconsider its decision to allow the temporary deployment of US military aircraft at the Bezmer air base, Iranian state media reported on Thursday.

During a phone call with his Bulgarian counterpart,

Velislava Petrova-Chamova, Araqchi said Sofia's approval of a US request to station military aircraft at the base to support military operations amounted to facilitating aggression against Iran, adding the move was unacceptable and contrary to the traditionally friendly relations between the two countries.

Iran has repeatedly warned countries allowing their territory to be used for US military operations against it that they could "face consequences."

Araqchi held a separate phone call with Cypriot Foreign Minister Constantinos Kombos, during which he stressed the importance of preventing foreign military bases in Cyprus from being used against Iran.

My favourite test batting partner: Kohli leads tributes as Rahane retires

Tendulkar hails 'remarkable career'

PTI

Mumbai, Jul 30: Star batter Virat Kohli on Thursday led the cricket fraternity in paying tribute to Ajinkya Rahane following his retirement from international cricket, describing him as his "favourite Test batting partner", while the legendary Sachin Tendulkar hailed him for never "chasing moments" during his career.

The 38-year-old Rahane announced his retirement from all formats three years since making his last appearance for India, having played an overall 85 Tests, 90 ODIs and 20 T20Is from 2011-2023.

Kohli and Rahane had 10 century stands and 19 fifty plus partnerships while playing Tests for India. Their best stand was 365 against New Zealand at Indore where Kohli struck 211 and Rahane notched up his career-best 188.

"Jinks, congratulations on a great career, buddy. You've done wonders for Indian cricket, and you can be very proud of your journey. The safest pair of hands in the slips and my favourite Test batting partner. Wishing you well always. God bless," Kohli wrote on X.

Tendulkar remembered the first time when he batted with a talented youngster while playing Ranji Trophy for Mumbai.

"Congratulations on a remarkable career. The first time we batted



together for Mumbai, I saw someone who never chased moments. They came to you because you were willing to do the hard yards for the team. That same quality defined your finest hour in Australia," Tendulkar wrote on his micro-blogging platform.

"You showed that composure isn't the opposite of aggression. It is often what gives a team the confidence to be fearless. Congratulations on a wonderful career! Wishing you and your family all the very best," the maestro further added.

Another Test stalwart Cheteshwar Pujara said the senior batter had a career he can be "incredibly proud of".

"Congratulations on a career you can be incredibly proud of, Ajinkya!," Pujara wrote on X.

"It has been an honour sharing the dressing room with you over the years; and building partnerships and memories on and off the field that will always fondly remember. Wishing you and the family the absolute best in this next chapter," he added.

The Indian cricket Board said Rahane's call to hang his boots ends an illustrious career.

"An illustrious career comes to an end. Thank you @ajinkyarahane88 for your immense contribution to Indian cricket and all the memories that will be cherished forever. Wishing you the very best in your next chapter," the BCCI wrote.

Former India opener Virender Sehwag hailed Rahane's resilient attitude on the field.

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FRIDAY • 31ST JULY

SPIDER-MAN BRAND NEW DAY
(HINDI)
(U/A 13+)

03:50 PM

SPIDER-MAN BRAND NEW DAY
(3D ENGLISH ATMCs
WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES)
(U/A 13+)

02:25 PM
05:20 PM
08:15 PM

SPIDER-MAN BRAND NEW DAY
(ENGLISH WITH
ENGLISH SUBTITLES)
(U/A 13+)

06:45 PM

THE ODYSSEY
(ENGLISH WITH
ENGLISH SUBTITLES)
(A)

02:45 PM
06:20 PM

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