



Future belongs to youth who see possibilities, not boundaries: LG Sinha

'World needs multi-disciplinary thinkers who can integrate knowledge across diverse fields'

KT News Desk

Jammu, Jul 31: Stating that the future belongs to youth who recognise possibilities, not boundaries, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Friday said that the world today demands multi-disciplinary thinkers who can integrate knowledge across diverse fields.

Addressing a gathering after inaugurating a series of groundbreaking academic programmes at Cluster University Jammu, LG Sinha, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, "These programmes will redefine the future of higher education in the region."

Terming the 'Design Your Degree' programme as a revolutionary step towards student-centric learning, LG Sinha said, "The world today demands multi-disciplinary thinkers who can integrate knowledge across diverse fields."

The Lieutenant Governor said, "The frontiers of knowledge



are continuously expanding. Problems are multidimensional, and their solutions are possible only through multi-disciplinary approaches. I believe that the 21st century will welcome those young people who are not specialists in just one subject but possess the ability to integrate knowledge from multiple fields and discover new solutions. The future belongs to those who recognise possibilities, not boundaries. This initiative empowers students

to shape their own academic journeys, combining subjects according to their interests, talents, and aspirations."

INAUGURATION MARKS LAUNCH OF INTEGRATED PROGRAMMES

The inauguration also marked the launch of integrated programmes in Physics, Chemistry, Botany, Zoology, Mathematics, and Geography.

The Lieutenant Governor underscored that science thrives on interconnectedness, and

these courses will nurture students as holistic researchers capable of addressing complex challenges.

"The study of climate change is not limited only to environmental science. Chemistry, physics, mathematics, geography and others play an equally important role. If we provide our students with a broader perspective from the very beginning, they will not become specialists in just one subject, but will emerge | More on P6

Our forces must be ready to tackle challenges of asymmetric warfare: LG

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Jul 31: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Friday interacted with the officers attending Higher Command Course - 55 at Army War College, Mhow.

In his address to the officers and faculty members of Army War College at Lok Bhavan, the Lieutenant Governor highlighted the pressing geopolitical and geo-strategic challenges of the present era, along with a comprehensive counter-terrorism strategy anchored in a "whole of government approach" aimed at dismantling the terror networks.

He said the transformation in Jammu Kashmir over past 6 years, is the result of a sustained commitment to rebuilding trust, enabling citizens to lead lives of their own choosing and restoring the dignity that had long been overshadowed by instability.

"I have consistently emphasized that governance cannot be managed from a distance.



Effective administration must reach out to every household in the most remote village and serve the most marginalized citizen, with unwavering dedication and responsibility," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor also noted that our forces must be ready to tackle the

challenges of asymmetric warfare. He said the strategic value of data analysis and algorithmic precision is as important as conventional kinetic operations today.

The Lieutenant Governor said that strong action has been taken with surgical firmness against the terror ecosystem | More on P6

Migrant worker killed, another injured in Kulgam terror attack

LG condemns, expresses solidarity with bereaved family

Directs security agencies to step up anti-terror ops, eliminate perpetrators

Umairsar Gul Ganaie

Kulgam, Jul 31: A migrant worker was killed and another injured in a terror attack in at Kelam village in South Kashmir's Kulgam district on late Friday evening. Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha condemned the dastardly attack and directed the security agencies to step up anti-terror operations and eliminate perpetrators.

An official told the news agency Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that terrorists opened fire at the migrant workers this evening. "One migrant worker died on the spot while another



sustained critical injuries. The injured was shifted to a nearby hospital, from where he has been referred to SKIMS Soura for specialised treatment," the official added.

The deceased was identified as Deepak Rattray, 24, son of Uma Shankar of Chattisgarh. The injured has | More on P6

Terrorists trained by Pak to target India have turned their guns towards their masters: MEA

Calls upon int'l community to hold Islamabad accountable for killing dozens of people in PoJK

Sajid Raina

New Delhi, Jul 31: Calling upon the international community to closely examine Pakistan's actions in Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir (PoJK), India on Friday said neighbouring country's political leadership has admitted that terrorists once trained and armed by the Pakistani state to target India have now turned against them.

Addressing the weekly media briefing, spokesperson of Ministry of External Affairs Randhir Jaiswal, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, "Islamabad has unleashed a



violent crackdown on civilians in PoJK and it should be held accountable for the deaths of more than 40 people during recent unrest in the region."

He said, "Pakistan's own political leadership has effectively admitted that terrorists once trained and armed by

the Pakistani establishment to target India have now turned against the Pakistani state."

Jaiswal said, "The Special Assistant to the Prime Minister of Pakistan on Political Affairs has openly acknowledged that the very Mujahideen whom the Pakistani establishment trained, funded, armed and sent to bleed India have now turned their guns inwards and are weaponising themselves against the state."

He alleged that Pakistan has used "ruthless force" against civilians in PoJK, where protests have intensified in recent weeks over rising prices, alleged administrative neglect, political | More on P6

Heavy rain triggers flash floods in Kashmir

MeT forecasts wet spell till Aug 7

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Jul 31: Heavy overnight rainfall triggered flash floods in parts of north Kashmir on Friday, inundating roads and a government school in Bandipora district, while the Meteorological Department forecast intermittent rain and thunderstorms across Jammu and Kashmir over the next week.

Officials told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that flash floods hit Saderkoot Bala in Bandipora, where muddy water entered the Government Primary School at Ganie Mohalla, Malpora, damaging classroom mats and forcing suspension of classes for the day.

In Baramulla district, flash

floods affected the Brennara area of Sopore town, though no loss of life or damage to property was reported. Authorities said the situation was being closely monitored.

Most parts of the Valley witnessed overnight rainfall, with significant precipitation recorded in Budgam, Baramulla and Bandipora districts.

According to the Meteorological Centre Srinagar, Srinagar received 24.6 mm of rainfall during the past 24 hours, while Jammu recorded 27.1 mm. Among other stations, Gulmarg received 9.6 mm, Pahalgam 6.4 mm, Kathua 6.8 mm, Katra 7.8 mm, Kupwara 2.2 mm and Qazigund recorded no rainfall.

The weather | More on P6

No shortage of fertilisers in J&K: Govt

Raja Syed Rather

Srinagar, Jul 31: The Centre on Friday said there is no shortage of fertilisers, including Urea, DAP, MOP and NPKS, in Jammu and Kashmir.

Responding to a starred question raised by Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra in the Lok Sabha regarding shortage of fertilisers, particularly DAP, Union Minister for Chemicals and Fertilizers Jagat Prakash Nadda, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said the government assesses state-wise and month-wise requirements before every cropping season and supplies fertilisers through monthly supply plans. | More on P6

Inclement weather, repair works Amarnath Yatra remains suspended from Baltal route

Around 4.5 lakh pilgrims pay obeisance since Jul 3

1,605 devotees leave Jammu in 24th batch

Umairsar Gull Ganie

Srinagar, Jul 31: The annual Amarnath Yatra remained suspended from the Baltal route on Friday due to inclement weather and ongoing repair work on the track, even as a fresh batch of 1,605 pilgrims left the Bhagwati Nagar Yatri Niwas in Jammu for the Baltal base camp.

Officials told the news



agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that the pilgrimage had already been suspended from the Pahalgam route to facilitate restoration and repair works. They said

the Baltal route was also closed on Friday as a precautionary measure in view of continuous rainfall since Thursday.

A senior government official told KNO that | More on P6

80% utilization mandatory before seeking balance funds: Finance Dept

Last quarter spending capped at 25% of budget estimates

KNO Special Correspondent

Jammu, Jul 31: In a significant move to regulate the release of balance budgetary allocations and expenditure during the last quarter of the financial year 2026-27, the Jammu & Kashmir Government on Friday ordered that balance allocation for any work will be released only after at least 80 percent of the funds already sanctioned have been utilized.

In a circular, a copy of which is in possession of news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the Finance Department directed that balance allocation for any work shall be released

only after at least 80 percent of the funds already released have been utilized, as reflected in BEAMS and Treasury accounts.

As per the circular, Administrative Departments must submit proposals for release immediately upon achieving the prescribed utilization.

The circular further states that for works included in the Annual Action Plan (AAP) 2026-27 that are completed, departments may seek release of the remaining funds up to 100 percent of the approved provision.

"Notwithstanding the above, where any work included in the Annual Action Plan (AAP)

2026-27 and uploaded on BEAMS has been completed and requires release of the balance allocation (up to 100 percent of the approved provision), the concerned Administrative Department/Executing Agency shall submit a specific requisition to the Finance Department. On verification, the Finance Department shall release the balance funds, subject to the condition that the corresponding bills shall be presented to the Treasury within 15 days from the date of such release. Failure to adhere to the prescribed timeline shall render the release liable to withdrawal by | More on P6

'Diplomatic efforts intensified to corner Pak for sponsoring cross border terrorism'

India's actions after Pahalgam terror attack recognised by several countries: Govts inform LS

Raja Syed Rather

Srinagar, Jul 31: The Government of India on Friday said it has intensified diplomatic efforts to build international pressure against cross-border terrorism emanating from Pakistan and secure greater accountability for terrorist networks and their supporters.

The issue, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), was raised in the Lok Sabha by Member Parliament Pratima



Mondal, who sought details of the measurable diplomatic outcomes achieved by

the Government in securing stronger international action against cross-border

terrorism, the framework guiding India's strategic autonomy while engaging with the US, Russia, Europe, BRICS and SCO, and the diplomatic initiatives taken in view of the strategic convergence between China and Pakistan and reported Chinese support to Pakistan during Operation Sindoor.

In response, Minister of State for External Affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh said the Government has been continuously sensitising other countries about cross-border

terrorism emanating from Pakistan during high-level and official visits.

He said India has established Joint Working Groups on Counter Terrorism with 31 countries and six multilateral groupings, where such issues are regularly discussed.

INDIA'S ACTIONS FOLLOWING PAHALGAM TERROR ATTACK RECOGNISED BY SEVERAL COUNTRIES

The Minister said India's actions following the Pahalgam terror attack on April 22, 2025 have | More on P6

J&K Govt notifies uniform building permission fee across urban areas

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Jul 31: In a significant reform aimed at streamlining the building permission process across Jammu and Kashmir, the Housing & Urban Development Department (HUDD) has notified a Uniform Building Permission Fee Schedule under the provisions of the Jammu & Kashmir Unified Building Bye-Laws, 2021, vide government order number 157-JK(HUD) of 2026.

The new fee schedule has come into force with immediate effect and will be applicable across all Urban Local Bodies and Development Authorities in the

Union Territory.

The notification introduces a single, standardized fee structure for building permissions, replacing the varying rates that were previously followed by different Municipal Corporations, Municipal Councils, Municipal Committees and Development Authorities. The reform aims to bring uniformity, transparency, predictability and ease of doing business while ensuring a more consistent and citizen-friendly regulatory framework for urban development.

As per the new rates, the fee has been fixed at 80 per sq. metre for | More on P6

VB-GRAM G

J&K Govt notifies agriculture pause periods to protect peak sowing, harvesting seasons

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, JULY 31: The Jammu and Kashmir Government has officially notified specific agricultural "pause periods" under the newly launched Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-GRAM-G), effectively halting public works during peak farming seasons to prevent labour shortages.

The move, as per an official statement, comes as the Union Territory transitions from the erstwhile MGN-REGA to the VB-GRAM-G.

According to the order issued by the Secretary, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Department, Mohammad Aijaz Asad, the pause schedules have been tailored to the distinct agro-climatic calendars of the Kashmir and Jammu divisions.

In the Kashmir Division, no new works will be commenced or executed during three key windows: April 26 to May 10 for Kharif sowing; May 25 to June 10 for Kharif transplanting and Rabi harvesting; and September 26 to October 23 for Kharif harvesting and Rabi sowing.

For the Jammu Division, the enforced pause will occur from April 15 to April 29 for Rabi harvesting; June 15 to June 29 for Kharif sowing and transplanting; and October 15 to



November 13 for Kharif harvesting and Rabi sowing.

The notification, issued under Sections 6(2) and 6(3) of the VB-GRAM-G Act, strictly bars the initiation or execution of scheme works during these windows. However, a carve-out allows the Government to undertake specific projects during the pause period if expressly permitted by the Government of India under Section 7 of the Act on grounds of public interest. This enforcement of a mandatory 60-day agricultural pause is a core feature of the newly notified Jammu Kashmir Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) Scheme, 2026, which was formally

rolled out on July 1st, 2026.

The Secretary said that the flagship programme enhances the guaranteed wage employment from the previous 100 days to 125 days annually for every eligible rural household willing to do unskilled manual work.

Aijaz Asad said that with the agricultural pause periods now legally defined, we are ensuring that our drive for rural infrastructure development does not come at the cost of farm productivity

"The transition to 125 days of work under VB-GRAM-G, coupled with technology-driven planning, marks a significant shift towards the vision of Viksit Bharat@2047," he said.

Film submission deadline for 1st IFFJK extended

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, JULY 31: The film submission deadline for 1st International Film Festival of Jammu and Kashmir (IFFJK) 2026 has been extended until 1st August, 2026 11:59 PM, to provide filmmakers final opportunity to register their entries for participation in the inaugural edition of the festival.

The IFFJK, organised by the Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR), is scheduled to be held from September 7 to 10, 2026. The festival aims to establish Jammu & Kashmir as a vibrant destination for cinema, creativity and cultural exchange while providing a prestigious platform for filmmakers from across the world to showcase their work.

The Festival, as per an official statement, is receiving tremendous response with more than 900 entries received from around 50 countries. This encouraging response from both national and international filmmakers underscores the growing confidence in Jammu & Kashmir as an emerging hub for film production, cinematic excellence and creative collaboration.

The four-day festival will feature screenings of selected films, interactive sessions, masterclasses, panel discussions and cultural engagements, offering opportunities for filmmakers, industry experts, students and cinema lovers to exchange ideas and explore new avenues of collaboration. The festival also aims to promote the culture of Jammu & Kashmir through Cinema, promote artistic excellence, cultural exchange, and cinematic innovation by exhibiting and recognising outstanding films from around the world.

The DIPR is planning a slew of activities to ensure participation from all stakeholders.

Pertinent to mention, the curtain raiser ceremony of the festival was held on July 17, 2026, inviting filmmakers, artists, producers and cinema enthusiasts from around the world to participate in the landmark event.

FDA takes enforcement action against unsafe Ghee, misbranded frozen meat

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, JULY 31: The Food & Drugs Administration (FDA), J&K has initiated enforcement action following the declaration of four Ghee samples, namely Dairy Mohan, Apna Dairy Milk, Sahi Taj, and Milk Bite, as unsafe by the National Food Laboratory, Ghaziabad.

Based on the laboratory reports, the Designated Officer, Food Safety, Anantnag, seized 1,250 litres of Ghee belonging to the affected batch numbers, valued at approximately 4.88 lakh, and issued a Prohibition Order under the provisions of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006. The sale and distribution of the affected batches have also been prohibited under Section 36(3)(b) read with Section 18(1)(f) of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006.

Further, Food Safety Teams in the Jammu Division, as per an official statement, conducted inspections, collected three additional samples of the affected Ghee brands, and forwarded them to NABL-accredited laboratories for analysis of quality and safety parameters.

During the inspections, 1,277 litres of Ghee, valued at approximately 4.97 lakh, were seized under the provisions of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, pending receipt of laboratory analysis reports.

In a separate enforcement action,

the Food Safety Team, Srinagar, conducted inspections of seven establishments dealing in meat and meat products. During the inspection, 2,600 kg of frozen meat, valued at approximately 5.98 lakh, was seized from an establishment at Bubghair, Kawadara, Srinagar, as the product was found to be misleading due to a mismatch between the contents of the package and the declarations made on the label, in violation of the labelling requirements prescribed under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 and the regulations. The frozen meat was also found to be stored under unsanitary conditions.

Accordingly, a complaint has been filed before the Additional Deputy Commissioner, Srinagar (Adjudicating Officer) under Section 61 of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, for furnishing false or misleading information or declarations, and under Section 56 for storing food under unhygienic or unsanitary conditions. Section 61 provides for a penalty of up to ₹10 lakh, while Section 56 provides for a penalty of up to ₹1 lakh.

The Food & Drugs Administration, J&K advises members of the public to remain vigilant and report the sale or availability of the prohibited Ghee batches or any suspected case of unsafe, adulterated, or misbranded food through the Toll-Free Helpline 104 or by email at cfsjandk.fnd@jk.gov.in.

VC JKLCMA reviews progress of Lake Conservation initiatives in J&K

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, JULY 31: The Vice Chairman (VC), Jammu & Kashmir Lake Conservation and Management Authority (JKLCMA), Khurshid Ahmad Shah, convened a review meeting Friday, to take stock of various ongoing activities and works being undertaken by the Authority for the conservation, protection and management of water bodies in Jammu & Kashmir.

All the officers of JK LCMA participated in the meeting.

During the meeting, as per an official statement, a detailed review of the progress of various ongoing works and field activities was undertaken. The Vice Chairman emphasized the need for time-bound execution, effective monitoring and regular field inspections to ensure that the objectives of lake and waterbody conservation are achieved in a coordinated and sustainable manner.

The meeting also reviewed measures being undertaken for the

protection of water bodies from encroachments, illegal constructions, dumping of solid waste, and discharge of untreated sewage. The concerned officers were directed to maintain close coordination with the field agencies and take prompt action wherever violations affecting the water bodies are noticed.

The progress of demarcation and clearance of encroachments, cleaning and maintenance of water channels, outlets and other associated works was also reviewed. The officers were directed to intensify field-level monitoring and ensure that cleared areas are protected from re-encroachment.

Issues relating to the 19 inlet channels coming from hinterlands came up for discussion. The Vice Chairman stressed the importance of ensuring proper functioning and maintenance of the regulatory gates installed on these inlet channels. It was desired that J&K PCC, in light of the directions of the Hon'ble High Court, shall be approached for banning the use of pesticides/chemicals by farmers along

the hinterlands and ultimately flowing into these inlet channels thereby deteriorating the water quality of the lake.

The functioning and maintenance of aerators, fountains and other lake conservation infrastructure were also reviewed. Directions were issued for early rectification of deficiencies and ensuring that such infrastructure remains operational and is properly maintained.

The Vice Chairman further stressed upon the officers to ensure regular submission of progress reports, proper documentation of works and close supervision of projects at the field level. The concerned officers were directed to adhere strictly to the timelines and submit updated status reports on the progress of works.

The Vice Chairman reiterated that conservation of the water bodies is a collective responsibility and called for sustained efforts, inter-departmental coordination and strict enforcement of applicable provisions to safeguard the fragile aquatic ecosystems of Jammu & Kashmir for future generations.

Sustainable Waste Management

Swachhta 50-50 launched in Bandipora to strengthen shared responsibility

KT News Desk

BANDIPORA, JULY 31: Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, Friday chaired the district-level convention marking the formal launch of the "Swachhta 50-50" initiative, a flagship campaign of the District Administration based on the principle of 50% Government and 50% Public participation for effective and sustainable solid waste management across the district, at the Conference Hall, Mini Secretariat Bandipora. The convention, as per an official statement, witnessed participation of Additional District Development Commissioner Bandipora, Nazir Ahmad Mir; PO ICDS Bandipora, Yaar Ali Khan; ACP Bandipora, Aijaz Ahmad; Chief Education Officer Bandipora; District Information Officer; Block Development Officers, and other stakeholders.

The programme



commenced with the National Anthem, followed by the Swachhta Pledge, which was administered by the students of Government Higher Secondary School Quilmuqam. Addressing the gathering, the Deputy Commissioner said that Swachhta 50-50 is a people's movement based on shared responsibility and called upon every stakeholder to work wholeheartedly to make the initiative a success. She said that the District Administration had already taken three major steps towards

scientific waste management and that Swachhta 50-50 marked the fourth step in this direction.

Highlighting the implementation strategy, the Deputy Commissioner announced that after a one-month handholding period, Bulk Waste Generators (BWGs) would be required to scientifically manage their own waste in accordance with the Solid Waste Management Rules, while the District Administration would continue to provide all necessary technical support and guidance. She said that

89 identified BWGs in the district account for a major share of waste generation and would be brought under this mechanism. She further informed that exhibitions would be organised to demonstrate scientific waste management practices and clarified that any issues relating to implementation in rural areas would be addressed through the Assistant Commissioner Panchayat, while concerns in urban areas would be handled by the concerned Municipal Committees.

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR. OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (R&B) DIVISION ZAINPORA NOTICE INVITING TENDERS

NIT No: - 35 /ZNP/RnB/e-Tendering/2026-27

Dated: - 30-07-2026

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, UT of J&K, STAGE e-tenders on %age basis/item rate basis(as the case may be)(In Single cover system) are invited for Consultancy services from Architects/Structural designers registered with council of Architects/ designers for following utilities of this Division.

S No.	Name of work	Advertised cost	Cost of Tender/ document (in Rupees)	Earnest Money (in Rupees)
1	Consultancy Services for different works of R&B Division Zainapora (Stage Tender) for the Year 2026-27.	1 % of advertised cost of the project (excluding cost of Contingencies, Electrical and Mechanical componenets).	300.00	10000.00

Funds Availability: Out of contingencies cost of project.

Project authority: PW(R&B) Department Kashmir

Terms and Conditions

- The bidding documents consisting of qualifying information, Eligibility criteria, specifications, bill of quantities (B.O.Q), set of terms and conditions of contract and other can be seen/downloaded from the Department websiteWWW.JKTenders.gov.in,
- The Consultancy tender has been floated to fulfill the Departmental exigency & shall not claim any preferential right to the consultant/ Bidder for award of Contract for a Particular Project. The Department reserves the right to float the separate Tender for a project involving Specific Technical expertise.
- The bidders are advised to quote their rates against the estimated rate i.e, 1 % of advertised cost of the project (excluding cost of Contingencies electric and mechanical components), which is treated as 100 in the BOQ and the quoted rates will be calculated accordingly.
- The Department reserves the right to cancel the consultancy tender in case of unsatisfactory performance by the Consultant without assigning any reasons thereof.
- Participation in the tender shall be subject to the bidder depositing the prescribed Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) and Tender Fee exclusively through the online payment gateway linked to the Centralized Designated Pooling Bank Account No. 0470010200000099, established for e-tendering purposes.
- This requirement is in pursuance of the instructions contained in Finance Department Circular No. FD-Code/290/2026 dated 22.05.2026 and endorsed by the Chief Engineer, PW(R&B) Department, South Kashmir, vide Endorsement No. CE/R&B/SK/WS/2095-2111 dated 05.06.2026, as amended from time to time. Accordingly, submission of EMD in the form of Fixed Deposit Receipt (FDR), Term Deposit Receipt (TDR), Call Deposit Receipt (CDR), Bank Guarantee (BG), or any other offline/physical instrument shall not be accepted and such bids shall be treated as non-responsive.
- The bidder shall ensure that the requisite EMD and Tender Fee are successfully remitted through the prescribed online mode on or before the bid submission deadline. Any bid not accompanied by proof of successful online payment of the prescribed EMD and Tender Fee within the stipulated time shall be liable to rejection at the technical evaluation stage without any further notice.
- The Successful bidder will have to provide performance security equal to Rs. 25000/- in cash to the designated authority/Account which shall be released after successful completion of the contract.
- To safeguard against a bidder's withdrawing or altering its bid during the bid validity period in the case of advertised or limited tender enquiry, Bid Security (also known as Earnest Money) is to be obtained from the bidders except Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) as defined in MSE Procurement Policy issued by Department of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) or are registered with the Central Purchase Organization or the concerned Ministry or Department, or Startups as recognized by Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT). The same MSME Registration Certificate shall be accompanied with the bid.
- The bidding documents consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, bill of quantities, set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the Department websiteWWW.JKTenders.gov.in.
- The Technical bids uploaded on the website shall be opened on the due date. In case of holiday or office happens to be closed on the date of opening of the bids, the bids will be opened on the next working day at the same time andvenue.
- Bids must be accompanied by a Bankers pay receipt of Tender fee (dated between the bid start date and the Bid Submission End date) deposited in the Centralized Designated Pooling Bank Account No. 0470010200000099 as the cost of the tender document. Note: - The Date of Bankers pay receipt of Tender fee and EMD must be between the date of start of bid and Bid Submission End date. Any deviation shall render the bidder as Non-responsive.
- Critical Dates: -

1.	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	30-07-2026
2.	Period of downloading of bidding documents	30-07-2026 06:00 PM to 10-08-2026 up to 6:00 P.M
3.	Bid submission Start Date	30-07-2026 06:00 PM
4.	Bid Submission End Date	10-08-2026 up to 6.00 P.M
5.	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	11-08-2026 at 01:00 PM in the Office of the Executive Engineer, (R&B) Division Zainapora.

12. Instructions to bidders regarding e-tenderingprocess:

- Bidders are advised to download bid submission manual from the download option as well as from bidders manual kit on websiteWWW.JKTenders.gov.in to acquaint bid submission process.
- To participate in bidding process, bidders have to get Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) as per Information Technology Act 2000. Bidders can get DSC from any approvedvendors.
- The bidders have to submit their bids online in electronic format with DigitalSignature.
- No financial bid will be accepted in physicalform.
- Bids will be opened online as per time schedule mentioned asabove.
- Bidders must ensure to upload scanned copy of all necessary documents.
- All bidders shall upload the following information and documents along with qualification criteria / eligible criteria with their bids: -
 - Registration certificate approved by Counsel of Architects/Structural designers.
 - All bidders shall upload receipt of tender fee (to be deposited in Centralized Designated Pooling JK Bank Account Bearing No: 0470010200000099, IFSC: JAKAOLALANG).
 - All bidders shall upload the receipt of Earnest Money Deposit (to be deposited in Centralized Designated Pooling JK Bank Account Bearing No: 0470010200000099, IFSC: JAKAOLALANG).
 - All bidders shall upload Valid GSTIN Registration & PAN Card.
 - All bidders shall upload Scanned Copy of GSTIN Registration and latest clearance certificate FORM GSTR-3B of latest quarter (April-June 2026-27) / proceeding month (June 2026) to issuance of NIT.
 - An affidavit of not being black listed.
 - The applicant must have been awarded / designed and successfully completed at least one similar nature of work of the value of Rs 2.50 Crore, or morein the last 5 years ending 12/2024.

NOTE: The "sum in dispute" shall refer to the aggregate of all the disputed amounts, both the claim(s) amount plus the counter claim(s) amount.

No: R&B/ZNP/DIV/NIT/2410-19
Dt: 30-07-2026

DIPK-3954/26
DATED: 31-07-2026

Sd/-
(Er. Shabir Ahmad Tak)
Executive Engineer
R&B Division Zainpora

‘India’s highest power loss stays in Kashmir’

Tops AT&C losses chart for 3rd year; one third of electricity vanishes

Riyaz Bhat

Srinagar, Jul 31: The power distribution company of Kashmir has recorded the highest electricity losses in India for the third consecutive year, with more than one-third of all power it handles vanishing before reaching consumers.

The official figures revealed that in the Financial Year (FY) 2025, Jammu and Kashmir was reeling under 33.54 percent of Aggregate Technical and Commercial (AT&C) losses against the national average of 15.04 percent. The local Discom, Kashmir Power Development Corporation Limited (KPDCL) had recorded a AT&C loss of 59.59 percent in FY23 against a target of 54 percent.

The figures further said that the AT&C had improved to 51.98 percent in FY24 against a target of 44 percent. However, the house was informed that the losses further declined to 33.54 percent in FY25 against the target of 44 percent.

In the FY26, KPDCL has set a target to fix the AT&C losses 34 percent. Earlier this year,



the Power Development Department (PDD) has directed the JPDCL and KPDCL to initiate strict actions including deducting up to 50 percent of salary against the officials of divisions and feeders where Aggregate Technical and Commercial (AT&C) losses exceed 40 percent.

Besides, the department had issued the revised Load Curtailment Plan (LPC) with extra hours of power shedding to the areas having AT&C losses of more than 40 percent and between 15 percent and 40 percent respectively.

PDD in an official communique had said that the measures are being taken in order to improve billing efficiency, collection efficiency and to reduce AT&C losses.

Stating the revision of Load Curtailment Plan (LPC), PDD had informed the current plan may be revised by imposing no power cut on feeders having AT&C losses below 15 percent.

“Three hours power cut instead of the present scheduled cut of two hours on feeders having AT&C losses between 15 percent

and 40 percent and six hours power cut instead of the present power cut of four hours on feeders having AT&C losses above 40 percent for both Kashmir and Jammu divisions,” it reads.

PDD further said that JKPCL shall explore other options, including entering into additional banking arrangements with other states for the period January 2026 to March 2026 in order to curtail the power purchase bill.

Under the accountability of underperforming divisions and sub-divisions, the DISCOMs, the JPDCL KPDCL were asked to serve show-cause notices to all divisions and sub-divisions and feeders found to be under performing that is where AT&C losses exceed 40 percent, under intimation to the Administrative Department.

“Further, action may be initiated for deduction of 50 percent of salary of the concerned officers or the officials of such divisions, sub-divisions or feeders,” the order issued by PDD earlier this year said—(KNO)

CS launches 162 new online citizen services on eUNNAT

KT News Desk

Srinagar, July 31: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo on Friday held a meeting of all the concerned Administrative Secretaries to assess Jammu and Kashmir's performance on the National e-Governance Service Delivery Assessment (NeSDA) and reviewed the progress made by the Information Technology Department towards expanding the digital governance ecosystem across the Union Territory.

During the meeting, the Chief Secretary launched 162 district-level online citizen services, developed by the Information Technology Department, which have now been integrated with the eUNNAT Portal, taking the total number of online Government-to-Citizen (G2C) services available on the platform from 1,548 to 1,710.

The newly added services, developed for 18 districts of the Union Territory, encompass a wide range of regulatory permissions and public services, including permissions for fairs and exhibitions, cultural programmes, political and religious gatherings, processions, drone operations and several other district-level services.

These services are now available through a completely digital, paperless and workflow-based platform, enabling citizens to apply online, monitor the status of their applications and receive digitally signed approvals without visiting Government offices.



Emphasising continuous improvement, the Chief Secretary directed all Administrative Departments to ensure timely compliance with all mandatory NeSDA parameters and work in close coordination with the Information Technology Department for digitisation of additional public services.

The Chief Secretary also directed the Information Technology Department to work in close coordination with the Law Department to undertake a comprehensive review of all online citizen services with a view to identifying those that have become redundant or obsolete in view of subsequent policy and legislative reforms.

He observed that, under the Government's Ease of Doing

Business (EoDB) and Reducing Compliance Burden (RCB) initiatives, several certificates, permissions and No Objection Certificates (NOCs) had already been abolished. Such services, he said, should no longer remain active on digital platforms, as their continued availability may lead to avoidable inconvenience for citizens.

Dulloo further maintained that the objective of digital governance is not merely to place services online but also to simplify governance by eliminating outdated and unnecessary compliances. He remarked that citizens, in no way, should be compelled to apply for certificates or permissions that are no longer required under the prevailing policy framework.

He advised that such services be appropriately categorised as 'No Longer Required' on the eUNNAT Portal after due legal validation. He expressed that our objective is not merely to improve rankings but to build an ecosystem where digital governance must translate into better governance at the grassroots level.

Emphasising greater accessibility and inclusive service delivery, the Chief Secretary further instructed the IT Department to identify at least 100 high-volume citizen services for integration with WhatsApp and the Single Sign-On (SSO) platform. He said that priority should be accorded to services frequently availed by farmers, tribal communities, women, children and

other vulnerable sections to make Government services more accessible through widely used digital channels.

He further called for the integration of emerging digital public assets, including AgriStack-enabled digital land records and SVAMITVA Property Cards, as and when these are operationalised by the concerned departments, observing that the eUNNAT platform should continuously evolve into a comprehensive, future-ready digital service delivery ecosystem.

Speaking during the meeting, Additional Chief Secretary, Finance, Shailendra Kumar, stressed that the success of

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LG Sinha meets The Asian School students

Meets TV veteran Siddharth Kak



KT News Desk

Jammu, July 31: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Friday met the students of The Asian School Jammu, at Lok Bhavan.

Interacting with the young students, the Lieutenant Governor commended their enthusiasm and dedication, and conveyed his best wishes for their academic and future endeavours.

The visit was a part of the school's curriculum-based educational outreach programme aimed at exposing young minds to governance

institutions and instilling core civic values.

The students were accompanied by Ankush Mahajan, Chairman and Atul M. Saxena, Principal of the school.

In the meantime, Siddharth Kak, film-maker and television presenter called on Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and discussed various important matters pertaining to protection and promotion of Heritage sites of the Union Territory.

Kak also presented his book titled "A Fire over Mount Everest" to the Lieutenant Governor.

373 Jan Aushadhi Kendras operational in J&K: GoI



RAJA SYED RATHER

Srinagar, Jul 31: A total of 373 Jan Aushadhi Kendras (JAKs) were operational across 20 districts of Jammu and Kashmir as on June 30, 2026, the Centre informed the Lok Sabha on Friday.

The figures were provided by Union Minister of State for Chemicals and Fertilisers Anupriya Patel in reply to an unstarred question on the number of operational Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Jan Aushadhi Kendras across the country, including district-wise details.

According to the district-wise data furnished by the government, Jammu has the highest number of Jan Aushadhi Kendras in J&K at 85, followed by Srinagar with 37 and Anantnag with 34. Budgam and Pulwama have 23 each, while Baramulla has 21 and Samba 20.

The data further shows that Kulgam has 16 JAKs, Kathua and Kupwara 13 each, Poonch and Rajouri 12 each, Udhampur 10, Shopian 9, and Bandipora, Ganderbal,

Ramban and Reasi have eight each. Doda has seven JAKs, while Kishtwar has six. At the national level, the Centre said 20,149 Jan Aushadhi Kendras had been opened under the Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Jan Aushadhi Pariyojana till June 30, 2026. During the financial year 2025-26, the scheme recorded sales of Rs 2,252.19 crore, resulting in estimated savings of approximately Rs 9,000 crore for citizens.

The government said district-wise sales data is not maintained by the Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices Bureau of India (PMBI), the implementing agency of the scheme.

On expansion, the Centre said PMBI has partnered with the cooperative sector to open Jan Aushadhi Kendras through Primary Agriculture Cooperative Credit Societies. As of June 30, 2026, 846 such centres had been opened across the country and more than 4,250 PACS had received initial approval to open JAKs.

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Highway closure traps hundreds of fruit-laden trucks



Umair Gull Ganie

Qazigund, Jul 31: Hundreds of fruit-laden trucks remained stranded at several locations along the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway on Friday following the suspension of traffic for restoration works, with drivers urging the authorities to reopen the road at the earliest to prevent losses to growers and transporters.

The Jammu-Srinagar National Highway, the only all-weather road linking Kashmir with the rest of the country, remained closed on Friday to facilitate restoration and slope stabilisation works on vulnerable stretches, leaving hundreds

of goods vehicles stranded at different locations on both sides of the highway.

The stranded drivers said that most of the vehicles were carrying fresh apples and other perishable produce to markets outside Jammu and Kashmir.

"We are carrying fruit-laden trucks, and the shelf life of the produce is very limited. If the highway remains closed for long, the fruit will start deteriorating, which will lead to heavy financial losses for growers as well as transporters," Mohammad Ashraf, a truck driver, said.

He said the uncertainty over the reopening of the highway was adding to their concerns. "We have been waiting for

hours without any clear information on when traffic will resume. Every passing hour reduces the quality of the fruit, and we fear the consignment may not fetch a good price in the market," he said.

Another driver said the timely transportation of apples is crucial during the harvesting season and appealed to the administration to prioritise the movement of fruit-laden trucks once the highway is declared safe.

"We understand that restoration work is important, but the highway should be reopened as soon as possible to save the fruit. Any further delay will cause huge losses because

these are perishable goods," another driver said.

He added, "We don't understand why the highway maintenance work is always taken up during the peak apple season. Thousands of fruit-laden trucks use this road at this time of the year. If the work had to be carried out, it could have been planned before or after the season. Every day's delay means huge losses for growers and transporters because the fruit has a limited shelf life."

The drivers appealed to the administration and the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) to expedite restoration

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Growers fear repeat of last year's transportation crisis

Jahangeer Ganaie

Pulwama, Jul 31: With the peak apple harvesting season approaching, orchardists and fruit traders across Kashmir have expressed serious concern over the condition and frequent disruptions on the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway (NH-44), fearing a repeat of last year's transport crisis that caused massive losses to the Valley's horticulture sector.

Growers said that recent closures have revived memories of last year's ordeal when thousands of fruit-laden trucks remained stranded for days, resulting in widespread damage to produce and huge financial losses.

Horticulture is regarded as the backbone of Kashmir's economy, providing livelihood to lakhs of families directly and indirectly, making uninterrupted road connectivity crucial during the marketing season.

Growers said the success of the season depends not only on a good crop but also on timely transportation of apples to markets across the country, warning that even brief delays can affect fruit quality, reduce market prices, and increase transportation costs.

"We are still recovering from the losses suffered last year. If the same situation is repeated this season, people in Kashmir

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EDITORIAL

J&K Needs Safer Roads

The numbers tell a painful story. Jammu and Kashmir recorded 1,109 highway accidents in 2026. In these accidents, 206 people lost their lives, and 1,658 others were injured. Behind every single number is a grieving family, a lost future, and a community in mourning. While the decline in accidents from 2,378 in 2022 to 1,109 this year is a positive sign, we cannot ignore the

lives that continue to be lost. What makes these numbers even more disturbing is the age of the victims. Seventeen of those who died were children below 18 years. Another 25 were young people between 18 and 25 years of age. Forty victims were between 25 and 35 years old. These are our young people, our future. Their loss is not just a personal tragedy for their families but a loss for the

entire society and economy of the region. The government has taken some steps. The PM-RAHAT scheme provides free treatment to accident victims, and 472 claims have been filed in J&K so far. However, only 43 of these claims have been settled. This shows that while the scheme exists, its implementation on the ground needs improvement. The national figures are even more alarming.

Across India, 77,234 accidents on National Highways claimed 34,610 lives in 2026 alone. These numbers point to a crisis that needs urgent attention. The decline in accidents over the years is encouraging, but the sharp rise in fatalities in 2025 and the drop in 2026 raise many questions. We need to understand why these fluctuations are happening. The government has advised states to set up

more hospitals near accident-prone areas. This is a good step, but much more is needed. Better roads, stricter traffic rules, public awareness, and faster emergency response are not just options—they are must-haves. Every road death is a tragedy that could have been prevented. It is time we stop looking at numbers and start saving lives. The cost of doing nothing is far too high.

Arabs And Israelis Need To Get Over 20th-Century Problems

It is a waste of time to keep relitigating whether each decision, each rejected plan, each declared state, was right or wrong. What happened, happened. It is what it is.

Nadim Shehadi

Some of the best minds of the last century have tried and failed to find a solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. I want to suggest that the answer lies with a new historical perspective and a revised narrative. The aim this time would not be to solve the problem but to place it in the context of one of the darkest periods of modern history, roughly the first half of the 20th century. Both peoples are survivors of that period, not only aggressors against each other, and recognizing that is the reframing I am suggesting.

The events of Oct. 7 and its aftermath brought out the worst brutality in the region, and the conflict with Iran is ongoing and may get worse. Of the two sides in that confrontation, one led by the Gulf states wants peace, while the other led by Iran thrives on war. But Oct. 7 also pointed to the obvious conclusion that peace is the only choice left and that this has to be the final war. There is a heavy legacy to get over on all sides and they should simply get over it. The second half of the 20th century was not much better.

In his essay collection "The Politics of Dispossession," the Palestinian American academic Edward Said discussed how Palestinians inevitably relate every aspect of their lives and history to the loss of Palestine.

Israeli New Historians, such as Avi Shlaim, Ilan Pappé, Shlomo Sand, and Benny Morris, have gone a long way toward criticizing and reevaluating the history of Zionism and the creation of Israel. They are a good example to follow. Many Palestinian and Arab intellectuals — the most radical of whom was the late Fouad Ajami — are moving in that direction,



Ahmad Gharabli – AFP

too. Historians of Palestine have also done detailed and often critical work, particularly of the Palestine Liberation Organization. But I want to suggest taking this a step further by taking a step back and looking at the global historical perspective.

Both Israelis and Palestinians are victims of various versions of nationalism that were the product of the late 19th century. The idea that nation states should have a certain degree of homogeneity of population and a uniform identity triggered tragic transformations. Four empires collapsed in this period, ending a more cosmopolitan order that

had prevailed in cities such as Vienna and Istanbul. Three of these — Russian, Ottoman, Austro-Hungarian, and German — fell during the First World War. The fourth, the British Empire, though victorious, took longer to fall, finishing the job after the Second World War with the withdrawal from India in 1947 and from Palestine in 1948. Palestine is not a separate story from India and Pakistan; it was the end of an era.

The forces were structural — ideas about nationhood, empires giving way, populations reshuffled to fit a new template. But the decisions inside that structure were made by

fallible people, often in the heat of the moment, without a clear plan and without being able to see the consequences that followed. We now have the benefit of hindsight that none of those decision-makers had. That is why it is a waste of time to keep relitigating whether each decision, each rejected plan, each declared state, was right or wrong. What happened, happened. It is what it is.

Mass population movements took place so often in the first half of the 20th century that they almost became normal, and were even written into treaties. Jews escaped pogroms in the Russian empire; Armenians, Assyrians, Chaldeans, and Kurds survived genocide in the Ottoman empire; Greece and Türkiye exchanged populations by treaty; and India and Pakistan did the same at even greater scale.

Zionism itself was mostly rejected by Jews when first proposed by Theodore Herzl in the late 19th century. The Arab inhabitants of Palestine were not originally hostile to Jewish immigration, but there was no way such numbers could be absorbed without friction. If the partition plan was a mistake, rejecting it may have been another. Palestinian nationalism did not even exist at the time; it emerged as a reaction to both Zionism and to the treatment of Palestinians by Arab regimes, and made its own mistakes, too, alienating Jordanians, Lebanese, Iraqis, Kuwaitis and Syrians along the way.

The expulsion of Palestinians from their homes and villages was one of the tragedies of that half-century, and no version of that story, the Nakba, makes it in any way acceptable or less tragic. It happened at the tail end of the same imperial unwinding — the collapse of the British Empire in both India and

Palestine.

Perhaps the answer is simpler than it looks. So far, the approach has been to solve the problems first and reach peace at the end. This has proved impossible, and it makes the whole process easy for spoilers to sabotage. In a mutual-blame setup, you have to fix the problems — refugees, borders, Jerusalem, return — before you are allowed to make peace, and each of those is easily blocked. Reverse the order instead.

Recognize the problems as real, but as the legacy of ideas, circumstances, and choices particular to that period — not a debt one side owes the other. There is no ledger left to settle, only a shared history to get over together. It is the will for peace that is important, and once that is established the details become much easier to deal with.

History has no overall plan. The stage we are at is the result of an accumulation of choices made inside constraints that often left little room for anything else, not the unfolding of some design that was always going to end here. What matters now is recognizing that we are recovering from the consequences of an awful period of history in which there are nothing but victims, and moving on rather than relitigating how we got here. There is also a past to look forward to. The region knew coexistence for most of the Ottoman period — Jews, Christians, and Muslims living together, not as an aspiration but as a documented fact. The culture of the Levant before the importation of these ideas was cosmopolitan and tolerant of diversity, and that is the precedent worth reclaiming.

Nadim Shehadi is an economist and political adviser. X: @Confusezeus. Courtesy: Arab News

Affordable Nutrition For Every Indian: Jan Aushadhi Nutraceuticals

Press Information Bureau

In an increasingly health-conscious India, nutraceuticals have gained recognition as an essential part of overall well-being. Be it for school-going children or senior citizens, dietary supplements—including vitamins and minerals, herbs and botanicals, probiotics, and other formulations—have found wide acceptance. Yet, affordability continues to be a challenge for millions of families seeking nutritional supplements.

The Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP) is addressing this gap with its nutraceutical basket. From nutrition bars to disease-specific formulations, the Jan Aushadhi nutraceutical basket is making nutrition supplements more accessible to people across India.

Nutrition For Diverse Needs

The Jan Aushadhi portfolio is designed to respond to the varied needs of the young, the elderly, women, and people with different health issues. The range includes protein supplements, immunity products, nutritional foods, and specialised formulations for individuals with specific dietary requirements. Manufactured in accordance with prescribed quality standards and offered at affordable prices, these products aim to make regular nutritional support more accessible without placing an undue burden on household budgets.

Convenient Nutrition For Active Lifestyles
Nutrient-dense Jan Aushadhi Protein Bars and Jan Aushadhi Immunity Bars offer a portable source of nourishment for children, working professionals, and fitness enthusiasts. Available in chocolate flavour



in a 35-gram pack, the protein bar provides a convenient way to supplement daily protein intake while on the go. Enriched with immunity-supporting ingredients, the tasty Immunity Bar provides energy and strengthens the body's protective barriers. These nutrition bars offer an economical alternative for consumers craving a quick snack but averse to junk food.
For a more substantial protein

supplement, 100% Whey Protein Powder and Jan Aushadhi Protein Powder support daily protein intake and muscle recovery, making them suitable for fitness enthusiasts. Protein Powder is available in Vanilla and Kesar Pista flavours, giving consumers greater choice.

Supporting Women's Nutritional Needs
Women have distinct nutritional requirements at different stages of life. Jan Aushadhi

Women Protein Boost is formulated to support daily protein intake, energy levels, and healthy bones and muscles. Available in chocolate and vanilla flavours, the 250-gram pack is priced at 204.66. By offering specialised nutrition at affordable rates, this product seeks to make it easier for more women to incorporate nutritional supplementation into their daily routines.

Nutrition Designed For Specific Health Needs

For individuals managing specific health conditions such as diabetes or kidney problems, dietary requirements can be more complex. Diabetes Care Protein Powder from Jan Aushadhi complements the nutritional requirements of people living with diabetes. For individuals with kidney-related conditions, Renal Care Protein Powder is available in both Low Protein and High Protein variants, allowing the choice of formulation to be guided by medical advice and individual dietary needs.

Jan Aushadhi Poshan: Everyday Nutrition For Families

For affordable everyday nutritional support for everyone in the family, the Jan Aushadhi Poshan range offers malt-based nutritional food enriched with essential vitamins and minerals.

Available in regular malt and cocoa variants, the range includes:

- Malt Based Food, 500 g: 160.17
- Malt Based Food with Cocoa, 500 g: 164.62
- Malt Based Food with Cocoa Sachet, 30 g: 8.90

The multiple pack sizes offer flexibility for different consumption needs and budgets.

Easy to prepare and suitable for regular consumption, the Poshan range provides families with an accessible nutritional supplement for everyday use.

Making Quality Nutrition More Accessible

These products highlight the growing importance of nutrition as part of a broader approach to health management. While specialised nutritional products should be used in accordance with professional medical and dietary guidance, affordable access can help make appropriate nutritional support more attainable for families.

For overall well-being, lifestyle choices that include quality nutrition cannot be stressed enough. Families are increasingly opting to make healthy choices when it comes to food and nutrition supplements. By offering affordable alternatives to expensive branded nutrition supplements through the Jan Aushadhi Kendra network, PMBJP is ensuring that quality nutritional support is not limited by income.

Affordable medicines remain the core of PMBJP, but nutrition is an essential part of the same larger health journey. Whether it is a student seeking convenient nourishment, a working professional managing a demanding routine, a homemaker supporting family nutrition, a senior citizen with specific dietary needs, or an individual managing a health condition, access to appropriate nutrition can play an important role in supporting well-being.

By combining quality, affordability, and accessibility, the Jan Aushadhi nutraceutical range is helping make nutrition a more attainable choice for Indian families, reinforcing the vision of "Quality Healthcare and Nutrition for All."

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

Rana expresses concern over declining availability of quality willow timber

Calls for revival of willow cultivation to sustain Kashmir’s cricket bat industry

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, JULY 31: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, Friday directed the concerned departments to launch a coordinated drive to revive willow cultivation across Kashmir and expand plantations to ensure a sustainable supply of quality timber for the cricket bat industry.

The directions, as per an official statement, were issued during a high-level review meeting convened to deliberate upon the challenges confronting the willow sector and to formulate a long-term roadmap for its revival and growth.

The meeting was attended by Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, J&K, Sarvesh Rai; Chief Conservator of Forests, Kashmir, Irfan Rasool Wani besides senior officers of the Forest Department and other concerned departments.

Addressing the meeting, the Minister observed that Kashmir occupies a unique position as the country’s only source of the specialised willow wood used for manufacturing cricket bats, making the region the national hub of the cricket bat industry. He said that hundreds of manufacturing units, predominantly located in south Kashmir’s Anantnag district, provide direct and indirect employment to thousands of people engaged



in willow cultivation, timber trade and bat manufacturing.

Rana expressed concern over the declining availability of quality willow timber, describing it as one of the biggest challenges confronting the cricket bat industry. He attributed the shortage to the indiscriminate felling of mature willow trees without adequate replantation, resulting in uncertainty in raw material supply and increased production costs for local manufacturers.

“The declining availability of willow timber is a matter of serious concern. Expansion of plantations, introduction of improved willow clones and systematic replantation must become a priority so that the industry continues to flourish without facing any shortages of raw material,” Rana asserted.

The Minister also noted that the area under willow

plantations has witnessed a steady decline, particularly on private lands, owing to changing land-use patterns. He stressed that unless timely corrective measures are taken, the long-term sustainability of the industry could be adversely affected.

He called upon the Forest Department to identify suitable low-lying and marshy areas across the Valley for expanding willow plantations, in coordination with the Deputy Commissioners.

It was decided that the State Forest Research Institute (SFRI) will introduce improved willow species and clones and ensure the availability of quality planting material to enhance productivity and sustainability.

“Our objective is to build a self-sustaining willow cultivation ecosystem through scientific management, quality

planting material, identification of new plantation areas and greater farmer participation. This will secure livelihoods while preserving Kashmir’s unique position as the country’s cricket bat manufacturing hub,” asserted the Minister.

The Agriculture Department was directed to identify the departmental farms and research blocks for raising quality willow planting material to support large-scale plantation drives.

The meeting also deliberated upon scientific management and expansion of government willow plantations, timely disposal of mature and over-mature trees to augment raw material availability, streamlining of the permission system for felling and transportation of willow timber, branding and Geographical Indication (GI) tagging for Kashmir willow bats. Emphasis was also laid on stronger coordination among the Forest, Agriculture, Industries & Commerce, MSME and allied departments to prepare a long-term roadmap for the sector.

Rana directed the concerned departments to work in close coordination and submit a time-bound action plan for implementation of the decisions taken. He stressed that revival of willow resources is vital not only for the cricket bat industry but also for the livelihoods of thousands of families dependent on it.

40 Trainee Civil Judges visit FSL Srinagar for exposure to Forensic Science

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, JULY 31: A batch of 40 trainee Civil Judges, accompanied by the Secretary, District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Srinagar, Friday visited the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL), Srinagar as part of an exposure programme aimed at enhancing their understanding of the role of forensic science in the criminal justice system.

The programme, as per an official statement, commenced with an introductory presentation by Sheikh Suhail Ahmad, Scientific Officer, Fingerprints Division, who briefed the participants on the mandate, organizational structure, scientific capabilities, and pivotal role of FSL Srinagar in assisting investigating agencies and the judiciary through scientific examination of evidence.

The participants were subsequently taken on a guided tour of the laboratory, coordinated by Dr. Rais Ahmad, Scientific Officer, Narcotics & Chemical Division, and Sheikh Suhail Ahmad, Scientific Officer, Fingerprints Division.

During the visit, the trainee judges interacted with experts across various forensic disciplines and were briefed by the respective Scientific Officers on the functioning of their divisions, modern analytical techniques, sophisticated instrumentation, quality assurance practices, and the scientific procedures followed in the examination of forensic exhibits.

Later, Dr. Qazi Danish



Mushtaq , Deputy Director JKFSL Srinagar interacted with the visiting judicial officers regarding functioning of the District Mobile Forensic Units (DMFUs). He highlighted the crucial role of the mobile forensic units in providing on-the-spot scientific assistance at crime scenes, ensuring proper collection, preservation, and documentation of physical evidence, and facilitating timely forensic support to investigating agencies across the Union Territory.

The exposure programme offered the trainee judicial officers valuable insights into the practical application of forensic science in criminal investigations and judicial proceedings. The participants actively interacted with the forensic experts, discussing the evidentiary value of scientific findings and the significance of forensic reports in ensuring fair and effective administration of justice.

Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Director, J&K FSL Srinagar, stated that “The

criminal justice system increasingly relies on scientific evidence. Such exposure visits strengthen the understanding of judicial officers regarding forensic processes and promote closer coordination between the judiciary and forensic experts for the effective delivery of justice.”

Sheikh Suhail Ahmad emphasized that “The objective of the programme is to familiarize judicial officers with the capabilities of modern forensic science and to provide them with firsthand exposure to the scientific procedures adopted in the laboratory.”

The visiting officers appreciated the state-of-the-art facilities and professional expertise available at FSL Srinagar and described the interaction as highly informative and beneficial. The programme concluded with a reaffirmation of the importance of continued collaboration between the judiciary and forensic institutions in strengthening the criminal justice system.

DC Reasi chairs DLC meeting, focus on dairy expansion, poultry promotion



KT News Desk

REASI, JULY 31: Deputy Commissioner Reasi Kumar Abhishek, who is also Chairman of the District Level Committee (DLC), Friday chaired a meeting at the DC Office Complex to review implementation of the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP), Jammu and Kashmir Competitiveness Improvement Project (JKCIP) and Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY). The meeting also finalised eligible cases submitted under the schemes for financial assistance.

The DC, as per an official statement, reviewed the physical and financial progress under the programmes and assessed the status of agriculture, horticulture, livestock, fisheries and allied sector initiatives. He sought convergence among departments for timely delivery of benefits to farmers and entrepreneurs.

He directed the departments

concerned to expedite processing of eligible cases and complete all proposals before placing them before the Committee, the department concerned to increase dairy units and encourage farmers and unemployed youth to set up poultry units under available schemes and bankers to clear pending loan cases and release timely assistance so that approved projects proceed without delay.

During the interaction, progressive farmers requested dedicated sale counters for marketing their produce and products. The Deputy Commissioner assured them that sale counters would be set up shortly to improve market access.

Among those present were Additional District Development Commissioner Krishan Lal, GM DIC Navdeep Wazir, Sheep Husbandry Officer Sarfaraz Nassem Choudhary, the Chief Horticulture Officer, Chief Animal Officers and other officers concerned.

Govt approves Rs 13.75 crore for heritage conservation projects at Purmandal, Imambara Zadibal

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, JULY 31: The Government of Jammu & Kashmir has approved two major heritage conservation projects worth 13.75 crore for the restoration and revival of the historic heritage site of Purmandal in Samba and the conservation and upgradation of the historic Imambara Zadibal in Srinagar. The twin initiatives reaffirm the Government’s commitment to preserving Jammu & Kashmir’s rich religious, cultural and architectural heritage while enhancing facilities for pilgrims, devotees and visitors.

The Government, as per an official statement, has approved a 7.16 crore project for the restoration and revival of the historic heritage site of Purmandal in Samba. The initiative aims to preserve the site’s unique heritage character while improving essential infrastructure to enhance the experience of pilgrims and tourists visiting the revered shrine town.

The Government has also sanctioned a 6.59 crore project for the conservation and upgradation of the historic Imambara Zadibal in Srinagar. The project seeks to conserve



the architectural and heritage character of the centuries-old Imambara while upgrading essential infrastructure to provide improved facilities for the large number of devotees and visitors who visit the revered religious site throughout the year.

These projects form part of the Government’s sustained efforts to protect and restore places of immense religious, historical and cultural significance across Jammu and Kashmir through focused investments in heritage conservation and infrastructure development.

The approval of the Purmandal and Imambara Zadibal projects follows a series of similar initiatives undertaken by the Government in recent months. Earlier, the Government sanctioned a

6.38 crore project for the development of the revered holy spring of Khoo Sahib at Yarwan in Shadimarg, Pulwama. The project aims to upgrade essential infrastructure and improve facilities for devotees while preserving the site’s religious, cultural and historical significance, thereby enhancing the overall pilgrim experience.

The Government has also recently approved two major heritage conservation projects worth 16.36 crore for the revival and restoration of the historic Jamia Masjid Sharief in Shopian and the revered Sarvadar Chaumanda Mata Mandir in Ramban. These projects are designed to protect important heritage structures while strengthening amenities for worshippers and visitors.

JMC launches ‘Catch the Rain’ campaign at Government High School, Gandhi Nagar



KT News Desk

JAMMU, JULY 31: In line with the nationwide ‘Catch the Rain’ campaign under the Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari (JSJB) initiative, the Jammu Municipal Corporation (JMC) Friday launched the campaign by performing the groundbreaking ceremony of a rooftop rainwater harvesting structure at Government High School, Gandhi Nagar. Jammu Municipal Corporation Commissioner Dr Devansh Yadav inaugurated the initiative.

Addressing the gathering, Dr Yadav, as per an official statement, described rainwater harvesting as a sustainable solution for conserving water and recharging groundwater. He explained that rainwater falling on school rooftops, usually lost through drains and nallahs, will now be channelled through specially designed pipelines to recharge the groundwater table.

The Commissioner announced that more than 1,000 rooftop rainwater harvesting

structures will be developed in schools under the campaign. Similar structures will also be installed in government buildings and rainwater harvesting will be made mandatory for all new building permissions issued by the JMC.

During the programme, students and teachers were sensitised about water conservation and the role of rainwater harvesting in ensuring a sustainable future. Dr Yadav interacted with the students, encouraged them to become ambassadors of water conservation and distributed sweets among them.

On the occasion, all participants took a pledge to conserve water and support the ‘Catch the Rain’ campaign, reaffirming their commitment to preserving water resources for future generations.

The month-long campaign will include awareness programmes, community outreach activities and the promotion of rainwater harvesting practices across Jammu city.

ADDC Budgam chairs MY Bharat District Advisory Committee meeting, reviews youth engagement initiatives

KT News Desk

BUDGAM, JULY 31: Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC) Budgam, Vivek Agarwal on Friday chaired the meeting of the Mera Yuva Bharat (MY Bharat) District Advisory Committee at the Conference Hall, Budgam, to review youth engagement initiatives and strengthen coordination among stakeholder departments.

The meeting, as per an official statement, reviewed the implementation of various MY Bharat programmes aimed at promoting youth participation in nation-building, volunteerism, skill development, leadership, and community service. Discussions also focused on enhancing outreach, increasing youth registrations, and ensuring active participation of educational institutions and line departments in MY Bharat activities.

The ADDC stressed the need for greater convergence among



departments to create meaningful opportunities for young people and directed the concerned officers to organise regular awareness and engagement programmes across the district.

Later, the ADDC chaired a review meeting of the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) to assess the progress of ongoing sanitation initiatives in the district.

The meeting reviewed the status of key SBM components, including solid and liquid waste management, cleanliness drives, sanitation infrastructure, and awareness campaigns. He directed the concerned

officers to ensure timely completion of all ongoing works and maintain sustained efforts towards achieving the objectives of the mission.

The ADDC emphasized close monitoring of field-level activities, effective public participation, and inter-departmental coordination to strengthen sanitation and hygiene across the district.

The meetings were attended by the CPO, ADC, ACP, District Officer, MY Bharat, District Panchayat Officer, Executive Officers of Urban Local Bodies, Block Development Officers, and other concerned officers.

J&K Sports Council begins Junior Boys Football trials for National Championship

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, JULY 31: The Jammu and Kashmir Sports Council on Friday commenced open selection trials for the Junior Boys Football Team for the 2026-27 Dr. B.C. Roy Trophy National Football Championship, organised under the aegis of the All India Football Federation, with 375 players from across the Union Territory registering for the process.

Simultaneous divisional trials began in Srinagar and Jammu, with selected players set to advance to the UT-level selection camp in Srinagar next week.

As many as 248 from Kashmir division and 127 from Jammu division have registered themselves. The first day of divisional trials was held simultaneously at the Synthetic Turf Football

Stadium, TRC, Srinagar for Kashmir division players and at the Mini Stadium Synthetic Turf, Parade Ground, Jammu for Jammu division players. Divisional trials continue on the second day, 1 August 2026, at the same venues.

Players selected at the divisional stage will proceed to UT level selection trials at the Synthetic Turf Football Stadium, TRC, Srinagar on 3 and 4 August 2026. The trials are open to boys born between 1 January 2011 and 31 December 2012 who are residents of Jammu and Kashmir.

The players reported in full playing kit and carried original birth certificates issued by the Municipal Corporation or competent authority. Aadhaar cards updated with recent photographs, and passport-sized photographs for verification process.

‘40-75 killed in PoJK protests’
UN expresses concern over crackdown

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Jul 31: At least 40 to 75 people have been reported killed by the Pakistan Army in Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir (PoJK), with Pakistani forces using live ammunition and lethal force to disperse demonstrations, leading to high-casualty standoffs in areas like Rawalakot and Mirpur, while the United Nations Human Rights Office has expressed severe concern over Islamabad’s suppression of peaceful assemblies.

According to reports, protests have intensified across PoJK in recent days, with the region also witnessing restrictions on movement and communication, including curfew-like measures and disruptions in internet and telecommunication services. Social media accounts linked to the Jammu Kashmir Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC) accused security forces of using lethal force against protesters.

JAAC has appealed to the United Nations, international human rights organisations, and democratic governments to intervene, alleging the use of live ammunition and excessive force against peaceful protesters by Pakistani security forces.

In a statement, Spokesperson for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Jeremy Laurence, said that the criminalisation of a civil society organisation and imposition of strict limitations on gatherings in PoJK raise serious concerns about infringements on the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, and association.

Dy CM reviews industrial development, restoration works in Kathua

KT News Desk

Kathua, Jul 31: Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary on Friday visited Bhagthali Industrial Estate in Kathua district to inspect the progress of infrastructure development and flood protection works being executed in the area.

During the inspection, the Deputy Chief Minister took serious note of the delay in execution of development works worth around 60 crore being undertaken by IRCON, including creation of industrial infrastructure, civic amenities and flood protection measures.

Expressing concern over the delay, he directed the concerned authorities to issue notices to the executing agency for failing to adhere to the original completion timelines fixed for 2025. He also called for third-party scrutiny of the works executed so far and fixed October 2026 as the deadline for completion of all pending works.

The Deputy Chief Minister also visited M/s Kanadhari Beverages, M/s Chiripal Poly Films Limited at Bhagthali Industrial Estate. He reviewed their operations and interacted with the management of the industrial units to obtain feedback on infrastructure, industrial facilitation and other issues.

Reviewing the local employment scenario, the Deputy Chief Minister called upon the industrial units to provide greater employment opportunities to local youth



through skill development and placement camps. He stressed the need to involve local elected representatives while identifying skilled and unskilled manpower requirements so that employment opportunities reach deserving candidates in the area.

Later, Surinder Choudhary chaired a comprehensive review meeting on the functioning of industrial estates and progress of various development and restoration works in the district.

During the meeting, it was informed that 14 industrial estates are being established across Kathua district.

Reviewing the status of roads damaged due to recent rains and floods, the Deputy Chief Minister was informed that out of 48 affected PWD roads, temporary connectivity has been restored on 46 roads, including the Old Kathua-Samba Road. He directed the Executive Engineers to ensure restoration of connectivity on all remaining roads without

delay and submit proposals for permanent restoration on priority.

While reviewing the restoration works under the Irrigation and Flood Control Department, it was informed that 11 out of 15 restoration works have been completed while work on the remaining projects is in progress.

The Deputy Chief Minister directed the Deputy Commissioner Kathua to regularly review the functioning of industrial estates and submit a comprehensive report to the Government highlighting issues requiring intervention for improving industrial infrastructure and investor facilitation. He emphasized close coordination among the industrial associations and other stakeholders for effective resolution of issues.

He further instructed the officers of the Pollution Control Committee, Mining and Forest Departments to ensure strict enforcement of all statutory regulations.

Regarding the issue of mining, Surinder Choudhary observed that the course of the River Ravi requires scientific correction by undertaking regulated lifting of material from identified pockets to streamline the natural flow of the river and minimise the risk of erosion during heavy rains and floods.

He also directed the Joint Director, Labour Department, to ensure effective implementation of labour welfare measures and strict compliance with labour laws and labour codes by industrial units.

Reviewing the implementation of Mission YUVA, the Deputy Chief Minister called for extensive awareness programmes in schools and colleges to motivate the students towards skill development aligned with industrial requirements. He also directed the Polytechnic institutions to conduct outreach programmes in remote areas to identify and nurture local talent.

JKAACL organises Punjabi Kavi Darbar to commemorate 350th martyrdom day of Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji



KT News Desk

Srinagar, Jul 31: The Jammu & Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture & Languages (JKAACL) on Friday organised a Punjabi Kavi Darbar dedicated to the 350th Martyrdom Day of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji at Gurdwara Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Singh Sabha, Hutmurrah, District Anantnag.

The programme commenced with the soulful rendition of Shabad Gurbani of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji by Bhai Popinder Singh and his group, creating a spiritually enriching atmosphere.

Speaking on the occasion, Popinder Singh, Senior Editor, Sheeraza Punjabi, JKAACL, reiterated the Academy’s commitment to preserving and promoting the rich cultural, literary and religious heritage of the region. He stated that JKAACL has been organising seminars, lectures, conferences and Kavi Darbars on a priority basis to connect the younger generation with their cultural and spiritual roots. He further emphasised that the Academy is making sustained efforts to organise such programmes in far-flung Punjabi-speaking areas so that local talent is encouraged

and the community remains actively engaged in literary and cultural activities.

Delivering the keynote lecture, Jathedar Ranjit Singh eloquently highlighted the divine teachings (Bani), philosophy and noble ideals of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji. He inspired the gathering to imbibe the values of truth, tolerance, compassion and selfless service as exemplified by the great Guru.

On the occasion, two eminent scholars from the village threw light on the life, philosophy and unparalleled sacrifices of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji. Young children from the village also presented a moving poetic tribute depicting the life and martyrdom of the great Guru, which was highly appreciated by the audience.

S. Karan Singh, President, Gurdwara Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Singh Sabha, Hutmurrah, appreciated the initiatives of JKAACL for providing a meaningful platform to young and talented individuals to showcase their literary and oratory skills while promoting the Punjabi language and culture.

A large number of members of the Sangat attended the programme and paid their obeisance to the revered Guru.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Future belongs

as researchers and thinkers capable of understanding complex problems in their entirety and finding solutions. By encouraging cross-disciplinary study, Cluster University, Jammu is preparing students not only to master theories but to generate new ideas and innovations,” the Lieutenant Governor said.

Cluster University, Jammu has also introduced a one-year PG Diploma in Sanatan Dharma and Indian Knowledge Systems, along with the establishment of the Department of Vedic Studies.

The Lieutenant Governor said the true education must balance science with values. He stressed that India’s intellectual heritage, from Panini’s grammar to Aryabhata’s astronomy, from Ayurveda to linguistics, represents a treasure of systematic thought and scientific vision.

“As modern knowledge is essential, it is equally essential that we understand who we are, what our intellectual tradition has been and what our civilisation has contributed to the world. Giving expression to this very sentiment, the establishment of the Department of Vedic Studies and the launch of the one-year PG Diploma programme in Sanatan Dharma and Indian Knowledge Systems today is a significant step. The students will get the opportunity to understand that the Indian Knowledge System is not limited only to ancient beliefs or religious rituals but that Indian philosophy, the Upanishads, the Vedas, ancient mathematics, medical science, astronomy and linguistics constitute an invaluable heritage of profound intellectual research, science and logical thinking that our ancestors gave to the world. This programme will allow students to engage deeply with India’s civilizational wisdom while pursuing modern knowledge,” he said.

The Lieutenant Governor also inaugurated the Semiconductor Skilling Programme in collaboration with IIT Madras, describing it as a vital step in India’s technological mission. He observed that semiconductors are the backbone of modern innovation, powering everything from mobile phones to space missions.

UNDER PM MODI’S LEADERSHIP INDIA SET TO BECOME LEADER

“Under the leadership of Hon’ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, India has resolved to become a leader in technology development and manufacturing. This skilling initiative will equip students with cutting-edge expertise, aligning them with the needs of future industries and strengthening India’s position in the global deep-tech landscape,” the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor called upon students to focus on skill development and innovation.

He said every skill acquired and every innovation pursued will contribute to India’s journey towards self-reliance and global leadership. He expressed confidence that these programmes will not only enrich individual academic journeys but also give new direction to Jammu Kashmir’s progress.

“The new programmes at Cluster University, Jammu is the beginning of a new philosophy of education. Rooted in India’s cultural identity and oriented towards global aspirations, these initiatives promise to empower students to dream, innovate and lead,” the Lieutenant

Governor said.

The occasion also witnessed the launch of Post-Graduate Programme in Environmental Sciences with Minor Specialisation in Renewable Energy; One year Post-Graduate diploma in Dogri Translation; release of Nasha Mukh Bharat activity report, and renaming of Vice-Chancellor’s office-cum-secretariat complex as “Suryaputri Tawi Bhawan” and old IIM Campus as “Chandrabhaga Campus”.

Prof. K.S. Chandrasekar, Vice-Chancellor, Cluster University of Jammu; Ankur Mahajan, Registrar, HoDs and office bearers of the Cluster University of Jammu; heads of several Constituent colleges of the University, faculty, and students attended the inaugural ceremony. (KNO)

Our forces must

and the conflict entrepreneurs who were working to keep terrorism alive in Jammu Kashmir.

“The systematic infiltration of terrorist sympathizers into government machinery over the past 30 years was decisively dismantled, delivering an unambiguous message of zero tolerance to terror and public money will no longer sustain those quietly subverting the nation from within,” he said.

Lt Gen Ajay Chandpuria, Commandant, Army War College, faculty members and senior officers of the Security Forces were present. (KNO)

Heavy rain

office said Srinagar recorded a maximum temperature of 31.4 degrees Celsius, which was 1.3 degrees above normal, while the minimum settled at 19.4 degrees Celsius, 0.5 degree above normal. Jammu recorded a maximum of 33.9 degrees Celsius, 0.8 degree above normal, and a minimum of 24.8 degrees Celsius.

The MeT office has forecast scattered light rain or brief thundershowers at isolated places across the Union Territory on August 1, with a possibility of isolated intense showers.

From August 2 to 4, many places are likely to witness light to moderate rain and thundershowers, particularly during the afternoon, evening and early morning hours. The department said a few districts of the Jammu division could experience heavy rain, including brief intense showers or torrential downpours.

Scattered light to moderate rain or thundershowers are also expected at several places from August 5 to August 7, accompanied by brief intense showers.

The weather department has warned that heavy rain or intense showers over parts of the Jammu division on July 31, August 2 and August 3 could trigger flash floods, landslides, mudslides and shooting stones at vulnerable locations, advising the public and authorities to remain vigilant. (KNO)

Terrorists trained

discrimination and reported atrocities against minority communities.

According to Jaiswal, the security crackdown has left more than 40 civilians dead and many others seriously injured. The demonstrations are being led by the Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC).

He also criticised remarks attributed to Pakistan’s defence minister, alleging that protesters were described as “enemies”, saying such statements reflected the establishment’s “absolute disdain” for the people of PoJK.

Referring to the recently concluded local body elections in the region, Jaiswal said the outcome represented a “humiliating rejection” of Pakistan’s establishment and noted that residents had appealed to international organisations to order an independent probe into the killings.

“We urge the international community to scrutinise Pakistan’s actions and hold it accountable for its atrocities,” he said.

On Jammu and Kashmir, Jaiswal reiterated India’s longstanding position that the entire region, including the Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, is an integral and inalienable part of the country.

“We are very clear that the entire region of Jammu and Kashmir, the Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, was, is and will continue to be an integral and inalienable part of India,” he said.

He urged foreign governments and stakeholders to use what India considers the correct nomenclature while referring to the region.

Earlier this month, India’s Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Ambassador Parvathaneni Harish, also reaffirmed before the UN that Jammu and Kashmir “has always been, is, and will remain an integral and inalienable part of India”, describing it as the country’s constitutional and legal reality. (KNO)

Migrant worker

been identified as Bopinder, 28, son of Dasar, resident of Chhattisgarh.

The official said soon after the attack security forces rushed to the spot and launched a manhunt in and around the village to nab the attackers.

Pertinently, this is the second terror attack in Kashmir in the last 10 days. On July 22, a Jammu and Kashmir police head constable was killed after being shot at a point blank range by terrorists in the Lal Chowk area of Anantnag district.

LG SINHA CONDEMNS BRUTAL TERROR ATTACK ON LABOURERS

Meanwhile, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha condemned the dastardly attack. He spoke with the Director General of Police, J&K and top security officials. He directed the security forces to step up their operations and eliminate the terrorists.

The Lieutenant Governor wrote on X: “I spoke with the DGP, Shri Nalin Prabhat and top security officials following the brutal terrorist attack in Kulgam in which a labourer from Chhattisgarh was killed. I strongly condemn this cowardly act. I have directed our security forces to step up their operations and eliminate the terrorists.”

“J&K Police and Security forces have cordoned off the area and launched an operation to bring the perpetrators to justice. Another injured labourer from Chhattisgarh has been rushed to the hospital for urgent medical care. My deepest condolences to the bereaved family and I am praying for the speedy recovery of the injured. J&K administration and the entire nation stand with the families.”

80% utilization mandatory

the Finance Department, and any further release, if required, shall be subject to fresh consideration by the Finance Department,” the circular reads.

Departments have been directed to

continuously monitor the pace of expenditure and ensure timely execution of works to avoid delays in the release of funds.

It further states that expenditure during the last quarter (January–March 2027) shall not exceed 25 percent of the Budget Estimates 2026-27 under each object head/work, except with the prior approval of the Finance Department in cases of unavoidable contractual, statutory, or court-mandated liabilities. (KNO)

Amarnath Yatra

the decision was taken to ensure the safety of pilgrims. “The Amarnath Yatra has been suspended for today as a precautionary measure following continuous rainfall since yesterday. With rainfall continuing in the Baltal area, authorities have temporarily halted the pilgrimage to ensure the safety of pilgrims. Further decisions on resumption will be taken after reviewing weather conditions and the overall safety situation,” the official said.

He said the Yatra would resume only after weather conditions improve and the tracks are declared safe by the concerned authorities.

Meanwhile, despite a complete traffic halt on the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway for restoration and slope stabilisation works, a fresh batch of 1,605 pilgrims left the Bhagwati Nagar Yatri Niwas in Jammu early Friday for the Baltal base camp.

According to officials, the 24th batch departed at 2:42 am in a convoy of 54 vehicles, including 38 buses, seven medium motor vehicles (MMVs) and nine light motor vehicles (LMVs). The batch comprised 1,215 male pilgrims, 335 women, 48 sadhus, five sadhvis and two children accompanying sadhus.

A total number of pilgrims who have left the Bhagwati Nagar base camp for the shrine this year has reached 1,35,806, officials said.

The 57-day annual pilgrimage commenced on July 3 and has witnessed an overwhelming response from devotees. Around 4.5 lakh pilgrims have so far paid obeisance at the holy cave shrine housing the naturally formed ice lingam.

The Yatra is scheduled to conclude on August 28, coinciding with the festival of Raksha Bandhan. (KNO)

No shortage

He said that in Jammu and Kashmir during 2025-26, the requirement of Urea was 1.46 lakh metric tonnes (LMT), against availability of 2.24 LMT and DBT sales of 1.60 LMT. The requirement of DAP stood at 0.46 LMT against availability of 0.61 LMT and sales of 0.43 LMT, while MOP availability was 0.35 LMT against a requirement of 0.21 LMT.

In 2024-25, J&K had a Urea requirement of 1.48 LMT against availability of 2.05 LMT and sales of 1.36 LMT. DAP requirement was 0.49 LMT against availability of 0.58 LMT and sales of 0.43 LMT, while MOP availability stood at 0.26 LMT against a requirement of 0.22 LMT.

The Minister said any gap between domestic production and demand is met through imports, while fertiliser movement across the country is monitored through the Integrated Fertilizer Management System. State governments are also advised to coordinate with manufacturers and importers to streamline supplies.

At the national level, during Kharif 2026 up to July 27, availability stood at 174.47 LMT for Urea against a pro-rata requirement of 120.16 LMT, 42.36 LMT for DAP against 34.67 LMT

requirement, 14.21 LMT for MOP against 10.97 LMT requirement and 88.01 LMT for NPKS against 52.89 LMT requirement.

The Centre also said it has taken measures to increase domestic production, including establishment of six new Urea units and approval of additional projects, with indigenous Urea production capacity rising to 269.42 LMT per annum. (KNO)

J&K Govt notifies

residential buildings including housing colonies, 150 for mixed-use buildings and 270 for commercial, public/semi-public, industrial and other special category buildings. The religious buildings have been exempted. The additional charges include Malba Security of 3,000 for residential and 10,000 for all other categories. A compounding fee of 40% of the applicable permission fee will also be levied over and above the normal fee.

The uniform fee structure shall be applicable to all Municipal Corporations, Municipal Councils, Municipal Committees and Development Authorities across the Union Territory. The notified rates will also be integrated into the Online Building Permission System (OBPS)/Auto-DCR to ensure uniform processing of building permission applications.

The reform is expected to simplify the building permission process, eliminate disparities in fee structures across different organizations under HUDD and shall provide a more citizen-centric and business-friendly regulatory framework for urban development in Jammu and Kashmir.

‘Diplomatic efforts

been recognised by several countries. He said condemnation of the attack was reflected in outcome documents at various multilateral forums, including the UNSC Press Statement, India-Central Asia Foreign Ministers’ Dialogue, FATF, QUAD Foreign Ministers’ Meeting and BRICS Leaders’ Summit.

He further said the Resistance Front (TRF), described by the Government as a proxy of Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Tayyiba and involved in the Pahalgam terror attack, was designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) and Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT) by the US Administration on July 18, 2025. The UNSC 1267 Sanctions Committee’s monitoring report also referred to TRF’s links with the Pahalgam attack.

On the broader issue of terrorism financing, Singh said India’s efforts have contributed to the listing of several terrorist entities and individuals linked to Pakistan by the UN, European Union and other countries. He added that Pakistan has faced sustained international scrutiny over its failure to prevent financial support to terrorist networks.

On India’s foreign policy and strategic partnerships, the Minister said national interest and strategic autonomy remain the guiding principles. He said India’s engagement with BRICS and SCO is consistent with its foreign policy objectives and does not affect its bilateral partnerships with other countries.

On the security implications of the China-Pakistan convergence, the Government said it closely monitors all developments having a bearing on India’s national security and takes all necessary measures to safeguard the country’s interests and ensure comprehensive national security across all domains. (KNO)

PM hails Cabinet decisions on PM-Kisan extension, Khelo India expansion, key flagship schemes



PTI
New Delhi, Jul 31: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday hailed the Union Cabinet's decision to extend the PM-KISAN scheme for another five years till 2030-31 with an outlay of over Rs 3.15 lakh crore, saying it will help farmers meet their needs related to seeds, fertilisers, and farming while improving their economic condition. Modi also welcomed the Cabinet's approval of the expanded Khelo India Scheme and the enhanced budget for Assistance to the National Sports Federations (ANSFs), with a combined outlay of Rs 36,441 crore over the next five years. "We are

committed to the empowerment and prosperity of our farmer brothers and sisters across the country. In this direction, today approval has been given to extend the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme until 2030-31. This will not only help farmers meet their needs related to seeds, fertilisers, and farming, but also improve their economic condition," he said in a post on X in Hindi. On the expansion of the Khelo India Scheme, the prime minister said the government is fully committed to promoting sports culture in the country. "In line with this, approval has been granted for the expansion of the Khelo India scheme, along with an increase in assistance

provided to national sports federations. This will provide young athletes across the country with better training, modern facilities, and more opportunities to hone their talents," he said. On the Cabinet's approval of 'Samudra Manthan', the National Offshore Exploration Scheme, with an outlay of Rs 84,084 crore for implementation up to fiscal 2030-31, Modi described it as a transformative leap towards strengthening India's energy security and unlocking our vast offshore potential. "By combining investment, cutting-edge technology, skilled human capital and modern infrastructure, Samudra Manthan will give fresh momentum to 'Make in India' and Aatmanirbhar Bharat," he said. The prime minister also hailed the Cabinet's approval of the Pradhan Mantri Surya Sarovar Yojana (PM-SSY) for development of floating solar photovoltaic projects with energy storage systems with a total outlay of Rs 5,070 crore. "The Cabinet's approval of the Pradhan Mantri Surya Sarovar Yojana expands India's clean-energy capacity through the innovative use of our reservoirs and inland water bodies. The scheme will benefit every State and Union Territory and reduce CO2 emissions," he said.

2020 Delhi riots

Life term for ex-AAP leader Tahir Hussain, court says case doesn't warrant death penalty

PTI

New Delhi, Jul 31: A Delhi court on Friday sentenced former AAP councillor Tahir Hussain and four co-convicts to life imprisonment for the murder of Intelligence Bureau officer Ankit Sharma during the 2020 Delhi riots, saying the case did not fall within the "rarest of rare" category warranting the death penalty. The judgement was pronounced by Additional Sessions Judge Praveen Singh in the presence of Hussain and others amid tight security. The judge awarded the sentence after hearing arguments on the quantum of sentence and denied the state contention to award death penalty to the convicts, saying the prosecution was not able to prove that they were beyond reformation. The courtroom was packed with lawyers and senior Delhi Police officials including Crime Branch's Joint Commissioner and DCP. The family of Hussain was so present in the court. In its order, the court said, "I find myself unable to agree based on the SPP that the convicts are beyond reformation or have such a fiendish character that their continued existence, even in prison, will be a menace to society. For the other offenses



Those who are asking for mercy today should have shown mercy themselves. No mercy was shown from anyone's side. No one even took Ankit to the hospital. They are asking for mercy after committing such a brutal murder, Pandey had said. On July 13, the court convicted Hussain and four others for the murder of Sharma, who was attacked by a mob during the riots. His body was later found in a drain. In its verdict, the court held that Hussain was a member of a heavily armed mob that assembled with animus against Hindus to commit rioting, arson and loot, and murdered Sharma in a savage and relentless assault. The court said the prosecution had proved that the members of the unlawful assembly knew that, in pursuing their common object, death could (be the) result and someone could be killed. Hussain was convicted under IPC sections 302 (murder), 365 (kidnapping or abducting with intent secretly and wrongfully to confine a person), 147 (rioting), 148 (rioting armed with a deadly weapon), 153A (promoting enmity) and 188 (disobedience to an order duly promulgated by a public servant), read with Section 149 (unlawful assembly).

Hyd police book cases against Meta India Head, social media users over posts on PM



PTI
Hyderabad, Jul 31: The Hyderabad Cyber Crime police has registered two cases against some social media users and Head of Meta in India, following a complaint by BJP activists over alleged objectionable content targeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The FIR was booked under Sections 66C (identity theft), 67 (publishing obscene material in electronic form) of the IT Act, and 353 (2) (accused person to be competent witness), 336 (4) (forgery) of the BNS following a complaint made on July 29 by a social media core committee member of the Telangana BJP. "The cases were booked against those who posted and how they (social platforms) allowed it," a cyber crime official told PTI on Friday. In one

case, the FIR was registered against 'users of Instagram and Facebook' mentioned in the complaint and the Head of Meta in India. The complainant sought an investigation into certain Instagram accounts that allegedly published and circulated content derogatory toward PM Modi. The complaint stated the content appears to promote narratives prejudicial to the nation's sovereignty, integrity and public order. The complainant submitted details of the Instagram and Facebook post URLs. He requested the police to preserve electronic evidence related to the social media accounts and posts, identify the individuals operating the accounts, conduct a thorough probe, and coordinate with Meta to obtain necessary account details and preserve relevant digital evidence if required.

Govt summons Meta global team over algorithmic bias, role in public order

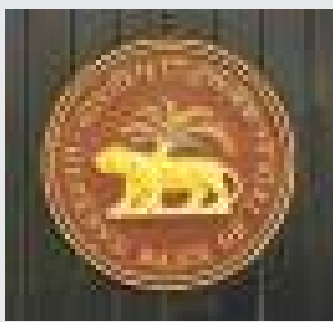
PTI

New Delhi, Jul 31: Meta's global team, which has been summoned by the government after the social media company restricted Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Facebook post, will be questioned on issues around algorithmic bias and their role in public order, sources said on Friday. Sources further said that Meta's global team is expected sometime in the middle of next week. Sources said Meta's global team will be "categorically" asked to clarify issues around algorithmic bias, how their algorithm operates, and the company's role in public order. The team will also appear before a parliamentary panel. The move assumes significance as the government earlier this week summoned a top Meta executive after Modi's recent post addressing India's youth and promising stringent measures against paper leaks was briefly restricted on Facebook. While the US-headquartered social media giant attributed the incident to a technical glitch and apologised, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) found the explanation "inadequate". In the aftermath of the issue, Meta informed the IT Ministry that posts by the prime minister and select prominent accounts will be subject to additional oversight on the platform, with multiple levels of checks involving senior company officials.

Bank credit to industry records robust growth of 19.2 pc in June: RBI data

PTI

Mumbai, Jul 31: Bank credit to industry recorded a robust growth of 19.2 per cent in June compared to 6.3 per cent in the year-ago period as large companies as well as MSMEs displayed broad-based expansion, according to RBI data released on Friday. On a year-on-year basis, non-food bank credit grew by 18.3 per cent as on the fortnight ended June 30, 2026, compared to 9.3 per cent during the corresponding fortnight of the previous year (June 27, 2025), the central bank said. It has released data on sectoral deployment of bank credit for June 2026, collected from 41 select scheduled commercial banks which together account for about 95 per cent of the total non-food credit. Advances to agriculture and allied activities registered a year-on-year growth of 16.8 per cent compared to 6.8 per cent in the corresponding fortnight of the



previous year. "Credit to industry recorded a robust y-o-y growth of 19.2 per cent (6.3 per cent in the corresponding fortnight of last year)," RBI said. All sub-sectors -- 'Micro and Small', 'Medium' and 'Large industries' displayed a broad-based expansion. Among major industries, credit to infrastructure, all engineering, food processing, textiles, construction, basic metal and metal products, petroleum, 'coal products and nuclear fuels' and 'chemical and chemical products' marked buoyant year-on-year (y-o-y) growth. However, 'rubber, plastic and their products' and 'wood and wood products' segments witnessed marginally subdued growth. According to the data, loans to the services sector registered a growth rate of 21.4 per cent y-o-y (8.8 per cent in the corresponding fortnight of the previous year), supported by accelerated growth in segments such as non-banking financial companies (NBFCs), commercial real estate, and trade. Also, credit to the personal loans segment recorded a growth of 15.8 per cent, as compared with 11.7 per cent a year ago. While segments such as vehicle loans and housing grew steadily in double digits, credit card outstanding registered a decelerated growth, the RBI said.

GOVERNMENT OF (U.T) JAMMU & KASHMIR Office Of The Executive Engineer Jal Shakti (PHE) Deptt. Ground Water Division Srinagar Baghi-Ali-Mardan, Nowshara Srinagar.

E- mail: - haakeemmushtaq.75316@jk.gov.in Tel./ Fax No:- 0194-2411285

NOTICE INVITING e-TENDERS

GIST of Detailede- NIT No: - 48/JS-PHE/GWDS/Mech. of 2026-27.

For and on behalf of Government of UT - J&K, e-tenders from reputed and resourceful Firms/Companies/drilling agencies/Joint Ventures etc for "registered experienced Contractors of Machine Drilled Hand pump wells" as per details given below The bidding process shall be completed online on www.jktenders.gov.in in two covers viz. Cover 1st consisting of Pre Qualification Criteria, General Terms and Conditions and Technical Specifications and Cover 2nd shall consist of Financial Bid in the prescribed BOQ.

S. No	S. No of AA	Name of work	Est. Cost Rs. in Lacs	Earnest money (EMD)	Cost of Tender Document	Time of completion	Major Head / Programme	Technical Sanction	Tender Call
1	1	Construction of Bore well at Waha Dar Kashmiri Mohalla on road side NHO Gh. Nabi Hajam and others at Panchalthan in District Anantnag.	Rs. 4.38 Lacs	Rs. 13,200/- Lacs	Rs.100/-	10 Days	CDF, 2025-26 (Constituency Development Fund, 42-Kokernag ST).	JS-PHE/ GWDS/ CDF Scheme/ 34 of 07/ 2026, Dt: 29-07-2026	1 st
2	1	Installation of Bore well NHO Tariq Manzoor Ganaie at Pethbug Block Shahabad in District Anantnag.	Rs. 2.43 Lacs	Rs.7,200/- Lacs	Rs.100/-	10 Days	CDF, 2025-26 (Constituency Development Fund, 43-Anantnag-West).	JS-PHE/ GWDS/ CDF Scheme/ 33 of 07/ 2026, Dt: 29-07-2026	1 st

Position of Funds: - Available:

- > For SI. No. 1: Accord of Administrative Approval issued by the District Development Commissioner Anantnag Vide Order No: 356-DDCA of 2026, issued under endorsement No. DDCA/ CDF-42-Kokernag ST/2026-27/4845-48, Dated: 29-07-2026.
- > For SI. No. 2: Accord of Administrative Approval issued by the District Development Commissioner Anantnag Vide Order No: 336-DDCA of 2026, issued under endorsement No. DDCA/ CDF-43-Anantnag West/2026-27/4523-27, Dated: 24-07-2026

The Bidding Documents and other details can be downloaded from the website:

<https://www.jktenders.gov.in>
From 01.08.2026 (10:00 AM) to 22.08.2026 (01:00 PM)

The Bidding documents consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Drawings (if any), Bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms, conditions of contract and other details can be seen / downloaded from the website:
As per Critical Dates/Information scheduled given below

1.	Publishing Date	01-08-2026 (10:00 A.M)
2.	Period of Downloading of Bids	01-08-2026 (10:00 A.M) upto 22-08-2026 (01:00 P.M).
3.	Period of Submission of bids	01-08-2026 (10:00 A.M) upto 22-08-2026 (01:00 P.M).
4.	Date of opening of Tender.	24-08-2026 (01:00 P.M)
5.	Tender Receiving Authority: Executive Engineer , Jal Shakti (PHE) Ground Water Srinagar Kashmir-190011 Cost of Tender Document : To be deposited online (If available) or Non-Refundable should be in form of DD /TR/ deposited to Account Head 0215 or in favour of Executive Engineer (Jal Shakti) PHE Ground Water Division Srinagar (The firm shall specify the name of work for which apply)	
6.	Note: In case the firm/agency/contractor submits/uploaded scanned copy of tender document fee in the shape of DD /TR/ the hard copies shall have to be submitted in the divisional office before opening of cover 2 nd (Financial Cover) of e-NIT (if needed)	
7.	Bid Validity Period: 180 Days	
8.	The bids can be downloaded or uploaded on www.jktenders.gov.in	

No instrument—such as an Earnest Money Deposit (EMD), Treasury Receipt, or Challan-generated prior to the publication of the tender document will be accepted. Any bid submitted contrary to this requirement is liable for summary rejection. In the event the tender is retendered due to government exigencies or otherwise, an instrument shall be considered valid only if generated after the date of the initial tender publication.

The cost of Tender Document under Account Head 0215 to be pledged in favour of the Executive Engineer Ground Water Division Srinagar (as specified in the table (I) (Page 1st). Bid security will have to be in any one of the forms as specified in the bidding documents and shall be valid for 180 Days after opening of bid. Bids will be opened in the Office of the Executive Engineer Jal Shakti (PHE) Ground Water Division Srinagar (H.Q. Baghi-Ali-Mardan, Nowshara Srinagar) on 24-08-2026 (01:00 PM) If the office happens to be closed on the date of opening of the bids as specified, the bids will be opened on the next working day at the same time and venue.

No: -JS-PHE/GWDS/26-27/Camp/6043-53
Dated: - 29-07-2026.

DIPK-3974/26
DATED: 31-07-2026

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

Hamas agrees to disarm under Trump plan to end Gaza war

AFP

Gaza City, Jul 31: Hamas said Friday it had agreed to a deal announced by US President Donald Trump to end the war with Israel, that includes it handing over its weapons to a Palestinian governing committee and the gradual withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza.

Israel did not immediately comment on the announcement, but shortly beforehand an Israeli political source had told AFP the proposed agreement did not "satisfactorily" address Israeli demands for the full demilitarization of the Gaza Strip.

The source also said that "the issue of Gaza did not come up at all" in this week's meeting between Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and Trump in Washington.

The Palestinian Islamist group's weapons have been one of the key sticking points in implementing a ceasefire deal in place since October, but Trump announced late Thursday an agreement for Hamas's "complete disarmament," calling it a critical step toward a new Palestinian government in Gaza.

Hamas officials told AFP that a committee established by Trump's Board of Peace to govern Gaza would



oversee the process of storing the Islamist movement's weapons.

The group said it expected mediators and the Board of Peace to ensure Israel complied with the deal's terms, which include Israel's withdrawal from Gaza.

Ghazi Hamad, a member of the group's negotiating team, said the movement was making "concessions for the sake of our people in the Gaza Strip, to save them from killing and displacement." "Israel will not

intervene in the issue of disarmament. The National Committee is the body that will undertake this task," he said, referring to the National Committee for Administration of Gaza (NCAG).

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

Focus now on implementation

The Board of Peace confirmed in a post on X that Hamas had "agreed to a detailed Roadmap for implementing the next phases of the Gaza ceasefire."

"Our focus now turns to implementation," the organization wrote, adding the NCAG will "soon begin a phased transition toward full authority."

Trump, in an earlier social media post, said that once Hamas is disarmed "Israeli forces will withdraw, and the International Stabilization Force will work with a new Palestinian police force to take responsibility for Gaza being safe for its residents and its neighbors."

Nickolay Mladenov, the Board of Peace's high representative for Gaza, said Friday the deal "took months of very difficult negotiations."

"What happens next matters even more. Implementation and verification have to be real," Mladenov wrote on X. "Withdrawal must move in lockstep with decommissioning," he added.

Egypt's state-linked Al-Qahera News said Friday that Cairo will soon host a meeting soon of the truce mediators, which also include the United States, Qatar and Türkiye, focused on the second phase of the ceasefire plan.

PM Modi, UK PM Burnham commit to harnessing full potential of mega trade deal



PTI

New Delhi, Jul 31: Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his British counterpart Andy Burnham vowed on Friday to take the India-UK comprehensive strategic partnership to "new heights" and maximise the benefits of the newly operationalised trade deal during a phone conversation covering key aspects of bilateral ties.

It was the first phone call between the two leaders after Burnham became the prime minister on July 20 succeeding Keir Starmer.

The two prime ministers discussed the situation in West Asia and agreed to work closely together towards deescalation and the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, according to a British readout.

In a social media post, Modi said he congratulated Burnham on assuming the charge of the top office and conveyed his best wishes for a successful tenure.

"We agreed to work together across sectors

such as technology, innovation, defence, security, clean energy, education and people-to-people ties and take the India-UK Comprehensive Strategic Partnership to new heights," he said.

"We will also collaborate closely to fully harness the trade and investment opportunities presented by the recently operationalized India-UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement, for the shared prosperity and well-being of both our people," Modi said.

The mega trade pact, being billed as one of the biggest trade deals of modern times, came into effect on July 15.

The pact, firmed up in July last year after three years of negotiations, secures zero-duty market access for nearly 99 per cent of India's exports to the UK.

The British readout said Burnham began the conversation by reflecting on the strength of the UK-India partnership and the

significant impact it has had on local communities across the UK.

"The prime minister set out his ambitions to further enhance the UK-India relationship, including through the UK-India Vision 2035 framework and strong people-to-people links," it said.

Burnham praised the contribution Indian communities in the UK make to the fabric of UK society, with Modi noting the links between the two leaders' own home cities of Manchester and Ahmedabad, in Gujarat, which he called the "Manchester of India", it said.

Turning to trade, Modi underlined the value of the recently introduced free trade agreement which will create opportunities for people across both countries, it added.

It said Burnham set out his personal commitment to the UK-India Technology Security Initiative, and both leaders noted the potential to work together on cutting edge technology, such as artificial intelligence.

The two leaders then discussed the situation in the Middle East, agreeing to continue to work closely together towards deescalation and the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, it said. "Both leaders look forward to speaking again soon and meeting in person at the earliest opportunity," it added.

As heat, dry conditions fan wildfires in France, volunteers fan out to help



AP

Lanton (France), Jul 31: With his watering can and bucket, Jean-Francois Pauner meanders from one small fire to the next along a forest floor, dousing small flareups of wildfires that have swept through a swath of southwestern France.

"This is the first fire I'm experiencing real-time, and I can tell you it's vicious," said Pauner, 64. "It's underground, it comes out at any moment, and no matter how much we try to extinguish it, re-extinguish it, it keeps restarting all the time." "It's

like a steamroller that's constantly, constantly rolling," said Pauner, wearing shorts, boots and sunglasses on a string around his neck on a road through cultivated pine trees, as the ground smoldered in pockets.

Pauner, who has a residence in nearby Lanton, is among the untold numbers of volunteers who have mobilized to support firefighters battling the biggest wildfires in years in France. "I'm protecting my forest, and my home," he said, after pouring out his watering can into a smoking ditch as if watering a garden, then huffing in the heat on Thursday.

Indian cyclists finish at the back in men's 4000m individual pursuit

PTI

Glasgow, Jul 31: India's challenge in the men's 4000m individual pursuit ended in the qualification stage as both Dinesh Kumar and Harshveer Singh Sekhon finished towards the bottom of the standings, while Australia underlined its dominance in the event at the Chris Hoy Velodrome during the Commonwealth Games here on Friday.

Dinesh was the better-placed of the two Indians, finishing 17th among 23 riders with a time of 4:29.267 (average speed 53.479 kmph), more than 25 seconds behind Australia's Oliver Bledodyn, who topped the qualification in a Commonwealth Games record time of 4:04.132 (58.984 kmph). Harshveer ended 19th after clocking 4:35.524 (52.264 kmph).

Dinesh began cautiously, covering the opening 1000m in 1:11.875, before



significantly improving his pace over the next two kilometres with splits of 1:05.175 and 1:04.379. However, he was unable to sustain the momentum and slowed in the final kilometre, clocking 1:07.838.

The qualifying session was dominated by Australia, which placed three riders in the top four. Bledodyn, the reigning Olympic team pursuit champion from the Paris Games and a silver

medallist in the team pursuit at the 2025 UCI Track Cycling World Championships in Santiago, carried his impressive form into Glasgow by setting the Games record.

He edged compatriot Conor Leahy, who qualified second in 4:04.147, by just 0.015 seconds to set up an all-Australian gold medal race.

The bronze medal contest will feature Matthew Bostock of the Isle of Man, who qualified third in 4:04.700, against Australia's James Moriarty, fourth in 4:05.677.

In the 4000m individual pursuit, the two fastest riders from the qualification round advance to the gold medal race, while the third and fourth fastest qualifiers compete for the bronze medal.

Australia will now be assured of at least two medals in the discipline after its commanding display in qualification.

Discarded SpaceX rocket on high-speed collision course with moon

AP

Cape Canaveral (US), Jul 31: A drifting SpaceX rocket is on a collision course with the moon after launching a pair of lunar landers more than a year ago.

The rocket's upper stage will unintentionally slam into the moon on Wednesday, carving out a crater and sending up a plume of dust and rubble that scientists — and skygazers — are eager to observe.

Space tracking expert Bill Gray predicts an impact of 5,400 mph (8,700 kph) — seven times the speed of sound — near Einstein Crater on the moon's sunlit western limb. With the action unfolding in the wee hours, the eastern portions of the US and Canada, and much of South America should have the best views.

While scientists are not too concerned about this particular piece of space junk, it highlights the growing threat as more and more items cram into orbit.

"Things are getting crowded up there," said Gray, who plans to view the aftermath from New Brunswick, Canada.

It was never SpaceX's intent to hit the moon. But space experts said the crash could have been avoided if the upper stage had been nudged into orbit around the sun.

It will be the second dead rocket known to crash into the moon accidentally. A Chinese rocket segment dug out a pair of craters on the lunar far side in 2022.

Lucky for astronomers, the upcoming smashup will occur on



the moon's near side, packing the equivalent energy of three tons of TNT.

The impact flash, lasting less than a second, will probably be too dim to see, according to experts. But the stream of ejected material could stretch for several miles (kilometres) into space and remain visible to telescopes for tens of minutes.

"The gravity on the moon is low and there is no wind to blow the dust away," said Los Alamos National Laboratory's Benjamin Fernandez, who's encouraging observations by professionals and amateurs alike.

"Part of the reason for our interest in this event is to figure out how much of a hazard debris impacts pose to future astronauts," he added in an email.

Fernando anticipates an impact crater nearly 90 feet across and 16 feet deep (27 metres across and 5 metres deep), too small to see from Earth but visible to spacecraft.

NASA's Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter and South Korea's Danuri

lunar orbiter will gather before-and-after shots of the crash scene. Danuri will stray within a mile or two (a few kilometres) of the SpaceX rocket just two minutes before impact, according to Fernandez and his team.

The abandoned rocket segment — measuring some 40 feet (12 metres) and weighing around 10,000 pounds (4,500 kilograms) — hoisted two private lunar landers on January 15, 2025.

One of them — Firefly Aerospace's Blue Ghost — became the first private spacecraft to pull off a fully successful lunar touchdown. The other, Japan-based ispace's lander, wrecked.

With meteoroids and other natural objects offering little if any warning before walloping the moon, scientists said there's much to learn by observing well-tracked strikes by human-made objects like the one coming up. NASA hurled rocket sections and lunar modules into the moon during the Apollo era for seismic measurements.

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SPIDER-MAN BRAND NEW DAY
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11:30 AM, 02:25 PM, 05:20 PM, 08:15 PM

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

10:30 AM, 12:35 PM

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