



Providing quality healthcare to citizens our obligation: CM Omar

Says J&K needs strong primary, secondary care alongside quaternary advancements

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Aug 27: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Thursday called for a balanced and integrated healthcare strategy that combines the development of advanced quaternary care with strengthening of primary and secondary healthcare services across Jammu and Kashmir.

Addressing the valedictory function of the Quaternary Healthcare & Research Summit: 4th J&K Medical Conference-2026 at the Sher-i-Kashmir International Convention Centre (SKICC), the Chief Minister said that while scaling tertiary healthcare into the fourth tier would enhance the capacity to provide highly specialised treatment, it must be accompanied by focused efforts to strengthen healthcare delivery at the grassroots.

The three-day summit, held from August 25 to 27, was organised by the Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS), Soura, under the aegis of NITI Aayog, Government



of India, in strategic collaboration with AIIMS New Delhi and PGIMER Chandigarh, along with AIIMS Jammu and AIIMS Awantipora. The conference was themed "Scaling Tertiary into Quaternary Healthcare: A National Strategy for Advanced Care."

The Chief Minister said providing quality healthcare to citizens was one of the

fundamental obligations of the government, adding that the medical profession was characterised by continuous learning, innovation and advancement.

Referring to the concept of quaternary healthcare discussed during the summit, Omar Abdullah said the fourth tier could play an important role in decongesting tertiary care institutions. However, he

cautioned that merely creating a higher tier would not adequately address the pressures confronting premier healthcare institutions unless the underlying gaps in the primary and secondary healthcare system were addressed.

"While there are certain aspects of quality care that can certainly be improved by upgrading SKIMS | [More on P6](#)



CELEBRATING NEW BEGINNINGS: 31 couples unite in the 10th Phase Mass Marriage organized by Al Noor Trust in Srinagar. Pics: Jahangir Shah (KNO/KT)

LG, CM greet people on Raksha Bandhan

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Aug 27: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah have extended heartiest greetings to the people on the auspicious occasion of Raksha Bandhan, which is being celebrated tomorrow on August 28.

In a message, the Lieutenant Governor said: "Heartiest greetings and best wishes to all on the sacred occasion of Raksha Bandhan. The joyful festival celebrates the timeless bond between brothers and sisters. The sacred thread of rakhi symbolizes unconditional love, affection, and trust. May the auspicious occasion further strengthen societal ties, deepen the spirit of unity and togetherness across | [More on P6](#)

Seasonal influenza may rise, health authorities issue advisory

Urge people to wear mask, avoid antibiotic

Jahangeer Ganaie

Jammu, Aug 27: With seasonal respiratory infections, including influenza, likely to increase during the monsoon and winter months, health authorities have urged patients, attendants, visitors and healthcare workers to adopt preventive measures to limit the spread of infection in hospitals.

The advisory, issued in the interest of patient and healthcare-worker safety under the Institutional Infection Prevention and Control Programme at SMVDIME, Kakryal, Reasi, stresses that seasonal influenza, including Influenza A/H1N1, is generally mild and self-limiting in most cases. However, officials said timely recognition of symptoms and appropriate medical care remain important, particularly for vulnerable patients.

According to the advisory, accessed by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), people experiencing fever, cough, sore throat, runny or blocked nose, body ache, headache, marked fatigue, vomiting or diarrhoea should take precautions before entering a hospital.

"Anyone experiencing respiratory symptoms should wear a well-fitting mask before entering a healthcare facility and inform reception or medical staff about their symptoms," the advisory states.

Patients and visitors have also been advised to maintain proper | [More on P6](#)

J&K to remain hot, humid over next 10 days: MeT

Jammu records 33°C, Srinagar 29.3 C, Gulmarg 20.3°C

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Aug 27: The Meteorological Centre on Thursday predicted that Jammu and Kashmir would witness generally hot and humid weather over the next 10 days, with brief spells of rain and thundershowers at scattered places.

According to the forecast accessed by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) brief spells of rain or thundershowers are expected at scattered places during the early morning and afternoon hours from August 28 to 30.

The weather is likely to remain generally hot and humid

on August 31 and September 1, with one or two spells of light to moderate rain and thundershowers at many places. Brief intense showers are also possible during the early morning and afternoon hours.

From September 2 to 7, the weather is expected to remain generally dry, although brief spells of rain or thundershowers may occur at scattered places during the early morning and afternoon hours.

The Meteorological Centre has cautioned that brief intense showers at localised places on August 31 and September 1 may trigger flash floods, mudslides and landslides.

It advised | [More on P6](#)

M K Sinha posted as J&K's Intelligence Chief

Sujit Kumar is IGP Kashmir, Tejinder Singh IGP Jammu

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Aug 27: In a major reshuffle in Jammu and Kashmir Police, senior IPS officer M.K. Sinha, who was serving as Additional Director General of Police (ADGP) Headquarters, has been transferred and posted as ADGP, CID J&K, the Intelligence Chief of the Union Territory.

According to an order issued by the Home Department, a copy of which is in possession of news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Nitish Kumar, ADGP CID J&K has been posted as ADGP J&K Armed Police.

Uttam Chand, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Police Operations & Services, PHQ has



been posted as IGP Railways J&K vice Vivek Gupta. He shall also continue to hold the additional charge of IGP Operations & Services.

As per order Bhim Sen Tuti,

IGP Jammu Zone has been posted as IGP Headquarters J&K. Sujit Kumar, IGP Security J&K has been posted as IGP Kashmir Zone. Vivek Gupta, IGP Railways | [More on P6](#)

Speaker Rather calls for early reopening of Yousmarg

Says thousands dependent on tourism

Naveed UI Haq Ganaie

Budgam, Aug 27: Jammu and Kashmir Assembly Speaker and Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) Charar-i-Sharief Abdul Rahim Rather has called for the early reopening of tourist destination Yousmarg in Budgam, saying thousands of people associated with the tourism sector depend on the destination for their livelihood.

Talking to reporters at Nagbal, Rather, as reported by the news agency—Kashmir



News Observer (KNO), said that local stakeholders, including horse owners, hotel operators, tea vendors and others, are dependent on tourism activity in Yousmarg and are facing difficulties due to its closure.

The MLA said he had spoken to the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam and urged him to visit Yousmarg and assess the

situation. He expressed hope that the destination would be opened within the next few days.

The Speaker said he is aware of the internet and ATM-related issues at Yousmarg and is actively pursuing their resolution. "The internet connectivity is expected to be restored soon, while efforts are also underway to make an ATM facility operational at the tourist destination," he said.

Rather said he had earlier taken up the internet issue with BSNL officials and would follow up on the matter to ensure early restoration of the service. Regarding the ATM facility, he said he had personally taken up the matter with the concerned bank authorities and | [More on P6](#)

Cong won't join govt till Centre restores 'snatched rights' of J&K people: Karra

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Aug 27: Stating that Congress would maintain its "principled stand" and would continue to raise public issues, Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) Chief Tariq Hameed Karra on Thursday said the party would not join the government until the Centre restores "snatched rights" of J&K people.

While talking to reporters here, Karra, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, "Congress is on principle stand since the last one year and won't accept cabinet



berth until the Central government restores the rights of the people of Jammu and Kashmir which were snatched from the people."

The JKPCC Chief said there is no doubt that the National Conference is interested in including Congress in the cabinet, but | [More on P6](#)

DIPR announces cash prizes across 9 categories for IFFJK 2026

Rs 25 lakh for best film; Rs 8 lakh for best actor (male/female)

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Aug 27: In a major initiative to recognise and encourage excellence in filmmaking, the Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR) has announced cash prizes across nine distinct award categories during the first International Film Festival of Jammu and Kashmir (IFFJK) 2026, scheduled to be held from 7th to

10th September 2026 at SKICC Srinagar, Gulmarg and Jammu.

The awards are aimed at celebrating creative excellence, technical craftsmanship, individual performances and emerging cinematic talent, while providing a significant platform of recognition to the filmmakers and artists participating in the inaugural edition of the festival.

The Best Film award carries the highest prize of Rs 25 lakh,

DIPR announces eminent jury

The Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR), Government of Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday announced the eminent five-member Jury for the 1st International Film Festival of Jammu and



recognising the outstanding cinematic work of the festival. The Best Director and Best Debut Film of a Director categories carry a cash prize of Rs 15 lakh each, underlining the festival's emphasis on both established creative leadership and new voices in cinema.

Giving special prominence to the cinematic identity of Jammu and Kashmir, DIPR has announced a Rs 10 lakh cash prize for Best Film – J&K Select,

aimed at recognising the compelling cinematic works connected with Jammu and Kashmir and highlighting its rich cultural, social and artistic landscape.

The DIPR will also honour excellence in acting during the festival, with Rs. 8 lakh each proposed for Best Actor (Male) and Best Actor (Female).

Recognising the crucial role played by technical and creative crafts in filmmaking, the department has proposed Rs 5 lakh each for Best Cinematography, Best Sound Design and Best Editing.

The award framework reflects the | [More on P6](#)

International Film Festival

VC JKLCMA takes on-site assessment of cleanliness around SKICC, Lalit Ghat

Calls for timely completion of all cleanliness-related measures



KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, AUGUST 27: The Vice Chairman, Jammu and Kashmir Lake Conservation and Management Authority (JKLCMA), Khurshid Ahmad Shah, Thursday undertook an extensive on-site assessment of the areas around SKICC and Lalit Ghat in connection with

the forthcoming 1st International Film Festival, scheduled to be held from September 7 to 10, 2026.

The Vice Chairman, as per an official statement, was accompanied by Collector LCMA and other senior officers during the inspection.

During the visit, the Vice Chairman reviewed the cleanliness and overall maintenance of the designated areas

and directed the concerned field staff to undertake necessary cleaning measures on priority. He stressed the need to ensure that the surroundings of SKICC and Lalit Ghat remain clean, well-maintained and presentable ahead of the international event.

For the special cleanliness drive, four machines, including three harvesters and one Water Master, have been deployed. The machinery will facilitate the removal of aquatic weeds and other floating material, thereby improving the overall appearance and water surface conditions around the designated areas.

The Vice Chairman called for timely completion of all cleanliness-related measures and emphasized sustained monitoring of the area to maintain high standards throughout the festival period.

The JKLCMA has reiterated its commitment to ensuring clean and well-maintained surroundings at the venues and adjoining areas, in view of the participation of national and international guests in the 1st International Film Festival.

DC Kulgam reviews progress of financial inclusion-cum-social security schemes



KT News Desk

KULGAM, AUGUST 27: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Shahzad Alam, Thursday chaired a meeting to review the progress and implementation of various financial inclusion and social security schemes in the district.

During the meeting, the DC, as per an official statement, took stock of the coverage and progress of beneficiaries under various financial inclusion and social security initiatives. He also reviewed the effectiveness of existing mechanisms for identifying eligible beneficiaries and facilitating their access to various entitlements and services under Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY), Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY), Pradhan Mantri Jeevan

Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY), Atal Pension Yojana (APY) and other such schemes.

The concerned officers presented the latest status of implementation, achievements made, issues requiring intervention and measures being undertaken to further enhance outreach and coverage of the schemes. The DC stressed coordinated efforts among all concerned departments to ensure inclusion and registration of people for financial inclusion and social security schemes.

The meeting was attended by Chief Planning Officer, Malik Suheel; Chief Medical Officer, Chief Education Officer, Lead District Manager; Chief Horticulture Officer; Chief Agriculture Officer, District Social Welfare Officer; Assistant Labour Commissioner and other concerned officers and officials.

Wildlife Department holds awareness programme on human-wildlife coexistence at Satoora Aripal

KT News Desk

PULWAMA, AUGUST 27: The Department of Wildlife Protection, Jammu & Kashmir, through the Office of the Wildlife Warden, Shopian Wildlife Division, Thursday conducted a Workshop-cum-Orientation Programme on "Human-Wildlife Conflict Mitigation and Wildlife Management" at Khangund Range, Satoora Aripal.

The programme was organised in collaboration with Wildlife SOS under the theme "Promoting Coexistence Through Conservation, Capacity Building and Scientific Wildlife Management."

The event, held under the broader banner "Bridging the Gap – Understanding and Reducing Human-Wildlife Conflict," brought together Wildlife Department officials, field staff, conservation partners from Wildlife SOS, and members of the local community, including village heads and residents of areas affected by recurring wildlife encounters. The programme aimed to strengthen coordination between the Wildlife Department and local communities while building practical, science-based capacity for conflict mitigation.

Assistant Conservator of Forests and Wildlife Warden, Shopian, Sohail Ah Wagay, spoke on the objectives of the programme and the importance of community participation in strengthening coordination between local residents and the Wildlife Department.

KVK Ganderbal organises capacity building Workshop on Agrivoltaics

KT News Desk

GANDERBAL, AUGUST 27: Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) Ganderbal, SKUAST-K, organized a one-day Capacity Building Workshop on Agrivoltaics in collaboration with the Centre for Study of Science, Technology and Policy (CSTEP), Bengaluru, to create awareness and strengthen the technical capacity of farmers and other stakeholders on the emerging integration of agriculture with solar photovoltaic technology. The workshop focused on the potential of agrivoltaic systems to enable simultaneous crop production and renewable energy generation from the same land, thereby promoting efficient resource utilization, diversification of farm income and climate-resilient agriculture.

The session commenced with an introduction by Dr. Faiqa Syeed, Scientist, KVK Ganderbal. Dr. Ajaz Ahmad Malik, Senior Scientist and Head, KVK Ganderbal, emphasized the potential of agrivoltaics as a promising approach for sustainable agriculture, renewable energy generation, and additional income opportunities for farmers, particularly amid rising energy demands, climate variability, and increasing pressure on agricultural land.

During the technical session, Sheikh Madiha Syed, Senior Analyst, CSTEP, sensitized participants about solar panel configurations, crop selection, microclimate management, irrigation considerations, energy generation, land-use efficiency and economic opportunities associated with agrivoltaic systems.

Dr. Suja Nabi Qureshi, Scientist at KVK Ganderbal, highlighted the potential of agrivoltaics as a futuristic approach to high-density apple cultivation by improving resource management and enhancing crop resilience. Dr. Faiqa Syeed also presented on the synergistic potential of deploying solar arrays over open-water aquaculture sites.

JKEDI conducts Startup Idea Challenge 2.0, Junior-Level Boot Camps

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, AUGUST 27: The Jammu & Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI) organised a series of Startup Idea Challenge 2.0 and Junior-Level Idea Challenge boot camps across Jammu and Kashmir from August 24-27, 2026 as part of its ongoing efforts to foster innovation, entrepreneurship and a startup culture among the youth.

The programmes, as per an official statement, were held at Government Degree College for Women, Pulwama; Government Girls Higher Secondary School, Amira Kadal, Srinagar; NIPS, Zainapora, Shopian; Government Degree College, Kulgam; Government Degree College, Sopore; and Government College for Women, Parade, Jammu. The initiatives were conducted under the J&K Startup Policy 2024-27, offering students and aspiring entrepreneurs a platform to present innovative ideas, seek expert guidance and explore pathways to transform their concepts into viable startup ventures.

More than 45 participants pitched their ideas before a jury, which encouraged them to further develop and pursue their innovative concepts. The ideas covered diverse areas, including sustainable Waste Management, AI, Agriculture and other emerging sectors.

Innovation was a key focus of the boot camps, with participants encouraged to think creatively, identify local challenges and develop practical solutions with the potential for wider social and economic impact. The sessions highlighted the importance of innovation in turning ideas into sustainable enterprises and creating new opportunities for employment, growth and community development. The participants also interacted with academics, banking officials and entrepreneurs, gaining valuable insights into entrepreneurship, business development and the practical challenges faced by startups. Experts provided feedback on refining and validating their ideas and offered guidance on developing them into sustainable business ventures

ADDC Shopian reviews implementation of Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme



KT News Desk

SHOPIAN, AUGUST 27: Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC) Shopian, Dr. Nasir Ahmed Lone Thursday chaired a comprehensive review meeting at the Conference Hall of the Mini Secretariat Complex, Shopian, to evaluate the progress and implementation of the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS) across the district.

The meeting, as per an official statement, focused on resolving critical field-level bottlenecks, addressing lingering functionality issues within the Power Development Department to ensure seamless, reliable power supply to consumers across District Shopian.

Addressing the meeting, the ADDC emphasized the importance of strict adherence to timelines and quality standards. He directed the executing agencies and contractor firms to expedite ongoing civil and electrical works and ensure smooth inter-departmental coordination to achieve 100% saturation of targets within the stipulated timeframe.

The ADDC emphasized that quality execution and active monitoring are vital for ensuring sustainable and long-term strengthening of the district's power distribution system. Clear instructions were issued to ensure project management authorities complete field evaluations and submit comprehensive status reports before issuing final clearances.

The meeting was attended by the Assistant Commissioner Revenue (ACR) Shopian, Shakoor Ahmed Dar, Sub Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Zainapora, Bilal Ahmed, Executive Engineer KPDC Division Shopian, Mohammed Saleem, AEEs, JEs, and other concerned.

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE
ENGINEER, IRRIGATION & FLOOD
CONTROL DIVISION HANDWARA
RAJWAR ROAD, HANDWARA – 193221
EMAIL: exenifcdhandwara@ifckashmir.com

Subject: Corrigendum.

Kindly read the description of unit at S. No. 5.00 published under Tender ID 2026_IFC_32085_3, in respect of e-NIT No. 10-IFCD/HND/2026-27 dated 13/08/2026, issued under Endorsement No. IFCD/HND/Camp/2441-50 dated 13/08/2026, as "Sft" instead of "Kgs."

All others terms and conditions shall remain same as laid down in original e-NIT.

No: IFCD/HND/2735-44
Dated: 27/08/2026.

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
Irrigation & F C Division
Handwara.
DIPK-5066/26
DATED: 27-08-2026

Government of Jammu & Kashmir OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (R&B) DIVISION PATTAN.

FRESH NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER

Fresh NIT No: 49 /R&B of 2026/ 2377-82

Dated .19.08. 2026

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, UT J&K, e-tenders (In single cover system) are invited on Percentage basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with J&K Govt., CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for the following works:-

S. No	Name of Work	Adv. (Rs. Lacs)	Cost In	Cost of T/Doc. (In Rupees)	Earnest money (In Rupees)	Time of completion	M.H of Account	Class of Contractor	Projecting Authority
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
1	Link roads of Goiwa by way of G-2nd 75mm Thick Wet Mix, 50mm thick BT, 25mm thick Semi dense with 6mm thick seal coat	23.31 lacs	800/-	46620/-	20 Days	5054-C&T	B/C	R&B	

Position Of AAA:

Position of T.S: Accorded

1. The Bidding documents Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Drawings, bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be viewed/downloaded from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in as per schedule of dates given below:-

1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	19.08.2026
2	Period of downloading of bidding documents	20.08.2026
3	Bid submission Start Date	20.08.2026
4	Bid Submission End Date	01.09.2026 4:00 PM
5	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	02.09.2026 11:00 AM Office of The Executive Engineer RnB Division Pattan

Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in shape of Treasury Challan (Dated between bid submission start date and bid submission end date) with NIT No. , Serial No. and name of work to be deposited in M.H. 0059 in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Division Pattan (tender inviting authority) Falling under the Competence of under sign.

2. All the bidders must upload Earnest money /Bid security equal to 2% of advertised cost in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG pledged to Executive Engineer R&B Division Pattan (tender receiving authority) (The Date of earnest money/Bid security should be between the Bid Submission start date and Bid submission End date, as per PWD norms).

3. The Successful bidder will have to provide performance security @ 5% of contract value in the form of CDR/FDR/BG pledged to Executive Engineer R&B Division Pattan (tender receiving authority). The earnest money/ Bid security @2% shall be released to the successful bidder only on receipt of Performance Security @ 5% of Contract value which shall be released after successful completion of DLP /maintenance period for different nature of works i.e. for M&R works six months (6 months) Bituminous works Three Years (03 Years) and Building works Eighteen Months (18 months) etc as per Physical nature of work.

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

5. The Additional Performance Security deposit if any shall be released after the completion of work.

6. The bidder must be registered on JKPWDOMS portal, while participating in the tendering process it should be ensured that all bank account of contractors mapped on JKPWDOMS must be linked with PAN No, GST No and ADHAAR No as per the circular instructions issued by the Finance Department.

7. The earnest money/ Bid security in favor of unsuccessful bidder shall be released only after submission of original Treasury Challan.

8. The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 day s from the date of opening of Technical bids

9. The earnest money shall be forfeited, If:-

Any bidder/ tenderer withdraw his bid/ tender during the period of bid validity or make any modifications in the terms and conditions of the bid.

Failure of Successful bidder to furnish the required performance security within the specified time limit.

Failure of Successful bidder to execute the agreement within 28 days after fixation of contract.

10. Instruction to bidders regarding e-tendering process.

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

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

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

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

Bidders must ensure to upload scanned copy of all necessary documents with the bid. Note:-Scan all the documents on 100 dpi with black and white option.

Computer operator/ Camp/ Draftsman/ Executive Engineer
Technical Officer / R&B Division Pattan

No: R&B / Divn./23777-82
Dated:19.08.2026

DIPK-5046/26
DATED: 27-08-2026

CM Omar reviews drainage system of Srinagar city

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Aug 27: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Thursday chaired a high-level meeting to review the drainage sector of Srinagar city, with a focus on addressing waterlogging, strengthening storm-water infrastructure and putting in place both immediate and long-term measures to improve the city's drainage resilience.

Commissioner Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) Fazlul Haseeb gave a detailed presentation on the drainage profile of Srinagar and outlined a comprehensive five-year integrated roadmap to address the key infrastructural and environmental challenges affecting stormwater management in the city.

The presentation highlighted that Srinagar currently has around 680 km of stormwater deep drainage network, while the city faces a deficit of nearly 2,500 km of drain length in view of future development envisaged under Master Plan 2035. Around 15 per cent of the existing stormwater network is presently not functioning at optimum hydraulic capacity due to inadequate drain dimensions, ageing infrastructure, silt deposition and solid-waste ingress. The review also highlighted the impact of rapid urbanisation on the city's natural drainage system and stressed the need for conservation and restoration of remaining natural drainage corridors.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister said that, to the best extent possible, the drainage system must be strengthened so that the city does not face inundation after few hours of rainfall.

He directed SMC to adopt the proposed short-term measures as its Standard Operating Procedure and ensure its timely implementation. He further directed that whenever



an alert regarding high precipitation is received, SMC should immediately activate these measures to minimise waterlogging and mitigate its impact.

"While these measures will help address some of the immediate problems, the major challenge is infrastructure," the Chief Minister said, directing the SMC to proceed with the proposed long-term interventions, engage a competent agency and prepare a Detailed Project Report (DPR). He stressed that the DPR and proposed interventions

should form part of the overall drainage plan rather than becoming a standalone emergency measure. He directed SMC to take all concerned departments on board and, once the DPR and financial requirements are finalised, work out the funding mechanism, including resources available with the departments.

The Chief Minister also emphasised the need for a sustained citizen awareness campaign, particularly regarding disposal of solid waste, plastic bottles and polythene bags.

He observed that polythene bags are a major cause of choking in the drainage system and called for greater public participation in keeping drains free from waste.

The proposed immediate measures include cleaning and de-silting of existing drains, clearing blockages, daily lifting of solid waste, prioritising missing links, installation of mechanical screens in large open drains and ensuring backup power for dewatering stations. Long-term interventions include construction of additional dewatering stations, segregation of sewerage and storm-water networks, upgradation of old and natural drains, prevention of encroachments and conservation and rejuvenation of lakes.

The proposed integrated programme is to be implemented in two phases over five years, with priority accorded to commercial and densely populated areas followed by low-lying areas.

The meeting was attended by Srinagar district MLAs, including MLA Khanyar Ali Mohammad Sagar, MLA Eidgah Mubarak Gul, MLA Habba Kadal Shamim Firdous, MLA Zadibal Tanvir Sadiq, MLA Hazratbal Salman Sagar, MLA Chanapora Mushtaq Guroo and MLA Lal Chowk Sheikh Ahsan Ahmed, who provided their feedback and inputs on the drainage system of Srinagar city.

Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary Jal Shakti Shaleen Kabra, ACS to the Chief Minister Dheeraj Gupta, ACS PDD Ashwini Kumar, ACS PWD Anil Kumar, ACS Finance Shailendra Kumar, Commissioner Housing & Urban Development Mandeep Kaur, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir Anshul Garg, Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, heads of various departments, Chief Engineers, senior engineers and other concerned officers also attended the meeting.

Adv Heena calls on LG Sinha



KT News Desk

Srinagar, Aug 27: Adv. Heena Sultan, President, J&K Women Lawyers Asso-

ciation, called on Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and put forth various issues pertaining to legal fraternity and women empowerment.

Div Com reviews proposed road projects for Srinagar



KT News Desk

Srinagar, Aug 27: Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg on Thursday chaired a meeting to review various proposed road projects for Srinagar aimed at improving urban mobility, easing traffic congestion and strengthening the city's transportation network.

The meeting was attended by the Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Commissioner SMC, Chief Conservator of Forests, Chief Executive Officer, Cantonment Board, Chief Engineers of I&FC and R&B, and officers from PHE, NHAI, Police, Traffic and KPDC, among other concerned departments.

At the outset, the Superintending Engineer, PWD, presented replies to the observations raised during the previous meeting regarding the proposed Parimpora-Dalgate Flyover, along with a detailed analytical report on the project.

While reviewing the report, the Divisional Commissioner directed the Commissioner SMC to submit the final report of the committee constituted under his chairmanship to assess the project's likely impact on traffic decongestion and improved mobility.

He instructed to incorporate assessments, concerns and inputs from all stakeholder departments regarding the

flyover.

The Divisional Commissioner emphasized that the project should be evaluated through a comprehensive and integrated assessment, taking into account its impact on the overall transportation network rather than examining it in isolation. He stressed the need for detailed technical and stakeholder evaluation before taking the project forward.

The meeting also reviewed the proposed Ring Road Part-III, particularly the stretch passing through the city from Lasjan to Pandach. The Divisional Commissioner examined the comparative statement of the three alternative alignments proposed by the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI).

He further reviewed the observations made by the I&FC Department and the Cantonment Board regarding the proposed 8-km flyover component from Lasjan to Dalgate.

On the occasion, the Divisional Commissioner directed the Chief Engineer, I&FC, to convene a meeting with NHAI to deliberate upon the proposed alignment and associated technical aspects, with particular emphasis on ensuring that the project does not pose any threat to the embankment of River Jhelum.

Continued on
www.kashmirthunder.in

J&K FDA mandates food safety regulations in schools

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Aug 27: The Food & Drugs Administration (FDA), Jammu & Kashmir, has called for strict and effective implementation of the Food Safety and Standards 'Safe Food and Balanced Diets for Children in School' Regulations, 2020 in all government and private schools across Jammu & Kashmir.

In a communication addressed to the Directors of School Education, Jammu and Kashmir, the FDA has emphasized the need to ensure compliance with the provisions of the regulations, which seek to ensure the availability of safe, hygienic

and nutritionally balanced food in and around educational institutions and to safeguard the health and well-being of school children.

Regulation 3(5) mandates that the School Authority shall ensure that no person sells or offers for sale, including free sale, or permits the sale of food products high in saturated fat, trans-fat, added sugar or Sodium (Junk Foods) within the school premises or campus.

Further, Regulation 5(1) provides that no person shall advertise market, sell or offer for sale, including free sale, or permit the sale of such food

Continued on
www.kashmirthunder.in

Daily wagers to protest on Sep 1 over regularisation delay

KNO

Srinagar, Aug 27: The Jammu and Kashmir Casual Daily Wagers Forum on Thursday announced a peaceful protest on September 1 over the prolonged delay in the regularisation of around 61,000 daily wagers, warning that the agitation could be intensified through hunger strikes and work stoppages if the government fails to act.

Forum president Sajjad Ahmad Parray, addressing a press conference here, appealed to daily wagers and employees across departments to remain

united and prepare for a sustained democratic struggle for regularisation and a permanent solution to their demands.

"A committee headed by the Chief Secretary was constituted on March 11, 2025, to prepare a roadmap for the regularisation of daily wagers and submit its report within six months. Despite the passage of around 17 months, the committee's report and recommendations have not been made public," Parray said.

He said Chief Minister Omar Abdullah had assured the Assembly that the regularisation process would

begin during the current financial year, but daily wagers continued to await concrete action.

"Around 61,000 daily wagers, along with their families, are affected by this prolonged uncertainty. Many of them survive on a monthly remuneration of around Rs 9,000, while household, medical, education and utility expenses continue to rise," he said.

Parray warned against attempts to divide employees and daily wagers, asserting that unity and collective action would remain central to their

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IFFJK 2026 to showcase 135 Films from 41 countries

Rs 96 Lakh Prize Purse Announced

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Aug 27: Jammu & Kashmir is all set to screen 135 films from 41 countries in its inaugural edition of the International Film Festival bringing the world of cinema to the UT from September 7 to 10, 2026.

Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo on Thursday reviewed the final arrangements for the inaugural International Film Festival of Jammu & Kashmir (IFFJK 2026), directing all concerned departments and agencies to work in close coordination to ensure a seamless and memorable experience for filmmakers, artists, delegates and audiences.

The meeting reviewed the key features, participation, programming, venue arrangements, cultural presentations, publicity strategy and departmental responsibilities for the four-day festival, which is being positioned as a major international cultural and creative platform for Jammu & Kashmir.

The meeting was attended by Principal Secretary, Home; Principal Secretary, Culture; Commissioner Secretary, General Administration Department; Divisional Commissioners, Jammu/Kashmir; IGP (POS); Commissioner Secretary, Floriculture; Deputy Commissioner, Srinagar; Director, Information; Commissioner, Srinagar Municipal Corporation; Director, Hospitality & Protocol; Director, Handicrafts & Handloom, Kashmir; Director, School Education, Kashmir; Director, Estates; Joint Director,



Information Jammu/Kashmir; GM, NFDC and other senior officers of DIPR.

The Chief Secretary took detailed note of the arrangements being put in place for the successful conduct of the festival and directed the Divisional and District Administrations to remain fully geared up to ensure seamless, professional and glitch-free conduct of the marquee event.

He stressed the importance of close inter-departmental coordination and directed all concerned agencies to discharge their assigned responsibilities efficiently and in unison.

Emphasizing the significance of the inaugural edition, Atal Dulloo called upon the NFDC to make special efforts to bring a larger number of acclaimed filmmakers, actors and other prominent personalities from the film fraternity to

Jammu & Kashmir.

In addition to that the detailed roles and responsibilities of the concerned departments and agencies were also discussed during the meeting. The Chief Secretary emphasized that the success of such a major international event would depend on seamless coordination, timely execution and a shared sense of ownership among all stakeholders.

The Chief Secretary directed all concerned departments to work in close coordination and ensure that every aspect of the festival from hospitality and protocol to venue management, security, civic amenities, transportation, cultural programming and public outreach is handled with professionalism and efficiency.

He underscored that the festival is envisaged as an annual international event from

this year onwards, and therefore its inaugural edition should establish high standards of organisation, programming and audience engagement.

Giving a detailed presentation on the festival, Director Information & Public Relations, Shreya Singhal, highlighted the extensive international participation secured for IFFJK 2026. She highlighted that the inaugural edition will showcase an expansive lineup of 135 films representing 41 countries, bringing together diverse cinematic traditions, storytelling formats and creative voices from across the world.

Adding that India leads the country-wise participation with 64 films, followed by France with 13 and Iran with 8. Argentina and Spain will contribute four films each, while Brazil, Germany, the Russian Federation and the United States

will have three films each.

A further group of countries, including South Korea, Sweden, Taiwan, Qatar, Colombia and Türkiye, among others, will each contribute curated films, giving the festival a distinctly global character.

A major attraction of the inaugural festival will be its proposed ₹96 lakh total prize purse, distributed across nine award categories to recognise excellence in filmmaking and cinematic craft.

The Best Film award carries the top prize of 25 lakh, while Best Director and Best Debut Film of a Director will carry ₹15 lakh each. Reflecting the festival's special focus on the region, the Best Film – J&K Select category carries a prize of ₹10 lakh.

The performance categories of Best Actor (Male) and Best Actor (Female) carry ₹8 lakh each, while the technical categories of Best Cinematography, Best Sound Design and Best Editing carry ₹5 lakh each.

The award structure, she said, has been designed to celebrate artistic excellence as well as the diverse creative and technical dimensions of filmmaking.

Adding a distinctive visual and experiential dimension to the festival, a Floating Screen on the waters of Dal Lake near SKICC is also being installed as part of the festival experience.

The initiative is expected to provide an iconic setting for film screenings while showcasing the unique cultural and natural landscape of Jammu & Kashmir to visiting filmmakers, artists and delegates from across India and abroad.

Continued on
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EDITORIAL

Friday Brief: Accountability As A Source Of Hope

Accountability is not merely a legal or social concept in Islam; it is the very foundation of faith. The Quran declares, "Every soul will be held in pledge for what it earned" (74:38). This verse establishes a profound truth: every action, word, and intention will be examined. No one escapes this divine audit. The concept of accountability in Islam begins

with the recognition that we are not the owners of our lives but trustees. Allah says, "And do not approach the property of the orphan except in the best manner until he reaches maturity, and give full measure and weight in justice" (6:152). This command to be just in transactions reflects a broader principle: we will be questioned about how we discharged

our responsibilities. The Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) said, "Every one of you is a shepherd, and every one of you is responsible for his flock." This hadith reminds us that accountability is universal. The ruler will be questioned about his subjects, the parent about his children, the employee about his work, and the citizen about his society. No

one is exempt. Equally important is the internal accountability—the accountability of the self. The Prophet (PBUH) said, "The wise person is the one who takes account of himself and works for what comes after death." This self-reckoning is not self-condemnation but self-correction. It requires honesty about our weaknesses and a commitment to improve. In a

world where corruption and injustice are common, Islamic accountability offers a powerful corrective. It teaches that no power, wealth, or status can shield anyone from divine justice. On the Day of Judgment, even the most powerful will stand alone, stripped of all worldly protection. The only currency that will matter is deeds performed with sincerity and

justice. Accountability in Islam is ultimately a source of hope. It assures us that no good deed is wasted and no injustice goes unaddressed. It calls us to live with integrity, knowing that we will be asked not only about what we did but also about what we failed to do. That is the essence of faith: to live as if every moment will be examined, because it will be.

The Quran Nurtures Intellect And Shapes Reason

Allah does not alter the condition of a people until they bring about a change in their inner selves. This is the law of Allah and there is no exception to this law.

Mansoor Alam

We verily, have made it a Quran in Arabic, that you may be able to understand (its meanings and its admonitions). (43:3) [Hilali & Khan]

The Quran not only appeals to reason, but it nourishes and develops it. Allah says that We have made the Quran unambiguous (2:2; 4:82) and absolutely clear (16:89) showing the truth, so that humans can understand it by using their intellect; so that they can use reason and logic to understand it (47:24). This will develop and nourish their intellectual abilities. The Quran addresses realities of life; it provides real solutions to real problems of life facing humanity (16:64). Its teaching is a guiding light (5:15) of truth and therefore it illuminates the path of humanity (6:122). This is the essence and reality of the Quran. When people asked the Prophet (PBUH) for miracle he said the Quran itself is the miracle that I am presenting to you (17:88; 2:23-24).

The Quran was sent down to the Prophet (PBUH) so that, he may, in accordance with Allah's directives, bring humankind out of darkness into light (14:1). And history is witness that the Prophet (PBUH) indeed did it.

Allah tells the Prophet (PBUH) to declare: (12:108) - Tell them that this is my way which is very clear and straight. My call is based on firm conviction, reason, knowledge, and understanding - mine as well as that of my followers.

Therefore, this is the way of the Prophet (PBUH) that he himself declares that he follows; and the Prophet (PBUH) also declares that those who claim to obey his way (Sunnah) must follow as well. But what is the reality in practice? Listen to any sermon by those who proclaim Prophet's Sunnah? The preachers in their sermons recite a verse of the Quran and then what follows after is weaving together of narrations after narrations describing miracles of the Prophet (PBUH) that mesmerizes the audience and turns off their intellect and thought. These kinds of sermons have nothing to do with the Prophet (PBUH).

When people get emotionally and psychologically attached to listening to stories of miracles and supernatural feats attributed to the Prophet (PBUH) then they lose their ability to think. This was a great conspiracy that was hatched against Islam so that religious clergy in collusion with kings could keep the masses ignorant; so that the masses never could question their illegitimate existence in Islam. In this age the light of knowledge is spreading fast and people are awakening from their religiously induced deep slumber. But the world's Pharaohs (hegemonic powers) cannot let the Muslim masses become independent thinkers again because they know that if that happens then the world will once again see the shining results of Islam as it once did; because then Islam's true picture of universal brotherhood of humankind will emerge and engulf the whole world; and their hegemony over the world will disappear. So, what did they do to avoid this scenario from happening and make sure Muslims as a whole don't come even close to adopting critical thinking? Iqbal put it succinctly and cogently in few words:

Make Muslims remain engrossed in prayers and rituals

Habituated to monastic way of life and worship ancestors



And:

If they ever happen to wake up from their daydreams

Let the magic of rulers and priests put them to sleep

Hegemonic powers are fully behind promoting and propagating this kind of Islam. Because they know that if this Ummah ever wakes up then the true Islam's universal sublime sunshine will remove their manufactured mental darkness. The Quran's verdict is that if Muslims become Momin, then no nation on earth will be able to dominate them (3:139). This message of the Quran may not be in front of us, but it definitely is in front of them.

Stop and Think - Prophet's (PBUH) Plea

The Prophet (PBUH) constantly appealed to his people to stop and think: (34:46) - Tell them O Messenger: I neither want to enter into unnecessary lengthy discussions with you, nor do I want to give you a long lecture. All I ask of you is, whether in pairs or alone, that you stop for a while and think! If you use your intellect and reason only then you will realize that the divine message I am presenting to you is for your own true benefit; it is for your own self-development.

The Quran emphasizes this point further. It is surprising to them that a warner has come from among them: (50:2) - These people are surprised that the person who has been bestowed with the Quran is an ordinary human being like them. We see the same thing today. One changes one's demeanor and looks when one becomes religiously inclined. He does not want to look like a regular person. Why do they change their outward appearance? It is because the looks and the dress are their special

religious identities. Why would they look like ordinary people; why would they be from among them? Because if they did they will become like them. Then they will have to work hard like common folks; and then they will have to talk about the Quran's equity. That is why they want to keep their separate special identities and the freeloading that goes with it.

There is another important point worth noting here about why it sounds strange to them that the Messenger is an ordinary person. And that is being held accountable. The Quran's entire foundation, the essence of our Deen is based on accountability of one's action. In fact, it is based on accountability of even one's thought. However, we see that there is no accountability for those who are committing transgression and are enjoying all the material benefits of life - and they are not paying the price for their crime.

The Quran says that life is not only the life of this world; that life continues after death. Leave aside the physical form and appearance that death consumes. The internal entity which is the source of human action is the one that moves forward after death. The Quran calls it "nafs" which modern psychology calls it "self" or "personality" and which Allama Iqbal calls it "khudi."

Human "Self" Inside Human Body

Getting into the abstract philosophy of "self" or "personality" is complex and time consuming. But some simple examples will illustrate the point. When I pick up a book I do not say that my hand picked it up. I say that "I" picked it up although my hand picked it. When I walk to the masjid I don't say that my feet walked. I say that

"I" walked although my feet walked. When I say something, I don't say that my tongue said it. But I say that "I" said this although actually my tongue said it. So, what is this "I" that is doing all this? In fact, it is this "I" that is accountable. A criminal is told that "you" stole that watch. He is not told that your hand stole the watch. That is, there is something else inside human being that makes him do an act. It is not his hand, it is not his feet, it is not his tongue that decided to act but that it is the inside entity that is invisible which made the decision and these organs acted only as its tool. If someone wanted to steal something but could not get the chance to do it then in the eyes of the law he didn't commit any crime. But in the eyes of Allah, he not only committed the crime, but that thought-crime was registered against his internal entity "self" in the divine registry - and it is this entity that moves forward after this life ends. This is the foundation of Islam. This is the essence of Deen - that no thought or action remains unaccountable in divine registry.

Islam is the conviction on this very fact that I will be asked about everything that I did or said or thought and that I will be held accountable after I die. This is called Iman in the Hereafter. But this conviction is missing from the Muslim society today. We seek every opportunity for short-cuts. In fact, we have invented short-cuts even in the Quran - for earning easy rewards. We think we can get away by flouting the laws of Allah. But we cannot escape accountability for our actions - not even for our thoughts - in the Hereafter. How we can escape accountability if not even our Prophet (PBUH) could! (6:15) - Say:

"Behold, I would dread, were I [thus] to rebel against my Sustainer, the suffering [which would befall me] on that awesome Day [of Judgment]." [Asad]

Fourteen hundred years ago the Quran described this, and modern psychologist are finding its proof today through extensive research in psychoanalysis. They have concluded that there is something in humans that is neither the product of physical body nor is it subject to physical laws nor does it die with the death of the physical body. This is called human "personality" or "self." The Quran calls it "nafs." They have even come to the conclusion - that human "self" is immortal. The Quran said this 1400 years ago: (50:4) - Tell them We know what the earth consumes of them. It is only the physical body that disintegrates. It has neither any effect nor any control over human personality or self. Deeds affect human personality (self) and not the body. Therefore, through the preservation of human personality (self) all deeds of a person are fully preserved with Allah. The continuation of this process is called "the life hereafter." And human "self" remains protected and moves on to the hereafter carrying along with it the records of all the deeds done in the world. The Quran says that this record remains fastened in everyone's neck which is opened up for one to read one's own life's record of deeds: (17:13) - The struggle between the Truth and Falsehood continues within man himself and the record of this is fastened around his neck. It is not anywhere outside but is within himself. During this life, there are many thoughts, feelings, and desires which remain hidden in the unconscious mind. On the Day of Judgement all these will be brought out. In other words, the record which had remained folded hitherto will be spread out at that time. Man will be told to read his own record and decide for himself the punishment he deserves for his wrong deeds (17:14):

What is the kind of society that results when even some people believe and have deep conviction that they will be held accountable in the Hereafter? Khalifa 'Umar (R) used to go on night-watch to find out if everything was okay with the people. In one of his excursions he found an interesting episode. A mother (who used to sell milk) was telling her daughter to pour water in milk in order to make more profit. The daughter refused to do that. When the mother asked what happened to you now? You never objected before. The girl said that I listened to Khalifa that one should not cheat; that one should do honest business. The mother said that no one is watching us here, so go ahead and pour some water in the milk. The girl refused again and said to her mother that Khalifa also said that Allah is watching even if no one is watching. This is the result of Iman, which is sadly missing from our society.

We may put security guards everywhere, but it will not change our society. Our hearts need to change first like that girl's heart did. Our mindset needs to change if we say that we have Iman in the Hereafter. This will be the real renaissance of Islam. The Quran says that unless and until people change their internal mindset there will be no change in the society: (13:11) - Allah does not alter the condition of a people until they bring about a change in their inner selves. This is the law of Allah and there is no exception to this law.

Courtesy: IslamiCity

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NITI Aayog member Dr N Srinivas reviews major development projects, initiatives in J&K

Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo stresses value addition, MSMEs, tourism and skill development

KT News Desk

Srinagar, August 27: Member, NITI Aayog, Dr. N. Srinivas Thursday emphasised that few years back we were talking about Safety & Security, and now we are talking about growth and development in Jammu and Kashmir.

Dr Srinivas, as per a PIB statement, made these observations while chairing a review meeting to take stock of major development works and the overall development scenario in the Union Territory. The meeting was held at SKICC Srinagar in the presence of Chief Secretary, J&K, Shri Atal Dulloo, and senior Secretaries of various departments.

Dr. Srinivas observed that the development landscape and approach to leadership have undergone significant changes, necessitating greater focus on effective implementation, outcomes and institutional collaboration.

Emphasising the ethos of cooperative and competitive federalism, he stressed the importance of stronger collaboration between institutions and governments and learning from successful practices that could be replicated in other areas.

He highlighted the potential role of NITI Aayog in bringing different stakeholders onto a common platform and facilitating a coordinated approach towards development. He suggested that departments identify and communicate their specific requirements and areas where institutional support could be useful, enabling NITI



Aayog to explore appropriate avenues for assistance.

Dr. Srinivas emphasised the need for a collaborative approach, with greater engagement among stakeholders and institutions to identify opportunities, address challenges and develop targeted interventions. He also appreciated the opportunity to engage with the J&K leadership and administration and indicated the scope for continued collaboration in areas where NITI Aayog can provide policy, institutional and technical support.

Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo highlighted the need to leverage the Union Territory's strengths and emerging opportunities to accelerate economic development, with particular focus on agriculture and horticulture, food processing, industry, tourism, research and development, skill development and MSMEs.

He stressed the importance of focusing on high-value, low-volume products, particularly apple, walnut, cherry and almond, and called for greater value addition and processing of agricultural and horticultural produce within the Union

Territory.

CS Dulloo underlined the need to promote food processing and value addition, including investment in processing facilities for apple juice and other products, with a view to increasing farmers' incomes and strengthening the local economic ecosystem.

He also emphasised strengthening research and development by leveraging the capabilities of universities, alongside focused efforts in skill development to create a workforce aligned with emerging opportunities.

On industrial development, the Chief Secretary stressed the need to strengthen the industrial and MSME ecosystem, including by leveraging the New Central Sector Scheme (NCSS) for attracting investment and promoting industrial growth.

Highlighting the potential of tourism as a key driver of economic activity, Shri Dulloo called for greater opportunities for local businesses and entrepreneurs. He also emphasised stronger institutional partnerships, including collaboration with IIM Jammu, particularly for leveraging industry data and supporting evidence-based

policy interventions.

The Chief Secretary further stressed the importance of promoting small businesses and development-oriented units at the district level, so that the benefits of economic growth and investment reach different parts of the Union Territory.

During the meeting, detailed presentations were made on the progress of major development projects and key sectoral initiatives being implemented across the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir. The review covered road and rail connectivity, power and hydropower, drinking water, agriculture and allied sectors, industrial development, tourism, health, education, and urban and rural development.

The meeting reviewed the expansion in connectivity infrastructure in J&K, including major projects such as the Delhi-Amritsar-Katra Expressway, Jammu-Srinagar National Highway, semi-ring roads and other National Highway projects. The review also covered 18 new highway projects sanctioned by the Government of India during 2025-26.

Progress under PMGSY and

NABARD was also reviewed. Since 2021-22, 1,074 projects with an estimated cost of 4,967.69 crore have been approved, of which 467 projects have been completed and 607 are under progress.

The power sector featured prominently in the review, with ongoing hydropower projects having a combined capacity of 3,014 MW and an investment of 22,207 crore. These projects are expected to generate around 5,800 million units of energy annually, while the Union Territory is working towards doubling its hydropower generation capacity by 2028.

The review also took note of progress under the Jal Jeevan Mission, with rural household tap-water coverage increasing from 31 per cent at the beginning of the Mission to 81 per cent. As many as 901 villages have been certified as Har Ghar Jal.

In agriculture and allied sectors, initiatives aimed at improving productivity, market access, farmer incomes and resilience were reviewed. The Jammu & Kashmir Competitiveness Improvement of Agriculture & Allied Project, with an outlay of approximately 1,800 crore, is being implemented across 90 blocks and is expected to benefit around three lakh households.

Industrial development and investment promotion were also reviewed. The Union Territory recorded investment realization of 5,824.42 crore during FY 2025-26, the highest ever as per the presentation, while 1,635 crore investment had been realized during the current financial year up to July 2026.

Khelo India Samvad at NIT Srinagar connects over 200 youth with Prime Minister's vision for Viksit Bharat



KT News Desk

Srinagar, August 27: MY Bharat Srinagar, under the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India, organised the Khelo India Samvad – Prime Minister's Virtual Interaction with Youth and Sportspersons at the National Institute of Technology (NIT), Srinagar.

The programme, as per a statement, witnessed enthusiastic participation from over 200 youth, including MY Bharat Volunteers (NYVs), students, sportspersons, social media influencers and representatives of various educational institutions. Organised as part of the nationwide Khelo India Samvad initiative, the event connected young people across the country with the Hon'ble Prime Minister through a virtual interaction.

Participants listened to the Prime Minister's address,

which underscored the importance of sports, fitness, youth leadership and active participation in nation-building. The interaction highlighted the role of young people in shaping the future of the nation and contributing towards the vision of Viksit Bharat.

The programme was attended by officials from NIT Srinagar, the District Youth Officer (DYO), Srinagar, social media influencers and other distinguished guests. Speakers appreciated the initiative for providing a meaningful platform for engagement, inspiration and dialogue with the youth.

The event concluded with a reaffirmation of the commitment to empower young people through sports, leadership and community participation. MY Bharat Srinagar expressed gratitude to all participants, volunteers, partner institutions and guests for their support in making the programme a success.

DC chairs NCORD meeting, calls for stronger coordination to combat drug menace



KT News Desk

UDHAMPUR, AUGUST 27: Deputy Commissioner Udhampur Minga Sherpa, Thursday chaired a meeting of the District-Level Narco Coordination Centre to review drug control measures in the district.

The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner Prem Singh and the officers from the line departments. The DC, as per an official statement, conducted a detailed review of measures pertaining to the identification and rehabilitation of drug users, progress on PIT-NDPS cases, action against erring pharmacies, installation of CCTV cameras, prevention of illicit cultivation of narcotic crops, inspections of pharmacies and de-addiction centres, destruction of wild cannabis, hotspot surveillance and preventive enforcement.

The meeting also reviewed block-wise data on drug users, identification of drug hotspots, surveillance of educational institutions, implementation of IEC campaigns, mass awareness programmes, computerised billing systems in pharmacies, Nasha Mukti Panchayats and cases registered under the NDPS Act.

Emphasising the need for

robust inter-departmental coordination, the DC directed all concerned agencies to intensify efforts to identify and apprehend individuals involved in drug trafficking, monitor drug abuse-prone areas and promote community-based rehabilitation and awareness initiatives. He instructed the stakeholder departments to intensify counselling services and strengthen IEC activities to sensitise the public, particularly youth, about the harmful effects of drug abuse.

Stressing the importance of strict enforcement, the DC called for decisive action against drug trafficking, effective seizure of illicit substances and sustained efforts to protect the youth from the menace of drugs.

He further directed all concerned departments to enhance their overall performance, ensure timely submission of reports and work in close coordination to achieve the goal of making Udhampur a drug-free district under the Nasha Mukti Bharat Abhiyan.

The Health Department was specifically directed to ensure that data pertaining to drug users is properly maintained and regularly updated for effective monitoring, planning and rehabilitation interventions.

Doda administration approves 17 rent assessment cases



KT News Desk

DODA, AUGUST 27: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Doda Krishan Lal Thursday chaired a meeting of the District Rent Assessment Committee to review and assess rent fixation cases pertaining to government-hired accommodations and office spaces across the district.

The committee, as per an official statement, took up a total of 19 cases for consideration. Each case was examined in detail with reference to the prescribed norms, prevailing rates, location, nature of the accommodation and other relevant parameters. After detailed scrutiny and deliberations, 17 rent assessment cases were approved by

the committee.

The Deputy Commissioner stressed the importance of maintaining transparency and uniformity in the rent assessment process. He directed the concerned departments to ensure that all rent assessment cases are submitted with complete requisite documents and proper justification for timely processing and disposal.

The meeting was attended by the Superintending Engineer, PWD (R&B); Chief Planning Officer; Assistant Commissioner Revenue; Additional Superintendent of Police; Chief Medical Officer; District Sheep Husbandry Officer, other concerned officers and officials, besides the house owners associated with the rent assessment cases.

DC Srinagar, SSP review anti-drug measures in District NCORD meeting

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, AUGUST 27: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo, Thursday chaired a comprehensive meeting of the District-Level NCORD Committee at the Meeting Hall of the DC Office to review and strengthen district's strategy the measures being undertaken to combat drug trafficking and substance abuse in the district.

Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Srinagar, Dr. G.V. Sundeeep Chakravarthy, also attended the meeting.

The meeting, as per an official statement, held detailed discussions on enforcement, prevention and rehabilitation, with emphasis on dismantling narcotics networks, strengthening action under the NDPS and PITNDPS Acts, effective implementation of the Common SOP for action against accused persons, implementation of the nationwide 100 Weeks Nasha Mukti Bharat Abhiyan, maintaining zero tolerance towards Government employees involved in NDPS cases, and strengthening rehabilitation measures for drug victims.

While reviewing the implementation of nationwide 100 Weeks Nasha Mukti Bharat Abhiyan, the Deputy Commissioner directed all concerned Departments to submit their detailed activity plans for the campaign. He stressed the need for sustained awareness and preventive interventions, particularly among youth and vulnerable



sections, to strengthen the collective fight against drug abuse.

The DC also reviewed rehabilitation measures and emphasized effective implementation of the proposed rehabilitation policy, being implemented on pilot basis in selected Districts of Jammu and Kashmir, including Srinagar. He called for strengthening rehabilitation, counseling, follow-up and aftercare mechanisms for drug victims to facilitate their recovery and reintegration into society.

The DC also stressed the enrolment of rehabilitation cases, aimed at ensuring better tracking of beneficiaries, timely interventions and improved coordination among departments and rehabilitation institutions.

Emphasizing the coordinated approach, the DC called upon all stakeholder Departments to intensify joint efforts, strengthen information sharing and surveillance and ensure effective implementation

of anti-drug measures. The DC further directed all concerned departments to work in close coordination and with a shared sense of responsibility to protect the youth from the harmful effects of drugs and contribute towards realizing the vision of a drug-free Jammu and Kashmir.

On the occasion, the SSP Srinagar underlined the coordinated approach against narcotics-related activities with sustained commitment.

During the meeting, the NCORD Committee was apprised of the sustained crackdown against narcotics, which has led to the registration of about 170 FIRs and the arrest of about 240 alleged drug peddlers, besides attachment and dismantling of illegal movable

and immovable properties linked to drug traffickers as a part of the intensified action, while bank accounts have also been frozen pursuant to financial investigations.

Jammu takes leap into future of green urban mobility with PM e-Bus Sewa

JSCL signs agreement with PMI Electro Mobility Solutions Private Limited for addition of 25 electric buses

KT News Desk

JAMMU, AUGUST 27: Jammu Smart City Limited (JSCL) Thursday signed an agreement with PMI Electro Mobility Solutions Private Limited for the addition of 25 electric buses to Jammu's existing electric public transport fleet under the Government of India's PM e-Bus Sewa Scheme.

Divisional Commissioner Jammu Ramesh Kumar was also present on the occasion.

The agreement, as per an official statement, was signed by Chief Executive Officer, Jammu Smart City Limited Dr. Devansh Yadav on behalf of the Housing and Urban Development Department, Government of

Jammu & Kashmir and COO – SPV Operations, PMI Electro Mobility Solutions Private Limited Chandra Kant Goyal.

The agreement marks an important milestone in scaling up Jammu's existing electric mobility ecosystem. Jammu Smart City Limited is already operating 100 electric buses in the city, and the addition of 25 more buses will further strengthen the public transport network and expand access to clean and sustainable mobility.

The initiative represents a continued commitment to transforming Jammu into a cleaner, greener and future-ready city, where modern public transport keeps pace with the city's growth and evolving



mobility needs.

As part of the programme, PMI Electro Mobility Solutions Private Limited made a

detailed presentation before the Chairman, JSCL and Divisional Commissioner Jammu Ramesh Kumar, showcasing its electric

bus products and apprising the senior leadership of the key features and passenger-oriented aspects of its mobility solutions.

Dr. Devansh Yadav, CEO, JSCL, also briefed the Chairman, JSCL and Divisional Commissioner on the PM e-Bus Sewa project, the proposed fleet augmentation and the current status of the associated infrastructure, including the development of the Bhagwati Nagar Depot.

The new electric buses will be operated from the Bhagwati Nagar Depot, which is currently being developed by Jammu Smart City Limited as a dedicated electric bus and mobility facility.

The Chief Minister of Jammu & Kashmir laid the foundation

stone for the Bhagwati Nagar Depot earlier this month, marking the beginning of another important piece of mobility infrastructure for Jammu.

The development of the depot, together with the expansion of the electric bus fleet, reflects JSCL's integrated approach towards building the next generation of public transport infrastructure in Jammu. The facility will provide the supporting ecosystem required for the growing electric bus network and will play an important role in strengthening public transportation in the city.

While speaking on the occasion, the Divisional Commissioner said that the expansion of electric public

transport is an important step in supporting Jammu's rapid growth and improving the quality of urban mobility for its citizens. The addition of these buses, along with the development of the Bhagwati Nagar Depot, will strengthen the city's public transport infrastructure and contribute to a cleaner and more sustainable Jammu. We must continue to focus on mobility solutions that are efficient, accessible and aligned with the future needs of the city, he added.

Dr. Devansh Yadav said "Jammu has already embarked on its journey towards electric mobility. Thursday's agreement takes that journey further by adding 25 more electric buses to our existing fleet.

Minister Dar calls for farmer-centric approach to boost horticulture

Directs strict action against spurious pesticides, quality checks on planting material

KT News Desk

Jammu, Aug 27: Minister for Agriculture Production, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Cooperatives and Election Department, Javid Ahmad Dar on Thursday called for a focused, farmer-centric strategy to harness the vast horticultural potential of Jammu division, enhance farm incomes and transform horticulture into a more productive and remunerative economic activity.

The Minister was speaking at an interactive session with the farmers organised by the Department of Horticulture Jammu at Kisan Kendra, Talab Tillo, here. He was the chief guest occasion and MLA Jammu West Arvind Gupta was the guest of honour.

Director Horticulture Jammu Gul Syed, Director Rural Development Jammu Shanaz Akhter, Director Animal Husbandry Jammu Sanjay Gupta, senior officers of the

Horticulture Department and allied departments besides farmers attended the programme.

The interaction provided a direct platform to the farmers to share their concerns, difficulties and suggestions regarding the horticulture sector. The farmers highlighted issues related to incentives, availability of quality planting material, market support and measures required to improve production, productivity and profitability.

Responding to the concerns, Javid Dar assured the farmers that their genuine issues would be examined and addressed through coordinated interventions. He stressed that the department must maintain continuous engagement with the farming community so that policies and schemes are aligned with the ground realities and emerging needs.

On the occasion, Javid Dar released the Handbook of the Department of Horticulture Jammu, a practical reference



document for farmers containing information on modern horticultural practices, departmental schemes, technologies and other farmer-oriented interventions. He also distributed sanction letters under various components of different Horticulture schemes among the eligible beneficiaries.

The initiative will facilitate the farmers in availing departmental assistance and undertaking horticultural activities in a systematic and commercially viable manner.

In another farmer-oriented initiative, the Minister flagged off buses carrying farmers for an educational and exposure visit to Government Fruit Plant Nurseries in Jammu and Samba. The visit is aimed at providing the farmers with practical exposure to modern nursery management, quality planting material, scientific fruit production and advanced horticultural technologies.

As part of the exposure programme, the farmers will also visit Krishi Vigyan Kendra

Samba, Krishi Vigyan Kendra Jammu, SKUAST-Jammu and Chakroi Farm, where they will observe field demonstrations, modern technologies and best practices that can be replicated at the farm level.

The Minister subsequently chaired a meeting of the Department of Horticulture Jammu and reviewed implementation of various schemes, programmes and farmer-oriented interventions.

The Minister directed the officers to intensify enforcement

against the sale and distribution of fake and spurious pesticides and ensure stringent quality control in the market. He called for regular inspections and effective monitoring mechanisms to safeguard farmers from sub-standard agricultural inputs and protect horticultural production.

Javid Dar also laid special emphasis on regulating the agencies involved in supply of planting material. He directed the concerned officers to ensure that only quality and certified planting material reaches the farmers and that suppliers strictly adhere to prescribed standards. He called for strengthening the government nurseries and expanding the availability of quality fruit plants at subsidised rates.

The Minister said that development of a robust nursery infrastructure and timely supply of healthy planting material would be crucial for improving productivity and accelerating the expansion of modern horticulture in Jammu division.

Calling for a scientific assessment of horticultural potential, the Minister directed the department to identify areas best suited for fresh and dry fruit cultivation. He stressed the need for location-specific and crop-specific plans based on agro-climatic conditions, available resources and market demand, so that farmers can be encouraged to adopt crops offering better and sustainable returns.

He directed the officers to strengthen field-level monitoring, improve the delivery mechanism of departmental schemes and ensure that benefits reach eligible farmers in a transparent and timely manner. He also called for regular inspections of input suppliers and nurseries to maintain quality standards.

Javid Dar stressed that the horticulture sector holds immense potential for employment generation, diversification of agriculture and strengthening the rural economy.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Providing quality

to a quaternary healthcare institution, the fact is that it will not resolve the pressures that SKIMS finds itself under. These pressures are not because of a top-down vacuum; they are because of a weakness at the foundation level," he said.

The Chief Minister observed that institutions such as SKIMS were essentially referral hospitals meant to cater to patients requiring highly specialised treatment. However, gaps at the primary and secondary levels often resulted in premier tertiary institutions having to undertake procedures and treatments that should ideally be available at lower levels of healthcare.

He cited routine surgical procedures such as gallbladder and appendicitis surgeries as examples of the burden being placed on tertiary institutions because of deficiencies in the lower tiers of the healthcare system.

"This defeats the purpose of the entire three-tier model of tertiary, secondary and primary healthcare," he said, stressing that strengthening the foundation of the healthcare system was essential for the successful functioning of both tertiary and quaternary institutions.

Omar Abdullah welcomed the conference held under the aegis of NITI Aayog and described the participation of leading institutions such as AIIMS New Delhi, PGIMER Chandigarh and J&K's own institutions as an important opportunity for meaningful collaboration.

He expressed hope that the engagement would translate into sustained cooperation, knowledge-sharing and institutional partnerships, particularly as J&K works towards strengthening its advanced healthcare ecosystem in line with the vision of a developed India by 2047.

The Chief Minister said the government would have to remain equally focused on ensuring access to good-quality basic healthcare beyond the two major urban centres of Jammu and Srinagar.

"We need to ensure good quality healthcare in rural J&K. I am not saying that we can either target or expect to provide SKIMS quality care in rural J&K. That is not the aim. But what we need to be able to ensure is that we can provide good quality basic healthcare beyond the two twin capital cities of J&K," he said.

He said a combination of strong primary and secondary healthcare services with an advanced level of specialised quaternary care would place Jammu and Kashmir in a stronger position to meet the healthcare needs of its people.

The Chief Minister also underlined the importance of ensuring that patients from J&K do not have to travel outside for advanced treatment. He recalled that SKIMS was established with the fundamental objective of providing the most needy patients with the best possible healthcare within J&K.

"That is what we hope going ahead as SKIMS transitions from tertiary care to the fourth tier," he said, assuring that the government would make every possible effort, within the financial limitations of J&K, to provide SKIMS with the infrastructure required for its next phase of development.

Omar Abdullah said infrastructure remained one of the principal factors determining the ability of healthcare institutions to retain and attract highly skilled professionals. He expressed confidence in the quality of human resources available in J&K, saying its doctors, nurses and paramedical staff were second to none.

"Our human resource is second to none. Our nurses, our paramedics and more than anything else our doctors are the best that you will find," he said.

Highlighting the presence of J&K-trained doctors in every continent around the world, particularly in the Gulf and Middle East, the Chief Minister said many professionals were compelled to seek opportunities outside of J&K because of limitations in facilities and infrastructure.

He called for a concerted effort to create conditions that could facilitate a "reverse brain drain", enabling doctors from J&K working outside to return and contribute to the healthcare system in their home state.

"How do we ensure that we provide the best possible facilities, the best possible infrastructure so that we can create a situation where tomorrow there is a reverse brain drain? Instead of exporting our doctors from J&K, we start welcoming many of them back to our own shores," he said.

The Chief Minister said achieving this objective would strengthen both tertiary and quaternary healthcare in J&K and contribute significantly towards building a self-reliant and advanced healthcare system.

He also emphasised that the recommendations emerging from the summit should move beyond being a theoretical exercise and be translated into action on ground, practically.

"I hope that the recommendations are not only a theoretical exercise but are put in a shape where they can be given practical implementation," he said.

Omar Abdullah said the summit had provided a valuable platform for collaboration among premier healthcare institutions, NITI Aayog, policymakers, clinicians and researchers, and expressed hope that the deliberations would result in tangible improvements in healthcare delivery and advanced medical services in J&K.

On the occasion, the Chief Minister released the book "Platinum Pearls in General Surgery Super Specialties" and the souvenir "SKIMS Journey of Transformation." He also presented awards to nine winners of the Quiz Competition, Poster Presentation and Oral Presentation categories.

Minister for Health and Medical Education Sakeena Masood Itoo, MLA Pampore Retd Justice Hasnain Masoodi, Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Dheeraj Gupta, Director SKIMS Prof. Dr. Mohammad Ashraf Ganie, Dean SKIMS Medical College Prof. Dr. Fazlul Q. Parry and Organizing Co-Chair Prof. Dr. Aejaz Ahsan Baba were present on the occasion.

Former Directors of SKIMS, faculty members, officers of SKIMS and officers and officials of the Health and Medical Education Department also attended the valedictory ceremony.

The summit brought together leading medical institutions, clinicians, researchers, policy makers and healthcare professionals to deliberate on advanced care, research, institutional collaboration and the roadmap for scaling tertiary healthcare into a quaternary healthcare ecosystem. (KNO)

LG, CM greet people

all sections."

CM Omar Abdullah, in his message, described Raksha Bandhan as a cherished festival that celebrates the bond of love, affection and mutual respect between brothers and sisters. He said the festival reflects the enduring values of family bonds, trust, care and responsibility that strengthen the social fabric of society.

The Chief Minister expressed hope that the occasion would bring happiness, peace and prosperity to every household and further strengthen the spirit of unity, harmony and brotherhood among people across Jammu and Kashmir.

J&K to remain hot

has been posted as IGP Security J&K vice Sujit Kumar.

Tejinder Singh, IGP CID J&K has been posted as IGP Jammu Zone vice Bhim Sen Tuti.

Shakti Kumar Pathak has been designated as Director, Anti-Corruption Bureau.

Mubassir Latifi Ameer has been posted as Deputy Inspector General (DIG) IR Kashmir. Sahil Sarangal has been posted as Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Pulwama. Sunny Gupta has been posted as SSP Kishtwar. Tahir Saleem Khan has been posted as SSP Handwara. Muzaffar Ahmad Shah has been posted as SO to IG Kashmir Zone. Naresh Singh has been posted as SSP Rajouri.

Transfers and postings have been ordered by the Lieutenant Governor in the interest of administration with immediate effect. (KNO)

J&K to remain

farmers to continue harvesting and other agricultural operations while keeping local weather conditions in view.

Meanwhile, Srinagar recorded a maximum temperature of 29.3 degrees Celsius and a minimum of 16.7 degrees Celsius on Thursday. Qazigund recorded 27.2 degrees Celsius, Pahalgam 24.7 degrees, Kupwara 30.1 degrees, Kokernag 26.8 degrees and Gulmarg 20.3 degrees as the maximum temperatures.

In the Jammu division, Jammu city recorded a maximum of 33 degrees Celsius and a minimum of 24.3 degrees, while Banihal recorded 30.1 degrees, Batote 25.9 degrees, Katra 30 degrees, Bhaderwah 29.1 degrees and Kathua 33.1

degrees.

Udhampur received the highest rainfall of 51 mm during the past 24 hours, while Kathua recorded 24.2 mm of rain, according to the weather bulletin.

The MeT centre said people, particularly those living in vulnerable areas, should remain alert during periods of intense rainfall. (KNO)

Uproar over posting

earlier triggered strong protests from the Assembly Secretariat staff, who accused the government of undermining the autonomous character of the legislature.

Several MLAs had also voiced concern over what they termed "interference" in the functioning of the Assembly. (KNO)

Cong won't join

reiterated his party's position on the issue.

He referred to assurances given by Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi regarding the party's support for the fight for restoration of rights.

Karra said Congress stands with the National Conference, but would continue to raise issues affecting the people. "There is no doubt that we are with the NC. Whenever NC faces any threat from BJP it will find Congress standing by its side," he said. "But that doesn't mean that the Congress Party [will not raise] the problems and issues here, whether they are of inflation, power, electricity, or gas cylinders, or any such issue which hurts the people here," Karra added.

On the recent electricity tariff hike, Karra said, "We were hoping that that instead of increasing the tariff government will give one-time amnesty. Here, for small people, Rs 20,000, Rs 50,000, even Rs 1 lakh is pending."

Karra also questioned electricity disconnections, particularly during extreme weather conditions. "Disconnecting electricity in Jammu during summer season and in Kashmir during winter is unacceptable," he said, adding,

"The government should have a human approach. Only then will the government be successful."

On the BJP's criticism of the NC-led government over issues linked to its pre-poll alliance and commitments, Karra said the BJP had also been in a position of power in J&K.

He questioned what the BJP had done when it had its "double-engine government", saying it has no moral justification to raise questions on issues that it itself faced while in power. (KNO)

Cong won't join govt till Centre restores 'snatched rights' of J&K people: Karra

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Aug 27: Stating that Congress would maintain its "principled stand" and would continue to raise public issues, Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) Chief Tariq Hameed Karra on Thursday said the party would not join the government until the Centre restores "snatched rights" of J&K people.

While talking to reporters here, Karra, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, "Congress is on principle stand since the last one year and won't accept cabinet berth until the Central government restores the rights of the people of Jammu and Kashmir which were snatched from the people."

The JKPCC Chief said there is no doubt that the National Conference is interested in including Congress in the cabinet, but reiterated his party's position on the issue.

He referred to assurances given by Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi regarding the party's support for the fight for restoration of rights.

Karra said Congress stands with the National Conference, but would continue to raise issues affecting the people. "There is no doubt that we are with the NC. Whenever NC faces any threat from BJP it will find Congress standing by its side," he said. "But that doesn't mean that the Congress Party [will not raise] the problems and issues here, whether they are of inflation, power, electricity, or gas cylinders, or any such issue which hurts the people here," Karra added.

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Speaker Rather calls

expressed hope that an ATM would be made operational at Yousmarg soon.

The MLA reiterated that efforts are being made to address the basic infrastructure issues at Yousmarg and facilitate the reopening of the destination, which he said is vital for the livelihoods of local tourism-dependent communities. (KNO)

DIPR announces cash

DIPR's endeavour to create a meaningful ecosystem of recognition for the filmmakers across different dimensions of cinematic excellence.

The cash prizes seek to appreciate the creative achievement, individual performance, technical craftsmanship and regional talent, making the inaugural IFFJK not merely a celebration of films but a platform for acknowledging the diverse artistic contributions that bring cinema to life.

The cash prizes are part of the broader vision of the J&K Government to position Jammu and Kashmir on the international cinematic map, provide opportunities for the filmmakers to showcase their work, facilitate cultural exchange and encourage emerging as well as established talent.

DIPR announces

cinema, creative expression, cultural exchange and meaningful dialogue. The festival will provide a platform for diverse cinematic voices while showcasing the rich cultural heritage, stories and creative potential of Jammu and Kashmir before a national and international audience.

The Jury comprises distinguished personalities from the world of cinema, including internationally acclaimed filmmakers, cinematographers, sound artists and film curators.

The five-member Jury includes, Santosh Sivan – Acclaimed Indian cinematographer, filmmaker, producer, and actor, and a founding member of the Indian Society of Cinematographers (ISC). His acclaimed directorial work includes The Terrorist, and in 2024 he was honoured with the Pierre Angénieux Tribute at the Cannes Film Festival.

Resul Pookutty, an Academy Award (Oscar) and BAFTA Award winner for Slumdog Millionaire, a Padma Shri recipient, and National Film Award winner. Internationally acclaimed sound designer, he has served on the executive committee of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS), elevating Indian cinema's global recognition.

Dorothee Wenner, a German filmmaker, curator, writer, and journalist renowned for her contributions to international cinema and cultural exchange. Since 1990, she has been associated with the Berlin International Film Festival, serving as a programmer and delegate for India and Sub-Saharan Africa. She is also a founding jury member of the Africa Movie Academy Awards and has worked extensively to promote African and Asian cinema globally. As a filmmaker, her notable works include Peace Mission, DramaConsult, and Kinshasa Collection.

Keiko Bang, Japanese media entrepreneur, documentary filmmaker, producer, and international curator with over three decades of experience in the global media industry. As the founder and CEO of Bang Singapore Pte Ltd., she has produced more than 50 award-winning documentaries, including Zheng He: Emperor of the Seas, Guge: The Lost Kingdom of Tibet, and Secrets of the Samurai. A leading advocate for international co-productions across Asia, she has worked with governments, broadcasters, and media organizations in over 25 countries.

Himansu Sekhar Khatua National Film Award-winning filmmaker, and educator known

for his significant contributions to Indian cinema. An alumnus of FTII Pune, he has worked on acclaimed films including Shunya Swaroopa, Ishanou, and several award-winning regional productions. He has also served as a faculty member and mentor, influencing generations of filmmakers through teaching and practice. He has also served as Director of Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute (SRFTI).

The Jury will evaluate films submitted under various competition and thematic sections of the festival, including international, national and Jammu and Kashmir-focused categories. Their collective expertise is expected to ensure an independent, credible and internationally informed assessment of the cinematic works presented at IFFJK.

The festival will feature a diverse programme of film screenings, masterclasses, in-conversation sessions, panel discussions and other cinematic engagements, providing opportunities for filmmakers, students, film professionals and audiences to interact and exchange ideas.

Seasonal influenza

cough etiquette, clean their hands frequently and avoid unnecessary contact with vulnerable patients. Attendants have been asked to restrict their presence to those essential for patient care and avoid unnecessary movement between different patient-care areas.

Health authorities have particularly cautioned against visiting vulnerable patients while suffering from an acute respiratory illness.

The advisory also highlights the dangers of self-medication with antibiotics for flu-like symptoms. Since influenza is caused by a virus, antibiotics do not treat the infection.

People have been advised not to take medicines such as azithromycin, amoxicillin-clavulanate, cefixime or other antibiotics merely because they have fever, cough or other influenza-like symptoms.

"Antibiotics should be used only when a qualified clinician identifies an appropriate indication," the advisory states, warning that unnecessary antibiotic use can contribute to antimicrobial resistance.

Healthcare professionals have been asked to follow standard precautions, use appropriate personal protective equipment, maintain hand hygiene, identify respiratory symptoms at an early stage and follow established triage and isolation protocols.

The advisory also calls for adequate ventilation, regular environmental cleaning and appropriate restriction or cohorting of visitors and patients wherever clinically required. Healthcare workers experiencing significant occupational exposure have been advised to report it and seek timely medical evaluation if symptoms develop.

While most seasonal influenza infections are not severe, health authorities have urged people not to ignore danger signs.

Among adults, difficulty in breathing, rapid or laboured breathing, chest pain or persistent pressure, bluish lips or fingers, coughing blood, confusion, unusual drowsiness, seizures, persistent vomiting or inability to take fluids and rapid deterioration have been listed as warning signs requiring urgent medical attention.

For children, inability to feed or drink, marked lethargy, fast or difficult breathing, grunting, severe chest retractions, bluish discoloration and convulsions have been identified as red flags.

The advisory further stresses the importance of seasonal influenza vaccination as a preventive measure, particularly for healthcare personnel and people at increased risk of complications, in accordance with public-health recommendations.

Health officials said prevention of respiratory infections inside hospitals cannot be achieved by healthcare workers alone and requires cooperation from patients, attendants and visitors.

The advisory summarises the preventive message through five key measures: wear a mask when experiencing respiratory symptoms, clean hands frequently, cover coughs and sneezes, avoid taking antibiotics without medical advice, and seek medical care promptly when danger signs appear.

"A safe hospital is a shared responsibility," the advisory said, emphasising that healthcare professionals, patients, attendants and visitors all have a role in protecting vulnerable patients and the healthcare workforce. (KNO)

India emerging as global production, innovation and services hub: FM Sitharaman

PTI

Washington, Aug 27: India is rapidly becoming a platform for global manufacturing, innovation, and exports, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Wednesday, while inviting Canadian capital to serve both India and world markets.

Addressing a high-level Business Roundtable in Toronto, Sitharaman highlighted that reforms, digitalisation, infrastructure investment and targeted policy support were steadily strengthening the environment for long-term investment in India.

"India is increasingly not only a major growth market, but a platform for global production, innovation, services and exports. Reforms, digitalisation, infrastructure investment and targeted policy support are steadily strengthening the environment for long-term investment," she said.

The minister invited Canadian businesses and investors to look at India not simply as an investment destination, but as a partner and platform for global growth — and to build long-term operations and partnerships that serve India and wider global markets. The Finance



Minister highlighted opportunities for Canadian companies in financial services and the Gujarat International Finance Tec-City International Financial Services Centre (GIFT IFSC), which can serve as a platform for India and regional strategies.

Stressing that India's reform-led transformation and strong growth trajectory have opened opportunities to build a more resilient, investment-led India-Canada economic partnership.

As India advances towards Viksit Bharat 2047, she called for deeper economic integration, combining Canadian capital, technology and

expertise with India's scale, talent and industrial capabilities.

She also underlined the potential of India's Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) as an avenue for technology, innovation and next-generation services.

The finance minister also emphasised the strong complementarity between India and Canada in clean-energy and critical-mineral value chains, particularly as both countries work towards more resilient and diversified global supply chains.

With bilateral trade in goods and services at around USD 24 billion in 2024 and an ambition to

take two-way trade towards USD 70 billion annually by 2030, she emphasised that the opportunity extends well beyond trade.

Canada's capital, technology, innovation and natural resources can complement India's scale, talent, manufacturing capabilities and rapidly expanding market, the minister said.

The roundtable was organised by the Consulate General of India, Toronto, in association with Canada-India Business Council and CII, bringing together business leaders from clean technology, critical minerals, rare earths, energy storage, sustainable infrastructure, agriculture, food processing, automotive, textiles, cybersecurity, biotechnology, AI, asset management, higher education and skills development.

Sitharaman also had separate meetings with Payments Canada president and CEO Susan Hawkins and Wayne Lee, Managing Director and Head, International Banking, CIBC Bank.

During the meeting with Lee, Sitharaman highlighted India's reform-led transformation over the past decade, with stronger institutions, a resilient financial sector and Digital Public Infrastructure

supporting the country's next phase of growth under the vision of Viksit Bharat.

She welcomed greater dialogue with CIBC and encouraged the institution to explore opportunities to establish a presence in India and participate in the country's expanding financial and economic ecosystem, the finance ministry said in a post on X.

With India continuing to reform, perform and transform, Sitharaman emphasised that there is considerable scope for Canadian financial institutions to be part of India's growth journey and its next generation of economic opportunities.

During the bilateral meeting with Hawkins, she pointed out that India's globally recognised digital payments ecosystem — a resilient banking system that is complemented by Digital Public Infrastructure and UPI, enabling secure, scalable and inclusive financial services at unprecedented scale.

The Finance Minister suggested GIFT-IFSC as an emerging gateway for international financial services and fintech, offering further avenues for India-Canada collaboration, another post on X said.

SC to hear on Aug 31 plea on cash donations received by political parties



PTI

New Delhi, Aug 27: The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear on August 31 a plea which has challenged the validity of a provision of the Income Tax Act that allows political parties to receive cash donations below Rs 2,000.

According to the apex court's cause list of August 31, the plea would come up for hearing before a bench comprising justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta.

On November 24 last year, the top court had agreed to hear the petition and sought responses from the Centre and others on it.

The plea claimed that lack of transparency undermines the purity of the election process as it deprives voters of the crucial knowledge about the source of political funding, including the donors and their motives, preventing them from making a rational, intelligent and fully informed decision while casting their vote.

The petition, filed by Khem Singh Bhati, also sought a direction to the poll panel to prescribe as a condition for registration of a political party and allotment of the election symbol that no amount can be received in cash by any political party.

The plea sought the striking down of Clause (d) of Section 13A of the Income Tax Act, 1961, as unconstitutional and also referred to the apex court's 2024 judgement which scrapped the electoral bonds scheme.

Section 13A of the Act deals with the special provision relating to the incomes of political parties. "The petitioner is seeking direction that the political parties must disclose the name and all other particulars of the person paying any amount of money to it, and no amount can be received in cash so as to maintain transparency in the political funding," the plea said. It said Section 13A was

introduced in the Act and income of a political party received by way of interest on securities, income from house property or income from other sources and any income by way of voluntary contributions are exempted from the computation of total income.

The plea has also sought a direction to the poll panel to scrutinise Form 24A contribution reports of all recognised political parties, and to require them to deposit the amount received by way of contributions for which address and/or PAN have not been furnished.

It said the poll panel should be directed to issue notices to the defaulting political parties under the Election Symbol Order, 1968, as to why the reserved symbol shall not be suspended or withdrawn for the failure to submit Form 24A contribution reports with full particulars within a prescribed period.

It has sought a direction to the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) to scrutinise the income tax returns and audit reports filed by political parties under the provisions of the Act for the last five years.

The plea said the CBDT should be directed to initiate appropriate proceedings for levy of tax, penalty and prosecution for failure to comply with the requirements of Section 13A of the Income Tax Act read with Section 29C of the Representation of the People Act, 1951.

Section 29C of the Representation of the People Act deals with the declaration of donations received by political parties.

"The injury to the public is the violation of the fundamental right to information of the voter, as guaranteed under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution. This violation is primarily caused by Section 13A(d) of the Income Tax Act, 1961, which allows political parties to receive anonymous cash donations below Rs 2,000," the plea said.

Sensex tanks 539 points, Nifty drops below 24,100 dragged by HDFC Bank



PTI

Mumbai, Aug 27: Benchmark indices fell sharply at the fag-end of trade on Thursday, with the Sensex dropping 539 points and the Nifty slipping below 24,100, as selling in blue-chip HDFC Bank and persistent geopolitical uncertainty weighed on market sentiment.

Falling for the second day, the 30-share BSE Sensex dropped 539.35 points, or 0.70 per cent, to settle at the day's low of 76,933.59 on the monthly derivatives-expiry day.

Similarly, the 50-share NSE Nifty declined 116.90 points, or 0.48 per cent, to end at the day's low of

24,090.85.

Among the 30 Sensex firms, HDFC Bank, NTPC, Mahindra & Mahindra, Bharti Airtel, HCL Tech and ITC were the major laggards.

Kotak Mahindra Bank, ICICI Bank, Tech Mahindra and Bharat Electronics were among the winners.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, edged higher by 0.67 per cent to USD 88.43 per barrel.

"Expiry-led volatility and the lack of a diplomatic breakthrough in the Middle East continue to keep markets range-bound in the near term," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Ltd, said.

Tanks are 'iron wall' on borders, boost soldiers' morale: Rajnath

PTI

Jabalpur, Aug 27: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday described tanks as an "iron wall" on India's borders that act as a death knell for the enemy and boost the morale of soldiers deployed in forward areas, asserting they remain vital to ground warfare despite the growing role of drones and missiles.

Singh made the remarks after laying the foundation stone of a Rs 472-crore facility for the overhaul of T-series battle tanks at the 57-year-old Vehicle Factory Jabalpur (VFJ), an ordnance unit here.

"Our Army is one of the most powerful forces in the world. T-72 and T-90 tanks are extremely important for ground warfare. They stand like an iron wall on our borders," he said.

"Tanks act as a death knell for the enemy and also boost the morale of our soldiers deployed on the borders," Singh added.

He said tanks, like other military equipment, require regular maintenance and periodic overhauling to ensure their operational readiness.

Under the upcoming



project, the facility will overhaul 80 T-72 and T-90 tanks annually, Singh said.

The Indian Army requires the overhaul of around 230 such tanks every year, according to him.

The Heavy Vehicles Factory (HVF) at Avadi currently overhauls around 150 tanks annually, and the new facility at VFJ will bridge the remaining shortfall, the defence minister said.

Singh said modern warfare was changing rapidly, with drones, missiles and other advanced technologies playing an increasingly important role.

"We need drones, missiles, artillery, electronic warfare systems and modern tanks. Our soldiers should have both tanks and drones,

with effective coordination between the two," he said.

The upcoming facility in Jabalpur would further strengthen India's capabilities in this direction, Singh added.

New technologies were constantly emerging in the defence sector and battles could no longer be won using conventional methods alone, the defence minister said.

In the age of drones and missiles, some may question the relevance of tanks, he said, adding that he held a different view.

"The character of warfare has changed, but that does not mean tanks have lost their relevance. Drones and missiles are important, but tanks continue to have

a role. What is needed is not reliance on a single platform, but a combined capability," Singh said.

Every weapon system has its own strengths, he said.

"The strength of a tank lies in its mobility and firepower. The need today is not to eliminate tanks, but to modernise them. This is not a battle of one weapon against another; it is a battle involving the entire combat system," Singh said.

While technology and the character of warfare were evolving, tanks continued to remain relevant and necessary in ground warfare, he added.

VFJ, where the tank overhaul facility is coming up, is a premier military vehicle manufacturing unit operating under Armoured Vehicles Nigam Limited (AVNL).

Established in 1969, the factory initially produced Shaktiman 3 tonnes (T) vehicles in collaboration with Germany's MAN, as well as Nissan IT and Janga vehicles in collaboration with Japan's Nissan Motors Co.

The factory complex is spread over 330 acres, while its adjoining estate covers another 600 acres, officials said.

Imp to inculcate value of freedom in children: Chief of Air Staff

PTI

Gorakhpur (UP), Aug 27: Children should be taught about the country and the value of freedom so that they develop a sense of responsibility towards the society and the nation, the Chief of Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Aman Preet Singh, said on Thursday.

He was on a visit to Saraswati Gurukul in Mathabari village, located 30 kilometres from Gorakhpur city, along with his wife Sarita Singh.

The couple was accorded a warm welcome at the school, where Sarita Singh inaugurated a newly established library.

The students also staged a performance based on Operation Sindoor, drawing applause from the Air Chief and other attendees amid chants of "Bharat Mata Ki Jai".

Interacting with students, the Air Chief Marshal described young people as the nation's



future and stressed the importance of character-building, discipline and perseverance.

He said children must be taught about the country and the value of freedom, so that they grow up with a sense of responsibility toward society and the nation.

Drawing the analogy of

a pillar whose foundation determines its strength, he said the education and values imparted during childhood form the basis of one's future success.

He urged students to respect the guidance of teachers and parents, continue striving despite failures, and focus on becoming good human

beings before pursuing any profession.

"Failure is not a bad thing; giving up after failure is," he said, encouraging students to keep trying and participate wholeheartedly in every endeavour.

He also highlighted the importance of social responsibility, saying service to the nation extends beyond wearing a uniform and can be achieved through time, effort and community participation.

Uttar Pradesh Public Service Commission Chairman Sanjay Singh Shrinet, who was also present, emphasised the importance of self-development and values-based education.

He suggested that students at Saraswati Gurukul adopt surnames reflecting their aspirations rather than their family identities, underscoring the institution's focus on character and purpose-driven learning.

Over 300 Indians missing in flash floods: Nepal Foreign Minister

PTI

Kathmandu, Aug 27: Nearly 300 Indian tourists are among thousands who are reportedly missing after a flash flood swept through parts of the Nepal-Tibet border, Foreign Minister Shisir Khanal said on Thursday.

The flash floods on Wednesday wreaked havoc across three districts in Nepal.

Nepal Foreign Minister Khanal on Thursday said that nearly 300 Indians are among thousands reported missing in the floods.

Khanal also confirmed that 160 people have died and thousands remain untraced after the tragedy in the Rasuwagadhi.

"Thousands of families have lost homes and are missing as of now. We are still trying to ascertain the full extent of the disaster," Khanal was quoted as saying by NDTV.

Nepal Police on Thursday said that the death toll rose to 162 in the flash flood on the Bhotekoshi River that wreaked havoc across three districts on Wednesday.

The flash floods were caused after an avalanche blocked the flow of the Lhende tributary of the Bhotekoshi and first hit Timure,



near Nepal's border with China at Rasuwagadhi.

On Wednesday, it was reported that at least 133 Indians and 37 NRIs are among the nearly 500 persons missing. At least 50 of the Indians were pilgrims for the Kailash Manasarovar Yatra.

On Wednesday, the Indian Embassy in Kathmandu issued emergency numbers for assistance and information related to Indian nationals affected by the flash floods. In a post on X, it said people can contact +977 985 131 6807 or +977 970 910 7500. The Embassy

of India has remained engaged with the relevant authorities of the Government of Nepal for early rescue and relief for Indian nationals affected by the flash floods that took place in Nepal, it said in another post on X, adding that rescue and relief efforts continue to be strengthened in coordination with the Nepal government.

The Nepal Tourism Board also issued similar numbers, including the toll-free emergency number 1234, the hotline 1144, and the Tourist Police number 9851289445 for help.

Nepal flash floods: 270 dead, hundreds search hospitals for missing loved ones

PTI

Kathmandu, Aug 27: Hundreds of people gathered outside hospitals in Nepal on Thursday, searching for family members and friends who went missing in devastating flash floods that killed at least 270 people, as rescue teams continued to search riverbanks and downstream areas for those still missing.

At Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital in Maharajgunj, hundreds gathered to look for their relatives who had been out of contact since Wednesday, when the floods swept through Rasuwa and other parts of central Nepal before surging downstream along the Trishuli and Narayani river systems, The Kathmandu Post newspaper reported. Authorities had posted lists of people brought to the hospital so relatives could check whether their loved ones were among those rescued or receiving treatment. Photographs of people who had died were also displayed at the hospital.

Officials set up desks to record the names and other details of people whose whereabouts remained unknown, as families sought information about those still missing.



The emergency ward in the hospital was crammed by injured people undergoing treatment from affected areas.

An early Thursday update from Nepal's health authorities said 20 injured people were receiving treatment at Tribhuvan

University Teaching Hospital, while others were being treated at hospitals including Trishuli Hospital in Nuwakot and Bir Hospital in Kathmandu.

"We have been searching for him everywhere, but we have not been able to find

his whereabouts. If you find anyone by this name in any hospital, please let us know. I will show you his photograph. Please look for him," the relative of a missing person, frantically looking for his brother-in-law outside the National Trauma Centre in Kathmandu, told PTI Videos.

The scenes were similar at Bharatpur Hospital in Chitwan, where families continued to search for relatives as authorities dealt with a growing number of bodies recovered from the Trishuli and Narayani rivers.

Thakur Prasad Kandel and Lilawati Sapkota were among those at the hospital looking for their brothers, who have been missing since Wednesday morning.

Other families at the hospital were facing similar uncertainty, as relatives tried to establish whether those missing had survived, been rescued or were among the bodies recovered from the rivers.

The scale of the recovery operation was also putting pressure on facilities at Bharatpur Hospital, where the mortuary was reportedly running out of space.

Nine bodies recovered in neighbouring Tanahun were sent back to the district because there was no room for them at the

Bharatpur facility, a senior police official was quoted as saying in Nepalese local media.

The disaster has also damaged health infrastructure in the affected areas. Three health facilities - the Timure Health Post in Rasuwa, the Syafrubeshi Health Post and the Rasuwagadhi Help Desk - were completely damaged by the flood, according to the Ekantipur news portal which quoted Nepal's health ministry.

Health authorities have been coordinating emergency treatment and rescue operations across the affected districts.

Government agencies and security forces continued searching for survivors and the missing, while authorities worked to reconcile casualty figures and identify those recovered.

According to the Nepal Tourism Board, 826 people were reported missing. The figure included 590 tourists, of which 476 were foreigners.

The flash floods began after an avalanche blocked the flow of the Lhende tributary of the Bhote Koshi River, with the resulting surge hitting Timure near Nepal's border with Tibet and causing widespread destruction downstream.

Chinese Premier Li visits flood-affected area in Tibet; 360 missing

PTI

Beijing, Aug 27: Chinese Premier Li Qiang on Thursday visited the Gyirong Township near the Nepal border post in Tibet, where 360 people were reported missing after a massive flash flood that caused heavy casualties.

The flash flood struck the Gyirong Township in the Tibet Autonomous Region on Wednesday morning. It swept through villages and towns near the China-Nepal border area killing three in Tibet and 270 in Nepal, and leaving hundreds others missing.

Li led a group of senior officials from relevant departments to the disaster-hit area, state-run Xinhua news agency reported. The officials will supervise rescue and relief operations, and visit those affected by the disaster.

A directing group of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) Western Theatre Command, which looks after the India-China border in Tibet, was dispatched to the affected area on Thursday to coordinate joint rescue operations by military personnel in Gyirong County.

Meanwhile, preliminary information released by local authorities

showed that 260 foreign nationals were currently missing in the area, while further details were still being verified, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian told a media briefing. Nearly 100 Chinese nationals were also missing in the affected area on the Nepalese side, he said, adding that the Chinese Embassy in Nepal is further verifying the information with Nepalese authorities.

Lin said China is maintaining close communication and coordination with Nepal and working with the Nepalese side on the search and rescue operations.

Over 40 private helicopter flights ferry relief from Kathmandu

PTI

Kathmandu, Aug 27: More than 40 charter flights by private helicopters have taken off from Kathmandu's Tribhuvan International Airport on Thursday to carry relief supplies to flood-affected areas of Nepal, including Rasuwa, authorities said.

The flights were coordinated and managed by the Nepal Army, with its 14th battalion stationed at the airport overseeing the transportation of relief materials from a collection centre to private helicopters, the Kantipur newspaper reported.

The flash floods have caused widespread devastation across three districts of Nepal,

with the death toll rising to 270 after 93 more bodies were recovered, Nepal Police said on Thursday.

According to an official at the Kathmandu Airport Office, more than 40 private helicopter charter flights had been completed by 2 pm, while over 20 helicopters remained on standby at the airport, Kantipur reported.

The Nepal Ministry of Home Affairs was also preparing to mobilise some of the helicopters stationed at the airport for rescue and relief operations in the affected areas, it said.

Nepal Army helicopters have also been making regular flights to flood-hit areas to rescue civilians and transport relief materials, according to the report.

We don't even participate in half of Olympic sports; need to improve: PM Modi



PTI

New Delhi, Aug 27: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said India's Olympic performance can improve only if the country manages to increase its participation in those events where it has not participated in the past.

In a virtual address to hundreds of athletes, students and volunteers who gathered at various locations for the Khelo India Dialogue, the PM said his vision for sports is not merely about winning medals but making it an integral part of the nation-building process.

"In the Olympics, there are so many different sports... Indian teams don't even participate in half of them," Modi said, calling it a "bitter truth".

In the 2024 Paris Olympics, India participated in 16 of the 32 sports which were a part of the Games roster.

"...we don't even compete for a huge chunk of the medal tally. And this has been going on for decades. Other countries of the world win medals in those sports, and we don't even participate in them.

"To increase our medal tally, we will have to master these sports as well," he added.

In his Independence Day speech on August 15, Modi had announced a nationwide talent hunt for children in the age group of 5 to 15 to ensure that India's participation improves at the Olympics.

"On this 15th August, I have presented India's sports vision for the nation from the ramparts of the Red Fort. When I talk about sports... it is not merely about winning medals.

"It is a campaign to integrate India's sporting power and youth power together in the construction of a developed India," he said.

Centurion Dinusha's dogged effort helps SL draw second Test; India win series 1-0

PTI

Colombo, Aug 27: Centurion Sonal Dinusha's unbending will en route an epic unbeaten 133 helped Sri Lanka enact a great jail break, battling persistent Indian bowlers, a fifth-day track and the weariness of following-on to eke out a memorable draw in the second and final Test here on Thursday.

India won the two-match series 1-0, riding on their 165-run victory in the first Test at Galle, but Lanka can be proud of the way they fought back at the SSC ground.

Dinusha, who faced 264 balls across 420 minutes, was Lanka's Superman with an invisible cape around him, registering his third hundred of the series which was also his fourth 50-plus score in as many innings this series.

Dinusha faced as many as 722 balls and batted 1139 minutes over the



course of the two-match series.

The 25-year-old also became the only the third batter to score twin hundreds in a Test match where his team followed-on, joining India's Vijay Hazare and Zimbabwe's Andy Flower in an elite club.

This statistical marvel enabled Lanka to end their second innings at 429 for nine declared for an overall lead of 216 runs, and at that point the players shook their hands,

signalling the stalemate.

But the situation was way different when Sri Lanka resumed the day at 229 for six, a mere 16 runs ahead.

It seemed just a matter of time before the home side caved in.

But the opposite happened as the Indians bowed to the spirit of the Lankan batters - Dinusha, who reached hundred in 196 balls, and Keshara Nuwantha (46, 150b).

The two milked 112 runs for the seventh wicket in

246 balls, which saw Lanka safely treading the first session without even losing a wicket.

But India enjoyed a rare moment of delight in the initial part of the post-lunch passage, as Manav Suthar dislodged Nuwantha, whose edge was taken safely by Dhruv Jurel in the slip.

Sri Lanka then mounted a mini fightback through Dinusha and Prabath Jayasuriya (2, 28b). The eighth wicket pair added only 25 runs but took 74 balls for it, pushing the clock further.

Ravindra Jadeja fetched another breakthrough as he jettisoned Jayasuriya, inducing an edge from the batter for Jurel in the second slip.

But they ran into another obdurate Lankan - Lahiru Kumara (12, 122m, 90b), with whom Dinusha added 47 runs but consumed 170 balls to wipe out the hopes of a victory from Indians' hearts.

Another former Malaysia PM faces criminal charges after leaving office

AP

Kuala Lumpur, Aug 27: Malaysian former Prime Minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob was charged Thursday with failing to declare his assets, making him the nation's third leader to face criminal charges after leaving office.

Ismail, 66, pleaded not guilty to a charge under the anti-graft law that alleged he failed to provide a complete declaration of assets following a notice from the anti-corruption agency in January 2025. The charge sheet lists large amounts of cash in Malaysian and foreign currencies, as well as gold and silver. If convicted, Ismail faces up to five years' imprisonment and a fine of up to 100,000 ringgit (\$24,810). Ismail, the country's ninth leader, unexpectedly became prime minister without a general election after emerging as a consensus figure during a turbulent political period. He was the shortest-serving leader, leading for only 15 months from August 2021 to November 2022.

After leaving office, Ismail has been questioned multiple times by anti-graft officials for possible misconduct involving millions of dollars spent on government publicity during his tenure. The anti-graft agency has also seized gold bars and some \$40 million in cash from properties linked to him.

His indictment followed that of his two predecessors.

India's racing sensation and F1 hopeful Atiqa Mir gets JK Tyre boost

PTI

New Delhi, Aug 27: JK Tyre, longtime supporters of Indian motorsport, on Thursday signed 11-year-old racing sensation Atiqa Mir, reinforcing its long-standing commitment to invest in future champions.

At such a young age, Atiqa has already made a strong mark on the international karting circuit, winning races in Europe and beating world class drivers older than her.

Atiqa, the first Indian to be supported by the F1 Academy, is currently competing in different series in Europe and is the highest ranked female in FIA's



International Karting Ranking in the OKN category (age 12-14).

She joins an elite list of accomplished Indian drivers to be supported by JK Tyre,

following in the footsteps of Narain Karthikeyan and Karun Chandhok, the only two Indians who have reached the pinnacle of F1. Earlier this year,

she became the first Indian to secure a podium in the European leg of the Champions of the Future Academy, before going on to deliver a dominant victory in Greece, where she became only the third driver in the series' history to sweep qualifying, heats and the final.

More recently, Atiqa added another feather to her cap by becoming the youngest Indian to record two top 10 finishes in FIA European Karting Championship which is considered the 'Formula 1 of Karting'.

Her journey also represents the growing presence of women in motorsport. Atiqa was the first Indian and Asian female

racer selected for F1 Academy's Discover Your Drive programme, further underlining her position as one of the sport's emerging young talents. "It is a very special feeling to join JK Tyre. My dad (Asif Mir who was India's first national karting champion) was also supported by JK Tyre during his racing days.

"I have always admired the company's contribution to Indian motorsport and the opportunities it has created for young racers. I'm excited for this journey and look forward to learning, improving and representing India and JK Tyre on the international stage," said Atiqa.