



REGIONAL

CM Announces Rs 6 Lakh Ex Gratia; LG Orders Round-The-Clock Restoration

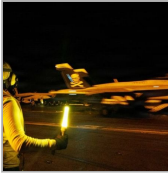
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SKIMS Director Orders Flood Fix After Rains

Waterlog Bemina Hospital

After heavy rain inundated SKIMS Medical College Hospital at Bemina, Director Prof M. Ashraf Ganie ordered dewatering pumps deployed and...

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Cabinet Clears Semicon 2.0 With Rs 1.27 Lakh Crore Outlay for Chip Push

The Union Cabinet approved the second phase of the India Semiconductor Mission with a Rs 1,27,500 crore outlay, widening incentives...

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England posted 387 for 3 and held India to 360 for 7 in the deciding third one-day international at Lord's...

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The Sensex and Nifty closed the week with modest gains, powered by IT and financial stocks after a run of...

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India-UK Free Trade Pact Comes Into Force, Modi Hails 'Historic Milestone'

The India-United Kingdom Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement took effect on July 15, granting duty-free access to nearly all Indian...

REGIONAL

J&K Students Among Scores Injured As Delhi Police Lathicharge Parliament March

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 22 JUL, 2026



Scores of students, several from Jammu and Kashmir, were injured as Delhi Police used batons and tear gas on a Parliament march over the NEET-UG leak, drawing condemnation from the J&K Students' Association.

NEW DELHI, July 20: Scores of students, several of them from Jammu and Kashmir, were

REGIONAL

Poonch Man Loses Eight Of Family As Cloudburst Buries House In Surankote

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 22 JUL, 2026



Mohammad Latief of Lower Muran stepped out to move his SUV as rain lashed the hillside. Minutes later a cloudburst flattened his three-storey home, burying eight members of his family under the...

POONCH, July 20: Mohammad Latief stepped out of his three-storey home in Lower Muran village of Surankote tehsil around 3:30 am on Sunday to move...

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Omar Leads National Conference Statehood Protest In Delhi, Alleges Tear Gas



Chief Minister Omar Abdullah led a National Conference protest in Delhi demanding immediate restoration of J&K statehood, accusing



REGIONAL

Congress March For Statehood Foiled In Jammu, Dozens Detained

Police foiled a Congress march to the Lieutenant Governor's residence in Jammu on July 19 and detained dozens of leaders, including state chief Tariq Hameed Karra, who were demanding the restoration of...

JAMMU, July 19: Police foiled a Congress march to the Lieutenant Governor's residence here on Saturday and detained dozens of party leaders...

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NATIONAL

Rahul Gandhi, Opposition Leaders Detained Outside PM's Home

Delhi Police detained Rahul Gandhi and other INDIA bloc leaders after a sit-in outside Prime Minister Modi's residence, protesting police action against students amid the NEET exam-leak scandal. They were released later...

NEW DELHI, July 21: Delhi Police on Tuesday detained Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and several other opposition figures after they staged a...

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REGIONAL

CM Announces Rs 6 Lakh Ex Gratia; LG Orders Round-The-Clock Restoration

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 22 JUL, 2026



Chief Minister Omar Abdullah announced Rs 6 lakh ex gratia for the next of kin of each flood victim, while Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha directed round-the-clock work to restore...

JAMMU, July 20: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah announced an ex gratia of Rs 6 lakh for the next of kin of each person killed in the Poonch-Rajouri floods, comprising Rs 4 lakh from the State Disaster Response Fund and Rs 2 lakh from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund. Chairing a high-level review, the Chief Minister said protecting human life remained the government's foremost priority and directed officials to ensure there was no delay in extending financial assistance to affected families. He said sufficient funds had been kept available for relief and rehabilitation, and that ministers would begin field visits to the affected districts from July

21. Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, who separately reviewed the situation, directed round-the-clock work to restore roads, power and water supply in the two districts. He said all departments had been placed on high alert and were prioritising immediate relief and repair work, and asked agencies including the SDRF, NDRF, Army, Border Roads Organisation and NHA to coordinate closely. Officials said 356 of the 435 roads damaged across the Jammu division had been reopened, while restoration of snapped power and water lines was under way in the flood-hit belt.

REGIONAL

Flash Floods Hit Safapora in Ganderbal, Homes and Crops Damaged

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 22 JUL, 2026



GANDERBAL, July 20: Flash floods triggered by heavy rain and a suspected cloudburst in the upper reaches swept through Safapora in Ganderbal district on Monday, inundating homes and destroying standing crops across low-lying stretches. Water levels in local streams and drainage channels rose suddenly after Ganderbal recorded more than 46 mm of rainfall in the 24 hours ending Monday morning. Floodwaters entered several houses and damaged household goods, food stocks and farm produce, residents said. No loss of life was reported. Local civil society member Muhammad Sidiq said the floods had entered several houses and damaged large tracts of agricultural land along with standing crops. He blamed unregulated soil

extraction in the area for choking natural drainage channels and demanded an immediate ban on the practice. The district administration said emergency teams had been placed on alert and control rooms activated to monitor rising water levels. The Meteorological Department, which forecast continued rain until July 23, advised residents living near nallahs and in flood-prone pockets to remain vigilant. The Safapora flooding was among the most severe of several weather-related disruptions reported from central and north Kashmir as the wet spell tightened its grip on the Valley through the day.

REGIONAL

Vaishno Devi Yatra Suspended For Second Day As Rain Lashes Reasi

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 22 JUL, 2026



KATRA, July 20: The Shri Mata Vaishno Devi yatra remained suspended for a second consecutive day on Monday as heavy rain and the threat of landslides

forced the shrine board to keep the Himalayan pilgrimage in Reasi district shut on safety grounds. The Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board halted the yatra on Sunday following an advisory from the India Meteorological Department that forecast heavy rainfall and the possibility of landslides across the region between July 19 and 23. "In view of the inclement weather advisory issued by the IMD, the yatra shall remain temporarily suspended as a precautionary measure to ensure the safety and well-being of pilgrims," a shrine board spokesperson said. With the suspension in force, the base town of Katra wore a deserted look, and hundreds of pilgrims who had reached the region were left waiting for the weather to clear. Officials said updates on resumption would be issued after assessing conditions along the track. Many devotees expressed disappointment but backed the decision. "Naturally, we are disappointed, but the decision is absolutely right. If the weather is unsafe, the authorities must prioritise the safety of pilgrims," said Kamal Kishore, a pilgrim from Indore. Several pilgrims recalled the landslide on the yatra route on August 26 last year, which killed 32 people and injured 20, saying the tragedy underscored the need for caution during spells of bad weather. The shrine board said it was monitoring the track and the weather round the clock and would resume the pilgrimage only once the route was declared safe.



REGIONAL

Kathua Records Highest Rainfall In J&K At 153 mm

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 22 JUL, 2026

KATHUA, July 21: Kathua recorded the highest rainfall in Jammu and Kashmir at 153.4 mm in 24 hours as heavy showers battered the region, triggering flash floods, waterlogging and landslides across several districts, officials said. According to the Meteorological Department, the Jammu region bore the brunt of the spell, with Samba receiving 133 mm and Udhampur 132.6 mm in the same period. Jammu airport recorded 67.7 mm and Katra 58.5 mm, while Gulmarg logged the highest in the Kashmir valley at 55 mm. The relentless rain sent water levels rising in the Tawi, Chenab and Ujh, prompting the administration to issue advisories in Kathua, Jammu, Samba, Reasi and Udhampur. Residents living close to rivers and streams were urged to remain alert and to stay away from the banks. The weather office warned of further heavy to torrential rain over the Jammu plains and upper catchments, and forecast that the wet spell would continue, with intermittent intense showers likely at isolated places. Authorities advised people to avoid unnecessary travel and to keep off landslide-prone stretches in the district until conditions improved, officials said.



REGIONAL

Udhampur Shuts Schools For Three Days As Heavy Rain Continues

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 22 JUL, 2026

UDHAMPUR, July 21: The district administration ordered the closure of all government and private schools across Udhampur for three days as a precautionary measure against the heavy rain battering the district, officials said. The order, issued by the Chief Education Officer on the directions of the deputy commissioner, kept educational institutions shut from July 20 to July 22 in view of the prevailing adverse weather and the risk of further heavy rainfall that could trigger landslides, flash floods and the disruption of road connectivity in vulnerable areas. The closure covered schools across eight tehsils of the district, including Basantgarh, Chenani, Latti, Majalta, Mounгри, Panchari, Ramnagar and Udhampur. Officials said the step was taken to ensure the safety of students and staff as several link roads in the hilly parts of the district remained vulnerable to slips. The administration also advised residents to avoid unnecessary travel to vulnerable areas and to follow the guidance issued by the Meteorological Department and local authorities. The district has been among the worst hit by the current spell of monsoon rain, recording over 130 mm in a single 24-hour period as the wet weather showed no sign of easing.

REGIONAL

Over 450 Displaced Sheltered In Relief Camps Across Rajouri, Poonch

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 22 JUL, 2026



The district administration moved more than 450 people displaced by the floods into relief centres across Rajouri and Poonch, providing food, water, bedding and medical care as res...

RAJOURI, July 20: The district administration shifted more than 450 people displaced by the flash floods into relief centres across Rajouri and Poonch, providing food, drinking water, bedding and medical care as families driven from their homes waited out the rain. At least 130 residents were moved to a relief centre set up at the Government Higher Secondary School in flood-hit Rajouri town, where medical teams screened evacuees and distributed essentials. Officials said nearly 230 people had been rescued and evacuated from low-lying and landslide-prone areas of the district. Quick response teams remained deployed in vulnerable pockets, with the

SDRF, NDRF, Army, Border Roads Organisation, NHAI, Jammu and Kashmir Police and Civil Defence working in coordination. Administration officials said half-hourly situation reports were being compiled to track the evolving situation and direct rescue resources. Health authorities set up medical camps at the shelters to guard against water-borne disease, while revenue staff began assessing damage to homes, shops and farmland to process compensation claims. Officials appealed to residents in exposed areas to move to safer ground and cooperate with evacuation teams.

REGIONAL

Cloudbursts Ravage Poonch, Rajouri; Toll Climbs Past 20 As Rescue Teams Battle Rain

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 22 JUL, 2026



POONCH, July 19: At least 23 people were killed and seven others remained missing after a series of cloudbursts triggered flash floods and landslides across the twin border districts of Poonch and Rajouri in the early hours of Sunday, in one of the worst rain-related disasters to strike the Pir Panjal belt in years. The heaviest devastation was reported from Surankote tehsil in Poonch, where floodwaters and mud swept away homes in Lower Murrah and adjoining villages. Most of the fatalities occurred in Poonch, while Rajouri town and its outskirts, including Bella Colony and Thannamandi, were battered by surging streams that submerged shops and carried away vehicles. Officials said at least 47 houses and other structures were damaged in the Surankote area, while about 20 shops were flattened in Rajouri. Nearly 20 vehicles were swept away near the Bella bus stand

and more than 40 others were damaged. Fifteen electricity poles and half a dozen transformers were knocked out, cutting power to Thannamandi, Darhal, Surankote, Mandi and Haveli. Road connectivity was severed across large parts of the region. The Jammu-Poonch National Highway remained closed after a landslide at Shiendra Maidana in Surankote, and the Border Roads Organisation was pressed into service to clear debris and shooting stones from key stretches. Rescue teams drawn from the Army, State Disaster Response Force, National Disaster Response Force, Jammu and Kashmir Police and Civil Defence, aided by local volunteers, launched large-scale operations. Officials said about 45 people trapped by the waters were pulled to safety in Poonch, Rajouri and Jammu, and around 230 residents were evacuated from vulnerable low-lying areas. The Meteorological Department warned of further inclement weather between July 19 and 23 and cautioned residents across the two districts and neighbouring Doda against venturing near swollen streams and nallahs until the rain eased. Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah reviewed the situation and directed officials to keep all departments on high alert. "The first priority of the administration is to safeguard precious lives," the Chief Minister said.

REGIONAL

Satish Sharma Launches Rs 10 Crore Projects In Chhamb Belt

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 22 JUL, 2026



AKHNOOR, July 17: Minister for Health and Medical Education Satish Sharma on Friday inaugurated and laid the foundation for a clutch of development projects worth over Rs 10 crore across the Chhamb constituency, aimed at improving roads, civic infrastructure and public services in the border belt. Among the projects thrown open were the Thandi Choi-Sainth road, built at a cost of Rs 1.50 crore, a bridge at Kharah worth Rs 3.45 crore, and a volleyball court at Pallanwala. Sharma also laid foundation stones for a tehsil office building at Kharah Balli, the Chaprial-Bardoh road and a veterinary hospital at Khour. Addressing residents at the functions, the minister said development was meaningful only when its benefits reached the common people. "Every project addresses local needs and improves quality of life," he said, adding that the administration was working to extend road connectivity and basic amenities to far-flung areas of the constituency. Senior



REGIONAL

Court Frames Charges Against Ten In Pakistan-Backed Narco-Terror Case

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 22 JUL, 2026

JAMMU, July 17: A special court trying cases under the National Investigation Agency Act ordered the framing of charges against 10 accused in a Pakistan-backed narco-terror case investigated by the Jammu and Kashmir Police's State Investigation Agency, officials said. The case, registered in October 2022, centred on a cross-border conspiracy allegedly orchestrated from Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir and linked to the proscribed Lashkar-e-Toiba. Investigators said the syndicate smuggled narcotics across the Line of Control and channelled the proceeds to finance terrorism. The SIA said its probe identified 16 accused, including four Pakistan- and PoJK-based handlers. Charges were framed against the 10 currently available for trial, while one suspect remained absconding. The accused face charges under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and the Indian Penal Code. The agency said the framing of charges marked progress in dismantling the nexus between drug trafficking and terror financing in the region. The prosecution said the network had used the proceeds of cross-border smuggling to fund militancy, part of what security agencies describe as narco-terrorism aimed at destabilising Jammu and Kashmir.



REGIONAL

Amarnath Yatra Suspended On Both Routes As Heavy Rain Forecast Strands Pilgrims

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 22 JUL, 2026

SRINAGAR, July 18: Authorities suspended the annual Amarnath Yatra from both the Baltal and Pahalgam routes from July 19 after the weather department forecast heavy to very heavy rainfall across Jammu and Kashmir, stranding thousands of pilgrims at base camps and transit points. Divisional Commissioner Kashmir Anshul Garg said no onward movement of pilgrims would be allowed from the Baltal and Nunwan-Chandanwari base camps as a precautionary measure. The Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Yatra in Reasi was also temporarily halted. The India Meteorological Department had warned of extremely heavy showers between July 19 and 23, with Jammu, Kathua, Samba, Rajouri, Doda, Ramban, Kishtwar, Reasi and Udhampur likely to be worst hit. Pilgrims were held back at camps in Jammu, Udhampur, Ramban and Banihal. Officials said more than 3.76 lakh pilgrims had paid obeisance at the cave shrine since the 57-day pilgrimage began, with over 16,000 visiting on July 18 alone. A batch of 3,632 yatris was in transit when the order took effect. The administration said the yatra, scheduled to conclude on August 28, would resume only after a full assessment confirmed both routes were safe for pilgrims.

REGIONAL

Rang Tarang Cultural Festival Concludes In Jammu

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 22 JUL, 2026



The IIM Jammu-hosted cultural festival Rang Tarang-2026 concluded in Jammu on July 17 with 17 presentations of theatre, music and dance, including 11 plays staged by students and a...

JAMMU, July 17: The multi-day cultural festival Rang Tarang-2026 concluded in Jammu on Friday after showcasing 17 presentations of theatre, music and dance, organisers said.The festival, hosted by the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Jammu and directed by theatre veteran Padma Shri Balwant Thakur, brought together students, artists and faculty for a programme that blended the performing arts with lessons in leadership and creativity.The line-up featured 11 plays, among them adaptations such as Haider and the satire Andher Nagari, alongside rock and devotional music and dance pieces that fused Punjabi and

Rajasthani forms.Presiding over the valedictory function, IIM Jammu Director Prof B S Sahay said the arts had a central place in shaping well-rounded managers. "The challenges of the future demand leaders who possess empathy, creativity, emotional intelligence and effective communication skills," he said.Organisers said the festival was designed to give management students exposure to the performing arts and to encourage collaboration, discipline and confidence through the stage.The festival concluded with felicitations for the participating performers and student teams.

REGIONAL

Rain Swamps Srinagar, Puts Smart City Under Scanner Again

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 22 JUL, 2026



SRINAGAR, July 20: Torrential overnight rain brought Srinagar to a standstill on Monday, submerging arterial roads, stranding commuters and reviving uncomfortable questions about the summer capital's flood preparedness barely weeks into the monsoon.The India Meteorological Department recorded 45.6 mm of rainfall in the city in the 24 hours ending 8:30 am, part of a wider wet spell that also dumped 55.4 mm on Sopore and 46 mm on neighbouring Ganderbal. Forecasters warned that the rain, accompanied by the risk of flash floods and landslides, would persist until July 23.Waterlogging was reported from Khanyar, Sada Kadal, Nalamar, Bohri Kadal, Rajbagh, Dalgate, Jawahar Nagar,

Bemina and Residency Road, with knee-deep water forcing motorists to abandon vehicles and wade through inundated lanes. Traffic on several routes was disrupted for hours as drains overflowed and low-lying markets took in water.The deluge again turned public anger on the Srinagar Smart City project, with residents questioning why the crores spent on urban redevelopment had failed to spare the city from routine flooding. Srinagar Smart City Limited distanced itself from the worst-hit stretches, saying the roads at Khanyar, Sada Kadal and several other places where drainage failures occurred were not executed under the Smart City project.The Srinagar Municipal Corporation said it had identified nearly 60 waterlogging hotspots

across the city and deployed dewatering teams and pumps to clear stagnant water. Officials said men and machinery had been kept on standby at vulnerable points as the rain continued.Beyond the city, the same weather system triggered a flash flood at Safapora in Ganderbal after a suspected cloudburst, inundating homes and farmland. The IMD flagged Gulmarg, Pahalgam, the Sonamarg-Zojila stretch, Bandipora's Razdan Pass and Kupwara's Sadhna Pass as particularly vulnerable to landslides and shooting stones during the spell.The administration advised residents living close to nallahs and in low-lying colonies to remain alert and avoid unnecessary travel to the higher reaches. Officials said control rooms had been

REGIONAL

Chief Secretary Joins Murti Pratishthan Divas at Anantnag Shrine

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 22 JUL, 2026

ANANTNAG, July 21: Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo attended the Murti Pratishthan Divas celebrations at the Mata Uma Bhagwati shrine at Umanagri in the Shangus area of Anantnag district on Tuesday, joining devotees for the two-day observance.Dulloo, the chief guest, paid obeisance at the shrine and took part in the Kalash Pooja and other rituals marking the anniversary of the deity's consecration. The celebrations, featuring a two-day Yagya and spiritual programmes, were organised by the Uma Bhagwati Asthapan Trust.Deputy Commissioner Anantnag Dr Bilal Mohi-ud-Din Bhat, senior district administration officials and a large number of devotees were also present at the event.Interacting with the Trust and locals, the Chief Secretary reaffirmed the government's commitment to heritage conservation, saying the shrine development project would incorporate additional works needed to improve facilities and preserve the sanctity of the shrine in a holistic manner.The Trust thanked Dulloo for the government's support and acknowledged the district administration's role in coordinating the event. Set amid the mountains of south Kashmir, the Uma Bhagwati shrine draws pilgrims from across the region, and officials said the conservation works would help boost religious tourism in the area.



REGIONAL

Regional Parties Split Over National Conference's Delhi Statehood Protest

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 22 JUL, 2026

SRINAGAR, July 18: Jammu and Kashmir's regional parties remained split over the National Conference's July 20 statehood protest in Delhi, with the Peoples Democratic Party and Peoples Conference declining to join a demonstration they said was too narrow.PDP president Mehbooba Mufti said her party would participate only if the agenda was widened beyond statehood to include the restoration of Article 370 and the release of political prisoners. "Limiting the movement to the demand for statehood alone would fall short of addressing broader political issues," she said, arguing that a statehood-only campaign risked legitimising the constitutional changes of August 5, 2019.Peoples Conference chief Sajad Lone questioned the timing and the real purpose behind Chief Minister Omar Abdullah's sit-in. Apni Party president Altaf Bukhari also stayed away, claiming the protest was meant to empower the ruling party rather than the people, while the BJP dismissed it as drama.The Congress, an ally of the National Conference, backed the protest and announced district-level demonstrations across Jammu and Kashmir on July 19. The divisions underscored the difficulty of forging a united front on the statehood question nearly two years after the assembly elections restored an elected government to the union territory.

REGIONAL

LG Sinha Attends Mahayajna Dharma Sammelan In Baramulla

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 22 JUL, 2026



Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha attended the Mahayajna Dharma Sammelan in north Kashmir's Baramulla on July 19, calling the gathering a spiritual rebirth for the region and a revival...

BARAMULLA, July 19: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Sunday attended the Mahayajna Dharma Sammelan in north Kashmir's Baramulla, describing the gathering as a "spiritual rebirth" for the region and a revival of its heritage. The event, held amid a large gathering of religious leaders, civil society members and residents, was organised as a celebration of the Sanatan tradition's emphasis on sacrifice and universal peace, organisers said. "On this land, where all faiths are respected, the Mahayajna is breathing new life into our spiritual legacy, which has given Jammu and Kashmir a distinctive and unique identity," Sinha said. He called the gathering "a living expression of national unity". The Lieutenant Governor listed

three priorities in his address: strengthening brotherhood among the youth, treating environmental conservation as a spiritual duty, and preserving culture for future generations. Among those present were Padma Shri Brij Lal Bhat, Principal Secretary (Culture) Brij Mohan Sharma, Deputy Inspector General of Police (North Kashmir) Vinod Kumar, Deputy Commissioner Baramulla Syed Fakhrudin Hamid and Senior Superintendent of Police Gurinderpal Singh. Sinha said Baramulla's centuries-old spiritual traditions were being revived through such gatherings, and urged residents to carry forward the region's syncretic ethos.

REGIONAL

Three Killed As Boulders Hit Bus, House In Rain-Battered Doda

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 22 JUL, 2026



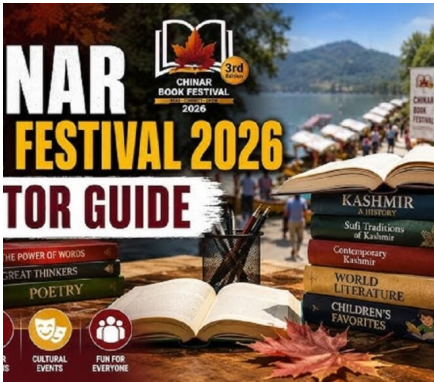
DODA, July 20: Three people were killed and six others injured on Monday as falling boulders struck a passenger bus and a house in two separate rain-triggered incidents in the hilly Doda district, officials said. In the first incident, a rock rolled down a hillock near Raggi Nallah along the Jammu-Kishtwar national highway around 9.30 am amid torrential rains and slammed into a passenger bus. Seven injured passengers were pulled from the mangled vehicle and rushed to a nearby hospital, where one of them, identified as Manish Kumar, was declared brought dead. The body of another, as-yet unidentified, person was later recovered from the damaged bus. A rescue operation was launched immediately after the boulder came down, with police, revenue staff and local residents working together to evacuate the injured. Officials said a couple of private vehicles travelling along the same stretch were also hit by falling stones, though their occupants escaped

unhurt. The highway remained blocked through the day as debris and loose rock continued to slide down the rain-soaked slopes. In the second incident, a woman identified as Shiv Devi was killed after a shooting stone crashed into her house in the Kashtigarh area of the district. The impact also damaged the structure, officials said. The deaths came as incessant rainfall lashed the Chenab Valley, loosening hill slopes and sending down shooting stones and boulders at several vulnerable points. Doda, along with the neighbouring districts of Ramban and Kishtwar, has long been identified by geologists as highly susceptible to landslides because of its fragile rock formations and steep terrain. District authorities advised residents and travellers to avoid movement along landslide-prone stretches until the weather improved, and cautioned that road connectivity could remain disrupted. Traffic on the Jammu-Kishtwar highway was suspended at multiple points as crews worked to clear the accumulated debris. The injured were reported to be stable at the district hospital, officials said, adding that the body of the unidentified man would be handed over to the family once the formalities of identification were completed.

REGIONAL

Third Chinara Book Festival Opens in Srinagar With Over 200 Publishers

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 22 JUL, 2026



SRINAGAR, July 18: The third Chinara Book Festival opened at the Sher-i-Kashmir International Conference Centre on Saturday, bringing more than 200 publishers and book stalls to the summer capital for a nine-day celebration of reading, writing and regional literature. Organised by the National Book Trust under the Union Ministry of Education, in collaboration with the Srinagar district administration and the National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language, the festival runs until July 26 and is free and open to all. Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha inaugurated the event. The stalls showcase titles in English, Urdu, Kashmiri, Hindi and other Indian languages. The programme spans author interactions, book launches, workshops, cultural performances and a dedicated children's corner offering storytelling and creative activities. Visitors also have access



REGIONAL

Budgam Administration Demolishes Structures Linked To Drug Peddlers

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 22 JUL, 2026

BUDGAM, July 18: The district administration, along with police, demolished several illegally raised structures allegedly linked to drug peddlers in central Kashmir's Budgam district on Saturday, officials said, in a fresh push against the narcotics trade. In the Magam sub-division, authorities pulled down three illegal structures and three shops in the Chairu and Mazhama areas, removed an unauthorised boundary fence and cleared about five marlas of encroached land. A parallel drive in the Beerwah sub-division saw four illegal structures and four shops demolished in the Parnewa and Arigam areas, along with a cowshed and an illegally constructed tile-manufacturing unit. The operation was carried out under the supervision of Tehsildar Magam Abrar Ahmad, with security provided by the Sub-Divisional Police Officer, Magam, Mohammad Ashraf Lisay, and administrative support from Station House Officer Khursheed Ahmad. Officials said the properties had either been raised on encroached land or were being used by people accused in narcotics cases. The action forms part of a wider campaign in which the administration has moved to attach and demolish assets of alleged drug offenders across the district. "Strict action against drug peddlers will continue without interruption," the administration said in a statement.



REGIONAL

Srinagar Logs Season's Hottest Day As Heat Grips Kashmir

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 22 JUL, 2026

SRINAGAR, July 17: Srinagar recorded the hottest day of the season on Friday, with the mercury touching 35 degrees Celsius, several degrees above normal, as a spell of heat tightened its grip across the Kashmir Valley. The city's minimum temperature settled at 22 degrees Celsius, the meteorological department said. In the Jammu region, Jammu city was the hottest place in the Union Territory at 35.8 degrees Celsius. Elsewhere in the valley, Kupwara in the north matched Srinagar at 35 degrees Celsius, while Qazigund recorded 33.2 and Kokernag 32.9. The resorts of Pahalgam and Gulmarg were cooler at 27.4 and 25.6 degrees Celsius respectively. In the Jammu division, Katra recorded 31.8, Bhadarwah 31.5 and Banihal 30.8. Friday's reading was the highest maximum temperature recorded in Srinagar so far this season, the weather office said, with day temperatures running well above the seasonal average across the region. Forecasters, however, said a major change was on the way. The weather department predicted a significant shift from July 19, warning of heavy rainfall, flash floods and landslides across Jammu and Kashmir over the following week.

NATIONAL

Police Shift Wangchuk to Hospital on 20th Day of Fast

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 22 JUL, 2026



Delhi Police removed activist Sonam Wangchuk from Jantar Mantar and moved him to hospital on the 20th day of a hunger strike demanding the education minister's resignation over the...

NEW DELHI, July 18: Delhi Police on Saturday removed activist Sonam Wangchuk from his protest site at Jantar Mantar and shifted him to a hospital on the 20th day of a hunger strike, an operation his supporters described as a forcible detention.Wangchuk, the Ladakh-based innovator and education reformer, had been fasting since June 28 to demand the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan over alleged irregularities in the NEET medical entrance examination, whose results have triggered nationwide student protests.Police said the transfer followed orders of the Delhi High Court and expert medical advice. "As per orders of the Hon'ble High Court and on expert medical advice due to the deteriorating health condition of Sh. Sonam Wangchuk, he has been shifted to the hospital," a police statement said.Doctors monitoring the fast said his weight

had fallen to about 56.5 kilograms and that he showed signs of mild dehydration, though he remained mentally alert. His blood pressure was recorded at 108/68 and oxygen saturation at 96 percent. Medical staff had warned that the prolonged fast had reached a critical stage.Abhijit Dipke, a civil society activist supporting the fast, alleged that police used force and detained Wangchuk against his will, and accused officers of striking student volunteers at the site. Police said they had exercised restraint despite some commotion.Leaders of the Congress, Nationalist Congress Party, Samajwadi Party, Aam Aadmi Party, Trinamool Congress and Shiv Sena expressed concern over his health and voiced solidarity with the protesting students, several of whom have pledged to continue the agitation.

NATIONAL

Bill To Raise Supreme Court Strength To 38 Judges Introduced

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 22 JUL, 2026



NEW DELHI, July 20: The government introduced the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Bill, 2026, in the Lok Sabha on Monday, seeking to permanently raise the apex court's sanctioned strength to 38 judges, including the Chief Justice of India, from the existing 34.Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal moved the legislation amid continued Opposition sloganeering on the opening day of the monsoon session. The measure is intended to replace the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Ordinance, promulgated by the President on May 16, and to give the higher strength a permanent statutory footing.The government has argued that the increase is necessary to help the court tackle its swelling docket of pending cases and to enable more benches to sit simultaneously. Officials said the

expansion follows repeated requests from the judiciary for additional judicial capacity.Alongside the bill, Opposition members Saugata Ray, N.K. Premachandran and Dean Kuriakose moved a statutory resolution disapproving the ordinance, contending that the executive should not resort to the ordinance route for matters that could await Parliament.The Supreme Court's sanctioned strength has been revised upward several times over the decades to keep pace with a rising caseload. The last increase, in 2019, had raised the number from 31 to 34. If passed, the fresh amendment would mark the highest sanctioned strength in the court's history since its establishment.The bill is expected to be taken up for consideration and passage later in the session.

NATIONAL

Ten Killed As Tunnel Caves In At Sikkim Hydel Project

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 22 JUL, 2026



NAMCHI, July 21: At least ten workers were killed and several others trapped when an under-construction tunnel collapsed following a landslide in Sikkim's Namchi district on Monday, officials said, as rescue teams battled difficult conditions to reach those still inside.The tunnel is part of the Teesta Stage VI Hydroelectric Project of the National Hydroelectric Power Corporation in the Samardung area. Around 27 workers were reported to be inside when a landslide blocked the mouth of the tunnel, cutting them off.Rescue operations were complicated by a suspected gas leak, with several rescue workers experiencing dizziness and losing consciousness as they tried to reach the trapped labourers. Officials said the gas was believed to be seeping from underground rock strata disturbed by the landslide.Teams of the National Disaster Response Force, State Disaster Response Force, Namchi police and the fire and emergency services were pressed into the operation, working through unstable ground and intermittent rain.Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed anguish over the loss of lives, offered condolences to the bereaved families and wished the injured a speedy recovery. State authorities announced assistance for the families of those killed.The collapse renewed concern over the safety of large infrastructure and hydel projects in the fragile, landslide-prone terrain of the eastern Himalayas, where heavy monsoon rain sharply raises the risk of slope failures. An inquiry into the cause of the collapse was ordered.



NATIONAL

At Least 25 Dead As Floods, Landslides Batter North And Northeast

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 22 JUL, 2026

NEW DELHI, July 20: At least 25 people were killed as heavy monsoon rain set off flash floods and landslides across northern India and the northeast over the weekend, officials said, with the toll expected to climb as rescue teams reached cut-off areas.Eight people died in Nagaland's Mon district, bordering Myanmar, where landslides buried homes and rescuers recovered several bodies from the debris. In Jammu and Kashmir, at least 11 people were killed as swollen rivers and cloudbursts swept through low-lying areas, damaging homes, a bus stand and stretches of road. Further deaths and injuries were reported from Assam and adjoining hill districts.The India Meteorological Department had issued warnings of very heavy rainfall across the region and forecast that active monsoon conditions would persist through at least July 22, prompting authorities to place disaster-response units on alert.Teams of the National Disaster Response Force, State Disaster Response Force, police and local volunteers were deployed for search and rescue, while administrations opened relief camps for displaced families. Roads, bridges and power lines were damaged in several districts, disrupting connectivity and communications.The Amarnath Yatra was suspended on July 19 on both the Pahalgam and Baltal routes after the weather office flagged the risk of flash floods along the pilgrimage tracks. Officials said the yatra would resume only after conditions improved.The monsoon, which accounts for the bulk of India's annual rainfall, routinely causes deadly flooding and landslides across the Himalayan and northeastern belts, where fragile slopes and swelling rivers leave communities exposed. Central and state agencies said relief material and medical assistance were being



NATIONAL

Supreme Court Orders Early-Release Policy For Elderly, Terminally Ill Prisoners

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 22 JUL, 2026

NEW DELHI, July 16: The Supreme Court directed all states and Union territories to frame a policy within three months for the early release of elderly and terminally ill prisoners, holding that their continued incarceration without such a mechanism violates the right to life and dignity under Article 21 of the Constitution.A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta was hearing a petition by the National Legal Services Authority, which flagged the plight of prisoners above 70 years of age and those suffering from terminal illness. A nationwide campaign by the authority had identified 5,393 vulnerable inmates, including 3,507 convicts and 1,886 undertrials, whose cases it said required urgent scrutiny.The court observed that prisons are not spaces where constitutional values stand suspended, and that the rights to dignity, humane treatment and health persist behind bars. It asked states to adopt a uniform definition of terminal illness, set up independent medical boards, follow time-bound procedures and use the National e-Prisons portal to ensure transparency. The verdict was delivered in National Legal Services Authority versus Union of India, and the court asked the states to report compliance once the policies are notified.

NATIONAL

Rahul Gandhi Pitches Exam Reforms At Dehradun Rally

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 22 JUL, 2026



Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi took the Congress's Chhatron Ki Goonj campaign to Dehradun on July 17, calling for a rethink of how examinations are conducted and renewing de...

DEHRADUN, July 17: Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Friday called for a complete overhaul of the country's examination system, telling students at a Congress event here that India needed to reimagine how it conducted exams. The interaction was part of the party's nationwide Chhatron Ki Goonj campaign, launched to highlight concerns over examination irregularities, paper leaks, unemployment and what the Congress describes as the deteriorating state of the education sector. It was the second such event, following one in Kota, Rajasthan, in June. Gandhi proposed a set of reforms including automated electronic generation of question papers to prevent leaks, non-partisan

appointments to head testing agencies and universities, and bringing the management of examinations back under direct government oversight. He said the issue concerned the future of the country's youth and its education system, and pressed the party's demand for the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan over recurring lapses in competitive examinations. The campaign has sought to place youth employment and educational accountability at the centre of the Opposition's messaging ahead of the monsoon session, where the NEET paper leak figured among the issues the Opposition planned to raise.

NATIONAL

Monsoon Session Opens To A Stormy Start In Both Houses

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 22 JUL, 2026



NEW DELHI, July 20: The monsoon session of Parliament opened on Monday to a stormy start, with proceedings in both Houses disrupted repeatedly as the Opposition sought to corner the government over a clutch of contentious issues on the very first day. The four-week session, scheduled to run through August 13 with 19 sittings, began in the Lok Sabha with obituary references to former members and other prominent figures who had died since the last session. In the Rajya Sabha, newly elected members took the oath before the House took up the day's agenda. The government has listed seven bills for the session, among them the Supreme Court (Number of Judges)

Amendment Bill and the Prevention of Insults to National Honour (Amendment) Bill, which seeks to extend statutory protection to the national song, Vande Mataram. Ministers said the legislative programme would focus on reforming legacy laws and strengthening institutions. Opposition members, however, pressed for discussions on the alleged misappropriation of donations at the Ram temple in Ayodhya, the NEET paper leak, the E20 ethanol-blended petrol policy and activist Sonam Wangchuk's protest. Congress and its allies also signalled they would revive their objection to the delimitation exercise and the pending Constitution amendment on

women's reservation. Amid sustained sloganeering, presiding officers in both Houses adjourned proceedings before scheduled business could be transacted in full. Government floor managers appealed for orderly debate, arguing that the House existed to legislate and deliberate rather than to remain in perpetual disruption. Ahead of the session, the government had convened an all-party meeting to seek cooperation for smooth functioning. Opposition leaders said they would extend support to genuine legislative work but insisted the treasury benches allow debate on issues of public concern. This is the first sitting of Parliament since the budget session earlier



NATIONAL

Shah Moves Bill To Criminalise Insults To Vande Mataram

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 22 JUL, 2026

NEW DELHI, July 20: Union Home Minister Amit Shah introduced the Prevention of Insults to National Honour (Amendment) Bill, 2026, in the Rajya Sabha on Monday, seeking to make intentionally insulting or obstructing the singing of the national song, Vande Mataram, a criminal offence. The bill amends the Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971, which currently criminalises acts of disrespect towards national symbols such as the national flag, the Constitution and the national anthem, Jana Gana Mana. The proposed change would extend the same statutory protection to the national song. Under the measure, a person found guilty of the offence could face imprisonment of up to three years, a fine, or both. The government said the amendment was being brought in the 150th anniversary year of the song's composition by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay in 1876. Vande Mataram, drawn from Chattopadhyay's novel Anandamath, was a rallying cry during the freedom movement and was accorded a status equal to the national anthem by the Constituent Assembly in 1950. Opposition members questioned the timing and necessity of the bill, arguing that existing laws already addressed acts of disrespect and cautioning against measures they said could be misused. The government maintained that the song deserved protection commensurate with its place in the nation's history.



NATIONAL

Modi Flags Off India's First Hydrogen-Powered Train In Haryana

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 22 JUL, 2026

JIND, July 17: Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagged off India's first hydrogen-powered passenger train from Jind railway station in Haryana, placing the country among a small group of nations operating zero-emission trains on their networks. Named the NaMo Green Rail, the 10-coach train will run two return trips a day along the roughly 90-kilometre route between Jind and Sonipat, carrying about 2,600 passengers at speeds of up to 75 kilometres per hour. Designed and built in India, the train emits only heat and water vapour, offering a diesel-free alternative on non-electrified stretches. Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw and Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini were present at the ceremony. Modi also inaugurated and laid the foundation stone for development projects worth more than Rs 14,700 crore across Haryana, spanning rail, road, healthcare and education. He described the launch as a marker of the country's push to become self-reliant and sustainable, and said the hydrogen train reflected a shift toward cleaner transport. India joins Germany, Japan, China and a handful of other countries that have deployed the technology in regular passenger service, and officials said the railways plan to add more hydrogen routes in the coming years.

BUSINESS

HDFC Bank Q1 Profit Rises 5% to Rs 19,060 Crore, NII Grows 7%

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 22 JUL, 2026



India's largest private lender posted a 5 per cent rise in first-quarter net profit to Rs 19,060 crore, with steady loan and deposit growth even as margins stayed under pressure.

MUMBAI, July 18: HDFC Bank, India's largest private-sector lender, reported a 5 per cent year-on-year rise in standalone net profit to Rs 19,060 crore for the first quarter of 2026-27, up from Rs 18,155 crore in the corresponding quarter last year. Net interest income, the difference between interest earned and interest paid, grew 6.7 per cent to Rs 33,534 crore from Rs 31,438 crore a year earlier. The board approved the unaudited results at a meeting on Saturday. The bank's gross advances rose 15.4 per cent to Rs 30.60 lakh crore, while average deposits increased 13 per cent to Rs 30.11 lakh crore, reflecting continued growth after the merger of parent HDFC Ltd. Provisions and contingencies fell sharply, by 79 per cent, to Rs 3,060 crore. Asset quality remained broadly stable, with gross non-performing assets at 1.17 per cent of gross

advances, marginally higher than 1.15 per cent in the preceding quarter. In absolute terms, gross NPAs stood at Rs 35,846 crore. The capital adequacy ratio was reported at 19.57 per cent. The sharp drop in provisions reflected a lower requirement for floating and contingent buffers compared with the year-ago period, when the bank had set aside additional reserves. Total income for the quarter stood at Rs 92,184 crore. Analysts described the quarter as mixed, noting that healthy profit and deposit growth were partly offset by margin pressure and a slight uptick in slippages. The result was among the most keenly awaited of the earnings season, given the lender's heavy weighting in the benchmark Sensex and Nifty indices.

BUSINESS

Kashmir Crafts Draw Strong Buyer Interest at Bharat Tex 2026

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 22 JUL, 2026



NEW DELHI, July 17: Jammu and Kashmir's handloom and handcraft heritage drew strong buyer interest at Bharat Tex 2026, the textile exhibition that concluded on Friday at Bharat Mandapam here. Around 20 exhibitors from the Union Territory, coordinated by the Jammu and Kashmir Trade Promotion Organisation (JKTPO), showcased GI-tagged Pashmina and Kani shawls, Kashmiri carpets, Pashmina rugs, wool stoles, scarves, chain-stitch rugs and handcrafted bags at a dedicated pavilion. Officials said the event, held from July 14 to 17, generated a wave of business enquiries and export prospects, opening new avenues for trade

partnerships. New Zealand's Minister for Rural Communities, Mark Patterson, visited the J&K pavilion and expressed interest in collaboration in the wool and textile sector. The showcase came against the backdrop of a sharp rise in Kashmir's shawl exports, which nearly doubled to Rs 588.23 crore in 2025-26 from Rs 305.52 crore a year earlier, accounting for more than 70 per cent of the region's total handicraft exports. Artisans said sustained access to national platforms was critical to reviving crafts such as carpets, papier-mache and wood carving, which have faced falling demand and shrinking export earnings in recent years.

BUSINESS

Wipro Q1 Profit Nearly Flat as Margins Hit 15-Quarter Low

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 22 JUL, 2026



BENGALURU, July 16: Wipro reported a near-flat consolidated net profit of Rs 3,356 crore for the first quarter of 2026-27, up just 0.6 per cent from a year earlier, as margin pressure offset double-digit revenue growth. Revenue rose 10.6 per cent year-on-year to Rs 24,479 crore, though it fell short of analyst estimates. Revenue from the core IT services business stood at \$2.61 billion, up 1 per cent from a year earlier but down 1.4 per cent sequentially. The IT services operating margin narrowed 130 basis points on a sequential basis to 16 per cent, which the company said was a 15-quarter low, weighed down by salary increases and investments in artificial intelligence capabilities. Total expenses outpaced revenue, rising 11.2 per cent year-on-year to Rs 20,720 crore. Large-deal bookings were a bright spot, rising 12.9 per cent quarter-on-quarter to \$1.63 billion across 13 deals, taking total bookings to \$3.37 billion. For the September quarter, Wipro guided for IT services revenue of \$2.57 billion to \$2.63 billion, implying constant-currency growth of between minus 1.5 per cent and plus 0.5 per cent.



BUSINESS

Sensex, Nifty End Week Higher as IT, Financials Lead Rally

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 22 JUL, 2026

MUMBAI, July 18: Benchmark equity indices ended the week with modest gains, buoyed by a rally in information technology and financial stocks on the back of upbeat quarterly earnings. The BSE Sensex surged 964.58 points, or 1.25 per cent, on Friday to close at 78,151.45, while the NSE Nifty 50 climbed 261.55 points, or 1.09 per cent, to settle at 24,334.30. For the week, the Sensex added 582.06 points, or 0.75 per cent, and the Nifty gained 127.4 points, or 0.52 per cent. The Nifty traded in a band of just 368 points through the week, its tightest weekly range so far in 2026, reflecting a phase of consolidation. The IT index was the standout performer with a weekly gain of about 4.3 per cent, while financial services rose 1.31 per cent. Tata Consultancy Services logged its strongest weekly advance in six years, and Tech Mahindra jumped after reporting a 28.4 per cent rise in quarterly profit. Jio Financial Services also gained more than 3 per cent over the week. Pharmaceutical stocks were the biggest drag, with the sector index down about 1.4 per cent, while metals slipped 0.4 per cent, leaving mid-cap and small-cap shares underperforming the large-cap benchmarks.



BUSINESS

Reliance Q1 Net Profit Falls 25% to Rs 23,001 Crore as One-Time Gain Fades

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 22 JUL, 2026

MUMBAI, July 17: Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) reported a consolidated net profit of Rs 23,001 crore for the first quarter of 2026-27, a decline of about 25 per cent from Rs 30,681 crore in the same quarter a year earlier, as the year-ago figure had been lifted by a one-time gain. The company said the previous year's other income had included Rs 8,924 crore from the sale of listed investments, without which the underlying operating performance improved. On a sequential basis, net profit rose from Rs 20,616 crore in the January-March quarter. Revenue from operations climbed 25.4 per cent to Rs 3,11,850 crore from Rs 2,48,660 crore a year earlier, while consolidated earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation (EBITDA) grew 9.9 per cent to Rs 51,403 crore. Basic earnings per share fell to Rs 12.54 from Rs 19.95 a year earlier. The results were approved by the board at its meeting in Mumbai. The digital services business, which houses telecom arm Jio, posted revenue of Rs 46,900 crore and EBITDA of Rs 21,255 crore, remaining the group's most profitable vertical. Reliance Retail reported revenue of Rs 90,409 crore and EBITDA of Rs 6,309 crore, aided by expansion in its store network and quick-commerce operations. The oil-to-chemicals (O2C) segment, the group's largest by revenue, recorded turnover of Rs 2,01,803 crore and EBITDA of Rs 17,010 crore, supported by firm fuel margins and higher volumes. The oil and gas segment, which includes the KG-D6 block, posted revenue of Rs 6,298 crore and EBITDA of Rs 4,973 crore. Analysts said the headline profit decline was largely optical, given the absence of the prior-year investment gain, and pointed to the broad-based improvement in operating profit across the consumer and energy businesses. Growth in the digital and retail

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TECHNOLOGY

China's Moonshot AI Unveils Kimi K3, Its Largest Open-Weight Model

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 22 JUL, 2026



Moonshot AI released Kimi K3, a 2.8-trillion-parameter open-weight system it called the largest openly released model to date, topping a coding leaderboard as China narrows the gap...

BEIJING, July 17: Chinese start-up Moonshot AI on Friday released Kimi K3, a 2.8-trillion-parameter open-weight artificial intelligence system it described as the largest openly released model to date, intensifying competition with leading American laboratories. The model features a one-million-token context window and native vision capabilities, and uses an architecture the company calls LatentMoE, which routes each query through 16 of 896 expert sub-networks to keep running costs down. Moonshot said the system was live on its kimi.com platform, with the full model weights due to be released on July 27. Independent evaluators ranked the model highly. The Arena leaderboard placed Kimi K3 first in its

Frontend Code test at 1,679 points, ahead of Anthropic's Claude Fable 5, while Vals AI rated it second overall. Analysts said the release showed Chinese developers narrowing the gap with US rivals despite American curbs on advanced chip exports, with some comparing its market impact to the earlier "DeepSeek shock" that rattled technology stocks. Moonshot, one of China's best-funded artificial intelligence companies, described Kimi K3 as a general-purpose system built for complex, multi-step tasks, and positioned it as comparable in capability to the strongest models from OpenAI and Anthropic.

TECHNOLOGY

Apple Briefly Overtakes Nvidia as World's Most Valuable Company

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 22 JUL, 2026



NEW YORK, July 17: Apple briefly overtook Nvidia to reclaim its title as the world's most valuable company during trading on Friday, before the chipmaker edged back ahead by the closing bell in a see-saw session that underscored a shift in investor sentiment. At its intraday peak, Apple's market capitalisation touched about \$4.9 trillion, moving past Nvidia, whose value slipped to roughly \$4.8 trillion as its shares fell as much as 4.6 per cent early in the day. Nvidia recovered through the session and closed down 2.2 per cent at just over \$4.9 trillion, finishing about \$6 billion above Apple. Nvidia had held the crown as the world's largest company since May 2025, buoyed by demand for the chips

powering the artificial intelligence boom. Friday's swing reflected a rotation by investors out of AI-linked semiconductor stocks and towards Apple, which has rallied to record highs in recent sessions. The two companies, along with Microsoft, have traded the top spot repeatedly over the past year as markets reassess how the returns from heavy AI spending will be distributed across the technology industry.

TECHNOLOGY

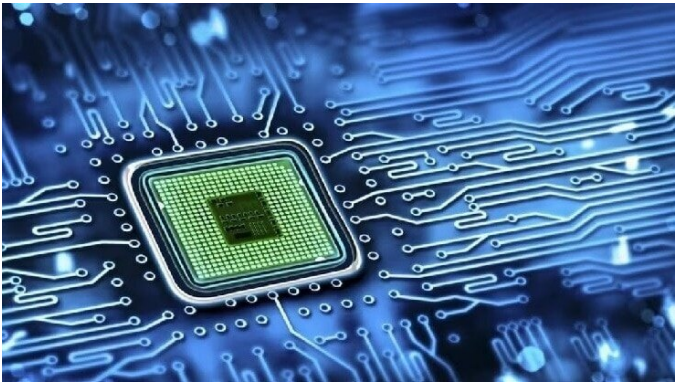
Google Launches Gemini 3.6 Flash and Teases a Gemini 4 Model

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 22 JUL, 2026



MOUNTAIN VIEW, July 21: Google on Tuesday released Gemini 3.6 Flash, an updated version of its high-volume "workhorse" artificial intelligence model, alongside two smaller variants and a fresh signal that work on its next flagship,

Gemini 4, is already under way. The company said Gemini 3.6 Flash consumes about 17 per cent fewer output tokens than the previous 3.5 Flash while improving on coding and reasoning tasks. On the DeepSWE coding benchmark the model scored 49 per cent, up from 37 per cent, and it posted gains on tests measuring computer use and multi-step reasoning. Its knowledge cutoff was advanced to March 2026. Google also cut prices. Output pricing for 3.6 Flash fell to \$7.50 per million tokens from \$9.00, while input pricing held at \$1.50 per million tokens. The model became available to developers through the Gemini API and Google AI Studio, and was added to GitHub Copilot the same day. The release included Gemini 3.5 Flash-Lite, a cheaper option priced at \$0.30 per million input tokens, and a limited-access 3.5 Flash Cyber model tuned to find software vulnerabilities. In a note accompanying the launch, Google said it had "already started our most ambitious pre-training run yet, for Gemini 4," an unusually early acknowledgement of a successor model. The disclosure came even as the company's long-promised Gemini 3.5 Pro flagship remained unreleased months past its original target, after internal testing reportedly fell short on coding and complex reasoning.



TECHNOLOGY

Cabinet Clears Semicon 2.0 With Rs 1.27 Lakh Crore Outlay for Chip Push

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 22 JUL, 2026

NEW DELHI, July 15: The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved the second phase of the India Semiconductor Mission, branded Semicon 2.0, with a budget outlay of Rs 1,27,500 crore, in a fresh push to build the country's chip-making ecosystem across design, fabrication, packaging and materials. Announcing the decision, Union Electronics and IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said the programme is expected to draw investments of around Rs 4 lakh crore and generate semiconductor production worth about Rs 2 lakh crore over the scheme period. He framed the outlay as a step towards self-reliance in a sector long dominated by a handful of countries. Semicon 2.0 is structured around six pillars. These cover strengthening chip design; incentives for manufacturing and research spanning equipment, materials, chemicals and gases; attracting semiconductor fabrication units; supporting the assembly, testing, marking and packaging (ATMP) and outsourced semiconductor assembly and test (OSAT) industries; research into advanced nodes and emerging technologies; and talent development through university programmes. A notable addition in the second phase is support extended deeper into the supply chain. The scheme carries provisions to incentivise suppliers of raw materials used in chip manufacturing, including minerals and specialty gases, an area where India remains heavily import-dependent. The approval builds on the first phase of the mission, under which the government cleared 12 projects with cumulative investments of about Rs 1.64 lakh crore. Companies including Micron, Kaynes and CG Semi have already begun commercial production in the country, and the first Made-in-India chips are expected to roll out from these units this year. Officials said



TECHNOLOGY

Xi Launches World AI Cooperation Body As China Courts Global South

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 22 JUL, 2026

SHANGHAI, July 17: Chinese President Xi Jinping announced the creation of a World Artificial Intelligence Cooperation Organization at the opening of the 2026 World Artificial Intelligence Conference, calling for a just and equitable system of global AI governance. Chinese officials said 29 countries had signed on to establish the body, which will be headquartered in Shanghai. Xi used the address to position China as a leading advocate of open-source artificial intelligence and pledged to provide 5,000 AI training opportunities to developing countries over the next five years, framing Beijing as an alternative to Washington's approach to regulating the technology. "A single string cannot make music, and a single tree does not make a forest," Xi told delegates, adding that AI development "should not be a solo performance by a single country, but a symphony of international cooperation." The initiative comes as the United States and China compete for influence over how the fast-moving technology is governed, with Washington pushing looser rules and lighter export controls. The conference drew government representatives, researchers and industry executives to Shanghai for talks on safety and access.

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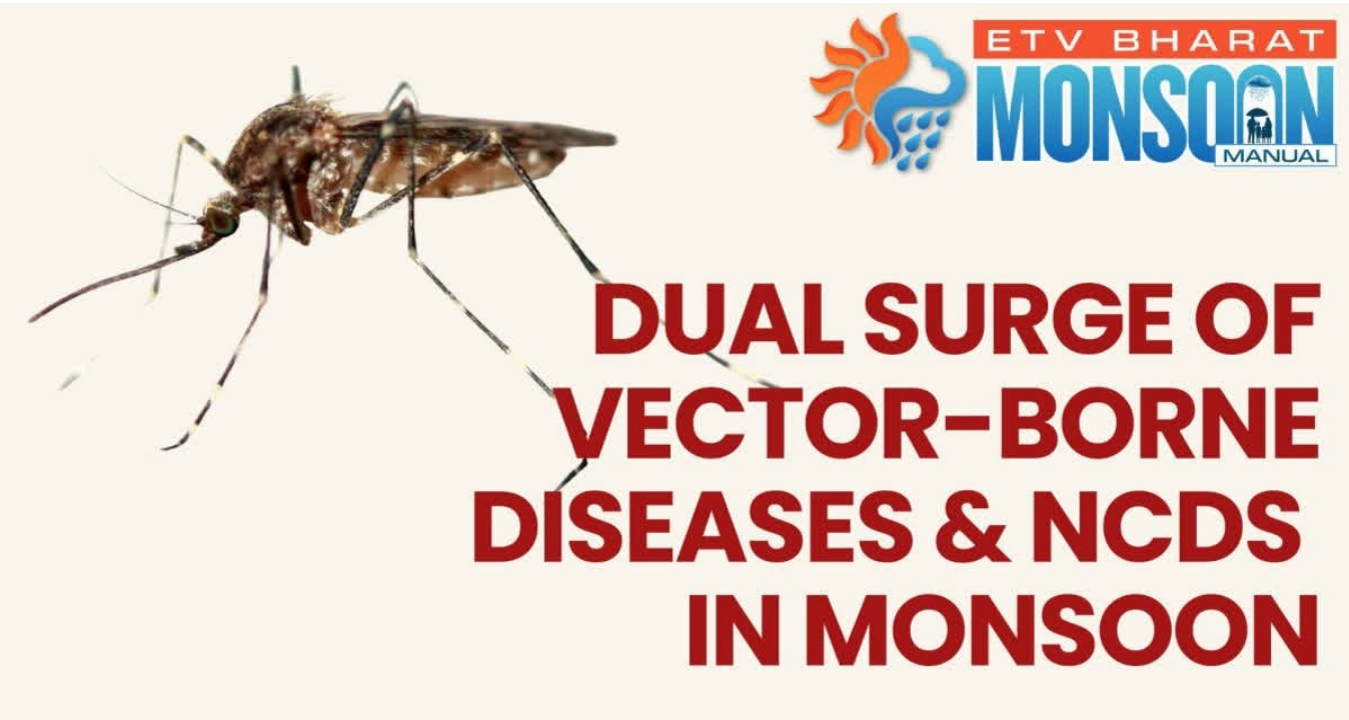


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HEALTH

India Faces Monsoon's Double Burden As Dengue Rises And NCDs Mount

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 22 JUL, 2026



Experts warn India is fighting on two fronts this monsoon, seasonal dengue outbreaks alongside a rising tide of chronic disease, even as malaria and kala-azar continue a long decli...

NEW DELHI, July 21: India is battling a double disease burden this monsoon, with mosquito-borne infections triggering seasonal outbreaks even as noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) emerge as the country's largest long-term health challenge, public-health experts have warned.Dengue remains the dominant vector-borne threat. National Centre for Vector Borne Diseases Control data show India logged 636,204 dengue cases and 877 deaths between 2023 and 2025, with Tamil Nadu recording the highest caseload of 20,866 in 2025. Malaria and kala-azar, by contrast, have declined sharply, malaria cases falling around 60 per cent between 2018 and 2022 and kala-azar dropping from 4,539 to 881

cases over the same period.Even as those gains hold, chronic illnesses are climbing. Government screening has diagnosed 7.01 crore people with hypertension and 4.68 crore with diabetes, and detected 2.14 lakh oral cancer cases."Vector-borne diseases attract immediate attention, but NCDs are the larger persistent challenge," said emergency physician Dr Tamorish Kole. Public-health expert Dr Suneela Garg said India must strengthen primary healthcare while sustaining gains against infectious diseases and reducing chronic-disease deaths, warning that waterlogging and flooding during the rains continue to fuel dengue and leptospirosis in urban centres.

HEALTH

India Clears Its First Dengue Vaccine As Takeda's Qdenga Wins Approval

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 22 JUL, 2026



NEW DELHI, July 21: India has approved its first dengue vaccine, clearing Japanese drugmaker Takeda's Qdenga for use against a mosquito-borne disease that infects hundreds of thousands of Indians every monsoon. The Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) sanctioned the two-dose vaccine for people aged four to 60 after reviewing its quality, safety and efficacy, the Union Health Ministry said.The vaccine is indicated for the prevention of dengue disease in individuals four to 60 years of age, the ministry said in its statement. Qdenga is administered as two injections given three months apart and is designed to protect against all four serotypes of the dengue virus.Qdenga has already been approved in 42 countries and more than 24 million doses have been distributed worldwide since its rollout. Its clearance in India comes as the country records a

persistent dengue burden: government data show more than one million infections and at least 1,500 deaths logged since 2021, with cases climbing during and after the monsoon in cities such as Mumbai, Delhi, Pune and Chennai.Dengue causes a spectrum of illness ranging from a mild fever to severe forms marked by plasma leakage, bleeding and organ impairment. There is no specific antiviral treatment, and clinical management relies on early diagnosis, fluid support and monitoring, making prevention the mainstay of control.Globally, the World Health Organization estimates 100 million to 400 million dengue infections a year, with nearly half the world's population living in areas at risk. The disease has expanded its range as warming temperatures and urbanisation widen the habitat of the Aedes aegypti mosquito that transmits it, and it is now endemic in more than 100 countries.Public-health experts cautioned that a vaccine is not a substitute for vector control, and that mosquito-source reduction, larvicidal measures and public awareness would remain central to India's dengue response. India is also developing an indigenous dengue vaccine, with Panacea Biotec's candidate DengiAll in late-stage clinical trials, a step officials say could eventually lower costs and expand access across the country.

HEALTH

Up To 45% Of Dementia Risk Can Be Prevented, Says WHO In New Guidelines

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 22 JUL, 2026



GENEVA, July 15: Up to 45 per cent of dementia cases worldwide could be prevented or delayed by tackling modifiable risk factors, the World Health Organization said as it released updated guidelines on reducing the risk of cognitive decline.The guidance identifies factors including tobacco and alcohol use, physical inactivity, social isolation, air pollution and noncommunicable diseases such as high blood pressure and diabetes as drivers of dementia risk that can be addressed across a person's life.More than 57 million people live with dementia globally and nearly 10 million new cases are diagnosed each year, the WHO said, with Alzheimer's disease accounting for an estimated 60 to 70 per cent of them. The condition costs the world economy about USD 1.3 trillion annually.The guidelines recommend regular physical activity,



HEALTH

SKIMS Director Orders Flood Fix After Rains Waterlog Bemina Hospital

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 22 JUL, 2026

SRINAGAR, July 20: The Director of the Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS), Prof M. Ashraf Ganie, conducted an extensive inspection of the waterlogged SKIMS Medical College Hospital at Bemina after heavy rainfall inundated parts of the campus, ordering immediate remedial action and a long-term flood mitigation plan.Persistent downpours left water accumulated across sections of the hospital, disrupting movement and raising concern over patient care at one of the Kashmir valley's key tertiary facilities. During the inspection, the director directed the immediate deployment of dewatering pumps to evacuate the accumulated water and asked the Principal and Medical Superintendent to restore normalcy urgently.The Engineering Wing was instructed to mobilise all available resources, and a detailed report on the causes of the flooding and mitigation strategies was sought within a week. The director also ordered the constitution of a high-level committee to formulate a sustainable flood mitigation plan, with its recommendations to be escalated for permanent infrastructural improvements."Uninterrupted healthcare delivery is of paramount importance," the director said, adding that the situation required a comprehensive and sustainable solution rather than temporary measures. The waterlogging underscored the vulnerability of health infrastructure in the valley during the monsoon.



HEALTH

ICMR Licenses Three Home-Grown Technologies For Cancer, Typhoid Fight

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 22 JUL, 2026

NEW DELHI, July 21: The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has licensed three indigenously developed biomedical technologies to domestic pharmaceutical and vaccine makers, in a move aimed at speeding the translation of publicly funded research into affordable treatments for cancer and infectious diseases.The first technology, SHetA2, is a novel anti-HPV therapeutic candidate for the treatment of cervical intraepithelial neoplasia (CIN), a precancerous condition of the cervix. It has been licensed to Emcure Pharmaceuticals Ltd. The molecule was developed by Dr Showket Hussain of the ICMR-National Institute of Cancer Prevention and Research (NICPR) with Dr Doris M. Benbrook of the University of Oklahoma.The other two technologies target enteric infections. A Salmonella typhi fusion vaccine, a next-generation typhoid vaccine candidate incorporating an outer membrane protein, and a recombinant vaccine designed to protect against Salmonella typhi, paratyphi and Shigella infections have both been licensed to Biological E Ltd. Both were developed at the ICMR-National Institute of Research in Bacterial Infections (NIRBI) in Kolkata.The Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare said the transfers marked another significant step towards accelerating the translation of publicly funded research into affordable healthcare solutions.Cervical cancer is among the most common cancers in Indian women, while typhoid and other enteric fevers remain a heavy burden during the monsoon, when contaminated water spreads infection. Officials said licensing the technologies to established manufacturers would help move the candidates through further development, trials and eventual commercialisation for the domestic and global

INTERNATIONAL

US-Iran Ceasefire Collapses As Hormuz Tanker Strikes Send Oil Soaring

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 22 JUL, 2026



Iranian missiles struck oil tankers in the Strait of Hormuz and the United States launched a new wave of strikes across Iran, shattering the June truce and driving global crude pri...

DUBAI, July 15: The fragile ceasefire between the United States and Iran collapsed this week as Iranian missiles struck oil tankers in the Strait of Hormuz and Washington launched a new wave of strikes across Iran, driving global crude prices sharply higher and reviving fears of a wider Gulf war. Iran said it disabled two "rogue supertankers" in the world's busiest oil chokepoint, while the United Arab Emirates reported that Iranian missiles hit two of its tankers in Omani territorial waters, killing one crew member. A fire was reported in the UAE's Fujairah oil zone from falling debris. The US military said its retaliatory strikes were meant to "degrade Iran's ability to threaten freedom of navigation" through the strait, which carries roughly a fifth of the world's daily oil supply. President Donald Trump declared the June ceasefire "over" and notified Congress that "limited" military action had resumed, as US Central Command said it would restore a naval blockade of ships moving to and from Iranian ports. Over three successive nights, American forces struck targets

across a broad swath of the country. The escalation jolted energy markets. Brent crude jumped about 16.7% to \$108.20 a barrel and US West Texas Intermediate rose 15.7% to \$105.13, their steepest one-day gains in years, as some Gulf refineries suspended operations and Iraq's southern oilfields cut output. The surge carries direct consequences for India, which imports the bulk of its crude through the strait and faces higher import bills and fuel prices if the disruption persists. The State Department issued a worldwide caution urging Americans, particularly those in the Middle East, to exercise heightened vigilance. Regional mediators presented Washington and Tehran with a proposal for a 10-day ceasefire to halt attacks on shipping and reopen the waterway, though there was no sign by week's end that either side was ready to stand down. Iran also launched missiles at US regional allies, widening a conflict that has spread well beyond the strait since fighting resumed on July 8.

INTERNATIONAL

Zelensky's Wartime Reshuffle Sparks Protests As Defence Chiefs Ousted

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 22 JUL, 2026



KYIV, July 16: President Volodymyr Zelensky has plunged Ukraine's wartime leadership into turmoil, dismissing Defence Minister Mykhailo Fedorov as part of a sweeping government reshuffle that has triggered street protests and resignations. Fedorov, a 35-year-old technocrat who oversaw Ukraine's drone programme and its "logistics lockdown" campaign against Russian forces, was removed on July 15 after months of feuding with Oleksandr Syrskyi, the commander-in-chief of the armed forces. Interior Minister Ihor Klymenko was named to replace him, a nomination several lawmakers openly criticised. The

dismissal came as Zelensky reshaped his cabinet around new Prime Minister Serhii Koryntskyi, the former Naftogaz chief, following the resignation of Yulia Svyrydenko. Fedorov's popularity surged after his ouster, with polls showing his trust rating overtaking the president's, and veterans and activists rallied in Kyiv demanding his reinstatement. Bowing to the pressure, Zelensky moved by July 21 to replace Syrskyi himself, appointing Mykhailo Drapatyi as the new commander-in-chief. The upheaval unfolded even as Russia pressed its offensive, launching dozens of missiles and more than a hundred attack drones across Ukraine in overnight barrages.

INTERNATIONAL

Death Toll In Congo Ebola Outbreak Passes 930

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 22 JUL, 2026



KINSHASA, July 20: The death toll from the Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has passed 930, health officials said, making it the fastest-growing outbreak of the disease ever recorded. The outbreak, declared on May 15 in the country's east, has spread faster than health teams can trace contacts, with more than 2,300 confirmed cases logged so far. It is caused by the Bundibugyo strain of the virus, a less common form for which there is no approved vaccine or treatment. Health workers have struggled to reach affected communities, and officials warned that the true scale of infections was likely higher than reported. Neighbouring Uganda has confirmed a smaller cluster of cases linked to the outbreak, raising fears of wider cross-border transmission. The World Health Organization and partners have deployed teams and supplies, but responders say shortages of staff, testing capacity and secure access continue to hamper efforts to contain the disease as case numbers climb. With no vaccine available for this strain, front-line teams are relying on isolation, safe burials and contact tracing. Congo has weathered more than a dozen Ebola outbreaks over the decades, but officials say the current spread is among the most difficult to control.



INTERNATIONAL

India-UK Free Trade Pact Comes Into Force, Modi Hails 'Historic Milestone'

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 22 JUL, 2026

NEW DELHI, July 15: The India-United Kingdom Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement came into force on Tuesday, activating one of the world's largest bilateral trade deals and, in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's words, marking "a historic milestone" for relations between the two economies. The pact, signed in July 2025 after nearly three years of negotiation, grants duty-free access to about 99% of Indian exports to Britain, covering labour-intensive sectors such as textiles, leather, footwear, sports goods, gems and engineering that employ millions of workers. In return, India will lower or scrap tariffs on 90% of British goods, including Scotch whisky and automobiles, phased in over time. Modi said the agreement would "significantly boost our bilateral trade and investment" and unlock opportunities for "farmers, workers, MSMEs, startups and innovators," linking it to his Viksit Bharat 2047 vision. British officials estimate the deal will lift annual bilateral trade by about £25.5 billion, with both sides aiming to double trade by 2030. Alongside the trade pact, the Double Contribution Convention on social security also took effect, exempting Indian professionals on short-term postings in Britain from paying into two social security systems at once. The exemption period has been extended from three years to five, a gain New Delhi says will improve the competitiveness of Indian workers abroad. The agreement is Britain's most significant trade deal since it left the European Union and India's most comprehensive with a Western economy. Officials on both sides say it is expected to create thousands of jobs and deepen investment ties across manufacturing, services and technology.



INTERNATIONAL

Monsoon Floods Kill Dozens In Bangladesh, Displace Over A Million

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 22 JUL, 2026

DHAKA, July 17: Catastrophic monsoon floods and landslides across southeastern and northeastern Bangladesh have killed at least 54 people and displaced more than a million, with authorities warning the toll will climb as waters recede in the worst-hit districts. The flooding, which began around July 6 and intensified through the following week, has struck seven districts, among them Cox's Bazar, Chattogram, Bandarban, Rangamati and Moulvibazar. Cox's Bazar recorded the highest number of deaths at 31, followed by Chattogram with 13, according to the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief. More than 600,000 households have been affected and hundreds of thousands of people left marooned, including an estimated 350,000 trapped in the submerged upazila of Satkania. Officials reported some 14,300 hectares of cropland damaged and thousands of commercial fish ponds destroyed, threatening livelihoods in a region already strained by hosting Rohingya refugee camps. Scientists linked the deluge to a warming climate that has quadrupled extreme rainfall events in northeastern Bangladesh since 1950, compounded by a strong El Niño. Relief workers said blocked sluice gates and illegal embankments worsened the flooding in several areas.

SPORTS

Spain Beat Argentina In Extra Time To Win 2026 World Cup

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 22 JUL, 2026



Ferran Torres struck in extra time as Spain beat Argentina 1-0 at MetLife Stadium to win the 2026 World Cup, becoming the first nation to hold the men's and women's titles at once.

EAST RUTHERFORD, July 19: Spain won the 2026 FIFA World Cup, beating Argentina 1-0 after extra time at MetLife Stadium in New Jersey to claim their second world title and become the first nation to hold the men's and women's crowns at the same time. Ferran Torres settled a tense final in the 106th minute, striking early in the first period of extra time to break the deadlock after 90 minutes had failed to separate the sides. The forward was later named man of the match before a crowd of 80,663. The triumph, Spain's first since their 2010 win in South Africa, arrives with the country's women's team the reigning world champions after their 2023 title, an unprecedented double for a single football federation. For Argentina, the defeat denied Lionel Messi a

fairytale finale. The 39-year-old became only the second man to appear in three World Cup finals, after Brazil's Cafu, but could not add to the title he lifted in 2022. Goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez produced 11 saves, a record for a World Cup final, in a losing cause. The final brought the curtain down on the first 48-team World Cup, jointly hosted by the United States, Canada and Mexico. Spain, who had swept through the knockout rounds, absorbed sustained Argentine pressure in the second half before Torres struck to decide the contest and spark celebrations among their travelling supporters. The tournament, the largest in the competition's history, was staged across 16 host cities in the three nations.

SPORTS

Ryan Fox Wins The Open At Royal Birkdale For First Major

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 22 JUL, 2026



SOUTHPORT, July 19: New Zealand's Ryan Fox birdied the final hole to win the 154th Open Championship at Royal Birkdale on Sunday, claiming the first major title of his career at the age of 39. Fox closed at 10 under par, one stroke clear of American Cameron Young, after a nerveless final round in which he made four birdies over the last six holes. The decisive putt on the 18th sealed a one-shot victory and the Claret Jug on a tense afternoon on England's north-west coast. The win made Fox the third New Zealander to capture a men's major championship and crowned a steady rise for a player

long regarded as one of the game's most consistent performers without a major to his name. Young, seeking a maiden major of his own, set the clubhouse target and could only watch as Fox produced his late flurry, the result denying the American once more at the game's highest level. Royal Birkdale, staging the Open for the 11th time, again proved a demanding links test, with the closing stretch deciding the championship in Fox's favour.

SPORTS

Josh Kerr Breaks 27-Year-Old Mile World Record In London

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 22 JUL, 2026



LONDON, July 18: Britain's Josh Kerr smashed one of athletics' longest-standing records, clocking

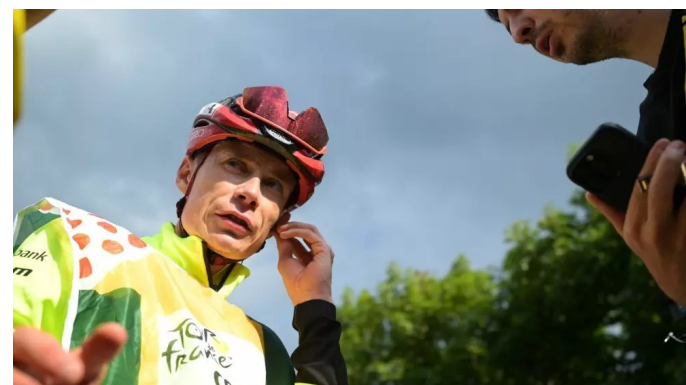
3:42.66 to win the mile at the London Diamond League and break a mark that had stood for 27 years. Running at the Novuna London Athletics Meet on Saturday, Kerr became the first man in history to go under 3:43 for the mile, erasing Hicham El Guerrouj's 3:43.13, set in Rome in 1999. He also became the first Briton to hold the world mile record since Steve Cram in 1985. Kerr, a former world 1500 metres champion and Olympic medallist, had spoken openly of chasing the record before the meet. Pacemakers Brannon Kidder and Zane Rudolf towed the field through halfway in 1:51.1 before Kerr pulled clear over the final laps and held on through the closing straight, finishing more than three seconds ahead of American Yared Nuguse, who ran 3:45.69 in second. "It is very overwhelming," Kerr said afterwards. "There was a lot of hype. I nearly lost it there at the end, but I got over the line. The last lap was incredible." The record capped a standout evening at the London meet, one of the marquee stops on the Diamond League circuit.

SPORTS

England Edge India At Lord's To Seal ODI Series 2-1

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 22 JUL, 2026

LONDON, July 19: England completed a 2-1 one-day international series victory over India at Lord's on Sunday, riding a mammoth 387 for 3 to a 27-run win in the deciding third match of the three-game rubber. Batting first, England posted 387 for 3 from their 50 overs, the highest total of the series, with left-hander Jacob Bethell named player of the match for his part in the innings at the home of cricket. India, chasing a target that would have levelled the series, mounted a spirited reply but fell short at 360 for 7, leaving the tourists to rue a middle order that could not sustain the required rate. The result handed England the series after the two sides had traded wins in the opening matches. India drew first blood at Edgbaston on July 14, bowling England out for 258 and knocking off the runs for the loss of four wickets to win by six wickets, with all-rounder Axar Patel adjudged player of the match. England hit back at Sophia Gardens in Cardiff on July 16, restricting India to 233 before Joe Root anchored the chase to steer the hosts home by four wickets with an over to spare. Root's innings earned him the individual award as England squared the series at 1-1, setting up the Lord's decider. The final match drew a large crowd, and England's total always looked likely to prove decisive on a true surface. Set 388 to win, India's batters kept the contest alive deep into the innings and kept pace with the required rate for long stretches, but the loss of wickets at key moments checked the charge and ultimately left the tourists 27 runs short at the close. The three-match one-day series formed the closing leg of India's white-ball tour of England, which had also featured a Twenty20 International series earlier in the month. The one-day defeat capped a testing few weeks for the tourists, with attention now turning to the remainder of both sides' international calendars.



SPORTS

Vingegaard Crashes Out Of Tour As Evenepoel Wins Stage 15

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 22 JUL, 2026

PLATEAU DE SOLAISON, July 19: Remco Evenepoel won stage 15 of the Tour de France on Sunday, but the day was overshadowed by a crash that forced two-time champion Jonas Vingegaard out of the race with a broken collarbone. Evenepoel, riding for Red Bull-Bora-Hansgrohe, edged race leader Tadej Pogacar and UAE Team Emirates rider Isaac Del Toro in the closing metres of the 183.9-kilometre stage from Champagnole to the Plateau de Solaison to take his first road-stage victory at the Tour. The success was a notable one for the Belgian, an Olympic and world time-trial champion better known for shorter efforts against the clock. The drama had unfolded earlier when Vingegaard, Pogacar's chief rival, crashed on a curve with around 22 kilometres remaining. His Visma-Lease a Bike team later confirmed a fractured collarbone, ending the Dane's bid for a third Tour title. Pogacar, who had begun the stage with a lead of more than four and a half minutes over Vingegaard, retained the yellow jersey and tightened his grip on the general classification with his main challenger gone. "I'm really sad," Pogacar said of his rival's exit, as the race headed towards its final week in the mountains.

PUBLIC NOTICES · TENDERS · AUCTIONS · RECRUITMENT

PUBLIC WORKS (R&B) DEPARTMENT, R&B DIVISION POONCH

Ref: e-NIT No. 41/EE/R&B/PNC of 2026-27 dated 21-07-2026 (Tender ID 2026_PWD_318742_1)

Flood-damage restoration of Surankote–Behla road and cross–drainage works

The Executive Engineer, R&B Division Poonch invites e-tenders on percentage–rate basis from registered J&K State/CPWD/Railway/MES/BRO Class 'A' and 'B' contractors for immediate restoration of the flash-flood-damaged Sur...

Type: Works
Last date: 12 Aug 2026
Est. cost: Approx. ₹3.85 crore
EMD: ₹7,70,000
Location: Surankote, District Poonch, J&K
Contact: Executive Engineer, R&B Division Poonch · Refer NIT PDF

JAL SHAKTI (PHE) DEPARTMENT, PHE DIVISION POONCH

Ref: e-NIT No. 28/EE/JSD/PNC of 2026-27 dated 21-07-2026 (Tender ID 2026_JSD_318955_1)

Restoration of flood-damaged intake and rising main of Surankote WSS

The Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti (PHE) Division Poonch invites e-tenders from eligible registered contractors for restoration of the damaged intake structure, silt-choked infiltration gallery and dislodged rising main...

Type: Works
Last date: 10 Aug 2026
Est. cost: Approx. ₹1.92 crore
EMD: ₹3,84,000
Location: Surankote, District Poonch, J&K
Contact: Executive Engineer, PHE Division Poonch · Refer NIT PDF

IRRIGATION & FLOOD CONTROL DEPARTMENT, I&FC DIVISION RAJOURI

Ref: e-NIT No. 19/EE/IFC/RJI of 2026-27 dated 21-07-2026 (Tender ID 2026_IFC_319034_1)

Flood-protection bund and spurs along Rajouri River at Madina Colony

The Executive Engineer, Irrigation & Flood Control Division Rajouri invites e-tenders for construction of a protection bund with wire-crate spurs and toe-wall along the left bank of the Rajouri River to protect Madina Co...

Type: Works
Last date: 14 Aug 2026
Est. cost: Approx. ₹4.60 crore
EMD: ₹9,20,000
Location: Madina Colony, District Rajouri, J&K
Contact: Executive Engineer, I&FC Division Rajouri · Refer NIT PDF

POWER DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT, JPDCL ELECTRIC DIVISION POONCH

Ref: e-NIT No. 33/EE/JPDCL/PNC of 2026-27 dated 21-07-2026 (Tender ID 2026_PDD_319217_1)

Restoration of collapsed 132kV transmission stretch at Behla–Surankote

The Executive Engineer, JPDCL Electric Division Poonch invites e-tenders from eligible electrical contractors for erection and stringing works to restore the transmission stretch feeding Poonch after two 132kV towers col...

Type: Works
Last date: 11 Aug 2026
Est. cost: Approx. ₹5.75 crore
EMD: ₹11,50,000
Location: Behla–Surankote, District Poonch, J&K
Contact: Executive Engineer, JPDCL Electric Division Poonch · Refer NIT PDF

PUBLIC WORKS (R&B) DEPARTMENT, R&B DIVISION RAJOURI

Ref: e-NIT No. 47/EE/R&B/RJI of 2026-27 dated 21-07-2026 (Tender ID 2026_PWD_319388_1)

Restoration of Nowshera–Kalakote road formation and breast walls

The Executive Engineer, R&B Division Rajouri invites e-tenders for restoration of the flood- and landslide-damaged Nowshera–Kalakote road, including reconstruction of collapsed breast walls, clearing of slips and re-meta...

Type: Works
Last date: 13 Aug 2026
Est. cost: Approx. ₹2.94 crore
EMD: ₹5,88,000
Location: Nowshera, District Rajouri, J&K
Contact: Executive Engineer, R&B Division Rajouri · Refer NIT PDF

PRADHAN MANTRI GRAM SADAK YOJANA (PMGSY), PIU POONCH

Ref: e-NIT No. 12/EE/PMGSY/PNC of 2026-27 dated 21-07-2026 (Tender ID 2026_PMGSY_319504_1)

Restoration of PMGSY rural road and culverts in Mendhar block

The Executive Engineer, PMGSY Programme Implementation Unit Poonch invites e-tenders for restoration of flood-damaged rural connectivity roads and washed-out culverts in Mendhar block to reconnect cut-off habitations. Co...

Type: Works
Last date: 17 Aug 2026
Est. cost: Approx. ₹2.35 crore
EMD: ₹4,70,000
Location: Mendhar, District Poonch, J&K
Contact: Executive Engineer, PMGSY PIU Poonch · Refer NIT PDF

PUBLIC WORKS (R&B) DEPARTMENT, R&B DIVISION POONCH (MUGHAL ROAD)

Ref: e-NIT No. 43/EE/R&B/PNC of 2026-27 dated 21-07-2026 (Tender ID 2026_PWD_319611_1)

Landslide clearance and protection works on Mughal Road near Thanamandi

The Executive Engineer, R&B Division Poonch invites e-tenders for clearance of landslide debris and construction of protective breast/retaining walls on the Mughal Road corridor near Thanamandi damaged in the July 2026 r...

Type: Works
Last date: 15 Aug 2026
Est. cost: Approx. ₹3.10 crore
EMD: ₹6,20,000
Location: Thanamandi (Mughal Road), District Rajouri, J&K
Contact: Executive Engineer, R&B Division Poonch · Refer NIT PDF

RURAL DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT (RDD), EXECUTIVE ENGINEER REW DIVISION POONCH

Ref: e-NIT No. 16/EE/REW/PNC of 2026-27 dated 21-07-2026 (Tender ID 2026_RDD_319740_1)

Restoration of damaged rural link roads and footbridges under REW Poonch

The Executive Engineer, Rural Engineering Wing (RDD) Division Poonch invites e-tenders for repair and restoration of flood-damaged rural link roads, drains and pedestrian footbridges across panchayats affected by the Jul...

Type: Works
Last date: 18 Aug 2026
Est. cost: Approx. ₹1.48 crore
EMD: ₹2,96,000
Location: Poonch, District Poonch, J&K
Contact: Executive Engineer, REW Division Poonch · Refer NIT PDF

JAMMU & KASHMIR MEDICAL SUPPLIES CORPORATION LTD (JKMSCL)

Ref: e-NIT No. JKMSCL/Surgical & Disposables/2026-28/712 dated 14-07-2026 (Tender ID 2026_JKMSCL_320118_1)

Rate-contract supply of surgical disposables and consumables 2026–28

The Managing Director, Jammu & Kashmir Medical Supplies Corporation Ltd invites online e-tenders from manufacturers and their authorised distributors for framing of a two-year rate contract for supply of surgical disposa...

Type: Supply
Last date: 21 Aug 2026
Est. cost: Refer notification
EMD: Refer notification (as per bid document)
Location: Srinagar / Jammu, J&K
Contact: Managing Director, JKMSCL · www.jkmsclbusiness.com

SHER-I-KASHMIR INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES (SKIMS), SOURA, SRINAGAR

Ref: e-NIT No. SKIMS/MM-II/26 of 2026-27 dated 15-07-2026 (Tender ID 2026_SKIMS_320274_1)

Supply and installation of medical/laboratory equipment for SKIMS Soura

The Director, Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences, Soura invites e-tenders from manufacturers and their authorised dealers for supply, installation, testing and commissioning of specified medical and laboratory...

Type: Supply
Last date: 20 Aug 2026
Est. cost: Refer notification
EMD: Refer notification (as per bid document)
Location: Soura, District Srinagar, J&K
Contact: Director / Medical Superintendent, SKIMS Soura · www.skims.ac.in

PUBLIC WORKS (R&B) DEPARTMENT, R&B CONSTRUCTION DIVISION UNIVERSITY OF JAMMU

Ref: e-NIT No. 09/EE/R&B/JU of 2026-27 dated 16-07-2026 (Tender ID 2026_PWD_320465_1)

Construction of academic block and allied civil works, University of Jammu

The Executive Engineer, R&B Construction Division invites e-tenders on item-rate basis from registered J&K State/CPWD/MES Class 'A' contractors for construction of an academic block and allied civil/electrical works with...

Type: Works
Last date: 24 Aug 2026
Est. cost: Approx. ₹8.90 crore
EMD: ₹17,80,000
Location: Jammu, District Jammu, J&K
Contact: Executive Engineer, R&B Construction Division (University) · Refer NIT PDF

J&K SERVICES SELECTION BOARD (JKSSB), HOME DEPARTMENT (PRISONS)

Ref: Advertisement Notification No. 05 of 2026 dated 06-07-2026

Recruitment of 288 Warder (UT Cadre) posts, J&K Prisons Department

The Jammu & Kashmir Services Selection Board invites online applications from eligible domiciles of J&K for 288 posts of Warder (UT Cadre) under the Home Department, J&K Prisons Department. Candidates meeting the prescri...

Type: Recruitment
Last date: 25 Aug 2026
Est. cost: Refer notification
Location: Jammu & Kashmir (UT Cadre)
Contact: Secretary, J&K Services Selection Board · jkssb.nic.in

J&K SERVICES SELECTION BOARD (JKSSB), PUBLIC WORKS (R&B) DEPARTMENT

Ref: Advertisement Notification No. 06 of 2026 dated 06-07-2026

Recruitment of 357 Public Works (R&B) posts — Draftsman & Works Supervisor

The Jammu & Kashmir Services Selection Board invites online applications for 357 Divisional Cadre posts in the Public Works (R&B) Department, comprising Draftsman (Civil) and Works Supervisor for Jammu and Kashmir divisi...

Type: Recruitment
Last date: 30 Aug 2026
Est. cost: Refer notification
Location: Jammu & Kashmir (Divisional Cadre)
Contact: Secretary, J&K Services Selection Board · jkssb.nic.in

J&K SERVICES SELECTION BOARD (JKSSB), DMRRR DEPARTMENT (PM PACKAGE)

Ref: Advertisement Notification No. 07 of 2026 dated 08-07-2026

Recruitment of 72 Divisional Cadre posts under PM Package for Kashmiri Migrants

The Jammu & Kashmir Services Selection Board invites online applications for 72 Divisional Cadre posts notified by the Disaster Management, Relief, Rehabilitation & Reconstruction (DMRRR) Department under the Prime Minis...

Type: Recruitment
Last date: 8 Sep 2026
Est. cost: Refer notification
Location: Kashmir Division, J&K
Contact: Secretary, J&K Services Selection Board · jkssb.nic.in

FINANCE DEPARTMENT, GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR (GST APPELLATE TRIBUNAL)

Ref: Recruitment Notice, Finance Department dated 10-07-2026 (GSTAT State Bench)

Recruitment of Technical Member (State) — GST Appellate Tribunal, J&K

The Finance Department, Government of Jammu & Kashmir invites applications for the post of Technical Member (State/UT) in the State Bench of the Goods and Services Tax Appellate Tribunal (GSTAT). Eligible serving/retired...

Type: Recruitment
Last date: 8 Aug 2026
Est. cost: Refer notification
Location: Jammu & Kashmir
Contact: Administrative Secretary, Finance Department, J&K · jk.gov.in

REGIONAL

J&K Students Among Scores Injured As Delhi Police Lathicharge Parliament March

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 22 JUL, 2026

NEW DELHI, July 20: Scores of students, several of them from Jammu and Kashmir, were injured on Monday when Delhi Police used batons and tear gas to break up a march towards Parliament, drawing sharp condemnation from the Jammu and Kashmir Students' Association and opposition leaders.The crackdown came as thousands of demonstrators led by the Cockroach Janta Party, a student-driven movement, tried to march to Parliament on the opening day of the monsoon session to demand accountability for the NEET-UG paper leak and the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan. Police said protesters breached barricades near Parliament Street before the lathicharge began. The movement, which has been protesting at Jantar Mantar since early June, is demanding a fresh NEET-UG examination and sweeping reforms in the conduct of public examinations.At least 133 protesters were admitted to three Delhi hospitals, 65 at Ram Manohar Lohia, 38 at Lady Hardinge Medical College and 30 at Lok Nayak, with fractures, head injuries and deep cuts, according to hospital records.

Around 80 were discharged by Tuesday morning. Delhi Police countered that more than 118 personnel and about 60 protesters were injured, and accused demonstrators of pelting stones and damaging vehicles.The Jammu and Kashmir Students' Association said it was shocked by the scenes. "The right to peaceful assembly, freedom of speech and the expression of dissent are guaranteed under Article 19 of the Constitution," its national convener Nasir Khuehami said, adding that "violence can never be the answer to peaceful democratic expression." The body, which counts thousands of Kashmiri and Jammu students studying outside the region among its members, said its office-bearers would visit the protest site to express solidarity.The association demanded an

REGIONAL

Congress March For Statehood Foiled In Jammu, Dozens Detained

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 22 JUL, 2026

JAMMU, July 19: Police foiled a Congress march to the Lieutenant Governor's residence here on Saturday and detained dozens of party leaders and workers who were pressing for the restoration of statehood to Jammu and Kashmir.Hundreds of Congress workers first staged a sit-in at Maharaja Hari Singh Park in the heart of the city, raising slogans in support of the statehood demand, before setting out in a procession towards Lok Bhavan to submit a memorandum addressed to President Droupadi Murmu.Police had barricaded the road at Jewel Chowk. A brief scuffle broke out as protesters tried to push past the barriers, officials said, after which the leaders and workers were taken into custody.Those detained included Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee president Tariq Hameed Karra, AICC general secretary and Congress Legislature Party leader G A Mir, working president Raman Bhalla and several former ministers and legislators."Nearly two years have passed since the assurances were given, but there has been no indication from the Centre on fulfilling that commitment," Karra said, referring to promises on statehood.The memorandum demanded the immediate restoration of full statehood to the Union Territory, which was created when the former state was reorganised in 2019. The Supreme Court, while upholding those changes in December 2023, had directed that statehood be restored at the earliest.The demonstration came a day before the National Conference's own statehood agitation, planned for the national capital, underscoring a rare convergence between the two parties on the issue even as they remain political rivals in the Union Territory.

REGIONAL

Poonch Man Loses Eight Of Family As Cloudburst Buries House In Surankote

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 22 JUL, 2026

POONCH, July 20: Mohammad Latief stepped out of his three-storey home in Lower Muran village of Surankote tehsil around 3:30 am on Sunday to move his SUV to higher ground as torrential rain hammered the hillside. Minutes later, a cloudburst sent a torrent of mud, rocks and water crashing down the stream bank, flattening the house and burying eight members of his family under the rubble.Latief survived by sheer chance. His elder son was spared because he had travelled to Jammu the previous day.

The rest of the household were trapped as the structure collapsed into the swollen nallah, among them his wife Noor Safia, sons Sajad Ahmad, Haqnawaz, Shah nawaz and Mohd Akram, and daughter-in-law Khalida Kouser.Armed with shovels, ropes and bare hands, villagers and rescue workers dug through the debris all day. By evening they had recovered two bodies, those of 60-year-old Bano Bi and two-year-old Sofian Yasar, while six family members remained missing as darkness and fresh rain hampered the search.Latief's account emerged as one of the most harrowing of the Surankote tragedy, where the majority of the district's flood deaths were recorded. Neighbours said the family had lived on the bank of the stream for decades and had no warning before the wall of water arrived.District officials said the State Disaster Response Force and Army teams would resume the search at first light, though continuing rain and unstable slopes were slowing efforts to reach the worst-hit hamlets.

NATIONAL

Rahul Gandhi, Opposition Leaders Detained Outside PM's Home

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 22 JUL, 2026

NEW DELHI, July 21: Delhi Police on Tuesday detained Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and several other opposition figures after they staged a sit-in outside Prime Minister Narendra Modi's residence on Lok Kalyan Marg, escalating a standoff over a national examination scandal.Those detained included Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav, along with several members of Parliament and party workers from the INDIA bloc.The leaders were protesting police action against students a day earlier, when a march toward Parliament turned violent. They demanded accountability and the resignation of the prime minister and Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan over a leak in the NEET medical entrance examination that forced more than two million students to sit the test again.Security personnel blocked the march before it reached the residence. When the leaders refused to disperse, they were escorted into police vehicles.

Officials announced no criminal charges, and Gandhi was released late on Tuesday."The government is unwilling to answer questions about the treatment of students," Gandhi said, demanding that Modi apologize for the violence. He had earlier called on the prime minister to resign "for destroying the future of India's youth."During Monday's march, authorities said 118 police personnel and about 60 other people were injured in clashes near the parliamentary complex. Pradhan, resisting calls to step down, said students "deserve far better than being treated as props in a political campaign." Opposition members have repeatedly disrupted the monsoon session of Parliament demanding a debate on the examination scandal.

REGIONAL

Omar Leads National Conference Statehood Protest In Delhi, Alleges Tear Gas

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 22 JUL, 2026

NEW DELHI, July 20: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah led a National Conference protest in the national capital on Monday demanding the immediate restoration of Jammu and Kashmir's statehood, accusing the Centre of forcing his party onto the streets nearly two years after assembly elections.The demonstration, timed to coincide with the opening day of Parliament's monsoon session, was to be held at Jantar Mantar, but police denied permission, prompting leaders to move towards the Constitution Club. Omar alleged that tear gas was used as party workers tried to press ahead. "We were stopped from getting to Jantar Mantar and stopped from protesting peacefully for what is rightfully ours, but we were not silenced," he said in a post on X.Around 50 to 100 people had travelled from Jammu and Kashmir for the protest, which was attended by NC president Farooq Abdullah, Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary and MP Sajad Kichloo, with AAP legislator Mehraj Malik and other allied leaders lending support.Omar said the campaign would begin with statehood and later extend to the restoration of special constitutional status. "First statehood, then the restoration of special status," he said, adding that democracy was being strangled. Farooq Abdullah reminded the Centre of its pledge. "We are fighting for the full restoration of statehood.

It is a promise made by the Prime Minister and the Home Minister," he said.The National Conference described the protest as the beginning of a sustained agitation for the powers stripped when the erstwhile state was downgraded into two union territories in August 2019.