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Record heat and killer floods grip Asia as a warming region reels

Late July brought record temperatures across East Asia and deadly monsoon flooding to India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, in a summer...

REGIONAL

J&K cabinet to meet Aug 4 amid reshuffle buzz

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 4 AUG, 2026

[DESK-CONFIRM] The J&K cabinet is scheduled to meet in Srinagar on Aug 4, its first sitting after the NC's Delhi statehood protest, amid talk of a long-awaited expansion and reshuffle.

*The Jammu and Kashmir cabinet is scheduled to meet in Srinagar on Tuesday, August 4, its first sitting since the National Conference's statehood protest in Delhi, amid speculation over a long-awaited expansion and reshuffle of...*

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REGIONAL

Amarnath Yatra crosses 4 lakh pilgrims, a record turnout: LG

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 4 AUG, 2026

More than four lakh pilgrims have paid obeisance at the Amarnath cave shrine this season, LG Manoj Sinha said, calling the footfall a record for the annual pilgrimage.

*More than four lakh pilgrims have paid obeisance at the Amarnath cave shrine in the south Kashmir Himalayas this season, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said...*

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Single protest won't bring statehood, sustained effort needed: Omar

CM Omar Abdullah said one protest would not restore statehood and that repeated effort was needed to keep the demand alive, defending the NC's...

*Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said a single protest would not bring statehood back to Jammu and Kashmir and that sustained...*

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INTERNATIONAL

Misri in Thimphu to co-chair India-Bhutan plan talks, new projects expected

[DESK-CONFIRM] Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri's July 30-31 visit to Thimphu is expected to approve a fresh tranche of India-funded projects under Bhutan's 13th Five Year Plan.

*Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri began a two-day official visit to Bhutan on July 30 to co-chair the fifth India-Bhutan Development Cooperation Talks...*

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Jammu-Srinagar highway to shut fully on July 31 for repairs

[DESK-CONFIRM] Traffic police have announced a complete suspension of vehicular movement on the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway on Friday to allow the NHAI to carry out urgent restoration work on rain-damaged stretches in...

*The Jammu-Srinagar National Highway (NH-44) is scheduled to remain fully closed to traffic on Friday, July 31, to allow the National Highways...*

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INTERNATIONAL

Muzaffarabad votes amid boycott in Pakistani Kashmir's phase two

[DESK-CONFIRM] Voters in the Muzaffarabad division of Pakistan-administered Kashmir are due to cast ballots on Saturday in the second phase of a staggered election clouded by protest, boycott calls and a business...

*Voters in the Muzaffarabad division of Pakistan-administered Kashmir are set to cast ballots on Saturday in the second phase of a staggered...*

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NATIONAL

Hill states reel as landslides shut roads, halt Char Dham Yatra

Relentless late-July rain triggered landslides and flash floods across Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, closing hundreds of roads, suspending the Char Dham Yatra and killing five members of a family near Chamba.

*Relentless monsoon rain battered Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand in the final days of July, triggering landslides and flash floods that closed hundreds...*

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REGIONAL

## Srinagar reviews Mission YUVA, ropes in banks for youth enterprise

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 4 AUG, 2026



The district administration held a joint review with line departments and bankers to speed up self-employment and enterprise support under Mission YUVA.

Deputy Commissioner Srinagar Akshay Labroo chaired a review of the Mission YUVA scheme, bringing line departments and bankers together to assess progress on the youth self-employment and enterprise programme in the district. The meeting, held at the Deputy Commissioner's office complex, examined the pipeline of applications, the flow of bank credit to young entrepreneurs and the functioning of the district's support units. Officials were asked to tighten coordination between government departments and lending institutions so that eligible youth are not held up at the

financing stage. The review was attended by Additional District Development Commissioner Rifat Aftab Qureshi, Additional Deputy Commissioners Mir Imtiaz Ul Aziz and Aadil Fareed, Chief Planning Officer Fayaz Ahmad Dar, General Manager of the District Industries Centre Abid Hussain, SDM West Irfan Bahadur, Deputy Director Employment Shubi Tabasum, the zonal head of the Jammu and Kashmir Bank and representatives of other banks and business development units.



REGIONAL

## Landslides shut Jammu-Srinagar highway as fresh rain alert issued

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 4 AUG, 2026

The Jammu-Srinagar national highway was shut for more than 12 hours over the weekend and disrupted again this week after a massive landslide at Gangroo in the Banihal sector of Ramban district buried the carriageway, with a fresh blockage reported at Dewal in Udhampur. Traffic police said clearance work continued through the day to remove the debris. The India Meteorological Department warned of intermittent light to moderate rain across Jammu and Kashmir from July 28 to 31, with the heaviest spells expected on July 29 and 30 and a risk of flash floods, landslides and mudslides at vulnerable spots over five days. Officials advised travellers to check the traffic advisory before setting out on the highway, the Valley's main road link to the rest of the country. Amarnath pilgrims were routed only through the shorter Baltal axis after the Pahalgam track was closed for repairs, with the Kashmir divisional administration citing urgent maintenance forced by the recent rains. Continuous rainfall since mid-July has triggered repeated slides along the Ramban-Banihal stretch, one of the most landslide-prone sections of the corridor.

REGIONAL

## Relief chief reviews services at Jammu migrant camps

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 4 AUG, 2026



Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner Dr Arvind Karwani on Wednesday reviewed essential services and development works at migrant camps in Jammu, directing officials to ensure uninterrupted supplies of clean drinking water, power and sanitation to residents. Karwani asked departments to deploy adequate water tankers and to conduct water-quality tests at frequent intervals to guarantee clean and hygienic drinking water in the camps. He directed that repair and renovation works be prioritised in consultation with camp commandants, and that deputy commissioners carry out weekly visits to the camps to monitor conditions on the ground. He also called for a door-to-door campaign to enrol eligible camp residents in social welfare schemes, and stressed adherence to General Administration Department directives on responsibilities at transit migrant camps. The review was attended by the Deputy Commissioner Relief, Assistant Commissioners Relief, camp commandants and officers of the Jal Shakti Department and the Public Works (R&B) Department, officials said.

HEALTH

## Diarrhoeal illness dominates J&K's monsoon disease load, Rajya Sabha told

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 4 AUG, 2026



Jammu and Kashmir recorded 43,878 cases of monsoon-related disease in the first six months of 2026, with acute diarrhoeal illness accounting for the overwhelming majority, according to data the Union health ministry placed before the Rajya Sabha this week. Acute diarrhoeal diseases made up 43,627 of the cases and were linked to four deaths in the union territory over the period. The remaining load comprised 160 chikungunya cases, 57 dengue cases, 28 of malaria and six confirmed leptospirosis infections, with no deaths reported from dengue or malaria, the figures showed. The pattern points to contaminated water and food rather than mosquitoes as the leading monsoon health threat in the region, a hazard that sharpens when heavy rain overwhelms drainage and mixes with drinking-water supplies. Compared with the same months of 2025, dengue cases rose from 13 to 57 and chikungunya from 113 to 160, while malaria fell from 127 to 28 and leptospirosis from 23 to six. The ministry reiterated that public health is primarily a responsibility of states and union territories, with the

Centre providing financial and technical support. Health officials in J&K have urged residents to drink only boiled or treated water and to seek care early for diarrhoea and dehydration during the rains.

REGIONAL

## Kashmir University wins UGC Category-I autonomy

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 4 AUG, 2026



The University of Kashmir has been granted Category-I status by the University Grants Commission, giving it wider academic, administrative and financial autonomy, officials said, in a decision cleared at the UGC's 598th meeting on July 6. The status lets the university start new programmes, revise curricula, pursue national and international collaborations and expand online and distance learning with minimal regulatory clearances. It follows the university's A++ grade with a CGPA of 3.68 in its 2025 NAAC re-accreditation, the highest in its history. Vice-Chancellor Prof Nilofer Khan said the recognition reflected "sustained academic progress and our collective commitment to quality." Chief Minister Omar Abdullah congratulated the university, calling it a landmark for higher education in Jammu and Kashmir that would strengthen research, innovation and interdisciplinary learning.



REGIONAL

## Omar reviews Ganderbal projects, vows balanced development for J&K

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 4 AUG, 2026

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah toured his Ganderbal constituency on Thursday, inspecting development projects and hearing public grievances, and said the government remained committed to balanced and inclusive development across all regions of Jammu and Kashmir. The chief minister inspected the ongoing New Bus Adda Road, a project meant to ease traffic congestion in Ganderbal town, and told agencies to speed up the work so the road could be opened to the public at the earliest. He said the administration was focused on strengthening infrastructure, improving civic amenities and settling genuine public concerns through coordinated action. At the Dak Bungalow, Abdullah met deputations from Safapora, Nuner, Manigam, Lar, Shallabugh, Manasbal, Gutlibagh and other villages, who raised demands over drinking water, irrigation, desilting of canals, staff shortages at health centres, and the upgrade of schools, playgrounds and tourism facilities. He directed officers to draw up time-bound plans and accelerate ongoing works.

MORE FROM THIS SECTION

REGIONAL

### Vaishno Devi shrine board sends Rs 40 lakh relief for flood-hit families

The Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board announced rehabilitation material worth about Rs 40 lakh for roughly 200 families in Rajouri and...



REGIONAL

# Poonch gears up for Budha Amarnath Yatra, set to begin Aug 16

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 4 AUG, 2026



[DESK-CONFIRM] The annual pilgrimage to the Budha Amarnath shrine in Poonch's Loran valley is scheduled to begin Aug 16, with officials reviewing security, medical and travel arran...

Preparations are under way for the annual Budha Amarnath Yatra to the shrine in Poonch's Loran valley, with the pilgrimage scheduled to begin on Aug 16 and conclude on Aug 28, officials said. The first batch of pilgrims is due to leave from the Bhagwati Nagar base camp in Jammu on Aug 16, with the Chhari Mubarak procession planned for Aug 26 and the yatra ending on Rakshabandhan. The shrine, at about 4,600 feet along the Pulasti river some 290 km from Jammu, draws pilgrims each year to one of the Pir Panjal's most revered sites. Jammu Divisional Commissioner Ramesh Kumar and

Inspector General of Police Bhim Sen Tuti, along with Deputy Commissioner Rajouri Abhishek Sharma, have reviewed arrangements including security, traffic management, medical facilities, water and power supply, sanitation, accommodation, high-mast lighting, fire-safety audits and signage along the route. Officials were directed to "ensure that all necessary facilities are in place well in advance for a safe, secure and comfortable pilgrimage." Final dates and arrangements are subject to confirmation by the district administration.

REGIONAL

# Itoo pushes health, school works as govt races to lift capital spending

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 4 AUG, 2026



Minister for Health and Medical Education, Education and Social Welfare Sakeena Itoo on Wednesday reviewed the progress of projects being executed under the Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment (SASCI), the Capital Expenditure (CAPEX) budget and other flagship schemes across her three departments, telling officers to hold to timelines, maintain financial discipline and align spending with physical work on the ground. Taking stock of the health sector first, the minister was told that 64 dialysis centres had been set up across districts, with two units each at 32 sub-district and community health centres. Officials said catheterisation labs were being readied at the Government Medical Colleges in Doda and Baramulla during the current financial year, while PET scan facilities estimated at Rs 35 crore were planned for GMC Srinagar and GMC Kathua. The department also flagged the rollout of 51 artificial-intelligence-enabled X-ray machines at a cost of Rs 2.50 crore, and about Rs 9.50 crore earmarked for the upkeep of lifts and oxygen plants in hospitals. Itoo directed officers to speed up infrastructure works and strengthen day-to-day healthcare delivery, warning against cost and time overruns. On school education, the minister was informed that 24,228 schools were operational across Jammu and Kashmir - including 37 Kendriya Vidyalayas, 20 Jawahar Navodaya

Vidyalayas and six schools run under Tribal Affairs - with a combined enrolment of about 26.57 lakh students. Of 1,421 works proposed under the UT CAPEX budget for 2026-27, she was told, 786 had been targeted for completion and 90 were already finished. Officials said 3,019 civil works had been completed under Samagra Shiksha over the past 18 months, and that 3,008 digital labs, 45 Atal Tinkering Labs and 159 STEM labs were in place, with 2,388 ICT labs and 4,597 smart classrooms under way. Another 396 schools had been cleared for upgrade under the PM-SHRI scheme, while skill education was running in 1,350 schools. For higher education, the minister was told that Rs 468 crore had been allocated for 2026-27, of which about Rs 227.71 crore was available for spending, alongside Rs 75.35 crore under the PM-USHA scheme. Targets for the year include five college buildings, 14 additional blocks, four science blocks, three hostels and 11 library-automation projects. Reviewing the Social Welfare Department, Itoo called for transparent, time-bound delivery so that benefits reached eligible people without delay. "Maintain strict financial discipline, adhere to prescribed timelines and ensure regular monitoring of the progress of all projects to avoid cost and time overruns," she told officers, asking them to remove execution bottlenecks and tighten field-level supervision. The review came as the

elected government pushes departments to lift capital spending in the second half of the financial year, with much of J&K's development budget routed through centrally aided schemes. Officials said roster-based field inspections by deputy commissioners would be used to check the quality of work and clear hold-ups. Health, education and social welfare together account for a large share of the Union Territory's social-sector outlay and staffing, and progress on their construction works is often read as a gauge of the administration's delivery. This year's building season has also been squeezed by a wet July, with heavy rain and landslides slowing work and the movement of material in several districts. The minister asked that financial progress be matched with measurable physical achievements for 2026-27, and that women from self-help groups and youth be drawn into scheme implementation where possible, officials said.



REGIONAL

# Pir Panjal toll hits 28 as fresh rain reopens Poonch, Rajouri wounds

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 4 AUG, 2026

The death toll from three weeks of relentless monsoon fury across Jammu and Kashmir climbed to at least 28 as fresh rain lashed the Pir Panjal on Thursday evening, reviving fear in Poonch and Rajouri districts still digging out from the flash floods of mid-July. Poonch, Rajouri and Doda have borne the worst of the disaster, which the weather office traces to a punishing sequence of cloudbursts and intense showers that began in early July. Roads, bridges, irrigation canals, power lines and drinking-water schemes lie in ruins across the twin districts of the Pir Panjal, where whole hamlets were cut off for days. The cruellest blow fell on July 20 in the upper reaches of Loran, where a landslide buried the mud home of a single family from Arigam village in Mandi tehsil, killing seven. Among the dead were Zahida Begum, 38, and children as young as four-year-old Aleesa and six-year-old Manan Rafiq, according to Poonch District Development Commissioner Ashok Kumar Sharma, who confirmed the bodies had been recovered for medico-legal formalities. Chief Minister Omar Abdullah cut short a visit to Delhi to steer the response, announcing ex-gratia relief of 6 lakh rupees for the next of kin of each person killed &mdash; 4 lakh from the State Disaster Response Fund and 2 lakh from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund. "We will ensure no more people die in the flood-ravaged districts," he told officials during a series of high-level reviews. The chief minister directed deputy commissioners in the affected districts to draw on funds already placed at their disposal for immediate relief and rehabilitation, and ordered departments to restore drinking water and electricity to vulnerable pockets within 24 hours while search parties continued to trace the missing. Relief has been slow to reach the interior. Down To Earth reported that more than 50 families were evacuated near the Abdullah Bridge in Ramban, while SDRF, NDRF, police and civil administration teams fanned out for rescue and restoration work. The India Meteorological Department recorded 92.5 mm of rain in Rajouri and 78 mm in Poonch over 24



REGIONAL

# Ten days on, Rajouri's water and power lifelines still broken

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 4 AUG, 2026

Ten days after flash floods tore through the Pir Panjal, Rajouri's water and power lifelines remain broken, and officials say restoring drinking water to thousands of households will take longer still, with pumping stations, wells and transformers either washed off or choked with silt. The July 19 deluge that killed more than a dozen people in the twin border districts of Rajouri and Poonch also gutted the machinery that keeps taps and lights running. In Rajouri alone, floodwater surged into homes and swept away or damaged the dug wells, pump wells and borewells the district depends on, Jal Shakti department officials said. "Damage has occurred to water sources such as dug wells, pump wells and borewells," said Zulafqar Ali, an executive engineer with the Jal Shakti department. "We have set up tanks and extended a pipeline to supply water to residents for drinking and household needs." Officials said 131 water supply schemes across the two districts were hit and that tankers were ferrying drinking water to the worst-affected pockets until the network could be rebuilt. The power grid took a similar beating. About 15 distribution transformers were washed away and close to 200 others damaged, along with scores of electric poles, cutting supply across large parts of Rajouri. Power Development Department executive engineer Javed Akhtar said crews were working "on a war footing," with field staff and labourers drafted in to string new lines and replace transformers. The two failures feed each other. Most of the district's water schemes cannot pump until electricity returns, so engineers have prioritised energising the feeders that power the main supply stations. Divisional Commissioner Ramesh Kumar had earlier flagged power as the single biggest challenge, noting that two 132-kV towers had collapsed at Behla and Surankote and knocked out Poonch's entire grid. Of 435 roads damaged in the disaster, officials said 356 had been reopened, but the deeper repairs to the utility network would take weeks. For residents, the numbers translate into daily hardship. In several Rajouri neighbourhoods, floodwater that entered homes left behind ankle-deep silt, ruined stored grain and contaminated the shallow wells people had fallen back on. In Madina Colony, inundated when the Rajouri river breached its banks, families spent days clearing mud from rooms. Those whose houses were damaged are sheltering with relatives or in relief accommodation while they wait for both the water and the power

MORE FROM THIS SECTION

REGIONAL

## Fresh rain rekindles fear along Pir Panjal's battered riverbanks

A sudden evening downpour across Rajouri and Poonch revived anxiety in villages still living with the scars of the July 19 floods, where...



REGIONAL

# DC Srinagar orders 100% cover for over-70s under Vay Vandana health scheme

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 4 AUG, 2026



Deputy Commissioner Akshay Labroo directs outreach camps across every medical zone so that no eligible senior citizen is left out of the Rs 5 lakh free-treatment cover, while press...

Deputy Commissioner Srinagar Akshay Labroo has ordered the district health machinery to enrol every resident aged 70 and above under the Vay Vandana Yojana, directing officials to run outreach camps across all medical zones so that, in his words, "no eligible individual is deprived of affordable and free healthcare services."Chairing a review of key public-health schemes at the Deputy Commissioner's office complex, Labroo set a target of 100 percent coverage of senior citizens above 70 under the scheme, which extends an additional Rs 5 lakh in free hospital treatment to older residents irrespective of their income. Officials were told to concentrate the enrolment push on the district's tertiary-care hospitals, where most elderly patients present, as well as every medical block and zone across urban and rural Srinagar.The Vay Vandana cover, an extension of the Centre's flagship health-assurance programme, is aimed at a demographic that often carries the heaviest burden of chronic illness but is least able to afford private treatment. Labroo said the exercise would only succeed if families of eligible beneficiaries were reached directly, and he asked line departments, medical superintendents and field health staff to fan out into localities with camp-based registration rather than wait for citizens to approach hospitals.The Deputy Commissioner tied the drive to what he called a "patient-first approach," telling officers that quality, accessible and responsive care must be the standard across every public health institution in the district. He directed that camp schedules be publicised in advance so that older residents and their attendants could plan visits, and that enrolment data be reviewed regularly to track gaps zone by zone.The same meeting reviewed progress under the TB Mukht Bharat Abhiyan, the national campaign to eliminate tuberculosis. Labroo pressed for wider presumptive testing and stronger disease surveillance, asking health teams to scale up screening and to ensure diagnosed patients were tracked through the full course of treatment. He stressed inter-departmental coordination and community outreach, noting

that early detection and uninterrupted medication remain the decisive factors in breaking transmission.Officials briefed the meeting on the district's screening coverage and the support extended to patients under the campaign, including nutritional and follow-up mechanisms. Labroo directed that no diagnosed case be allowed to drop out of treatment for want of follow-up, and asked the district tuberculosis wing to coordinate closely with block-level medical officers.The Vay Vandana enrolment target and the tuberculosis review were taken up together, the Deputy Commissioner said, because both hinge on the same field network of medical blocks, zonal officers and community health workers. Reaching the oldest residents in their homes and localities, he argued, was as much a test of that outreach as of hospital capacity, and he asked officers to map un-enrolled beneficiaries ward by ward rather than rely on aggregate figures.He also directed that the district's health institutions display scheme details prominently and guide walk-in patients to registration desks, so that eligible senior citizens arriving for routine care are enrolled on the spot. Common Service Centre operators were asked to support the paperwork, particularly for beneficiaries who lack digital access or documentation.The review was attended by Chief Planning Officer Fayaz Ahmad Dar, District Tuberculosis Officer Dr Abdul Rouf, the Medical Superintendents of SMHS, JLNM and the Chest Diseases hospitals, the Block Medical Officer Hazratbal, all Zonal Medical Officers and the district manager of the Common Service Centres, alongside officers of allied departments.Srinagar, the summer capital and the valley's largest urban district, carries a substantial share of the Kashmir division's elderly population and its referral hospital load, making full enrolment under the senior-citizen scheme both an administrative test and a welfare priority. Labroo asked officers to submit progress reports at the next review and warned that outreach targets would be monitored until saturation was achieved.

REGIONAL

## Central varsity marks six years of NEP-2020 at Ganderbal campus

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 4 AUG, 2026



The Central University of Kashmir marked six years of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 at its Tulmulla campus in Ganderbal, holding the observance under the banner of the Akhil Bhartiya Shiksha Samagam (ABSS) 2026.Addressing the gathering online, Vice-Chancellor Prof A. Ravinder Nath said educational institutions must nurture students as "global citizens equipped with knowledge, competence, values and a deep sense of social responsibility." He said the NEP sought to develop independent learners with effective communication skills, digital literacy and experiential-learning abilities, and reaffirmed the university's commitment to multidisciplinary education, research, innovation, skill development and Indian Knowledge Systems.Prof Syed Zahoor Geelani, Director of the Directorate of Internal Quality Assurance, said the university had been

among the pioneering institutions in the region to organise extensive deliberations on the draft policy. Dr Haribhau Bhapkar, the university's NEP-2020 coordinator, described its guiding philosophy as the "Panchamukhi Sutra," or five pillars of holistic education.Faculty members, research scholars and students attended the programme, which featured deliberations on the policy's rollout in higher education.

REGIONAL

## DC Ramban orders time-bound disposal of revenue matters

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 4 AUG, 2026



Deputy Commissioner Ramban Mohammad Alyas Khan on Wednesday directed revenue officers to ensure the time-bound disposal of revenue matters and expedite public service delivery, as he chaired a review of the Revenue Department alongside restoration efforts following heavy rainfall in the district.Reviewing the SVAMITVA scheme, the Agristack digitisation initiative and land-record modernisation, Khan

asked officers to speed up the distribution of pending property cards on the basis of verified Survey of India records and to complete the Jamabandi lock-up exercise by Aug 15. He also called for the timely ground truthing of geo-referenced maps and directed that detailed reports on pending revenue litigation be submitted for early disposal.On the recovery front, the Deputy Commissioner asked field officers to closely monitor the restoration of roads, utilities and essential infrastructure damaged in recent rains, and to ensure prompt redressal of public grievances.The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner Varunjeet Singh Charak, SDM Banihal Mohammad Naseeb Bajraan, SDM Gool Imtiaz Ahmed, SDM Ramsoo Sayed Mazahir Hussain Shah and all district Tehsildars, officials said.

REGIONAL

## Amarnath Yatra presses on via Baltal after six-day weather halt

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 4 AUG, 2026



REGIONAL

## Budgam reviews farm revival under HADP, JKCIP

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 4 AUG, 2026

Deputy Commissioner Budgam Athar Aamir Khan chaired a meeting to review the implementation and progress of the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) and the Jammu and Kashmir Competitiveness Improvement of Agriculture and Allied Sectors Project (JKCIP) in the district.The umbrella HADP, a cluster of projects covering agriculture, horticulture, animal and sheep husbandry, is intended to modernise farm practice and lift rural incomes across the union territory. Officials briefed the meeting on the establishment of new units and the uptake of scheme benefits by farmers in Budgam.Khan directed the concerned departments to ensure timely delivery of assistance and close hand-holding of beneficiaries so that the district makes full use of the programmes. The meeting was attended by Additional District Development Commissioner Vivek Agarwal, the Chief Planning Officer, and the Chief Agriculture, Horticulture, Animal Husbandry and Sheep Husbandry officers, among others.



SPORTS

## Kathua district badminton tournament reaches knockout stage

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 4 AUG, 2026

The District Badminton Tournament Kathua-2026 has moved into its knockout stage after four days of brisk competition, with organisers reporting a heavy match load and encouraging participation from young players across the district.Held under the Nasha Mukht Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyan and organised by the district administration with guidance from Deputy Commissioner Rajesh Sharma, the tournament drew entries from Basohli, Billawar, Nagri, Hiranagar, Mahreen and other areas. More than 25 girls are taking part, a mark of growing interest in the sport among young women in the district.By the fourth day the event had staged 176 matches in all, spread across under-19 singles and doubles, women's singles and veterans' categories, several of which have reached the semifinal and final stages. Officials said such events were intended to channel the energy of youth towards sport and a drug-free lifestyle.



REGIONAL

# Over 250 students vie at Jammu inter-school selection trials

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 4 AUG, 2026



The district youth services and sports wing held inter-school selection trials in Gatka, soft tennis, rugby and girls' cricket across three Jammu venues, drawing more than 250 stud...

The Department of Youth Services and Sports (DYSS), District Jammu, held Inter-School District Level Selection Trials and Competitions on Wednesday, drawing more than 250 students from government and private schools across the district. The trials were conducted at MA Stadium, KK Hakku Stadium and the Green Field ground in Gandhi Nagar in the disciplines of Gatka, soft tennis, rugby and girls' cricket, in the Under-14, Under-17 and Under-19 age categories for boys and girls, officials said. In the Gatka events, Amardeep Singh of Celestial Mission School topped the Under-17 boys' Fari Stick category,

while Jaspreet Singh of the Army Public School, Kaluchak, won the Under-19 boys' Single Stick competition. The meet was organised under the supervision of Director General Youth Services and Sports Anuradha Gupta, with Joint Director Inderjeet Singh and District Youth Services and Sports Officer Sukhdev Raj Sharma overseeing the arrangements. Officials said the trials were aimed at scouting talent for higher-level competitions and encouraging school students across Jammu to take up organised sport. A panel of referees and technical officials adjudicated the events across the three venues.

REGIONAL

# Chenab Valley shuts schools as MeT warns of flash floods till Aug 2

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 4 AUG, 2026



Authorities across the Chenab Valley kept schools shut for a second straight day on Thursday as moderate to heavy rain lashed Doda, Kishtwar and Ramban districts, and the Meteorological Department warned that flash floods, landslides and mudslides remained likely at vulnerable locations until Aug 2. The rain began around 5 a.m. on Wednesday and continued in intermittent bursts through Thursday, prompting the Doda Chief Education Officer to order the closure of all government and private schools in the district as a precautionary measure. In neighbouring Kishtwar, the administration shut all schools except those within the city limits, from Malipeth to Cherhar, citing continuous rainfall, slippery roads and the risk of shooting stones. Institutions in both districts were directed to shift to online classes. The Meteorological Department said moderate to heavy rainfall was likely to continue across the Jammu division over the coming days, with heavy to torrential showers possible in parts of the region on Thursday and Friday. It cautioned that intense spells could trigger flash floods, landslides and mudslides at vulnerable locations between July 29 and Aug 2, and forecast further light to moderate rain, with isolated intense bursts, up to Aug 5. In the 24 hours ending Wednesday, Samba recorded the heaviest rainfall in the division at 87 mm, followed by Katra with

71.2 mm, Udhampur 65 mm and Jammu 52 mm, according to weather data. Below-normal daytime temperatures were reported at most stations, with Srinagar registering a maximum of 25.7 degrees Celsius, more than four degrees below normal, an indication of the persistent cloud cover and rain over the wider Union Territory. The Jammu-Srinagar National Highway, the region's economic lifeline, remained open to traffic despite the downpour, but officials reported heavy congestion in stretches through Ramban and Udhampur, where earlier landslides and shooting stones had damaged sections of the road and slowed vehicle movement. Commuters and transporters were advised to travel with caution and to heed traffic advisories before setting out. District administrations across the Chenab Valley kept control rooms functioning round the clock and placed men and machinery on standby to clear debris and respond to emergencies. Officials said restoration crews from the Public Works Department, the Border Roads Organisation and the National Highways Authority of India were positioned along vulnerable stretches to reopen blocked roads quickly. The renewed wet spell follows one of the wettest phases of the monsoon in recent memory, which battered the Jammu region through July, damaging roads, bridges, water lines and power infrastructure and claiming lives in

flash floods, landslides and house collapses across several districts. Residents living close to rivers, nallahs and embankments were asked to remain vigilant, avoid non-essential travel to hilly and low-lying areas, and stay away from swollen streams and water channels. Officials in Doda and Kishtwar said the decision to suspend classes had been taken purely as a safety measure, and that a call on reopening schools would be taken after reviewing weather conditions and the state of roads leading to educational institutions. Jal Shakti and power department crews, meanwhile, were pressed into service to maintain drinking water and electricity supplies in areas where lines had been disrupted by the rain.



REGIONAL

# Pulwama reviews MY Bharat youth drive, pushes wider enrolment

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 4 AUG, 2026

Deputy Commissioner Pulwama Dr Basharat Qayoom chaired a meeting of the District Advisory Committee on the MY Bharat (Mera Yuva Bharat) initiative at the administrative complex here, reviewing the district's progress on the Centre's youth-engagement platform. The District Youth Officer presented data on youth registrations, the formation of Youth Clubs, the registration of non-governmental organisations, experiential-learning opportunities and the district's standing on the MY Bharat portal, along with a roadmap for strengthening participation. Qayoom directed officials to intensify awareness campaigns across educational institutions and at the grassroots through youth organisations, and called for coordinated efforts among stakeholder departments to boost enrolment. He said the platform should be used to create meaningful opportunities for young people through skill development, community service and nation-building activities, and asked for regular, youth-centred events focused on leadership and community engagement. The meeting was attended by the Additional Deputy Commissioner, the General Manager of the District Industries Centre, the Assistant Commissioner Development and other members of the committee.



REGIONAL

# SSP Baramulla reshuffles 19 police officers

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 4 AUG, 2026

The Senior Superintendent of Police, Baramulla, has ordered the transfer and posting of 19 police officers across the district in what the order described as being "in the interest of administration." The directive, issued as Order No. 403 of 2026 dated July 28, was released by the District Police Headquarters, Baramulla, and asks all affected officers to hand over charge to their successors promptly. Among the key changes, DySP (P) Rajat Sambyal has been posted as the new Station House Officer of Police Station Boniyar. Inspector Shabir Ahmad, earlier SHO of Police Station Kunzer, moves in as SHO Police Station Baramulla, while Inspector Tanveer Jahangir, who was heading Boniyar, has been shifted to the District Police Headquarters as In-charge of the Crime Section. Periodic reshuffles of station and headquarters postings are routine in the district's policing set-up, and officials said the latest order was aimed at streamlining field responsibilities.

MORE FROM THIS SECTION

NATIONAL

# Weak graft proof is a matter for trial, not a ground to quash the FIR: Supreme Court

Setting aside a high court order, the court held that the absence of clinching proof of illegal gratification may end in acquittal at trial...



NATIONAL

# Centre can offer a bounded amnesty for projects that skipped green clearance, court rules

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 4 AUG, 2026



In the Vanashakti case the Supreme Court held the Union may frame a limited, one-time scheme to regularise projects begun without prior environmental clearance, while cautioning th...

The Supreme Court on Tuesday held that the Central government is empowered to frame a bounded, one-time scheme to deal with projects that began operating without the prior environmental clearance the law requires, in a ruling closely watched by both industry and green campaigners. Deciding the Vanashakti petition against the Union of India, the court accepted that a circumscribed amnesty for such projects can be framed under the Environment (Protection) Act, but stressed it must be limited in scope and time rather than serve as a standing route to bypass prior clearance. The judgment engages a long-running

tug-of-war over so-called ex-post-facto clearances, which environmentalists argue reward violators and dilute the principle that appraisal must precede construction. By permitting a bounded regularisation hedged with conditions, the bench sought a middle path between shutting down projects that employ thousands and granting a blanket pardon. With the government separately moving on eco-sensitive-zone notifications in several states, the limits the court has drawn around such schemes carry weight for federal environmental policy.

NATIONAL

# Modi convenes fourth security cabinet on West Asia, orders fuel and fertiliser supply protected

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 4 AUG, 2026



Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday chaired the fourth special meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security to review India's preparedness across the energy, food and maritime fronts as the conflict in West Asia stretched into another month, with the government moving to insulate households, farmers and industry from any disruption to fuel and fertiliser supplies. The meeting in New Delhi was attended by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Home Minister Amit Shah, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar. The Cabinet Secretary briefed the committee on measures to ensure an adequate supply of petroleum products, including LNG and LPG, and of fertilisers, official readouts said. On the energy front, the committee was told that sources for procurement of LPG had already been diversified and that the overall stock and supply position of major petroleum products remained adequate, with refineries running at high capacity for petrol and diesel. Amid tensions over the Strait of Hormuz, through which a large share of India's crude and cooking gas passes, Modi is understood to have pressed for a sharper push on renewables to secure long-term energy independence. The panel also reviewed structural steps to cushion the economy against any prolonged squeeze:

industrial substitution of LPG through expansion of the National Gas Grid, augmentation of LNG import and regasification infrastructure, expansion of City Gas Distribution networks, and time-bound pipeline and last-mile connectivity approvals under the Pipeline Infrastructure Order, 2026. Requirements for fertilisers for the coming rabi season were assessed and alternative sources of supply discussed. The prime minister directed that every measure be taken to keep fertiliser supply uninterrupted. The assurances on cooking gas and fertiliser carry particular weight in far-flung and hill regions, including Jammu and Kashmir, where winter stocking of LPG and the approaching rabi sowing both hinge on steady supply lines. The committee devoted significant attention to the safety of Indian seafarers, thousands of whom crew domestic and foreign-flagged vessels transiting the Gulf and adjoining waters. Modi directed that a mechanism be established to provide timely information, emergency assistance and counselling to seafarers and their families, officials said. Officials indicated that the government was watching commodity and freight markets closely and had kept its strategic petroleum reserves and diplomatic channels for contingency evacuation in a state of readiness, though no evacuation had been ordered. The

finance ministry, they said, was tracking the pass-through of any spike in global crude prices to domestic inflation, a variable the government is anxious to contain. Thursday's meeting was the fourth special sitting of the security cabinet since the crisis escalated. In earlier rounds Modi had held a virtual meeting with chief ministers on fuel supply and inflation and convened the committee to weigh mitigating measures, reflecting the government's concern that a drawn-out conflict could feed through to domestic prices at a sensitive time for the farm economy. No fresh public advisory was issued after the meeting. Ministries were directed to keep contingency plans current and to continue monitoring the situation, with the committee signalling that supply-side interventions would be scaled up as required rather than allowed to lag events. Officials stressed that the reviews were precautionary and that there was, at present, no shortage of fuel or fertiliser in the country. The repeated recourse to the Cabinet Committee on Security, the apex body that ordinarily deliberates on defence and strategic affairs, underscores how far the West Asia conflict has spilled beyond diplomacy into questions of domestic economic security, from the price of a gas cylinder to the fertiliser a farmer will need for the next crop.



NATIONAL

# Life term till last breath is constitutional, Supreme Court rejects convicts' challenge

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 4 AUG, 2026

The Supreme Court on Tuesday upheld the constitutional validity of sentences directing imprisonment for the remainder of a convict's natural life without remission, holding that such a term means incarceration until the prisoner's last breath unless lawfully remitted by the appropriate authority. A bench of Justices Sanjay Karol and Augustine George Masih dismissed a batch of Article 32 writ petitions by four sets of convicts, some of them death-row prisoners whose sentences had earlier been commuted. The lead petitioner, Ramasrey alias Fakkad, had argued that a sentence stripping him of any prospect of remission was unconstitutional. Rejecting the plea, the court said the question was foreclosed by its constitution-bench decisions in Union of India versus V. Sriharan and Swamy Shraddananda, which affirmed the judiciary's power to substitute the death penalty with life imprisonment barred from remission. Repeatedly reagitating a settled point, the bench observed, amounted to an abuse of the legal process. It added that the president's clemency power under Article 72 cannot be revisited as though it were an appeal.



NATIONAL

# Assam raises flood ex-gratia to Rs 9 lakh, waives post-mortems

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 4 AUG, 2026

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has announced an expanded relief package for families hit by the state's devastating floods, raising ex-gratia compensation and ordering that payments be released without procedural delay. Families of those who died in the floods will receive Rs 9 lakh, comprising Rs 4 lakh from the state government under central norms and an additional Rs 5 lakh from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund. To speed up disbursal, the government has waived the requirement of a post-mortem examination in flood-death cases. Families of people missing for more than 30 days will get Rs 4 lakh in ex-gratia. Sarma also announced interim cash assistance of Rs 15,000 for severely affected households in districts including Charaideo, Sivasagar, Golaghat and Jorhat. The Orunodoi welfare scheme will resume from August 1, with beneficiaries in flood-hit districts receiving Rs 2,500 for the month. From August 1, flood-affected students will receive education grants of Rs 1,000 for higher-secondary pupils, Rs 3,000 for undergraduates and Rs 5,000 for postgraduates, alongside free textbooks and uniform assistance. Damage assessment for houses, crops, livestock and fisheries is due to begin on August 3, the Chief Minister said.

MORE FROM THIS SECTION

NATIONAL

## Supreme Court reserves verdict on three-year practice rule for junior judges

A batch of review petitions argues the mandatory practice requirement keeps meritorious law graduates out of the lower judiciary....



NATIONAL

# Bill to tighten delayed birth, death registration introduced in Lok Sabha

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 4 AUG, 2026



The Registration of Births and Deaths (Amendment) Bill, 2026, introduced amid Opposition protests, would require a judicial magistrate's order to register any birth or death report...

The government introduced the Registration of Births and Deaths (Amendment) Bill, 2026, in the Lok Sabha, seeking to tighten the rules for registering vital events reported long after they occur and to align the law with the newly enacted criminal codes. The Bill amends the Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1969. Its central change concerns delayed registration: where information about a birth or death is given more than two years after the event, registration would be permitted only on an order passed by a Judicial Magistrate of the First Class, after the magistrate verifies the correctness of the information. Existing powers of the district magistrate

would continue to apply to shorter delays of up to two years. The government says the measure is intended to make delayed registration more rigorous and to encourage the timely reporting of births and deaths, which underpins entitlements ranging from school admission to inheritance and welfare benefits. Definitions in the Act are being updated to match the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023. The introduction came amid Opposition protests in the House, with members demanding the presence of Home Minister Amit Shah. The Bill was subsequently listed for consideration and passage later in the session.

NATIONAL

# Lok Sabha clears tougher anti-paper-leak law with 10-year jail term

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 4 AUG, 2026



The Lok Sabha on Tuesday passed the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Amendment Bill, 2026, sharply increasing the penalties for paper leaks and organised cheating in national recruitment and entrance tests, even as Opposition members walked out charging that the legislation treats the symptom rather than the disease. The Bill, cleared by voice vote during the monsoon session, amends the 2024 Act under which the Centre first criminalised exam malpractice. It follows the cancellation in May of the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) after an alleged question-paper leak forced roughly two million candidates to sit the medical-entrance exam again, triggering weeks of student protests and the resignation of Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan. Under the amended law, the maximum imprisonment for individuals convicted of leaking or facilitating the leak of a public examination paper rises from five years to ten, while fines increase from Rs 10 lakh to as much as Rs 50 lakh. Organised leaks carried out by a group or institution can attract penalties of up to Rs 10 crore, and the government says such cases will be routed through fast-track courts with investigations to be completed within 60 days. The provisions cover papers set by the National Testing Agency, the Staff

Selection Commission, the Union Public Service Commission, railway and banking recruitment boards and comparable bodies. Moving the Bill, Minister of State Jitendra Singh said the government had acted decisively to protect the integrity of examinations that decide the futures of crores of young Indians, and accused the Opposition of politicising an issue on which the House should have spoken with one voice. He urged members to engage in what he called a meaningful debate rather than posturing. Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi countered that the Bill was reactive, not preventive, and did little to secure the examination process before a paper reaches the leak stage. He linked repeated leaks to what he described as the creeping privatisation and politicisation of the education system. Congress leader Shashi Tharoor argued that punishment alone would not stop paper leaks, while party colleague Karti Chidambaram likened the measure to bolting the stable door after the horse has already bolted, saying it offered only post-facto action. Opposition members also pressed for a comprehensive overhaul of the NTA rather than a purely punitive statute, and several staged a walkout before the voice vote. The government has separately constituted a six-member task force under Infosys co-founder Nandan Nilekani to recommend

structural and technology-driven reforms to the testing agency, including a phased shift to computer-based examinations. Ministers said the amended penalties would apply prospectively to examinations conducted after the law comes into force, and that rules framed under the Act would spell out the machinery for investigation and prosecution. Officials indicated the Bill would be taken up by the Rajya Sabha later in the session. For aspirants across Jammu and Kashmir and the wider country, the practical test will be enforcement. Successive leaks in medical, teaching and clerical recruitment exams have hardened a public perception that well-connected cheating networks operate with impunity. The government maintains that a combination of stiffer sentences, faster trials and a modernised testing agency will restore confidence; its critics counter that no penalty schedule can substitute for leak-proof question banks, secure logistics and an agency insulated from political interference.



NATIONAL

# Cabinet set to extend PM-KISAN to 2031 with Rs 3.15 lakh crore outlay

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 4 AUG, 2026

[DESK-CONFIRM] The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, is expected to approve the continuation of the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) scheme from 2026-27 to 2030-31, extending one of the government's flagship welfare programmes for a further five years. A total financial outlay of Rs 3.15 lakh crore has been earmarked for the period, according to officials. Under the scheme, eligible landholding farmer families receive Rs 6,000 a year, paid in three equal instalments of Rs 2,000 directly into their bank accounts through the Direct Benefit Transfer system. Since its launch, the scheme has transferred more than Rs 4.47 lakh crore to farmers across 23 instalments, the government says, covering over nine crore families. Officials describe the extension as a signal of the Centre's continued commitment to rural incomes and to shoring up farm investment. For Jammu and Kashmir's largely agrarian districts, including the terraced farms of the Pir Panjal, the continuation would sustain a predictable annual transfer for registered cultivators. The desk will confirm the Cabinet decision and final terms once formally announced.



NATIONAL

# Nilekani panel to steer NTA overhaul toward computer-based exams

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 4 AUG, 2026

As Parliament moved to stiffen penalties for paper leaks, the government's high-powered task force on examination reforms began framing the structural changes it will recommend for the National Testing Agency, the body at the centre of this year's testing crisis. The six-member panel, constituted last week and chaired by Infosys co-founder Nandan Nilekani, has been asked to make the examination system more secure, transparent and leak-proof, with a strong emphasis on technology-driven solutions and a phased shift to computer-based tests. Its members include former ISRO chairman S. Somanath, Intelligence Bureau chief Tapan Deka, IIT-Madras director V. Kamakoti, former Union Education Secretary Anita Karwal and senior bureaucrat Amrit Lal Meena. The panel will review the current examination process end to end and suggest measures to improve security, accountability and efficiency. The intervention follows the May NEET-UG paper leak, which forced a re-test of about two million candidates, ignited nationwide student protests and led to the resignation of the education minister. Officials say the task force's recommendations, together with the amended anti-cheating law, are meant to rebuild trust in a system on which crores of aspirants stake their futures.

MORE FROM THIS SECTION

NATIONAL

## Delhi tops electronic 'zero FIR' filings against cyber fraud under new criminal code

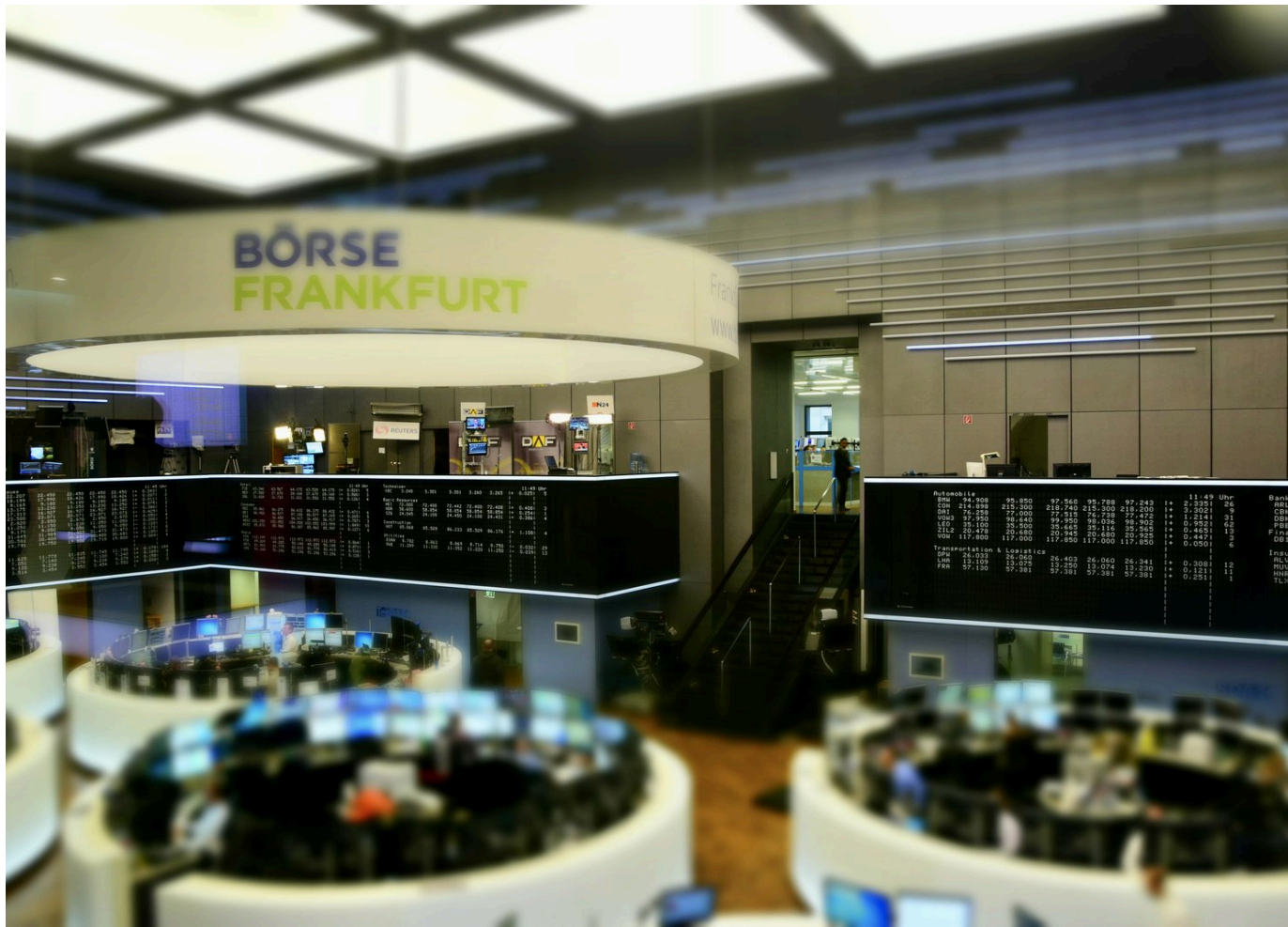
New official data show electronic zero-FIRs, enabled by the reworked criminal procedure code, are being used to move quickly on online...



BUSINESS

# Markets grind higher for a second day as earnings season peaks, RBI meeting looms

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 4 AUG, 2026



The Sensex and Nifty closed higher for a second straight session on Thursday, buoyed by auto and IT stocks, even as a heavy day of June-quarter results and weak market breadth sign...

Indian equities eked out a second day of gains on Thursday, with a late burst of buying carrying benchmark indices into the green as investors picked through one of the busiest days of the June-quarter earnings season and looked ahead to the Reserve Bank of India's rate decision next week. The BSE Sensex rose 273.55 points, or 0.35 per cent, to close at 77,928.15, while the NSE Nifty 50 added 66.95 points, or 0.28 per cent, to end at 24,317.15. The advance built on Wednesday's stronger session, when the Sensex had climbed about 1.16 per cent and the Nifty 1.10 per cent as IT and chemical counters led a broad recovery. Auto stocks stayed at the front of Thursday's rally, but the tone under the surface was far more cautious than the headline numbers suggested. Market breadth was decisively negative, with 2,408 stocks declining against just 1,620 advancing on the BSE and 188 unchanged, a sign that the buying was concentrated in a handful of index heavyweights rather than spread across the market. Traders said the mood was shaped by a crowded earnings calendar. More than 90 companies, including Tata Steel, Bajaj Finance, Mahindra and Mahindra, Vedanta and Swiggy, were scheduled to report results on Thursday, keeping investors selective. The results that did land underlined how uneven the quarter has been. Hyundai Motor India, the country's second-largest carmaker, reported a 35.1 per cent year-on-year slide in net profit to 888.6 crore rupees, even as revenue held broadly flat at 16,334.6 crore rupees. The company blamed a fire at a supplier facility that forced a temporary shutdown at one of its Chennai plants, along with cost pressures and export disruption tied to the conflict in West Asia. Its operating margin narrowed sharply to 9.3 per cent from 13.3 per cent a year earlier. Even so, domestic volumes grew 5.4 per cent and the carmaker retained its guidance of 8 to 10 per cent growth in domestic and export

volumes for the current financial year. The contrast with Mankind Pharma was stark. The drugmaker posted a 29.6 per cent jump in consolidated net profit to about 568 crore rupees, with revenue up 12.9 per cent to roughly 4,031 crore rupees and EBITDA margins expanding some 250 basis points to 26.3 per cent, helped by faster growth in its chronic-therapy portfolio. The divergence captured the wider picture confronting investors: resilient demand in pockets of the economy, set against margin pressure from elevated crude oil prices, softer external orders and the drag from geopolitical tension in the Gulf. Brent crude has stayed firm through July, feeding into input costs across manufacturing. Global cues offered only limited direction. The US Federal Reserve held its benchmark rate steady at its latest meeting, a decision that was widely expected and did little to move Asian markets, while investors continued to track tensions in West Asia and their effect on oil. Attention now turns squarely to Mint Road. The Reserve Bank's Monetary Policy Committee begins its three-day meeting next week, with the rate verdict due on Tuesday, August 5. A clutch of economists expects the panel to leave the repo rate unchanged at 5.25 per cent for a fourth straight review, wary of an uptick in inflation. Retail inflation accelerated to 4.38 per cent in June, edging above the central bank's 4 per cent medium-term target for the first time in 17 months. "The market wants to see whether the RBI signals any concern on inflation and the currency, and whether earnings can justify current valuations," one Mumbai-based dealer said, adding that investors were likely to stay range-bound until the policy statement. With foreign portfolio flows choppy and the results season entering its final stretch, analysts expect the indices to consolidate in the near term rather than break decisively higher.



BUSINESS

## Record Amarnath Yatra gives Kashmir's tourism trade a shot in the arm

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 4 AUG, 2026

A record-breaking Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra is proving a windfall for Kashmir's tourism economy, with the surge of pilgrims lifting business for hotels, houseboats, transport operators, guides and artisans across the Valley. Trade bodies say lakhs of devotees have travelled to the cave shrine this season, and a sizeable share are extending their stay to visit destinations such as Srinagar, Gulmarg, Pahalgam and Sonamarg. That has pushed up hotel occupancy and brought brisk business to taxi operators, shikara owners and handicraft sellers, sectors that had been looking for a strong summer. Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha has said a successful yatra will boost Jammu and Kashmir's economy further, framing the pilgrimage as a catalyst for the broader tourism revival the administration has been chasing. Tour operators note that the pilgrim influx dovetails with an already busy leisure season, helping spread earnings beyond the traditional hill resorts to local traders and craft workers. Industry members caution, however, that the gains must be matched by smoother logistics and infrastructure so that the Valley can convert a bumper pilgrimage season into durable, year-round tourism demand.



BUSINESS

## July GST mop-up due, with collections expected to stay above Rs 2 lakh crore

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 4 AUG, 2026

[DESK-CONFIRM] The government's monthly goods and services tax collection figures for July are due to be released on August 1, and are expected to show revenue holding above the 2 lakh crore rupee mark for another month. Provisional trade estimates suggest gross GST revenue rose about 15.4 per cent year-on-year to roughly 2.11 lakh crore rupees in July, which would mark the fastest pace of growth in more than a year. Collections from domestic transactions are pegged to have risen in double digits, while revenue from imports is estimated to have surged close to 29 per cent, reflecting stronger inbound trade. Economists read sustained collections above 2 lakh crore rupees as a sign of resilient consumption and improving compliance, even as manufacturing surveys have flagged some softening in demand. The figures feed directly into the Centre's fiscal maths for the year and will be watched alongside the Reserve Bank's policy meeting the same week. Final numbers are subject to confirmation when the Finance Ministry publishes the official data.

BUSINESS

## Q1 earnings scorecard: Hyundai skids, Mankind Pharma races ahead

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 4 AUG, 2026



The June-quarter earnings season delivered a study in contrasts on Thursday, with corporate India's results splitting sharply between firms hit by external shocks and those riding steady domestic demand. Hyundai Motor India reported a 35.1 per cent year-on-year fall in net profit to 888.6 crore rupees, its weakest showing in several quarters. The carmaker pointed to a fire at a supplier facility that forced a temporary halt at a Chennai plant, along with cost pressures and export disruption from the West Asia conflict. Revenue was broadly flat at 16,334.6 crore rupees and the operating margin shrank to 9.3 per cent from 13.3 per cent, though the company kept its full-year volume guidance

intact. Mankind Pharma went the other way, posting a 29.6 per cent rise in net profit to about 568 crore rupees as revenue climbed 12.9 per cent to roughly 4,031 crore rupees and margins widened. More than 90 companies, among them Tata Steel, Bajaj Finance and Vedanta, were slated to report on the day, keeping investors selective as the results season entered its closing stretch.

BUSINESS

## RBI seen holding rates a fourth time as inflation ticks above target

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 4 AUG, 2026



[DESK-CONFIRM] The Reserve Bank of India's Monetary Policy Committee begins a three-day meeting on Monday, with Governor Sanjay Malhotra due to announce the rate decision at 10 a.m. on Tuesday,

MORE FROM THIS SECTION

BUSINESS

### Highway delays put Kashmir's Rs 12,000-crore apple economy on edge

Growers warn that landslides, road repairs and Amarnath Yatra restrictions on the Srinagar-Jammu highway are choking the movement of...



TECHNOLOGY

# 5G now covers 99.9% of districts as government details rural broadband push

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 4 AUG, 2026



The number of 5G base stations has nearly quadrupled since 2023 and BharatNet fibre is reaching more gram panchayats, the Centre told Parliament, though rural internet access still...

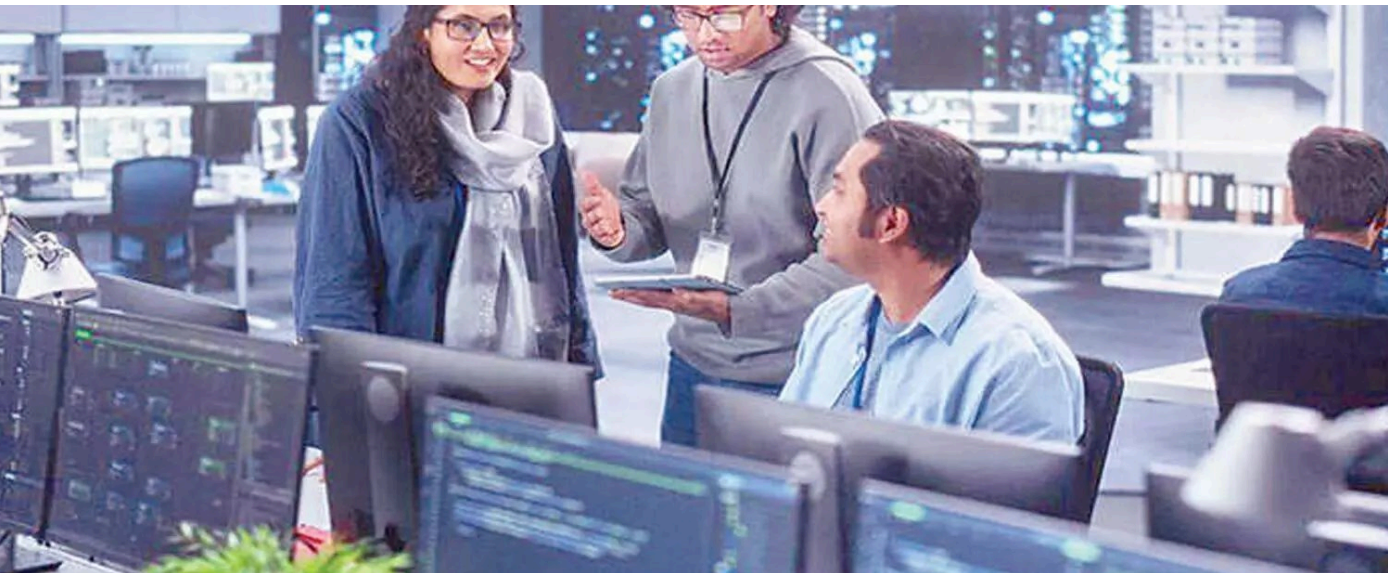
Fifth-generation mobile services are now available across all states and union territories and cover 99.9 per cent of India's districts, the government told Parliament, detailing the pace of a rollout it calls the world's fastest.The number of 5G base transceiver stations has risen nearly four-fold in three years, from 1,40,623 as on March 31, 2023 to 5,62,971 as on June 30, 2026, according to figures placed before the House. The Centre also said 136 telecom research-and-development projects have been approved to build home-grown network capability.On rural connectivity, the government said BharatNet Phase III, launched on May 24, 2026, aims to link all

remaining gram panchayats and about 6.25 lakh villages with high-speed broadband. As of June, 43,908 km of optical-fibre cable had been laid and 13,494 gram panchayats upgraded under the amended programme, while roughly 24,000 mobile towers have been commissioned under the 4G saturation scheme to cover previously unserved villages.Even so, the divide persists: rural internet penetration stood at 48.31 per 100 population in 2025-26, up from 45.03 a year earlier but still well behind urban levels, underscoring how much of the connectivity job in states such as Jammu and Kashmir remains unfinished.

TECHNOLOGY

# IT sector added 1.35 lakh jobs in FY26 even as AI reshapes the work, government tells Lok Sabha

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 4 AUG, 2026



India's information-technology industry added about 1.35 lakh jobs in 2025-26 even as artificial intelligence forced a sweeping rethink of how the sector hires and staffs projects, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) told the Lok Sabha on Wednesday, putting the country's technology workforce at roughly 60 lakh by the close of the financial year.In a written reply during the monsoon session, the ministry acknowledged that AI and automation were causing widespread restructuring within the industry and that some routine, repetitive positions were at risk. It named junior quality-assurance and Level-1 IT-support roles as among the most exposed to automation, while arguing that the same technology shift was creating fresh demand for specialised, next-generation work in data, cloud and AI engineering that supported overall hiring.The measured tone from the government contrasts with an unusually anxious year for the Indian IT services business, which employs the bulk of the country's engineering graduates. Market leader Tata Consultancy Services has described its own transition as a pivot to an "AI-first" services model, and industry press has reported thousands of roles being trimmed across the top firms as clients slow discretionary spending and automate delivery-heavy work.The pain, analysts say,

is landing hardest on professionals with roughly three to eight years of experience in process-driven delivery roles, precisely the layer that AI coding assistants and automated testing tools can most readily absorb. Campus hiring, long the on-ramp for fresh graduates from engineering colleges, has also tightened, with some firms deferring joining dates or reassessing recently onboarded recruits.Yet the aggregate picture the ministry presented is one of net growth rather than collapse. Even after the cuts, the sector's headcount rose over the year, buoyed by hiring at global capability centres (GCCs), the in-house technology and back-office hubs that multinationals continue to expand in India. GCC roles, along with cloud, cybersecurity and data-science positions, are where demand is now concentrated.For students across Jammu and Kashmir eyeing the IT job market, the message from the data is that the entry-level ladder is being redrawn rather than pulled away.The commoditised support and testing jobs that once employed lakhs of freshers are shrinking; roles that pair domain knowledge with AI, data and cloud skills are multiplying. Recruiters increasingly want candidates who can supervise and audit AI output, not merely perform tasks that software now handles.The government has pointed to its own reskilling push as part of the answer.

Programmes under the IndiaAI Mission, alongside earlier skilling schemes, are meant to move workers up the value chain toward AI development, applied machine learning and data governance. Whether those efforts scale fast enough to match the churn is the open question industry bodies have flagged.Survey data cited in recent months suggests Indian tech workers remain comparatively confident about their prospects, with a larger share reporting a sense of job security than the wider Asia-Pacific average, even as headlines about layoffs mount. The ministry framed the FY26 numbers as evidence that India's technology employment base is broadening, not contracting, despite the disruption.Still, the reply left little doubt about the direction of travel. Repetitive, rules-based work will keep migrating to machines; the durable jobs will sit alongside AI, not beneath it. For a sector that has been the single largest formal-sector employer of India's young graduates for a generation, that is a consequential recalibration, and one the government now formally concedes is under way.

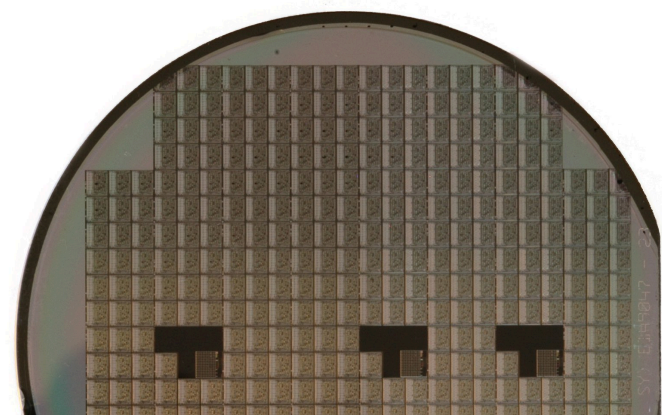


TECHNOLOGY

# Parliament clears path to bring back merchant fees on UPI

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 4 AUG, 2026

[DESK-CONFIRM] The government moved on Tuesday to create the first legal room since 2020 to restore merchant fees on digital payments, introducing in the Lok Sabha a bill that amends the provision which had enforced a blanket ban on charges for UPI and RuPay debit-card transactions.Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's proposal reworks Section 10A of the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007, replacing the outright prohibition with a framework under which the Centre can notify, by executive order, which electronic payment modes remain exempt from the merchant discount rate (MDR). Modes not so notified could lawfully attract a fee.Officials signalled that consumers, small merchants and peer-to-peer transfers would be shielded, leaving any future levy focused on the large-merchant segment. India banned MDR on UPI and RuPay debit cards in January 2020 to accelerate mass adoption of digital payments; payment firms have long argued the zero-fee model is unsustainable. The change is enabling, not immediate, and any fee would require a separate government notification.



TECHNOLOGY

# India's chip push moves to assembly as Semicon 2.0 takes shape

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 4 AUG, 2026

[DESK-CONFIRM] India's semiconductor programme is shifting from ground-breaking to assembly lines, with about a dozen chip sites now under construction or in early production and the first commercial output expected before the end of 2026.The momentum follows Cabinet approval on July 15 of the Semicon India Programme 2.0, with an outlay of about Rs 1.27 lakh crore spanning fabrication, advanced packaging, equipment, materials, design and talent. Tata Electronics is building the country's first large-scale fab at Dholera in Gujarat, based mainly on 90-nanometre process technology, with first silicon targeted for December.Much of the near-term activity is in assembly, testing and packaging rather than cutting-edge fabrication. Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the CG Semi outsourced-assembly facility at Sanand, Gujarat, on July 4, a Rs 7,500-crore project, and the government expects five plants to be operational nationwide by year-end. Analysts caution that closing the gap with global leaders in leading-edge chips remains a long road.

MORE FROM THIS SECTION

TECHNOLOGY

## Smartphones become India's top export as electronics output crosses Rs 13 lakh crore

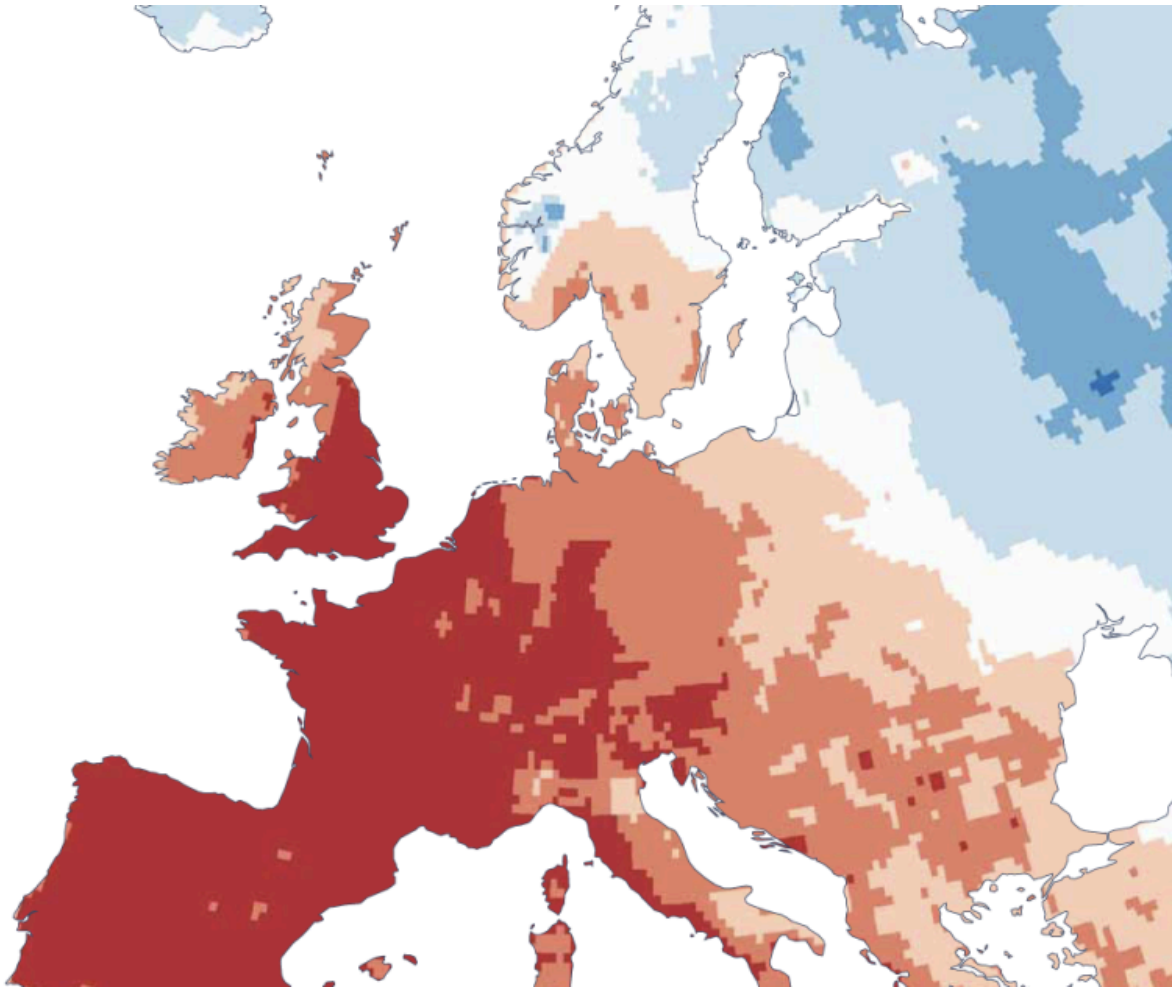
Electronics production rose to Rs 13.11 lakh crore in 2025-26 and smartphones overtook petroleum and jewellery to become India's single...



HEALTH

# Global Heatwaves Exacerbate Public Health Crisis Across Europe and North America

BY KARAN KHAJURIA · 4 AUG, 2026



Sustained record-breaking summer temperatures across Europe and North America are overwhelming emergency departments and worsening chronic cardiorespiratory conditions. Public heal...

GENEVA, Switzerland — Record-breaking summer heatwaves sweeping across Europe and North America have triggered widespread public health warnings, with health systems reporting a sharp increase in heat-related emergencies and cardiovascular complications.The World Health Organization (WHO) and United Nations environmental panels issued joint alerts highlighting the expanding health risks tied to prolonged extreme thermal stress. Beyond classical heatstroke and dehydration, epidemiologists report that elevated nighttime temperatures are preventing human bodies from recovering, leading to heightened mortality among vulnerable populations, including elderly citizens and individuals with pre-existing respiratory illnesses.Recent public health analyses reveal secondary impacts associated with ambient temperature spikes. Researchers note an upward trend in emergency room visits for severe substance overdoses and acute foodborne illnesses, as high heat accelerates food

spoilage and strains community-level mental health services.The heat crisis coincides with new WHO global data emphasizing that non-communicable diseases—including cardiovascular conditions and dementia—are heavily exacerbated by environmental pressures like extreme heat and ambient air pollution. Public health specialists urge municipalities to update urban resilience playbooks, establish accessible cooling centers, and strengthen primary care response networks. "Extreme heat is no longer just a weather event; it is a direct public health emergency that tests the capacity of our healthcare infrastructure," stated health policy experts during a briefing in Geneva.Governments are facing growing pressure to integrate climate resilience directly into national public health budgeting, as climate scientists predict that severe summer heat events will become longer, more frequent, and increasingly intense over the coming decade.

HEALTH

# South drives India's dengue load as monsoon season deepens, Parliament told

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 4 AUG, 2026



India recorded 23,952 dengue cases and 31 deaths in the first six months of 2026, with the country's southern states carrying the heaviest share of the burden, the government told the Rajya Sabha this week as the monsoon drove up seasonal transmission of the mosquito-borne disease.Responding to a question from member Narain Dass Gupta on July 28, Minister of State for Health Anupriya Patel said five southern states — Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana — together reported 15,137 cases, or 63.2 per cent of the national caseload, in the January-June period.Tamil Nadu remained the single biggest hotspot with 7,511 cases and three deaths. Kerala followed with 4,458 cases but recorded 19 deaths, the most of any state and 61.3 per cent of all dengue fatalities reported nationwide over the six months. Karnataka logged 1,601 cases, Andhra Pradesh 968 and Telangana 599, neither of the last two reporting a death in the period.Outside the south, Maharashtra reported 2,676 cases and one death and West Bengal 1,831 cases and eight deaths, the figures placed before

the House showed. Public health specialists say the numbers, which cover only the pre-peak months, are likely to climb sharply through August and September, when standing monsoon water offers ideal breeding conditions for the Aedes aegypti mosquito that spreads the virus.Patel told the House that while public health is primarily the responsibility of states and union territories, the Centre supports prevention and control through the National Health Mission and the National Centre for Vector Borne Diseases Control. "The government is actively collaborating with state health departments and urban local bodies to enhance sanitation and strengthen mosquito control measures," she said in her reply.The disclosure comes as doctors across the country warn that dengue is no longer confined to a defined monsoon window but is increasingly a year-round threat, a shift they link to warmer winters, erratic rainfall and rapid, poorly drained urban growth. National surveillance in recent years has shown dengue displacing older vector-borne scourges such as malaria and kala-azar,

both of which have fallen steadily, even as the dengue map widens into districts that rarely saw the disease a decade ago.The data landed weeks after India moved to add a new tool to its response. The Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation cleared Qdenga (TAK-003), a live-attenuated tetravalent vaccine made by Japan's Takeda, for use in people aged four to 60. The two-dose shot, given three months apart, protects against all four dengue serotypes and has been approved in more than 40 countries and prequalified by the World Health Organization. Takeda has tied up with Indian manufacturer Biological E to expand supply, while an indigenous single-dose candidate, Panacea Biotec's DengiAll, remains in late-stage trials.Vaccine access, however, is expected to be gradual, and officials stress that source reduction — clearing stagnant water from coolers, tyres, pots and construction sites — remains the frontline defence. Several states have ordered intensified fogging, larval surveys and fever-screening as case counts rise with the rains.Clinicians also caution against self-medication during

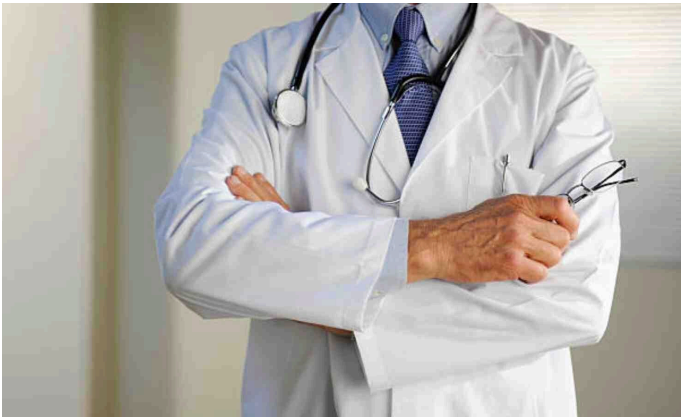


HEALTH

# Record Ebola Outbreak in DR Congo Triggers Massive International Health Response

BY KARAN KHAJURIA · 4 AUG, 2026

BUNIA, Democratic Republic of the Congo — Humanitarian agencies and local health authorities have opened the nation's largest specialized Ebola treatment facility in Ituri province this week, as the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) battles the most severe outbreak of the virus in its history. According to data released by the World Health Organization (WHO), confirmed cases have climbed past 3,600 since the official declaration of the outbreak in mid-May 2026. More than 1,500 deaths have been recorded across five provinces, making this surge larger than the historic 2018–2020 epidemic. Health officials noted that transmission rates accelerated sharply over the past seven days, recording the highest weekly death toll to date. The new 100-bed facility, constructed by the International Medical Corps (IMC) in partnership with the United Nations, aims to relieve heavily strained field clinics. Located on the outskirts of Bunia near the Kigonze displacement camp, the transit and treatment hub will accelerate diagnostic testing and isolate suspected cases rapidly. Containment efforts face steep obstacles. Conflict and ongoing civil insecurity in eastern DRC have displaced roughly 270,000 residents into crowded camps, creating ideal conditions for viral spread. International aid directors warned that insecurity, mobile populations, and cross-border travel threaten to spill the virus into neighboring territories. "Ebola is moving fast, hitting communities already facing conflict and severe hunger," said Carl Skau, acting chief of the World Food Programme, following an emergency assessment of Ituri. Global health experts emphasize that while new treatment centers bolster localized clinical care, curbing transmission will require sustained international funding, enhanced field surveillance, and active community trust to halt further geographic expansion.



HEALTH

# Existing NMC rules safeguard cosmetic surgery patients, health ministry says

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 4 AUG, 2026

The government has told Parliament that existing National Medical Commission guidelines are sufficient to safeguard patients undergoing cosmetic surgery and hair-transplant procedures, resisting a call for a new, dedicated regulatory framework.Responding in the Rajya Sabha on Tuesday to member Dr Ajeet Madhavrao Gopchade, Minister of State for Health Anupriya Patel said the NMC's guidelines on aesthetic surgery and hair-transplant procedures, issued in September 2022, already govern who may perform such interventions and under what conditions, in order to protect patient safety.Gopchade had asked whether the government had studied regulatory reforms in the United Kingdom and Australia and whether it planned a dedicated framework classifying cosmetic procedures by risk. The minister said the current rules addressed patient-safety concerns, without committing to a separate risk-classification regime.The exchange comes against a backdrop of rising demand for cosmetic and hair-restoration procedures in India and a string of reports of botched treatments at unqualified clinics, which doctors say underline the need for stricter enforcement of who is allowed to operate.

MORE FROM THIS SECTION

HEALTH

## Anti-drug campaign has reached 1.2 crore people in J&K, Parliament told

The Centre says more than 1.2 crore people, including 69 lakh youth and 51 lakh women, have been sensitised under the Nasha Mukta Bharat...



INTERNATIONAL

# India pushes 'SHANTI' agenda in fresh drive for a UN Security Council seat

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 4 AUG, 2026



New Delhi has stepped up its campaign for a non-permanent Security Council seat and wider UN reform, built around a framework it calls SHANTI.

India has stepped up its campaign for a bigger role at the United Nations, pressing both a bid for a non-permanent Security Council seat and its wider demand for reform of the 1945-era body, in a diplomatic push that ran through late July. The effort is built around a framework New Delhi calls SHANTI, spanning peacekeeping, maritime security, counter-terrorism, the responsible use of artificial intelligence, sustainable development and institutional reform. External

Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar launched the candidature at UN headquarters earlier in the month. India is seeking the Asia-Pacific group's seat for the 2028-29 term, to be decided in elections in June 2027, in what would be its ninth stint on the Council. It has also renewed its argument that a structure frozen since 1945 fails to represent the Global South. In the regional contest India faces Tajikistan.



INTERNATIONAL

## Record heat and killer floods grip Asia as a warming region reels

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 4 AUG, 2026

An unusually fierce stretch of summer weather gripped much of Asia through late July, with record heat across East Asia and deadly flooding in South Asia that scientists link to a rapidly warming region. Japan logged its hottest June-July on record, with temperatures reaching about 41.8 degrees Celsius and dozens of heat-related deaths, while South Korea recorded 41.4C at Yangsan, its highest since observations began there in 2008. Heatstroke alerts covered most of Japan's prefectures. In South Asia the monsoon turned lethal. India, Pakistan and Bangladesh reported hundreds dead or missing after cloudbursts dumped 300 to 400 millimetres of rain in single days, triggering flash floods and landslides. Researchers point to a warming Bay of Bengal, which loads the monsoon with extra moisture. Forecasters also tracked Super Typhoon Dolphin over the northwestern Pacific as it moved toward China's coast, where authorities activated emergency responses across several provinces.

INTERNATIONAL

## Russian barrage kills 10 in Ukraine as a stray missile crosses into Poland

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 4 AUG, 2026



A Russian barrage of missiles and drones across Ukraine overnight killed at least 10 civilians, including children, and wounded more than 50, Ukrainian officials said on July 30, in one of the heaviest attacks in weeks. Russia launched close to 280 strike and decoy drones and more than 70 missiles, including ballistic and cruise weapons, according to the Ukrainian air force, which said its air defences shot down most of them. Debris and direct hits were reported at more than 30 locations. The assault spilled across NATO's border when one missile crossed into Poland, prompting the alliance to scramble warplanes before the projectile came down. It was the latest in a series of incidents that have drawn NATO air defences into action along the war's western edge. Ukrainian forces, meanwhile, pressed a long-range campaign against Russian ports and oil infrastructure, part of an effort to raise the economic cost of the war as front-line gains on both sides remain incremental.

INTERNATIONAL

## India-US trade deal still stuck at 'last 1 per cent' as tariff clock runs down

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 4 AUG, 2026



India's first-phase trade agreement with the United States remained stuck at what negotiators call the 'last 1 per cent' as July closed, with no signed pact and no published text more than a week after an interim tariff arrangement was due to lapse. The temporary deal, which had capped an additional US levy at 10 per cent, was set to expire on July 24, after which duties on some Indian goods risked drifting back toward higher rates. Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal has insisted India will negotiate for terms rather than to a calendar, pressing for an edge over Asian competitors instead of a rushed close. Leaders on both sides have signalled intent. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Donald Trump directed officials at the June G7 meeting in France to fast-track the agreement, and the US envoy in New Delhi has said the deal is in its final steps.

INTERNATIONAL

## Mediators unveil roadmap for Hamas to disarm as Gaza truce enters new phase

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 4 AUG, 2026



Mediators from Egypt, Qatar, Turkey and the United States said on July 30 they had finalised a roadmap for the next phase of the Gaza ceasefire, under which Hamas would disarm in stages and hand civilian control of the territory to an independent Palestinian administration. The plan, announced by the US-led Board of Peace and International Stabilization Force, sets a 14-day window for Hamas to prepare a weapons inventory once all parties formally accept the terms, with the disarmament process expected to take up to 300 days. A stabilisation force of about 5,000 personnel would oversee implementation as Israeli troops withdraw in phases. Israel had not publicly endorsed the proposal. Hamas said the following day that an Israeli commitment to halt attacks was 'the essential gateway' to moving forward, and warned it would not act until Israeli forces met their own withdrawal obligations. Violence has continued despite the truce that took hold last October. Gaza health officials say more than 1,100 Palestinians have been killed since the ceasefire began.



INTERNATIONAL

## US launches 'heavy wave' of strikes on Iran as war widens

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 4 AUG, 2026

The United States carried out what its military called a "heavy wave" of strikes across Iran overnight, hitting military command centres, missile and drone facilities and coastal surveillance sites in a sharp escalation of the months-long conflict. Central Command said the barrage, completed early Thursday, targeted Iranian command-and-control, maritime capabilities and air-defence positions. It followed an Iranian missile attack a day earlier on U.S. forces at a base in Jordan, which Jordanian air defences blunted by intercepting five missiles without casualties, according to officials. Iran's state news agency IRNA said three civilians were killed on the island of Qeshm, where residents and Iranian officials said a strike hit a family home, killing a couple and their two-year-old son. An analysis of imagery by The New York Times indicated the munition was likely a 2,000-pound bomb. Iran's Revolutionary Guard vowed to "punish the aggressor," warning that nations aiding Washington would also face retaliation. A separate Iranian strike killed a worker at a firm's premises in Kuwait, regional officials said, as fears grew of a widening regional war after a brief pause in the fighting collapsed.

MORE FROM THIS SECTION

INTERNATIONAL

### Russia fires 70 missiles, 280 drones at Ukraine; Poland scrambles jets

Russia unleashed one of its largest aerial assaults in weeks, firing more than 70 missiles and about 280 drones at Ukrainian cities and...

INTERNATIONAL

### Hormuz stays choked as US-Iran standoff drags on, and India's Gulf lifeline feels the strain

The Strait of Hormuz enters August still disrupted by a five-month US-Iran confrontation, unsettling oil markets, Gulf economies and...



SPORTS

# Pulwama's Shariya Manzoor becomes first J&K woman picked for Asian Kabaddi League

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 4 AUG, 2026



Shariya Manzoor of Pulwama has become the first woman from Jammu and Kashmir selected for the inaugural Asian Kabaddi League, a milestone hailed by the J&K Amateur Kabaddi Associat...

Shariya Manzoor, a kabaddi player from south Kashmir's Pulwama district, has been selected for the inaugural Asian Kabaddi League (Women, Chapter 1), becoming the first woman from Jammu and Kashmir to earn a place in the competition. The selection was hailed by the J&K Amateur Kabaddi Association as a landmark achievement for women's kabaddi in the Union Territory. General Secretary Dr Kuldeep Kumar Gupta said Manzoor's inclusion was "the result of years of hard work, dedication and disciplined training," and

credited her coach, Arshid Rather, for guiding her development to the international level. Officials said the selection reflected a broader rise in J&K kabaddi talent, noting that two players from the Union Territory featured in the 2026 Pro Kabaddi League and that the Sports Council has sanctioned new kabaddi centres to strengthen grassroots training. The association described Manzoor's breakthrough as an example for young women across the region taking up the sport.

SPORTS

## India to host five-time champions Brazil in Kolkata football friendly

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 4 AUG, 2026



The All India Football Federation on Wednesday confirmed that the India senior men's team will host Brazil in an international friendly at the Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan, better known as Salt Lake Stadium, in Kolkata on October 3. The fixture pits India against the five-time World Cup champions in a rare visit by a South American giant, and immediately evoked memories of Brazil's storied 1977 exhibition match in Kolkata featuring Pele. Both sides come to the game at contrasting points, with Brazil rebuilding after a Round-of-16 exit at the last World Cup and India using the window to prepare for AFC Asian Cup qualifiers. "For our national team players, this is far more than just another match. It is a rare opportunity to test themselves against one of the greatest footballing nations," said Subrata Paul, director of the national team, in remarks carried by the federation. The friendly, slotted into a FIFA international window, adds to a busy calendar for the Indian side, which has also lined up fixtures against New Zealand later in the year. Kolkata, long regarded as one of Indian football's most passionate centres, is expected to draw a large crowd for the occasion.

SPORTS

## Gill to lead India in Sri Lanka Tests as Jadeja returns, Saransh Jain earns maiden call

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 4 AUG, 2026



India's senior men's selection committee on Monday named a 15-member squad for the two-match Test tour of Sri Lanka, keeping faith with Shubman Gill as captain and KL Rahul as his deputy for the red-ball assignment. The most notable inclusion was Saransh Jain, the 33-year-old Madhya Pradesh off-spinning all-rounder, who earned a maiden India call-up after a heavy domestic season and steps in with Washington Sundar unavailable through injury. Veteran all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja returns to the fold, adding experience and a second front-line spin option alongside Kuldeep Yadav and left-armer Manav Suthar. Pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah was named subject to a fitness clearance as he recovers from a knee problem picked up late on the England tour, with Mohammed Siraj, Prasidh Krishna and Gurnoor Brar completing the seam attack. Yashasvi Jaiswal, Sai Sudharsan and Devdutt Padikkal provide top-order cover, while Rishabh Pant and Dhruv Jurel share the wicketkeeping duties. The series forms part of India's build-up to a home-heavy season, with the first Test scheduled at Galle from August 15 and the second at Colombo, preceded by a practice fixture in the Sri Lankan capital. Selectors said the group balanced continuity with an eye on spin-friendly conditions on the island.

SPORTS

## Chopra eyes javelin gold as India's Glasgow track campaign peaks

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 4 AUG, 2026



[DESK-CONFIRM] The men's javelin final at the Commonwealth Games, one of the most keenly awaited events of the Glasgow programme, is scheduled for July 31 at Scotstoun Stadium, with double Olympic medallist Neeraj Chopra leading an Indian challenge that also features Yash Vir Singh. Chopra, the reigning Olympic and world medallist and the biggest draw in Indian athletics, entered the Games among the favourites for gold in a field also carrying strong Australian, South African and Sri Lankan throwers. Early reports from Glasgow indicated a keenly contested final, with Sri Lanka's Rumesh Tharanga Pathirage producing a long-distance throw and Chopra pushing for the podium, while Yash Vir Singh was in contention for a medal of his own. A javelin medal would be the marquee moment of India's athletics campaign in Glasgow, capping a track-and-field programme that has already delivered silvers on the flat and in the jumps. The full result and distances are to be confirmed from the venue. Chopra has increasingly used the Commonwealth stage as a competitive checkpoint within his season, and the desk will update this report with the confirmed finishing order, marks and reaction once the final is decided.

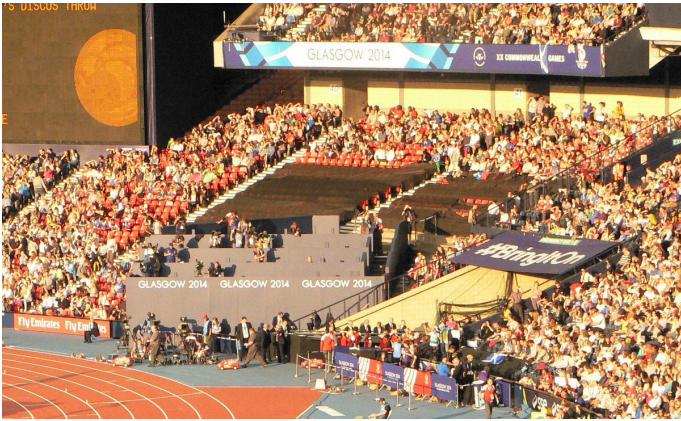


SPORTS

## U-17 Subroto Cup football kicks off in Baramulla with big opening wins

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 4 AUG, 2026

The Under-17 boys' inter-district provincial-level Subroto Cup football tournament 2026 got under way at St Joseph's School, Baramulla, on Tuesday, organised under the aegis of the Directorate of Youth Services and Sports, Jammu and Kashmir. Eight of the province's ten districts fielded teams, including Bandipora, Anantnag, Baramulla, Shopian, Srinagar, Kulgam, Ganderbal and Budgam. District Youth Services and Sports Officer Mushtaq Ahmad Pampori inaugurated the competition, which serves as the provincial qualifier for the national Subroto Cup, one of the country's oldest school football tournaments. The opening day produced emphatic results. Bandipora beat Anantnag 4-0, hosts Baramulla overran Shopian 8-0, and Srinagar routed Kulgam 9-0, setting an early marker in the race for the provincial title. Organisers said the event aimed to widen the base of school-level football in the Kashmir valley and identify players for higher age-group representation.



SPORTS

## India surge past 20 medals at Glasgow as Commonwealth Games enter final weekend

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 4 AUG, 2026

India moved firmly into the upper reaches of the Commonwealth Games medal table this week, gathering more than twenty medals at Glasgow 2026 as the Games headed into a decisive final weekend, with the men's javelin final and the closing ceremony on August 2 still to come. The haul has been built, as ever, on India's traditional strengths. Weightlifting again proved the most reliable engine, with Tokyo Olympic silver medallist Saikhom Mirabai Chanu topping the podium in the women's 48kg to set the tone for a lifting contingent that added a string of silver medals across the weight classes, among them Rishikanta Singh, Raja Muthupandi and Harjinder Kaur. India's boxers were the standout story of the ring, converting a clutch of finals into gold. Sakshi Chaudhary, Preeti Pawar, Jaismine Lamboria, Priya Ghanghas and Arundhati Choudhary all climbed to the top of the women's podium, while Sachin Siwach and Ankush Panghal delivered in the men's draw, giving the boxing squad one of its most productive Commonwealth campaigns in years. The track and field programme produced both landmark firsts and heavy medal weight. In para-athletics, Dilip Mahadu Gavit stormed to gold in the men's 100m T47 in a Games-record 10.71 seconds, while Sharmila Dhankar and Soman Rana claimed shot put F57 titles, part of a para contingent that punched repeatedly above its billing. On the able-bodied track, Gulveer Singh took silver in the 10,000m and bronze in the 5,000m, high jumper Sarvesh Kushare and long jumper Murali Sreeshankar added silvers, and the triple jump pair of Praveen Chithravel and Selva Prabhu shared a podium. Officials in the Indian camp said the breadth of the tally, spread across weightlifting, boxing, athletics, para-sport and the combat disciplines, reflected the depth being built through the country's Olympic-cycle programmes rather than reliance on any single event. They pointed to the para-athletics results in particular, where multiple gold medals and Games records underlined how far the parallel programme had come, and to a boxing squad that had matched or bettered its recent Commonwealth returns. The weightlifting group, long the backbone of India's Commonwealth campaigns, again did the heavy lifting in both senses. Beyond Chanu's title, a run of silver medals across the men's and women's categories kept the platform among the most productive of any Indian discipline, and coaches said the success

MORE FROM THIS SECTION

SPORTS

### Pogacar equals all-time record with fifth Tour de France crown

Slovenia's Tadej Pogacar rode into Paris to seal his fifth Tour de France title, drawing level with cycling's greatest names, as the 2026...



PUBLIC NOTICES · TENDERS · AUCTIONS · RECRUITMENT

PWD (R&B) DIVISION POONCH

Ref: PWD/R&B/PNC/2026-27/EMG-27

Emergency flood restoration of Mendhar–Balnoi road and damaged causeways

The Executive Engineer, PWD (R&B) Division Poonch, on behalf of the Governor of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, invites online item-rate tenders from eligible and registered contractors of appropriate class for the...

Type: Works

Last date: 16 Aug 2026

Est. cost: ₹ 4.85 crore

EMD: ₹ 9.70 lakh

Location: Mendhar, Poonch

Contact: Executive Engineer, PWD (R&B) Division Poonch · Refer NIT PDF

JAL SHAKTI (PHE) DIVISION POONCH

Ref: JSD/PHE/PNC/2026-27/NIT-41/FLD

Restoration of flood-damaged water supply schemes in Surankote tehsil

The Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti (PHE) Division Poonch, invites online tenders from approved and eligible contractors for the restoration of flood-damaged water supply schemes in Surankote tehsil, including re-laying o...

Type: Works

Last date: 18 Aug 2026

Est. cost: ₹ 3.20 crore

EMD: ₹ 6.40 lakh

Location: Surankote, Poonch

Contact: Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti (PHE) Division Poonch · Refer NIT PDF

IRRIGATION & FLOOD CONTROL DIVISION POONCH

Ref: IFC/PNC/2026-27/NIT-13/EMG

Anti-erosion and flood-protection bunds along Poonch river and Betaar nallah

The Executive Engineer, Irrigation & Flood Control Division Poonch, invites online percentage-rate tenders from eligible registered contractors for urgent anti-erosion and flood-protection works along the Poonch river an...

Type: Works

Last date: 21 Aug 2026

Est. cost: ₹ 2.95 crore

EMD: ₹ 5.90 lakh

Location: Poonch

Contact: Executive Engineer, Irrigation & Flood Control Division Poonch · Refer NIT PDF

PWD (R&B) DIVISION RAJOURI

Ref: PWD/R&B/RAJ/2026-27/EMG-19

Landslide clearance and restoration of Rajouri–Thanamandi–Buffliaz road

The Executive Engineer, PWD (R&B) Division Rajouri, invites online item-rate tenders from eligible and appropriately registered contractors for landslide debris clearance, restoration of the damaged carriageway, construc...

Type: Works

Last date: 24 Aug 2026

Est. cost: ₹ 5.40 crore

EMD: ₹ 10.80 lakh

Location: Thanamandi, Rajouri

Contact: Executive Engineer, PWD (R&B) Division Rajouri · Refer NIT PDF

JAMMU POWER DISTRIBUTION CORPORATION LTD (JPDCL), O&M DIVISION POONCH

Ref: JPDCL/PNC/2026-27/NIT-58/FLD

Restoration of flood-damaged 11kV and LT distribution network in Poonch

The Executive Engineer, O&M Division JPDCL Poonch, invites online tenders from eligible and registered electrical contractors for restoration of the flood-damaged 11kV and LT distribution network, including re-erection o...

Type: Works

Last date: 27 Aug 2026

Est. cost: ₹ 2.15 crore

EMD: ₹ 4.30 lakh

Location: Mandi, Poonch

Contact: Executive Engineer, O&M Division JPDCL Poonch · Refer NIT PDF

RURAL ENGINEERING WING (REW/RDD) RAJOURI

Ref: REW/RDD/RAJ/2026-27/NIT-72/FLD

Restoration of flood-damaged rural roads and culverts in Budhal and Kandi blocks

The Executive Engineer, Rural Engineering Wing (RDD) Rajouri, invites online percentage-rate tenders from eligible registered contractors for the restoration of flood-damaged rural roads, reconstruction of washed-out cul...

Type: Works

Last date: 30 Aug 2026

Est. cost: ₹ 1.85 crore

EMD: ₹ 3.70 lakh

Location: Budhal, Rajouri

Contact: Executive Engineer, REW (RDD) Rajouri · Refer NIT PDF

JAL SHAKTI (PHE) DIVISION RAJOURI

Ref: JSD/PHE/RAJ/2026-27/NIT-33/FLD

Restoration of flood-damaged rising mains and intake works in Darhal and Kandi

The Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti (PHE) Division Rajouri, invites online tenders from approved and eligible contractors for the restoration of flood-damaged rising mains, repair of intake and infiltration works, and rec...

Type: Works

Last date: 2 Sep 2026

Est. cost: ₹ 2.10 crore

EMD: ₹ 4.20 lakh

Location: Darhal, Rajouri

Contact: Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti (PHE) Division Rajouri · Refer NIT PDF

SAMAGRA SHIKSHA, POONCH

Ref: SS/PNC/2026-27/NIT-09/REP

Repair and restoration of flood-affected school buildings in Poonch district

The Chief Education Officer-cum-District Project Coordinator, Samagra Shiksha Poonch, invites online tenders from eligible and registered contractors for the repair and restoration of flood-affected government school bui...

Type: Works

Last date: 5 Sep 2026

Est. cost: ₹ 95.00 lakh

EMD: ₹ 1.90 lakh

Location: Poonch

Contact: District Project Coordinator, Samagra Shiksha Poonch · Refer NIT PDF

PWD (R&B) DIVISION JAMMU

Ref: PWD/R&B/JMU/2026-27/NIT-118

Construction of RCC bridge and approaches over Tawi tributary at Nagrota

The Executive Engineer, PWD (R&B) Division Jammu, invites online item-rate tenders from eligible and appropriately registered contractors for the construction of an RCC bridge with approaches, protection works and allied...

Type: Works

Last date: 8 Sep 2026

Est. cost: ₹ 6.75 crore

EMD: ₹ 13.50 lakh

Location: Nagrota, Jammu

Contact: Executive Engineer, PWD (R&B) Division Jammu · Refer NIT PDF

JAL SHAKTI (PHE) MECHANICAL DIVISION ANANTNAG

Ref: JSD/PHE/MECH/ANT/2026-27/NIT-24

Supply of DI/HDPE pipes and specials for water supply schemes

The Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti (PHE) Mechanical Division Anantnag, invites online tenders from eligible manufacturers and their authorised dealers for the supply of DI and HDPE pipes of assorted diameters together wi...

Type: Supply

Last date: 10 Sep 2026

Est. cost: ₹ 1.40 crore

EMD: ₹ 2.80 lakh

Location: Anantnag

Contact: Executive Engineer, PHE Mechanical Division Anantnag · Refer NIT PDF

SHRI MATA VAISHNO DEVI UNIVERSITY (SMVDU), KATRA

Ref: SMVDU/S&P/2026-27/NIT-47

Supply and installation of laboratory equipment for the School of Engineering

The Registrar, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University, Katra, invites online tenders from eligible manufacturers and authorised suppliers for the supply, installation, testing and commissioning of laboratory equipment and ins...

Type: Supply

Last date: 12 Sep 2026

Est. cost: ₹ 85.00 lakh

EMD: ₹ 1.70 lakh

Location: Katra, Reasi

Contact: Registrar, SMVDU Katra · Refer NIT PDF

GOVERNMENT MEDICAL COLLEGE (GMC) JAMMU

Ref: GMC/JMU/PROC/2026-27/NIT-96

Supply of hospital equipment and surgical consumables for associated hospitals

The Principal-cum-Dean, Government Medical College Jammu, invites online tenders from eligible manufacturers and authorised distributors for the supply of hospital equipment, patient-monitoring systems and surgical consu...

Type: Supply

Last date: 14 Sep 2026

Est. cost: ₹ 1.60 crore

EMD: ₹ 3.20 lakh

Location: Jammu

Contact: Principal-cum-Dean, GMC Jammu · Refer NIT PDF

UNIVERSITY OF JAMMU

Ref: JU/ESTATE/AMC/2026-27/NIT-31

Annual maintenance contract for HVAC and lift installations on main campus

The Registrar, University of Jammu, invites online tenders from eligible and experienced firms for the comprehensive annual maintenance contract of HVAC systems, lifts and allied electro-mechanical installations at the m...

Type: Service

Last date: 15 Sep 2026

Est. cost: ₹ 55.00 lakh

EMD: ₹ 1.10 lakh

Location: Jammu

Contact: Registrar, University of Jammu · Refer NIT PDF

J&K SERVICES SELECTION BOARD (JKSSB)

Ref: JKSSB/ADVT/2026-27/62

Recruitment of Junior Engineers (Civil) in various UT departments

The J&K Services Selection Board invites online applications from eligible candidates for direct recruitment to the posts of Junior Engineer (Civil) in various Union Territory departments against advertised vacancies. Ca...

Type: Recruitment

Last date: 13 Sep 2026

Est. cost: N/A

Location: Jammu & Srinagar

Contact: Secretary, J&K Services Selection Board · jkssb.nic.in

J&K PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION (JKPSC)

Ref: JKPSC/ADVT/2026/28

Recruitment of Medical Officers (Allopathic) in the Health & Medical Education Department

The J&K Public Service Commission invites online applications from eligible candidates for direct recruitment to the posts of Medical Officer (Allopathic) in the Health & Medical Education Department, Union Territory of...

Type: Recruitment

Last date: 11 Sep 2026

Est. cost: N/A

Location: Jammu & Srinagar

Contact: Secretary, J&K Public Service Commission · jkpsc.nic.in



REGIONAL

## J&K cabinet to meet Aug 4 amid reshuffle buzz

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 4 AUG, 2026

The Jammu and Kashmir cabinet is scheduled to meet in Srinagar on Tuesday, August 4, its first sitting since the National Conference's statehood protest in Delhi, amid speculation over a long-awaited expansion and reshuffle of the council of ministers.The meeting, to be chaired by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah at 4 p.m. in the summer capital, had not had its agenda formally circulated, officials said, though it was expected to take up routine administrative business and policy proposals.Chief Minister Abdullah had earlier hinted that the expansion could come before or after the July 20 protest at Jantar Mantar. The six-member cabinet, including the chief minister, has three vacancies under the nine-member ceiling fixed for the Union Territory. Whether the reshuffle is taken up on Tuesday remained to be seen.

REGIONAL

## Amarnath Yatra crosses 4 lakh pilgrims, a record turnout: LG

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 4 AUG, 2026

More than four lakh pilgrims have paid obeisance at the Amarnath cave shrine in the south Kashmir Himalayas this season, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said, hailing the turnout as a record for the annual pilgrimage."By Lord Shiva's divine grace, the holy Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra has crossed a remarkable milestone and more than 4 lakh pilgrims have already completed the sacred journey," the Lieutenant Governor said. Officials put the count at over 4.14 lakh devotees.The yatra began on July 3 along the traditional 48-km Pahalgam route in Anantnag and the shorter 14-km Baltal route in Ganderbal, and is scheduled to conclude on August 28, coinciding with Raksha Bandhan. The pilgrimage had resumed on July 22 after a six-day suspension forced by heavy rain and landslide warnings.Authorities credited the turnout to coordination among the civil administration, security agencies, the Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board, health teams and thousands of volunteers working round the clock along both tracks.

Pilgrims were being routed mainly through the Baltal axis after weather damage forced repairs on the Pahalgam trail.

REGIONAL

## Single protest won't bring statehood, sustained effort needed: Omar

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 4 AUG, 2026

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said a single protest would not bring statehood back to Jammu and Kashmir and that sustained effort was needed to keep the demand alive, speaking to reporters after reviewing development works in Ganderbal on Thursday."We knew that we would not get anything from the first protest. We never expected immediate results from a single protest. But at least we will register our concern," he said, referring to the National Conference's July 20 demonstration at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi.The chief minister said the protest was meant to flag the delay in restoring statehood and keep the issue in the national conversation, adding that a promise made to Jammu and Kashmir remained unfulfilled.

The party, he said, had not waited for August 5 - the anniversary of the reading down of Article 370 - to press the case.

INTERNATIONAL

## Misri in Thimphu to co-chair India-Bhutan plan talks, new projects expected

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 4 AUG, 2026

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri began a two-day official visit to Bhutan on July 30 to co-chair the fifth India-Bhutan Development Cooperation Talks, the plan talks that shape New Delhi's assistance to Thimphu under Bhutan's 13th Five Year Plan.According to the scheduled programme, Misri is to receive an audience with the King of Bhutan, Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, and call on Prime Minister Dasho Tshering Tobgay and the Minister for Foreign Affairs and External Trade, Lyonpo D.N. Dhungyel. Talks were expected to cover the development partnership, energy, trade and investment, connectivity and people-to-people ties.Officials indicated the two sides would approve a fresh batch of project-tied assistance, building on India's standing as Bhutan's largest development partner, with new initiatives spanning energy, infrastructure, urban development, health and sustainable mobility.

India has long linked its own security to stability in the Himalayan kingdom on its northern frontier.Outcomes were due to be set out in a joint statement at the close of the visit on July 31.

REGIONAL

## Jammu-Srinagar highway to shut fully on July 31 for repairs

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 4 AUG, 2026

The Jammu-Srinagar National Highway (NH-44) is scheduled to remain fully closed to traffic on Friday, July 31, to allow the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) to undertake urgent restoration and repair work on stretches battered by heavy rain, traffic police said.Senior Superintendent of Police (Traffic), National Highway, Raja Adil Hamid said there would be no vehicular movement on NH-44 for the day as repairs were taken up on sections damaged in Udhampur and Ramban districts, where recurring landslides and shooting stones have repeatedly disrupted the route through the monsoon."All commuters, transporters and travellers are advised to plan their journeys accordingly and avoid travelling on NH-44 until further advisory," the traffic police said, urging people to confirm road status before setting out.The highway is the principal surface link between the Jammu region and the Kashmir Valley and a lifeline for the movement of essential supplies. Its intermittent closures this season have stranded trucks, delayed perishables and disrupted travel for thousands. Officials said the one-day suspension was intended to let crews complete slope and carriageway repairs safely.

INTERNATIONAL

## Muzaffarabad votes amid boycott in Pakistani Kashmir's phase two

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 4 AUG, 2026

Voters in the Muzaffarabad division of Pakistan-administered Kashmir are set to cast ballots on Saturday in the second phase of a staggered regional election clouded by protest, boycott calls and a business shutdown, officials said.The phase covers the divisional capital and 12 assembly seats reserved for Kashmiris displaced elsewhere in Pakistan &mdash; the very seats the Jammu Kashmir Joint Awami Action Committee wants abolished. The committee, whose banning in June triggered months of unrest, has refused to contest and urged supporters to stay home.The three-phase vote began in Mirpur division on July 27 and is due to end in the Poonch division, around Rawalakot, on August 10. Rights groups say more than 50 people have been killed since the agitation began; the government has not released a toll.

Turnout in the opening round was reported at about 46 percent.

NATIONAL

## Hill states reel as landslides shut roads, halt Char Dham Yatra

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 4 AUG, 2026

Relentless monsoon rain battered Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand in the final days of July, triggering landslides and flash floods that closed hundreds of roads and forced authorities to suspend the Char Dham Yatra in Uttarakhand for the safety of pilgrims.Officials said close to 290 roads were blocked across the two states at the peak of the disruption, including national and state highways cut by debris and washouts. In Uttarakhand alone, more than a hundred roads, among them stretches of national highway, were shut following repeated slides.In Himachal Pradesh, sudden flash floods in streams around Chamba caused widespread damage, and a car plunged into a gorge after a road gave way, killing five members of a family, including a three-month-old infant.The India Meteorological Department said the southwest monsoon was in its most active phase and warned that vigorous conditions were likely to persist across the western Himalaya. Disaster-management teams were deployed to clear blocked routes and evacuate stranded travellers as pilgrimage and tourist traffic came to a standstill.