



REGIONAL

Omar opens, lays base for civic works worth over Rs 60 crore in Jammu

PAGE 2



NATIONAL

Statehood demand convulses Parliament as J&K marks seven years since Article 370

PAGE 6



INTERNATIONAL

Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Pakistan sign Mecca defence pact, and New Delhi is watching

PAGE 13



BUSINESS

Kashmir's apple harvest opens under the shadow of a single, unreliable road

PAGE 8

IN BRIEF

- HEALTH

Cheap, colourful and untraceable: suspicious snacks flood rural Kashmir

Unbranded candies, coloured drinks and loose chips carrying no maker's name or ingredient list are flooding rural markets in Kashmir...
- TECHNOLOGY

Startups bag \$252 million in a week as EV maker River lands the biggest cheque

Indian startups raised about \$252 million across 23 rounds in the week to Aug 8, more than triple the previous...
- SPORTS

Khalin Joshi runs away with J&K Open at Srinagar's Royal Springs

Bengaluru's Khalin Joshi won the fifth J&K Open at Srinagar's Royal Springs Golf Course by nine shots, closing on 24-under...
- BUSINESS

RBI holds repo rate at 5.25% for a fourth time as it awaits clarity on inflation

The Monetary Policy Committee left the benchmark rate unchanged and kept its neutral stance, nudging up its growth forecast for...
- INTERNATIONAL

Imran Khan marks three years in jail as PTI rallies across Pakistan

The former prime minister's party staged nationwide demonstrations demanding his release, as rights groups condemned his prolonged solitary confinement.
- NATIONAL

Parliament clears bill raising Supreme Court judges' strength to 38

The Rajya Sabha passed the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Bill, 2026, lifting the sanctioned strength of the apex...
- NATIONAL

REGIONAL

Guard's warning shots trigger day-long forest search in Poonch's Mendhar belt

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026



A security guard who fired warning shots after spotting suspicious movement near an under-construction tunnel set off a day-long cordon-and-search operation across the forests of Poonch's Mendhar sector, officials said, though no militants were found.

A security guard's warning shots near an under-construction tunnel touched off a day-long, multi-agency search across the forests of the Mendhar sector in Poonch on Monday, officials said, though by evening no militants had been...

FULL REPORT CONTINUED ON PAGE 16 >

NATIONAL

IAF's Bhawana Kanth becomes first woman to clear elite 'Top Gun' combat course

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026



Squadron Leader Bhawana Kanth has become the first woman in the Indian Air Force to complete the demanding Fighter Combat Leader course, the service's equivalent of the US Navy's 'Top Gun' programme.

Squadron Leader Bhawana Kanth has become the first woman officer in the Indian Air Force to complete the elite Fighter Combat Leader course, a milestone...

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16 >

INTERNATIONAL

Houthi drone strike sets Saudi Aramco refinery ablaze in Jizan



Yemen's Houthis said they hit a Saudi Aramco refinery in Jizan with a drone, sparking a fire that Saudi authorities said was quickly extinguished...

Yemen's Houthis said on Sunday they had struck a Saudi Aramco refinery in the Red Sea province of Jizan with...

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16 >



BUSINESS

RBI holds repo rate at 5.25%, lifts growth forecast to 6.7%

The Reserve Bank of India kept its benchmark lending rate unchanged and raised its growth forecast for the year, citing resilient demand but flagging...

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16 >



NATIONAL

India names 27 places in Arunachal; China calls the move 'null and void'

India formally assigned standardised names to 27 places and features in Arunachal Pradesh, countering China's renaming campaign; Beijing rejected the step as "illegal, null...

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16 >



INTERNATIONAL

Netanyahu rejects US Gaza plan, demands Hamas disarm first

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu rejected the latest US proposal for the next phase in Gaza, insisting Hamas fully disarm before any Israeli withdrawal.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16 >

REGIONAL

Transporters' wheel-jam strike halts buses across Rajouri, Poonch

A wheel-jam strike by bus and tempo operators brought public transport to a standstill in Rajouri, Poonch and Jammu, stranding commuters across the flood-hit...

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16 >



REGIONAL

Omar hands out 2.71 crore rupees in cash awards to 580 J&K athletes

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah presented cash awards totalling 2.71 crore rupees to 580 sportspersons from Jammu and Kashmir at a ceremony in Srinagar.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16 >

NATIONAL

Opposition presses Shah on Jantar Mantar as monsoon session nears close

In the final week of the monsoon session, opposition MPs pressed the government for a statement on the Jantar Mantar protest and sparred over...

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16 >

INSIDE TODAY

P2 · Omar opens, lays base for civic works worth over Rs 60 crore in Jammu

P6 · Statehood demand convulses Parliament as J&K marks seven years since Article 370

P13 · Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Pakistan sign Mecca defence pact, and New Delhi is watching

P8 · Kashmir's apple harvest opens under the shadow of a single, unreliable road

P14 · India cruise past Sri Lanka XI in Colombo warm-up before Galle Test

P10 · 'We cannot drink DATA': Google's \$15bn AI campus runs into a thirsty city

P12 · J&K's drug fight widens: 1.03 lakh users treated, 7,730 traffickers held in three years

P15 · Classifieds & Tenders

REGIONAL

Omar opens, lays base for civic works worth over Rs 60 crore in Jammu

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026



Chief Minister Omar Abdullah inaugurated finished civic works and laid foundation stones for others totalling more than Rs 60 crore in Jammu, from an electric-bus depot to a riverf...

JAMMU, Aug 7 — Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Thursday inaugurated a set of completed civic works and laid the foundation stones for several more, together valued at over Rs 60 crore, in a single Housing and Urban Development push across Jammu city and its outskirts, the government said. The programme paired foundation-laying for projects worth about Rs 28 crore with the inauguration of finished works worth roughly Rs 32 crore, spanning public transport, riverfront leisure, heritage conservation and municipal amenities. Officials described the spending as part of the administration's sustained focus on strengthening urban infrastructure, promoting cleaner mobility and expanding public spaces in the winter capital. The centrepiece of the foundation ceremonies was a depot for 100 electric buses at Bhagwati Nagar, to be built at Rs 23.04 crore under the PM e-Bus Sewa scheme. The facility will house and service the electric fleet the government is introducing to cut fuel bills and vehicular pollution on Jammu's congested roads. Abdullah also laid the foundation for the rejuvenation and restoration of a flowing nallah at Tan Talab Kundarorian in Katra, a Rs 5.14 crore work aimed at reviving a water body and improving drainage near the Vaishno Devi base town. Among the completed projects the Chief Minister opened was Tawi Wonderland, an Rs 11 crore "waste-to-wonder" park raised on the banks of the River Tawi at Bhagwati Nagar from scrap and recycled material. "The newly inaugurated Waste-to-Wonder Park on the banks of the River Tawi has the potential to emerge as a major tourist attraction," Abdullah said, according to an official account of the event. He also inaugurated a Rs 15.74 crore Heritage Trail and site beautification project, a Rs 1.65 crore modernisation of the food street at Bahu Fort, and a Rs 3.61 crore shopping-cum-municipal complex at Akhnoor. Officials said the works were designed to improve civic amenities, promote sustainable mobility, conserve heritage sites and add to the city's leisure and shopping infrastructure. The projects are being executed by the Housing and Urban Development

Department along with Jammu Smart City Limited and the urban local bodies, whose senior functionaries attended the ceremonies. The government has leaned on the Smart City programme and central urban schemes to fund riverfront development, heritage circuits and non-motorised transport in Jammu over the past two years. The Tawi riverfront has been a recurring focus of the city's development plans, with successive works aimed at reclaiming the river's banks for parks, walkways and public gatherings. The waste-to-wonder park, built largely from discarded metal and other scrap, joins a growing list of such installations that municipal bodies have used to combine solid-waste management with tourism. Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary and Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani were among those present. They were joined by Bahu MLA Vikram Randhawa, Jammu West MLA Arvind Gupta and Jammu East MLA Yudhvir Sethi, along with Additional Chief Secretary Dheeraj Gupta, the Commissioner Secretary of the Housing and Urban Development Department, the Divisional Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner of Jammu, the Inspector General of Police, Jammu, and the chief executive of Jammu Smart City Limited. Abdullah used the occasion to press his government's argument that visible, on-the-ground development is central to its mandate, even as it continues to seek the restoration of full statehood from the Centre. The electric-bus depot, in particular, feeds into the PM e-Bus Sewa rollout meant to add battery-powered public transport in cities across the country, with Jammu among the towns in line for new fleets and charging infrastructure. The inaugurations came days before Independence Day, with the administration keen to showcase completed works across both capitals. Officials said further Housing and Urban Development projects in Jammu and Srinagar are at various stages of execution and would be dedicated to the public as they are finished.

REGIONAL

J&K allocated Rs 905 crore under Jal Jeevan 2.0, none drawn yet

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026

SRINAGAR, Aug 6 — Jammu and Kashmir has been allocated Rs 905.74 crore for 2026-27 under the second phase of the Jal Jeevan Mission, but had not drawn any of the money as of Aug 2, the Ministry of Jal Shakti told Parliament. The Centre has extended the rural drinking-water mission to December 2028 under a revamped JJM 2.0, shifting the focus from building new schemes to keeping existing tap connections working, sustaining water sources and maintaining supply. Himalayan states and Union Territories with legislatures, including J&K, are funded on a 90:10 central-to-local ratio. Nationally, the ministry said, more than 82 per cent of rural households now have functional tap water connections, with over 15.9 crore of 19.36 crore households covered as of Aug 4. The zero drawdown in J&K, a month into the financial year, points to delays in finalising the Union Territory's operation-and-maintenance plans, on which the fresh tranche is conditioned.

REGIONAL

Govt reconstitutes project group to fast-track big-ticket works

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026

SRINAGAR, Aug 10 — The Jammu and Kashmir government has reconstituted its Union Territory Project Monitoring Group to speed up infrastructure and investment projects worth Rs 5 crore and above, according to a General Administration Department order. Under Government Order No. 1386-JK(GAD) of 2026, the group will be chaired by the Chief Secretary, with the Administrative Secretary of the Planning, Development and Monitoring Department as member secretary. Its members include the administrative secretaries of Jal Shakti, Power, Finance, Public Works, Health, Housing and Urban Development, Industries and the education departments, with District Development Commissioners co-opted as required. The panel is tasked with tracking major projects through the PMG Portal, clearing inter-departmental bottlenecks and coordinating with central ministries and the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade. Officials said the revamp is meant to cut the delays and cost overruns that have dogged large works in the Union Territory, where projects routinely stall over land, forest clearances and utility shifting. The Planning department will act as the nodal agency.

REGIONAL

Security tightened across J&K ahead of Independence Day

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026

SRINAGAR, Aug 11 — Security has been tightened across Jammu and Kashmir ahead of the 80th Independence Day, with police and central forces stepping up frisking, vehicle checks and area domination in cities, along highways and in sensitive border areas. Officials said multi-layered arrangements are in place for the Aug 15 celebrations, including nakas on arterial roads, sanitisation of venues and heightened patrolling in and around Srinagar and Jammu. The deployment is being coordinated between the Jammu and Kashmir Police and central armed police forces. The security build-up has run alongside the Har Ghar Tiranga campaign. On Monday, the Central Reserve Police Force organised a Tiranga rally with school students at the historic Ghanta Ghar in Lal Chowk, Srinagar, one of a series of processions held in the run-up to the day. Similar rallies were held in districts including Pulwama under the campaign, which runs from Aug 9 to 17.



REGIONAL

J&K starts Census-2027 count in snow-bound areas first

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026

SRINAGAR, Aug 8 — The Jammu and Kashmir administration has begun the population enumeration phase of Census 2027, starting with snow-bound and remote areas that will be counted ahead of the rest of the Union Territory. Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, who chaired a meeting of the UT-Level Census Coordination Committee, said self-enumeration in these areas would run from Aug 17 to 31, followed by door-to-door enumeration through September. The reference "Census Moment" is midnight on Oct 1, with a revisional round from Oct 1 to 5. The Union Territory has been divided into 95 administrative charges and a tentative 4,146 enumeration blocks, with the largest concentrations in Doda, Kishtwar, Baramulla, Kupwara, Ramban and Anantnag districts. Dulloo directed departments to appoint and train enumerators and supervisors proficient in the digital census applications, run publicity campaigns in far-flung areas and disburse honorariums promptly. It is the first census to be conducted digitally, with field staff recording responses on mobile applications.



REGIONAL

J&K rolls out Har Ghar Tiranga, aims to keep top national rank

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026

SRINAGAR, Aug 9 — Jammu and Kashmir has launched its Har Ghar Tiranga 2026 campaign across all 20 districts, running from Aug 9 to 17, with the administration aiming to retain the Union Territory's top national ranking from earlier phases of the drive. Officials said more than 14 lakh national flags — 14,03,496 in all — are being distributed through panchayats, urban local bodies and educational institutions, with procurement routed through local self-help groups and the Department of Posts. The Chief Secretary has directed that every flag conform to the Flag Code of India. This year's campaign has been dedicated to 150 years of the national song Vande Mataram, and will feature Tiranga rallies, bike and cycle processions, exhibitions and patriotic concerts. A main event is planned in Srinagar on Aug 12, with a Tiranga bike rally and mela from the Sher-i-Kashmir International Conference Centre to the Botanical Garden. J&K had emerged as the leading performer among states and Union Territories in successive rounds of the campaign, officials said, and the government has set participation targets for every district to hold that position.

REGIONAL

J&K got Rs 171 crore, 397 health projects under PM-ABHIM: Nadda

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026

NEW DELHI, Aug 7 — Jammu and Kashmir received Rs 171.25 crore under the Pradhan Mantri Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission over the past two financial years, with 397 health infrastructure projects approved across the Union Territory, Union Health Minister Jagat Prakash Nadda told the Lok Sabha. The funds, released during 2024-25 and 2025-26, are being used to build a network of primary and critical-care facilities. The sanctioned works include 79 Urban Ayushman Arogya Mandirs, of which 55 are functional; 287 Block Public Health Units, with 20 operational so far; 20 Integrated Public Health Laboratories, three of them active; and 10 Critical Care Blocks, nine of which are under construction. "PM-ABHIM is aimed at strengthening India's public health system by expanding health infrastructure and enhancing preparedness for pandemics," Nadda said, according to the reply. The scheme is meant to plug gaps in diagnostic capacity, disease surveillance and critical care exposed during the Covid-19 pandemic. Officials have said the block-level units and laboratories are intended to bring testing closer to rural populations in a Union Territory where terrain and winter access complicate specialist care, easing the load on the two Government Medical Colleges in Jammu and Srinagar.

MORE FROM THIS SECTION

REGIONAL

Cabinet expansion only after Aug 15, says Omar

The Chief Minister has said his council of ministers will be expanded only after Independence Day.

REGIONAL

Omar vows to take Rajouri-Poonch flood package to PM as belt counts its losses

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026



Reviewing relief in flood-hit Rajouri, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah says J&K cannot fund restoration alone and pledges five-marla plots, free ration and enhanced SDRF compensation.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah told flood-hit families in Rajouri on Thursday that Jammu and Kashmir does not have the money to rebuild the Pir Panjal belt on its own, and that he will personally place a special relief proposal before Prime Minister Narendra Modi. “While there are some things we can manage on our own, the reality is that Jammu and Kashmir does not have the financial capacity to bear the entire cost of restoration,” Abdullah said after touring damaged neighbourhoods and reviewing rescue and relief work with district officials. “As soon as the proposal is ready, I will personally submit it to the prime minister.” The chief minister pointed to the precedent of last year’s disaster. “After last year’s floods, the Central government approved a package of nearly Rs 1,400 crore for Jammu and Kashmir,” he said, arguing that the scale of damage across Rajouri and Poonch this monsoon had again put restoration beyond the reach of the Union Territory’s own budget. Flash floods and cloudbursts through July and into early August tore through Surankote, Mendhar, Mandi and Rajouri town, washing away homes, shops, paddy and maize fields, livestock and long stretches of road. Assets of the Public Works (R&B), Jal Shakti and Power departments were among the worst hit, leaving villages without secure road links, drinking water or electricity for days. Abdullah said saving lives had been the government’s first concern. “Our first priority was to minimise the loss of human lives. We regret the loss of four precious lives in this district,” he said, referring to the toll in Rajouri, where one person was still listed as missing. He set out a rehabilitation plan aimed at families left with nothing. Households that lost both their house and their farmland would be given five marlas of land on a suitable government plot to rebuild, he said, while farmers stripped of standing crops would receive free ration for six months to a year. The next of kin of each

person killed in the rain-related incidents has already been sanctioned an ex gratia payment of Rs 6 lakh. The chief minister also promised to raise disaster compensation itself. “The SDRF compensation has not been revised for nearly seven to eight years. We have decided to enhance it,” he said, adding that the existing norms were far too low for the losses families were carrying. On restoring services, Abdullah directed the Power Development Department to complete permanent repairs to the 33-kV line linking Rajouri and Poonch, the backbone that had failed when towers came down during the floods. He said roads in the mountains had to be rebuilt to a sturdier standard, with engineering designed to survive cloudbursts and landslides rather than be swept away each monsoon. Local legislators and administration officials, including the Rajouri MLA, joined the review. Residents pressed the chief minister on delays in reaching remote hamlets, on damaged water schemes that still forced households to depend on tankers, and on the fear that another spell of heavy rain could undo the fragile repairs already made. The floods were the belt’s second major blow in as many years, and the damage read like a familiar ledger: collapsed mud houses in the upper reaches, shops gutted in the bazaars, and culverts and link roads torn open where streams jumped their banks. Relief teams were still reaching cut-off hamlets on foot where machinery could not pass, carrying ration and tarpaulin to families sheltering with neighbours. Abdullah acknowledged that the belt’s exposure demanded long-term investment, not only emergency aid. A proposed mini-secretariat for the district, estimated at Rs 50-60 crore, and stronger early-warning and drainage systems would be built into the case he takes to New Delhi, he said. For now, the priority was a roof, a road and a working tap for every family the water had displaced.



REGIONAL

In Rajouri’s Saaj and Mehra, floods take the fields that fed families

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026

Flash floods triggered by fresh heavy rain have washed away farmland and standing crops across the Saaj, Plangher and Mehra areas of Rajouri, wiping out paddy, maize, fodder and livestock enclosures that families here live on. Around 25 to 30 households in Saaj and Plangher have lost cultivated land to erosion, residents said, while in Mehra a swollen stream changed course and cut through nearly 50 kanals of fertile ground, hitting 30 to 40 families. One farmer said he had lost 10 to 12 kanals of his own, with relatives losing close to 50 kanals between them. “The July 19 flood had already damaged our land, but yesterday’s flash flood washed it away completely,” a farmer in Mehra said. “We depended on this land for crops, fodder and livestock.” Villagers complained that government attention had been thin and said their local legislator had not visited since the first flood struck. They urged the administration to survey the losses quickly and fold the ruined farmland into the relief and rehabilitation package promised for the district.



REGIONAL

Power crawls back to Poonch as crews race the next downpour

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026

Electricity is returning to the Pir Panjal belt in fits and starts, weeks after cloudbursts brought down transmission towers and left Poonch district in the dark for days. The Power Development Department said it had revived all major transmission feeders across Rajouri and Poonch and restored the critical 132-kV supply to Poonch after roughly 10 days, using an Emergency Restoration System to bridge two towers that had collapsed at Behla and Surankote. Around 200 distribution transformers were damaged in Rajouri alone, engineers said, and crews have worked through difficult terrain to re-string lines washed out by the floods. Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, reviewing relief in Rajouri on Thursday, directed the department to move from temporary fixes to permanent repair of the 33-kV line that links Rajouri and Poonch, the spine of the belt’s grid. Officials said steady power was also the key to reviving pumping stations for drinking water, many of which stalled when the supply failed. Line staff cautioned that the repairs remain fragile. With the monsoon still active over the Pir Panjal, a fresh cloudburst could bring down the makeshift towers again, and crews have kept restoration material stockpiled at Poonch and Surankote in case they have to start over.

REGIONAL

Army destroys two old mortar shells unearthed near LoC in Mendhar

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026



An army bomb-disposal team destroyed two old, unexploded mortar shells found near the Line of Control in Poonch’s Mendhar subdivision on Thursday, a reminder of the live ordnance the border belt still lives with long after the shelling. The rusted shells were detected in the Choki Sagra area of the Mankote sector, officials said. Personnel of the bomb-disposal squad reached the spot and carried out a controlled explosion, following the laid-down safety drill, defence sources quoted by PTI said. No loss of life or damage to property was reported. Villages along the Mankote and Krishna Ghati belts have seen heavy shelling during past flare-ups, and decades-old shells and other munitions still surface in fields, forests and grazing grounds. Farmers and Bakarwal herders working the higher pastures are warned not to touch suspicious metal objects and to alert the army or police, which keep disposal teams on call across Poonch and Rajouri.

REGIONAL

Border belt goes on alert as forces tighten Independence Day security

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026



Security has been tightened across the Rajouri-Poonch border belt ahead of Independence Day, with additional personnel deployed at vulnerable points and vehicle checks intensified on the routes into the districts. Officials said vigilance had been raised in the Krishna Ghati sector and around Poonch, as well as along stretches of the International Border near Kautha and in frontier villages. Frisking and snap checks have increased at town entry and exit points, and night-time patrolling has been stepped up. Inspector General of Police V.K. Birdi has directed field officers to strengthen checkpoints, patrolling and area domination in sensitive pockets, part of a wider security exercise across Jammu and Kashmir that includes the Srinagar-Jammu highway. The measures run alongside the searches in Mendhar and the belt’s forested ridgelines, as forces work to keep the border districts calm through the national holiday.

REGIONAL

Taps still dry in Poonch towns as flood-hit water schemes await repair

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026

Weeks after the floods, drinking water remains the hardest gap to close across Poonch, where damaged supply schemes have left households in Poonch town, Mandi, Mendhar and Surankote queuing at tankers for their daily needs. Several Jal Shakti Department schemes were crippled when cloudbursts washed away pipelines, machinery and intake works along the swollen streams. With many pumping stations dependent on a power supply that itself failed for days, officials said restoring water had lagged behind the recovery of the electricity grid. The department has deployed tanker trucks and generator sets as a stop-gap, but residents say the rounds are irregular and the water insufficient for large families and their livestock. In the higher hamlets, women and children again walk long distances to springs and nallahs, a return to the hardship the piped schemes were meant to end. Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, reviewing relief on Thursday, flagged uninterrupted power to drinking-water schemes as a priority. Engineers warned that permanent restoration of the worst-hit schemes could take weeks, and longer if fresh rain damages the temporary repairs.



REGIONAL

Guard’s warning shots trigger dawn search near Mendhar tunnel site

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026

Security forces launched a large cordon-and-search operation in the Mendhar sector of Poonch on Tuesday after a guard at an under-construction tunnel spotted suspicious movement and fired three to four rounds as a precaution. The operation began around 6 a.m., with personnel of the Jammu and Kashmir Police, the Special Operations Group and the CRPF fanning out through the forests of Bhatadurian, Sangiot and adjoining areas. Drones and sniffer dogs were pressed into the search of the dense, rugged terrain, officials said. No loss of life or damage to property was reported, and there was no exchange of fire between the forces and any suspects. Similar searches were stepped up in parts of Rajouri and along the Line of Control, part of a wider tightening of security across the twin border districts. Tunnel and road-construction sites in Poonch and Rajouri have drawn repeated security scares in recent years, and the guard’s alert set off the standard drill of sealing the area before first light. The search was still on when officials last spoke, with reinforcements holding the ridgelines above the work site.

MORE FROM THIS SECTION

REGIONAL

Mughal Road stays the belt’s lifeline as flood-broken roads await repair

With the Jammu-Rajouri-Poonch highway and link roads battered by the floods, the Mughal Road over Pir Ki Gali is again the belt’s most...

REGIONAL

Budgam takes health research to the village at Khag rural unit

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026



A two-day ICMR-SHINE programme at the Model Rural Health Research Unit in Khag pushed doctors and administrators to turn research into care that a far-flung dispensary can actually...

Deputy Commissioner Budgam Athar Aamir Khan on Monday presided over a two-day health research and outreach programme at the Model Rural Health Research Unit at Khag, an event built around a plain question: how does medical research reach a village dispensary and change what happens there. The programme, held under the ICMR-SHINE banner, was organised by the unit in collaboration with ICMR-NICHR, New Delhi, and the Department of Health Research. It gathered health administrators, researchers, doctors, academics and community members for sessions on health awareness, community participation, evidence-based practice and the strengthening of rural healthcare. Addressing the gathering, Khan said the worth of research was measured on the ground, not on paper. Evidence-based research, he said, should translate into tangible improvements in healthcare delivery, particularly in rural and far-flung areas where families often travel long distances for a basic consultation. He asked researchers and field staff to treat the generation of evidence and the delivery of care as one chain rather than two separate tracks. The Deputy Commissioner said units such as the one at Khag were meant to carry the tools of research, from screening to data collection and follow-up, into blocks that rarely see a tertiary hospital, and to feed what they learn back into how local health centres are run. He urged the medical fraternity to use the platform to identify the health problems specific to the area and to design responses around them. A series of technical and community sessions ran through the day, with academics and clinicians presenting on disease surveillance, preventive care and the role of communities in sustaining health programmes. Officials said the choice of Khag was deliberate. The block lies well away from Srinagar's referral hospitals, and its scattered villages illustrate the access gaps that rural health research is meant to address. Holding the programme at the unit itself, rather than

in a district headquarters, kept the discussion tied to the conditions it was about. The programme drew a wide roster of medical faculty and officials. Among those present were Chief Medical Officer Budgam Dr Gulzar Ahmad; Dr Mohd Iqbal Pandith, Head of the Department of Social and Preventive Medicine at Government Medical College Srinagar; Dr Mohd Caser, Scientist-C at the Khag unit; and faculty members Dr Mariya Amin, Dr Inaamul Haq, Dr Mohd Naser and Dr Mohd Iqbal Khan, alongside health staff and residents of the area. After the sessions, Khan visited the Primary Health Centre at Khag to inspect the facility and review arrangements for patient care. He directed the staff to ensure that services remained accessible and timely, and that patients coming to the centre were attended to without delay. He took stock of the availability of staff and the condition of the wards during the walk-through. He also stressed community participation, noting that health programmes succeed only when residents take part in them, from turning up for screening to following through on treatment. Awareness efforts, he said, should be pitched in the local idiom and carried by people the community already trusts. The rural research-unit model is part of a national effort by the Indian Council of Medical Research and the Department of Health Research to place such units in rural settings, so that studies are conducted where the health burden actually falls and their findings can be applied close to the population they concern. Khag, a hilly block on the western edge of Budgam, sits among the kind of remote habitations these units are meant to serve. Khan said the district administration would continue to support collaboration between research institutions and the public health system, and asked officers to build on the two-day exercise rather than let it end with the closing session. The aim, he said, was steady, measurable improvement in the care available to rural residents.

REGIONAL

Baramulla reviews MY Bharat, pushes departments to converge on youth

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026



Deputy Commissioner Baramulla Dr S.F. Hamid on Monday chaired a meeting of the district's MY Bharat Advisory Committee, reviewing how the Centre's youth-engagement platform is being run in Baramulla and how to widen young people's participation in it. Hamid told the committee that the platform 'should be effectively utilised to connect young people with opportunities for volunteering, leadership, skill development and community participation.' He asked departments to work in convergence rather than in silos, to draw up actionable plans aimed at the grassroots, and to keep the effort under regular review and monitoring. The meeting was attended by Additional District Development Commissioner Pranjal J. Hazarika, the District Youth Officer for MY Bharat, and representatives of the Industries, Health, Education, Panchayati Raj, Social Welfare, Information, Employment and Skill Development departments, along with the NSS, NCC, Bharat Scouts and Guides and Youth Services and Sports wings.

REGIONAL

Sanitation chief reviews Baramulla waste works, seeks plastic-free Gulmarg

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026

The Director General of Rural Sanitation, Jammu and Kashmir, Anoo Malhotra, on Aug. 6 reviewed the progress of the Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) across Baramulla, pressing officials to finish sanitation infrastructure on time and to keep waste-management services running. The review went through the status of rural sanitation assets, door-to-door waste collection, the tendering of new infrastructure and the upkeep of what is already built, including plastic waste management units, segregation sheds and solid and liquid waste facilities. Malhotra directed the Assistant Commissioner Panchayat, Baramulla, to monitor the works closely so that assets do not fall idle once handed over. She singled out Gulmarg, asking officials to work towards making the ski resort a no-plastic zone. The meeting also took up Extended Producer Responsibility under the Solid Waste Management Rules, and the obligations that producers and brand owners carry for collecting and recycling post-consumer waste. The review was attended by Deputy Director Rural Sanitation Kashmir Shabir Ahmad Hakak, Assistant Commissioner Panchayat Mudasir Hussain, Block Development Officers from across the district, and assistant and junior engineers along with directorate consultants.

REGIONAL

Anantnag drives intensive MY Bharat youth enrolment

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026

Deputy Commissioner Anantnag Dr Bilal Mohiuddin Bhat on Sunday chaired a meeting of the district's MY Bharat Advisory Committee, pressing departments to drive up youth registrations on the national platform during an intensive enrolment drive. Bhat directed every department to take an active part in the ongoing registration drive and to ensure that the maximum number of young people in the district signed up on the MY Bharat portal. He asked officials to reach out through schools, colleges and local youth networks rather than rely on aggregate figures. MY Bharat, or Mera Yuva Bharat, is the Centre's platform for organising volunteering, skilling and community work among young people, and district administrations across Jammu and Kashmir have been asked to enrol youth and channel them into its programmes. Officials at the meeting reviewed where the district stood on registrations and the steps needed to lift the numbers. The committee, drawn from the departments that handle youth, education and skilling, was asked to coordinate its work and to report progress at regular intervals so that gaps could be identified and closed.



REGIONAL

Srinagar clears 97% of Capex works for tender, DC orders quick start

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026

Deputy Commissioner Srinagar Akshay Labroo on Sunday reviewed the progress of works taken up under the District Capex Budget 2026-27, convening all executing agencies and line departments at the DC Office Complex to go through the portfolio agency by agency. Officials told the meeting that estimates for all approved works had been submitted and that tenders had been floated for more than 97 percent of the works, with several projects already allotted for execution on the ground. Labroo directed the agencies to clear the pending tendering and allotment quickly and to begin physical work without further delay, stressing strict adherence to technical standards and timelines. With the valley's short building season already under way, he asked departments to make the most of the working months and to coordinate closely so that funds and manpower were not left idle. The review was attended by Additional District Development Commissioner Rifat Aftab Qureshi, Chief Planning Officer Fayaz Ahmad Dar, Chief Education Officer Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din, Assistant Commissioner Panchayats Bashir Ahmad, and executive engineers from the R&B, PHE, KPDC, SMC and UEED departments, besides Block Development Officers.



REGIONAL

Bandipora's Swachhta 50-50 drive ropes in 107 schools, 720 Anganwadis

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026

Deputy Commissioner Bandipora Indu Kanwal Chib on Thursday reviewed the progress of the district's Swachhta 50-50 campaign, a cleanliness drive built on an equal split between government effort and public participation. Officials said 107 government and private educational institutions had begun household surveys through their Eco Clubs, each covering 50 households and five shops, while 720 Anganwadi Centres had joined the exercise from Aug. 3, with every centre adopting a similar cluster of homes and shops. The drive focuses on source segregation of waste, home composting, the use of cloth bags, scientific disposal and a cut in single-use plastic. "Meaningful and lasting change can only be achieved through collective efforts and active community participation," Chib said, describing schools and Anganwadi centres as the channels best placed to carry the message directly into households. The meeting was attended by the Programme Officer ICDS, the Assistant Commissioner Panchayat, the Chief Education Officer, the Chief Executive Officer of the Municipal Committee Bandipora, Zonal Education Officers, Block Development Officers and representatives of the sanitation agency SWAAHA.



REGIONAL

IUST, SKIMS screen women for PCOS at Awantipora awareness camp

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026

The Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST) at Awantipora held an awareness and screening camp on polycystic ovary syndrome on Monday, targeting a hormonal disorder that is increasingly common among young women, in collaboration with the Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS). The programme was organised by the IUST Health Centre with SKIMS Soura and the SKIMS Medical College at Bemina, and coordinated by the offices of the Dean Students' Welfare and Dean Outreach. Doctors screened female students and staff, while specialists spoke on the diagnosis of the condition, its skin-related signs and the biology behind it, in sessions that were followed by a question-and-answer round and individual consultations. Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, the chief guest, called for a change in the way society views the condition. Vice-Chancellor Prof. Shakil A. Romshoo urged that such health-awareness programmes be made a regular feature on the campus, and SKIMS Soura Director Prof. Mohammad Ashraf Ganie stressed the need to strengthen research on the disorder.

MORE FROM THIS SECTION

REGIONAL

Srinagar reviews disaster mitigation as DDMA meets

Deputy Commissioner Akshay Labroo, who heads the district's disaster management authority, chaired a review of mitigation measures across...

REGIONAL

Ujh crosses danger mark in Kathua as rain swells river ninefold in two hours

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026



The Ujh river breached its danger level at the Kathua gauge on Tuesday after intense rain sent its discharge surging nearly ninefold within two hours, putting the district administ...

The Ujh river breached its danger mark in Kathua on Tuesday after a burst of intense rain sent its discharge surging nearly ninefold within two hours, prompting the district administration to keep low-lying settlements along its course under close watch. According to river-monitoring data cited by the Kashmir Weather service, the Ujh was flowing at a discharge of 95,099 cusecs at the Kathua gauge in the late morning, a level it identified as the river's danger mark. The alert threshold is pegged at 52,341 cusecs and the evacuation level at 1,44,701 cusecs, meaning the flow had crossed the point at which authorities are expected to step up vigilance but remained below the mark that would trigger a full evacuation. The discharge had climbed nearly nine times over in the span of about two hours as heavy rain lashed the river's upper catchment, the service said. Precipitation continued over the higher reaches through the day even as its intensity eased in the plains, and the weather agency cautioned that persistent rain could push other rivers and streams past their flood and danger marks in the hours ahead. Other monitored points were still below their alert levels when readings were taken around 11 a.m. The Ujh at Panjtirthi stood at 8 feet against an alert level of 16.5 feet, while the Tarnah river was at 3 feet against an alert level of 4.3 feet, according to the data. Officials said water levels across the district were being tracked round the clock and that the administration remained on alert for flash flooding at vulnerable spots along the swollen channels. The Ujh, a major tributary of the Ravi, rises in the Himalayan foothills above Kathua and runs through the

district's plains before crossing into Punjab, and its rise is watched anxiously each monsoon in the belts that hug its banks. A sharp jump in discharge of the kind recorded on Tuesday can inundate riverside fields, low bridges and approach roads within hours, and residents of settlements close to the water are routinely advised to stay clear of the river during such spells. Tuesday's surge was the latest in a punishing monsoon that has repeatedly swollen rivers, nallahs and hill streams across the Jammu region this season, damaging roads and civic infrastructure and forcing district administrations to keep control rooms and response teams on standby. Kathua, which sits astride the National Highway and the rail line linking Jammu with Punjab, has seen several spells of heavy rain through July and early August. Weather forecasters have warned of continued wet conditions across the Jammu division, with the risk of localised flash floods, landslides and mudslides at vulnerable locations during intense bursts of rain. Residents living close to rivers and drains were urged to remain vigilant, avoid non-essential travel to low-lying and hilly stretches, and heed advisories issued by the administration and the weather office. Officials said the situation on the Ujh would depend heavily on how much rain fell over its catchment through the evening and night, and that gauges along the river and its tributaries would continue to be monitored so that any further rise crossing the evacuation threshold could be met with a prompt response on the ground.

REGIONAL

ACB books former Kishtwar Patwari for Rs 3 lakh bribe over land document

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026

The Anti-Corruption Bureau has registered a case against a former Patwari of Kishtwar for allegedly demanding and accepting a bribe to issue a land document, officials said on Tuesday. A case, FIR No. 02/2026, was registered at Police Station ACB Doda against Mohd Arif Mir, former Patwari of Patwar Halqa Trigam in Kishtwar, under Section 7 of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, as amended, the bureau said. Mir is accused of demanding Rs 5 lakh and accepting Rs 3 lakh through a cheque as illegal gratification for issuing a Fard, a record of rights, to a complainant. Acting on the complaint, the ACB carried out a search at Mir's residential house at Malipeth, near the Grid Station in Kishtwar, with due authorisation from the court and in the presence of independent witnesses, according to the bureau. A spokesperson said further investigation of the case was in progress. Patwaris sit at the base of the revenue administration and issue the land records and Fards that underpin property transactions, mutations and a range of official verifications, making the office a recurring focus of corruption complaints. The ACB has in recent months booked several revenue functionaries across the Jammu division in cases involving alleged demands for money to release routine documents.



REGIONAL

Health camp screens 104 senior citizens at Thathri in Doda

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026

A free health screening camp for senior citizens organised jointly by the Social Welfare Department and the Community Health Centre (CHC) Thathri screened 104 elderly residents, including old-age pensioners, at Dak Bunglow Thathri in Doda district, officials said on Tuesday. The camp, held under the supervision of Block Medical Officer Thathri Dr Shakeel Ahmed Kichloo, offered general health check-ups along with haemoglobin testing, screening for non-communicable diseases such as hypertension and diabetes, and tuberculosis screening, according to the organisers. Beneficiaries were given health counselling and free essential medicines on the spot. The exercise was aimed at bringing basic diagnostic and preventive care within reach of older people, many of whom find it difficult to travel to higher health facilities. Officials said pensioners and other elderly residents from the surrounding areas turned up through the day for consultations. The Territorial Social Welfare Officer, Thathri, said continued coordination between the Health and Social Welfare Departments would ensure that elderly beneficiaries had access to essential healthcare services closer to home, and indicated that similar camps could be held in the sub-division in the coming weeks.

REGIONAL

Army provides medical cover for kabaddi tournament at Gool

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026



The Army provided medical cover during a kabaddi tournament organised by the Gujjar and Bakkarwal community at Narshinga in the Gool area of Ramban district, officials said on Monday. Army medical personnel were deployed through the event to provide first-aid and medical assistance to participants and spectators as needed, the Army said. The tournament drew enthusiastic participation from local youth and community members, fostering what organisers described as a spirit of sportsmanship, camaraderie and healthy competition. The Army said the initiative reflected its continued commitment to the welfare and well-being of the local population, and was aimed at strengthening mutual trust, goodwill and the enduring bond between soldiers and the people of the region. Such community sporting events, backed by medical and logistical support from Army units under the Sadbhavana outreach, are a common feature of the summer calendar in the upper reaches of Ramban, where formal medical facilities are often distant.

REGIONAL

Army holds Beti Bachao Beti Padhao awareness drive in Reasi

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026



The Army held a Beti Bachao Beti Padhao awareness drive at the Girls High School, Chakalsalta, in Reasi district on Monday, reaching 56 students and four teachers, officials said. The session, part of the Army's Sadbhavana community outreach, featured awareness lectures emphasising the importance of girl-child education, gender equality and women's empowerment. Speakers shared motivational accounts of accomplished Indian women and highlighted government schemes supporting the education and welfare of girls. The talks touched on the need to address declining female-to-male ratios and to ensure equal opportunities for girls, and included interactive discussions that drew participation from the students, according to the Army. A parallel session was held at Khanetar in neighbouring Poonch. The Army said such outreach was intended to encourage families in the region to prioritise the schooling of girls and to reinforce the message of gender equality among young students.

REGIONAL

Tiranga rally held at Ghagwal in Samba under Har Ghar Tiranga campaign

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026



A Tiranga rally was taken out at Ghagwal in Samba district on Monday as part of the nationwide Har Ghar Tiranga campaign, drawing BJP workers, local residents and other participants who raised patriotic slogans along the route. The rally was organised by Ghagwal Mandal president Nishant Sharma and was joined by BJP Jammu and Kashmir vice-president and party in-charge for Samba, Rekha Mahajan. Also present were vice-president Rashpal Verma, former District Development Council member Suresh Kumar Falli and Mahila Morcha leader Geeta Bhagat, among others. "The Har Ghar Tiranga campaign is a powerful people's movement that strengthens our emotional connection with the national flag," Mahajan said, appealing to every household to proudly display the tricolour and make the campaign a success. The Har Ghar Tiranga drive, part of the annual observance in the run-up to Independence Day, ran from Aug 9 to Aug 17, with rallies, flag-hoisting events and awareness programmes being held across Samba and other districts of the Jammu division.



REGIONAL

Dozens of PDP workers from Gool join National Conference in Banihal

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026

Dozens of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) workers from the Gool area joined the National Conference at a function in Banihal on Sunday, the party said, in a fresh round of defections in the Banihal-Gool belt of Ramban district. The workers were welcomed into the NC by senior party leader and Banihal-Gool legislator Sajjad Shaheen, who said the growing influx of people into the party was a clear endorsement of its politics of development, dignity and secularism. He said development was being pursued on the principle of equity across the constituency. Shaheen used the occasion to attack the PDP's 2014 alliance with the BJP, arguing that it had contributed to the erosion of Jammu and Kashmir's special constitutional status, and said people had "neither forgotten nor forgiven this betrayal." He positioned the National Conference as a principled defender of the region's interests under Chief Minister Omar Abdullah's administration. The Banihal-Gool segment has seen a steady trickle of workers moving between parties since the last assembly elections, and Sunday's crossover adds to the National Conference's efforts to consolidate its organisational base in the mountainous stretch straddling the Jammu-Srinagar highway.

MORE FROM THIS SECTION

REGIONAL

GDC Udhampur begins five-day SCALE induction for freshers

Government Degree College, Udhampur, opened a five-day SCALE induction programme to orient newly enrolled students to the college's...

NATIONAL

Statehood demand convulses Parliament as J&K marks seven years since Article 370

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026



On the seventh anniversary of the reading down of Article 370, Opposition MPs led by Rahul Gandhi and joined by the National Conference forced repeated adjournments of both Houses,...

The demand for restoration of Jammu and Kashmir's statehood erupted on the floor of Parliament on Wednesday, the seventh anniversary of the reading down of Article 370, as Opposition members forced repeated adjournments of both Houses and marched through the Parliament complex pressing the Centre to end the Union Territory's political limbo. Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, led INDIA bloc MPs in a protest that moved from the Prerna Sthal to the Makar Dwar of the Parliament building, the members carrying placards that sought the immediate return of full statehood to the erstwhile state. National Conference members, including senior MP Chowdhary Mohammad Ramzan, joined the demonstration alongside Congress, DMK and other allies, folding the J&K question into a wider Opposition charge sheet against the government. Inside the chambers, the din was relentless. Both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha were adjourned for the day amid noisy protests, with Opposition benches also demanding a statement from Home Minister Amit Shah on alleged police action against students and raising questions over the handling of temple-donation accounts. But it was the statehood plank that carried the sharpest regional charge, giving the day's disruption a direct line to the Kashmir Valley and the Jammu region. The date was freighted with symbolism. August 5 marks the anniversary of the 2019 decision to strip Article 370 of its effect and to split the state into the Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. Seven years on, the political divide it opened remains raw. The National Conference, the Peoples Democratic Party and the Congress observed the day as a "black day", holding protests in Srinagar, Jammu and several district headquarters, while the Bharatiya Janata Party marked it as the completion of the region's integration with the rest of the country. The Opposition's case rests on a promise it says has gone unhonoured. The Centre has repeatedly told Parliament and the Supreme Court that

Union Territory status for Jammu and Kashmir is a temporary arrangement and that statehood would be restored at an appropriate time, though it has never committed to a date. When the Supreme Court upheld the abrogation of Article 370 in its judgment of December 11, 2023, it recorded the Solicitor General's assurance that statehood would be returned, while leaving open the larger question of whether Parliament can convert a full state into a Union Territory. For the elected government in Srinagar, the anniversary was a reminder of the ceiling on its own authority. The first cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah after the 2024 assembly elections had passed a resolution urging the Union government to restore statehood, and the National Conference has since kept up the pressure both in the Union Territory and, on Wednesday, on the floor of the national legislature. Policing, land and public order in Jammu and Kashmir continue to rest with the Lieutenant Governor, an arrangement the Opposition argues is incompatible with a functioning democratic mandate. Government managers countered that the House had business to transact and accused the Opposition of manufacturing disruption during the monsoon session, one of the most crowded legislative calendars in recent years. Treasury benches maintained that the sequence of statehood restoration would follow the government's own timetable and could not be dictated by protest, and that security and development gains in the region since 2019 had to be consolidated first. By evening neither side had given ground. The placards were rolled up, the Houses stood adjourned, and the substantive demand, articulated once again in the heart of New Delhi, remained where it has sat for seven years: an assurance repeated, a timeline withheld. With the session running into its closing stretch before the Independence Day recess, the Opposition signalled it would return to the statehood question at every available opportunity.



NATIONAL

Parliament clears bill raising Supreme Court judges' strength to 38

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026

The Rajya Sabha on Wednesday cleared the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Bill, 2026, raising the sanctioned strength of the country's apex court from 34 judges to 38, including the Chief Justice of India. The legislation replaces an ordinance promulgated in May 2026 and marks the first increase in the Supreme Court's judicial strength since 2019, when the number was fixed at 34. Piloting the measure, the government said the four additional posts were needed to help the court cut into a backlog that runs into tens of thousands of pending cases and to speed the disposal of constitutional and appellate matters. The bill's passage came on a day when both Houses were repeatedly disrupted over the demand for Jammu and Kashmir's statehood and other Opposition grievances, with the government pushing its legislative agenda through amid the protests. As the final court of appeal for the whole country, including the Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, the expanded bench strength will bear on litigants far beyond the capital.



NATIONAL

Supreme Court orders nationwide overhaul of motor-insurance enforcement

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026

The Supreme Court has directed a nationwide overhaul of motor-insurance enforcement, observing that nearly 56 per cent of vehicles plying on Indian roads carry no insurance and leave accident victims waiting years for compensation. A bench of Justices Sanjay Karol and Prashant Kumar Mishra, deciding an appeal by National Insurance Co. Ltd. against a Telangana High Court award, directed the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India to raise the mandatory third-party cover for new private cars from three years to four and for new two-wheelers from five years to six. The court ordered that Automatic Number Plate Recognition cameras on highways and city roads be integrated with the Vahan database and the Insurance Information Bureau so uninsured vehicles can be flagged automatically and e-challans issued, and directed that traffic police be equipped with handheld devices to verify cover in real time. It also floated a pilot linking fuel supply to valid insurance. The directions apply across states and Union Territories, including hill regions where uninsured two-wheelers are common.

NATIONAL

No sacking for a pending case alone, Supreme Court tells state on former SPO

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026

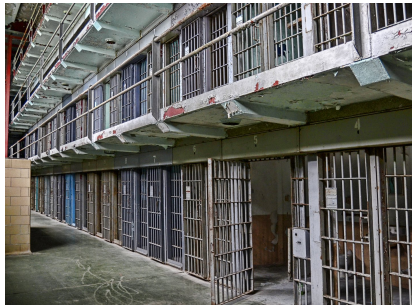


The Supreme Court has held that no law permits a public employer to dismiss or remove a police employee of more than a decade's standing solely on the ground that a criminal case is pending against him, and awarded five lakh rupees to a former special police officer who was discharged without a hearing. A bench of Justices Dipankar Datta and Sheel Nagu was deciding the case of Satpal Singh, appointed a special police officer in Punjab's Batala in 1991, who was let go not because of any conviction but merely because a prosecution was pending, and without being given a chance to defend himself. The court's reasoning carries particular resonance in Jammu and Kashmir, where thousands of special police officers form a large and often precarious tier of the security apparatus, frequently serving for years on uncertain terms. By insisting that a pending case cannot by itself end a long-serving officer's employment, the judgment strengthens the service protections available to that force.

NATIONAL

Man freed after 22 years as Supreme Court flags third-degree confession

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026



The Supreme Court has acquitted a man who spent 22 years fighting a criminal case, holding that his conviction could not stand where it rested on a confession the court found had been extracted through third-degree methods rather than proved by credible evidence. A bench of Justices J.B. Pardiwala and R. Mahadevan Chandran, deciding the appeal of Arjun Jani against the State of Orissa, set aside the conviction after finding the prosecution case infirm and the coerced confession unsafe to rely on. The court underlined that a confession obtained by force carries no evidentiary value and that the burden on the prosecution to prove guilt beyond reasonable doubt cannot be shifted onto an accused through such means. The judgment adds to a line of rulings in which the court has warned investigators against shortcuts, observing that a wrongful conviction exacts a price no acquittal, however belated, can repay.

NATIONAL

Money disputes belong in a civil court, not an FIR: Supreme Court

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026



The Supreme Court has reiterated that disputes over money and commercial dealings must ordinarily be settled through civil suits and cannot be converted into criminal prosecutions to arm-twist the other party into a settlement. A bench of Justices J.B. Pardiwala and R. Mahadevan Chandran, in Sandeep Shukla versus State of Uttar Pradesh, cautioned that the machinery of criminal law is not a recovery agency and that giving a civil dispute a criminal colour is an abuse of the process of the court. Where the substance of a grievance is a failure to pay or perform under a contract, the bench held, the remedy lies before a civil forum, not in a first information report. The court's observations feed a long-running effort to unclog police stations and trial courts of what judges have repeatedly described as essentially civil quarrels, and to shield individuals from the coercive weight of a criminal case filed to settle a commercial score.



NATIONAL

Cruelty law shields partners in marriage-intent live-in ties, Supreme Court holds

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026

The Supreme Court has held that the criminal law against cruelty by a husband or his relatives can extend to a woman in a live-in relationship, provided the couple lived together with a genuine intention of marriage and in a relationship that had the character of a marriage. A bench of Justices Sanjay Karol and N. Kotiswar Singh, in Dr Lokesh B.H. versus State of Karnataka, reasoned that Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code is meant to protect women from cruelty within relationships that resemble marriage, and that a purely technical view of marital status should not defeat that purpose where the parties had cohabited as a couple with the intent to wed. The court was careful to draw limits: casual or fleeting relationships would not attract the provision, and each case would turn on evidence of the couple's intent and the nature of their life together. The ruling nonetheless expands the pool of complainants who can invoke one of the most frequently used, and most fiercely debated, protections in Indian criminal law, and will guide trial courts across the country weighing cruelty complaints outside formal marriage.

MORE FROM THIS SECTION

NATIONAL

Lok Sabha passes taxation amendment bill without debate amid din

The Taxation and Other Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026 cleared the Lok Sabha without discussion as Opposition members pressed their protest...

NATIONAL

IAF wraps up Exercise Pitch Black in Australia, flexing long-range reach

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026



The Indian Air Force concluded nearly three weeks at Exercise Pitch Black in northern Australia, deploying Rafale fighters and C-17 transports alongside some 20 nations in one of t...

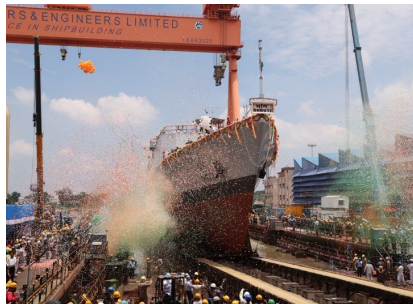
The Indian Air Force wrapped up its participation in Exercise Pitch Black 2026, one of the world's largest multinational air combat drills, in northern Australia this week, capping nearly three weeks of high-intensity flying alongside the air forces of around 20 nations. The biennial exercise, hosted by the Royal Australian Air Force from its bases at Darwin and Tindal, ran from July 20 to August 7. It drew close to 100 aircraft and more than 2,500 military personnel for war-game scenarios built around defensive and offensive counter-air operations over the vast, sparsely populated ranges of Australia's Northern Territory. India fielded a contingent of four Rafale fighter jets, two C-17 Globemaster III heavy-lift transport aircraft and more than 120 air warriors, the IAF said. The deployment required ferrying the fighters thousands of kilometres from India to the Australian mainland, a long-range movement supported by air-to-air refuelling and by the C-17s, which carried ground crew, spares and equipment. For the IAF, the value of Pitch Black lies less in any single sortie than in the experience of operating from an unfamiliar base far from home, integrating with partner air forces flying different platforms, and slotting into large-force engagements that can put dozens of aircraft into one contested airspace at once. Officials said Indian pilots flew in mixed formations with counterparts from several nations in scenarios that tested both offensive strike packages and the defence of high-value assets. The exercise is one of the most visible strands of India's expanding defence diplomacy in the Indo-Pacific, a region where New Delhi has steadily deepened military ties with Australia, Japan, the United States and Southeast Asian partners. Successive editions of Pitch Black have given the IAF a rare chance to benchmark its crews and its French-built Rafales against some of the most advanced air forces in the world. First held in 1981, Pitch Black has grown into a marquee event on the global military-aviation calendar; the 2024

edition was billed by the Royal Australian Air Force as its largest ever, drawing more than 20 countries and hundreds of aircraft. The 2026 iteration kept that scale, with warplanes ranging from fourth-generation fighters to advanced transport and support aircraft sharing the same crowded skies, and controllers on the ground choreographing missions that would be impossible to stage over Indian ranges alone. For younger pilots in the Indian contingent, officials said, it was a first taste of flying in an air picture that dense. The Rafale has become the sharp end of that effort. Inducted from 2020 and based at Ambala in the north and Hasimara in the east, the twin-engine jets are central to the IAF's plans and routinely fly missions along India's sensitive northern and western frontiers, including the skies over Jammu and Kashmir. Sending a handful of them halfway around the world, and sustaining them there for three weeks, is as much a test of logistics and airlift as of air combat. That expeditionary reach has become a theme of the IAF's recent calendar, which has seen Indian fighters take part in exercises in Europe, West Asia and now the Pacific. Defence analysts say such deployments signal a force trying to shed a largely home-based posture and build the habits, and the tanker-and-transport backbone, needed to operate at distance. The C-17 fleet, based at Hindon near Delhi, is the enabler for much of that ambition. The same aircraft that anchor India's disaster-relief and troop-movement missions at home underwrote the Pitch Black deployment, underlining how heavy-lift capacity has become a strategic asset in its own right. The IAF said the exercise had sharpened its crews' skills and strengthened interoperability with friendly air forces, and that lessons from the Australian ranges would feed back into training at home. The Indian contingent was expected to fly back in the days after the drill concluded.

NATIONAL

GRSE launches Navy's second next-gen patrol vessel Shruti

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026



Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers launched Shruti, the Indian Navy's second next-generation offshore patrol vessel, at its Kolkata yard on Tuesday, less than three months after floating out the first ship in the class. The 113-metre vessel displaces about 3,000 tonnes, can touch 23 knots and has a range of 8,500 nautical miles, the shipbuilder said. It was launched by Manika Sadhu, wife of Vice Admiral Sanjay Sadhu, the Navy's Controller of Warship Production and Acquisition, who said the ship had been built almost 85 per cent with indigenous content and could join the fleet in early 2027. Chairman and Managing Director Cmde P R Hari said GRSE was building nine warships and would deliver five of them, including the stealth guided-missile frigate Vindhyagiri and four anti-submarine warfare shallow-water craft, by the end of the financial year.

NATIONAL

Cabinet approves Rs 8,970-crore Guwahati-Tezpur highway in Assam

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026



The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs on Thursday approved an Rs 8,970-crore highway in Assam, clearing a four-lane access-controlled corridor that will cut travel time between Guwahati and Tezpur and improve connectivity across the state's north bank. The 135.87-km stretch, part of National Highway 15, will run from Baihata Chariali to Tezpur, excluding the Mangaldoi bypass, and will be built on a build-operate-transfer toll model, the government said. The project includes five major bypasses totalling about 59 km, meant to spare congested towns along the route. Officials said the corridor would also feature a 4.9-km emergency landing facility for aircraft near the Tezpur bypass, a dual-use provision of strategic value given the highway's proximity to the frontier with China. The road is expected to ease freight movement for tea, agriculture and the region's growing industrial clusters, and to shorten the drive to Tezpur, a gateway to Arunachal Pradesh.

NATIONAL

Cabinet clears Rs 84,084-crore 'Samudra Manthan' offshore exploration push

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026

The Union Cabinet has approved 'Samudra Manthan', a national offshore exploration scheme with an outlay of Rs 84,084 crore, in a bid to lift India's domestic output of oil and natural gas and reduce its heavy dependence on imported energy. The scheme, a central-sector initiative of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, will run through 2030-31, the government said. It is aimed at accelerating exploration and production in the country's offshore basins, where much of India's untapped hydrocarbon potential is believed to lie beneath the seabed off the western and eastern coasts. India imports more than 85 per cent of the crude oil it consumes, one of the largest drains on its foreign exchange, and successive governments have struggled to raise domestic production. Officials said Samudra Manthan would offer fiscal and procedural incentives to draw investment into deepwater and other high-cost offshore blocks that companies have long been reluctant to develop. The approval is one of a cluster of big-ticket energy schemes cleared this month.

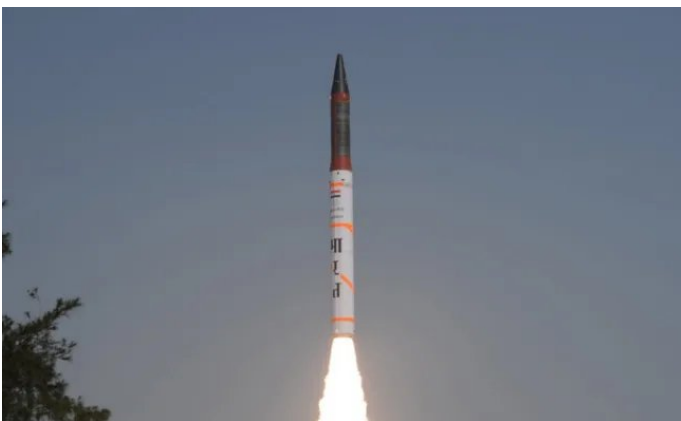


NATIONAL

Cabinet clears Rs 23,731-crore biogas scheme to turn farm waste into fuel

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026

The Union Cabinet on Thursday approved a Rs 23,731-crore national scheme to scale up compressed biogas production, a move the government said would convert farm residue, cattle dung and municipal waste into clean fuel and organic manure while trimming India's energy import bill. Chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Cabinet cleared the GOBARdhan scheme, formally the National Unified Scheme for Compressed Biogas, for the period 2026-27 to 2035-36. Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said it aimed to raise domestic output of the fuel nearly tenfold by tapping the country's abundant agricultural and animal waste. The scheme fixes an administered price of Rs 2,110 per million British thermal units for compressed biogas and will hold that pricing framework in place for at least a decade to give producers revenue certainty, officials said. Support will flow through assured procurement, capital subsidies and help in building pipelines that link biogas plants to city gas distribution networks, they added.



NATIONAL

India test-fires nuclear-capable Agni-4 missile off Odisha coast

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026

India successfully test-fired the nuclear-capable Agni-4 ballistic missile from a range off the Odisha coast on Thursday, in a launch the defence establishment described as validating the weapon's operational readiness. The missile was flight-tested from the Integrated Test Range at Chandipur under the aegis of the Strategic Forces Command, the wing responsible for India's nuclear arsenal. The Defence Research and Development Organisation said the test met all technical and operational parameters. Agni-4 is a two-stage, road-mobile, surface-to-surface missile with a range of up to 4,000 kilometres and the ability to carry a payload of about a tonne. It uses solid-fuel motors, a ring laser gyroscope-based inertial navigation system and digital controls, and is built for quick deployment from mobile launchers. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh called it a "textbook mission launch" and congratulated the DRDO and the Strategic Forces Command, saying the test reaffirmed India's resolve to defend the nation and to sustain a credible minimum deterrence.



NATIONAL

Himachal monsoon toll climbs to 157 as rain, landslides batter hill state

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026

The monsoon death toll in Himachal Pradesh has climbed to 157, the state government said, as relentless rain, landslides and flash floods continued to batter the hill state through the first half of August. Between June 30 and August 9, disaster management authorities recorded 157 deaths and 257 injuries, officials said. Of the dead, 89 were killed in rain-related road accidents and 68 in landslides, drowning, falls, electrocution and snake bites. Damage to homes, roads and public works has been estimated at about Rs 886 crore. Chamba was the worst hit with 24 deaths, followed by Kullu and Kangra with 21 each and Shimla with 20. Some 259 roads were closed to traffic, the largest number in Mandi, where about 120 stretches were blocked by debris and slips. The government acknowledged that climate change was making extreme rainfall more frequent across the Himalayas, even as experts said unchecked construction along slopes and riverbeds had deepened the region's vulnerability to such disasters.

MORE FROM THIS SECTION

NATIONAL

Delhi on high alert ahead of Independence Day

Police tightened security across the capital before the Prime Minister's Red Fort address, with facial-recognition cameras, anti-drone...

BUSINESS

Kashmir's apple harvest opens under the shadow of a single, unreliable road

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026



As early varieties begin moving out of Valley orchards, recurring disruptions on the Srinagar-Jammu National Highway have revived growers' fears for a crop worth close to Rs 12,000...

Kashmir's apple harvest has opened, and with it the Valley's yearly gamble on a single stretch of road. As growers begin plucking early varieties, the movement of fruit down the Srinagar-Jammu National Highway has again become the industry's most anxious question, with recurring disruptions on the artery threatening a crop that underpins the region's rural economy. Horticulture is the mainstay of Jammu and Kashmir's economy. The apple trade alone is valued at close to 12,000 crore rupees a year and supports lakhs of families, while the Valley accounts for roughly three-quarters of India's apple production. During the harvest an estimated 100 to 120 fruit-laden trucks leave Kashmir every day, bound for wholesale markets in Delhi, Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. The problem is that almost all of that produce travels on one road. NH-44 is prone to closures during the monsoon, when landslides, shooting stones and flash floods block traffic for hours or days at a stretch, and repair work and pilgrimage-related restrictions add to the delays. The alternative Mughal Road cannot take the 12- to 16-tyre trucks that carry commercial consignments, leaving the highway indispensable for perishable cargo. Early-season fruit is the most exposed. Short-shelf-life varieties such as Gala apples, along with pears and plums that ripen first, lose freshness and value with every day spent stranded on the road. Growers say even a delay of a day or two can shave a sizeable slice off the price their consignments fetch in distant mandis, where buyers discount fruit that arrives bruised or overripe. The stakes are large. Kashmir produces more than 20 lakh metric tonnes of apples a year, and the fruit is the single biggest source of cash for hundreds of thousands of households across Shopian, Pulwama, Anantnag, Baramulla, Kupwara and Sopore. Past seasons have shown how quickly gains can vanish: prolonged highway blockades in earlier years left consignments rotting and forced buyers to turn to growers in Himachal Pradesh and

to imported stock, costing the Valley's farmers hundreds of crores in a matter of weeks. The disruptions have spilled into politics. Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said on Friday that facilitating the movement of fruit trucks was a priority for his government, adding that fruit-laden vehicles from Kashmir and petroleum tankers from Jammu were being given precedence on the highway. He has taken up the state of the road with Union Road Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari. Opposition parties have kept up the pressure. Peoples Democratic Party leaders Mehbooba Mufti and Ittija Mufti have accused the administration of failing growers, arguing that repeated closures were pushing fruit farmers into deeper distress at the worst possible moment in their calendar. Traders' bodies have echoed the criticism, demanding that the government treat the marketing season as an emergency. Grower and trade associations want concrete arrangements rather than assurances. The Kashmir Trade Alliance and fruit growers' unions have pressed for dedicated time slots or a priority corridor for perishable cargo through the season, real-time updates on road conditions, and closer coordination between the traffic police and highway agencies so that trucks are not left idling for days. Bashir Ahmad Basheer, who heads the Kashmir Valley Fruit Growers-cum-Dealers' Union, has warned that authorities must keep the road open, arguing that every delay translates directly into losses for growers. There are alternatives, but they remain limited. A daily parcel-cargo train from Budgam to Adarsh Nagar in Delhi, launched last year, carries a share of the fruit and handicraft trade and reaches the capital in about 23 hours, yet its capacity is small against the flood of trucks that leave the Valley at the peak. For now, the bulk of Kashmir's apple economy still rides on NH-44, and growers say the coming weeks will decide whether the season ends in profit or loss.



BUSINESS

RBI holds repo rate at 5.25% for a fourth time as it awaits clarity on inflation

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026

The Reserve Bank of India kept its benchmark repo rate unchanged at 5.25 per cent on Tuesday, extending a pause that has now run through four straight policy reviews as the central bank waits for a clearer read on inflation. The decision by the six-member Monetary Policy Committee, chaired by Governor Sanjay Malhotra, was unanimous, and the panel retained its "neutral" stance. It was the RBI's first review since it last moved rates, a cut from 5.5 per cent to 5.25 per cent in December. The committee nudged up its growth forecast for the 2026-27 financial year to 6.7 per cent, from the 6.6 per cent projected in June, while pegging retail inflation for the year at about 5 per cent. Malhotra said the panel wanted greater clarity on the path and composition of inflation before acting further. Retail inflation had edged above the bank's 4 per cent medium-term target in June. The next review is scheduled for early October.



BUSINESS

Rs 12,665-crore in industrial proposals lined up for J&K, Parliament told

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026

Jammu and Kashmir's industrial pipeline drew attention in Parliament on Thursday, with the government telling the Rajya Sabha that investment proposals worth thousands of crores had been registered in the Union Territory under its central-sector incentive scheme. Responding to an issue raised by Jammu and Kashmir Bharatiya Janata Party chief and Rajya Sabha member Sat Sharma, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said 918 industrial units had registered under the New Central Sector Scheme, with proposed investment of about 12,665 crore rupees. Of those, 292 units had already gone into commercial production after grounding roughly 3,415 crore rupees, generating employment for close to 29,000 people, the minister said. Three foreign investment proposals worth about 500 crore rupees had also been received under the region's industrial policy. The figures come as the administration pushes to widen manufacturing beyond horticulture and handicrafts. Officials have said the incentive regime is intended to draw private capital into a territory long starved of large industry.

BUSINESS

Markets slip on Friday but hold on to a second straight weekly gain

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026



Indian equities ended a choppy week on a weak note on Friday, though the benchmarks still held on to a second straight week of gains. The BSE Sensex fell about 455 points, or 0.58 per cent, to close at 78,499.17, while the NSE Nifty 50 slipped 0.27 per cent to 24,570.65. Financial stocks led the retreat, with the Nifty Bank index down 0.55 per cent at 57,746, and firm crude oil prices and cautious global cues weighed on sentiment. Information technology shares bucked the trend, the Nifty IT index rising 1.42 per cent to 31,548 and cushioning the fall. Traders also pointed to lingering tension in West Asia as a drag on the mood. Despite Friday's dip, both indices finished the week roughly 1 per cent higher, extending their winning run to a second week as investors looked past a mixed earnings season.

BUSINESS

Services growth cools to a four-year low in July, survey shows

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026

India's dominant services sector grew at its slowest pace in more than four years in July, a survey showed, a sign that momentum in the economy's biggest engine is cooling even as it stays in expansion. The HSBC India Services Purchasing Managers' Index, compiled by S&P Global, fell to 53.3 in July from 57.4 in June. A reading above 50 still signals growth, but the print was the weakest since February 2022, as output and new orders rose at their softest rates in about 53 months. The survey was not all downbeat. Overseas demand stayed strong, with export business supported by buyers in the United Arab Emirates, Britain and the United States, and hiring picked up from June's six-month low. Input-cost inflation eased to a six-month low, letting firms raise their own charges at the fastest pace since April. The composite index, which combines services and manufacturing, stood at 54.3, still firmly in growth territory. Even so, business confidence about the year ahead slipped to a seven-month low as firms weighed softer domestic demand.

BUSINESS

Surging Amarnath yatra gives Valley tourism economy a lift

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026



A surging Amarnath pilgrimage is giving Kashmir's tourism economy a fresh lift, with the influx of devotees rippling through hotels, transport operators, guides and handicraft sellers across the Valley. By August 8, more than 4.76 lakh pilgrims had paid obeisance at the Himalayan cave shrine since the yatra began in early July, a turnout officials put at about 28 per cent higher than the same stage last year. The 2026 pilgrimage, which runs to late August, is being routed entirely through the Baltal base camp this season. Trade bodies say a sizeable share of pilgrims extend their stay to visit Srinagar, Gulmarg, Pahalgam and Sonamarg, spreading earnings to taxi and shikara operators and to artisans. Officials have described the strong footfall as a boost for a local economy still leaning on tourism for its recovery, and have framed a peaceful, well-attended yatra as a catalyst for the wider revival they have been chasing.



BUSINESS

GI tags reshape the fortunes of Kashmir's craft economy

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026

Jammu and Kashmir's push to turn its craft heritage into protected global brands drew fresh attention this week, as trade watchers highlighted how Geographical Indication tags are reshaping the fortunes of the region's artisans. The GI regime, which legally ties a product to its place of origin, now covers a long list of Kashmiri crafts, among them Pashmina, Sozni embroidery, the Kani shawl, papier-mache, Khatamband woodwork and walnut-wood carving. By the end of last year, official data showed 445 handicraft products and 27 product logos registered under the Act in the Union Territory. The branding drive has coincided with a sharp rise in exports. Shipments of Kashmiri handicrafts had roughly doubled after the pandemic, climbing to about 1,162 crore rupees in 2023-24 from 563 crore rupees two years earlier, with carpets, shawls and embroidered garments finding buyers in the Gulf and beyond. Industry members say GI protection helps guard against cheaper imitations and lets genuine Kashmiri work command a premium, though artisans still contend with thin margins and a long chain of middlemen.

MORE FROM THIS SECTION

BUSINESS

Kashmir tourism runs ahead of last year as summer footfall stays strong

Industry estimates put 2026 arrivals well above 2025, with hoteliers in the hill resorts reporting near-full occupancy through the season.

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TECHNOLOGY

'We cannot drink DATA': Google's \$15bn AI campus runs into a thirsty city

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026



Google's largest-ever India investment, a \$15 billion data-centre hub built with the Adani Group, faces street protests and court challenges in Visakhapatnam over the water and pow...

Google's plan to build a \$15 billion data-centre hub on the Andhra Pradesh coast, its largest single investment in India, is running into a fight it did not budget for: a city that says it cannot spare the water. The complex, being developed with Gautam Adani's group, is pitched by the state as an engine for up to 188,000 jobs and a marquee win for a region eager to sit at the centre of the artificial-intelligence build-out. But residents, environmental groups and, increasingly, the courts are asking who pays for the electricity and water that AI-grade computing consumes, Reuters reported. The arithmetic is what worries them. Visakhapatnam, a city of 2.5 million where taps already run on a rota, draws about 410 million litres of water a day from reservoirs and rivers against a daily requirement of 480 million, Reuters reported. Into that shortfall the government has invited one of the most water-hungry industries on earth. The site also sits close to the Kambalakonda Wildlife Sanctuary, about 860 metres away by campaigners' reckoning, home to leopards and pangolins. Three cases challenging the clearances have gone before India's environmental court, and the Andhra Pradesh High Court this week asked the state to answer allegations from Jal Biradari, or Water Community, that the campus will drain a nearby reservoir. The next hearing is set for Aug 24. The backlash has spilled onto the streets. In recent weeks activists and schoolchildren have marched through Visakhapatnam with banners reading "We cannot drink DATA," and painted handcuffs on the Google logo. "Development should not be at the cost of the livelihood of the people," Raja Rama Mohan Roy, founder of the group Green Visakha, told Reuters. "Who will be the sufferers? The people." Google says the campus will be built "in line with applicable laws" and will use "advanced air cooling to protect vital local water resources," casting itself

as "a quiet, unobtrusive neighbour." The state government, led by an ally of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, rejects the charge that it waved the project through without weighing the risks to water and wildlife. On the other side of the ledger are the jobs. The state has sold the campus as a generational opportunity, with promises of up to 188,000 direct and indirect roles and a supply chain of cooling, power and construction work around it. For engineering students across the south, a hyperscale facility on the doorstep offers internships and careers that until now usually meant moving to Bengaluru, Hyderabad or abroad. That promise is a large part of why the project keeps its political backing even as the water questions sharpen. The dispute is a preview of arguments India will keep having. Every chatbot and image generator that students and offices now lean on runs on server halls that have to be cooled, and the country is courting dozens of them as it bids to become a global AI hub. A single large campus can draw millions of litres a day for cooling, and India's water table is already stressed across large stretches of the plains, which is why each new proposal now arrives with a fight over resources attached. For the technology industry the Visakhapatnam standoff is a test of whether "AI infrastructure" can be sold to the public as jobs and prestige without a credible answer on water and power. Newer designs lean on closed-loop and air cooling precisely to cut consumption, and Google's pledge points that way. Campaigners want those commitments written into binding conditions rather than left in press statements they cannot enforce. For now the concrete is being poured. Trucks were working the Tarluwada site in early August even as the petitions moved through the courts, a reminder that in India's AI race the building tends to start before the arguments finish.

TECHNOLOGY

Redmi Note 17 5G lands in India with an 8,000mAh battery under Rs 20,000

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026



Xiaomi's budget arm brought the Redmi Note 17 5G to India, a phone built to put fast connectivity in students' hands without a flagship price. According to specifications compiled by Smartprix, it runs Qualcomm's Snapdragon 4 Gen 4 chip, pairs an FHD+ OLED screen at 120Hz with a 50-megapixel main camera, and carries a large 8,000mAh battery with 45-watt charging and IP65 splash resistance. Pricing is expected to land under Rs 20,000. The launch follows the phone's China debut earlier in the month and arrives alongside a near-identical Poco M8 Power that Smartprix says is a rebadge of the same hardware. For buyers in smaller towns, where 5G coverage is still filling in, the pull is a battery that lasts two days and a screen readable in sunlight, rather than a headline camera number.

TECHNOLOGY

Vivo's curved-screen S2 shows how far 'mid-range' has climbed

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026

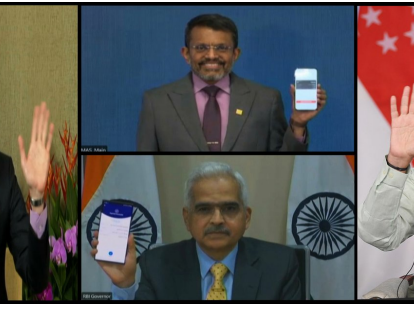


Vivo added a pricier option to a crowded launch day with the S2, a slim, curved-screen phone aimed at buyers who shop on looks and cameras. Pre-launch coverage in Deccan Herald and other outlets put the India debut at Aug 6, with a 6.59-inch 1.5K AMOLED display at 120Hz, a MediaTek Dimensity 7360 processor and a 7,000mAh battery paired with 80-watt fast charging, a lot of capacity for a handset in its class. The camera package is led by a 50-megapixel sensor. Expected pricing sits in the Rs 38,000-to-Rs 45,000 band, placing it well above the week's budget 5G launches and squarely in the mid-premium segment where Vivo, Oppo and OnePlus trade blows. It is a reminder of how quickly "mid-range" has crept upmarket in India, where the phones students save hardest for now cost as much as a used two-wheeler.

TECHNOLOGY

UPI clocks a fresh record of 23.66 billion transactions in a month

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026



India's homegrown payments rail set another record, processing 23.66 billion transactions in July worth Rs 29.88 lakh crore, the highest monthly volume yet, figures released this month by the National Payments Corporation of India show. Volume rose 4.1% over June and value 3.3%, Business Standard reported, with the network averaging 763 million transactions a day. What caught analysts' eye was the timing. July carried no big festival or quarter-end rush, so the jump reflected ordinary spending, the auto-rickshaw fares, chai stalls and kirana bills that now move on UPI as readily in a small town as in any metro. The month beat the previous high of 23.20 billion set in May. For the tens of millions of students and small traders who treat a phone as their bank branch, the figures are less a milestone than a description of daily life.



TECHNOLOGY

Startups bag \$252 million in a week as EV maker River lands the biggest cheque

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026

Indian startups pulled in about \$252 million across 23 rounds in the week to Aug 8, more than triple the previous week's \$79.8 million, according to a tally by Indian Startup News. The headline cheque went to River Mobility, the Bengaluru electric two-wheeler maker, which raised \$120 million in a Series C led by Elev8 Venture Partners and Claypond Capital, nearly half the week's total. Mobility and clean energy set the pace, with roughly \$135 million flowing to electric-vehicle and battery firms, while fintech drew about \$47.7 million across five deals. Artificial intelligence threaded through the smaller rounds: Pinegap raised \$8 million to automate equity research for fund managers, and Kily \$3.15 million for AI agents that run online storefronts. So far in 2026 Indian startups have raised about \$8.2 billion across 590 rounds, the tracker said, a sign that capital is flowing back into the sector after a lean couple of years. For students eyeing the job market, the mix matters as much as the money: this week's cheques point to hiring in EVs, batteries and applied AI rather than the discount-driven consumer apps of the last funding boom.

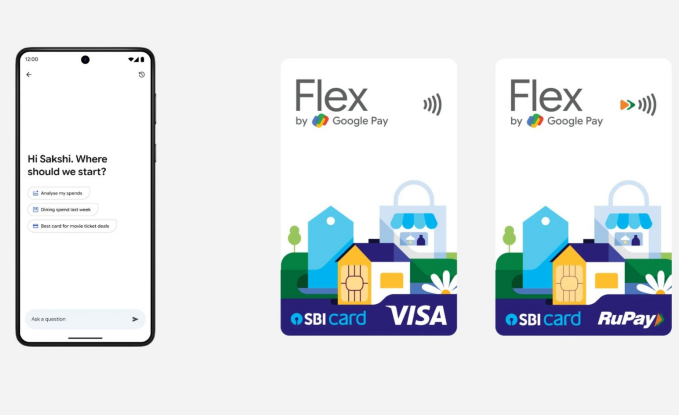


TECHNOLOGY

Supreme Court orders 13-point crackdown on 'digital arrest' and deepfake scams

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026

The Supreme Court has ordered a sweeping crackdown on "digital arrest" and deepfake frauds, issuing a 13-point set of directions that hands the CBI nationwide authority to investigate the scams and orders online platforms to take down synthetic content within three hours of a complaint. A bench led by Chief Justice Surya Kant, sitting with Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V. Mohana, also told the Reserve Bank of India to frame standard procedures for freezing "mule" bank accounts, tightened SIM-card verification through the telecom department, and backed nationwide use of e-Zero FIRs so victims can report from anywhere. The court was told that Indians have lost about Rs 52,976 crore to cyber fraud over six years, including Rs 22,495 crore in 2025 alone. "We have deepfakes now," Justice Bagchi observed, warning that the tools of enforcement have to be sharpened to keep pace with the tools of fraud. The rulings reach well beyond the metros: elderly and first-time smartphone users in small towns and hill districts, J&K's included, are among the softest targets for callers posing as police officers or federal agents demanding money to avoid a fake arrest.



TECHNOLOGY

Google's 24/7 AI agent, Gemini Spark, starts reaching Indian subscribers

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026

Google's always-on AI assistant, Gemini Spark, is reaching subscribers in India, extending an agent that keeps working after the phone is locked or the laptop is shut. Unveiled at the company's May developer conference and now rolling out to Google AI Pro and Ultra members, Spark is billed as a personal agent that handles multi-step chores rather than answering one question at a time. Running on the Gemini 3.6 Flash model through Google's cloud, it plugs into Gmail, Calendar, Drive, Docs, Sheets, YouTube and Maps. Google's examples include updating a travel itinerary when a booking is confirmed, finding local events and slotting them into free days, and auditing invoices to flag creeping subscription charges. The company says Spark asks permission before "high-stakes" actions such as spending money or sending an email on a user's behalf. For students and desk workers it is a working preview of the "agentic" software the big AI firms expect to define the next few years, in which an assistant carries out a task end to end instead of waiting for the next prompt, provided you are on the paid tier that unlocks it.

MORE FROM THIS SECTION

TECHNOLOGY

Weather-triggered insurance startup InRisk Labs raises \$27 million

InRisk Labs raised \$27 million to build 'parametric' cover that pays out automatically when a weather trigger is hit, a model aimed at...



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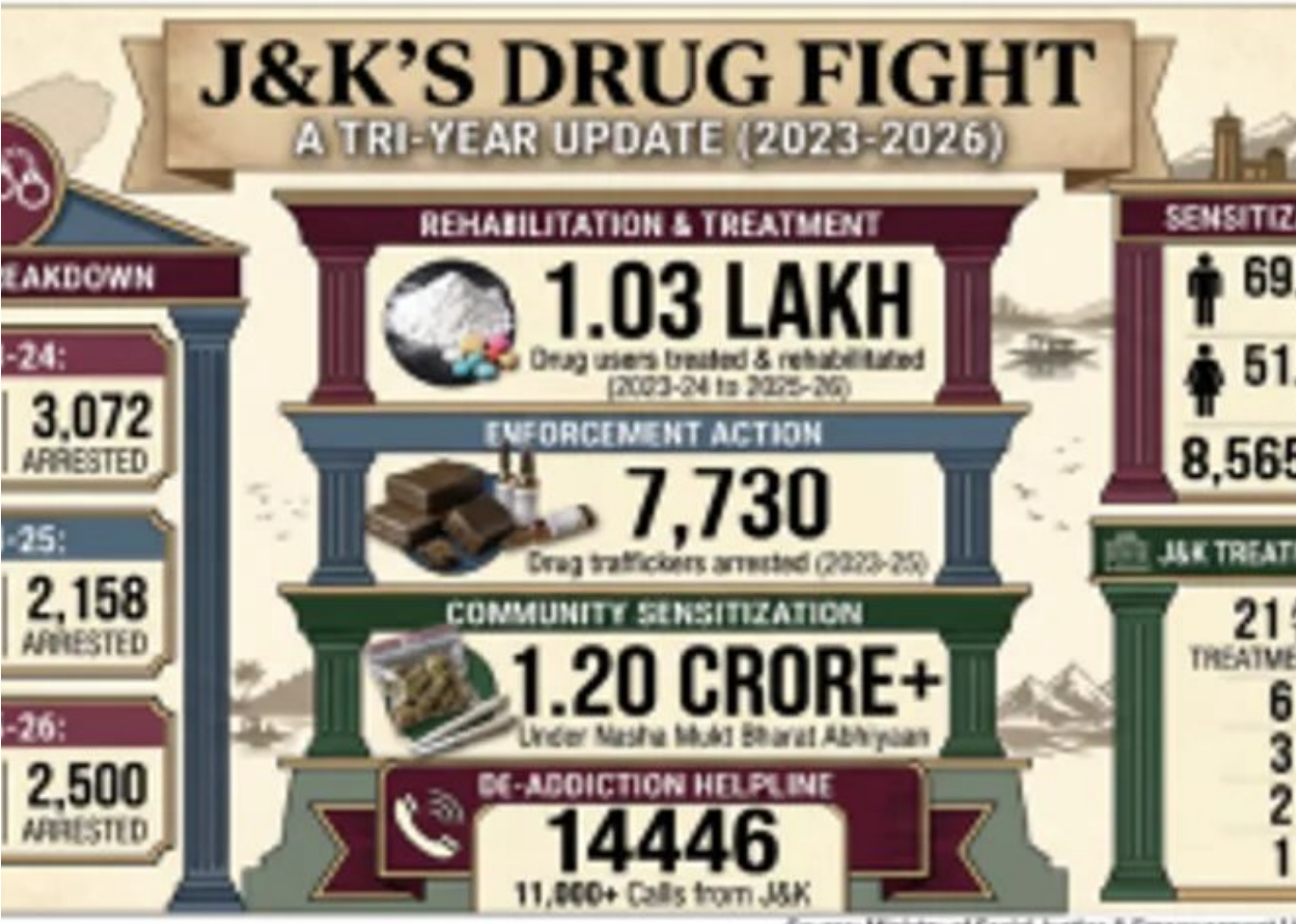


*Based on independent consumer survey conducted in March -April 26. For details, visit http://bit.ly/GATnC_

HEALTH

J&K's drug fight widens: 1.03 lakh users treated, 7,730 traffickers held in three years

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026



Jammu and Kashmir treated more than 1.03 lakh drug users and arrested 7,730 traffickers over the past three years, the government has told Parliament, figures that lay bare both th...

Jammu and Kashmir treated and rehabilitated more than 1.03 lakh drug users over the past three years even as enforcement agencies arrested 7,730 traffickers, the government has told Parliament, in figures that lay bare both the scale of the union territory's substance-abuse crisis and the widening machinery now ranged against it.In a written reply in the Lok Sabha, Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment B.L. Verma said 1,03,716 users had been treated and rehabilitated in the region between 2023-24 and 2025-26, while 31,136 awareness programmes were held and more than 1.20 crore people sensitised over the same period.The year-wise figures showed 35,639 users treated in 2023-24, 39,711 in 2024-25 and 28,366 in 2025-26. Trafficker arrests numbered 3,072, 2,158 and 2,500 across the three years, while awareness programmes ran to 18,939, 5,851 and 6,346 respectively."The anti-drug strategy in J&K is being pursued on multiple fronts, combining enforcement against trafficking with demand-reduction measures, awareness generation, counselling, treatment and rehabilitation," the minister said.The disclosure comes against the backdrop of a problem doctors in the Valley have flagged for years. The government's own benchmark, the 2018 National Survey on the extent and pattern of substance use conducted through the National Drug Dependence Treatment Centre at AIIMS, estimated 5.4 lakh opioid users in Jammu and Kashmir, a prevalence of 4.91 per cent among those aged 10 to 75. The same survey put the number of alcohol users at 3.9 lakh, cannabis users at 1.4 lakh, sedative users at 1.7 lakh and inhalant users at 1.35 lakh.Treatment and rehabilitation in the union territory are anchored by a network funded under the National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction: one Integrated Rehabilitation Centre for Addicts, three Outreach and Drop-In Centres, two community-based peer-led intervention programmes, six District De-Addiction Centres and 21 Addiction Treatment Facilities attached to government hospitals. The Centre's 14446 de-addiction helpline has logged more than 11,000 calls from

Jammu and Kashmir alone.Public health specialists say the numbers, stark as they are, capture only those who reach a centre. De-addiction outpatient departments at Srinagar's tertiary hospitals have for years reported heavy caseloads, with clinicians warning of a shift towards injectable heroin among the young that carries added risks of overdose and blood-borne infection. The border belt of the Jammu region, including Poonch and Rajouri, has not been spared, with security agencies linking part of the supply to cross-border smuggling routes.The rising treatment figures cut two ways. Officials read them as proof that more users are being reached and are willing to seek help, a shift they attribute to sustained awareness work and a widening network of centres. Clinicians, however, caution that the same numbers reflect a demand that has not eased, and that the true burden is larger still, since many users, deterred by stigma or distance, never present at a facility at all.Doctors stress that awareness drives and enforcement must be matched by long-term rehabilitation, counselling and jobs if users are to stay clean, describing addiction as a treatable medical condition rather than a moral failing. They caution that a treated patient sent home without follow-up support and a livelihood often relapses, and that families remain the first and most important point of intervention. Capacity for structured, residential rehabilitation, as opposed to short detoxification, remains thin across the union territory, they add, and is thinnest in the very hill districts where the problem is spreading.Successive governments have leaned on the Nasha Mukti Bharat Abhiyaan, launched nationally in 2020 and extended to all districts in 2023, to carry the prevention message into schools, colleges and university campuses. Officials say the effort is now being reinforced with a corps of community volunteers, known as Nasha Mukti Mitrs, drawn from the neighbourhoods most at risk, who are meant to spot early warning signs, steer families towards counselling and follow up with those returning from treatment.



HEALTH

Cheap, colourful and untraceable: suspicious snacks flood rural Kashmir

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026

Unbranded snacks, brightly coloured flavoured water, loose candies and chips packed in flimsy plastic pouches are flooding rural markets across Kashmir, most of them carrying little or no information about who made them, where or what they contain.The products are cheapest where oversight is thinnest, sold from wayside shops and outside school gates, and they are especially popular with children. Food safety experts warn that non-food-grade packaging risks contamination in the warm months, when poor wrapping exposes contents to moisture and dust, while the absence of an ingredient list means buyers get no warning of allergens."These products carry little or no information about who manufactured them, where they were made and what ingredients they contain," a food safety official said, adding that consumers cannot verify origin or shelf life.Assistant Commissioner Food Safety, Srinagar, Yameen ul Nabi said market surveillance was ongoing, with several cases detected and legal action taken. Selling packaged food without mandatory labelling attracts regulatory action under food safety laws, he said, urging people to avoid buying unlabelled packaged foods, especially those meant for children.



HEALTH

Drug treatments in J&K hit five-year high of 46,491, Rajya Sabha told

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026

The number of people treated for drug addiction at centres supported by the Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment in Jammu and Kashmir rose to 46,491 in 2025-26, the highest annual figure recorded in the last five years, according to data tabled in the Rajya Sabha.The number marks a sharp rise from 5,382 in 2021-22, with 27,843 people treated in 2022-23, 40,546 in 2023-24 and 36,588 in 2024-25. The data were provided in reply to a question on the prevalence of substance abuse and the strength of treatment and rehabilitation services in the union territory.Jammu recorded the highest number of treatments in 2025-26 at 9,960, followed by Srinagar with 6,204, Bandipora 5,769, Kulgam 5,765 and Rajouri 5,561. Kupwara accounted for 4,530, Pulwama 3,433 and Budgam 2,693, the figures showed, underlining that the crisis now spans both the Valley and the Jammu and Pir Panjal belts rather than any single pocket.The government said the network in J&K comprises one Integrated Rehabilitation Centre for Addicts, three Outreach and Drop-In Centres, two peer-led intervention programmes, six District De-Addiction Centres and 21 Addiction Treatment Facilities, all supported under the National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction.

HEALTH

Delhi logs 1,379 dengue cases this monsoon as vector-borne season peaks

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026



Delhi has recorded 1,379 dengue cases so far this monsoon, with no deaths reported, according to civic figures released this week as the capital braced for the seasonal surge in mosquito-borne illness.Around 200 of the cases were patients from outside Delhi who were treated in the city's hospitals, the data showed. Health officials said the count was likely to climb through August and September, when standing rainwater offers ideal breeding conditions for the Aedes aegypti mosquito that spreads the virus.The figures are a marker for the wider north, including Jammu and Kashmir, where the vector-borne season typically peaks as the rains recede. Doctors again urged people to clear stagnant water from coolers, pots, tyres and construction sites, to use repellents and nets, and to avoid self-medication, warning that painkillers such as aspirin and ibuprofen can worsen bleeding risk in dengue patients and that a fever lasting more than two days warrants testing.

HEALTH

Police, de-addiction centres take drug-free message into Kashmir schools

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026

Police units and government de-addiction centres across Kashmir have stepped up awareness programmes in schools and colleges this week, part of a sustained drive to steer young people away from a drug problem that health workers say has crept deeper into the region's towns and villages.At one such programme, the Drug De-Addiction Centre in Baramulla held a session at Higher Secondary School, Authora, sensitising students and teachers to the physical, psychological and social consequences of substance abuse and the importance of seeking help early. Organisers stressed prevention, early intervention and counselling, and the central role that families, schools and the wider community play in keeping children off drugs.The programmes are the visible edge of a much larger effort under the Nasha Mukti Bharat Abhiyaan, which has focused its outreach on schools, higher-secondary institutions and university campuses. Officials say the aim is not only to warn students but to make it easier for those already using, or their families, to reach counselling and treatment without stigma.

HEALTH

J&K's food safety net widens as PDS rolls reach 68.5 lakh

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026



The number of people covered by Jammu and Kashmir's public distribution system has risen to 68.5 lakh, the government has said, widening the food safety net that reaches poorer households across the union territory.The subsidised ration network, run under the National Food Security Act, 2013, supplies foodgrain at heavily discounted rates and forms the backbone of food security for low-income families, a foundation on which child and maternal nutrition programmes are built. Nutritionists say a reliable grain supply matters most for the young and for pregnant and nursing women, groups also served by the anganwadi and supplementary-nutrition schemes that sit alongside the PDS.Expanding the beneficiary rolls, officials say, is intended to ensure that eligible families in far-flung and hill districts are not left out of a scheme that remains, for many, the difference between an adequate diet and going without.



HEALTH

Over 900 doctors appointed in J&K, 400 more in the pipeline

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026

More than 900 doctors have been appointed in Jammu and Kashmir and the recruitment of a further 400 is under way, the government has said, in a push to ease the chronic shortage of medical staff that has long strained hospitals in far-flung and rural districts.Officials described the drive as part of a broader effort to strengthen public health services across the union territory, including the expansion of diagnostic and treatment facilities such as CT scans and dialysis at district and sub-district hospitals so that patients need not travel to the tertiary centres in Jammu and Srinagar for routine care.Staffing shortfalls have been among the most persistent complaints in J&K's health sector, with specialist posts especially hard to fill in mountainous belts such as Poonch, Rajouri, Kishtwar and Kupwara, where a single vacancy can leave a whole catchment without a doctor. Health administrators say fresh appointments, together with new equipment, are intended to bring more of that care closer to where people live rather than concentrating it in the two big cities.

MORE FROM THIS SECTION

HEALTH

Delhi's monsoon swine flu tally climbs to 1,349, no deaths

Delhi has logged 1,349 swine flu cases this monsoon without a single fatality, civic data show, as respiratory infections track the...

INTERNATIONAL

Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Pakistan sign Mecca defence pact, and New Delhi is watching

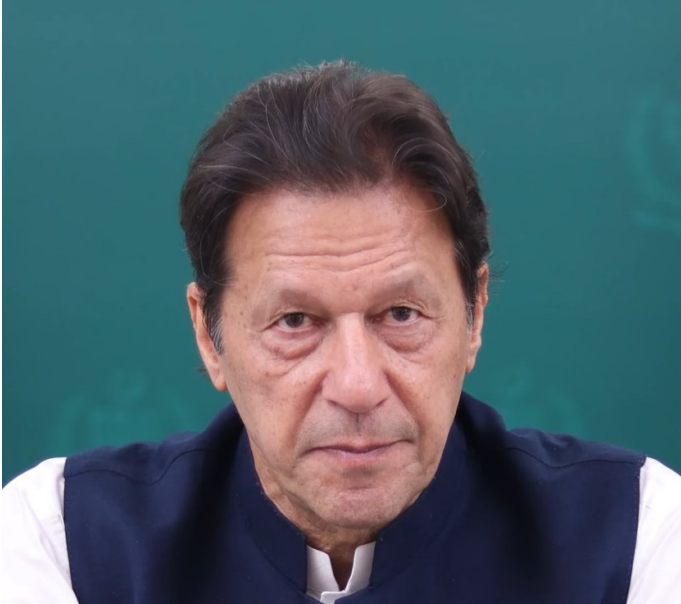
BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026



Three of the Muslim world's heaviest military and economic powers agreed in Mecca to treat an attack on one as an attack on all, a realignment with direct bearing on India's securi...

Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Pakistan signed a trilateral mutual-defence pact in Mecca on Thursday, binding three of the Muslim world's heaviest military and economic powers to treat an attack on any one of them as an attack on all. It is a realignment New Delhi will watch closely for its bearing on the region's security balance.The Mecca Joint Defence Agreement was signed by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in Islam's holiest city, a setting that lent the accord heavy symbolic weight. Pakistan's army chief Asim Munir was among the officials present at the ceremony, which capped nearly a year of negotiations.'An attack on any member would be regarded as an attack on all,' Pakistan's foreign ministry said, describing the pact as intended to strengthen collective deterrence. Erdogan said the arrangement was "based on collective deterrence," while Sharif called it a "historic endeavour." A Saudi deputy minister, Rayed Krimly, sought to temper alarm abroad, insisting the deal was "not linked to nuclear ambitions or an arms race."The agreement extends to Turkey a bilateral Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement that Riyadh and Islamabad signed in September 2025. It sets up a ministers' committee, separate political and military committees and a permanent secretariat expected to be based in Saudi Arabia, giving the pact institutional machinery rather than leaving it a paper declaration.The three signatories bring complementary strengths. Turkey fields NATO's second-largest military. Saudi Arabia is the world's top oil exporter. Pakistan is the only Muslim-majority state with nuclear weapons. Together, analysts say, they are testing whether a bloc anchored on shared faith and hard power can create a new regional order at a moment when older security guarantees look shaky.Timing explains much of the urgency. The pact was sealed against the backdrop of the 2026 Iran war, which began in February and

has dragged on for six months, and of renewed fighting in Yemen between the Houthis and the internationally recognised government backed by Riyadh. With the Strait of Hormuz repeatedly closed and Gulf shipping under threat, the three capitals have moved to hedge against an unpredictable Washington and a volatile neighbourhood.For India, the most sensitive element is Pakistan. A formal commitment that could draw Saudi Arabia and Turkey into a conflict involving Islamabad complicates New Delhi's long effort to keep the Gulf monarchies, and their energy and remittance ties, insulated from the India-Pakistan rivalry. When Riyadh and Islamabad concluded their bilateral pact last year, Indian officials said they would factor the development into national-security planning while safeguarding the country's interests.Indian diplomats have invested years in courting the Gulf, and Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates remain among India's largest trade and investment partners and home to millions of Indian workers. Officials in New Delhi have publicly played down any suggestion that the new architecture is aimed at India, but strategists note that any collective-defence clause involving Pakistan narrows India's room for manoeuvre in a future crisis.Iran, watching a Sunni-led bloc form on its flank, reacted warily, with a lawmaker questioning its intent. Western capitals were similarly cautious, mindful that two of the three members host or field advanced weaponry and that the pact could harden fault lines across West Asia.Whether the Mecca agreement hardens into a genuine alliance or remains a signalling exercise will depend on how its committees function and whether the members are willing to act on the mutual-defence clause. For readers in the Pir Panjal, long attuned to shifts across the Line of Control, it is a reminder that Pakistan's external alignments are again in motion, and that the diplomatic weather over the Gulf rarely stays offshore.



INTERNATIONAL

Imran Khan marks three years in jail as PTI rallies across Pakistan

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026

Former Pakistani prime minister Imran Khan marked three years in detention this week, with his family, his party and international rights groups condemning his solitary confinement and demanding the restoration of his constitutional rights.Thousands of members and supporters of Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf held demonstrations across the country to press for his immediate release. The cricketer-turned-politician, ousted in 2022, has been jailed since August 2023 and is serving a 14-year sentence handed down in a corruption case. His wife, Bushra Bibi, was given seven years in the same case.Amnesty International and PTI leaders said Khan had been held in prolonged isolation at Adiala jail, calling the conditions arbitrary and a violation of his rights. The government has rejected accusations of mistreatment and maintains that his convictions followed due legal process.Khan remains Pakistan's most popular opposition figure, and his detention continues to shadow the coalition government led by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, keeping the country's long-running political crisis unresolved three years on.



INTERNATIONAL

US-Iran war enters sixth month as Hormuz talks inch on in Oman

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026

The US-Iran war entered its sixth month this week, with a ceasefire in tatters and negotiations narrowing to the single question of reopening the Strait of Hormuz, the waterway through which much of the world's seaborne oil passes.An initial ceasefire agreed in April, mediated by Pakistan, collapsed by mid-year, and Washington reimposed a naval blockade of Iran. President Donald Trump said the United States was now "low-keying" negotiations with Tehran and, on Aug. 5, predicted Hormuz would reopen "soon." By Aug. 10 he was insisting the United States would require compensation from Iran as a condition for further talks.Iran's foreign ministry spokesman, Esmail Baghaei, said Tehran was focused only on talks with Oman about the strait. Adding to the volatility, Houthi forces claimed an attack on a Saudi oil tanker on Aug. 5, a reminder of how easily Gulf shipping can be dragged into the conflict.The stakes reach South Asia directly: any prolonged closure of Hormuz threatens the crude imports and remittance flows on which India and its Gulf-based workforce depend.

INTERNATIONAL

Typhoon Dolphin floods central China and parts of Beijing

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026



Typhoon Dolphin churned inland to the central Chinese province of Hubei on Tuesday, flooding streets, closing tourist areas and halting construction, before its rains reached parts of Beijing by evening.Authorities in the capital activated a Level II flood-control emergency response, the second-highest in the system, as forecasters warned heavy rain would intensify overnight into Wednesday. The Shunyi district, northeast of the main financial area, was among the worst hit; the neighbourhood of Houshayu recorded 88.5 millimetres of rain in a single hour.Officials said they had pre-positioned drainage pumps and flood barriers and relocated people from areas prone to flooding and landslides. Construction and mountain and water-based tourism were suspended, while flexible working hours and staggered commuting were encouraged. Schools, outdoor events and public transport faced possible suspension depending on conditions.The flooding is the latest in a run of destructive summer storms across China, where warming-driven extreme rainfall has repeatedly overwhelmed cities and killed dozens in recent years.

INTERNATIONAL

Gaza truce frays as Israel strikes even after disarmament breakthrough

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026



The fragile ceasefire in Gaza frayed further in early August, with fresh Israeli attacks reported across the territory even as a US-brokered plan to disarm Palestinian armed groups advanced.President Donald Trump announced on July 31 that his "Board of Peace" had reached an agreement to disarm Hamas and other factions in Gaza. The Al-Quds Brigades, the armed wing of Islamic Jihad, consented to the disarmament plan on Aug. 2, a notable step in a process that has repeatedly stalled.Yet Palestinian sources said the Israeli military carried out renewed ceasefire violations across the Strip in the same week, including artillery fire on southern areas of Khan Younis and demolitions. Since the truce took effect on Oct. 10, 2025, monitors have logged thousands of violations and hundreds of deaths.The persistence of the fighting, more than nine months into a nominal ceasefire, underscores how far Gaza remains from a durable peace despite the diplomatic choreography around it.

INTERNATIONAL

Nagasaki marks 81 years since the atomic bomb with a plea against deterrence

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026



Nagasaki marked the 81st anniversary of its atomic bombing on Sunday with a peace ceremony that drew survivors, bereaved families and representatives from 98 countries to the city's Peace Park.The ceremony began at 10:45 a.m., and at 11:02 a.m., the moment the bomb detonated over the city on Aug. 9, 1945, participants observed a minute of silence. More than 73,000 people are estimated to have died by the end of that year; the register of victims now holds 204,708 names, including 2,773 added over the past 12 months.Mayor Shiro Suzuki declared nuclear weapons an "absolute evil" and warned that reliance on nuclear deterrence only increases the risk of catastrophe. He urged the Japanese government to uphold its Three Non-Nuclear Principles of not possessing, producing or permitting nuclear arms.The appeal came as debate over deterrence has sharpened worldwide, with conflicts from Ukraine to West Asia reviving talk of nuclear arsenals.



INTERNATIONAL

India-Taliban ties deepen as Kabul warns Islamabad to 'stop playing games'

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026

India's diplomatic engagement with Taliban-administered Afghanistan is deepening, even as Kabul's relationship with Islamabad has fallen to its lowest point in years amid repeated Pakistani airstrikes and border clashes.Afghan Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi has kept up a stern line toward Pakistan, urging Islamabad to "stop playing games" and warning that no group would be allowed to use Afghan soil against any neighbour, including India. His pointed remarks have underscored a realignment that has gathered pace since early 2025.New Delhi has upgraded the Technical Mission it opened in Kabul in 2022 to a full Embassy of India, and has welcomed visits by the Afghan foreign, commerce and health ministers. The two sides have agreed to institutionalise a Joint Chamber of Commerce and to open an air-freight corridor linking Kabul with Delhi and Amritsar.Bilateral trade reached about \$1 billion in 2025, still short of the roughly \$1.5 billion recorded in 2019-20, as India broadens cooperation into healthcare, agriculture and infrastructure alongside humanitarian aid.

MORE FROM THIS SECTION

INTERNATIONAL

Yunus says July Memorial Museum opens 'a new chapter' for Bangladesh

The former interim leader marked the anniversary of the uprising that toppled Sheikh Hasina.

SPORTS

India cruise past Sri Lanka XI in Colombo warm-up before Galle Test

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026



India beat a Sri Lanka Cricket XI by six wickets in a three-day tour game at Colombo, Yashasvi Jaiswal and Devdutt Padikkal leading the runs, to head into the two-Test series opene...

India warmed up for their two-Test tour of Sri Lanka in emphatic fashion, beating a Sri Lanka Cricket XI by six wickets in a three-day tour game in Colombo, a result that sent the tourists into the series opener at Galle on a settled and confident note.Set 207 to win in the fourth innings, India knocked the runs off with room to spare, finishing on 214 for four. Opener Yashasvi Jaiswal set the tempo with a fluent 61 from 46 balls before retiring once he had reached his half-century, sharing an opening stand of 105 with captain Shubman Gill that took the sting out of the chase inside the first hour.Gill, who had taken a knock to his hand in the build-up, chose to bat through the discomfort and made 44, using the middle to sharpen his rhythm before the red-ball assignment proper. Rishabh Pant added 28 and Dhruv Jurel 17, but the flourish belonged to Mohammed Siraj, who walked in and smashed 32 not out from just 15 deliveries, including three sixes in succession, to hurry India to the target.The batting highlight of the match, though, had come earlier. In India's first innings, left-hander Devdutt Padikkal made an unbeaten 142, a long and controlled century that pressed his case for a top-order berth and gave the middle order valuable time in the middle on a surface offering turn.The Sri Lanka Cricket XI, fielding a mix of established and fringe players, declared their second innings at 200 for six to set up the run chase, with Nishan Madushka top-scoring on 63 and Nipun Dhananjaya making 46. India's bowlers used the outing to find their lengths, Ravindra Jadeja and Gurnoor Brar picking up two wickets apiece while Siraj and Prasidh Krishna claimed one each.For Jadeja, back in the fold, the workout was as much

about overs in the legs as wickets, and the left-arm spinner's control alongside the seamers pointed to the balance India are likely to seek on the spin-friendly pitches of the island.The tour game was the only red-ball hit-out before the first Test, which begins at Galle on August 15, with the second to follow in Colombo. India travel as one of the form sides of the world game and, under Gill's captaincy, are managing a transition in the batting order while leaning on a bowling group that mixes pace and spin.Team management was understood to be satisfied with the run-out, pointing to Jaiswal's touch at the top, Padikkal's hundred and the rhythm found by the frontline bowlers as the boxes they had wanted ticked. The presence of both Pant and Jurel behind the stumps also gave the side flexibility in its wicketkeeping and lower-order batting.For cricket followers across Jammu and Kashmir, the tour has added resonance in a summer when the game is thriving closer to home. The grassroots Chinara Premier League has drawn hundreds of young players in the Valley, and J&K's own senior side, the reigning Ranji Trophy champions, are deep in pre-season preparation, a backdrop that has sharpened local interest in how the national team fares abroad.Sri Lanka, rebuilding at home, will fancy their chances of exploiting conditions that traditionally aid their spinners, making the Galle Test a stern early examination of India's touring credentials. But on the evidence of the Colombo warm-up, a brisk chase, a big first-innings hundred and wickets shared around, the visitors have given themselves the best possible launch pad for the series.



SPORTS

Khalin Joshi runs away with J&K Open at Srinagar's Royal Springs

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026

Bengaluru professional Khalin Joshi produced a commanding wire-to-wire display to win the fifth J&K Open at the picturesque Royal Springs Golf Course in Srinagar, closing out the DP World PGTI event by a crushing nine-shot margin.Joshi signed off with rounds of 63, 66, 65 and 66 for a 24-under total of 260, never letting the chasing pack close in on the final day. Delhi's Rashid Khan, a two-time Asian Tour winner, finished a distant runner-up on 15-under 269, while Panipat's Shubham Jaglan took third at 14-under 270 for his best result of the season.The title, worth P15 lakh from a record P1 crore purse, was Joshi's second DP World PGTI victory of 2026 and the eighth professional win of his career. "I was definitely nervous at the start, especially after missing the first fairway," he said, adding that he settled by the third hole.Joshi also talked up Srinagar's potential as a golf-tourism destination, praising the pristine condition of the Royal Springs layout and its views, and suggesting the Union Territory could in time host international events.



SPORTS

Baramulla, Srinagar lift UT-level Subroto Cup football titles

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026

District Baramulla and District Srinagar were crowned champions at the inter-district Union Territory-level football championship played under the 65th Subroto Mukherjee Cup, which concluded at the Rugby Field, Polo Ground, in Srinagar.Baramulla claimed the boys' honours across the Under-15 and Under-17 categories, while Srinagar took the girls' titles, capping a competition organised by the Directorate of Youth Services and Sports, Jammu and Kashmir, under the Nasha Mukta J&K Abhiyan. More than 100 young footballers from districts across the region took part.Director General of Youth Services and Sports Anuradha Gupta, who attended the event, said engaging students in football went "beyond trophies" and was essential for personality development, adding that sport helped shield young people from excessive screen time. District Youth Services and Sports Officer Srinagar Ghulam Hassan Lone distributed the trophies to the winning sides.The winning districts now represent J&K at the national Subroto Cup, one of the oldest and most prestigious school football tournaments in the country, giving the Valley's age-group players a platform on the wider stage.

SPORTS

Galle Gallants win maiden Lanka Premier League title

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026



Galle Gallants captured their maiden Lanka Premier League title, beating Jaffna Kings by five wickets in the 2026 final at the R. Premadasa Stadium in Colombo.Jaffna, chasing more silverware, were held to 123, with the Gallants' bowlers Charith Asalanka and Eshan Malinga sharing six wickets between them, Asalanka taking three for 20 and Malinga three for 25 to strangle the innings. Galle knocked off the runs to finish on 126 for five with 25 balls to spare, skipper Dasun Shanaka seeing it home on 20 not out.The victory handed the Gallants a first LPL crown at the end of a campaign in which they had been among the most consistent sides, and denied the Kings, one of the tournament's most successful franchises, another piece of silverware. The final drew a strong crowd to the Premadasa on a night that closed out this year's edition of Sri Lanka's franchise Twenty20 competition.

SPORTS

Durand Cup group stage rolls on with big wins for Bagan, SC Delhi

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026



The 135th edition of the Durand Cup, Asia's oldest football tournament, rolled through a busy week of group-stage fixtures, with several sides strengthening their bids for the knockout rounds.Mohun Bagan Super Giant produced the most emphatic result, thrashing CISF Protectors 6-0 in Kolkata, while SC Delhi ran riot with a 7-1 win over an Indian Air Force side in Jamshedpur. In the north-east, NorthEast United beat Karbi Anglong Morning Star 4-1 in Guwahati, and TRAU edged the Indian Navy 2-1 in Imphal.The tournament, which features 24 teams across six groups, runs from late July through to the final at Kolkata's Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan on August 23. The competition again spread its fixtures across venues in Kolkata, Guwahati, Imphal, Shillong and Jamshedpur, taking top-flight football to centres beyond the traditional metropolitan hubs.

SPORTS

Chinara Premier League opens in Baramulla with 1,600 young cricketers

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026



One of the largest grassroots cricket tournaments the Kashmir Valley has seen got under way in Baramulla, with the Chinara Premier League 2026 formally opening at the General Bipin Rawat Stadium.Organised jointly by the Baramulla Cricket Forum and the Indian Army's Chinara Corps, the IPL-style Twenty20 league has drawn some 1,600 young cricketers across 72 teams representing the Kashmir, Jammu and Ladakh divisions. Matches are being staged at the Gen Bipin Rawat Stadium and the Showkat Ali College Ground in Khawjabagh.Organisers described the league as one of the biggest grassroots T20 platforms in the region, aimed at identifying talent from remote areas and giving emerging players a competitive stage and a pathway into higher levels of the game. The tournament has been pitched as much as a community-building exercise as a sporting one, drawing large local crowds to Baramulla.



SPORTS

Udhampur's IPL find Brijesh Sharma links up with Ranji champions J&K

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026

Fast bowler Brijesh Sharma, one of the breakout names of the past Indian Premier League season, has linked up with Ranji Trophy champions Jammu and Kashmir ahead of the 2026-27 domestic campaign.Brijesh, who hails from Mada town in Udhampur district, returns to represent his home region after moving to Delhi as a youngster to train under former Ranji pacer Deepak Punia. He made his IPL debut for Rajasthan Royals in 2026, taking 14 wickets in 13 matches despite having no senior domestic experience, having earned his contract on the back of 11 wickets in seven games in the Bengal Pro T20 League."Brijesh Sharma has linked up with the Jammu and Kashmir team for the Ranji Trophy. He's with the team for the preparation camp and has been progressing well," a J&K Cricket Association source said.The pacer was named in J&K's squad for practice matches against Uttarakhand from August 10 to 17 at the SK Stadium in Srinagar, with both sides reporting to the city on August 8. He is set to make his first-class debut for the Ranji champions this season.

MORE FROM THIS SECTION

SPORTS

Budgam tenni-koit championship draws village players to Beerwah

The District Budgam Tenni-Koit Championship 2026 began at the Beerwah Sports Ground, drawing boys and girls from villages across the...

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
PWD (R&B) SUB DIVISION MENDHAR, POONCH Ref: PWD/R&B/PNC/2026-27/EMG-163 Emergency restoration of flood-damaged Mandi-Loran link road including protection works and cross-drainage PWD (R&B) Sub Division Mendhar, Poonch invites e-tenders on percentage/item-rate basis from eligible registered contractors/firms for emergency restoration of flood-damaged Mandi-Loran link road including protection work... Type: Works Last date: 20 Aug 2026 Est. cost: ₹ 1.65 crore EMD: ₹ 3.30 lakh Location: Mandi, Poonch Contact: Executive Engineer, PWD (R&B) Division Poonch · Refer NIT PDF	JAL SHAKTI (PHE) DIVISION RAJOURI Ref: PHE/RJI/2026-27/WSS-088 Restoration of flood-damaged water supply schemes and tube wells in Kotranka-Budhal belt Jal Shakti (PHE) Division Rajouri invites e-tenders on percentage/item-rate basis from eligible registered contractors/firms for restoration of flood-damaged water supply schemes and tube wells in Kotranka-Budhal belt at... Type: Works Last date: 19 Aug 2026 Est. cost: ₹ 1.42 crore EMD: ₹ 2.84 lakh Location: Budhal, Rajouri Contact: Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti (PHE) Division Rajouri · Refer NIT PDF	MUNICIPAL COMMITTEE POONCH Ref: MC/PNC/2026-27/CW-19 Reconstruction of flood-damaged drains, lanes and retaining structures in Poonch town wards Municipal Committee Poonch invites e-tenders on percentage/item-rate basis from eligible registered contractors/firms for reconstruction of flood-damaged drains, lanes and retaining structures in Poonch town wards at Poo... Type: Works Last date: 14 Aug 2026 Est. cost: ₹ 74.00 lakh EMD: ₹ 1.48 lakh Location: Poonch town Contact: Executive Officer, Municipal Committee Poonch · Refer NIT PDF
HEALTH & MEDICAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT (GMC RAJOURI) Ref: GMC/RJI/PROC/2026-27/EQP-41 Supply and installation of medical and diagnostic equipment for Government Medical College Rajouri Health & Medical Education Department (GMC Rajouri) invites e-tenders from eligible registered firms for supply and installation of medical and diagnostic equipment for Government Medical College Rajouri at Rajouri. The... Type: Supply Last date: 22 Aug 2026 Est. cost: ₹ 2.10 crore EMD: ₹ 4.20 lakh Location: Rajouri Contact: Principal / Dean, GMC Rajouri · jktenders.gov.in	J&K SERVICES SELECTION BOARD (JKSSB) Ref: JKSSB Advt. Notification No. 08 of 2026 dated 21-07-2026 Recruitment to 145 posts of Junior Assistant / Panchayat Accounts Assistant across divisions (Advt. No. 08 of 2026) J&K Services Selection Board (JKSSB) invites online applications from eligible candidates for recruitment to 145 posts of junior assistant / panchayat accounts assistant across divisions (advt. notification no. 08 of 202... Type: Recruitment Last date: 15 Sep 2026 Est. cost: N/A Location: Jammu & Kashmir (UT) Contact: Secretary, J&K Services Selection Board · jkssb.nic.in	AGRICULTURE PRODUCTION & FARMERS WELFARE DEPARTMENT, JAMMU Ref: APD/JMU/2026-27/SUP-27 Supply of certified seeds, bio-fertilisers and farm implements for rabi 2026-27 under centrally sponsored schemes Agriculture Production & Farmers Welfare Department, Jammu invites e-tenders from eligible registered firms for supply of certified seeds, bio-fertilisers and farm implements for rabi 2026-27 under centrally sponsored sc... Type: Supply Last date: 25 Aug 2026 Est. cost: ₹ 1.05 crore EMD: ₹ 2.10 lakh Location: Jammu division Contact: Director, Agriculture Jammu · jktenders.gov.in

REGIONAL

Guard's warning shots trigger day-long forest search in Poonch's Mendhar belt

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026

A security guard's warning shots near an under-construction tunnel touched off a day-long, multi-agency search across the forests of the Mendhar sector in Poonch on Monday, officials said, though by evening no militants had been traced and there had been no exchange of fire.The guard, posted at the tunnel site, spotted what he described as suspicious movement in the surrounding treeline before dawn and fired three to four rounds as a precaution, according to police. A joint search operation was launched around 6 a.m., fanning out through the Bhatadurian and Sangiot forest belts and adjoining tracks, with follow-up searches in the Surankote and Mankote areas.Personnel from the Jammu and Kashmir Police Special Operations Group, the Central Reserve Police Force and the Army's Rashtriya Rifles took part, deploying drones and sniffer dogs to comb dense forest terrain and steep mountain trails, officials said. "No loss of life or damage to property has been reported," a police officer said, adding that there had been no contact with any militants.The operation is the latest in a series of intelligence-led cordon-and-search drives that security forces have mounted across the Poonch-Rajouri belt of the Pir Panjal in recent months, focusing on village corridors and forest clusters near the Line of Control. Officials said the search would be scaled down only after the area had been fully sanitised.

NATIONAL

IAF's Bhawana Kanth becomes first woman to clear elite 'Top Gun' combat course

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026

Squadron Leader Bhawana Kanth has become the first woman officer in the Indian Air Force to complete the elite Fighter Combat Leader course, a milestone the service announced on Wednesday that places her among a tiny cadre of its most highly qualified fighter pilots.Kanth graduated from the 20-week course at the Tactics and Air Combat Development Establishment in Gwalior, the institution widely described as the IAF's answer to the US Navy's Strike Fighter Tactics Instructor programme, better known as "Top Gun." Officials say only about one percent of the force's fighter pilots are selected for the punishing qualification, which trains them to lead complex air-combat missions and mentor other aviators.Kanth was commissioned in June 2016 as one of India's first three women fighter pilots, alongside Avani Chaturvedi and Mohana Singh. In 2019 she became the first Indian woman cleared to fly daytime fighter-combat missions, and her latest achievement extends a run of firsts for women in the country's combat aviation stream.The IAF hailed the qualification as a marker of how far women have advanced in frontline flying roles a decade after the fighter cockpit was first opened to them, and said it reflected both her flying skill and the widening space for women in the service's tactical leadership.

INTERNATIONAL

Houthi drone strike sets Saudi Aramco refinery ablaze in Jizan

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026

Yemen's Houthis said on Sunday they had struck a Saudi Aramco refinery in the Red Sea province of Jizan with a drone, igniting a fire that Saudi authorities said was brought under control without casualties.Military spokesman Yahya Saree said the group had "succeeded in targeting the Aramco refinery in Jizan with a drone," calling it a response to Saudi drone incursions over the Yemeni governorates of Saada and Hajjah. Saudi Arabia's energy ministry confirmed the fire had been extinguished, without describing the cause. The Houthis said they had also struck the Red Sea port town of Mokha, in a fresh escalation of a conflict that has repeatedly reached into Saudi oil infrastructure.

BUSINESS

RBI holds repo rate at 5.25%, lifts growth forecast to 6.7%

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026

The Reserve Bank of India kept its benchmark repo rate unchanged at 5.25 percent on Wednesday and held its "neutral" policy stance, opting to wait and watch as global uncertainty clouds the outlook, the central bank said.The monetary policy committee raised its growth forecast for the 2026-27 financial year to 6.7 percent, from 6.6 percent, citing robust manufacturing and steady domestic demand after a better-than-expected first quarter, and trimmed its inflation projection to 5.0 percent, from 5.1 percent.The central bank cited heightened geopolitical tensions in the Middle East as a key reason for standing pat. Equity benchmarks held modest gains after the decision, with broader mid- and small-cap indices outperforming.

NATIONAL

India names 27 places in Arunachal; China calls the move 'null and void'

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026

India has formally assigned standardised names to 27 places and geographical features in Arunachal Pradesh, entering them on Survey of India maps in a pointed answer to China's repeated attempts to rename territory New Delhi controls, officials said.The Union home ministry, working with the state government, said the 27 names cover 21 land areas, four mountain passes, one lake and one monument, several along the Line of Actual Control, in a counter to Beijing's own renaming drives.China rejected the move, its foreign ministry on Monday calling the naming "illegal, null and void" and repeating its claim over the state. India has consistently dismissed such assertions, holding that Arunachal Pradesh is an integral part of the country.

INTERNATIONAL

Netanyahu rejects US Gaza plan, demands Hamas disarm first

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has rejected the latest US plan to advance the next stage of a settlement in Gaza, demanding that Hamas fully disarm before any Israeli forces pull back from the territory.Netanyahu said Israel would not move to the next phase while the group retained its weapons, hardening a position that has repeatedly stalled American-brokered efforts to wind down the war. He also reiterated that no Palestinian state would be established as long as he remained prime minister, "not in Gaza and not in the West Bank."The rebuff underscored the gulf between Washington and its closest Middle East ally over how to end the conflict, and left the truce effort in fresh doubt.

REGIONAL

'Transporters' wheel-jam strike halts buses across Rajouri, Poonch

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026

A wheel-jam strike by transport unions halted public transport across Rajouri, Poonch and Jammu on Monday, stranding commuters through much of the Pir Panjal, residents and union members said.Bus and tempo operators kept their vehicles off the roads for the day, leaving passengers scrambling for taxis at higher fares. The stoppage hit the twin border districts of Poonch and Rajouri hardest, where the road network is already frayed after weeks of monsoon flooding washed away stretches of highway and link roads.Union representatives said the protest was meant to press long-pending grievances of the transport trade. Commuters, many of them daily-wage earners, students and patients bound for hospitals in Jammu, said they had been left with few options.

REGIONAL

Omar hands out 2.71 crore rupees in cash awards to 580 J&K athletes

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah presented cash awards worth 2.71 crore rupees to 580 sportspersons from Jammu and Kashmir at a special ceremony at the Sher-i-Kashmir International Convention Centre in Srinagar on Monday, honouring athletes who have won laurels at national and international events.The awards recognised medal-winners across a spread of disciplines, part of what the administration cast as a push to reward and encourage sporting talent from the region. Officials said the ceremony was among the largest such felicitations held in recent years, spanning athletes from across the union territory's districts.

NATIONAL

Opposition presses Shah on Jantar Mantar as monsoon session nears close

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 10 AUG, 2026

Parliament entered the last week of its monsoon session on Monday amid persistent opposition protests, with members demanding a statement from Home Minister Amit Shah on the handling of a protest at Jantar Mantar and sparring with the government over a Bill to amend the foreign-funding law.The Lok Sabha saw the introduction of several measures, including the Tribunal Reforms Bill, an amendment to the Mines and Minerals law, a Bill to rename Kerala and a National Co-operative Development Corporation amendment, while the Rajya Sabha took up the Bankers' Books Evidence Bill, 2026. Congress issued a whip to its members to be present through the closing days, saying important matters would come up for debate.