



REGIONAL

Chief Secretary orders J&K to fast-track Rs 1,579-crore disaster recovery

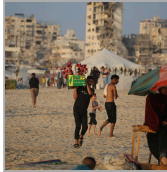
PAGE 2



NATIONAL

Jharkhand caves to exam-reform stir, scraps JSSC-CGL and tainted tests

PAGE 6



INTERNATIONAL

Iran and Oman agree Hormuz safe corridor after fresh tanker attack chokes Gulf shipping

PAGE 13



BUSINESS

Markets end week lower as inflation, tariffs and a fragile rupee weigh

PAGE 8

IN BRIEF

HEALTH

DR Congo Ebola outbreak tops 4,600 cases as Bundibugyo vaccine trials begin

The WHO says the Democratic Republic of the Congo's fastest-growing Ebola outbreak on record has now killed more than 2,100...

TECHNOLOGY

ISRO to break seven-month launch freeze with GISAT-1A in September

The Indian Space Research Organisation is preparing to return to the launch pad in early September with the GISAT-1A Earth-observation...

SPORTS

Chess stars Divya, Vidit lead 17 named for Arjuna Awards

The Sports Ministry named 17 athletes for the Arjuna Award, but left the Khel Ratna unawarded this year.

BUSINESS

Wholesale inflation eases to 9.78% in July as fuel costs cool

India's WPI inflation slipped marginally to 9.78 percent in July from 9.87 percent in June, though double-digit fuel prices kept...

INTERNATIONAL

Zelensky says Ukraine has a plan to pressure Putin, a year after the Alaska summit

As the war grinds on twelve months after the Trump-Putin meeting in Anchorage, Zelensky says Kyiv and its partners have...

NATIONAL

'Season 2' warning: Cockroach Janta Party tells Centre to keep Jantar Mantar promises

The youth-led CJP says the Centre has yet to honour the assurances it gave to end the Jantar Mantar sit-in...

NATIONAL

NATIONAL

India marks 80th Independence Day; Tricolour flies from Red Fort to Poonch

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026



PM Modi's Red Fort address and flag-hoistings across Jammu and Kashmir — from Srinagar's Bakshi Stadium to Poonch — marked the nation's 80th Independence Day.

India marked its 80th Independence Day on Friday with Prime Minister Narendra Modi hoisting the Tricolour from the ramparts of the Red Fort, while Jammu and Kashmir observed the day with flag-hoistings, ceremonial parades and...

FULL REPORT CONTINUED ON PAGE 16 ►

NATIONAL

Modi unveils Demography Mission, Sapta Dhara vision in Red Fort address

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026



The prime minister's Independence Day speech carried a raft of new missions, led by a High-Powered Demography Mission targeting border-area migration.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi used his 80th Independence Day address from the Red Fort to unveil a sweep of new missions, with a High-Powered Demography...

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16 ►

REGIONAL

New Sungal tunnel opens, cutting Jammu-Poonch travel near the LoC



A 2.79-km BRO tunnel through the Kalidhar range shortens the Jammu-Poonch highway by about 12 km, aiding border districts and military logistics.

A new 2.79-km tunnel that shortens the difficult road between Jammu and Poonch was thrown open to traffic on Aug...

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16 ►



INTERNATIONAL

Kushner shuttles between Hamas and Netanyahu to salvage Gaza truce

US envoy Jared Kushner met Hamas leaders in Egypt, then Israel's PM, pressing Trump's road map as the two sides sparred over disarmament.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16 ►



INTERNATIONAL

Colombia earthquake toll passes 300 as rescuers dig through rubble

A magnitude-7.4 quake in western Colombia has killed more than 300 people and destroyed thousands of homes, prompting a national disaster declaration.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16 ►



REGIONAL

Budha Amarnath Yatra begins in Poonch as LG flags off first batch

LG Manoj Sinha flagged off the first batch from Jammu for the 12-day pilgrimage to the ancient Poonch shrine amid a multi-tier security grid.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16 ►



REGIONAL

'Return what was snatched': Omar renews statehood pitch on I-Day

At Bakshi Stadium, CM Omar Abdullah pressed for restoration of statehood and constitutional guarantees, invoking Article 370 and PoK.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16 ►



NATIONAL

BWF World Championships open in New Delhi after 17 years

The 30th badminton World Championships began at the Indira Gandhi Arena, with India hosting the flagship event for the first time since 2009.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16 ►



INTERNATIONAL

US-Iran deadline expires without deal as Trump threatens Oman

A US-set deadline for a new nuclear agreement lapsed with no deal, sharpening a standoff that has drawn American warships back toward the Gulf.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16 ►



REGIONAL

Amarnath Yatra stays suspended as tracks repaired; over 4.8 lakh pay obeisance

The pilgrimage remained halted on both routes after weather damage, even as the tally crossed 4.8 lakh ahead of the Aug 28 Chhari Mubarak...

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16 ►

INSIDE TODAY

P2

Chief Secretary orders J&K to fast-track Rs 1,579-crore disaster recovery

P6

Jharkhand caves to exam-reform stir, scraps JSSC-CGL and tainted tests

P13

Iran and Oman agree Hormuz safe corridor after fresh tanker attack chokes Gulf shipping

P8

Markets end week lower as inflation, tariffs and a fragile rupee weigh

P14

India close on Galle victory as Sri Lanka totter at 84 for four chasing 372

P10

Three chip plants now running, five to eight more coming, Modi tells nation

P12

Over 3,000 staff at J&K's five new medical colleges begin indefinite strike

P15

Classifieds & Tenders

REGIONAL

Chief Secretary orders J&K to fast-track Rs 1,579-crore disaster recovery

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026



Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo directed every department to accelerate work under the NDMA-backed Recovery and Reconstruction Plan, ordering geo-tagged, 'build-back-better' rebuilding...

The Jammu and Kashmir administration ordered a wholesale acceleration of its disaster-recovery effort on Sunday, with Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo directing every line department to fast-track the rebuilding of homes, roads, water systems and public assets wrecked by the floods, cloudbursts and landslides that have repeatedly battered the Union Territory. Chairing a review of the Recovery and Reconstruction Plan at the Civil Secretariat, Dulloo told officials that the pace of project formulation and execution had to pick up sharply, and that no eligible work should be left stranded for want of paperwork or inter-departmental delay. The meeting drew senior administrative officers from both the Kashmir and Jammu divisions, and all 20 district deputy commissioners joined virtually to report progress from the ground. The recovery package is a large one. The National Disaster Management Authority has approved Rs 1,579.09 crore for the plan, built on a Post-Disaster Needs Assessment that put the damage at Rs 1,534.58 crore. Detailed action plans have so far been prepared for works worth Rs 1,225.78 crore, the Chief Secretary was told, leaving a balance of roughly Rs 353.31 crore still to be committed — much of it resting with the water and agriculture sectors, which were asked to finalise their proposals without further delay. Ramban, among the districts worst hit when flash floods and a cloudburst tore through the Chenab valley, has been given a dedicated recovery blueprint of Rs 44.52 crore. Dulloo asked the district administration to treat the Ramban works as a template for coordinated, time-bound reconstruction that other affected districts could follow. Central to the directive was a "build-back-better" standard for every asset being restored. Rather than simply replacing what was lost, the Chief Secretary said, reconstructed schools, bridges, embankments and homes must be made disaster-resilient, incorporating seismic-compliant design and, where flooding is a recurring threat, elevated foundations. The aim, he said, was to ensure that public money spent once was not washed away in the next

cloudburst. To keep the spending clean and trackable, Dulloo ordered departments to geo-tag every recovery project and upload it to the government's BEAMS digital platform, allowing real-time monitoring of physical and financial progress. He also directed officials to cross-verify beneficiary lists against existing welfare schemes — including the rural housing programme PMAY-G, the Jal Jeevan Mission and the urban mission AMRUT — so that the same household or asset is not funded twice under overlapping heads. Departments handling roads, power and drinking-water supply were asked to prioritise the restoration of connectivity and essential services in the affected pockets, several of which lie in the rugged Chenab valley belt of Ramban, Doda, Kishtwar and Reasi where terrain complicates rebuilding. Officials said restoring lifeline infrastructure before winter was a particular concern, given the risk of communities being cut off once snow sets in. The plan is a response to a punishing run of extreme-weather events. Flash floods and a cloudburst in April 2025 devastated parts of Ramban, sweeping away houses and stretches of the Jammu-Srinagar national highway, while successive monsoon spells have triggered landslides that periodically choke the same artery and, this season, forced multi-day suspensions of the Amarnath Yatra. Officials say the frequency of such events has made structured, well-funded recovery a standing administrative priority rather than a one-off relief exercise. For the Omar Abdullah government, the review also carried a governance message: that the elected administration and the bureaucracy can jointly drive a large, centrally-funded rebuilding programme on a tight timeline. The Chief Secretary asked departments to firm up completion schedules for each sanctioned work and to flag bottlenecks early, warning that delayed execution would only inflate costs and prolong the hardship of families still living with damage from earlier disasters. He said progress would be reviewed again in the coming weeks, with districts expected to show measurable movement on the ground.

REGIONAL

J&K lines up its first international film festival

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026

The Jammu and Kashmir government is preparing to stage its first international film festival, with Chief Minister Omar Abdullah reviewing arrangements this week for a four-day event the administration wants to turn into an annual global fixture. The inaugural International Film Festival of Jammu and Kashmir (IFFJK) is scheduled for September 7 to 10 across Srinagar and Jammu. Organisers said it had drawn roughly 1,100 film entries from more than 80 countries, to be screened on seven screens at venues including the Sher-i-Kashmir International Convention Centre and INOX in Srinagar and Waves Cinema in Jammu. The programme spans competition and panorama sections — among them International Competition, Cinema of the World, Bharat Panorama and a J&K Select strand — alongside masterclasses, panel discussions and workshops with industry figures. Chairing the coordination meeting, attended by Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo and senior divisional and police officials, Abdullah stressed that "meticulous planning and seamless coordination" were needed to showcase the region's cultural and cinematic heritage and give local filmmakers a platform.

REGIONAL

Cabinet reshuffle awaited as Independence Day passes

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026



With Independence Day now behind it, the Omar Abdullah government faces renewed pressure to move on a long-delayed expansion and reshuffle of the Council of Ministers that the chief minister had explicitly deferred until after August 15. Abdullah, who had described the exercise as "work in progress" that would "happen sometime," said ahead of the national holiday that it would be unfair to reshuffle portfolios while ministers were preparing to deliver Independence Day speeches. "They are preparing their speeches. Let them give their speeches," he had said, brushing aside repeated questions on the timing. The ruling National Conference is reported to be weighing not only fresh inductions but also a redistribution of portfolios among sitting ministers. The council, which took office in October 2024, has functioned below its sanctioned strength, leaving room for additional inductions that MLAs from across the Valley have been lobbying for. Party managers see the reshuffle as a chance to reward organisational loyalists and balance regional representation, even as the leadership keeps the

REGIONAL

Don't interfere in state subjects, Omar tells Centre

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026



Chief Minister Omar Abdullah pressed his case for a stronger federal balance, urging the Centre not to interfere in subjects that properly belong to states and calling for a greater devolution of powers to elected governments. Abdullah argued that areas such as education and health should be left to state governments to run, while the Union government should focus on matters squarely within its own jurisdiction. The remarks extended the theme he had struck on Independence Day, when he said Indian federalism remained "incomplete" unless states were empowered and that the process of strengthening it "must start with Jammu and Kashmir." The chief minister has repeatedly complained that the Union Territory model concentrates authority in the Lieutenant Governor's office and hollows out the elected government's writ, an arrangement he says is built for failure rather than success. His latest intervention tied the statehood demand to a broader national argument over Centre-state relations, positioning Jammu and Kashmir's case within a wider push by regional parties for the Union to respect the constitutional division of powers. The comments are likely to feed into the government's messaging as it carries its statehood signature campaign



REGIONAL

BJP calls Omar's flag-day speech 'irresponsible'

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026

The Bharatiya Janata Party hit back hard at Chief Minister Omar Abdullah's Independence Day address, with Leader of Opposition in the Assembly Sunil Sharma describing the speech as "irresponsible" and accusing him of dragging politics onto a national stage. "This stage is not the stage of a party or a person. This stage is for the glory of the flag," Sharma said, arguing that the Independence Day platform should remain non-partisan and represent national pride rather than serve a political agenda. He said it was "unfortunate" that the chief minister had chosen to "create an atmosphere of confusion" in the Valley on a day meant for unity. Sharma's remarks reflected the wider BJP response to Abdullah's renewed statehood pitch and the newly announced signature campaign. Party leaders have repeatedly countered the National Conference's statehood demand with what has become a familiar security refrain, insisting that lasting normalcy and the elimination of militancy must precede any change in Jammu and Kashmir's constitutional status. The exchange underscored the deepening divide between the elected government and the Centre-aligned opposition over the pace of restoring statehood. While Abdullah insists the pledge made to the region must now be honoured, the BJP maintains that the Union Territory framework has delivered improved security and that the timeline for statehood rests with New Delhi. Both sides used the Independence Day functions to sharpen positions that are likely to dominate the run-up to the Assembly's autumn session.



REGIONAL

'No need to panic', LG Sinha assures on Valley security

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha sought to reassure a jittery Kashmiri Pandit community on Sunday, saying there was "no need to panic over attempts by certain elements to disturb peace" in Jammu and Kashmir and that the administration and security forces remained fully committed to maintaining stability. Addressing the foundation-day function of the KP Volunteers, a humanitarian body working for displaced Kashmiri Pandits, in Jammu, the Lieutenant Governor responded to worries raised by community members over the safety of Pandit employees living and working in the Kashmir Valley in the wake of recent terror incidents. "There is no need to worry. The necessary concerns are being addressed," he said, adding that protective measures "have not started today; such efforts have been underway for some time." Sinha, who has directed security forces to step up anti-terror operations after a string of attacks on non-local workers earlier in the month, pointed to what he called a visible shift in Kashmir, noting that many residents were now willing to carry the national flag as "a powerful example of that change." He praised the volunteers' relief work, saying selfless service kept spreading "like light from one lamp to another."



REGIONAL

Multi-tier security grid locks down J&K for Independence Day

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026

Jammu and Kashmir went into a near-total security lockdown in the days before Independence Day, with authorities erecting a multi-tiered grid across the Union Territory to guarantee an incident-free August 15 amid what officials described as fresh threat inputs. Director General of Police reviewed arrangements at a high-level meeting on the eve of the celebrations, while Inspector General of Police (Kashmir) V.K. Birdi said multi-tier security arrangements were in place across the Valley to ensure peaceful functions. Sharpshooters of the Jammu and Kashmir Police and the Central Reserve Police Force occupied high-rise buildings overlooking the main venues in Srinagar and Jammu to counter any aerial or ground threat, officials said. The measures included intensive frisking at multiple entry points to the Bakhshi Stadium and MA Stadium venues, thorough checks of vehicles on approach roads, and an enhanced deployment of Quick Response Teams and anti-sabotage squads. CCTV networks and facial-recognition systems were pressed into service for real-time monitoring of crowds, while anti-drone measures and bomb-disposal units were kept on standby. Police, Army and central agencies stepped up night patrols, nakas and drone surveillance across Srinagar and the districts through the window, extending the security cover well beyond the ceremonial venues. The elaborate arrangements followed a spate of attacks on non-local labourers earlier in August and a broader intelligence assessment that militants might attempt to stage a high-visibility strike around the national holiday. Officials said the celebrations across all district headquarters ultimately passed off peacefully, with senior ministers and district development commissioners hoisting the tricolour without incident.

MORE FROM THIS SECTION

REGIONAL

Deputy CM leads Jammu I-Day function as districts mark day peacefully

Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary hoisted the tricolour at Jammu's MA Stadium as Independence Day was observed without incident...

REGIONAL

Javed Rana unfurls Tricolour in Poonch as border district marks 80th Independence Day

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026



Jal Shakti Minister Javed Ahmed Rana hoisted the National Flag at Sports Stadium Poonch on the 80th Independence Day, taking the salute at a ceremonial march past and pledging speech...

The border district of Poonch celebrated the 80th Independence Day with fervour and patriotic zeal on Friday, with Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology and Environment and Tribal Affairs Javed Ahmed Rana unfurling the National Flag at the Sports Stadium and taking the ceremonial salute. Rana, who presided over the main district function, received the Rashtriya Salute at an impressive march past presented by contingents of the Jammu and Kashmir Police, the India Reserve Police, the Central Reserve Police Force, the Forest Protection Force, National Cadet Corps cadets and school children. The parade, held under tight security in a district that shares a long stretch of the Line of Control with Pakistan, drew a large gathering of officials, tribal representatives and residents. "Independence Day is an occasion to remember the sacrifices of the past and reaffirm the collective resolve to uphold the ideals of justice, liberty, equality, fraternity and national unity," Rana said in his address. He urged residents to "renew our pledge to build a stronger, inclusive and prosperous India and ensure that the benefits of development reach every section of society." The minister used the occasion to spell out the administration's development record in a district long counted among the region's most remote. He said Poonch had been allocated a District Capex budget of Rs 6,716.84 lakh for the year, and that 37.5 MW of power generation capacity had been added to strengthen supply across the hilly belt. On drinking water, he said 84,791 of the district's 107,048 households had been provided piped clean water, with saturation targeted in the coming phases. Rana devoted a significant part of his speech to the flash floods and landslides that battered Poonch and neighbouring Rajouri through July and early August. He said

the rains had claimed 22 lives in the district and damaged 366 houses, besides washing away roads, footbridges, agricultural land and public assets belonging to the Public Works, Jal Shakti and Power departments. He assured residents that relief and rehabilitation was the administration's foremost priority and that damage assessment was under way to ensure that no affected family was left out of compensation. The minister said the government had already sanctioned enhanced ex gratia for the next of kin of those killed and was pressing the Centre for a special assistance package to rebuild the shattered infrastructure of the two Pir Panjal districts. Restoration of the Rajouri-Poonch highway and internal link roads, he said, was being carried out round the clock so that connectivity to interior and border villages was restored before the onset of harsher weather. MLA Surankote Choudhary Mohammad Akram, Deputy Commissioner Ashok Kumar Sharma and Senior Superintendent of Police Shafqat Hussain Bhat were among the dignitaries who attended the function. Cultural items presented by schoolchildren, patriotic songs and a display drill rounded off the programme, which ended with the distribution of prizes and appreciation certificates to personnel who rendered service during the flood emergency. Similar flag-hoisting ceremonies were held at the tehsil and block levels across Mendhar, Surankote, Mankote and Balakote, with government offices, panchayat ghars and educational institutions joining the celebrations under the Har Ghar Tiranga campaign. Security remained heightened through the day, with additional deployment along the LoC and in forward pockets after fresh counter-terror operations in the Surankote sector earlier in the week.



REGIONAL

Terror hideout busted in Surankote's Draba, arms and IEDs recovered ahead of I-Day

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026

Security forces busted a suspected terror hideout in the Draba area of the Surankote sector in Poonch district on Saturday and recovered a cache of arms, ammunition and improvised explosive devices, officials said. A joint team comprising the 16 Rashtriya Rifles, the Special Operations Group of the Jammu and Kashmir Police and the 38 Battalion of the Central Reserve Police Force launched the cordon-and-search operation on a specific input. During the search, the forces recovered one gamla-type IED, one gool-type IED, four small IEDs, one Motorola wireless set and seven AK-47 rounds. Officials said the recovery, made on the day the country celebrated its 80th Independence Day, had "averted a major tragedy" in the border district. The explosive material was defused by a bomb disposal squad, and the seized items were taken into custody for further investigation to establish the source of the consignment. The operation came amid heightened vigil along the Line of Control in Poonch, where forces have intensified area domination and counter-infiltration measures. Searches were continuing in the adjoining forest belt on Saturday evening.



REGIONAL

Rajouri celebrates Independence Day with border-belt fervour at Police Lines

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026

The border district of Rajouri celebrated the 80th Independence Day with patriotic fervour on Friday, with District Development Commissioner Abhishek Sharma hoisting the National Flag at the District Police Lines and taking the Rashtriya Salute at a ceremonial march past. The main function was attended by MLA Thanamandi Muzaffar Iqbal Khan, Deputy Inspector General of the Rajouri-Poonch Range Sandeep Wazir, Senior Superintendent of Police Gaurav Sikarwar and a large number of officials, students and residents. Contingents of the police and central forces presented the parade, followed by cultural performances in which schoolchildren showcased the region's heritage, traditions and syncretic ethos. "The true meaning of independence is fulfilled when the last village gets road connectivity and every family has a pucca house," Sharma said in his address, linking the day to the administration's post-flood rebuilding push in the district. Officials said a particularly high level of enthusiasm was witnessed among students and youth from the border areas, many of whom braved difficult terrain to attend the celebrations.

REGIONAL

Poonch District Court hoists Tricolour, honours staff on Independence Day

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026



The District Court in Poonch celebrated the 80th Independence Day with enthusiasm on Friday, with Principal District and Sessions Judge Sushil Singh hoisting the Tricolour at the court complex in the presence of judicial officers, advocates, senior citizens and court staff. The flag was unfurled with due ceremony, followed by the National Anthem, and patriotic songs were sung by the staff and members of the Bar, creating a festive and nationalistic atmosphere at the premises. On the occasion, the judge honoured police personnel, judiciary employees and other court staff in recognition of their services and contributions to the justice delivery system, particularly during the recent flood emergency in the district. In his remarks, he underlined the values of justice, liberty and equality enshrined in the Constitution and called on the legal fraternity to work towards making justice accessible to the last citizen in the remote border district.

REGIONAL

Rajouri court marks I-Day, felicitates para-legal volunteers for flood relief work

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026



The District Court in Rajouri joined the district in celebrating the 80th Independence Day, with Principal District and Sessions Judge Rajender Sapru hoisting the National Flag at the court premises in the presence of judicial officers, advocates and staff. Addressing the gathering, Sapru highlighted the importance of justice, liberty and equality, and called on the legal community to strengthen access to justice for the poor and vulnerable in the border district. The National Anthem was sung after the flag hoisting, followed by a brief cultural programme. In a gesture that connected the occasion to the district's recent ordeal, the court felicitated para-legal volunteers with appreciation certificates for the assistance they rendered to stranded and affected families during the July flash floods that devastated parts of Rajouri and neighbouring Poonch. Officials said the volunteers had helped affected people access relief, documentation and legal aid in the aftermath of the disaster. The celebrations were part of a series of Independence Day functions across government departments and institutions in the district, held under heightened security and the Har Ghar Tiranga campaign.

REGIONAL

Offices, schools across Poonch and Rajouri fly the Tricolour under Har Ghar Tiranga

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026

Government departments, offices and educational institutions across Poonch and Rajouri celebrated the 80th Independence Day with flag hoistings, cultural programmes and patriotic functions, marking the culmination of a week of Har Ghar Tiranga activities in the Pir Panjal belt. Schools, colleges, panchayat ghars and departmental offices in the two border districts unfurled the National Flag, with students presenting patriotic songs, skits and speeches on the meaning of freedom and the sacrifices of the freedom struggle. The Har Ghar Tiranga campaign, observed nationally from August 9 to 17, saw homes, shops and public buildings across the region fly the Tricolour, with local youth organisations taking out Tiranga rallies in the run-up to Independence Day. Officials said the celebrations in the border areas carried added significance this year, coming weeks after devastating floods and amid heightened security along the Line of Control. Institutions also used the occasion to felicitate staff, students and volunteers who had helped affected communities during the recent flood emergency, weaving the district's ordeal into the day's message of resilience and unity.



REGIONAL

BRO races to reopen flood-hit Rajouri-Poonch highway as residents hail round-the-clock effort

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026

The Border Roads Organisation has intensified round-the-clock clearance operations on National Highway 144 in the Rajouri-Poonch sector, weeks after heavy rain, flash floods and landslides snapped connectivity across the Pir Panjal belt. BRO teams have deployed heavy machinery to remove debris and boulders from slide-hit stretches near Nadpur and Thalka, working through the night whenever the weather permits. The highway is the main artery linking Rajouri and Poonch with Jammu, and its repeated blockage through the monsoon had left interior and border villages cut off, delaying the movement of relief and essential supplies. Residents of the affected pockets said the pace of work had visibly picked up. "When the rain stops, you can see them working. They are doing a very good job," said Khadim Hussain, a resident of Anaipur in the Thalka area, who thanked the district administration for coordinating with the road agency. Another resident, Rajesh Kumar, said, "You can see the big machines. BRO is working day and night." The district administration has directed departments to work in tandem on rescue, relief and restoration, with the deputy commissioners of Rajouri and Poonch monitoring the clearance. Officials said priority was being given to restoring vehicular movement on the highway and repairing damaged culverts and link roads so that flood-affected families could receive assistance and rebuild before the harsher weather sets in. Temporary restoration of a damaged 33 KV transmission line between the two districts had earlier been carried out by the Power Development Department to revive supply.

MORE FROM THIS SECTION

REGIONAL

Rana tours flood-hit Qazi Mohra, Jhulas to review relief

Minister Javed Ahmed Rana visited flash-flood-affected Qazi Mohra and Jhulas in Poonch to assess damage and review restoration works.

REGIONAL

Srinagar’s e-bus riders press for bigger, safer fleet as peak-hour crush grows

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026



Commuters, especially women, are asking the administration to expand Srinagar’s Smart City electric-bus service, raise peak-hour frequency and extend routes to the Hazratbal belt,...

The electric buses that have reshaped Srinagar’s daily commute are straining under their own popularity, with women passengers and other regular riders pressing transport authorities and the district administration for a bigger, safer fleet as peak-hour overcrowding worsens across the city. In accounts to Greater Kashmir, commuters said the Smart City-era e-bus service had made everyday travel easier, cheaper and cleaner, but that packed cabins during office and school hours had begun to erode those gains. Women riders, in particular, described standing in tightly congested spaces with barely room to move. “People keep squeezing into already packed buses, making it difficult even to move,” one commuter said, describing the crush on busy corridors during the morning and evening rush. Shabnam, a resident of Bemina, said the buses had “made travelling easier” and brought a measure of comfort and affordability to the routes she uses daily, but that overcrowding at peak times now left women feeling unsafe. Irfan Ahmad, from Rajbagh, echoed the concern, saying the sheer density of passengers during rush hour raised safety worries for everyone on board. Riders set out a short list of fixes: more buses on the road, higher service frequency during peak hours, and extended routes to underserved peripheral areas — with the Hazratbal belt named as a stretch that needs better coverage. Several said additional buses running at fixed intervals would ease the crush and cut the scramble to board. The demand reflects the scale of the service’s success. Rolled out as part of Srinagar’s shift toward cleaner, organised

public transport, the electric buses have become a familiar sight on the city’s arterial roads and a preferred option for students, office-goers and daily-wage workers. That popularity, riders say, is precisely why capacity has struggled to keep pace with demand. Women commuters said safety and comfort should be built into any expansion rather than treated as an afterthought. Beyond simply adding buses, they called for measures to manage crowding during the busiest hours so that female passengers are not forced into uncomfortably close quarters, a recurring complaint on the most crowded routes. Transport and traffic officials said enforcement teams were keeping public-service vehicles under watch. “Our teams are conducting regular inspections of e-buses, cabs and other public transport vehicles,” a traffic department official said, pointing to routine checks on the city’s fleet. For many riders, the e-bus network remains a marked improvement on what came before — a cheaper, cleaner and more predictable ride through a city long troubled by traffic snarls and patchy public transport. The message from its users this week was less a grievance than a plea to build on the gain: scale the fleet, stretch the routes to the edges of the district, and make the daily journey one that women can take without anxiety. Residents said the coming months would test whether the service can grow fast enough to match a ridership that has plainly outpaced the buses now on the road, and whether the district administration can turn a popular pilot into a dependable, city-wide backbone for everyday travel.



REGIONAL

Javid Dar unfurls tricolour in Baramulla as district marks 80th I-Day

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026

Minister for Agriculture Production, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Javid Ahmad Dar unfurled the national flag at Prof. Showkat Ali Stadium in Baramulla on Saturday, leading the district’s main function for the 80th Independence Day. Dar took the salute at a ceremonial parade whose contingents included the BSF, CRPF, J&K Police, SSB, Home Guards, NCC and school students. Government departments presented tableaux showcasing their schemes and initiatives, while schoolchildren performed cultural items to a large gathering of officials, public representatives and residents. The celebration, officials said, reflected “a strong display of patriotism, national unity and pride,” with parallel functions held across the district’s sub-divisions and tehsils. Full-dress rehearsals had been completed a day earlier at the venue. The Baramulla function was among the larger district-level events in north Kashmir, coming days after the district administration reviewed youth-engagement programmes under the Mera Yuva Bharat framework and pushed the Har Ghar Tiranga campaign through schools, colleges and ITIs.

REGIONAL

DC Bilal Bhat hoists flag in Anantnag, guard of honour marks Independence Day

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026

Deputy Commissioner Anantnag Dr. Bilal Mohiuddin Bhat hoisted the national flag at the Deputy Commissioner’s Office in Anantnag on Saturday as the south Kashmir district joined the nationwide 80th Independence Day celebrations. A contingent of the District Police presented a ceremonial guard of honour to the Deputy Commissioner, who was joined by district and sectoral officers, employees and members of the public. The tricolour was unfurled to the strains of the national anthem, followed by patriotic songs and a brief cultural programme. Functions were held simultaneously at sub-divisional and tehsil headquarters across the district, where officials, security personnel and schoolchildren took part. Departmental displays highlighted the year’s work in agriculture, rural development, health and education. The Anantnag administration has been running an active development calendar through the month. The District Development Commissioner recently reviewed the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme and the Jammu and Kashmir Competitive Improvement Project for 2026-27, and the district has been preparing for the annual Sri Amarnath Yatra arrangements alongside its routine welfare drives. Officials said the Independence Day passed off peacefully in Anantnag amid tight security, with the day used to reaffirm the administration’s focus on public service delivery and grassroots development in one of the Valley’s most populous districts.

REGIONAL

Bandipora celebrates I-Day at Nadihal; DC flags development, anti-drug push

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026



Deputy Commissioner Bandipora Indu Kanwal Chib hoisted the national flag at Government Higher Secondary School, Nadihal, on Saturday, presiding over the district’s main function for the 80th Independence Day. The flag-hoisting was followed by the national anthem and a ceremonial parade whose contingents included the District Police, Women Police, IRP, Home Guards, CRPF, BSF, the Forest Protection Force, NCC and students. The Deputy Commissioner inspected the parade and took the salute. Officials said the event highlighted the district’s development projects, its tourism potential and the ongoing anti-drug campaign, with community members participating in large numbers. MLA Nizamuddin Bhat and judicial officers were among those present. Separately, the District Legal Services Authority and the district judiciary marked the day at the new District Court Complex in Kaloosa, where Principal District and Sessions Judge Jeema Bashir hoisted the flag in the presence of the Deputy Commissioner, SSP Aijaz Ahmad Zargar, judicial officers, lawyers and DLSA functionaries. The Army had earlier hoisted a 120-foot tricolour near the Line of Control in Gurez, part of the district, ahead of the celebrations.

REGIONAL

Pulwama marks Independence Day at police lines; DC leads parade

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026

Deputy Commissioner Pulwama Dr. Basharat Qayoom hoisted the national flag at the District Police Lines in Pulwama on Saturday, leading the district’s main function for the 80th Independence Day. The Deputy Commissioner took the salute at a ceremonial parade and inspected contingents of the security forces, police and school students. Legislators, senior civil and police officers and members of the public attended the function, which featured the national anthem, patriotic songs and cultural performances. Government departments put up tableaux highlighting welfare schemes and the year’s development work, and prizes were given to the best-performing cultural groups. Sub-divisional and tehsil headquarters held parallel celebrations. The Independence Day capped a busy fortnight for the Pulwama administration, which had virtually joined the Prime Minister’s nationwide launch of the anti-drug “Nasha Mukht Yuva for Viksit Bharat” campaign earlier in the month, drawing youth, students and civil-society groups into a 100-week public drive against substance abuse. Officials said the day passed off peacefully in Pulwama amid tight security, with the administration reaffirming its commitment to development, employment and youth engagement.

REGIONAL

Shopian hoists tricolour at police lines; DC pays tribute to freedom fighters

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026

Deputy Commissioner Shopian Shishir Gupta hoisted the national flag at the District Police Lines in Shopian on Saturday and took the salute at an impressive parade, leading the district’s main function for the 80th Independence Day. The Deputy Commissioner inspected the parade and witnessed the march-past by contingents of the CRPF, J&K Police, J&K Women Police, the Forest Protection Force, Home Guards, NCC, the Government Degree College and school students. He paid tribute to the freedom fighters and to all those who made sacrifices for the country, officials said. The celebration featured the national anthem, patriotic songs and cultural performances, with departmental tableaux showcasing development schemes to a large gathering of officials, public representatives and residents. Parallel functions were held at sub-divisional and tehsil headquarters. The celebrations followed a week of Har Ghar Tiranga activities, including a mega Tiranga bike rally flagged off from the District Police Lines that wound through Batapora, Four Way Chowk and the Clock Tower before returning. Independence Day passed off peacefully in Shopian, the apple bowl of Kashmir, amid tight security.



REGIONAL

DC Kulgam reviews Agristack farmer-ID drive; 54 villages digitised

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026

Deputy Commissioner Kulgam Shahzad Alam, accompanied by Additional Deputy Commissioner Vikar Ahmad Giri, visited a Farmer’s ID generation camp organised under the Agristack project at Tehsil Kulgam on Monday to take stock of the ongoing registration and digitisation drive. The Deputy Commissioner supervised the process, interacted with revenue staff and reviewed the data being submitted, verified and approved on the Agristack portal to ensure accuracy and transparency at every stage. He directed officials to expedite the exercise while maintaining data quality. “The Farmers ID will serve as a single digital identity for every farmer. It will enable direct benefit transfer, crop insurance, soil health cards and access to institutional credit without duplication and delays,” Alam said. Registration and verification have been completed for 54 villages on the portal, with the remaining villages to be covered in a phased manner, officials said. Farmer-ID camps are currently under way at locations across the district. The unique Farmers ID, the Deputy Commissioner added, would create a comprehensive digital database of cultivators that streamlines the delivery of all agriculture-related benefits and schemes in a hassle-free manner.

MORE FROM THIS SECTION

REGIONAL

Nasir Wani hoists flag in Kupwara, lists development works

Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani hoisted the tricolour at the District Police Lines in Kupwara and reviewed development...

REGIONAL

Deputy Commissioners lead 80th Independence Day across Jammu, Chenab districts

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026



From MA Stadium in Jammu to the Chowgan grounds in Kishtwar, ministers and deputy commissioners unfurled the Tricolour at district functions marking India's 80th Independence Day a...

The 80th Independence Day was celebrated with patriotic fervour across the districts of the Jammu division and the Chenab Valley on Friday, with ministers, deputy commissioners and senior officers unfurling the National Flag at district-level functions and taking the salute from ceremonial parades. At the main divisional function in Jammu, Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary hoisted the Tricolour at the MA Stadium in the presence of Lok Sabha MP Jugal Kishore Sharma, Rajya Sabha MP Sat Paul Sharma, Ramban MLA Arjun Singh Raju, Gulabgarh MLA Khurshied Ahmed, Nagrota MLA Devyani Rana, Divisional Commissioner Ramesh Kumar and Inspector General of Police Bhim Sen Tuti. "The Tricolour is a symbol of sacrifices, unity, brotherhood and collective aspiration," the Deputy Chief Minister said, paying tribute to the armed forces and security personnel guarding the frontier. School children presented cultural programmes celebrating the freedom struggle. In Udhampur, Deputy Commissioner Minga Sherpa unfurled the flag at the Government PG Degree College for Boys, with Udhampur West MLA Pawan Kumar Gupta, DIG Shiv Kumar Sharma and SSP Amritpal Singh in attendance. The function highlighted the district's infrastructure transformation, and a cultural programme underscored national unity. At Samba, Deputy Commissioner Ayushi Sudan hoisted the Tricolour at the Rani Suchet Singh Sports Stadium alongside SSP Anuj Kumar and Additional Deputy Commissioner Champa Devi, where a vibrant cultural presentation showcased the region's heritage and unity in diversity. The border district had been placed under heightened vigil in the run-up to the day. In Reasi, Deputy Commissioner Kumar Abhishek led celebrations at the General Zorawar Singh Sports Stadium in the company of Reasi MLA Kuldeep Raj Dubey, Katra MLA Baldev Raj Sharma and SSP Mukund Tibrewal, with the administration stressing balanced growth and the extension of services to remote areas. Across the Chenab Valley, Doda Deputy Commissioner Krishan Lal unfurled the flag at the district Sports Stadium, joined by SSP Kartik Shrotriya and Additional Deputy Commissioner Anil Kumar Thakur, as the J&K Police band performed and school children staged patriotic presentations. In Ramban, Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Aliyas Khan

hoisted the Tricolour at the District Police Lines, where Commander 11 Sector Rashtriya Rifles Ajay Pal Singh, SSP Arun Gupta and CRPF 84 Battalion Commandant Vijay Singh Khatana watched contingents of the J&K Police, CRPF, SSB and IRP march past. At Kishtwar, Deputy Commissioner Pankaj Kumar Sharma unfurled the flag at the historic Chowgan grounds, with SSP Naresh Singh present and DySP Divya Kesar commanding a parade of CRPF, CISF and IRP contingents. Officials used the occasion to press for environmental compliance and the preservation of the district's religious sites. In Kathua, Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Minister Satish Sharma led the district function, announcing more than Rs 70 crore for 2,079 works under the District Capex Budget for 2026-27. Deputy commissioners and district magistrates unfurled the Tricolour at sub-divisional and tehsil headquarters as well, while the week-long Har Ghar Tiranga campaign, observed from Aug 9 to 17, saw rallies, plantation drives and Tiranga exhibitions culminating in the Independence Day functions. Officials said the district celebrations passed off peacefully amid tight security arrangements, with contingents of the J&K Police, central armed police forces and home guards deployed at venues and along approach routes. Ex-servicemen, prominent citizens, students and members of the public attended the functions, many of which concluded with the felicitation of achievers and the distribution of prizes to winners of school-level competitions. Beyond the district headquarters, deputy commissioners and district magistrates unfurled the Tricolour at sub-divisional and tehsil offices, while government departments and educational institutions across the division held their own flag-hoisting ceremonies. In Jammu, the Directorate of Health Services, the regional office of the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation and the departments of Agriculture and Horticulture were among the offices that marked the day. Officials said the celebrations reaffirmed the administration's commitment to development, public service delivery and the welfare of border and far-flung areas, with speakers across the districts pledging to carry the momentum of the week's Tiranga campaign into the year ahead.



REGIONAL

Satish Sharma announces Rs 70 crore for 2,079 works at Kathua I-Day function

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026

Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs, IT, Youth Services and Sports, and Science and Technology Minister Satish Sharma hoisted the National Flag at the Sports Stadium here on the 80th Independence Day and took the salute from a march-past by contingents of the police, security forces, Forest department, NCC and school students. Addressing the gathering, Sharma highlighted government initiatives in development, food security, transport, sports, e-governance, water supply and infrastructure, noting that more than Rs 70 crore had been allocated under the District Capex Budget 2026-27 for 2,079 works in Kathua. He urged young people to "explore opportunities in sports, skills, technology and entrepreneurship" to lead the future of Jammu and Kashmir. Kathua MLA Dr Bharat Bhushan, Deputy Commissioner Rajesh Sharma, SSP Mohita Sharma, senior civil and police officers, ex-servicemen, prominent citizens and students attended the function. A cultural programme by school children marked the occasion, and achievers as well as winners of departmental competitions were felicitated.



REGIONAL

Udhampur launches Vrinda Kalari, its first women-led cheese cooperative

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026

Deputy Commissioner Minga Sherpa on Wednesday inaugurated "Vrinda Kalari," a formalised, hygienic and mechanised processing unit for traditional kalari cheese at Kotli Balan, giving Udhampur its first women-led cooperative brand for the prized Dogra delicacy. The unit is run by Vrinda Cooperative Private Limited, a fully women-member enterprise described by officials as women-led from its very foundation. It has been set up with seed funding routed through the Centre for Cooperatives and Livelihoods at the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration in Mussoorie. Officials said it is the first cooperative in Udhampur, and indeed in the country, to undertake both the processing and the market branding of kalari cheese under a single cooperative structure. Kalari, also known as kaladi, is a dense, chewy cheese associated with the hill belts of the Jammu region and is a fixture of local cuisine and roadside eateries. Officials said the venture aims to give women producers a formal footing, standardised hygiene and a recognisable brand, while opening a steadier market for a product that has long been made and sold informally. "Kaladi carries strong potential to boost tourism and cultural promotion in the district," the Deputy Commissioner said at the launch, which was attended by officials of the district administration, representatives of partner departments and the women members of the cooperative. The administration said it would extend support for capacity building, packaging and marketing so the enterprise could scale up.



REGIONAL

Doda, Baderwah hold full-dress rehearsals ahead of Independence Day

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026

The Doda district administration held full-dress rehearsals for the 80th Independence Day at the local Sports Stadium and at Baderwah on Thursday, previewing the parades and cultural programmes for the main functions on Aug 15. At the Sports Stadium in Doda, Additional Deputy Commissioner Anil Kumar Thakur inspected the parade and took the salute from contingents of the CRPF, SSB, J&K Armed Police, J&K Police, the Police Protection Force, NCC cadets and students from government and private institutions. He extended greetings to the people of Doda on the eve of Independence Day and paid rich tributes to the freedom fighters and martyrs who sacrificed for the country's independence. At Baderwah, Tehsildar Kamal Preet Singh hoisted the Tricolour at the New Bus Stand and took the salute, with the NCC senior division from the Government Degree College, the NCC junior division from higher secondary schools and contingents of government and private schools taking part. The rehearsal featured traditional dances and patriotic songs previewing the Independence Day programme. The main district function was held on Aug 15 with Deputy Commissioner Krishan Lal unfurling the flag.

REGIONAL

Search operations launched in Reasi, Udhampur, Kathua after suspicious movement

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026



Security forces launched coordinated search operations across parts of Reasi, Udhampur and Kathua districts on Tuesday following separate reports of suspected persons moving in the areas, officials said. In Reasi, forces combed the Sadini forests after reports of suspicious movement. In Udhampur's Talot village, a joint cordon-and-search operation was mounted after two men wearing shawls allegedly knocked on the door of a resident, Prakash Chand, late Monday night seeking food and then moved off towards the Khuban side when the household did not respond. In Kathua, searches were carried out in several villages near the International Border in the Hiranagar sector. Joint teams from the

REGIONAL

Samba marks Independence Day under tight border security

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026

Deputy Commissioner Ayushi Sudan unfurled the National Flag at the Rani Suchet Singh Sports Stadium here on the 80th Independence Day, taking the salute from a ceremonial march-past in the presence of SSP Anuj Kumar and Additional Deputy Commissioner Champa Devi. A vibrant cultural programme by school children showcased the district's heritage and the theme of unity in diversity, while achievers and prominent citizens were felicitated. Officials, ex-servicemen, students and members of the public attended the function. As a border district, Samba had been placed under tight security in the run-up to the day, with personnel keeping vigil at checkpoints and along approach roads. The celebrations capped the week-long Har Ghar Tiranga campaign, observed across the district from Aug 9 to 17, during which rallies, plantation drives and awareness activities on cleanliness and water conservation were held to encourage residents to fly the Tricolour at their homes and workplaces.

REGIONAL

Ramban caps week-long Tiranga drive with Independence Day parade

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026

Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Aliyas Khan hoisted the National Flag at the District Police Lines here on the 80th Independence Day, taking the salute from contingents of the J&K Police, CRPF, SSB and the India Reserve Police as school children staged patriotic cultural performances. Commander 11 Sector Rashtriya Rifles Ajay Pal Singh, SSP Arun Gupta and CRPF 84 Battalion Commandant Vijay Singh Khatana were among those present at the function, which passed off peacefully under tight security in the hill district straddling the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway. The parade capped a week-long Har Ghar Tiranga drive observed across Ramban from Aug 9 to 17, during which rallies, plantation drives and Tiranga exhibitions were held to draw residents into the campaign. The Deputy Commissioner had earlier said the effort aimed at "taking the spirit of patriotism beyond ceremonial celebrations" and encouraging citizens to associate with the flag with pride. Officials, ex-servicemen, students and members of the public attended the celebrations.

MORE FROM THIS SECTION

REGIONAL

Kishtwar hoists Tricolour at Chowgan as Machail yatra runs under curbs

Deputy Commissioner Pankaj Kumar Sharma unfurled the flag at the historic Chowgan grounds even as the Machail Mata pilgrimage continued...

NATIONAL

Jharkhand caves to exam-reform stir, scraps JSSC-CGL and tainted tests

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026



After a 24-day student agitation and a 16-day hunger strike in Ranchi, the Hemant Soren government cancelled the JSSC-CGL exam, the 14th JPSC prelims and every test run by a blackl...

Bowing to one of the most sustained student agitations Jharkhand has seen in years, the Hemant Soren government on Sunday scrapped the Jharkhand Staff Selection Commission's Combined Graduate Level (JSSC-CGL) examination and annulled every recruitment test conducted by a blacklisted outsourcing firm, handing the protesting aspirants their central demand after 24 days on the streets of Ranchi. The cabinet decision, announced late on August 17, cancelled the JSSC-CGL exam, the 14th Jharkhand Public Service Commission (JPSC) preliminary examination and all examinations, results and selections carried out since 2014 by TSR Data Processing Pvt Ltd (TDPL) — a firm the state had blacklisted in 2024 but which was allowed to keep running tests. The government also ordered an Enforcement Directorate probe into financial irregularities in the 14th JPSC exam, sought the resignation of three JPSC members and set up a reforms committee headed by senior IAS officer Amitabh Kaushal, according to The Federal. The Manch's core charge was that a firm barred for earlier lapses had been entrusted with high-stakes exams that decide thousands of government jobs, and that repeated leaks had drained any faith in the process. Aspirants said careers had been left in limbo for years as results were challenged and re-examinations ordered. Chief Minister Hemant Soren said an official inquiry had exposed "several companies" involved in what he called a "huge exam racket," and framed the cancellations as a cleanup of the state's recruitment machinery. The Federal reported that roughly 2,000 candidates already selected through TDPL-run tests could lose their appointments as a result. The concessions followed weeks of escalating protest led by the JPSC-JSSC Reform Manch, which had camped first at Ranchi's Morabadi Maidan and then at the Jaipal Singh Munda Stadium. Manch leader Devendra Nath Mahto, associated with the Jharkhand Loktantrik Krantikari Morcha, had been on an

indefinite hunger strike for 16 days before ending his fast in the early hours of August 17. "Today marks a huge victory for Jharkhand," Mahto said as he suspended his fast, according to The Federal. "While I am now suspending my protest, my struggle for reform will continue." The stir had turned combative on August 10, when thousands of aspirants marched on the state assembly. Police used lathi charges, tear gas and water cannon to break up the "Vidhan Sabha gherao"; the following day the state BJP enforced a bandh in solidarity and scores of Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad workers were detained, according to accounts of the agitation. On August 15, even as the rest of the country marked Independence Day, protesters at the Ranchi site burned effigies of state and opposition leaders to signal they would not be placated by symbolism. Yet the government's climbdown stopped short of the protesters' final demand — a Central Bureau of Investigation inquiry into the alleged paper leaks and recruitment irregularities. "All our demands have not been met yet," Manch coordinator Ravindra Paswan said, insisting the movement would continue until a CBI probe was ordered and the status of the 11th to 13th JPSC examinations was clarified, the Organiser reported. The agitation had become a rallying point for the opposition. Congress leaders, including Rahul Gandhi, voiced support for the aspirants and demanded a transparent investigation, while the ruling coalition sought to blunt the political fallout in a state that is fiercely sensitive about its recruitment record. For thousands of unemployed graduates who have watched examination after examination sink under leak allegations, the cancellations were a rare instance of a government conceding ground to a leaderful street movement — even as the aspirants made clear they would not fold their tents until the paper trail was handed to central investigators.



NATIONAL

'Season 2' warning: Cockroach Janta Party tells Centre to keep Jantar Mantar promises

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026

The Cockroach Janta Party (CJP), the youth movement that forced Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan out of office in July, has warned the central government to honour the promises it made to end the Jantar Mantar protest or brace for a fresh, larger agitation. CJP founder Abhijeet Dipke said on August 12 that "Season 2 of Jantar Mantar is going to start very soon," a message the party's spokesperson Saurav Das cast as a nationwide campaign on education and jobs rather than a single sit-in, Outlook reported. The CJP called off its 37-day Jantar Mantar protest on July 25 after Pradhan resigned and the government gave written assurances — the withdrawal of FIRs against non-violent protesters in Delhi and NDA-ruled states, no fresh cases, a parliamentary discussion on preventing paper leaks, and compensation for families of NEET aspirants who died by suicide. Dipke has since alleged the Centre reneged on those terms, saying compensation remained unpaid and that cases against students were still being pursued. The party, which has decided to stay a pressure group rather than contest elections, launched a rural-schools drive from Independence Day even as it kept the threat of renewed street action alive.



NATIONAL

Government agrees to full Parliament debate on student protests, Shah to reply

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026

The government has agreed to a full parliamentary debate on the student protests that have roiled national politics this summer, with Home Minister Amit Shah set to respond to the discussion rather than offer a brief ministerial statement. The concession, reported this week, marks a shift after the opposition spent days pressing for a substantive reckoning on the NEET paper leak and the wave of exam-reform agitations. Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi had repeatedly demanded that Shah answer the House directly and questioned his absence from the benches during the row. Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju attached a condition to the deal, according to the report: opposition members must hear Shah's reply without disrupting proceedings and not walk out during the response. The two sides were still to settle the timing, duration and precise scope of the debate. The agreement threatens to keep the student agitations — from the Jantar Mantar sit-in to the Jharkhand recruitment stir — at the centre of the session's business, giving the opposition a formal platform to press the government on accountability for repeated examination leaks.

NATIONAL

Supreme Court quashes criminal defamation case against Rahul Gandhi

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026



The Supreme Court on August 14 quashed a criminal defamation complaint against Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi over remarks he had made about the Hindutva ideologue V.D. Savarkar, according to a weekly round-up of the court's rulings by Law Zone. The bench held that political speech is entitled to heightened constitutional protection and that the machinery of criminal defamation cannot be used to silence dissent or ordinary political debate, the round-up said. The ruling brought to a close one of several defamation prosecutions that had trailed the Congress leader across states in recent years. The decision lands amid a wider legal and political debate over the use of criminal defamation against politicians, activists and journalists, and adds to a body of the court's jurisprudence urging restraint in criminalising speech that falls within the bounds of political expression. Gandhi, who has faced multiple defamation cases filed by ruling-party supporters, has argued that such prosecutions are meant to harass the opposition. The court's intervention removes one such case even as others remain pending across the country.

NATIONAL

Supreme Court weighs afternoon hearings to clear Constitution Bench backlog

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026



The Supreme Court is exploring dedicated afternoon sittings devoted to its most consequential cases, in a bid to clear a stubborn backlog of matters awaiting larger benches, India Legal reported. The court on Wednesday floated the idea of holding two-hour hearings every afternoon before seven-judge Constitution Benches, while reserving the morning session for fresh, miscellaneous and routine cases, the report said. As many as 29 Constitution Bench matters are currently pending, many raising weighty questions that have waited years for a full hearing. Constitution Bench cases — heard by five or more judges — decide the largest questions of law and precedent, but they routinely lose out to the crush of daily admissions and bail matters that dominate the court's mornings. By ring-fencing the afternoons, the court hopes to give these disputes sustained, uninterrupted attention. The move is the latest of several experiments aimed at cutting delays in a system where pendency runs into the millions. It reflects a recognition that the court's own backlog of foundational cases has become a drag on legal certainty for governments and litigants alike.

NATIONAL

Apex court orders Rs 25 lakh for custodial death, flags cover-up

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026



The Supreme Court has ordered Rs 25 lakh in interim compensation to the family of a man who died in custody in Chhattisgarh, finding that state authorities had "deliberately tried to cover up" the circumstances of the death. In Lahra Bai Tamre versus State of Chhattisgarh, decided on August 12, the bench faulted the official handling of the case and directed the interim payout while the wider proceedings continue, according to a weekly review of the court's judgments by Verdictum. Custodial deaths have long drawn sharp judicial scrutiny in India, with the court repeatedly holding that the state bears a heightened duty of care over anyone in its custody and must account transparently when a detainee dies. The interim award does not close the matter, but the bench's finding of an attempted cover-up signals that the court expects a full and candid accounting from the authorities rather than the obstruction it said it had encountered. Rights groups have long pressed for independent inquiries into deaths in police and judicial custody.



NATIONAL

Supreme Court bars retrospective POCSO penalty, restores life term for child rape

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026

The Supreme Court has restored a life sentence for the aggravated sexual assault of a three-year-old, ruling that stiffer penalties introduced by the 2019 amendment to the child-protection law cannot be applied to an offence committed before the change took effect. In Balesh Kumar Kuraiti versus State of Chhattisgarh, decided on August 12, a bench of Justices Aravind Kumar and Vipul M. Pancholi set aside a High Court order that had leaned on the 2019 Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) amendment to fix a term of 20 years' rigorous imprisonment, according to a weekly review of the court's judgments by Verdictum. The bench held that applying the enhanced statutory punishment retrospectively would violate Article 20(1) of the Constitution, which forbids convicting a person under a law heavier than the one in force when the offence was committed. The court restored the life term as the appropriate punishment, while clarifying that it would not extend to the remainder of the convict's natural life. The judgment, which opened with a literary reflection on the suffering of children, reinforced a settled constitutional principle even as it upheld a severe sentence for one of the gravest categories of crime against a minor.

MORE FROM THIS SECTION

NATIONAL

Supreme Court examines reach of anti-defection law in Shiv Sena split

The court took up whether a split in a legislative party carries over into the wider organisation — a question with far-reaching...

NATIONAL

Himachal reels as monsoon toll hits 196; 105 roads shut, rain warning to Aug 23

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026



Relentless rain kept Himachal Pradesh in crisis on Tuesday, shutting 105 roads, crippling power and water supply, and pushing the season's death toll to 196 as the weather office e...

Relentless monsoon rain kept Himachal Pradesh in the grip of crisis on Tuesday, shutting 105 roads to traffic, crippling power and drinking-water supply across the hills, and pushing the season's death toll to 196 as the India Meteorological Department extended a heavy-rain warning through Aug. 23. The State Emergency Operations Centre said 196 people had died in rain-related incidents between June 30 and Aug. 17, in a monsoon that has repeatedly battered the fragile Himalayan state with cloudbursts, flash floods and landslides. Officials pegged the cumulative damage to public and private property at nearly Rs 994 crore, a figure expected to rise as assessment teams reach cut-off pockets. Road connectivity bore the brunt of the latest spell. Of the 105 blocked roads, Mandi accounted for 39 and Kullu for 33, with the rest scattered across Sirmaur, Kangra and Chamba. Thirty-six electricity transformers were knocked out and 15 drinking-water schemes damaged, leaving clusters of villages without power or piped water for a second straight day. The heaviest rain in the 24 hours to Tuesday morning fell at Kothi in Kullu, which recorded 71.4 mm. The weather office issued an orange alert for heavy to very heavy rain at isolated places in Kangra, Mandi, Bilaspur and Sirmaur, and a yellow alert for Shimla, Kullu, Solan, Una, Hamirpur and Chamba. Forecasters warned that landslides and flash floods remained likely at vulnerable locations until Aug. 23, and cautioned residents and tourists against travelling on hill roads during downpours. The deadliest incident of the day came from Sirmaur, where a landslide at a limestone mine in the Kafota-Shillai belt buried and killed three people as a section of hillside gave way amid continuous rain. Rescuers battled falling debris to recover the bodies, and local residents alleged that excavation had continued despite a seasonal ban on monsoon mining. In

Lahaul and Spiti, a cloudburst washed away a stretch of road, stranding pilgrims bound for the Neelkanth shrine along with local farmers and their vehicles. Administrations in the affected districts said restoration crews and machinery had been pre-positioned, but that fresh slides were repeatedly reopening the same choke points on national and state highways. Himachal has become one of the sharpest illustrations of the Himalayan region's mounting climate stress. The state recorded dozens of separate cloudburst and flash-flood events through the 2025 monsoon, and this year's pattern of short, intense bursts has again overwhelmed drainage, slope-stabilisation and early-warning systems built for gentler rain. Engineers say ageing government buildings, unplanned construction on unstable slopes and the scarring of hillsides by roads and mining have magnified the damage from each spell. The disruption has cascaded into daily life. Schools in several sub-divisions stayed shut, apple growers in Kullu and Shimla warned that blocked roads were stranding the harvest at the peak of the marketing season, and tour operators reported cancellations as travellers steered clear of the hills. The Public Works and Jal Shakti departments said crews were working around the clock to reopen arteries and repair water lines, but that safety of personnel in active slide zones limited how fast they could move. State authorities appealed to the public to heed weather advisories, avoid river banks and drainage channels, and dial emergency helplines at the first sign of slope movement. With the IMD signalling no let-up before the weekend, officials said the immediate priority was to keep evacuation routes open, restore essential supply to cut-off habitations and prevent the toll from climbing further as the sodden slopes stay primed to give way.



NATIONAL

President Murmu approves 78 gallantry awards, 13 of them posthumous

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026

President Droupadi Murmu has approved 78 gallantry awards for personnel of the armed forces and central police organisations on the eve of the 80th Independence Day, honouring acts of exceptional bravery, 13 of them posthumously. The list includes nine Kirti Chakras — seven of them awarded posthumously — one Bar to the Shaurya Chakra and 19 Shaurya Chakras, one of which is posthumous. The Kirti Chakra and Shaurya Chakra are among the country's foremost peacetime gallantry decorations, given for conspicuous courage in circumstances other than direct action against the enemy. The armed forces were further recognised with five Bars to the Sena Medal (Gallantry) and 36 Sena Medals (Gallantry), along with three Nao Sena Medals (Gallantry) and five Vayu Sena Medals (Gallantry). The awards span soldiers, sailors and airmen as well as personnel drawn from the central armed police forces engaged in counter-insurgency and counter-terror operations. Announced by the government the day before Independence Day, the honours cap a week in which the leadership repeatedly spotlighted the sacrifices of security personnel, and set the stage for the formal conferment of the decorations at investiture ceremonies later in the year.



NATIONAL

India leases two more MQ-9B Sea Guardian drones for the Navy in Rs 1,943-crore deal

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026

The Ministry of Defence has signed a contract with General Atomics Aeronautical Systems Inc. for the lease of two MQ-9B Sea Guardian high-altitude, long-endurance remotely piloted aircraft for the Indian Navy, a deal valued at about Rs 1,943 crore. The lease runs for 30 months and will take the Navy's fleet of leased Sea Guardians to four, deepening the surveillance reach it has built up over the past several years. Equipped with advanced sensors and sophisticated payloads, the drones are meant to sharpen the service's maritime domain awareness and provide persistent intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance across vast stretches of the Indian Ocean region. The Navy already operates two leased MQ-9Bs under a contractor-owned, contractor-operated arrangement that has seen multiple extensions. The fresh contract, signed on Sunday, comes alongside a separate, larger programme to procure 31 MQ-9B Predator drones for the three services from the United States. Officials said the additional aircraft would help the Navy keep watch over busy sea lanes and choke points at a time of heightened focus on the maritime domain, offering coverage over areas that manned patrols cannot sustain for long. The Sea Guardian is the naval variant of the MQ-9B family, tailored for wide-area ocean surveillance.

NATIONAL

Modi opens Rs 11,000-crore highway projects to ease Delhi's traffic

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026



Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday inaugurated two major national highway projects worth nearly Rs 11,000 crore in Delhi, aimed at decongesting the capital's chronically choked road network and smoothing connectivity to neighbouring Haryana. The projects include the Delhi section of the Dwarka Expressway and the Alipur-Dichaon Kalan stretch of the Urban Extension Road-II (UER-II). Together they are designed to divert through-traffic away from the city core, cut travel times to the airport and satellite towns, and relieve pressure on existing arterial corridors. Modi used the occasion to renew his "Vocal for Local" pitch ahead of Independence Day, linking modern infrastructure to the wider push for self-reliance and domestic manufacturing. Officials said the new stretches, built with elevated and access-controlled sections, would improve last-mile links for commuters and freight across the national capital region.

NATIONAL

Reliance and Rolls-Royce to co-develop indigenous engine for AMCA fighter

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026

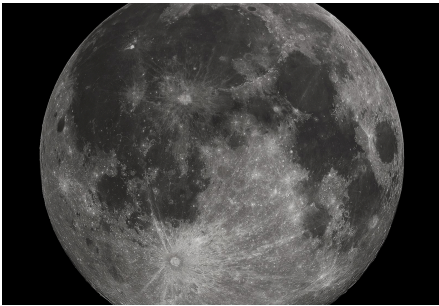


Reliance Industries and British engine-maker Rolls-Royce have announced their intent to partner on the design, development and manufacture of a sovereign indigenous combat engine for India's Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA), the country's planned fifth-generation stealth fighter. Under the arrangement, unveiled on Aug. 14, the two firms will explore setting up a dedicated Aerospace Gas Turbine Complex — a centre of excellence for propulsion technology. The venture aims to build end-to-end domestic capability from design and manufacturing to testing and through-life support of aero engines. Rolls-Royce said combining its expertise with Reliance's industrial base would help create sovereign capability in one of the most closely guarded areas of military technology. A home-built jet engine has long been a gap in India's aerospace ambitions, with the country still dependent on foreign powerplants for its fighter fleet. The companies framed the tie-up as a step towards the Aatmanirbhar Bharat vision of self-reliance. The AMCA, developed under the Defence Research and Development Organisation, is central to the Air Force's plans to field an advanced twin-engine stealth jet.

NATIONAL

NASA invites ISRO to join its lunar Moon Base programme

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026



NASA has invited the Indian Space Research Organisation to join its Moon Base programme, an ambitious effort to build humanity's first permanent outpost near the Moon's south pole, in a move that deepens space cooperation between the two countries under the Artemis framework. The invitation, which came to light this week, followed the ninth meeting of the India-US Civil Space Joint Working Group, held at ISRO headquarters in Bengaluru on Aug. 5 and 6. The two sides agreed to advance discussions on sharing open scientific data and to expand civil and commercial space collaboration, including in human spaceflight technology. The programme envisions a sustained lunar surface habitat where astronauts would live, work and test technologies for deeper missions, including to Mars. The overture builds on the NASA-ISRO partnership behind the NISAR earth-observation satellite, launched in July 2025, and on India's status as a signatory to the Artemis Accords since 2023. Under its Space Vision 2047, India is targeting a crewed lunar landing by 2040 and the first module of its own Bharatiya Antariksh Station by 2028.



NATIONAL

Military modernisation is top priority, Rajnath tells armed forces on I-Day eve

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh told the armed forces that the modernisation of the military, driven by a self-reliant and future-ready defence sector, was the government's top priority, in his customary address to soldiers on the eve of Independence Day. Speaking over Akashvani, Singh said the sector had been transformed over the past 12 years by the Aatmanirbhar Bharat and Make in India initiatives, shifting the country steadily from an importer of weapons towards a producer and exporter. He said domestic defence production, worth about Rs 46,000 crore in 2014, had climbed to a record Rs 1.78 lakh crore in 2025-26 — a nearly four-fold rise. The Defence Minister said the outlay had also expanded sharply, with the defence budget rising from Rs 2.53 lakh crore in 2013-14 to Rs 7.85 lakh crore in 2026-27. He credited the growth to policy support for indigenous design and a widening private-sector role. Singh highlighted recent technological strides by the Defence Research and Development Organisation and the forces, and framed continued indigenisation as central to India's strategic autonomy. He paid tribute to soldiers guarding the frontiers and said the government remained committed to equipping them with modern, home-built platforms as the country marked its 80th year of independence.

MORE FROM THIS SECTION

NATIONAL

Three killed in Sirmaur limestone-mine landslide

A hillside gave way at a limestone mine in Himachal's Sirmaur district, burying and killing three people amid heavy rain.

BUSINESS

Markets end week lower as inflation, tariffs and a fragile rupee weigh

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026



India's benchmark indices closed the week to Aug. 14 in the red as sticky wholesale inflation, a rupee pinned near record lows and the overhang of steep US tariffs kept investors c...

India's equity benchmarks closed a bruising week lower, weighed down by stubborn wholesale inflation, a rupee pinned near its all-time low and the unresolved overhang of steep American tariffs, even as pockets of the market drew buyers on the final session.The BSE Sensex ended the week to Aug. 14 at 78,009.25, down about 490 points or 0.62 percent, while the NSE Nifty 50 settled at 24,366, lower by roughly 205 points or 0.83 percent, according to a weekly market wrap by brokerage Upstox. The Bank Nifty finished the week at 57,491.10. On Friday alone the Sensex shed about 71 points while the Nifty held at 24,366, with consumer durables among the few sectors to advance, Business Standard reported.The week's biggest drag was fresh price data. Wholesale price inflation stood at 9.78 percent in July, easing only marginally from 9.87 percent in June and staying uncomfortably high on the back of a 20.05 percent surge in fuel and power costs, figures released on Aug. 14 showed. Retail inflation, measured by the Consumer Price Index, printed at 4.45 percent for July, within the Reserve Bank of India's tolerance band but with food inflation running hotter at 5.52 percent.Currency weakness compounded the gloom. The rupee has traded near record lows through 2026, having touched an all-time weak point of 96.84 against the US dollar in May before clawing back, and hovered in the mid-95 range during the week as elevated crude prices and West Asia tensions offset any relief from softer import demand. Foreign portfolio investors have pulled roughly P2.29 lakh crore out of Indian equities so far in 2026, already exceeding the full-year 2025 outflow, data cited by market analysts showed.Looming over sentiment is Washington's tariff wall. A 50 percent US tariff on a broad swathe of Indian goods, in place since mid-2025, was compounded by an additional 10 percent duty on non-exempt items from July 24, covering an estimated 55

percent of India's exports by New Delhi's own reckoning. Labour-intensive sectors — textiles and apparel, gems and jewellery, marine products and engineering goods — remain the most exposed, and exporters have warned that shipments are being priced out against rivals in Vietnam, Bangladesh and Indonesia.Against that backdrop, safe-haven assets rallied hard. Gold on the Multi Commodity Exchange pushed to record territory near P1.55 lakh per 10 grams by the middle of the following week, extending a steady climb that has run through August, while silver held near P2.50 lakh a kilogram.Monetary policy offered a measure of stability. The Reserve Bank of India, at its August review, kept the repo rate unchanged at 5.25 percent with all six Monetary Policy Committee members voting to hold, retaining a neutral stance. Governor Sanjay Malhotra signalled the central bank wanted a clearer read on inflation before acting, and the RBI nudged its FY27 growth forecast up to 6.7 percent while trimming its inflation estimate to 5.0 percent.Corporate results, still trickling in as the June-quarter reporting season wrapped up, gave bulls something to hold on to. Aggregate corporate sales rose about 24 percent year-on-year in the first quarter of FY27, pointing to resilient domestic demand even as profitability stayed uneven on higher costs, according to a survey published mid-week.Analysts said the market was likely to stay range-bound until there was clarity on the tariff standoff and a durable turn in the rupee. "Domestic demand and corporate performance remain supportive, but external headwinds are capping the upside," one brokerage note observed. Traders will watch crude prices, foreign flows and any progress on India-US trade talks for the next directional cue.



BUSINESS

Wholesale inflation eases to 9.78% in July as fuel costs cool

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026

India's wholesale price inflation eased marginally to 9.78 percent year-on-year in July from 9.87 percent in June, data released by the commerce and industry ministry on Aug. 14 showed, though the headline number stayed in double digits for a fourth straight month.The all-commodities index stood at 110.0 for July against 110.2 in June. The moderation was led by a softening in fuel and power inflation, which fell to 20.05 percent from 27.41 percent, even as it remained the single largest contributor to price pressure. Primary articles inflation rose to 8.52 percent from 7.0 percent, while manufactured products firmed to 8.29 percent from 7.48 percent.The WPI food index registered inflation of 6.65 percent in July, up from 6.14 percent in June, pointing to persistent pressure on kitchen budgets. The reading came a day after retail inflation, measured by the Consumer Price Index on the new 2024 base, printed at 4.45 percent for July, with rural inflation at 4.84 percent and urban at 3.96 percent.Economists said the divergence between still-elevated wholesale prices and contained retail inflation reflected the pass-through lag from costly fuel and imported inputs, and reinforced the Reserve Bank of India's decision to hold rates steady while it waited for a clearer inflation signal.



BUSINESS

Gold vaults near ₹1.55 lakh as safe-haven demand builds

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026

Gold prices held near record levels this week, with futures on the Multi Commodity Exchange rising about 0.55 percent to P155,358 per 10 grams on Aug. 17, extending a steady climb the metal has shown through August.In the physical market, 24-carat gold was quoted at roughly P15,513 a gram on Aug. 16, while silver traded near P2.50 lakh a kilogram, holding firm at P238,690 by Aug. 17. Both metals have appreciated sharply from early-month levels, when MCX gold first breached P1.49 lakh per 10 grams.Dealers attributed the rally to strong investor demand for safe-haven assets amid global economic uncertainty, expectations around the US Federal Reserve's rate path and renewed geopolitical tension in West Asia. The surge has, however, dampened retail and jewellery buying, with traders reporting muted demand at elevated prices ahead of the festive season.Analysts said bullion was likely to stay well bid as long as currency volatility and geopolitical risk persisted, though a sharp correction could not be ruled out if global cues stabilised.

BUSINESS

Centre clears ₹5,630 crore to widen J&K industrial scheme

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026



The apex committee overseeing industrial incentives has permitted the use of about P5,630.75 crore available under the New Central Sector Scheme for Industrial Development of Jammu and Kashmir to register eligible units beyond the 918 already enrolled, a move expected to clear a long waiting list of applicants, according to a report this week.The Centre has disbursed nearly P950 crore under various industrial incentive schemes in the Union Territory over the last five financial years, with 292 of the registered units having begun commercial production. Officials estimate the NCSS-2021, which offers capital investment and interest subsidies, could generate roughly 29,000 jobs.The development came as J&K's industrial pipeline drew attention in Parliament. Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal told the Rajya Sabha that investment proposals worth about P12,665 crore in domestic and P500 crore in foreign capital had been received for the region, after BJP leader Sat Sharma raised the issue of accelerating industrial development and foreign investment in the House.Officials said widening registration under the scheme would help absorb pending applications and deepen manufacturing activity in a UT where industrialisation has long lagged the national average.

BUSINESS

J&K handicraft exports touch ₹817 crore as artisan base widens

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026



Jammu and Kashmir's handicraft exports reached P817.39 crore during 2025-26, with 4.61 lakh artisans now registered across the Union Territory, according to official figures reported on Aug. 15.The headline number masked a steep decline in the region's marquee craft. Carpets, once the valley's leading handicraft export at P821.50 crore in 2016-17, slumped to just P123.31 crore this year, hit by weak overseas demand and competition. Shawls and other crafts have taken up part of the slack.To broaden market access, 1,871 artisans and weavers have been onboarded onto the Open Network for Digital Commerce, the government said, part of a wider push to move Kashmir's craftspeople onto formal digital marketplaces. Officials have coupled the effort with skill-development programmes and quality certification aimed at arresting the erosion of the traditional export base.

BUSINESS

Chief Secretary pushes GI traceability to shield Kashmir crafts

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026



Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo has directed authorities to expand skill-based courses and improve the traceability of Geographical Indication-tagged products, as Jammu and Kashmir moves to shield its handicrafts and handloom sector from counterfeits, according to a review meeting held on Aug. 14.Dulloo asked officials to explore technology-driven systems for fair-wage assessment of artisans and to deepen quality authentication. The Indian Institute of Carpet Technology in Srinagar has already GI-tagged and QR-code labelled 22,500 carpets, allowing buyers to scan and verify authenticity of the handmade product.Proposals for six additional crafts from Kashmir and ten from the Jammu division are under consideration for GI registration, officials said, part of a drive to protect the UT's heritage products from cheaper machine-made imitations that have eroded artisan earnings.



BUSINESS

Corporate India posts 24% sales jump in Q1 as demand holds firm

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026

Corporate India turned in a resilient first quarter of FY27, with aggregate sales rising about 24 percent year-on-year, a survey published on Aug. 16 showed, pointing to healthy domestic demand as the June-quarter earnings season drew to a close.The combination of strong top-line growth and positive, if slower, earnings expansion suggested companies entered the financial year with firm demand conditions, analysts said. Profitability, however, was uneven across sectors, weighed down by higher input costs and one-off charges, leaving margins under pressure at several firms.The reporting week to Aug. 14 — the deadline for filing quarterly results — saw a heavy slate of announcements, including from Tata Motors, Hindustan Aeronautics, MRF, Siemens, Apollo Hospitals, Bharat Forge, RVNL and Vodafone Idea. By late July, more than 760 companies had already reported.On the macro side, SBI Research projected real GDP growth of about 8 percent for the June quarter, citing supportive domestic demand and steady corporate performance. The Reserve Bank of India, at its August policy, raised its FY27 growth forecast to 6.7 percent, underscoring cautious optimism despite external headwinds from US tariffs and a weak rupee.

MORE FROM THIS SECTION

BUSINESS

US tariff wall keeps Indian exporters on edge

A 50 percent US tariff, compounded by a fresh 10 percent duty, continues to squeeze India's labour-intensive export sectors.

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TECHNOLOGY

Three chip plants now running, five to eight more coming, Modi tells nation

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026



In his 80th Independence Day address from the Red Fort, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said three Indian semiconductor plants have begun commercial production and exports, and promis...

Prime Minister Narendra Modi used his 80th Independence Day address from the ramparts of the Red Fort on Friday to put India's semiconductor drive at the centre of the country's technology ambitions, telling the nation that three plants have already begun producing chips commercially and that exports have started from the new facilities.Modi said India had entered a fresh phase of chip manufacturing and that another five to eight plants could become operational over the next seven to eight years, with at least one more unit expected to start work before the end of 2026. The declaration marked one of the most forward-leaning technology passages in a Red Fort speech otherwise dominated by security, self-reliance and the country's youth.Officials tracking the programme said the three units now in production are Micron's assembly and test plant at Sanand in Gujarat, and facilities run by Kaynes and CG Semi, all cleared under the India Semiconductor Mission. Micron's plant packages memory chips for mobile phones, data centres and vehicles, while the two other units handle assembly, testing, marking and packaging work that forms the back end of the chip supply chain.The prime minister's remarks were anchored in Semicon 2.0, the second phase of the national chip programme approved by the Union Cabinet in July with a total outlay of about Rs 1,27,500 crore. Unlike the first phase, which concentrated on attracting fabrication and packaging investment, Semicon 2.0 is designed as an end-to-end effort covering chip design and intellectual property, manufacturing equipment and raw materials, new fabrication lines, advanced packaging, research, and the specialised workforce the sector needs.Modi framed the push as central to cutting India's dependence on imported electronics, a recurring theme of his self-reliance agenda. Every smartphone, laptop, car and defence system now relies on

chips that India has historically bought from abroad, and the government has argued that a domestic base is as much a strategic requirement as an economic one. The prime minister linked the effort to a wider bet on next-generation networks and artificial intelligence, saying the country intends to move from being a consumer of frontier technology to a producer of it.The announcement lands at a delicate moment for the industry. Tata Electronics is racing to bring its wafer fabrication plant at Dholera, built with Taiwan's Powerchip, to first silicon by late 2026, a milestone that would give India its first operational fab producing chips at mature nodes of 28 nanometres and above. Government figures cited over the past year put the number of approved semiconductor projects in the double digits, spread across seven states and ranging from large logic and power fabs to compound-semiconductor and substrate units.Analysts have cautioned that packaging and testing, while real manufacturing, sit at the lower-value end of the chain, and that India's claim to a genuine chip ecosystem will rest on the fabs still under construction. But the sector has also drawn tens of thousands of crores in committed investment and created a pipeline of engineering jobs, and the prime minister's decision to spotlight it from the Red Fort signalled that the government sees political as well as industrial capital in the story.For a border region like the Pir Panjal, the payoff is indirect but real: cheaper, more secure and more available electronics feed everything from banking and health records to the connectivity that districts such as Poonch and Rajouri increasingly depend on. Modi closed the passage by casting the chip programme as a marker of a confident, technologically self-reliant India as the country begins its journey toward the centenary of Independence.

TECHNOLOGY

Independence Day hackathon puts agentic AI to work on public good

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026



A civic-technology nonprofit chose India's 80th Independence Day to launch a 90-day artificial-intelligence hackathon aimed at turning the country's engineering talent toward public problems rather than commercial apps.Code for India opened its "Code for a Billion" contest on August 15, framing it as a Bharat agentic-AI hackathon that runs through November 15, with winners announced on December 5 based on projects actually deployed and running in the cloud. The organisers said participants would build agentic AI-powered digital public goods addressing major challenges in areas such as public health, and would register and build through dedicated online platforms rather than gathering in person.The fully virtual event carries a prize pool of about Rs 18 lakh and has drawn industry bodies as knowledge and skilling partners, including Nasscom's FutureSkills Prime. Code for India describes itself as a nonprofit set up to help engineers build technology for the public good, and the timing was chosen to tie the effort to the Independence Day theme of national self-reliance.

TECHNOLOGY

xAI ships Grok 4.6, closing gap with OpenAI's top model

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026

Elon Musk's artificial-intelligence company xAI released Grok 4.6 this week, the newest version of its flagship large language model, in a launch that showed how quickly the top tier of AI systems is converging.According to industry trackers, Grok 4.6 matched OpenAI's strongest current model, GPT-5.6 Sol Max, on the closely watched Artificial Analysis Intelligence Index, with both scoring 61, and supports a context window of about 500,000 tokens, allowing it to handle far larger documents and codebases in a single session. xAI held the model's pricing steady from the previous release, a move analysts read as an attempt to compete on capability without touching off a fresh round of price cuts.The update arrived in the same week that OpenAI and Google unveiled faster serving tiers, underscoring how tightly bunched the leading labs have become. With headline quality scores now separated by narrow margins, the competition has shifted to speed, price, context length and how well each model drives autonomous coding agents.Grok is developed by xAI and is woven into Musk's social platform, giving it a distribution channel its rivals lack. The rapid cadence of releases across the sector has left enterprise customers weighing not just which model is best today but how often each provider ships, and at what cost.

TECHNOLOGY

Anthropic revises its own AI safety verdict downward in new report

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026

The artificial-intelligence developer Anthropic published a detailed risk report this week that revised one of its own earlier safety verdicts downward, an unusual step for a leading lab and a signal of how seriously the industry is treating questions about controlling powerful models.The 186-page document, reported on Tuesday, reassessed the company's previous, more reassuring judgement about the behaviour of its systems and moved it to a more cautious footing. The change was driven less by a single failed test than by a broader sense of uncertainty as models grow more capable and are handed more autonomy over real-world tasks.Anthropic, the maker of the Claude family of models, has positioned safety research as central to its identity and regularly publishes assessments under a formal framework meant to flag when a system crosses a threshold that warrants extra caution. Publishing a downward revision, rather than quietly updating internal figures, puts pressure on rivals to be equally transparent about the risks their own systems carry.The report lands amid intensifying competition, with labs shipping faster and more powerful models almost weekly. Safety researchers have warned that the same agentic capabilities being marketed to businesses, in which software plans and executes tasks on its own, are precisely what make rigorous evaluation harder, and Anthropic's revision underscored how thin the margin between capability and control has become.



TECHNOLOGY

ISRO to break seven-month launch freeze with GISAT-1A in September

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026

The Indian Space Research Organisation is set to end a nearly seven-month operational pause, with the GISAT-1A Earth-observation satellite scheduled to lift off in the first week of September, according to a report on Monday.The mission will be ISRO's first launch since the PSLV-C62 flight carrying the EOS-N1 satellite failed on January 12, one of the longest gaps between launches the agency has faced in recent years. GISAT-1A, also designated EOS-05, will fly aboard the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle from the spaceport at Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh.The satellite is built for high-frequency imaging of large stretches of the Indian landmass from a geostationary vantage point, allowing it to keep near-continuous watch over the same region rather than passing overhead only intermittently. Its intended uses include monitoring floods, cyclones and other natural disasters, along with agriculture, forestry and changes on the ground, capabilities of direct value to disaster-prone and remote districts.ISRO has spent the months since January reviewing the earlier failure before clearing its heavier vehicles to fly again. A successful GISAT-1A mission would restore momentum to a launch calendar that had stalled and reassure domestic and foreign customers waiting on Indian rockets. The agency has not confirmed a precise date, saying only that final checks are under way ahead of the September window.



TECHNOLOGY

OpenAI and Google race to sell speed with new AI tiers

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026

OpenAI and Google both moved on Thursday to sell speed as a feature in its own right, each announcing a faster tier of artificial intelligence as the two companies compete to win over businesses that treat response time as a cost.OpenAI introduced a tier it calls Ultrafast, which it said runs its GPT-5.6 Sol model up to 14 times quicker than the standard service, reaching as many as 750 output tokens per second. The company said the tier runs on specialised chips from Cerebras and is being offered as a preview to a small group of early customers. "Until now, getting real-time speed typically meant choosing a smaller or more specialized model," the firm said, casting the launch as more useful work per second rather than a trade-off.Google answered the same day with Gemini 3.7 Flash, priced at 75 cents per million input tokens and \$3.75 per million output tokens through the end of December, before the rate rises. Independent benchmarking put the model at about 340 output tokens per second, and Google billed it as its most capable workhorse model yet for coding and software agents.



TECHNOLOGY

Google launches Pixel 11 in India at Rs 1.2 lakh

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026

Google took the wraps off its Pixel 11 smartphone line at a Made by Google event on Wednesday, launching the flagship Pixel 11 Pro in India at a starting price of about Rs 1,19,999, with a higher-storage variant listed at Rs 1,34,999.The Pro model is powered by Google's in-house G6 processor and runs the latest version of Android, pairing a 6.3-inch high-refresh OLED display with a triple rear camera system and a large front sensor. Google has leaned heavily on on-device artificial intelligence as the phone's main selling point, folding generative features and its Assistant deeper into the camera, search and everyday tasks.Across the wider lineup Google dropped its entry 128GB storage option this year, pushing up starting prices in several markets, including the United States. In India the Pixel 11 Pro will go on sale from August 20 through the Google Store, Flipkart and other retail partners, in a set of new colour finishes.The launch keeps Google in a premium segment of the Indian market long dominated by Apple and Samsung, where it competes on software and camera processing rather than volume. Priced well above the mass market, the Pixel remains a niche but closely watched device among Indian enthusiasts and reviewers.

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HEALTH

Over 3,000 staff at J&K's five new medical colleges begin indefinite strike

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026



Non-gazetted employees of the Government Medical Colleges at Baramulla, Anantnag, Rajouri, Doda and Kathua stopped work from Aug 18, saying recruitment rules promised for their ins...

More than 3,000 non-gazetted employees of Jammu and Kashmir's five new Government Medical Colleges (GMCs) resolved to launch an indefinite strike from Aug 18, protesting what they described as a nearly six-year delay in framing the recruitment rules that would give them a statutory career structure, Rising Kashmir reported.The agitation covers the GMCs at Baramulla, Anantnag, Rajouri, Doda and Kathua, the five colleges sanctioned to widen medical education and tertiary care across the Union Territory. Employees said the absence of notified service rules had left them without clarity on promotions, seniority and career progression, condemning much of the workforce to what they called professional stagnation.The posts, they said, were created through a Cabinet decision and formally sanctioned in October 2017, but the rules governing recruitment and promotion for these cadres were never finalised. Draft recruitment rules were placed in the public domain by the Health and Medical Education Department in August 2025, the employees said, yet more than a year later there had been no meaningful movement towards their notification.Their central demand is that the rules for the new colleges be framed on the pattern already in force at the established GMCs in Srinagar and Jammu, so that staff at the newer institutions enjoy comparable service conditions and promotional avenues.Employees linked the deadlock directly to patient care, pointing to acute understaffing across the five hospitals. At GMC Baramulla alone, they said, roughly half of the 541 sanctioned posts remain vacant, forcing the available staff to shoulder multiple roles. "Where there should be three employees in a section, sometimes only one is managing the entire workload. It ultimately affects patient care," a GMC Baramulla employee told Rising Kashmir.The strike is not the workforce's first. In May 2026, employees of the same five institutions held an indefinite strike over the identical grievance, but they said the matter remained unresolved despite assurances, prompting the fresh call for agitation.The

protesting employees said that while they were pressing ahead with the stir, emergency services and emergency patient care would be kept running to avoid endangering critically ill patients. Routine hospital work, however, including regular outpatient and inpatient services, was likely to be hit as staff withdrew from non-emergency duties, they cautioned.The five colleges, spread across both the Kashmir and Jammu divisions, were meant to decongest the older tertiary hospitals in Srinagar and Jammu and bring specialist care closer to districts such as Rajouri, Doda and Kathua. Employees argued that a stable, rule-bound cadre was essential if these institutions were to deliver on that promise, and warned that continued uncertainty would drive experienced hands away from the public health system.Representatives of the employees appealed to the administration to convene the file at the earliest and notify the long-pending rules, saying they had exhausted patience through years of representations, meetings and an earlier strike. They said the responsibility for any disruption to services rested with the delay in decision-making, not with a workforce that had, in their words, kept fledgling hospitals functioning through chronic shortages.The employees also sought parity in pay scales, promotion channels and seniority with counterparts at the older colleges, arguing that staff doing identical work across the two sets of institutions could not be governed by different, and in their case non-existent, rules. Years of waiting, they said, had blocked time-bound promotions and left many still on the designation they were first appointed to.The stir adds to a run of unrest across J&K's medical-education sector in recent weeks, with staff at various hospitals pressing longstanding demands over cadre reviews, regularisation and working conditions. Employees warned that unless the rules were notified quickly, the strike could be intensified, and urged the administration to treat the demand as an overdue administrative correction rather than a fresh concession.



HEALTH

DR Congo Ebola outbreak tops 4,600 cases as Bundibugyo vaccine trials begin

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026

The Democratic Republic of the Congo's worst-ever Ebola outbreak has climbed to 4,665 confirmed cases and 2,184 deaths, a case-fatality ratio of about 47 percent, the World Health Organization said in a disease outbreak update on Aug 12. It is the largest and fastest-growing Ebola outbreak the country has recorded.Declared on May 15, the outbreak has spread to 54 health zones across six eastern provinces, including Ituri, North Kivu and South Kivu, the WHO said. The UN reported that more than 300 children had died. Al Jazeera, reporting the toll passing 2,000 on Aug 11, noted the epidemic is second in scale only to the 2014-16 West Africa outbreak.The outbreak is driven by the Bundibugyo species of the virus, for which no vaccine or treatment is yet approved. The WHO said trials of the first Bundibugyo-specific candidate vaccine had begun, offering hope of the world's first shot against the strain, though results were likely months away. Response teams face health-worker strikes, misinformation and high-risk burial practices, it added.

HEALTH

West Bengal rolls out Ayushman Bharat, opening Rs 5 lakh cover to 1.5 crore families

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026

West Bengal began implementing the Centre's Ayushman Bharat health insurance scheme from Aug 16, with the government marking the occasion as 'Ayushman Diwas', The Print reported. About 1.5 crore families, roughly six crore people, are expected to be covered, in addition to some 3.4 crore residents already enrolled who could access services from the same day.Under the scheme, each beneficiary is entitled to cashless treatment of up to Rs 5 lakh, with the cost of medicines, diagnostic tests and follow-up care covered from three days before hospitalisation until 15 days after discharge. Patients need only present an Aadhaar card for digital verification, and no charge is levied for issuing the Ayushman Bharat card, officials said.A network of 1,930 hospitals, 1,303 private and 627 government facilities, has been enrolled to deliver treatment, according to the report. The Centre has committed about Rs 1,000 crore, or 60 percent of the funding, with the state bearing the rest. Officials said the scheme would run alongside the state's existing Swasthya Sathi programme for an initial three months before that is gradually phased out."Nobody will be left out. There is no need to fear that anyone will be excluded," state Health Minister Sharadwat Mukherji was quoted as saying.

HEALTH

Army medical camp treats 500 in remote Khag belt of Budgam

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026



The 62 Rashtriya Rifles of the Indian Army organised a free medical camp at Humchipora village in the Khag area of Budgam district on Aug 17, providing consultations, check-ups and medicines to residents of a belt where health facilities are hard to reach, Gadyal Kashmir reported.About 500 people from Humchipora and adjoining villages attended the camp, among them a large number of elderly residents, women and children. Beyond routine examinations, the camp offered free medicines and general healthcare guidance, with organisers encouraging preventive care and timely follow-up for chronic ailments."Such free medical camps are of immense value in remote areas where access to healthcare facilities is often limited," local residents were quoted as saying, thanking the Army for bringing doctors to their doorstep. The camp is one of several the security forces have run across rural and border districts of J&K in recent weeks as part of their civic-outreach work.

HEALTH

Paras Health Srinagar to hold free multispeciality camp on Aug 23

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026



Paras Health Srinagar will hold a free multispeciality health camp on Aug 23 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at its facility at Durganag, Dalgate, the hospital announced, according to the Srinagar Observer.Free out-patient consultations will be offered across a dozen specialities, including internal medicine, cardiology, orthopaedics, medical and surgical oncology, gynaecology and obstetrics, gastro sciences, neuro sciences, pulmonology, nephrology, urology and paediatrics. Attendees will also get complimentary blood-pressure and blood-sugar checks and a 20 percent concession on laboratory and radiology investigations, the hospital said. Registration is being taken over phone ahead of the camp."We believe that access to timely and expert medical advice is an important part of building a healthier community," Facility Director Dr Murtuza Habib said. Such camps have become a regular feature of Srinagar's health calendar, giving patients a single window to consult specialists who are otherwise spread across separate departments and appointment queues.

HEALTH

WHO chief defends MMR vaccine, warns against sidelining science

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026



World Health Organization Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus used his Aug 12 media briefing to reaffirm the safety of routine immunisation, voicing concern over a new vaccination-policy approach in the United States and cautioning against letting politics override scientific evidence."Vaccines - including the MMR vaccine - are safe and do not cause autism," Tedros said, addressing claims that have circulated for years despite being repeatedly debunked. He added that "delaying vaccines or separating doses unnecessarily does not make vaccination safer," pushing back against proposals to alter established childhood immunisation schedules.Vaccination policy, he stressed, should follow the science rather than political influence. The remarks land at a time when health agencies worldwide are contending with faltering immunisation coverage and a resurgence of vaccine-preventable diseases such as measles, a trend the WHO has repeatedly linked to gaps in routine cover and the spread of misinformation.

MORE FROM THIS SECTION

HEALTH

On Youth Day, WHO flags young people's mental health

Marking International Youth Day, the WHO drew attention to the mental-health burden and other risks facing young people worldwide.

INTERNATIONAL

Iran and Oman agree Hormuz safe corridor after fresh tanker attack chokes Gulf shipping

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026



Iran said it had reached a deal with Oman on a safe route through the Strait of Hormuz, a day after the UAE accused Tehran of attacking a third ADNOC tanker in the world's most imp...

Iran said it had reached an agreement with Oman on a safe corridor for ships passing through the Strait of Hormuz, a tentative step toward easing a crisis that has all but shut the world's most important oil chokepoint after another attack on a Gulf tanker. Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei announced the deal on Aug. 15, saying Tehran and Muscat had agreed on "a safe route for vessels transiting through the Strait of Hormuz" following about three weeks of talks, Iran International reported. But Baghaei tied any lasting calm to Washington, insisting that "full security in the strait could not be restored while US maritime sanctions, military movements and a naval blockade remain in place." The caveat underscored how far the Gulf remains from normal, with the United States and Iran locked in their most dangerous maritime confrontation in years. The corridor announcement came a day after the United Arab Emirates accused Iran of attacking a third Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) vessel in less than a week as it transited the strait. ADNOC said the ship had come under attack on Aug. 14 but reported no injuries and said "the situation was under control," according to Reuters and Al-Monitor. The UAE foreign ministry demanded that Iran "halt what it described as unprovoked attacks, end hostilities and fully reopen the waterway." The repeated strikes have throttled one of the arteries of the global economy. The Strait of Hormuz, a narrow passage between Iran and Oman, normally carries about a fifth of the world's oil. Iran International reported that only two vessels passed through on Friday, Aug. 14, against a pre-crisis daily average of more than 130 ships. US Central Command said it had redirected 62 commercial vessels by mid-August as it enforced what Tehran calls a blockade, and oil prices climbed on fears that diplomacy remained stalled. Qatar and Pakistan have been working to broker a de-escalation, according to the Iranian account, part of a scramble by

regional and outside powers to prevent a wider war in the Gulf. For the region's Arab monarchies the stakes are acute: their economies run on the uninterrupted export of crude and liquefied natural gas through Hormuz, and prolonged disruption threatens revenues, insurance costs and their standing as reliable suppliers. The confrontation has been building for months amid intensified conflict across the Middle East, with attacks reported in both the Strait of Hormuz and the Red Sea and no clear route back to negotiations between Washington and Tehran. Iran has long threatened to close Hormuz in answer to Western pressure, a step analysts historically viewed as a last resort because it would choke Iran's own exports and invite a fierce military response. This time the near-total collapse of traffic suggests Tehran is willing to use the waterway as leverage. The disruption reverberates well beyond the Gulf. Asian economies, India among the largest buyers, draw a substantial share of their crude and gas through Hormuz, and a sustained closure would push up import bills and pump prices far from the Persian Gulf. Global shipping lines have already begun rerouting or pausing voyages, and war-risk insurance premiums for Gulf transits have jumped, adding cost at every link of the supply chain. The Iran-Oman understanding, if it holds, could allow a trickle of shipping to resume under Omani guarantees while the broader dispute festers. Muscat has long played mediator between Iran and the West, and its involvement offers a face-saving channel for both sides. Yet with Baghaei conditioning full security on an end to US sanctions and naval operations, and the UAE demanding an immediate halt to attacks, the two sides' opening positions remain far apart. For now shipowners, insurers and energy markets are left watching a chokepoint that has rarely looked so vulnerable, and a Gulf that has rarely looked so close to open conflict.



INTERNATIONAL

Zelensky says Ukraine has a plan to pressure Putin, a year after the Alaska summit

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026

President Volodymyr Zelensky said this week that Ukraine and its international partners had developed a joint plan built on pressuring Russia, declaring in his nightly address that "Putin does not want to stop this war, but he will stop it. We have a plan." The Kyiv Independent reported that Zelensky announced the strategy's existence on Aug. 12 but withheld details, saying they had been handed to US negotiators. A US official said Washington had learned of the plan during an Aug. 11 call but had not yet received specifics, which Ukrainian officials indicated would be shared when envoys Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner visit Kyiv later in the month. Zelensky pressed the Trump administration to work "more actively," arguing there was "not enough pressure" on Moscow. The appeal came as commentators marked one year since the Trump-Putin summit in Anchorage. An RTE analysis noted the front line has barely shifted in twelve months, peace talks have stalled since February, and Russia continues to demand full control of the Donbas while Ukraine seeks a freeze along current lines. Kyiv has stepped up deep strikes on Russian oil depots and logistics.



INTERNATIONAL

Zambia's Hichilema wins second term, avoiding a runoff

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026

President Hakainde Hichilema won re-election in Zambia's general election, the Electoral Commission of Zambia announced on Aug. 18, crediting the incumbent with 60.49 percent of the vote and clearing the 60 percent threshold required to avoid a runoff. Hichilema, of the United Party for National Development (UPND), and his running mate Mutale Nalumango were returned for a second term after the Aug. 13 poll. His nearest challenger, Brian Mundubile of the newly formed NRPUP, took 37.87 percent, according to the commission. Turnout was reported at 57.25 percent, a sharp fall of more than 13 percentage points from the previous election. The UPND also strengthened its grip on parliament, winning 174 of 266 seats, up from 82 in 2021, while the NRPUP emerged as the main opposition bloc. Hichilema, a businessman who lost five previous presidential bids before winning in 2021, has faced mounting criticism over the cost of living, power shortages and a prolonged drought that battered the economy. His allies cast the result as an endorsement of his reform agenda; opponents complained of an uneven playing field.

INTERNATIONAL

Nigeria's Adeleke holds Osun governorship in tight race

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026

Incumbent Osun State governor Ademola Adeleke was declared the winner of the Aug. 15 gubernatorial election, Nigeria's Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) announced on Aug. 16, handing the Accord party candidate a second term in the south-western state. According to results published by INEC, Adeleke won 511,067 votes to defeat Munirudeen Bola Oyebamiji of the governing All Progressives Congress (APC), who polled 444,815. Najeem Salaam of the African Democratic Congress trailed far behind with 17,180 votes. Notably, the Peoples Democratic Party, on whose platform Adeleke first won office, did not field a candidate, underscoring the fluid party alignments that increasingly define Nigerian state politics. The contest in Osun had been closely watched as a barometer of the APC's standing in the south-west ahead of the wider 2027 general election cycle, and the party had poured resources into recapturing the state. Adeleke, a former senator known nationally for his exuberant public style, cast his re-election as a mandate to continue infrastructure and welfare programmes. The APC signalled it may challenge aspects of the result, a familiar coda to hard-fought Nigerian polls, where governorship outcomes are frequently contested at election tribunals.

INTERNATIONAL

Fresh monsoon spell puts Pakistan's Punjab cities on flood watch

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026



Pakistan's Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) warned this week of urban flooding across Punjab's largest cities as a fresh monsoon spell swept the region, forecasting continued heavy rain through Aug. 21. Lahore, Rawalpindi, Gujranwala, Faisalabad, Sialkot and Gujrat were placed on watch for flash and urban flooding, officials said. The PDMA reported that most Punjab rivers were maintaining normal flow, with low-level flooding recorded in the Indus, while the Chenab at Marala, Khanki and Qadirabad and the Ravi at Sidhnai were expected to touch low-flood levels. The Kabul river at Nowshera was also forecast to reach low-flood level, with hill torrents in the Dera Ghazi Khan division facing a risk of flash flooding. The fresh spell caps a punishing monsoon. Earlier tallies cited by Al Jazeera put the season's death toll above 100 since June, with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa recording the most fatalities, followed by Punjab, and more than half of the deaths caused by collapsing homes and roofs. Authorities in Lahore had set up more than a dozen relief camps for evacuated residents.

INTERNATIONAL

Settler siege of West Bank village draws rare Israeli condemnation

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026



Israeli settlers besieged Palestinian homes in the West Bank village of Qusra, south of Nablus, setting up outposts and blocking residents' access, before Israeli troops moved in to evacuate the settlers, The Times of Israel reported. Residents said soldiers occupied some homes during the operation and reported damage to interiors, the theft of money from one family and a security-camera recorder taken from a besieged house; the military had not responded to the allegations by the time of reporting. The episode drew an unusually sharp response from within Israel's own pro-settlement camp. Yesha Council chair Yisrael Ganz called the siege "severe and unacceptable" and said it was "not our way," condemning violence against Palestinians and security forces even as he backed settlement growth through "orderly" means. US Ambassador Mike Huckabee initially branded the perpetrators "Israeli terrorists," later framing them as a "very small minority" and praising Ganz's stance. The confrontation added to a summer of rising settler violence across the occupied West Bank, which has drawn repeated warnings from rights groups and stretched Israeli forces already engaged elsewhere.



INTERNATIONAL

Japan's defence review flags Taiwan as tensions with Beijing simmer

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026

Japan's newly released defence white paper highlighted security in the Taiwan Strait as a major concern, warning that China has expanded military activity around the island, normalised repeated drills by the People's Liberation Army and strengthened blockade and precision-strike capabilities, according to reporting from Tokyo and Taipei this week. The review lands amid a diplomatic crisis between Beijing and Tokyo that has simmered since late 2025, when Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi told parliament that a Chinese attack on Taiwan could constitute an "existential crisis" for Japan, potentially allowing Tokyo to act in collective self-defence. Beijing reacted angrily, and relations have remained frosty. An American Enterprise Institute tracker dated Aug. 14 recorded continued friction over Taiwan's status, including Taipei's complaint that a Chinese move aimed to create a "false impression" of Chinese jurisdiction to the island's east. Taiwan and Japan have both pushed back on Beijing's assertiveness, while China insists the island is an internal matter and warns outside powers against interference. Analysts say the hardening rhetoric leaves little room for a quick de-escalation.

MORE FROM THIS SECTION

INTERNATIONAL

Israeli strike kills Hamas commander during Gaza truce

Israel said it killed a Hamas brigade commander in Khan Younis, defending strikes during the ceasefire as targeting an imminent threat.

SPORTS

India close on Galle victory as Sri Lanka totter at 84 for four chasing 372

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026



Devdutt Padikkal's first-innings 167 and a disciplined spin attack left Sri Lanka needing an improbable 288 more on the final day, with India six wickets from a 1-0 series lead.

India tightened their grip on the opening Test against Sri Lanka at the Galle International Stadium on Tuesday, reducing the hosts to 84 for four at the close of the fourth day and leaving them needing a further 288 runs — an improbable 372 in all — to keep the series level. With six wickets to take on the final morning, the tourists were firmly placed to go 1-0 up in the two-match series. The match had swung India's way from the first session. Choosing to bat on a dry Galle surface, the visitors ran up 462 in their first innings, built around a commanding 167 from opener Devdutt Padikkal, who batted through the second day and shared 136 for the second wicket with KL Rahul. Rahul made 82 and wicketkeeper Dhruv Jurel chipped in with 51 down the order as India, resuming their overseas assignment in the subcontinent, laid a platform few sides recover from in Galle. Sri Lanka's reply of 284 always trailed the game. The hosts slipped to 90 for five before Niroshan Dickwella and Sonal Dinusha counter-attacked, adding 146 for the sixth wicket to spare the innings deeper embarrassment. Dinusha reached a defiant hundred and Dickwella made 80, but once the stand was broken the tail folded quickly. India's spinners did the bulk of the damage, with left-armers Manav Suthar and Ravindra Jadeja sharing seven wickets between them to hand the tourists a first-innings lead of 178. That advantage might have been decisive on its own, but Sri Lanka's bowlers dragged their side back into contention on the third evening. Asitha Fernando, moving the older ball, took four wickets and left-arm spinner Prabath Jayasuriya claimed three as India were bowled out for 193 in their second innings. Rishabh Pant top-scored with a brisk 66

and Padikkal added 44, though a middle-order stumble meant the lead was set at 372 rather than something closer to 450. Sri Lanka's pursuit began badly. India's quicks removed the openers cheaply before the spinners returned to squeeze the scoring, and by stumps the hosts had limped to 84 for four across 34 overs. Captain Dhananjaya de Silva was unbeaten on 31 and Dinusha, promoted after his first-innings century, was 25 not out, the pair charged with surviving the new day on a pitch offering increasing turn and bounce. The equation heavily favoured the tourists. No side has chased anything approaching 372 in the fourth innings at Galle, where the surface typically deteriorates sharply by the fifth day, and India's control of length through Suthar, Jadeja and their support seamers had already exposed the fragility of the home batting. For Sri Lanka, the task was less about the runs than about batting out roughly a day and a half against an attack that had conceded little. India's team management will have drawn particular satisfaction from the batting depth on show, with contributions from the top three, the middle order and the lower-middle order all telling in a low-scoring second innings. The bowling, meanwhile, blended patience with the incisive spells that have become the hallmark of their subcontinental Tests. Victory on the final day would give India an early cushion in the series and continue a strong recent record in Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka, seeking to level before the second Test, needed a rearguard of rare discipline, with de Silva and Dinusha the last realistic barriers to an Indian win. Play was scheduled to resume on the fifth morning with the tourists needing six wickets and the hosts a further 288 runs.



SPORTS

Chess stars Divya, Vidit lead 17 named for Arjuna Awards

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026

The Union Sports Ministry named 17 sportspersons for this year's Arjuna Awards, with chess prominent on a list headlined by Divya Deshmukh, the teenager who won the FIDE Women's World Cup in 2025, and Grandmaster Vidit Gujrathi. Decathlete Tejaswin Shankar, the first Indian to win a Commonwealth Games medal in the event, and badminton doubles specialists Gayatri Gopichand and Treasa Jolly were also among those recognised. Boxer Narendra, a Glasgow Commonwealth Games silver medallist, and deaf rifle shooter Dhanush Srikanth featured on a list spanning a wide range of disciplines. Veteran footballer I Arumainayagam, a member of India's gold-winning side at the 1962 Asian Games, was chosen for the Lifetime Achievement award. Notably, the ministry did not name any athlete for the Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna, the country's highest sporting honour, this year. The awards, which recognise outstanding performance over the preceding cycle, are conventionally conferred at a ceremony at Rashtrapati Bhavan. The announcement drew particular attention for the strength of Indian chess, coming on the back of a run of world-level results by the country's younger players.



SPORTS

Mohun Bagan survive marathon shootout to reach Durand Cup semis

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026

Mohun Bagan Super Giant edged Jamshedpur FC 9-8 on penalties to book a semi-final berth in the 135th Durand Cup, winning a marathon shootout at the Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan on Monday after the quarter-final finished 1-1 in normal time. Sahal Abdul Samad put the Mariners ahead before Devendra Murgaonkar levelled for Jamshedpur, sending the tie to a shootout that ran deep into sudden death. The first 16 kicks were all converted before goalkeeper Vishal Kaith saved Lawmsangzuala's effort, and Tekcham Abhishek Singh stepped up to convert the decisive penalty. The result completed a strong weekend for the Kolkata giants. A day earlier, East Bengal had beaten Indian Army 1-0 at the same venue to reach the semi-finals, while NorthEast United FC thrashed Shillong Lajong 5-2 in Shillong to complete the last-four line-up. The semi-finals were scheduled for August 19 and 20, with the final to be played at the Salt Lake Stadium on August 23. The Durand Cup, first held in 1888, remains Asia's oldest football competition and this year drew 24 teams across six groups.

SPORTS

Chinar Premier League brings 1,600 young cricketers to Baramulla grounds

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026

The Chinar Premier League 2026 is under way across North Kashmir, with around 1,600 young cricketers turning out for 79 teams in an IPL-style Twenty20 tournament that opened in Baramulla on August 8. Organised by the Indian Army's Chinar Corps in partnership with the Baramulla Cricket Federation, the league draws teams from all 10 districts of the Kashmir valley as well as Jammu, Leh and Ladakh. Matches are being staged across seven venues in Baramulla, including the Gen Bipin Rawat Stadium and the Showkat Ali College Ground at Khawajabagh. Organisers said the participation of 79 teams was tied to the 80th Independence Day, framing the event as a platform for youth engagement, sportsmanship and regional unity. The tournament has been positioned as one of the larger grassroots cricket exercises held in the region, offering young players competitive match exposure and a route to be spotted by selectors. Officials described strong turnouts at the opening fixtures, with the format aimed at nurturing local talent through the Kashmir summer.

SPORTS

Kulgam launches month-long girls' sports meet to scout young talent

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026

A month-long multi-discipline sports tournament for girls was inaugurated at the Sports Stadium in Kulgam on Monday, part of a district drive to identify and nurture young sporting talent under the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme. Deputy Commissioner Shahzad Alam, who opened the event, called for greater investment in girls' education, sport and skill development. "Our goal is to ensure that our daughters scale new heights in their respective careers," he said, adding that sport helped build confidence, discipline and leadership among young women. Organised by the Sankalp Hub for Empowerment of Women, Kulgam, the tournament features competitions in cricket, football, volleyball, badminton and basketball. Block-level teams from across the district are taking part, with organisers aiming to spot promising players who can be developed through structured coaching. Officials said the initiative was as much about widening participation as about winning, encouraging girls from rural blocks to take up organised sport at a competitive level. The event forms part of a wider push in south Kashmir to expand access to sporting facilities for women and girls, building on similar district-level meets held across the valley through the summer. The month-long calendar is expected to culminate in finals across the five disciplines, with the best performers in contention for further trials.

SPORTS

India pull out of FIFA ASEAN Cup to keep Brazil friendly in Kolkata

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026



India have withdrawn from the inaugural FIFA ASEAN Cup to clear the way for a marquee friendly against Brazil, the All India Football Federation confirmed, with the showpiece fixture set for the Salt Lake Stadium in Kolkata on October 3. AIFF Deputy Secretary General M Satyanarayanan said the governing body could not commit to both events. "We have pulled out of the FIFA ASEAN Cup since we can't play both Brazil and the FIFA ASEAN Cup," he said, citing a scheduling clash with the tournament, which runs from September 21 to October 6. India had been placed in Division 1 Group A of the ASEAN Cup alongside Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore. The federation initially weighed sending a developmental squad before abandoning the idea, choosing instead to build its calendar around the Brazil game — a rare visit by one of world football's heavyweights to Indian soil. The AIFF is reportedly exploring further friendlies, including possible fixtures against Cabo Verde and Iran, though those remain unconfirmed. For the Blue Tigers, the Brazil match offers a high-profile test after a difficult run of results.



SPORTS

Harmanpreet double gets India off to winning start at Hockey World Cup

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026

India began their FIH Hockey World Cup 2026 campaign with a 3-1 win over Wales in a Pool D opener at the Wagener Hockey Stadium in Amstelveen on Saturday, captain Harmanpreet Singh scoring twice to set the tone for the tournament favourites. Young forward Sanjay opened the scoring in the eighth minute, and Harmanpreet doubled the lead three minutes later. The India skipper added his second in the 43rd minute to put the game beyond Wales, who pulled one back through Sam Welsh in the 56th minute. "I think we started very well. I am happy that one of the young players scored our opening goal. Overall, it was a pretty good game," Harmanpreet said afterward, singling out the teenage forward's contribution. The win gave India an early advantage in a pool that also features England, their next opponents on August 17. India, among the pre-tournament contenders, will look to carry momentum into the tougher fixtures as they chase a first World Cup medal in more than four decades on the Netherlands turf.

MORE FROM THIS SECTION

SPORTS

DPS Jammu skaters win 18 medals at state roller championship

Nine golds among 18 medals for the school at the 4th Ranking Roller Skating Championship at MA Stadium, Jammu.

PUBLIC NOTICES · TENDERS · AUCTIONS · RECRUITMENT

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

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

PWD (R&B) DIVISION POONCH

Ref: PWD/R&B/PNC/2026-27/EMG-34

Emergency restoration of flood-damaged Loran–Sawjian road and protection works

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 registered contractors of appropriate class for emergen...

Type: Works
Last date: 2 Sep 2026
Est. cost: ₹ 3.40 crore
EMD: ₹ 6.80 lakh
Location: Mandi, Poonch
Contact: Executive Engineer, PWD (R&B) Division Poonch · 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

JAL SHAKTI (PHE) DIVISION RAJOURI

Ref: JSD/RAJ/2026-27/FRW-19

Restoration of flood-damaged water supply schemes in Thanamandi and Darhal blocks

The Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti (PHE) Division Rajouri, on behalf of the Governor of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, invites online item-rate tenders from eligible registered contractors for the restoration of f...

Type: Works
Last date: 5 Sep 2026
Est. cost: ₹ 2.10 crore
EMD: ₹ 4.20 lakh
Location: Thanamandi, 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

PDD ELECTRIC DIVISION POONCH

Ref: PDD/PNC/2026-27/REST-22

Restoration of flood-damaged 11kV and LT lines in Surankote and Mendhar

The Executive Engineer, PDD Electric Division Poonch, on behalf of the Governor of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, invites online tenders from eligible registered electrical contractors for the restoration of flood...

Type: Works
Last date: 8 Sep 2026
Est. cost: ₹ 1.65 crore
EMD: ₹ 3.30 lakh
Location: Surankote, Poonch
Contact: Executive Engineer, PDD Electric Division 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

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: ₹ 210 crore
EMD: ₹ 4.20 lakh
Location: Rajouri
Contact: Principal / Dean, GMC Rajouri · jktenders.gov.in

DIRECTORATE OF HEALTH SERVICES JAMMU

Ref: DHSJ/2026-27/EQP-41

Supply of ambulances and emergency medical equipment for Pir Panjal district hospitals

The Director, Health Services Jammu, on behalf of the Governor of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, invites online tenders from eligible manufacturers and authorised suppliers for the supply of advanced life-support...

Type: Supply
Last date: 10 Sep 2026
Est. cost: ₹ 4.20 crore
EMD: ₹ 8.40 lakh
Location: Poonch / Rajouri
Contact: Director, Health Services Jammu · Refer NIT PDF

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

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

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

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

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. 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

NATIONAL

India marks 80th Independence Day; Tricolour flies from Red Fort to Poonch

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026

India marked its 80th Independence Day on Friday with Prime Minister Narendra Modi hoisting the Tricolour from the ramparts of the Red Fort, while Jammu and Kashmir observed the day with flag-hoistings, ceremonial parades and cultural functions from Srinagar to Poonch — in a Valley where the national flag once flew amid apprehension.Delivering his 13th consecutive Independence Day address, a record for any non-Congress prime minister, Modi spoke for about 78 minutes. He unveiled a "Sapta Dhara" vision of seven streams of national strength and announced a High-Powered Demography Mission to counter what he called demographic change driven by infiltration and illegal migration along the borders.He promised artificial-intelligence training for one crore youth over the next year, said three semiconductor plants had begun production with five to eight more on the way, and reported that India's defence exports had grown nearly fiftyfold, with weapons now reaching close to 100 countries. For the first time at the ceremony, the full Vande Mataram was rendered.The prime minister also promised free coaching for competitive examinations to ease the burden on families, launched a nationwide sports talent hunt for children aged five to 15 with an eye on the 2036 Olympics, and set a target of 100 GW of nuclear capacity by 2047.

He said work on Mission Sudarshan Chakra, an indigenous defence shield announced last year, was progressing rapidly, and pledged a modern civil-defence volunteer network.In Srinagar, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah hoisted the flag at Bakshi Stadium and took the salute at a ceremonial parade of the J&K Police, central forces and schoolchildren as a helicopter showered flower petals over the ground. Former chief ministers Farooq Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti were among those present.Addressing the gathering, Omar reiterated his government's commitment to restoring the Union Territory's statehood and constitutional guarantees. "Whatever was snatched from us should be returned," he said, adding that had Article 370 not been revoked in 2019, people across the Line of Control would today be pressing to reunite with Jammu and Kashmir.In the winter capital, Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary unfurled the Tricolour at the MA Stadium in Jammu. "The Tricolour is a symbol of the sacrifices, unity, brotherhood and collective aspiration of every Indian," he said, inspecting contingents of police, NCC cadets and students.In Poonch, Jal Shakti Minister Javed Ahmed Rana hoisted the flag at the Sports Stadium and took the march-past salute, while deputy commissioners led the functions in Rajouri, Kathua, Udhampur, Samba, Doda, Reasi, Ramban and Kishtwar. Other cabinet ministers presided over district celebrations across the Valley — Javid Ahmad Dar in Baramulla, Sakina Itoo in Anantnag and Nasir Aslam Wani in Kupwara — with parades, patriotic songs and folk performances marking the day.Elaborate security arrangements were in place across Jammu and Kashmir, with multi-tier deployments of police and central armed forces, drone surveillance and checkpoints on approaches to venues, following full-dress rehearsals held earlier in the week.

Authorities reported no untoward incident. No movement restrictions were imposed in Srinagar, mobile internet remained functional through the day, and hundreds of tourists thronged Lal Chowk and the refurbished Clock Tower.Officials said the Tricolour now flies on hilltops once regarded as militant strongholds, a shift the administration cited as evidence of changing ground realities eight decades after Independence. The observance came weeks after a summer of deadly cloudbursts in the hills and midway through the Amarnath pilgrimage, but functions across the two divisions passed off peacefully, they said.

NATIONAL

Modi unveils Demography Mission, Sapta Dhara vision in Red Fort address

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026

Prime Minister Narendra Modi used his 80th Independence Day address from the Red Fort to unveil a sweep of new missions, with a High-Powered Demography Mission at its centre.Modi said the mission would tackle what he described as a demographic imbalance in border areas caused by infiltration and illegal migration, framing it as a step to safeguard the "unity, integrity and rights" of India's citizens.He also set out a "Sapta Dhara" vision — seven streams spanning manufacturing, agriculture and food processing, technology, connectivity, defence, the green and blue economies, and India's soft power — to drive the goal of a developed India, or Viksit Bharat, by 2047.On the economy, the prime minister said three semiconductor plants had begun production and five to eight more would follow within a year or two, while defence exports had risen nearly fiftyfold, with Indian weapons now reaching close to 100 countries.Modi promised free artificial-intelligence training for one crore youth over the next year, free coaching for competitive examinations, and a nationwide sports talent hunt for children aged five to 15 with an eye on the 2036 Olympics. He said work on Mission Sudarshan Chakra, an indigenous defence shield, was advancing quickly, and pledged a modern civil-defence volunteer network to prepare citizens for emerging security challenges.Delivering his 13th consecutive address in a roughly 78-minute speech, Modi presided over a ceremony that featured a full rendition of Vande Mataram for the first time in independent India's history.

REGIONAL

New Sungal tunnel opens, cutting Jammu-Poonch travel near the LoC

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026

A new 2.79-km tunnel that shortens the difficult road between Jammu and Poonch was thrown open to traffic on Aug 16, in a boost to connectivity across the Pir Panjal and to military logistics near the Line of Control.The Sungal tunnel, bored through the Kalidhar range by the Border Roads Organisation's Project Sampark, bypasses a landslide-prone stretch of the Jammu-Poonch national highway, cutting the distance by about 12 km and travel time by roughly 45 minutes.Built at a cost of around Rs 600 crore, the tunnel has initially been opened for light motor vehicles during daylight hours, between 8 am and 8 pm. BRO officials said it would progressively be opened to heavy vehicles and round-the-clock traffic after detailed assessment.Chief Minister Omar Abdullah had inspected the tunnel the previous week ahead of its operationalisation.Beyond its strategic value, officials said the tunnel would benefit civilians in Poonch, Rajouri and Nowshera, improving access to the border districts and supporting trade, healthcare and everyday travel that had long been hostage to weather and landslides on the old alignment.The project is part of a wider push to upgrade highways and build tunnels across Jammu and Kashmir, several of which are aimed at making the mountainous frontier region more accessible year-round.

INTERNATIONAL

Kushner shuttles between Hamas and Netanyahu to salvage Gaza truce

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026

US envoy Jared Kushner shuttled between Hamas and Israeli leaders this week in a renewed push to salvage President Donald Trump's Gaza ceasefire road map, meeting the Palestinian group's leadership in Egypt on Sunday before a marathon session with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Jerusalem on Monday.Kushner, Trump's son-in-law, met Hamas chief Khalil al-Hayya in Cairo, then joined Netanyahu alongside former British prime minister Tony Blair and other mediators to press the Israeli leader to move ahead with the US-backed plan and "not create obstacles," officials said.The talks centred on the disarmament of Hamas, with the two sides agreeing that demilitarisation "should be prompt and completed before any reconstruction." Netanyahu has insisted Israel will not withdraw forces from Gaza or permit rebuilding until the group is fully disarmed.Hamas says it has accepted the road map and has urged mediators to compel Israel to sign on. Kushner said the aim was "a fully demilitarized and deradicalized Gaza that poses no threat to Israel, and where Gazans can pursue prosperity and dignity peacefully."The marathon meeting ended with cautious optimism but no firm Israeli commitment, officials said, leaving the fate of the truce unclear even as pressure mounted on both sides to halt a war that has ground on for nearly two years.

INTERNATIONAL

Colombia earthquake toll passes 300 as rescuers dig through rubble

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026

The death toll from the powerful earthquake that struck western Colombia on Aug 10 climbed past 300 this week as rescuers dug through the rubble of collapsed homes in the mountainous Choco region.The magnitude-7.4 quake, centred about 20 km from San Jose del Palmar, killed at least 304 people and injured more than 4,550, with over 420 still missing, authorities said. More than 81,000 homes were damaged and nearly 14,500 destroyed.President Abelardo de la Espriella declared a state of national disaster and three days of mourning, activated rescue teams and set up a unified command post to coordinate relief.On Aug 12 he declared an economic emergency and proposed a "Miracle Fund" to finance reconstruction across the devastated departments.Rescue crews raced against the critical 72-hour window, pulling survivors — and, in one case captured on video in Cali, a dog — from the debris as aftershocks continued to rattle the region and heavy rain hampered relief operations.

REGIONAL

Budha Amarnath Yatra begins in Poonch as LG flags off first batch

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026

The annual Budha Amarnath Yatra to the ancient shrine in Poonch's Mandi belt began on Sunday, with Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha flagging off the first batch of pilgrims from the Bhagwati Nagar Yatri Niwas in Jammu.The first group set out at 6:30 am for the roughly 230-km journey to the Baba Budha Amarnath temple at Rajpura, perched at about 4,600 feet, for a 12-day pilgrimage that will culminate on Raksha Bandhan on Aug 28."Praying to Lord Shiva for a smooth, safe and spiritually fulfilling journey for all pilgrims arriving from every corner of the country," the LG said.Devotees have travelled from Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, Delhi, Maharashtra and Gujarat, officials said.A multi-tier security grid has been thrown across the Jammu-Rajouri-Poonch route, with police escorts, central armed forces, searches at lodging sites and surveillance in Rajouri and Poonch. Langars, reception counters at transit points and an online registration portal have been set up along the way to support the pilgrims.

REGIONAL

'Return what was snatched': Omar renews statehood pitch on I-Day

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah used his Independence Day address at Bakshi Stadium in Srinagar to renew his government's demand for the restoration of Jammu and Kashmir's statehood and the constitutional guarantees stripped in 2019."Whatever was snatched from us should be returned so that our identity does not just remain in words, but is put into practice," Omar told the gathering after hoisting the national flag and taking the ceremonial salute.Defending the region's accession, he said: "The decision our leaders took for us 80 years ago was the right decision." Had Article 370 not been revoked, he argued, "the people of that part of Jammu and Kashmir across the LoC would have been protesting to reunite with us."The National Conference leader assured people his government would keep working to regain the special status, restore constitutional guarantees and usher in "a new era of progress" — a pledge he has pressed repeatedly, including in the presence of the prime minister.

NATIONAL

BWF World Championships open in New Delhi after 17 years

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026

The 30th BWF World Championships got under way at the Indira Gandhi Arena in New Delhi on Monday, bringing the sport's elite to the Indian capital as the country hosted badminton's flagship event for the first time since 2009.The week-long championship, running Aug 17-23, drew 382 players across men's and women's singles, men's and women's doubles and mixed doubles, with China fielding the largest contingent at 30, followed by Chinese Taipei and Indonesia.India, competing as hosts, entered a 20-strong squad led by former world champion and Olympic medallist P.V. Sindhu, with hopes also pinned on Lakshya Sen and a clutch of rising shuttlers.The opening day featured round-of-64 action in the singles draws and early doubles matches, with the competition building towards the finals on Aug 23.Organisers said the tournament, held on home soil, offered India's players a rare shot at a world title before a passionate home crowd.

INTERNATIONAL

US-Iran deadline expires without deal as Trump threatens Oman

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026

A US-imposed deadline for Iran to reach a new nuclear agreement expired on Monday without a deal, sharpening a standoff that has drawn American warships back toward the Gulf and rattled the wider region, CNN reported.President Donald Trump, who had set the cut-off, turned his ire on Oman — the Gulf sultanate that has long hosted indirect US-Iran contacts — threatening the mediator as the talks collapsed, according to the network's live coverage of the crisis.Washington has signalled it could move to reimpose sweeping sanctions on Tehran, while the aircraft carrier USS Washington was dispatched to the Middle East to relieve the USS Lincoln amid the escalating confrontation.The expiry came against a backdrop of intensifying conflict in Yemen, where Houthi rebels aligned with Iran have struck Saudi Arabia and Red Sea shipping, and of stalled diplomacy that has repeatedly failed to produce a durable understanding between the two adversaries.Iran has rejected what it calls coercive deadlines, insisting its nuclear programme is peaceful. Analysts warned that the lapse of the deadline, with no fresh talks scheduled, risked a new cycle of sanctions and military brinkmanship across the Gulf.

REGIONAL

Amarnath Yatra stays suspended as tracks repaired; over 4.8 lakh pay obeisance

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 17 AUG, 2026

The Amarnath Yatra remained suspended on both the Pahalgam and Baltal routes through this week after damage to the pilgrim tracks and repeated weather warnings, even as the 2026 pilgrimage neared its formal close.The yatra was halted from Aug 9 to allow urgent repairs to vulnerable stretches battered by heavy rain, with the India Meteorological Department flagging adverse conditions in the days that followed, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir Anshul Garg said.Despite the disruptions, more than 4.8 lakh pilgrims have paid obeisance at the cave shrine since the 57-day yatra began in early July — a larger turnout than the previous year.The Chhari Mubarak, the holy mace, will proceed along the traditional Pahalgam route to reach the cave on Aug 28, marking the formal culmination of this year's pilgrimage.Authorities said the tracks would reopen once repairs and the weather permitted, stressing that the safety of pilgrims remained the priority.