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Modi joins Xi, Putin at Bishkek SCO summit, presses zero-tolerance line on terror

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA • 31 AUG, 2026



Prime Minister Narendra Modi told the 26th Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit in Kyrgyzstan there could be no double standards on terrorism, as he shared the stage with Xi Jinping, Vladimir Putin and Pakistan's Shehbaz Sharif.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi joined Chinese President Xi Jinping, Russian President Vladimir Putin and other leaders at the 26th Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit in the Kyrgyz capital Bishkek on Sunday and Monday, using the...

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Pakistani drones probe LoC in Poonch, Rajouri; troops open fire, launch hunt

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA • 31 AUG, 2026



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REGIONAL

Sinha orders intensified area domination, sustained pressure on terror networks

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026



Chairing a high-level security review in Srinagar, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha directed the Army, police and intelligence agencies to keep up aggressive area domination and unr...

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha chaired a high-level security review meeting in Srinagar on Monday and directed the Army, the Jammu and Kashmir Police and central agencies to intensify area domination and maintain sustained pressure on terror networks to decisively counter emerging threats across the Union Territory, officials said. The meeting brought together the top security and administrative brass. Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, Director General of Police Nalin Prabhat, Principal Secretary Home Chandraker Bharti, Special DG (Coordination) at Police Headquarters S.J.M. Gillani and Principal Secretary to the Lieutenant Governor Dr Mandeep K. Bhandari attended, along with ADGP (CID) M.K. Sinha, Inspector General of Police Kashmir Sujit Kumar, IGP Jammu Tejinder Singh, IGP (Crime Branch) Sarah Rizvi, divisional commissioners, DIGs and other senior officers from both divisions. Sinha reviewed the prevailing security scenario, the preparedness of the forces and the coordination between agencies, and pressed for tighter ground-level operational synergy so that any attempt to disturb the peace could be pre-empted. He called for an aggressive area-domination strategy in vulnerable pockets and asked commanders to plug gaps that infiltrators and their local networks could exploit, officials said. The Lieutenant Governor commended the police and security agencies for their recent action against drug smugglers and directed them to sharpen operations against narco-terror networks, which the administration says are being used to funnel money and weapons into the region. He also asked officials to step up monitoring of social media platforms to counter anti-national propaganda, digital misinformation and online blackmailing, a brief that has grown as recruitment and radicalisation shift online. Alongside the enforcement agenda, Sinha stressed that public trust remains central to the security apparatus. He directed senior police officers to maintain a strong and continuous engagement with the public, fix designated hours for hearing

grievances and ensure that every genuine complaint is addressed with sensitivity. "Every investigation must be conducted with absolute fairness, transparency and impartiality," he told the officers, according to officials. The review came amid a heightened vigil across the Valley and in the Jammu region's hill districts, where the forces have kept up cordon-and-search operations and checkpoints through the summer. Security agencies have reported a string of arrests of suspected overground workers and recoveries of arms, grenades and ammunition in south Kashmir in recent weeks, part of a wider effort to dismantle the support structures that sustain armed activity. Monday's meeting also carried a political backdrop. The elected Assembly is due to convene for its autumn session in Srinagar on Sept 21, the first sitting since the monsoon, and the administration is keen to signal that the security grid remains firmly in place ahead of the session and the busy pilgrimage and tourist calendar. Sinha, who last week briefed the Union leadership on the overall situation in Jammu and Kashmir, has repeatedly framed the counter-terror push as a precondition for the region's development drive. Officials said the Lieutenant Governor asked agencies to sustain the tempo of operations without letting down their guard, warning that lulls in violence should not translate into complacency. He directed that intelligence be acted upon swiftly and that coordination between the Army, the CRPF, the state police and central agencies be reviewed at regular intervals rather than only after incidents. The administration has projected the improving security metrics of recent years — fewer local recruitments, a shrinking pool of active militants and a revival in tourism — as evidence that the strategy is working, even as it cautions that cross-border attempts to push in weapons, narcotics and fighters continue. Monday's directives, officials said, were aimed at consolidating those gains and keeping the initiative with the forces through the coming months.



REGIONAL

MeT warns of widespread rain, flash-flood risk across J&K

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026

The Meteorological Department forecast a fresh spell of widespread rain and thunderstorms across Jammu and Kashmir, cautioning that intense showers could trigger flash floods, landslides and mudslides at vulnerable locations after a stretch of hot, humid weather. The weather office said fairly widespread rain was likely in Kashmir and widespread rain in the Jammu division on Sunday, with widespread light to moderate rain and thundershowers expected across both divisions on Sept 1 before the activity gradually eased from Sept 2. It warned of isolated thunderstorms with lightning and gusty winds of 30 to 40 kmph in Kashmir on Aug 31 and Sept 1, and isolated heavy rain, thunderstorms and lightning in the Jammu division over the same period. Ahead of the wet spell, day temperatures had run well above normal, climbing three to five degrees above the seasonal mark in Kashmir and one to two degrees above normal in Jammu, where Kathua touched 35.4 degrees Celsius. In the preceding 24 hours, the Kathua automatic weather station logged the highest rainfall in the Union Territory at 23 mm. The MeT advised people in landslide- and flash-flood-prone areas to stay alert and track weather developments, and urged travellers to exercise caution on hilly stretches. The warning followed a punishing monsoon in which cloudbursts, flash floods and rain-triggered landslides have repeatedly hit the Jammu region and the Pir Panjal belt.



REGIONAL

Sinha pitches 'health anytime, anywhere' at CII conclave

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha inaugurated the third edition of the CII Jammu and Kashmir Health Conclave in Srinagar and set out a vision of "health services anytime, anywhere," arguing that technology must be harnessed to make care accessible, affordable and equitable for all. Sinha said the future of healthcare lay in innovations such as telemedicine, drone-based delivery of medicines and blood units, artificial-intelligence-powered diagnostics and solar-powered cold chains for remote health centres. He cited the example of an ASHA worker using tele-consultation to connect patients in far-flung villages with district hospitals, calling it a revolutionary step that erased geographical barriers. "Technology must serve humanity," the Lieutenant Governor said, urging the conclave to deliberate on building modern primary health centres in every village linked to district networks, using AI for early detection of disease, strengthening disease surveillance and genomic capacity, encouraging local manufacture of diagnostic kits and expanding the health workforce. He listed the region's expanding health infrastructure — two new AIIMS, ten new medical colleges, two state cancer institutes, dedicated bone-and-joint and paediatric hospitals, and dozens of nursing, paramedical and pharmacy colleges — as evidence that Jammu and Kashmir was emerging as a hub of innovation and resilience in the health sector.

REGIONAL

Mirwaiz urges J&K parties to unite for statehood, 370

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026



Chief cleric Mirwaiz Umar Farooq called on Jammu and Kashmir's political parties to make a unified push for the restoration of statehood and Article 370, saying it was their moral responsibility to raise their voice for the rights of the people. "Our rights were snatched away by force. Our statehood was abolished, we were made a Union territory," the Mirwaiz told reporters, adding that the government should honour the promises made to people before the elections. He said parties must also press for the release of political prisoners and a peaceful resolution of the Kashmir issue. He termed alleged threats to Kashmiri Pandits living in the Valley "deeply unfortunate," and criticised the recent hike in electricity tariffs, warning that low-income households were in no position to bear escalating power bills at a time when the region's economy remained fragile. The remarks drew a sharp rebuttal from the Jammu and Kashmir BJP, which accused the cleric of trying to provoke the public and disturb the calm that had returned to the Valley.

REGIONAL

High Court cracks down on building, fire safety lapses in Jammu

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026

The High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh directed civic and safety authorities to file a fresh, comprehensive affidavit on the action taken against building and fire-safety violations in Jammu, holding that an earlier submission was deficient and failed to address the issues raised. Justice Wasim Sadiq Nargal asked the Jammu Municipal Corporation Commissioner, the Director of Fire and Emergency Services, the Vice Chairman of the Jammu Development Authority and the IGP (Traffic) to detail the number of establishments surveyed, their compliance with building permissions and occupancy certificates, the categories of violations found, and enforcement measures such as notices, sealing, demolition, prosecution or cancellation of permissions. The scrutiny covers hotels, commercial establishments, coaching institutes and other public buildings accused of unauthorised construction, missing parking, absent fire clearances and inadequate statutory permissions. The court warned of coercive proceedings against officials if its directions were not met and listed the matter for Sept 3, according to the order.

REGIONAL

FDA bans 10 adulterated ghee batches, orders recall

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026

The Jammu and Kashmir Food and Drugs Administration banned the sale, storage and distribution of 10 batches of ghee found adulterated with foreign vegetable fat, and ordered their withdrawal from the market within 48 hours, officials said. The samples failed on the Baudouin test and showed abnormal fatty-acid profiles and the presence of beta-sitosterol, a marker for vegetable oil, the FDA said. The flagged batches spanned several brands, including Dairy Mohan Desi Ghee, Apna Dairy Milk Desi Ghee, Milk Bite Cow Ghee, Nandni Desi Ghee, Shahi Taj Desi Ghee, Daawat Fresh, Nand Krishna Cow Ghee, Vandu Cow Ghee, Dairy Milk Desi Ghee and Mohan Dairy Ghee. The administration directed traders to pull the identified batches from shelves immediately and warned of action for non-compliance. It advised consumers to check brand names, batch numbers and packing dates while buying ghee, and to report the availability of any banned product to the authorities.



REGIONAL

Rs 82 crore cleared to repair 5,000 migrant camp flats in Jammu

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026

The Jammu and Kashmir government has sanctioned Rs 82.45 crore for the repair and renovation of more than 200 building blocks and about 5,000 flats and community halls across Kashmiri migrant townships in Jammu, officials said. The works span the Jagti, Muthi, TRT Nagrota, Buta Nagar and Purkhoo camps, home to roughly 7,000 displaced Kashmiri Pandit families, said Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner (Migrants) Arvind Karwani. Beyond structural repairs, the package covers internal road upgrades, parks, schools, dispensaries and the repair of a sub-district hospital through the Public Works Department. The Jal Shakti Department will execute a Rs 10-crore water-supply augmentation project, while an Rs 11.5-crore sewage treatment plant is planned for the Nagrota, Muthi-Buta Nagar and Purkhoo clusters, officials said. The move drew a mixed response. Some residents and activists welcomed the funding but called it insufficient for townships built more than a decade ago, demanding structural safety audits before cosmetic repairs. "You cannot cure cancer with a bandage; it requires chemotherapy or surgery," one activist said, pressing for a longer-term rehabilitation plan rather than patchwork maintenance.

MORE FROM THIS SECTION

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HC quashes JK Bank officer's dismissal, orders reinstatement

The High Court set aside the dismissal of a J&K Bank officer, ruling that the bank could not skip a departmental inquiry unless strict...

REGIONAL

Chhari Mubarak caps Budha Amarnath yatra in Poonch

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026



The annual Shri Budha Amarnath Ji Yatra culminated in Poonch with the ceremonial Chhari Mubarak procession reaching the ancient Shiva shrine at Rajpura in Mandi, drawing hundreds o...

The annual Shri Budha Amarnath Ji Yatra culminated in Poonch on Tuesday with the ceremonial Chhari Mubarak procession reaching the ancient Lord Shiva shrine at Rajpura in the Mandi belt of the border district, bringing the curtain down on one of the Pir Panjal region's most cherished pilgrimages, officials said.The Chhari Mubarak — the holy mace — was carried in a 25-kilometre procession that set out from the Dashnami Akhara Mandir in Poonch town and wound its way up to the Budha Amarnath temple at Rajpura, Mandi. It was led by Shri Shri 1008 Mahamandleshwar Swami Vishavatmanand Saraswati Ji Maharaj, with sadhus, local devotees and yatris joining the march, according to Daily Excelsior.Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary joined the culmination ceremony, along with Kalakote MLA Thakur Randhir Singh, former MLC Vibodh Gupta, Deputy Commissioner Poonch Ashok Kumar Sharma and Deputy Inspector General of Police for the Rajouri-Poonch range, Sandeep Wazir, besides other officers of the civil administration and police, the reports said.The temple at Rajpura, set amid the mountains of the Pir Panjal near Mandi, is among the oldest Shiva shrines in the region and, according to local tradition, is associated with the sage Rishi Pulastya. Every year during the holy month of Shravan, pilgrims trek to the shrine to offer prayers to Lord Shiva; hundreds of devotees from across the country took part this year, the reports said.The yatra had been flagged off from the Bhagwati Nagar base camp in Jammu on Aug 16 by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, who saw off the first batch of pilgrims amid tight security. From Jammu, the yatris travelled along the Jammu-Rajouri-Poonch highway, where the administration had

stepped up security and put in place arrangements for lodging, medical aid and langars through the course of the pilgrimage.The Budha Amarnath yatra is widely regarded as a symbol of the syncretic character of Poonch, where members of the local Muslim community traditionally help pilgrims, set up refreshment stalls along the route and lend a hand in running the langars. Along the Chhari Mubarak route this year too, locals arranged stalls offering food and refreshments to the marching devotees, the reports said.The participation of the Deputy Chief Minister and elected representatives underlined the government's push to promote the shrine as part of the Pir Panjal's religious-tourism circuit. The administration has in recent years worked to improve the yatra track, sanitation and pilgrim facilities at Rajpura, and officials have spoken of developing the Mandi belt's tourism potential given its alpine setting and cultural heritage.Tucked into the Pir Panjal along the Line of Control, Poonch has a long tradition of shared religious festivals, and the Budha Amarnath yatra is among the most prominent, drawing pilgrims not only from within Jammu and Kashmir but from Punjab, Delhi and other states. For the district's traders, transporters and small businesses, the pilgrimage is also a modest annual economic boost during the Shravan month.The peaceful conduct of the yatra in a district that sits along the LoC and has seen periodic security alerts was seen by the administration as a marker of the belt's stability. Officials said the smooth culmination, without any untoward incident, capped weeks of coordination between the district administration, police and security forces.

REGIONAL

ACB chargesheets ex-official over mid-day meal ration scam in Rajouri

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026

The Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) has filed a chargesheet against a former junior assistant in the education department over the alleged misappropriation of mid-day meal rations in Rajouri, officials said.The accused, Mohd Farooq, who served as junior assistant in the office of the Zonal Education Officer, Manjakote, is charged with misappropriating 256.40 quintals of rice meant for the Mid-Day Meal Scheme, causing a loss of more than Rs 12.65 lakh to the state exchequer, according to Greater Kashmir. The figure comprises rice worth about Rs 8.03 lakh and cooking costs of some Rs 4.61 lakh.The ACB said the accused and others, by abusing their official positions, got fake and fabricated indent and authority letters prepared by manipulating official records to divert the ration. The case stems from FIR No. 26/2018, registered in December 2018, and invokes provisions of the J&K Prevention of Corruption Act and the Ranbir Penal Code.The chargesheet has been produced before the Special Judge, Anti-Corruption Court, Rajouri, which has fixed the matter for hearing on Sept 29, officials said.

REGIONAL

Poonch courts paralysed as lawyers' strike over judge drags on

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026

Court work across Poonch remained paralysed as lawyers pressed on with an indefinite strike over the alleged intimidation of a sitting judge by police — one of the longest such boycotts the border district has seen, officials said.The protest was triggered by an incident on Aug 17, when Additional District and Sessions Judge Poonch, Mir Wajahat, was stopped by police personnel at the Surankote bypass while returning to his station from leave. Police allegedly tried to pull out the ignition key of his vehicle and misbehaved with him despite the car displaying a judicial flag and the judge disclosing his identity, according to Free Press Kashmir.The Bar Associations of Poonch, Surankote and Mendhar suspended work in the district court complex and the sub-divisional courts, raising slogans and demanding the immediate suspension of the personnel involved and a formal inquiry. The lawyers resolved to continue the boycott until concrete action was taken.The strike stretched into its second week, with the bar bodies holding firm on their demand for disciplinary and criminal action against the officials, leaving hearings stalled and litigants across the district waiting, reports said.

REGIONAL

Bear, leopard attacks keep Pir Panjal belt on edge

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026



A surge in bear and leopard attacks has kept residents of the Pir Panjal belt on edge through the monsoon, prompting the Wildlife Department to set up dedicated control rooms for the Rajouri-Poonch division as part of a Union Territory-wide response, officials said.The control rooms, equipped with cages, capture nets, tranquilliser guns, thermal cameras, GPS devices and rescue vans, are meant to speed up response to man-animal encounters, which have risen sharply across Jammu and Kashmir, Greater Kashmir reported.The border districts have reported a string of maulings in recent weeks, including bear attacks in the Mandi belt of Poonch in which women were injured, and the death of an elderly man in a bear attack in the upper reaches of Rajouri.The department's advisory urges people to avoid moving alone in forests, keep children and women accompanied, steer clear of forest edges at dawn and dusk, keep homes well-lit and make cattle sheds leopard-proof. Residents have been asked to alert the nearest control room, or the forest, police or revenue officials, in an emergency.



REGIONAL

Heavy rain shuts Poonch schools, submerges Rajouri highway

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026

Fresh spells of heavy rain lashed the twin border districts of Rajouri and Poonch on Tuesday, throwing normal life out of gear, forcing the closure of schools in Poonch and submerging stretches of the Jammu-Rajouri-Poonch national highway, officials said.The downpour, which began on Tuesday afternoon, was particularly intense in the Kalakote subdivision of Rajouri, where water levels in rivers and streams rose sharply, prompting the administration to keep a close watch on vulnerable spots for flash floods and waterlogging, according to Greater Kashmir.In Rajouri town, the highway was submerged under accumulated rainwater at the low-lying Panj Peer area, while the Poonch-Mendhar road was also disrupted by rainwater. All schools in Poonch district remained shut for the day as a precaution.The Chief Education Officer, Poonch, said the situation across the district was being closely monitored, with particular focus on vulnerable areas, the report said. The renewed downpour revived memories of July's deadly flash floods in the belt, which had killed several people and damaged roads, power lines and homes across Rajouri and Poonch.



REGIONAL

Two gorge crashes in 48 hours kill 13 in Pir Panjal belt

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026

Two devastating road accidents within 48 hours claimed at least 13 lives across the Pir Panjal belt, laying bare the deadly toll of the region's treacherous mountain roads, officials said.In the more recent of the two crashes, six people, including two women and an 11-year-old boy, were killed and three others injured on Wednesday when a Maruti Eeco plunged around 150 feet into a roadside gorge in the Sheindra area near Seri Chouhana village of Surankote tehsil in Poonch, police said. All the victims hailed from Seri Chouhana. The dead were identified as Mohd Shafiq, 32; Nazakat Hussain, 34; Sheraz Ahmed, 30; Mohd Fareed, 21; Musarat Naz, 19; and Zulfat Bi, 25, according to Daily Excelsior. The driver is believed to have lost control around 5.30 pm. The injured were rushed to the District Hospital, Poonch.The Surankote tragedy came barely a day after seven people were killed and more than two dozen injured when an overloaded vehicle carrying pilgrims to the Shahdara Sharief shrine skidded into a deep gorge in the Thanamandi area of Rajouri, officials said.Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha expressed grief over the Surankote accident. Officials said overloading and the belt's fragile, winding hill roads remain a recurring cause of such crashes.



REGIONAL

Repeated closures undermine Mughal Road's promise

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026

Repeated weather-related closures are undermining the Mughal Road's promise as Kashmir's alternate highway, leaving commuters and traders across the Pir Panjal wary of depending on the route that links Poonch and Rajouri with the Valley, Greater Kashmir reported.The road, which crosses the Pir Panjal range at Peer Ki Gali at about 11,500 feet, has faced a string of disruptions this year, including a cloudburst at Zaznar Point on June 29 and at Sukh Sarai on June 14, and landslides at Lal Ghulam on July 14 and Sukh Sarai on Aug 3. It also stays shut for months every winter because of heavy snowfall.The Border Roads Organisation, under Project Beacon, clears the road after each blockage. "Our teams respond immediately whenever the road is blocked. The priority is to clear debris and restore traffic at the earliest," an official said. Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, who drove the route on Aug 5, described its condition as worse than the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway.Residents say the frequent closures make the road unreliable, even as it remains vital for south Kashmir's horticulture trade to Jammu markets. A 9-km tunnel planned between Chatta Pani in Poonch and Zaznar in Shopian is being seen as the key to making the link all-weather.

MORE FROM THIS SECTION

REGIONAL

Poonch trekker flags glacial lake flood threat in Pir Panjal

Poonch adventurer Moin Manhas has urged the J&K government to scientifically monitor high-altitude glacial lakes in the Pir Panjal, warning...

REGIONAL

Baramulla police crack house theft, arrest three and recover stolen gold

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026



Baramulla Police cracked a house theft reported from Rangwar, arresting three people — a suspected household worker, an alleged handler and a city jeweller — and recovering gold ba...

Police in north Kashmir's Baramulla district on Sunday said they had cracked a house theft case with the arrest of three people and the recovery of a substantial part of the stolen gold, unravelling a chain that ran from a suspected household worker to a city jeweller who had bought the ornaments. The case was set in motion by a written complaint from Saleema Begum, wife of Mohd Akbar Wani, a resident of Rangwar in Baramulla, who reported that gold jewellery and cash had been stolen from an almirah at her home. According to the complaint, the theft occurred while she was away from the house on official duty, and she discovered the ornaments and money missing on her return. Police registered a case, FIR No. 139/2026, under sections 331(4) and 305 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) at Police Station Baramulla and took up investigation. During the probe, suspicion fell on a worker who had access to the house. The suspect, identified as Shabir Ahmad Khan, son of Mohd Yousuf Khan of Kanispora, was taken into custody and, on questioning, allegedly disclosed his involvement in the theft, police said. He is said to have told investigators that the stolen jewellery had been handed over to one Ulfat Rather, daughter of Mohd Yousuf Rather of Pathla, Kanispora. On the basis of that disclosure, police said, Ulfat Rather was arrested. She allegedly revealed that part of the stolen jewellery had been kept at her residence, while a pair of gold bangles had been sold to Gousia Ornaments, a jewellery shop on Jadeed Link Road in Baramulla owned by Hilal Ahmad Zargar, son of Nazir Ahmad Zargar. A search at Ulfat Rather's home led to the recovery of one gold ring and one gold earring, according to police. The trail then took investigators to the jeweller. Police said a subsequent search

at Gousia Ornaments resulted in the recovery of the stolen pair of gold bangles, and the shop's owner, Hilal Ahmad Zargar, was arrested in connection with the case. With his arrest, three people were in custody in the theft. Investigation revealed that the gold bangles had been sold for Rs 2.40 lakh, police said. Of that amount, Rs 1.80 lakh had been transferred online to Ulfat Rather while Rs 60,000 was paid in cash, indicating that the ornaments had already been converted into money before the recovery. Police said efforts were on to recover the remaining items, with Rs 15,000 in cash and one gold earring still to be traced. The recoveries — a pair of gold bangles from the jeweller's shop and a gold ring and an earring from the alleged handler's home — accounted for much of the ornaments reported stolen in the complaint. Police said the sequence of disclosures, from the worker to the handler to the jeweller, had allowed them to reconstruct how the jewellery had moved from the house to the market within a short span. Officers said the swift detection underlined the district police's continued focus on property crimes, which tend to rise around periods when houses are left unattended. The case, they said, showed the value of following the money and the ornaments through every hand they had passed, rather than stopping at the first arrest. Further investigation in the matter is under way, and police said the remaining recovery and the completion of legal formalities against the three arrested persons were being pursued. Residents have periodically been urged to report thefts promptly and to keep records of valuables so that stolen ornaments can be identified if they surface in the local market.

REGIONAL

Ganderbal farmers get Field School on integrated pest management

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026

A Farmer Field School programme focused on Integrated Pest Management (IPM) was inaugurated on Monday at village Khanpora in central Kashmir's Ganderbal district, aimed at teaching growers how to protect crops while cutting back on unnecessary use of chemical pesticides. The programme was organised jointly by the Central Integrated Pest Management Centre (CIPMC), Srinagar and the State Agriculture Department, Ganderbal. It was inaugurated by Dr. Vageesh Pandey, Deputy Director of CIPMC Srinagar, and Ghulam Ahmad Rather, Subject Matter Specialist, Ganderbal, in the presence of local farmers. Sessions at the field school covered seed treatment, need-based application of chemicals, the National Pest Surveillance System and the safe and judicious use of pesticides, along with a pre-evaluation assessment of farmers' existing knowledge so that the training could be pitched to their needs. Speaking at the programme, Assistant Plant Protection Officer Dr. Haroon Rashid Hakla said adoption of IPM practices could help farmers reduce unnecessary pesticide use while promoting sustainable and economically viable crop production. Officials said the field-school approach, which trains farmers in their own fields through a crop season, was intended to give hands-on exposure rather than classroom instruction alone.

REGIONAL

DC Budgam reviews national highway, road projects, orders faster execution

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026

Deputy Commissioner Budgam Athar Aamir Khan on Monday chaired a meeting to review the progress of the national highway and other vital road projects running through the district, calling for faster execution without any compromise on quality. The Deputy Commissioner said improved road infrastructure was vital for better connectivity, seamless mobility, tourism promotion and economic growth in the district, and asked implementing agencies to treat the road works as a priority. He directed them to expedite the projects while maintaining quality standards, meet completion timelines, ensure coordination among the departments involved, resolve bottlenecks promptly and carry out regular monitoring of progress on the ground. Officials briefed the meeting on the status of the works and the issues holding up some stretches, including land and utility-shifting matters that require inter-departmental coordination. The Deputy Commissioner asked officers to take up such pending issues in a time-bound manner so that work on the ground was not stalled. The review was attended by the Additional Deputy Commissioner Budgam, the Assistant Commissioner Revenue, the Chief Engineer PWD, the Superintending Engineer R&B, executive engineers of various wings, officers of the NHAI and other concerned officials.

REGIONAL

Anantnag police arrest drug peddler at Uttersoo, recover charas

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026



Police in south Kashmir's Anantnag district on Friday arrested a suspected drug peddler and recovered charas from his possession during a search, officials said. According to police, the arrest was made during routine patrolling at Haji Mohalla, Barariangan, in the Uttersoo area. The person, identified as Hamid Farooq Dar, son of Farooq Ahmad Dar and a resident of Brakpora, was apprehended, and a quantity of charas was recovered during his search, they said. A case, FIR No. 88/2026, was registered under sections 8/20 of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act at Police Station Uttersoo, and further investigation was taken up. The recovery is part of the district police's continuing drive against narcotics under the wider anti-drug campaign in the Valley. Reiterating its commitment to combating the drug menace, Anantnag Police urged members of the public to extend cooperation in making the district drug-free, and to share information about those involved in the trade so that action could be taken against them.

REGIONAL

Kulgam's Khudwani research centre upgraded to South Kashmir's first agriculture faculty

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026

Deputy Commissioner Kulgam Shahzad Alam on Monday visited the Mountain Research Centre for Field Crops (MRCFC) at Khudwani, which has been upgraded to the Faculty of Agriculture, South Campus under the Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-K), marking the establishment of South Kashmir's first dedicated faculty of agriculture. Officials said the upgraded campus will offer postgraduate and doctoral programmes — MSc and PhD — in agronomy, plant breeding, plant pathology, entomology and soil sciences, opening advanced agricultural education closer to home for students from the southern districts of the Valley. The Khudwani centre has functioned for more than eight decades in seed production, crop improvement and crop protection, and its elevation to a full faculty is expected to broaden its teaching and research mandate. Touring the facility, the Deputy Commissioner reviewed the institution's work and its recent upgrades and interacted with university officials on the ground. He said research must travel beyond experimental plots to reach farmers across Kashmir, stressing that the campus should serve as a bridge between the laboratory and the field for the region's growers. The visit was attended by senior district officers and university officials. Officials said the new faculty would strengthen the link between the district administration, the university and the farming community in Kulgam and the neighbouring apple- and paddy-growing belts of south Kashmir, where agriculture and horticulture remain the mainstay of the rural economy.

REGIONAL

Four Bandipora villages face week-long water cut as Shilvat pump station is shifted

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026

Deputy Commissioner Bandipora Indu Kanwal Chib on Sunday chaired a meeting to review the proposed relocation of the Shilvat pump station along with its intake and electro-mechanical equipment, a shift that will temporarily disrupt drinking water supply to four villages in the Sumbal sub-division. Officials told the meeting that the shifting will affect two water supply schemes — the Shilvat WSS and the Nowgam WSS — which together serve the villages of Shilvat, Nowgam, Gundi-Nowgam and Rakhi Sultanpora. The relocation work is expected to take about a week, during which residents of the four villages will face an interruption in piped supply. To cushion the disruption, the administration decided that tanker-based water supply would be arranged for the affected habitations through the shutdown period. The Deputy Commissioner also directed that Gram Sabhas be held in all four villages before September 8 to inform residents in advance about the schedule and the alternative arrangements, so that households could plan for the temporary cut. Chib stressed the need for advance planning and close coordination among all concerned departments to ensure the shifting work was completed within the stipulated timeframe while minimising inconvenience to the public. The meeting was attended by the Additional Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, SDM Sumbal Murtaza Ahmad Sheikh, project heads from the NHAI and NHPC, executive engineers of the Mechanical, PHE and Power Development departments and the SDPO Sumbal, while the Chief Engineer PHE Kashmir and superintending engineers joined virtually.

REGIONAL

Kupwara banks post 121% credit-deposit ratio but lag annual credit plan

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026

Additional Deputy Commissioner Kupwara Gulzar Ahmad Khan on Sunday chaired a meeting of the District Level Review Committee and District Level Consultative Committee (DLRC/DLCC) to take stock of banking performance and the flow of institutional credit across the border district. Officials told the meeting that, as of June 30, 2026, total deposits in the district stood at Rs 4,349.67 crore against total advances of Rs 5,290.55 crore, giving a credit-deposit ratio of about 121.63 per cent — well above the benchmark that banks are expected to maintain. Under the Annual Credit Plan, however, banks had disbursed Rs 732.70 crore in the first quarter against an annual target of Rs 2,272.18 crore, with Rs 313.98 crore going to the priority sector and Rs 418.72 crore to the non-priority sector. Flagging the gap against the yearly target, the ADC expressed concern over the pace of lending and directed banks to enhance credit flow to key sectors, particularly agriculture, education and housing. He asked bankers to step up disbursement in the remaining quarters so that the district met its credit plan. Khan also called on banks and line departments to strengthen public awareness about government welfare schemes and credit-linked programmes so that eligible beneficiaries could avail loans and subsidies. The meeting was attended by Lead District Manager Kupwara Manzoor Ahmad Sheikh, representatives of various banks and officials of concerned line departments.

MORE FROM THIS SECTION

REGIONAL

Pulwama college hosts JKEDI Startup Idea Challenge

The J&K Entrepreneurship Development Institute held its Startup Idea Challenge 2.0 at the Government Degree College for Boys, Pulwama, to...

REGIONAL

Cloudbursts, landslides kill 11 in Reasi and Ramban in monsoon's deadliest night

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026



Seven members of a single family were buried alive in Reasi's Mahore belt and four more died in a cloudburst-triggered flash flood at Ramban's Rajgarh, as rain-battered hillsides g...

Cloudbursts and rain-triggered landslides on the intervening night of Friday and Saturday killed at least 11 people across two districts of the Jammu region — seven of a single family in Reasi's Mahore belt and four more in Ramban's Rajgarh — in one of the deadliest nights of an already punishing monsoon, officials said. In Reasi, a massive landslide set off by heavy rain flattened a kaccha house at Badder village in the remote Mahore subdivision in the early hours of the morning, burying an entire family as they slept. Rescuers recovered the bodies of Nazir Ahmad, his wife Wazira Bano and their five sons — Bilal Ahmad, Mohammad Mustafa, Mohammad Adil, Mohammad Mubarakh and Waseem Ahmad — from the debris, according to Greater Kashmir. Five of the dead were children, aged between four and 12. Some 100 km away in Ramban, a cloudburst around 11.30 pm triggered a flash flood at Rajgarh, about 25 km from the district headquarters, sweeping away homes and a school. Four bodies were pulled from the debris — Ashwani Sharma, 24, his brother Dwarka Nath, 55, their niece Virta Devi, 26, and a guest, Om Raj, 38 — while rescuers continued to search for Sharma's sister-in-law, Bidya Devi, 55, who remained missing. Union Minister Jitendra Singh, who represents the Udhampur constituency that includes Ramban, said a "cloudburst in the Rajgarh area has resulted in loss of four lives" and that relief teams had been rushed to the site. Chief Minister Omar Abdullah directed the administration to mount "immediate rescue and relief operations" and to extend all possible help to the bereaved families, officials said. Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha confirmed that rescue work was under way at both sites. Teams of the State Disaster Response Force, police and local volunteers worked through the rain-soaked terrain to reach the affected hamlets, several

of which are accessible only on foot. Power and telephone links to some villages snapped, and washed-out tracks slowed the movement of relief material to the interior belts. Local youth and neighbours were the first responders at both sites, digging through mud and rubble with hand tools before formal teams arrived. The twin tragedies came during a fortnight in which weather fury battered the Jammu region and the wider Union Territory, with landslides, cloudbursts and flash floods claiming more than 100 lives, including pilgrims on the Machail Mata and Vaishno Devi routes, according to figures compiled by news outlets. Both Mahore and Rajgarh lie in the rugged, landslide-prone uplands strung along the Chenab, where kaccha houses perched on unstable slopes are especially vulnerable when saturated hillsides give way. Residents said continuous rain over the preceding days had loosened the ground before the slopes collapsed. The loss of an entire family in a single house at Badder cast a pall over the Mahore belt, where relatives and neighbours gathered as the bodies were brought out one after another. Grief also gripped Rajgarh, where the flood tore through a cluster of homes minutes after the cloudburst, leaving survivors little time to flee. District administrations in Reasi and Ramban said damage assessments were being carried out and that ex-gratia relief would be released to the families as per norms once the surveys were complete. Officials appealed to people living in vulnerable pockets to move to safer locations and to heed weather advisories as the monsoon persisted. The disaster renewed long-standing demands for the relocation of families settled in high-risk zones and for early-warning systems in the Chenab Valley's remote reaches, where help can take hours to arrive after a slope fails in the dark.



REGIONAL

Jitendra Singh lays foundation of Rs 1,503-crore rural roads for five Jammu districts

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026

Union Minister Jitendra Singh laid the e-foundation of 110 rural road projects worth Rs 1,503.53 crore for five districts of the Jammu region, in what officials described as one of the largest single tranches of connectivity works cleared for the area under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana. The 110 roads, together spanning 598.455 km, are spread across Kathua, Udhampur, Ramban, Doda and Kishtwar and are expected to benefit 46,972 people, according to The Tribune. Udhampur accounts for the largest share with 44 projects worth about Rs 554.90 crore, followed by Kathua with 24 and Kishtwar with 16, while Ramban and Doda have 13 each. "The scale of the latest PMGSY intervention demonstrates the continued commitment of the government to taking all-weather road connectivity to the last mile," Singh said. A large number of the works will use waste plastic in road construction, officials added, pairing the connectivity push with a sustainability goal.



REGIONAL

Chatroo minor's death case handed to Crime Branch as protests are called off

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026

The investigation into the death of a teenage schoolgirl from Chatroo, whose alleged sexual exploitation and death convulsed the Chenab Valley for days, has been handed to the Crime Branch of the Jammu and Kashmir Police, officials said, following sustained protests demanding an independent probe. The minor died on Aug 20 after alleged complications linked to an attempt to terminate a pregnancy, in a case that triggered shutdowns and marches across Kishtwar, Doda and Ramban. A sit-in at Chatroo was called off after the transfer was ordered, according to Greater Kashmir. The Crime Branch will examine the allegations of sexual exploitation, the circumstances of the pregnancy, the medical events preceding the death and the role of every person connected to the case, officials said. Six people have been arrested so far, including a government school teacher, his brother and employees of the health department. Cases have been registered under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act. BJP leader Ravinder Raina, who visited the family, said the matter would be investigated thoroughly, while tribal leader Choudhary Talib Hussain was among those who joined the protests pressing for justice.

REGIONAL

Budgam-Katra train services resume, to stay off on Sundays

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026



Train services between Budgam and Katra resumed on Saturday, restoring a direct rail link between the Kashmir Valley and the pilgrim town of Katra in Reasi district, officials said. Train No. 04688 from Budgam to Katra and Train No. 04687 on the return leg have been restored and will run as per a revised schedule, officials told Greater Kashmir, adding that the services will remain suspended every Sunday. The resumption is expected to strengthen connectivity for commuters, students, employees, visitors and pilgrims who travel between the valley and Katra, the base for the Vaishno Devi pilgrimage, officials said. Passengers were advised to check the latest railway timetable and operational status before planning their journeys, particularly on Sundays, when the trains will not run. The link is part of the wider network that has knitted the Kashmir Valley into the national grid through the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla line. The Budgam-Katra service has become a popular option for pilgrims and daily travellers seeking a cheaper and more comfortable alternative to road travel on the landslide-prone national highway.

REGIONAL

Landslide at Mansar blocks Samba-Udhampur route, strands vehicles

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026



A landslide in the Mansar area of Samba district blocked the Samba-Udhampur route on Monday, leaving a line of vehicles stranded as debris spilled onto the carriageway, officials said. The slide came down amid the wet spell that has loosened hillsides across the Jammu region, and traffic on the stretch was held up until men and machinery could be pressed into service to clear the road, according to Social News XYZ. There were no immediate reports of injuries. Commuters were advised to use alternative routes and to avoid the affected patch until the debris was removed and the road declared safe for movement. The Mansar belt, a scenic lake-side stretch popular with day-trippers, has seen recurring slope failures during the monsoon, and officials said clearance teams remained on alert for fresh slides as intermittent rain continued over the district.

REGIONAL

Habitual peddler booked under PIT-NDPS Act in Doda drug crackdown

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026

A habitual drug peddler was detained under the Prevention of Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (PIT-NDPS) Act in Doda district and lodged in Central Jail Kot Bhalwal in Jammu, police said, in the latest move in a crackdown on narcotics in the Chenab Valley. The detenu, identified as Imtiaz Ahmad, had two earlier cases registered against him under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act at Doda police station, in 2022 and 2025, and had been granted bail in both, a police spokesperson said. Preventive detention proceedings were initiated against him after a review of his record, and the detention order was executed following approval by the competent authority, officials said. Police said the action was part of a sustained drive against drug trafficking in Doda and the wider Chenab Valley, where the trade has been blamed for drawing young people into addiction. Officers said habitual offenders who exploited bail to return to peddling would face preventive detention, and appealed to the public to share information on those involved in the narcotics network.



REGIONAL

NH-44 reopened for two-way traffic as crews repair rain-hit Ramban, Udhampur stretches

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026

The Srinagar-Jammu National Highway was open for regulated two-way traffic on Monday even as restoration and improvement works continued at several rain-damaged stretches in Ramban and Udhampur districts, officials of the Traffic Control Unit, Ramban, said. A 30-to-40-metre section at Dewal in Udhampur, left with an uneven, undulating surface by recent rains, was being managed through single-lane movement, while erosion had reduced the Srinagar-bound tube to a single lane at several points. In Ramban, the Maroog-Kishtwari Pather stretch had restricted single-lane portions because of ongoing construction and road-improvement work. The National Highways Authority of India had deployed men and machinery at the affected locations to repair the damaged portions and restore road surfaces, officials said. Authorities advised passengers and light vehicles to travel between Ramban and Banihal only during daylight hours, warning against night journeys because of the risk of shooting stones, landslides and mudslides. Kashmir-bound tankers were being permitted only between 5 pm and 5 am beyond Chenani because of widening work on the Digdol-Khooni Nalla axis. Commuters were urged to maintain lane discipline, avoid overtaking and unnecessary halts, and check the day's advisory before setting out on the landslide-prone artery, which had been battered repeatedly through the monsoon.

MORE FROM THIS SECTION

REGIONAL

Railways collect Rs 56.46 lakh in fines in Jammu division ticket drive

The Jammu division booked 8,106 cases of ticketless and irregular travel during an August checking drive across stations from Jammu and...

NATIONAL

India's economy grows 7.8% in Q1, beats RBI forecast

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026



India's gross domestic product expanded 7.8% in the April-June quarter of 2026-27, official data showed, outpacing the Reserve Bank of India's 7% projection and most market estimat...

India's economy grew 7.8% in the first quarter of the 2026-27 financial year, faster than most forecasts, as strong manufacturing, resilient domestic demand and a broad rebound in services kept growth buoyant despite an uncertain global backdrop, official data released on Friday showed. The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation said real gross domestic product for the April-June quarter rose 7.8% from a year earlier, comfortably above the 7% pace the Reserve Bank of India had projected for the quarter and ahead of the expectations of most economists polled ahead of the release. The print was, however, slower than the 8.6% expansion recorded in the preceding January-March quarter. In nominal terms, GDP rose 10.3% to about 88.27 lakh crore rupees, from roughly 80 lakh crore rupees a year earlier. Real gross value added, which strips out taxes and subsidies and is seen as a cleaner gauge of underlying production, grew 8.2% to 73.82 lakh crore rupees, pointing to firm activity across the goods- and services-producing sectors. The headline number was powered by manufacturing, which the data showed expanded by about 9.2% year on year, a sign that factory output has held up even as global trade conditions remain choppy. The statistics ministry attributed the quarter's momentum to sturdy domestic demand, the strength in manufacturing and a wide-based recovery in services, the largest part of the Indian economy. The reading is likely to be read by the government as evidence that the economy retains momentum in the face of external headwinds, including a volatile trade environment and the drag from tariffs on some exports. It also gives the Reserve Bank room to weigh its next moves on interest rates against an inflation trajectory that has stayed within its comfort band for much of the year. Economists had flagged in the run-up to the release that

the quarter could show a strong print on the back of a favourable base, a pickup in government and private capital spending, and steady consumption. The 7.8% outcome overshot even the more optimistic of those calls, and beat the central bank's own numbers, which had pencilled in a softer first quarter before a gradual pickup over the rest of the year. The manufacturing surge is significant because factory output had been a weak spot in earlier quarters, weighed down by patchy external demand. A near double-digit expansion suggests that a mix of domestic orders, infrastructure-linked demand and a low year-earlier base lifted the sector. Services, which span trade, hotels, transport, finance, real estate and public administration, continued to do the heavy lifting for the broader economy. Analysts cautioned that a single strong quarter does not settle the outlook for the full year, and that the sustainability of the pace will hinge on how global trade tensions evolve, whether private investment broadens beyond a handful of sectors, and how rural and urban consumption hold up through the festive months. The trajectory of the monsoon, which has been erratic this year with heavy rain and flooding across northern India, will also shape farm incomes and the demand that flows from them. Still, the first-quarter number strengthens India's claim to remain among the fastest-growing major economies. The government has repeatedly said it is targeting a sustained high-growth path to meet its longer-term development goals, and officials are expected to point to the quarter's data as validation of that push. The next major cue will come from the GST Council, which meets in mid-September to weigh tax and procedural changes that could feed into consumption and business sentiment in the quarters ahead.

NATIONAL

GST Council to meet on Sept 12 to weigh ITC norms, state revenues

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026

The Goods and Services Tax Council will meet in New Delhi on Sept 12, its first sitting in about a year, to take up procedural reforms and to review the finances of the Centre and the states after the sweeping rate rationalisation carried out under GST 2.0, officials said. An officers' meeting will precede the Council on Sept 11 to firm up the agenda. The body, which groups the Union finance minister and her state counterparts and is the apex decision-maker on the indirect tax, usually meets quarterly, making the long gap unusual. The agenda is expected to be dominated by conditions governing input tax credit, one of the most litigated areas of the tax, alongside easier registration and audit norms for businesses and the functioning of the GST Appellate Tribunal. The Council is also likely to examine the revenue position of the states after the rate changes rolled out a year ago, a politically sensitive issue for many governments. Manoj Mishra, a partner at Grant Thornton Bharat, said the Council "should revisit one of the most litigated conditions governing input tax credit." The timing, after the monsoon session of Parliament, was seen as opening a window for the Council to reconvene and clear a backlog of procedural questions.

NATIONAL

Supreme Court orders pan-India SIT on motor-accident insurance fraud

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026

The Supreme Court has ordered a pan-India special investigation team to probe organised fraud in motor-accident compensation claims, describing the suspected racket as being "of enormous proportion" and warning that it was draining insurers and clogging tribunals across the country. Hearing an appeal in Oriental Insurance Co. Ltd. v. Tuni Pati, the court said it had come across patterns in which the same vehicles surfaced in multiple, unrelated accident claims, and identical sets of witnesses and documents were recycled to extract compensation from motor-accident claims tribunals. Such manipulation, the bench observed, amounted to a fraud on the justice system and on the insurance pool that ultimately falls on honest policyholders. The order directs a nationwide investigation rather than a state-by-state inquiry, reflecting the court's view that the networks operate across jurisdictions. The judges asked investigators to trace the touts, middlemen and, where implicated, professionals who allegedly stitched together bogus claims, and to recommend safeguards to plug the loopholes. The direction is among the more consequential judicial interventions of the week, touching insurance regulation, road-safety accountability and the integrity of a claims system meant to compensate genuine accident victims.



NATIONAL

Supreme Court clears Art of Living in Yamuna floodplain case

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026

The Supreme Court has cleared the Art of Living Foundation of liability over environmental damage alleged from its large cultural event on the Yamuna floodplain in Delhi, ruling that the polluter-pays principle can be invoked only where the harm is clearly attributable to the party being made to pay. Deciding *Vyakti Vikas Kendra India v. Manoj Misra*, the bench held that a party cannot be saddled with compensation for degradation unless a direct causal link between its actions and the damage is established. On the material before it, the court found the requisite link had not been shown, and set aside the levy imposed on the foundation, founded by spiritual leader Ravi Shankar, over the World Culture Festival held on the riverbed a decade ago. The judgment refines a principle that Indian environmental jurisprudence has leaned on heavily, clarifying that it is a tool to fix accountability on an identifiable polluter rather than a general levy imposed wherever damage is alleged. The court underlined that environmental protection remains a constitutional imperative, but that liability must rest on evidence of causation.

NATIONAL

Supreme Court orders time-bound trials in dowry, cruelty cases

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026

The Supreme Court has directed trial courts to conduct time-bound trials in dowry-death and matrimonial-cruelty cases, laying down that charges should ordinarily be framed within 60 to 90 days and that adjournments must be kept to a bare minimum, in a bid to end the years-long delays that dog such prosecutions. Ruling in *State of U.P. v. Ajmal Beg*, the bench said cases under the cruelty and dowry provisions often drag on for years, wearing down complainants and, in many instances, leading to acquittals as evidence fades and witnesses turn hostile. Speedy adjudication, the court said, serves both the accused, who is entitled to a swift trial, and victims seeking closure. The court asked subordinate courts to adhere to the timelines and to record reasons where a departure became unavoidable, so that progress could be monitored. It added to a body of rulings pressing the criminal-justice system to cut delays in cases involving crimes against women, where pendency has remained stubbornly high despite successive reforms.

NATIONAL

Working wife's income can't by itself halve father's child-support duty: SC

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026

The Supreme Court has held that the mere fact that a mother is employed cannot, by itself, be a reason to halve a father's obligation to maintain his child, in a ruling that clarifies how courts should fix maintenance where both parents work. Deciding *Sujata Kumari v. Rahul Kumar*, the bench observed that "the wife earns is not, by itself, a reason to halve the father's liability," and said the child's needs, the standard of living the child was accustomed to and the means of both parents must guide the quantum, rather than a mechanical split because the mother has her own earnings. The court underlined that maintaining a child is a shared duty of both parents, but cautioned that a working mother's income should not become a device to whittle down the father's contribution below what the child reasonably requires. The judgment is expected to guide family courts weighing maintenance claims in an era when both spouses are frequently in paid work.

NATIONAL

Supreme Court cancels bail in Maharashtra 'burnt alive' murder case

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026

The Supreme Court has cancelled the bail granted to the accused in a Maharashtra murder case in which the victim was doused in inflammable fluid and set on fire, holding that the sequence of events pointed prima facie to a pre-planned attack carried out with a common intention. In *Yash Mahesh Gaikwad v. State of Maharashtra*, a division bench said the circumstances on record, including repeated threats by the accused, their arrival together carrying petrol, and the pouring of inflammable fluid over the deceased before setting the person ablaze, indicated they were acting in concert and in furtherance of a common intention. Setting aside the bail, the court said such grave and apparently premeditated offences warranted the accused remaining in custody through the trial. Cancellation of bail once granted is ordinarily an exceptional step, and the bench held the case met that threshold, part of a set of rulings this week in which the court took a firm line on bail in cases of serious violence.

MORE FROM THIS SECTION

NATIONAL

Supreme Court allows withdrawal of SpiceJet insolvency case

The Supreme Court permitted the withdrawal of insolvency proceedings against budget carrier SpiceJet, closing one of the long-running...

NATIONAL

Centre clears private takeover of 11 AAI airports in Rs 8,622-crore push

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026



The Public Private Partnership Appraisal Committee has approved handing the running of 11 Airports Authority of India airports — from Amritsar and Varanasi to Tiruchirappalli and T...

The government has cleared the way for private companies to take over the running of 11 more airports owned by the Airports Authority of India, in the largest single burst of airport privatisation since 2019. The Public Private Partnership Appraisal Committee (PPPAC), the inter-ministerial body that vets such deals, approved the plan for a total investment of about Rs 8,622 crore, with each airport to be leased to a private operator for 50 years. The 11 airports have been grouped into five bundles so that busier hubs are paired with smaller ones and no operator can cherry-pick only the profitable stations. The first bundle pairs Amritsar in Punjab with Kangra in Himachal Pradesh; the second groups Varanasi and Kushinagar in Uttar Pradesh with Gaya in Bihar; the third links Bhubaneswar in Odisha with Hubballi in Karnataka; the fourth ties Raipur in Chhattisgarh to Aurangabad in Maharashtra; and the fifth couples Tiruchirappalli in Tamil Nadu with Tirupati in Andhra Pradesh. The committee, chaired by Department of Economic Affairs Secretary Anuradha Thakur, laid down conditions meant to protect existing staff. Private concessionaires will have to retain at least 60 per cent of the Airports Authority of India employees at each station for up to three years, cushioning the transition for a workforce that has run these airports as public assets for decades. The move is part of the government's broader asset-monetisation drive, under which operational public infrastructure is leased to private players to raise capital while ownership stays with the state. Officials argue that private operators bring faster terminal expansion, better passenger amenities and commercial revenue that a cash-strapped state agency struggles to match, freeing the Airports Authority to focus on air-traffic management and the

many small airports that remain unviable. It is the deepest expansion of the model since 2019, when six AAI airports — Ahmedabad, Lucknow, Jaipur, Mangaluru, Thiruvananthapuram and Guwahati — were leased to the Adani Group in a round that drew criticism from the Opposition and some employee unions over the concentration of airports in a single group. This time the bundling into five separate packages is designed partly to widen the field of bidders and avoid a repeat of that concentration. The Airports Authority operates well over a hundred airports across the country, most of them loss-making, and successive governments have leaned on privatising the busiest to subsidise the rest. Several of the 11 named airports sit on heavily travelled religious and tourism circuits — Varanasi and Gaya on the Buddhist and Hindu pilgrimage trail, Amritsar for the Golden Temple, Tirupati for its temple town — where passenger traffic has been climbing and existing terminals are stretched. For the cities involved, the promise is of modern terminals, more direct flights and expanded cargo and commercial space; the concern, voiced by aviation unions in earlier rounds, is that private control can push up user development fees and other charges that ultimately fall on passengers. Consumer groups have also pressed for tighter tariff oversight once private operators take charge. With the appraisal committee's clearance secured, the government can now move to competitive bidding, invite financial offers for each bundle and sign concession agreements with the winning operators. The rollout, if it holds to precedent, will unfold over the coming year as the successful bidders take over operations and begin the promised upgrades at the 11 stations.

NATIONAL

DRDO tests indigenous combat parachute with jumps from 22,000 feet in Ladakh

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026

The Defence Research and Development Organisation has successfully tested an indigenously developed Military Combat Parachute System designed for high-altitude operations, with paratroopers making safe jumps from 22,000 feet above mean sea level in temperatures of minus 15 degrees Celsius, the agency said. The trials were carried out at the Nyoma-Mudh drop zone in Leh, Ladakh, one of the most demanding jump environments in the world for both equipment and troops. The system, developed by the Aerial Delivery Research and Development Establishment (ADRDE) in Agra, is built for both High Altitude Low Opening (HALO) and High Altitude High Opening (HAHO) missions — the covert insertion techniques special forces use to enter an area undetected. Life-support elements for the thin-air, sub-zero conditions were provided by the Defence Bioengineering and Electromedical Laboratory (DEBEL) in Bengaluru. The DRDO said the parachute offers a lower rate of descent, improved steering and compatibility with India's NavIC satellite navigation system, giving jumpers tighter control over where they land. The test jumps were performed by parachutists identified as Rahul Jha, R J Singh and Vivek Tiwari. The successful trial clears the way for the system to replace imported canopies and support Indian troops operating along the high-altitude frontiers, part of the wider push for self-reliance in defence equipment.

NATIONAL

UP clears lifelong free bus travel for women above 60

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026

The Uttar Pradesh cabinet has approved a scheme granting women aged 60 and above free travel for life on state-run buses, a welfare measure the government says will benefit more than one crore elderly women across the country's most populous state. The Lokmata Ahilyabai Matrushakti Yojana is named after the 18th-century Maratha queen Ahilyabai Holkar, whose 300th birth anniversary the government has marked through the year. Under the scheme, eligible women will be able to ride Uttar Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation buses without a fare, with the state treasury absorbing the cost. The government estimated the monthly outgo at about Rs 22.5 crore, a recurring subsidy it framed as a step towards easier mobility and dignity for senior women, many of whom depend on public transport to reach hospitals, temples and family. The announcement adds Uttar Pradesh to a lengthening list of states — among them neighbouring Delhi and several in the south — that have used free or subsidised bus travel for women as both a welfare tool and a political signal. With the concession pitched at the elderly rather than all women, the state has sought to contain the fiscal load while still reaching a large constituency ahead of a busy electoral calendar.

NATIONAL

New blind cavefish found in Bihar is a first for the Gangetic basin

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026

Researchers have identified a new species of subterranean fish in Bihar that they say is the first cave-adapted fish ever recorded from the Indo-Gangetic basin. The species, named *Gangaichthys indonepalicus*, was found in the Pashchim (West) Champaran district, in the belt where the Gangetic plain meets the foothills along the India-Nepal frontier. Like other creatures that have evolved to live in the perpetual darkness of underground water, the fish shows the classic hallmarks of subterranean life: a complete loss of body pigmentation, leaving it pale and colourless, and greatly reduced eyes, the sensory organs that are of little use where no light ever reaches. Such features develop over long spans of isolation in aquifers and cave streams cut off from the surface. The discovery is significant because the flat, alluvial Gangetic basin has not been thought of as cave-fish country, unlike the limestone karst regions of peninsular and northeastern India where most of the country's handful of subterranean fishes have turned up. Its documentation hints that the groundwater beneath the northern plains may hold an unexplored fauna worth protecting.

NATIONAL

Andhra signs UK pact to build Amaravati as a smart capital

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026



Andhra Pradesh has signed a memorandum of understanding with the United Kingdom to deepen cooperation on urban development, infrastructure and advanced technology as it revives work on Amaravati, the greenfield city it is building as its capital. The pact was signed at the state secretariat in Velagapudi, within the Amaravati capital region. Under the arrangement, UK Export Finance can extend support for eligible projects, opening a channel of financing and British expertise for a capital the state is developing at an estimated cost of around Rs 40,000 crore. The cooperation is pitched to extend beyond Amaravati to some 123 municipalities across Andhra Pradesh, covering smart-city systems, transport and civic infrastructure. The partnership marks another step in reviving a capital project that had stalled for years amid political and funding uncertainty.

NATIONAL

Mysuru conclave adopts declaration to save tribal languages and museums

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026

A three-day national conclave on strengthening tribal museums and preserving tribal languages concluded in Mysuru with the adoption of the Mysuru Declaration, a statement of intent to document and revive the many Indian languages spoken by Adivasi communities that carry no script and face extinction as younger generations shift to dominant tongues. The event was inaugurated by Durgadas Uikey, Minister of State for Tribal Affairs. The conclave also launched an upgraded version of Adi Vaani, a digital platform intended to help translate, record and teach tribal languages, and saw the Ministry of Tribal Affairs sign an agreement with the Central Institute of Indian Languages for the documentation, preservation and promotion of these tongues. Officials cast the effort as part of a wider push to give tribal heritage a firmer place in the national record, from museums that tell Adivasi histories to archives of oral traditions. India is home to hundreds of tribal languages, many spoken by only a few thousand people, and linguists warn a significant number could disappear within a generation without documentation.

NATIONAL

NITI Aayog report flags 87 million young Indians out of work and study

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026

Roughly 87 million young Indians are neither in education, employment nor training, according to a report released by NITI Aayog, the government's policy think tank, laying bare the scale of the task in putting the country's much-vaunted demographic dividend to work. The figure covers the 15-to-29 age group, the cohort economists watch most closely because it should be entering or already in the workforce. The category, known in labour statistics as NEET — not in education, employment or training — captures young people who have dropped out of schooling or college but have not found a job or a place in a skilling programme, a group at particular risk of long-term exclusion from the labour market. A large NEET population is widely read as a warning sign that growth is not translating into enough jobs for those leaving education. The report frames the number as both a challenge and an opportunity, arguing that bringing even a portion of these young people into vocational training and formal work could lift household incomes and national output. It is likely to sharpen the political debate over jobs, which has dogged the government despite headline economic growth, with the Opposition pointing to youth unemployment as evidence that expansion has not been broad-based.

MORE FROM THIS SECTION

NATIONAL

Mizoram places 79 heritage sites under state protection

Mizoram has declared 79 monuments and archaeological sites as state-protected, while the Archaeological Survey of India accorded national...

BUSINESS

IT stocks power Sensex, Nifty higher as global AI rally lifts D-Street

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026



Indian benchmarks snapped a two-day losing streak on Friday as a global artificial-intelligence rally drove information-technology shares sharply higher, capping a choppy August th...

Indian equity benchmarks snapped a two-day losing streak on Friday, closing firmly higher as a global rally in technology stocks drove information-technology shares sharply up and lifted the broader market. The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 330.92 points, or 0.43 per cent, to settle at 77,264.51, while the Nifty 50 added 84.80 points, or 0.35 per cent, to close at 24,175.65. The rebound was led almost single-handedly by IT counters, which tracked an upbeat mood across global technology markets after strong results from US chipmaker Nvidia rekindled enthusiasm over the artificial-intelligence spending cycle. The Nifty IT index was the day's standout, surging more than 3 per cent to top the sectoral charts and pulling the frontline indices out of the red. Coforge jumped nearly 6 per cent, LTIMindtree rose almost 5 per cent and Tata Consultancy Services gained about 4 per cent, with Persistent Systems and Tech Mahindra also among the biggest advancers on the Nifty. Pharmaceutical and metal stocks added to the gains, while fast-moving consumer goods and consumer durables counters ended lower, leaving market breadth firmly positive. Sentiment was helped by a calmer risk backdrop. India VIX, the market's fear gauge, fell more than 4 per cent, signalling reduced nervousness heading into the weekend, dealers said. The recovery clawed back losses from earlier in the week, when profit-taking and caution ahead of key economic data had pulled the indices lower. The Friday bounce capped a choppy August in which Indian equities struggled for clear direction, buffeted by firm crude prices, a soft rupee and lingering uncertainty over global interest rates and trade. The benchmarks have largely moved sideways since scaling record highs earlier in the year, with foreign portfolio flows turning volatile and domestic institutions doing much of the buying. The bigger macro trigger came after the closing bell, over the following Monday, when official data showed the economy had grown a stronger-than-expected 7.8 per cent in the April-June quarter, comfortably beating the Reserve Bank

of India's 7 per cent estimate. Economists said the robust print reinforced India's standing as the fastest-growing major economy and could lend support to equities in the sessions ahead. Not all the cues were benign. Brent crude held above \$93 a barrel through the week, keeping pressure on the import-dependent economy and on the rupee, which hovered near the 96-to-a-dollar mark. Persistent worries about a wider trade deficit and imported inflation kept a section of investors cautious even as the headline indices advanced. Analysts said the IT rally, while sharp, was driven largely by global sentiment rather than any change in the domestic earnings picture, which remained mixed after a largely concluded first-quarter results season. Much of the sector's fortunes, they noted, remain tied to United States technology spending and the pace of AI-related deal wins for India's software exporters. Broader market indices tracked the frontline gauges higher, with buying visible in mid- and small-cap counters, reflecting selective appetite among domestic investors. Traders said direction in the coming week would hinge on the trajectory of crude, the rupee, foreign portfolio flows and global cues from Wall Street. For the week as a whole, the benchmarks ended broadly steady, recovering ground in the final session after mid-week weakness. Both the Sensex and Nifty have gained modestly from their August lows but remain some distance below the peaks touched at the start of 2026, underscoring the range-bound tone that has gripped the market for much of the year. "The move was almost entirely a technology story, riding a global AI wave," one Mumbai-based strategist said. "Domestic triggers are thin with earnings behind us, so the market will take its cues from crude, the currency and how foreign investors read the strong growth number." With few fresh domestic catalysts on the calendar, dealers expect trading to stay headline-driven in the near term.

BUSINESS

Offbeat-tourism startup Wildfloc rebuilds to Rs 2.5 crore in valley

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026

A Srinagar-based travel startup that steers visitors away from Kashmir's crowded hotspots is emerging as a small but telling success story for the valley's tourism economy, having clawed its way back from near-collapse to a projected Rs 2.5 crore in annual revenue. Wildfloc Adventures, founded in 2021 by cousins Faseeh Khan and Hummayoun Dhar, has served more than 6,000 travellers by taking them to lesser-known destinations across the valley and connecting them with local communities, rather than funnelling them to established draws such as Gulmarg and Pahalgam. The company, which raised Rs 22 lakh in seed funding in 2023, now generates about Rs 25 lakh a month, its founders say. The model of spreading tourist spending beyond a handful of marquee sites speaks to a wider challenge for Jammu and Kashmir, where tourism is a mainstay of the economy but earnings have long been concentrated in a few locations and vulnerable to disruption. The business nearly folded after an April 2025 attack that battered arrivals across the valley, before recovering through a pivot to group trips, its promoters said. The rebound underscores both the fragility and the resilience of a sector that supports lakhs of livelihoods, from houseboat owners and hoteliers to guides, drivers and artisans.



BUSINESS

Kashmir's apple harvest gathers pace as valley crop reaches mandis

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026

Kashmir's apple harvest is gathering pace as the 2026 season enters its most crucial phase, with early varieties reaching the sprawling fruit mandi at Sopore in north Kashmir and growers across the valley preparing to move the perishable crop to markets nationwide. Horticulture is the mainstay of Jammu and Kashmir's rural economy, and apple is by far its most important crop. The union territory accounts for roughly 70 to 75 per cent of India's apple output and produces close to two million tonnes of the fruit a year, supporting an estimated seven lakh families, according to horticulture department data. Sopore, often called Kashmir's apple town, is home to one of Asia's largest fruit mandis, where rapid-fire pre-dawn auctions move thousands of tonnes of Delicious and Maharaji varieties through the peak months of August to October. Traders said the main commercial crop was expected to reach markets through September and October. Growers, however, remain anxious about weather and logistics. The trade has repeatedly pressed for smoother highway connectivity to move the fruit quickly, more controlled-atmosphere cold storage to hold produce until prices are favourable, and a market-intervention safety net for orchards hit by hail.

BUSINESS

Rupee stays under pressure near 96 as costly crude weighs

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026

The rupee stayed under pressure against the US dollar through late August, hovering near the 96-to-a-dollar mark as elevated crude oil prices and steady demand for the greenback weighed on the currency. The local unit had weakened to around 95.68 to the dollar in mid-August and traded with a soft bias thereafter, dealers said, as Brent crude held above \$93 a barrel and lifted the dollar demand of oil importers. A firm dollar overseas and caution over foreign portfolio flows added to the strain. Costlier oil is a recurring headwind for the rupee because India imports the bulk of its crude requirement, widening the trade gap and stoking imported inflation when prices climb. The pressure on the currency featured in market commentary through the week and weighed on sentiment in equities. Dealers said the central bank was believed to have smoothed sharp moves through periodic intervention, and that the rupee's near-term path would track crude prices, the dollar index and overseas fund flows. A stronger-than-expected first-quarter growth print offered some fundamental support, though the immediate cues stayed tilted towards caution.

BUSINESS

Kashmir shawl exports surge as willow GI tag opens new doors

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026



Kashmir's handicrafts economy is showing rare momentum, with shawl exports climbing to Rs 588.23 crore in 2025-26 from Rs 305.52 crore the previous year, according to trade figures, an almost twofold jump that now accounts for more than 70 per cent of the valley's total handicraft exports. The surge underscores the enduring global pull of Kashmiri pashmina and embroidered shawls, which reach buyers in more than 40 countries. Artisans and traders have long argued that the valley grows and makes some of the world's finest produce yet earns a fraction of its true value, and the export uptick is being read as a modest correction to that gap. A further boost has come from the 2025 geographical-indication tag for Kashmir willow, the wood prized for cricket bats, which industry figures say could sharpen the identity and premium of another signature valley product. A forest department plan to plant 2.2 lakh new willow trees is aimed at securing raw material for an industry that employs tens of thousands of people.

BUSINESS

Primary market stays busy as Skyways Air, SME issues line up listings

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026

India's primary market stayed busy through the final week of August, with a steady stream of initial public offerings on the counter and several set to list in the closing days of the month, extending a buoyant run for share sales even as secondary-market benchmarks moved sideways. Logistics company Skyways Air, whose Rs 582.80-crore mainboard offer was priced in a band of Rs 131 to Rs 138 a share, closed its subscription window and was slated to list on August 31, with grey-market activity pointing to a premium of about 22 per cent over the issue price. Investor appetite for the offer reflected continued interest in the logistics and infrastructure space. Smaller offers on the SME platform also drew attention. Sumax Engineering, which sold shares at up to Rs 101 apiece to raise Rs 53.40 crore, was due to list on September 1 amid a firm grey-market premium. Market watchers cautioned that grey-market premiums are unofficial and volatile indicators of demand rather than a guarantee of listing gains, and urged investors to weigh company fundamentals rather than chase short-term pops.

BUSINESS

Fiscal deficit at 26.8% of full-year target through July

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026

The Centre's fiscal deficit for the first four months of the financial year touched Rs 4.55 lakh crore at the end of July, or 26.8 per cent of the full-year target, government data released on Monday showed. The figure, put out by the Controller General of Accounts, marked a slower pace of deficit accumulation than a year earlier, when the shortfall had reached 29.9 per cent of the budget estimate over the same April-July period. The improvement pointed to healthier revenues and a measured pace of spending in the opening months of 2026-27. The government has budgeted a full-year fiscal deficit of Rs 16.96 lakh crore for 2026-27, equal to about 4.3 per cent of gross domestic product, as it continues a gradual path of consolidation while protecting capital spending. The fiscal deficit is the gap between the government's total expenditure and its total receipts other than borrowings, and is met through market borrowing. Analysts said the comfortable start, coming alongside a stronger-than-expected first-quarter growth print, gave the exchequer some headroom, though the trajectory of tax collections, disinvestment receipts and any additional spending in the second half would determine whether the annual target is met. A robust nominal GDP, they noted, also helps keep the deficit-to-GDP ratio in check.

MORE FROM THIS SECTION

BUSINESS

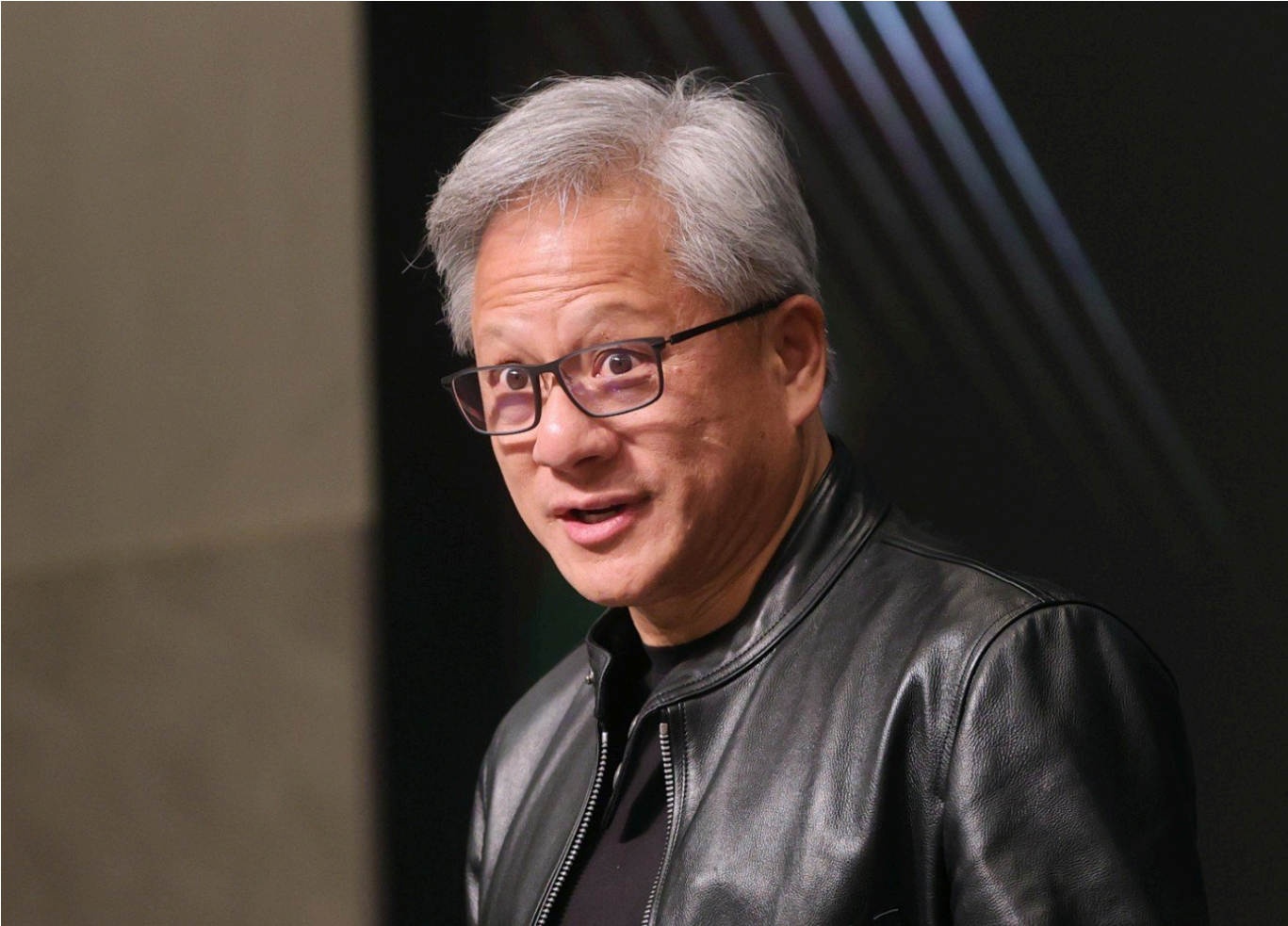
Brent above \$93 keeps pressure on import-reliant India

Crude prices stayed elevated through late August, stoking worries about India's trade deficit and imported inflation.

TECHNOLOGY

Nvidia posts record \$96 billion quarter as AI demand keeps compounding

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026



The chipmaker more than doubled revenue to \$96.2 billion, powered by an \$89 billion data-centre business, but shares slipped as investors focused on thinning margins and rising mem...

NVIDIA reported record fiscal second-quarter revenue of \$96.2 billion, more than doubling from a year earlier and beating Wall Street's \$92.2 billion estimate, as demand for its artificial-intelligence accelerators showed no sign of cooling. The results, released after US markets closed, reinforced the Santa Clara chipmaker's position at the centre of the global AI build-out and kept it comfortably the most valuable company on the planet. Data-centre revenue — the division that houses Nvidia's Blackwell AI systems — rose 117 percent to \$89 billion, ahead of analyst forecasts near \$85 billion and accounting for roughly 92 percent of the company's total sales. Adjusted earnings came in at \$2.22 a share, against the \$2.10 that analysts had expected. Gaming, professional visualisation and automotive, once the bulk of Nvidia's business, are now rounding errors beside the data-centre juggernaut. "AI has reached its inflection point," chief executive Jensen Huang told analysts on a call after the release. "Compute is revenue, and demand is accelerating." Huang went further than usual on the outlook, saying he expected the company's revenue to grow about 70 percent in the next fiscal year — a forecast far above the market's own projections and a sign of how confident Nvidia remains that the spending wave has years left to run. The company guided current-quarter revenue to about \$108 billion, above the \$104.2 billion analysts had penciled in. Crucially, Nvidia said that figure assumed no sales to China, where a combination of US export controls and Beijing's own guidance to domestic firms has effectively frozen Nvidia out of a market it once counted among its largest. Executives said any China revenue would be upside the guidance does not bank on. Yet the record numbers were not enough to satisfy a market that has priced Nvidia for near-perfection. Shares

slipped about 1.6 percent in after-hours trading as investors fixed on margins. The company said gross margin would bottom at 71 to 72 percent by the fourth quarter, down from about 75 percent, blaming the rising cost of the high-bandwidth memory, or HBM, that its most powerful chips stack alongside their processors in ever greater quantities. That memory squeeze is a rare pressure point for a firm used to dictating terms. HBM is supplied by a narrow group — SK Hynix, Samsung and Micron — whose capacity is now the industry's bottleneck, and prices have climbed as every AI chipmaker competes for the same wafers. Nvidia said it was working with all three suppliers to secure volume for its next-generation Rubin platform. The results landed a day after OpenAI used the Hot Chips conference to argue that its own inference accelerator, Jalapeño, beats Blackwell on performance per watt — a reminder that Nvidia's biggest customers are also becoming its rivals. Amazon, Google, Meta and Microsoft are each pouring tens of billions into custom silicon, and Advanced Micro Devices continues to press at the high end. Huang was dismissive, telling analysts that Nvidia's advantage lay in a full-stack platform of chips, networking and software that bespoke parts cannot easily match. For now the numbers are on his side. Nvidia's data-centre business alone is larger than the entire annual revenue of most technology companies, and its guidance implies the infrastructure boom will keep compounding into 2027. The question hanging over the quarter — asked more loudly each time Nvidia reports — is how long the hyperscalers can keep spending at this pace before the returns on all that compute have to show up. Huang's answer, delivered with characteristic certainty, was that they have barely begun.



TECHNOLOGY

OpenAI says its first chip beats Nvidia's Blackwell on power efficiency

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026

OpenAI used the Hot Chips conference at Stanford to make its boldest hardware claim yet, saying its first custom silicon — an inference accelerator code-named Jalapeño and built with Broadcom — beats Nvidia's Blackwell systems on performance per watt in nearly every test. OpenAI said Jalapeño delivered between 1.5 and 1.9 times better throughput per watt than Blackwell while drawing about half the power, measuring the parts on InferenceX, a public SemiAnalysis benchmark that scores the full job of serving an AI request rather than raw chip throughput. OpenAI normalised the results using each accelerator's published power rating, arguing that performance per watt is the number that matters once data centres run into the limits of the electricity grid. The company was candid about the caveats. Jalapeño is inference-only — it serves models but cannot train them, as Blackwell does — and it leans on newer HBM4 memory, which OpenAI conceded made the comparison unfair. The benchmarks also ran against Nvidia's GB200 and GB300, not the Vera Rubin platform now shipping. Deployment will trickle out later this year, with volume production slated for 2027. Even hedged, the disclosure — a day before Nvidia's record earnings — signalled that OpenAI intends to own more of the compute stack it now rents.

TECHNOLOGY

Samsung unveils memory that computes, aiming to speed AI on phones

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026

Samsung Electronics unveiled a memory chip that does part of the computing itself, presenting LPDDR5X-PIM at the Hot Chips conference as a way to speed up on-device artificial intelligence without rebuilding the hardware around it. The design places a processing-in-memory, or PIM, block inside each of the chip's 16 DRAM banks, with multiply-accumulate units and a logic unit that handle both floating-point and integer maths where the data sits. That lets some calculations run inside the memory instead of being shuttled back and forth to a separate processor — the movement that burns most of the power and time in AI inference. Samsung said the 16-gigabyte part delivered internal bandwidth of 614 gigabytes per second, roughly eight times the 76.8 GB/s of conventional LPDDR5X. Running Meta's Llama 3.1 model, token throughput rose from 27 to 81.3 tokens per second, about a threefold gain. The headline feature is compatibility: the chip uses the same 561-ball package as standard LPDDR5X, so device makers can drop it in without reworking their designs. Samsung is pitching it at phones, laptops and other edge devices where power and cost matter more than the raw performance of data-centre memory, and where running AI models locally rather than in the cloud is fast becoming a selling point.

TECHNOLOGY

India moves to let AI agents pay on UPI within limits users set

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026



India is preparing to let artificial-intelligence agents make small payments on its Unified Payments Interface without seeking a user's approval for every transaction, a step that would put the country among the first to build agentic payments into a national system. The National Payments Corporation of India is expected to unveil a Unified Agent Protocol at the Global Fintech Fest in Mumbai next week, Reuters reported, citing sources. The protocol is expected to draw on two mechanisms already in UPI: UPI Circle, which lets an account holder delegate spending authority to another party — here a software agent — and Reserve Pay, which blocks a pool of funds for repeated debits. Users would set rule-based limits on when and how much an agent can spend, with audit trails and identity checks built in. Any launch needs the Reserve Bank of India's approval. The stakes are large: UPI, the world's biggest retail fast-payment system, processed 24.51 billion transactions worth 29.82 trillion rupees in August alone. Initial use cases would be low-value purchases such as groceries and digital orders.

TECHNOLOGY

Meta settlement forces sweeping changes to teen Facebook and Instagram

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026



Meta Platforms agreed to sweeping changes to how teenagers experience Facebook and Instagram as part of a landmark settlement with US states, unveiled on 26 August, that reshapes the products far beyond any cash payout. The deal, resolving claims by 48 states that Meta designed its apps to hook children, carries a headline value of up to \$18 billion over ten years, of which about \$16.7 billion is earmarked for the states. Meta is committed to roughly \$12.7 billion, with a further \$5 billion contingent on rivals adopting similar protections. It denied wrongdoing. The product changes are the more consequential part. Meta agreed to cap teen accounts at two hours a day, block access between midnight and 6am, and switch off push notifications during school hours, 8am to 3pm on weekdays. Likes and reactions will be hidden by default, cosmetic-surgery filters disabled without parental consent, and parents given supervision tools including alerts tied to self-harm searches. The settlement is the highest-profile test yet of the claim that platforms deliberately engineered compulsive use in minors, and its mandates set a template regulators may cite.

TECHNOLOGY

Salesforce and Anthropic deepen alliance with 'Claudeforce'

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026

Salesforce and Anthropic deepened their alliance on 26 August, announcing an expanded partnership branded Claudeforce that weaves Anthropic's Claude models into Salesforce's enterprise software, as the two companies race to sell businesses on autonomous, agentic AI. The tie-up makes Salesforce's data, workflows, business logic and governance controls securely accessible to Claude, so the model can carry out multi-step tasks — pulling records, drafting responses, taking actions — inside a company's own systems rather than in a standalone chatbot. A Salesforce in Claude capability is available to select pilot customers now, with an open beta expected in September. The deal underscores how enterprise-software vendors are lining up behind foundation-model providers to keep customers from routing work around them. For Anthropic, whose Claude family competes with OpenAI's GPT and Google's Gemini, embedding inside one of the world's largest business-software platforms is a route to the corporate deployments where AI spending is heaviest. For Salesforce, it is a hedge that keeps its customer-relationship software at the centre of how firms adopt AI agents.

MORE FROM THIS SECTION

TECHNOLOGY

Cyberattack disrupts Boston Scientific order systems

The medical-device maker confirmed an intrusion that hit the systems it uses to process and ship customer orders.

HEALTH

J&K medical interns launch indefinite strike over frozen stipend

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026



Hundreds of MBBS and BDS interns across Jammu and Kashmir stopped work on August 31, demanding their monthly stipend be raised from Rs 12,300 to Rs 30,000 after nearly six years wi...

Hundreds of MBBS and BDS interns across Jammu and Kashmir walked off the wards on Monday, launching an indefinite strike over a monthly stipend that has stayed frozen at Rs 12,300 for close to six years, in a protest that suspended intern-run clinical services at Government Medical College (GMC) Srinagar and rippled across the Union Territory’s teaching hospitals. The interns, who perform the year-long compulsory rotatory internship that follows their final examinations, are demanding that the stipend be raised to Rs 30,000 a month, arguing that the current figure has not moved despite years of inflation and a workload that keeps them on the hospital floor around the clock. A government-appointed committee had in 2023 recommended raising the stipend to Rs 25,000, but that recommendation was never implemented, the interns said. Clinical services staffed by interns were completely withdrawn at GMC Srinagar and its associated hospitals from August 31, with interns at SKIMS Medical College Bemina, GMC Jammu, GMC Anantnag and GMC Baramulla joining the agitation, according to Greater Kashmir and Rising Kashmir. Because interns form the backbone of round-the-clock hospital operations – manning emergency rooms, wards, intensive-care units, operation theatres and outpatient departments – the sudden withdrawal of their services strained patient care at institutions that already run beyond capacity. “In view of the prolonged inaction, intern doctors have decided to publicly announce a complete strike from August 31,” the protesting interns said in a statement, adding that repeated representations to the administration had gone unanswered. The interns pressed their case with a comparison of stipends across the country, pointing out that J&K’s Rs 12,300 is among the lowest paid to interns anywhere in India. By their account, interns in Odisha receive about Rs 44,319 a month and those in West Bengal about Rs 43,099 – more than three times what their counterparts in Jammu and Kashmir are paid for comparable duties. The stir drew support from senior colleagues. Postgraduate residents and senior residents of

GMC Srinagar and its associated hospitals, working under the banner of the Resident Doctors’ Association, extended full backing to the interns on August 28, describing them as an “indispensable part” of the public healthcare system who often work long hours while shouldering significant clinical responsibility. Health activist Dr Mohammad Momin Khan, associated with the All India Medical Students’ Association, said the unity of MBBS and BDS interns in raising a legitimate demand deserved attention. The government signalled sympathy but stopped short of an immediate settlement. Health and Medical Education Minister Sakina Itoo acknowledged that the interns’ demand was genuine and said a proposal to increase the stipend was already under process, according to Rising Kashmir. She did not commit to a figure or a timeline, and the interns said they would keep the strike in force until a formal order was issued. Interns and resident doctors have long complained that J&K’s medical education system leans heavily on the labour of trainees to keep its hospitals running while paying them a fraction of what the work is worth. The internship year is meant to be a period of supervised, hands-on training, but in practice interns absorb much of the routine clinical load in busy government hospitals, particularly in emergency and inpatient services. The timing sharpened the strike’s impact. It came as Kashmir hospitals were already contending with a seasonal rise in respiratory and viral illness and chronic staff shortages, leaving outpatient queues and emergency rooms exposed when the interns stepped back. Hospital administrations moved to redeploy postgraduate and senior residents to cover essential and emergency services, but conceded that a prolonged agitation would be difficult to absorb. Intern bodies said the ball was now in the government’s court, warning that only a written order revising the stipend would bring them back to work. The desk will track the administration’s response and the effect of the strike on patient services across J&K’s medical colleges.

HEALTH

Parliamentary panel flags doctor shortage in J&K's border, remote areas

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026

A parliamentary panel has flagged a persistent shortage of qualified doctors and specialists in Jammu and Kashmir’s border, remote and difficult areas, warning that filling those posts remains “critical for ensuring equitable healthcare delivery.” The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs, in observations reported on August 29, said the availability of doctors in hard-to-reach areas continued to lag – a description that fits frontier and mountain districts such as Poonch, Rajouri, Kupwara and Kishtwar, where health facilities have long struggled to retain specialists. The committee urged the administration to expedite regular recruitment, expand postgraduate medical education and specialist training, strengthen the District Residency Programme and offer financial and career incentives for doctors posted in difficult terrain. The panel also called for wider use of telemedicine, digital health infrastructure and strengthened emergency services to bridge the gap in underserved areas, according to Greater Kashmir. At the same time, the committee acknowledged substantial investment in J&K’s health sector since 2019, including new AIIMS and government medical colleges, nursing colleges and digital initiatives such as the JK-SEHAT platform. It commended gains in maternal and reproductive health, noting a total fertility rate of 1.5, below the national average, and reviewed the rollout of the AB-PMJAY SEHAT health-insurance scheme.



HEALTH

Srinagar's H1N1 testing lab has lain shut for four years

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026

A dedicated H1N1 testing laboratory in Srinagar has lain shut for four years even as influenza cases climb across the Valley, a lapse critics have called a waste of public money, Greater Kashmir reported. The laboratory, set up at the Chest Diseases Hospital in Srinagar, was announced in 2015 and made functional by 2018, but has been non-functional since 2022, ostensibly closed for “necessary repairs” that have never been carried out, the newspaper said. The report put the facility’s cost at Rs 5.63 crore. No microbiology staff were ever allocated to run it, leaving the lab idle for want of both repairs and personnel. “For four years, no repairs and allocations have taken place. This is sheer wastage of public money,” a hospital official was quoted as saying. The closure means samples for dangerous respiratory viruses cannot be tested at the facility locally, forcing dependence on other surveillance labs at a time when H1N1 and other influenza strains are circulating widely. Medical Superintendent Dr Sameena Saba said detailed estimation and drawings had been completed and that the tendering process would commence shortly, according to the report. Doctors said the delay had blunted the Valley’s capacity to detect and track respiratory outbreaks close to where patients present.



HEALTH

WHO declares Uganda Ebola outbreak over as DRC epidemic rages on

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026

The World Health Organization declared an end to the Ebola outbreak in Uganda on August 26, after the East African country passed the mandatory 42-day monitoring period without a new confirmed case. Uganda recorded 20 Ebola infections and two deaths during the outbreak, with the last confirmed case reported on June 21 and the final patient discharged from the Mulago National Referral Isolation Centre in mid-July, according to WHO and Al Jazeera. The declaration was made at a joint news conference with Uganda’s health ministry. “WHO had to wait because that’s the process. That’s the guideline,” Uganda’s health ministry permanent secretary Diana Atwine said, referring to the six-week wait required before an outbreak can be called over. The relief in Uganda stood in sharp contrast to neighbouring Democratic Republic of the Congo, where a far larger Ebola epidemic caused by the Bundibugyo virus continued to rage. As of late August, the DRC had reported more than 5,600 confirmed cases and over 2,700 deaths, with Ituri province the epicentre, WHO figures showed. WHO has kept the risk to the DRC assessed as very high and has warned that the outbreak, declared a public health emergency of international concern, remains far from contained.

HEALTH

Most Indians screened carry drug-resistant gut bacteria, study finds

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026

A large study of antibiotic resistance in India has found that most people it screened – in ordinary communities as well as in hospitals – were already carrying drug-resistant gut bacteria, underscoring how deeply resistance has seeped into everyday life. The study, published on August 26 in the journal Frontiers in Public Health, was carried out by the ARCH India team led by the Indian Council of Medical Research’s National Institute of Epidemiology in Chennai, in partnership with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. It screened 1,305 community participants and 1,393 hospitalised patients for intestinal colonisation with resistant Enterobacteriales. Some 77.7 percent of community participants and 90.3 percent of hospitalised participants tested positive for at least one resistant phenotype, including extended-spectrum cephalosporin-resistant, carbapenem-resistant or colistin-resistant bacteria, the authors reported. The researchers said the findings point to the scale of the challenge in low-resource settings and stressed that robust surveillance, laboratory quality assurance and community engagement would be essential to track and curb resistance.

HEALTH

Oxygen plant down for two months at District Hospital Shopian

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026



The oxygen generation plant at the District Hospital in Shopian has been out of order for nearly two months, forcing the facility to lean on backup oxygen concentrators and cylinders and raising fears for patients whose oxygen levels drop suddenly, Greater Kashmir reported. With the plant down, the hospital has been managing on stored cylinders and portable concentrators, and staff conceded that patients with respiratory illness could have to be referred elsewhere if demand outstrips the backup supply. The breakdown was attributed to maintenance problems, part of a wider pattern in which district hospitals across Kashmir carry liabilities exceeding Rs 8 crore that constrain routine upkeep. “We were shocked to learn that the plant was not working,” said Mohammad Rafiq, a patient attendant. Civil society members demanded urgent action, with one warning that installing a plant was “only the first step” and that a proper maintenance mechanism was essential. Anwar Hamid Shaikh, an

HEALTH

SKIMS opens summit to push J&K from tertiary to quaternary care

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026

A three-day Quaternary Healthcare and Research Summit opened at the Sher-i-Kashmir International Conference Centre (SKICC) in Srinagar on August 25, drawing the heads of some of the country’s biggest medical institutions to chart how Jammu and Kashmir can move from tertiary care to the most advanced, super-specialised tier of treatment. Themed “Scaling Tertiary into Quaternary Healthcare: A National Strategy for Advanced Care,” the summit was jointly organised by the Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS), the J&K Science, Technology & Innovation Council and the Department of Science & Technology, along with the Ladakh Research Consortium, and held under the aegis of NITI Aayog, according to Rising Kashmir. SKIMS Director Prof M. Ashraf Ganie inaugurated the event. The gathering brought together the directors of AIIMS New Delhi and PGIMER Chandigarh and the executive directors of AIIMS Awantipora and AIIMS Jammu, among others. The programme moved from faculty research with local relevance on the first day to national-level deliberations with outside experts on the second, and closed with institution heads discussing collaboration in research, training and teaching. Organisers said the aim was to build platforms for collaboration, promote clinical research and draw up a roadmap for strengthening quaternary healthcare across the country.

MORE FROM THIS SECTION

HEALTH

Moul Mouj Foundation marks two years with J&K obesity summit

The Kashmir-based Moul Mouj Foundation marked two years of community health work by hosting the JK Obesity Summit and its MMFDiacon-2026...

INTERNATIONAL

Himalayan glacier collapse unleashes flood that kills more than 1,000 on Nepal-Tibet border

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026



A section of glacier and bedrock broke away high in the Himalayas and crashed into a river on the Nepal-Tibet frontier, sending a wall of water, ice and rock down the Bhote Koshi a...

A wall of water, ice and shattered rock that roared down the Nepal-Tibet border on the morning of Aug. 27 has become the deadliest Himalayan disaster in living memory, with Nepal's disaster authority confirming more than 1,000 dead across the frontier and thousands still unaccounted for by the time of its Sept. 1 bulletin.By that count at least 987 people were confirmed dead in Nepal and 16 across the border in China's Tibet region, while roughly 3,900 people remained missing on the Nepali side and more than 540 in Tibet, according to figures cited by Al Jazeera. Officials warned the toll would keep climbing as recovery teams reached villages the flood had scoured down to bedrock.The catastrophe began high in the mountains, where a large section of glacier and the bedrock beneath it broke away at about 5,200 metres and plunged some 1,200 metres into the Lhende river inside Tibet. The debris briefly dammed the river before the barrier gave way, sending a torrent down the Bhote Koshi and Trishuli gorges. Water levels rose by as much as nine metres in half an hour, and investigators said the flood wave tore down its first 22 kilometres at an average speed of around 193 kilometres per hour.The surge obliterated the Rasuwagadhi border post, the main overland trade crossing between Kathmandu and Lhasa, and swept away bridges, hydropower plants and long stretches of the only road linking the Nepali capital to Tibet. Settlements in Rasuwa district, among them Timure and Syabrubesi, were among the worst hit before the flood pushed downstream into Nuwakot and Dhading districts.Among the missing are Hindu and Buddhist pilgrims and trekkers bound for Mount Kailash, along with hundreds of workers at hydropower projects strung along the river. Nepali authorities said the missing included 177 Indian nationals, about 90 Americans, 34 Australians, 33 Britons and 25 Canadians, part

of a group of foreign visitors drawn from more than 30 countries.China mounted a large cross-border rescue effort, with state media reporting that President Xi Jinping had ordered an "all-out" operation and that Premier Li Qiang travelled to the disaster zone. On the Nepali side, army helicopters ferried the injured to Kathmandu and lifted stranded survivors from ridgelines above the drowned valley, though damaged roads and unstable slopes hampered the effort for days.The flood's reach extended well beyond the mountains. Swollen tributaries carried the pulse of water into India's Gandak river system, prompting flood warnings in parts of Bihar and underscoring how a single glacial collapse in the high Himalayas can threaten communities hundreds of kilometres downstream.Scientists initially suspected an earthquake: the US Geological Survey recorded a seismic signal it first read as a magnitude 4.4 tremor, but later concluded the shaking, revised to about 5.2, had been generated by the landslide itself rather than a quake. Researchers described the event as a glacial collapse, a hazard they say is growing more frequent as warming destabilises ice and permafrost across the region.For readers in the Pir Panjal and the wider western Himalaya, the disaster carried an uncomfortable echo. Glacier-fed rivers, high-altitude lakes and run-of-the-river hydropower dot Jammu and Kashmir's mountains too, and glaciologists have long warned that glacial-lake outburst floods and rock-ice avalanches pose a rising danger across the entire Himalayan arc.A week after the water came down, rescue teams were still digging through silt and debris for the dead, and hope of finding survivors among the thousands of missing had all but faded. Nepali officials said rebuilding the shattered border infrastructure would take years.



INTERNATIONAL

Russian drone strike on ammunition depot near Kyiv kills 38

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026

At least 38 people were killed and about 20 wounded when a Russian drone slammed into an ammunition warehouse near the Ukrainian capital on Aug. 29, touching off hours of secondary explosions in a residential area, Al Jazeera reported.The drone struck a facility at Myla, a village around five kilometres west of Kyiv on the highway toward Chop, sparking a fire and a chain of blasts that lasted through the night. Roughly 50 homes were damaged and four people were still listed as missing, officials said. It was the second strike on a munitions depot near Kyiv in two months, and Ukrainian prosecutors opened an investigation into alleged negligence over storing arms so close to housing.President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Russia had launched about 1,500 drones over four days, some 800 of them jet-powered Shahed variants that are hardest to intercept. Moscow's defence ministry warned of "massive strikes" on Ukraine's energy grid before winter, raising fears of another punishing cold season for civilians.



INTERNATIONAL

US-allied Kurdish force in Syria dissolves after merging into national army

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026

The Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces, for years Washington's main partner against the Islamic State group, has ceased to exist as an independent army after formally merging into Syria's armed forces, its commander announced this week.Mazloun Abdi declared the group's dissolution in a televised address from the presidential palace in Damascus on Aug. 25, saying, "We announce the end of the mission of the Syrian Democratic Forces." The move completed an integration agreed under a framework signed in January with President Ahmed al-Sharaa's government, which in turn pledged to recognise Kurdish cultural, civil and educational rights.Roughly 10,000 SDF fighters have been folded into brigades of the Syrian army, with officials saying the figure could reach about 12,000, Al Jazeera reported. Two days later, al-Sharaa issued a decree naming Abdi an adviser to the presidency. Analysts cautioned that a genuine unification of Syria's patchwork of armed factions, and lasting protection for Kurdish rights, remains far from settled.

INTERNATIONAL

US and Iran trade direct strikes in sharp Gulf escalation

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026

The United States and Iran exchanged direct military blows on Aug. 30 in a sharp escalation in the Gulf, according to accounts relayed by the US national-security site Just Security, citing Reuters and The Associated Press.US forces struck Iranian rocket launchers on Larak Island, near the Strait of Hormuz, US Central Command spokesman Capt. Tim Hawkins said. Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps responded with missile strikes aimed at air bases in Jordan and the United Arab Emirates, according to the two countries and Washington.Jordan's military said it intercepted eight incoming missiles, while the UAE denied that its Al Minhad Air Base had been hit. The tit-for-tat marked one of the most serious direct confrontations between the two adversaries in months and rattled shipping through the Hormuz chokepoint, past which a large share of the world's seaborne oil moves.Gulf governments and Western capitals urged restraint, warning that a wider war would endanger energy supplies and the millions of migrant workers, many of them South Asian, who live and work across the region. Both Tehran and Washington said they were ready to respond to any further attack, leaving the standoff dangerously open.

INTERNATIONAL

Israel widens Gaza City offensive as famine is confirmed

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026

Israel pressed ahead with an expanded offensive to seize Gaza City in the final days of August, launching intense air and artillery strikes on the enclave's largest urban centre even as a UN-backed monitor confirmed famine there.The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, the world's leading authority on hunger, said famine conditions had taken hold in Gaza City, with more than half a million people affected. Aid agencies described the crisis as man-made and preventable after nearly two years of war and severe restrictions on the entry of food and fuel.Israeli strikes killed at least seven Palestinians on Aug. 25, destroying an aid warehouse at al-Shifa Hospital, Al Jazeera reported, and further raids over the following weekend killed about 10 more people, including a three-year-old child, according to Reuters and AP. Israel said its operation targeted Hamas and urged residents to move south, an order aid groups warned could uproot hundreds of thousands of people. International mediators pressed for a ceasefire even as the ground assault widened.

INTERNATIONAL

Trump unveils sweeping deal to develop Venezuela's oil reserves

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026

President Donald Trump announced a sweeping agreement on Aug. 29 handing a private consortium long-term rights to develop Venezuela's vast oil reserves, a deal his administration cast as one of the largest in the industry's history.Under the arrangement, reported by Axios, The Wall Street Journal and Reuters, the US government would take a 35 percent stake in a venture called North American Blue Energy Partners, with the Pentagon helping to finance operations across fields estimated to hold some 65 billion barrels. Venezuela's interim president, Delcy Rodriguez, confirmed the accord and projected it could generate about \$209 billion in tax revenue.The deal marks a dramatic turn in relations between Washington and Caracas after years of sanctions and confrontation over Venezuela's leadership. Critics questioned the terms and the direct US government stake, while supporters argued the investment could revive a collapsed economy. Details of how output and revenue would be shared, and how quickly shattered production could be rebuilt, remained unclear.

INTERNATIONAL

Masked settlers attack West Bank villages as Netanyahu condemns 'rioters'

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026

Masked Israeli settlers attacked Palestinian homes in the occupied West Bank villages of Qusra and Jalud on Aug. 29, in the latest surge of settler violence to hit the territory, according to reporting relayed by Just Security from NBC News and news agencies.Residents said assailants fired tear gas, handcuffed and beat villagers and ransacked houses. An NBC News crew was assaulted while interviewing Palestinians about the raids, the network said. The attacks drew condemnation from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who described the perpetrators as a "handful of rioters," though Palestinians and rights groups say such assaults have become routine and are rarely prosecuted.Settler violence has climbed sharply during the Gaza war, with Palestinian communities across the West Bank reporting near-daily incursions, arson and the seizure of grazing land. The United Nations has repeatedly warned that the West Bank risks sliding into wider conflict as military raids, settler attacks and displacement mount. More than 700,000 Israeli settlers live in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, on land Palestinians seek for a future state.

MORE FROM THIS SECTION

INTERNATIONAL

CIA chief's secret Moscow trip fuels talk of Trump-Putin-Zelenskyy summit

CIA Director John Ratcliffe made a secret visit to Moscow, spending hours in talks with Russian officials and stoking speculation about a...

SPORTS

India take Sri Lanka series 1-0 as Dinusha's defiance denies clean sweep

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026

India wrapped up their tour of Sri Lanka with the series in the bag on Thursday, but Shubman Gill's tourists were denied the clean sweep they had chased for the best part of four days as a defiant Sri Lanka batted out the second and final Test at the Sinhalese Sports Club to earn a draw, the visitors settling for a 1-0 win.It had all pointed to a second victory in Colombo. India piled up 503 for 9 declared, built around a fluent 117 from Devdutt Padikkal and an unbeaten 115 from wicketkeeper Rishabh Jurel, and when Sri Lanka were bowled out for 290 in reply Gill did not hesitate to enforce the follow-on. It was the second time in the series that Padikkal had passed three figures, and Jurel's maiden overseas hundred underlined the depth of a batting line-up that has scored heavily throughout the tour. On a flat surface that offered the bowlers little, however, the hosts dug in a second time and refused to buckle.The resistance was led by Sonal Dinusha, whose unbeaten 133 was the innings of the match and the cornerstone of Sri Lanka's escape. The right-hander batted for the best part of two days, occupying the crease with monk-like patience as partners came and went, and finished not out as the home side reached 429 for 9 before the game was called off. It was Dinusha's third century in four innings, a sequence that has announced him as Sri Lanka's find of the series.Sooriyabandara weighed in with 92 lower down the order, and between them the pair batted India out of the contest. Gill's bowlers sent down 243.4 overs across Sri Lanka's two innings, a punishing workload on a docile pitch, and India's seamers and spinners alike probed without reward for

long stretches. By the close of the fourth day the declaration and the runs had run out, leaving the fifth day to peter into a formality.If the finish frustrated India, the series was still theirs, sealed by the emphatic 165-run win in the opening Test at Galle. Padikkal was the outstanding figure across the two matches, named Player of the Series after amassing 328 runs at an average of 109.33 with centuries in each Test, the left-hander's red-ball stock rising with every innings on a tour that has cemented his place in India's middle order.For Gill, a first assignment as Test captain on Sri Lankan soil ends with a tick in the win column, if not the flourish he wanted. India will reflect on a missed opportunity to press home their dominance, and on the World Test Championship points left on the table by the Colombo stalemate, a draw that could yet matter when the standings are totted up later in the cycle.For Sri Lanka, beaten but unbowed, the second Test offered something to build on after a chastening week at Galle. Dinusha's marathon and the lower order's stubbornness will have pleased a home dressing room that had looked in danger of a whitewash, and the draw at least spared the islanders a 2-0 scoreline as the sides went their separate ways.The result keeps India on the road ahead of a busy home season, and offers Gill's think tank a clutch of selection puzzles to chew over, not least how to fit Padikkal, Jurel and the rest of a deep batting order into a single XI. For Sri Lanka, the focus turns to rebuilding around a top order that found, in Dinusha, a batsman with the temperament for the long haul. Both camps left Colombo with plenty to ponder.

SPORTS

Djokovic stunned in US Open first round by Navone

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026



Novak Djokovic's US Open ended almost before it had begun, the 24-time Grand Slam champion crashing out in the first round on Saturday in a five-set defeat to Argentina's Mariano Navone that ranks among the biggest upsets of his storied career.The result was Djokovic's first opening-round exit at a Grand Slam since 2006, a startling statistic for a four-time champion at Flushing Meadows who had reached the business end of the tournament with metronomic regularity for the better part of two decades. Navone, seizing his moment, refused to be overawed on the big stage.For Djokovic, long the sport's ultimate big-match competitor, the manner of the loss will sting, coming as it did against an opponent ranked well outside the game's upper tier. The New York crowd, expecting a routine night for the veteran, instead witnessed a genuine shock, and the defeat blew a hole in the top half of the men's draw. For Navone, it was the result of a lifetime.

SPORTS

Alcaraz cruises as seeds survive US Open opening round

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026

While one former champion tumbled out, the men's seeds otherwise negotiated the opening round of the US Open with few alarms, led by Carlos Alcaraz, who needed only three sets to move through in typically brisk fashion on the New York hard courts.The second seed dispatched Russia's Roman Safiullin in straight sets, dropping little as he opened his campaign with the assurance of a man among the favourites for the title. Alcaraz's clean, front-foot tennis set the standard for the leading names on his side of the draw.There was rather more drama elsewhere. Stefanos Tsitsipas recovered from losing the opening set to knock out the 10th seed Arthur Fils, while eighth seed Ben Shelton came from a set down to see off the Netherlands' Tallon Griekspoor. Third seed Felix Auger-Aliassime also advanced, edging past Australia's Rinky Hijikata in four sets.With Djokovic gone, the draw has opened up invitingly for the likes of Alcaraz, and the second week in New York promises intrigue as the contenders jostle to fill the vacuum left by the fallen former champion.

SPORTS

Pathirage soars to 92.07m to win Zurich javelin

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026

The Diamond League's Zurich meeting threw up one of the performances of the athletics season on Thursday, Sri Lanka's Rumesh Pathirage stunning a strong javelin field with a monster throw of 92.07 metres to take victory and announce himself among the event's heavy hitters.The distance, well beyond the 90-metre barrier that only a handful of throwers clear in a given year, underlined the rapid rise of a South Asian arm in a discipline long dominated by European and Nordic names. Pathirage's win came in the absence of Neeraj Chopra, who had opted to skip the Zurich leg.For Sri Lankan sport, starved of headline moments on the global track-and-field stage, the throw was a landmark, and it sets up a mouthwatering prospect should Pathirage and Chopra meet at the Diamond League final in Brussels. The Indian, a fixture on the finale podium, has already sealed his place in that showdown.Pathirage's breakthrough is a reminder that the balance of power in men's javelin, once the preserve of a familiar few, is shifting, with fresh challengers now capable of the sport's biggest throws.

SPORTS

India women open Asia Cup defence with 94-run rout of Thailand

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026

India's title defence at the Women's Asia Cup began with a comprehensive statement on Saturday, the holders brushing aside Thailand by 94 runs in Dubai to open their Group A campaign with a commanding win and an early boost to their net run rate.Shafali Verma set the tone with a punchy 64 from 36 balls, an innings studded with eight fours and three sixes that gave India a flying start at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium. The rest of the card was less convincing, India losing eight wickets for 46 runs in a middle-order wobble, but 159 for 9 proved more than enough on a surface that offered the bowlers plenty.Thailand never got going in reply, folding for 65 in 16.1 overs as India's attack squeezed the life out of the chase. Nandani Sharma led the way with 3 for 18, while the experienced Deepti Sharma, playing her 150th Twenty20 international, ripped out three wickets in the space of seven balls without conceding a run.Shafali was named Player of the Match. India, the defending champions, share Group A with Pakistan, Thailand and Hong Kong, and will fancy their chances of topping the pool as the tournament builds towards the knockout rounds and a final scheduled for September 13.



SPORTS

Chopra books Diamond League final berth despite skipping Zurich

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026

Neeraj Chopra has booked his place in the final of the 2026 Diamond League despite sitting out the Zurich leg, the two-time Olympic medallist doing enough earlier in the campaign to secure his spot among the world's leading javelin throwers for the season-ending showpiece and reaffirming his status as the standard-bearer of Indian athletics.Chopra skipped Thursday's meeting in Zurich but had already banked the points he needed, courtesy of strong outings at Doha and Lausanne, where he launched a season-best 88.05 metres. That haul was sufficient to carry the Indian into the final in Brussels on September 4 and 5, where the year's Diamond Trophy will be decided.The Zurich competition, meanwhile, produced a statement performance from an unexpected quarter, Sri Lanka's Rumesh Pathirage winning with a huge throw of 92.07 metres to signal South Asia's growing strength in the discipline. Chopra, who has made the podium a habit at the Diamond League finale, will start among the favourites in Brussels.



SPORTS

Champions League draw hands PSG a Barcelona blockbuster

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026

Europe's elite clubs learned their fates on Wednesday as the draw for the 2026-27 UEFA Champions League league phase was conducted at the Grimaldi Forum in Monaco, setting the fixtures for the competition's second season under its expanded 36-team format.The standout tie handed to Paris Saint-Germain pits the French champions against Barcelona, one of eight opponents PSG will face across the league phase. Manchester City and Aston Villa were also drawn into PSG's programme, guaranteeing the Parisians a run of marquee nights against some of the continent's biggest names.Under the format retained from last season, each of the 36 clubs plays eight different opponents, four at home and four away, with the combined table deciding who advances directly to the last 16 and who drops into a knockout play-off round. The competition spans 144 matches across eight matchdays.The action gets under way on the weekend of September 8 to 10, when the first round of fixtures is played across the continent. The revamped structure, introduced to guarantee more high-profile clashes earlier in the campaign, delivered exactly that in a draw rich with heavyweight pairings, and for the neutral the promise of PSG against Barcelona alone was enough to whet the appetite for the autumn.

MORE FROM THIS SECTION

SPORTS

Deepti Sharma marks 150th T20I with three-wicket burst

The India all-rounder celebrated a Twenty20 milestone with a devastating spell against Thailand in Dubai.

PUBLIC NOTICES · TENDERS · AUCTIONS · RECRUITMENT

PWD (R&B) DIVISION POONCH

Ref: PWD/R&B/PNC/2026-27/EMG-41

Emergency restoration of flood-damaged Behramgalla–Poshana stretch and protection works on Mughal Road approaches

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

Type: Works
Last date: 17 Sep 2026
Est. cost: ₹ 2.85 crore
EMD: ₹ 5.70 lakh
Location: Behramgalla, Poonch
Contact: Executive Engineer, PWD (R&B) Division Poonch · Refer NIT PDF

JAL SHAKTI (PHE) DIVISION POONCH

Ref: JSD/PHE/PNC/2026-27/NIT-37/FLD

Restoration of flood-damaged water supply schemes in Mandi and Loran

The Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti (PHE) Division Poonch, invites online tenders from approved and eligible contractors for the restoration of flood-damaged intake works, rising mains, storage tanks and distribution line...

Type: Works
Last date: 19 Sep 2026
Est. cost: ₹ 1.95 crore
EMD: ₹ 3.90 lakh
Location: Mandi, Poonch
Contact: Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti (PHE) Division Poonch · Refer NIT PDF

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

Ref: JPDCL/RAJ/2026-27/NIT-63/FLD

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

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

Type: Works
Last date: 21 Sep 2026
Est. cost: ₹ 1.72 crore
EMD: ₹ 3.44 lakh
Location: Thanamandi, Rajouri
Contact: Executive Engineer, O&M Division JPDCL Rajouri · Refer NIT PDF

RURAL ENGINEERING WING (REW/RDD) POONCH

Ref: REW/RDD/PNC/2026-27/NIT-79/FLD

Reconstruction of flood-damaged rural roads and culverts in Surankote and Mendhar blocks

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

Type: Works
Last date: 23 Sep 2026
Est. cost: ₹ 2.10 crore
EMD: ₹ 4.20 lakh
Location: Surankote, Poonch
Contact: Executive Engineer, REW (RDD) Poonch · 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

DIRECTORATE OF HEALTH SERVICES JAMMU

Ref: DHS/J/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

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, PDD DIVISION MENDHAR

Ref: PDD/Mendhar/NIT/2026-27/33

Restoration of flood-damaged 11kV and LT distribution network in Mendhar sub-division

Re-stringing of 11kV/LT lines, replacement of damaged poles and distribution transformers in Mendhar, Balnoi and Sagra following August flood damage.

Type: Works
Last date: 16 Sep 2026
Est. cost: Rs 1.24 crore
EMD: Rs 24,800
Location: Poonch
Contact: Executive Engineer, PDD Mendhar · 01965-225037

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, PWD (R&B) DIVISION POONCH

Ref: PWD/Poonch/NIT/2026-27/58

Restoration of flood-damaged Poonch–Mandi–Loran carriageway and protection works

Reconstruction of washed-out carriageway stretches, RCC breast walls and cross-drainage on the Poonch–Mandi–Loran road damaged in the August 2026 flash floods.

Type: Works
Last date: 18 Sep 2026
Est. cost: Rs 312 crore
EMD: Rs 62,400
Location: Poonch
Contact: Executive Engineer, PWD (R&B) Poonch · 01965-220145

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, JAL SHAKTI (PHE) DIVISION RAJOURI

Ref: JS/Raj/NIT/2026-27/41

Restoration of flood-damaged water supply schemes in Budhal and Kandi belt

Repair of intake works, rising mains and distribution networks of rural water supply schemes damaged by monsoon flooding across Budhal, Kandi and Darhal.

Type: Works
Last date: 20 Sep 2026
Est. cost: Rs 1.86 crore
EMD: Rs 37,200
Location: Rajouri
Contact: Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti Rajouri · 01962-262048

PWD (R&B) DIVISION JAMMU

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

Construction of RCC bridge and approaches over Tawi tributary at Nagrota

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

Type: Works
Last date: 8 Sep 2026
Est. cost: ₹ 6.75 crore
EMD: ₹ 13.50 lakh
Location: Nagrota, Jammu
Contact: Executive Engineer, PWD (R&B) Division Jammu · Refer NIT PDF

JAL SHAKTI (PHE) MECHANICAL DIVISION ANANTNAG

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

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

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

Type: Supply
Last date: 10 Sep 2026
Est. cost: ₹ 1.40 crore
EMD: ₹ 2.80 lakh
Location: Anantnag
Contact: Executive Engineer, PHE Mechanical Division Anantnag · Refer NIT PDF

SHRI MATA VAISHNO DEVI UNIVERSITY (SMVDU), KATRA

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

Supply and installation of laboratory equipment for the School of Engineering

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

Type: Supply
Last date: 12 Sep 2026
Est. cost: ₹ 85.00 lakh
EMD: ₹ 1.70 lakh
Location: Katra, Reasi
Contact: Registrar, SMVDU Katra · Refer NIT PDF

GOVERNMENT MEDICAL COLLEGE (GMC) JAMMU

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

Supply of hospital equipment and surgical consumables for associated hospitals

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

Type: Supply
Last date: 14 Sep 2026
Est. cost: ₹ 1.60 crore
EMD: ₹ 3.20 lakh
Location: Jammu
Contact: Principal-cum–Dean, GMC Jammu · Refer NIT PDF

UNIVERSITY OF JAMMU

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

Annual maintenance contract for HVAC and lift installations on main campus

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

Type: Service
Last date: 15 Sep 2026
Est. cost: ₹ 55.00 lakh
EMD: ₹ 1.10 lakh
Location: Jammu
Contact: Registrar, University of Jammu · Refer NIT PDF

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, R&B DIVISION KISHTWAR

Ref: RB/Kishtwar/NIT/2026-27/27

Landslide clearance and restoration of Chenab-belt link roads in Kishtwar

Mechanical clearance of landslide debris and restoration of blacktop on Kishtwar–Dachhan and Kishtwar–Chatroo link roads blocked by August monsoon landslides.

Type: Works
Last date: 24 Sep 2026
Est. cost: Rs 2.05 crore
EMD: Rs 41,000
Location: Kishtwar
Contact: Executive Engineer, R&B Kishtwar · 01995-259023

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

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 (adv. 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

JAMMU AND KASHMIR SERVICES SELECTION BOARD (JKSSB)

Ref: JKSSB/Advt/09 of 2026

Recruitment to 320 posts of Junior Assistant across UT departments

Direct recruitment to 320 posts of Junior Assistant (Divisional/District cadre) through online application and written examination; reserved-category quotas as per rules.

Type: Recruitment
Last date: 22 Sep 2026
Est. cost: —
EMD: As per notification
Location: Jammu & Kashmir (UT-wide)
Contact: Secretary, JKSSB · 0191-2470102

NATIONAL

Modi joins Xi, Putin at Bishkek SCO summit, presses zero-tolerance line on terror

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026

Prime Minister Narendra Modi joined Chinese President Xi Jinping, Russian President Vladimir Putin and other leaders at the 26th Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit in the Kyrgyz capital Bishkek on Sunday and Monday, using the two-day gathering to press an uncompromising line on cross-border terrorism even as India worked to steady its ties with Beijing and Moscow.Addressing the Council of Heads of State at the Yrys Ordo Congress Hall, Modi said the fight against terrorism could brook "no double standards", and called on the grouping to dismantle "the entire ecosystem of terrorist financing, recruitment, radicalisation and safe havens". Nations that used terrorism as an instrument of state policy, he said, must be sent a strong and unambiguous message.The Prime Minister framed India's priorities around what he called three pillars — security, connectivity and opportunity — and urged member states to move them "beyond vision towards concrete outcomes". In a remark widely read as a reference to Chinese-backed corridors that pass through Pakistan-occupied territory, Modi stressed that connectivity projects "must respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries".On the wars in West Asia and Ukraine, Modi reiterated India's long-standing position that "wars and conflicts cannot be resolved on the battlefield" and must instead be addressed through dialogue and diplomacy.

He said the success of the SCO should ultimately be measured by the opportunities it created for the young — new markets for entrepreneurs and technology reaching farmers.The summit, marking 25 years of the SCO, brought together the leaders of a bloc of 10 member states that its officials say represents roughly 3.4 billion people. Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif were among those present. Modi arrived in Bishkek after a bilateral visit to Uzbekistan, part of a wider outreach to Central Asia.Modi was received at Manas International Airport by Adylbek Kasymaliev, Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Kyrgyz Republic, and was welcomed by members of the Indian diaspora who chanted "Bharat Mata Ki Jai" and "Vande Mataram".

A group of yoga enthusiasts performed at the reception, and the Prime Minister watched cultural presentations by Kyrgyz performers.The leaders posed for the customary group photograph before the closed-door deliberations, during which Modi interacted briefly with Xi and Putin. It was the third consecutive SCO summit at which Modi and Xi have met, following their encounter in Tianjin, China, in September 2025, and came against the backdrop of a cautious thaw in India-China relations after years of tension along the Line of Actual Control.At the close of the deliberations, the heads of state signed the summit declaration setting out the grouping's common positions on security, terrorism, trade, energy, transport connectivity and digital cooperation. Modi announced that India would host the first SCO Civilisation Dialogue Forum, pitching it as a platform to deepen people-to-people and cultural ties across the member states.On the sidelines, the Prime Minister held bilateral meetings with Tajik President Emomali Rahmon and Lao President Thongloun Sisoulith, discussing the expansion of trade and connectivity.

Indian officials said the Central Asian leg of the tour was aimed at reinforcing New Delhi's engagement with a region it views as central to its energy security and its ambitions for overland connectivity that bypasses Pakistan.India has in recent years used the SCO platform to push back against Pakistan-based terror groups and against connectivity initiatives it sees as infringing its sovereignty, while continuing to engage China and Russia on trade and regional stability. The Bishkek summit, coming weeks before India hosts the BRICS summit in New Delhi, underlined New Delhi's effort to keep lines open with both Beijing and Moscow while holding firm on terrorism.For the Pir Panjal belt, where suspected Pakistani drones probed the Line of Control in Poonch and Rajouri only days before the summit, Modi's insistence on dismantling the machinery of cross-border terror carried a particular resonance. The message from Bishkek, Indian officials said, was that the demand for accountability would not be diluted by the diplomacy of the summit table.

REGIONAL

Pakistani drones probe LoC in Poonch, Rajouri; troops open fire, launch hunt

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026

Suspected Pakistani drones probed the Line of Control (LoC) in the twin border districts of Poonch and Rajouri within hours of each other over the weekend, prompting the Army to open fire in one sector and to launch search operations across the forward belt, officials told the news agency PTI.In Poonch, a drone was spotted hovering over forward areas near Behrooti village in the Balakote area of the Mendhar sector late on Friday evening. It moved towards the Mangalnar-Dabrote side close to the border before returning across the LoC, officials said. Troops guarding the LoC intensified surveillance and, at first light on Saturday, launched a search operation to establish whether the drone had dropped or carried any suspicious material.In neighbouring Rajouri, suspected drones were detected around midnight on Thursday in the Rumlidhara area of the Nowshera sector.

Alert soldiers opened fire, forcing the aerial intruders to retreat towards the Pakistani side, officials said. A search operation was launched on Friday to sanitise the forward areas and rule out any infiltration attempt.Separately, security forces combed the villages of Gaibas, Mithiyani, Mogla and Narla in Rajouri after residents reported the movement of two suspected armed men believed to be militants. Joint teams of the police, Army and paramilitary forces also searched forested stretches in the Udampur and Kathua belt following reports of suspicious movement.Officials said there had been no contact with any suspected persons and no recoveries by the time of reporting.

The sightings come amid persistent concern over the use of drones to ferry weapons and narcotics across the LoC, and reports that Pakistan has been inducting counter-drone systems along the frontier, including in the Rajouri, Poonch, Nowshera and Sunderbani sectors. Surveillance along the forward posts has been stepped up as the search operations continue.

NATIONAL

India signs Javelin anti-tank missile deal with US; Tata to explore co-production

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026

The Indian Army has signed an agreement to procure the American Javelin anti-tank guided missile system, in the first major United States arms purchase since a bruising tariff standoff between New Delhi and Washington eased earlier this year. The US Embassy in New Delhi said it welcomed the Army's signing of a Letter of Offer and Acceptance under the US Foreign Military Sales (FMS) programme on August 28.Under the deal, India is expected to acquire about 100 FGM-148 Javelin rounds and 25 Javelin Lightweight Command Launch Units, according to reports. The US State Department had estimated the value of the missile system and related equipment at about \$45.7 million.

The shoulder-fired, fire-and-forget Javelin is jointly produced by American defence majors Lockheed Martin and RTX, and is designed to defeat armoured vehicles and other targets.In a linked development, Tata Advanced Systems Limited (TASL) and the Javelin Joint Venture on August 31 unveiled a memorandum of understanding to explore co-producing the Javelin All Up Round in India, a step officials said could deepen the transaction from a straight foreign purchase into an industrial partnership aligned with the government's push for domestic defence manufacturing.The signing marks a notable thaw in defence ties that had been buffeted by the tariff dispute of 2025, when Washington imposed steep duties on Indian goods over New Delhi's Russian oil purchases before the two sides reached a trade understanding in February 2026. Defence analysts said the Javelin, a proven anti-armour weapon, would strengthen the infantry's ability to blunt mechanised thrusts, a capability of direct relevance along India's western and northern frontiers.

REGIONAL

Summer of cloudbursts: 35 events, 31 dead as extreme rain batters J&K

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026

Jammu and Kashmir has endured one of its most destructive monsoons in memory, with 35 cloudbursts recorded across the Union Territory in 2026 and 31 people killed in cloudbursts, flash floods and landslides, according to a compilation by the news agency IANS.The worst of the devastation has been concentrated in the Pir Panjal and Chenab belts. Poonch, Rajouri, Kathua, Doda and Kishtwar have been the hardest hit, with further incidents reported from Shopian, Kupwara, Bandipora, Anantnag's Pahalgam area and Ganderbal. As many as 22 of the cloudbursts struck between June 1 and mid-July, but the events have continued deep into August.Among the most damaging was the August 1 cloudburst in the Chatroo area of Kishtwar, where floodwaters carrying debris, uprooted trees and rocks tore into residential areas and a local market, cracking houses, inundating shops and sweeping away parked vehicles.

Power and communication links were disrupted before restoration work began. Elsewhere, a woman was swept away in a flash flood in the Himli area of Kupwara.Weather scientists and residents alike have described the pattern as a new and dangerous climate reality for the mountain territory, where narrow valleys and steep slopes turn sudden downpours into deadly torrents. Officials have repeatedly evacuated residents and tourists from vulnerable pockets through the season, and disaster teams have remained on alert as fresh spells of rain continued to lash the region into the closing days of August.

NATIONAL

Supreme Court quashes FIRs against NEET protesters across states

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026

The Supreme Court on Monday quashed a batch of first information reports (FIRs) registered against students and others who had taken part in nationwide protests over the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET), holding that peaceful demonstrators should not be dragged through the criminal process for exercising the right to protest.The court carved out an important exception, making clear that the relief would not extend to cases in which the protests had involved bodily harm to any person or the destruction of property. Such matters, the bench said, would proceed on their own facts and in accordance with law.The order brings a measure of closure to the legal fallout from the agitation that had swept several states, with aspirants and their supporters taking to the streets over grievances linked to the conduct of the high-stakes medical entrance examination. Petitioners had argued that the blanket registration of cases against ordinary protesters had a chilling effect on the freedom of expression and assembly.Legal commentators noted that the ruling reinforced a line of the court's jurisprudence distinguishing lawful, peaceful protest from acts of violence or vandalism, and cautioned investigating agencies against treating participation in a demonstration as an offence in itself.

The judgment, reported by the legal news service Verdictum, was among a clutch of significant orders delivered by the court on the day.

REGIONAL

M K Sinha named J&K intelligence chief in police reshuffle

BY RAJESH KHAJURIA · 31 AUG, 2026

Senior Indian Police Service officer M K Sinha has been appointed the intelligence chief of Jammu and Kashmir, in a reshuffle of top police officers ordered by the Lieutenant Governor's administration. Sinha, who was serving as Additional Director General of Police (ADGP) at Police Headquarters, has been posted as ADGP, Criminal Investigation Department (CID), the wing that oversees intelligence in the Union Territory.The Home Department order, issued on August 27 and reported by the Kashmir News Observer (KNO), effected a series of movements across the senior ranks. Nitish Kumar, the outgoing ADGP, CID, was posted as ADGP of the J&K Armed Police.

Sujit Kumar was named Inspector General of Police (IGP) for the Kashmir Zone, while Tejinder Singh was posted as IGP, Jammu Zone. Bhim Sen Tuti was moved to IGP, Headquarters.The administration said the transfers and postings had been ordered "in the interest of administration" and were to take effect immediately. The reshuffle touches some of the most sensitive assignments in the J&K Police at a time of heightened vigil along the Line of Control, with the intelligence and zonal commands central to counter-terror coordination across the Kashmir Valley and the Jammu region.The changes come days after suspected Pakistani drones were sighted along the LoC in Poonch and Rajouri, underlining the premium the administration places on a well-marshalled intelligence apparatus in the border districts.