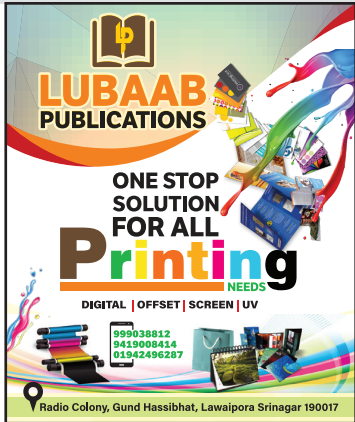


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HEADLINES
TODAY

Voice To The Voiceless



Terrorists, Their Aids Will Be Treated Alike: PM Modi

Sends Stern Message to Pakistan While Lauding Our Forces For Op- Sindoor



■ **HT News Network**

NEW DELHI, AUG 15: In a clear and stern warning to Pakistan from the ramparts of Red Fort, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said terrorists and those providing them safe haven will be treated alike and

that Indian armed forces will deliver a “crushing” response to the enemy in case of any future misadventure. Delivering his address on the country’s 79th Independence Day, Modi, referring to Operation Sindoor, said the Indian military punished the

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Our Farmers Have Sole Right Over Its Waters: PM on Indus Treaty

■ **HT News Network**

NEW DELHI, AUG 15: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said India and its farmers have the sole right over the country’s share of Indus river waters and termed the Indus Water Treaty “unjust and one-sided”. It had caused enormous harm to agriculture in India, Modi said in his Independence Day address from the Red Fort. He said the attack in Pahalgam underscored the futility of continuing the agreement. “India has decided that blood and water cannot flow together,” the prime minister said, accusing the treaty of allowing rivers that rise in India to “irrigate the fields of

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No Individual To Be Left Out of Contemporary Historic Journey of Peace and Progress: LG Sinha

Hoists Tri Colour at Raj Bhavan in Srinagar on the 79th Independence Day

■ **HT News Network**

SRINAGAR, AUG 15: On the occasion of 79th Independence Day, Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha hoisted and saluted the National Flag at Raj Bhavan in Srinagar. He conveyed his heartiest greetings and good wishes to all. The Lieutenant Governor paid tributes to the freedom fighters and brave hearts of Police, Army and CAPFs. He also paid homage to the citizens who lost their lives due to the tragic cloudburst in Chashoti, Kishtwar. “On this Independence Day, let us take a pledge that no individual or village is left out of this historic journey of peace and progress. As we watch tricolour flying high, let us look ahead with pride, confidence and hope towards a better and brighter future for UT of Jammu Kashmir,” the Lieutenant Governor said. In a post on X, the Lieutenant Governor said: “Hoisted our National Flag at Raj Bhavan in Srinagar on the occasion of 79th Independence Day. I convey my heartiest greetings and good wishes to all. This is a day we salute our tricolor and feel pride in watching it fly high in the sky. I join every citizen in paying homage to our



freedom fighters, whose undying love for Motherland secured us our freedom. I pay tribute to civilian martyrs, who were brutally killed by Pakistan-backed terrorists in Pahalgam on April 22. I also thank our armed forces, our brave

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PM Outlined 11 Yrs Progress, Prosperity Plan: HM Shah

■ **HT News Network**

NEW DELHI, AUG 15: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday said Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his address to the nation has given a broad outline of the progress made by the country in the last 11 years, the strength of the present and the strategy for a prosperous India. Shah also said that whether it is the elimination of terrorists through Operation Sindoor, the plan to secure the country’s infrastructure through ‘Mission Sudarshan Chakra’, or the resolve to create an infiltrator-free India through the ‘High-Powered Demography Mission’, the Modi government is committed to making the nation strong and secure. Highlighting the government’s unwavering commitment to the interests of farmers, PM Modi, in his address to the nation from the ramparts of Red Fort on 79th Independence Day, called for self-reliance in nuclear energy, critical minerals, energy, the space sector, and jet engines.

“Moreover, the announcement of the ‘Pradhan Mantri Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana’ and significant GST relief measures during the upcoming Diwali will make the lives of citizens easier and boost small enterprises,” Shah said. Under ‘Pradhan Mantri Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana’ with a fund of Rs 1 lakh crore, he said first-time employees in the private sector will receive Rs 15,000, and companies generating more jobs will also receive incentives. This initiative will benefit approximately 3.5 crore people, providing a golden opportunity for Indian youth and strengthening the journey toward a self-reliant India, Shah said. The home minister said the Modi government is taking robust steps toward a self-reliant India by empowering small businesses. “From the ramparts of the Red Fort, PM Modi announced Next Gen GST Reforms as a Diwali gift to the nation. These reforms will not only greatly benefit small industries

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"Trust Us Once, We Have Never failed Before, Neither Will Fail in Future" J&K Has Every Right To Be A State: CM Omar Abdullah

Vows To Mobilize People’s Voice Across 90 Constituencies For Restoration of Statehood

■ **HT News Desk**

SRINAGAR, AUG 15: On the occasion of the 79th Independence Day, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah hoisted the Tricolour at the Bakshi Stadium here and delivered an address to the people of Jammu & Kashmir, calling for unity, justice and restoration of the State’s constitutional status. Opening his speech on a solemn note, the Chief Minister extended heartfelt condolences to the families affected in Kishtwar due to cloudburst tragedy. “As we celebrate our Independence Day, at the same time we mourn the loss of precious lives

in the cloudburst at Kishtwar. I want to tell the people of Kishtwar and those affected by this calamity — my government stands with them shoulder-to-shoulder and Government will support them. We must also see whether administration could have been proactive and done more to save these precious lives because there was advance weather advisory. In the coming days, we shall fix the responsibility for any lapses,” he said. Marking his first Independence Day address from the Bakshi Stadium in over a decade, Omar Abdullah reflected on the seismic political changes since



he last addressed the state from this platform. “It has been 11 years since I

have addressed the people of Jammu & Kashmir from this stage. Back then, we had our own

identity, our own special status, our own flag, and our own constitution. Today, none of that remains. Even the status of being a State is not ours anymore,” he said. The Chief Minister questioned the prolonged wait for democracy’s return to J&K and the unfulfilled hopes of meaningful announcements from New Delhi. “Some of our friends and relatives kept telling me this year there would be an announcement from Delhi. We waited. It did not happen. The truth is, the ray of light I often spoke about has

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As we celebrate our Independence Day, at the same time we mourn the loss of precious lives in the cloudburst at Kishtwar. I want to tell the people of Kishtwar and those affected by this calamity — my government stands with them shoulder-to-shoulder and Government will support them. We must also see whether administration could have been proactive and done more to save these precious lives because there was advance weather advisory. In the coming days, we shall fix the responsibility for any lapses,” he said.

CM Omar’s Signature Campaign For J&K Statehood Will Be Run Vigorously: Farooq Abdullah

■ **HT News Network**

SRINAGAR, AUG 15: National Conference president Farooq Abdullah on Friday said the signature campaign announced by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah for the restoration of Jammu and Kashmir’s statehood will be run vigorously. “The campaign will be run and it will be a vigorous campaign,” Farooq told reporters after attending the Independence Day function at

Bakshi Stadium here. The NC chief was responding to a question about the signature campaign announced by the CM in response to the Supreme Court observation that the Pahalgam terror attack should be taken into consideration while deciding on restoration of statehood to Jammu and Kashmir. The Supreme Court bench led by Chief Justice of India B R Gavai observed that the “ground situation”

in the region must be weighed before restoring its statehood, stressing that “incidents like Pahalgam” cannot be ignored. Omar Abdullah further said he will launch a massive signature campaign to press the demand for restoration of statehood to Jammu and Kashmir during the eight weeks’ time given by the Supreme Court to the Centre to respond to the plea before it.

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CS Seeks Plans to Harness J&K’s GI-Tagged Products

■ **HT News Desk**

SRINAGAR, AUG 15: In a significant push towards safeguarding J&K’s unique cultural heritage and enhancing the livelihood of its artisans and farmers, Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo today directed the Industries & Commerce Department to formulate targeted plans for fully leveraging the advantages of the UT’s Geographical Indication (GI) tagged products. Chairing a meeting convened to chalk out a strategy for unlocking the economic and cultural potential of GI products, the Chief Secretary emphasised the need for robust measures to ensure quality, authenticity, and global recognition of these items. The meeting was attended by Principal Secretary, Agriculture Production Department (APD); Commissioner Secretary, Industries & Commerce; Secretary, Industries Department; Director, Handloom & Handicrafts, Kashmir/Jammu and other senior officers. The Chief Secretary underlined the importance of strengthening the traceability features of GI-tagged handicrafts to protect them from counterfeiting. He directed for augmenting testing facilities across J&K and called for expediting NABL accreditation of the Pashmina Testing and Quality Certification Centre (PTQCC) in Kashmir to enhance its acceptability in international markets. Highlighting global best practices, Principal Secretary, APD, Shailendra Kumar, suggested developing tamper-proof labels for each product, detailing its unique features, place of origin, and creator. He proposed a quality enforcement mechanism under which substandard products could be returned to sellers with penalties imposed—similar to systems successfully

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KISHTWAR CLOUD-BURST

60 Dead, 69 Missing, Over 100 Hurt; PM Modi Promises All Assistance

■ **HT News Network**

NEW DELHI/KISHTWAR, AUG 15: Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke with Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Friday and assured them of all help in the wake of a cloudburst in Kishtwar district that has killed at least 60 people and injured more than 100, officials said. A massive flash flood triggered by the cloudburst struck the remote mountain village of Chisoti in Kisht-

war on Thursday. Authorities have so far identified 30 of the bodies retrieved, the officials said on Friday. Modi spoke with Abdullah and Sinha and took stock of the situation. In a post on X, the prime minister said, “Spoke to Jammu and Kashmir LG, Shri Manoj Sinha Ji and CM Shri Omar Abdullah Ji regarding the situation in the wake of the cloudburst and flooding in Kishtwar.” “Authorities are working on the ground to assist those affected,” he added.

Earlier, addressing an Independence-Day function at Srinagar’s Bakshi Stadium, Abdullah said at least 60 people have been killed and more than 100 injured in the tragic incident. There were two Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) personnel among the deceased. To identify the deceased, the authorities shared their pictures through a WhatsApp group with the affected families, resulting in the identification of 30 of them. More than 160 people have so far

been rescued and the condition of 38 of them is said to be serious. The officials said the death toll could go up as more people are believed to be trapped. The Union Territory administration has set up a control room-cum-help desk in Paddar, about 15 km from Chositi, to assist people and pilgrims. Five officials have been put on duty at the control room. The numbers provided are — 9858223125,

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High Court of J&K, Ladakh marks 79th I-Day with grand celebration at Srinagar

■ HT News Desk / DIPR

SRINAGAR, AUG 15: The High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh today celebrated the 79th Independence Day with a grand celebration and spirited gathering at the High Court Complex, Srinagar.

The event witnessed an exceptional turnout from the legal fraternity, creating an atmosphere filled with patriotic fervor and unity.

The celebration was graced by Chief Justice, High Court of J&K and Ladakh, Justice Arun

Palli, who hoisted the National Flag in the presence of Justice Sindhu Sharma, Justice Javed Iqbal Wani, Justice Rahul Bharti, Justice Moksha Khajuria Kazmi, Justice Mohd Yousuf Wani and Justice Shahzad Azeem, the sitting Judges of the Srinagar Wing along with former Judges and members of the Civil and Police administration.

The proceedings commenced with the ceremonial flag hoisting, attended by the officers of the Registry and Judicial Officers from the District Judiciary, Senior Advo-

cates, Government Advocates, members of the Bar and lawyers from the District Court Srinagar. The officers and officials of the High Court of J&K, the J&K Legal Services Authority and the District Court Srinagar also joined in large numbers, symbolizing the solidarity and commitment to the ideals of the Constitution.

The occasion also served as a reminder of the pivotal role played by the judiciary and members of the legal profession in India's struggle for independence. Many stalwarts of the

freedom movement including Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, B. R. Ambedkar and several other leaders, were lawyers who used the power of law, advocacy and constitutional vision to challenge the colonial rule and lay the foundations of a sovereign, democratic nation. This legacy continues to inspire the legal community to protect the rights of citizens and uphold the rule of law.

Throughout the event, the premises of the High Court resonated with the values of Justice, Liberty, Equality and

Fraternity. The presence of the Judges and the enthusiastic participation of the Bench and Bar highlighted their shared dedication towards safeguarding the constitutional principles and serving the people.

The celebrations concluded with a solemn reaffirmation that the nation's strength lies in justice, unity and the protection of citizens' rights. The judiciary and the legal fraternity pledged to continue working hand in hand for justice, equality and the progress of the nation.



Tarigami Mourns Kishtwar Cloudburst Victims

■ Farooq Rather

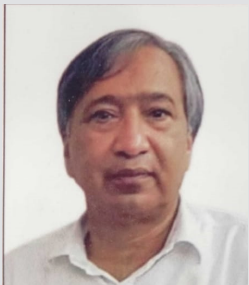
SRINAGAR, AUG 15: M Y Tarigami, CPI(M) leader and MLA Kulgam, has expressed deep sorrow over the loss of lives in the devastating cloudburst at Chosoti in Kishtwar on Thursday afternoon, which triggered flash floods along the route to the annual Machail Mata Yatra.

Calling it a "deeply sad moment for all," Tarigami said the tragedy, which left several dead and many injured, demands an immediate and coordinated response. "The government should announce compensation for the deceased without delay, ensure proper treatment for the injured, and expedite rescue operations," he said.

He warned that Jammu and Kashmir, being an ecologically fragile region, are among the most vulnerable to climate change in the Indian Himalayan region. "Jammu and Kashmir's fragile environment is under increasing strain from multiple factors — from global warming and reckless urban growth to deforestation and the neglect of our water bodies. Over the past two decades, the signs of climate change have become unmistakable, with erratic weather bringing drought-like conditions in some areas and devastating flash floods, windstorms, and cloudbursts in others," he said.

Recalling similar disasters in Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh, Tarigami said such incidents are "wake-up calls" for policymakers and the administration. "We must learn lessons from these tragedies and develop effective responses to such calamities and emerging challenges before they cause even greater losses," he said.

Quoting recent environmental studies, he said that in recent years, Jammu and Kashmir have witnessed a rise in cloudburst incidents, with several districts hit by flash floods in the past few months. "Jammu and Kashmir today stands on the brink of an environmental disaster. Unless we act to safeguard our fragile ecosystem and conserve our natural resources, we risk endangering not just our present, but the future of generations to come," he added.



Srinagar Police Visits Families of Martyrs and Distributes Sweets on Independence Day

■ Mohammad Hanif Khan

SRINAGAR, AUG 15: In a heart-felt gesture of gratitude and solidarity, Srinagar Police visited the families of the fallen Police Martyrs to mark 79th Independence Day. This meaningful initiative underscores the Jammu & Kashmir Police department's unwavering respect for the supreme sacrifices made in the service of the Nation.

Senior officers from various Police units, and establishments of Srinagar Police stepped forward to meet with next of kin of the martyrs.

During these interactions, they listened to the families' concerns and reassured them of the J&K Police department's ongoing support.

As a token of respect and appreciation, sweets and small gifts were distributed, aiming to



bring warmth and comfort to these families on this significant day. The initiative also emphasized the emotional bond between the Police and the families of its fallen heroes.

This gesture serves as a reminder that the sacrifices made by the brave officers are remembered and valued.

Srinagar Police reaffirm their pledge to stand by Martyr families in solidarity always.

79th Independence Day celebrated across sub divisions of district Kupwara

■ HT News Desk / DIPR

KUPWARA, AUG 15: In connection with the celebration of 79th Independence Day, sub divisions of district Kupwara including Handwara, Lolab and Karnah hosted major functions to celebrate the event with traditional fervor and enthusiasm.

Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Handwara, Javaid Naseem Masoodi hoisted the National Flag at District Police Lines Handwara after inspecting the parade. He took salute at march past which comprised the contingents from JKPF, BSF, CRPF, IRP and Police band, NCC cadets and students. SSP Handwara, Chowdhary Mushtaq Ahmad, DDC Members, Officers from civil administration, police department and other concerned were present on the occasion.

In Lolab sub division, Independence Day celebration function was held at Government Degree College Sogam where Sub Divisional Magistrate Lolab,



Mudassir Ahmad hoisted the National Flag and took salute on the March Past. Independence Day was also celebrated in border sub division Karnah where SDM Karnah, Zaffar Ahmed Lone hoisted the National Flag at Mini Secretariat Tangdar and took salute on the

March past. The Republic celebrations were also held at all Tehsil, block Headquarters, Panchayats, Government Offices and Education institutions of the district where the National Flag was hoisted by the Heads of the institutions.

79th Independence Day Celebrated with Patriotic Fervour in Kulgam

■ Farooq Rather

KULGAM, AUG 15: The 79th Independence Day was celebrated with great enthusiasm and patriotic fervour across District Kulgam, with the main function held at District Police Lines (DPL) Kulgam. On this occasion, Chairperson District Development Council (DDC) Kulgam, Mr. Mohammad Afzal Parry, unfurled the National Flag and took salute at the ceremonial parade.

The impressive march past included contingents of CRPF, Jammu & Kashmir Police, Women Police, Police Band, Home Guards, NCC, and school children, who showcased a spirit of discipline and national pride.

In his address, the DDC Chairperson highlighted the historic significance of Independence Day, terming it the most important day in the country's history. He appreciated the developmental progress of Kulgam district, the achievements across various sectors, and the

effective implementation of welfare schemes. He also extended warm congratulations to Deputy Commissioner Kulgam, Athar Aamir Shafi Khan (IAS) for being awarded the Prime Minister's Award under the Holistic Development Programme for his outstanding performance.

The event was attended by Deputy Commissioner Athar Aamir Shafi Khan (IAS), SSP Sahil Sarangal (IPS), ADDC Altaf Ahmad, ADC Waqar Ahmed Giri, SDM Bashir-ul-Hassan, ACR Altaf Ahmad Shah, members of the DDC, representatives of various political parties, officers from the civil and police administration, CRPF personnel, army officers, and a large number of local citizens.

Earlier, the Deputy Commissioner hoisted the National Flag at the Mini Secretariat Kulgam, in the presence of officers and the general public. In his speech, he highlighted the importance of the day, encouraged honest and hardworking officers, and emphasized the need for respon-



sive governance and timely redressal of public grievances.

At the District Court Complex Kulgam, Chairman District Legal Services Authority and Principal District & Sessions Judge, Ejaz Ahmad Khan, hoisted the National Flag. Similar flag hoisting ceremonies were held by Judicial Magistrate Aastik Verma at Qazi-

gund Court and Judicial Magistrate Nisar-ul-Haq Khan at D.H. Pora Court.

In Damhal Hanjipora, SDM Noorabad, Mr. Bashir-ul-Hassan, unfurled the National Flag and took salute at the march past. He also addressed the gathering, reflecting on the importance of Independence Day and outlining

the ongoing developmental works and achievements in the region.

Flag hoisting ceremonies were held across all Tehsil Headquarters including Devsar, Kulgam, Qazigund, Qaimoh, Yaripora, Frisal, Pahloo, and Damhal Hanjipora. Similar events took place at Block offices, Panchayati Raj institutions, health centres, police stations, municipal offices, colleges, schools, Anganwadi centres, armed forces and paramilitary installations, and various government establishments, where the National Flag was hoisted and salute presented with full patriotic spirit. Later in the day DC Kulgam and SSP Kulgam held a meeting with the families of police martyrs. During the interaction, the officers addressed and resolved several genuine grievances on the spot, assuring the families of full support from the Family members also visited the memorial sketches of police Martyrs displayed at district police office Kulgam, paying their heartfelt tributes.

79th Independence Day Celebrated in all educational institutions in Ganderbal

■ HT News Desk

GANDERBAL, AUG 15: The 79th Independence Day was celebrated with great patriotic fervour and enthusiasm across all Government and Private Schools of the District Ganderbal.

The celebration programmes commenced with the Hoisting of the National Flag in all the Govt and Private Schools, followed by the singing of the



national Anthem, patriotic songs and March past by Students.

Heads of institutions delivered speeches on the significance of Independence Day and urged students to uphold the values of unity, integrity and brotherhood.

This day reminds us of the sacrifices made by our freedom fighters and the enduring spirit of unity, resilience, and progress of our country.

Students and all the staff members participated enthusiastically in all the programmes, making the celebrations memorable.

The Chief Education Officer Ganderbal congratulated and appreciated the efforts of the heads of institutions, teaching staff, non teaching staff and students for making the celebrations memorable and spreading the message of patriotism.

79th Independence Day: Kupwara celebrates I-Day with patriotic fervor & enthusiasm

Chairman DDC hoists National Flag at DPL Kupwara, ID functions held at Handwara, Lolab, Karnah

■ HT News Desk / DIPR

KUPWARA, AUG 15: As the nation marks its 79th Independence Day, District Kupwara came alive with vibrant celebrations of Independence Day today with great patriotic fervor and enthusiasm.

The main function of Independence Day was held at District Police Lines (DPL) Kupwara where Chairman District Development Council Kupwara, Irfan Sultan Panditpori hoisted the National Flag, inspected the parade and took salute at March-past which was presented by contingents of CRPF, Women Battalion of JKP, IRP, JKP, Home Guards, FPF, Special Commandos of police, NCC Cadets and school children who performed synchronized movements which reflected discipline and coordination, amid patriotic tunes played by JKP Band dressed in their ceremonial uniforms creating a dignified and inspiring atmosphere.

Vice Chairman DDC, Haji Farooq

Ahmad Mir, Deputy Commissioner Kupwara, Shrikant Balasheeb Suse, SSP Kupwara, Gulam Jeelani, ADDC Kupwara, Mufti Fareeduddin, ADC Kupwara, Gulzar Ahmad, ACR, CPO, DDC Members, District officers, officials of all departments and large number of people from different areas were present during the function.

Addressing the Independence Day function, the Chairman, expressed his deep sorrow over the cloudburst incident that happened in Kishtwar district yesterday which claimed the precious lives of the people and expressed solidarity with the families of the deceased. He highlighted the historical background of the Independence Day with special reference to sacrifices made by freedom fighters and the armed forces.

The Chairman highlighted various achievements and developments made by the district during the recent past. He said Kupwara was recently awarded



Prime Minister's Award for Excellence for being among the best performing districts of the country. He said the district has seen a holistic development which range from construction of new roads, bridges, irrigation projects, Primary Health Centres, digital classrooms to successfully conduct of vaccination drives against rabies and lumpy skin diseases. Adding that Skill development programme has gained momentum in the district with establishment of self employment generating units by the youth.

The Chairman also expressed his delight over the sanctioning of Sahna Tunnel by the Government which will provide all weather connectivity to the major border sub division Karnah. He said the ongoing construction of National Highway and approval of Kupwara-Baramulla Railway project will boost the developmental activities in the district. He highlighted achievements under Jal Jeevan Mission, besides, upgradation of pow-

er infrastructure, development of model degree colleges, smart higher secondary schools, digital classrooms, and kindergartens which have improved the developmental tempo of the district. He also mentioned the tourism potential of Lolab, Bangus, Keran and other places which have hosted various tourism festivals in past and offer a plethora of opportunities vis a vis employment generation and development in the district.

Earlier, the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Deputy Commissioner Kupwara and SSP Kupwara paid floral tributes at Martyr's Memorial.

The celebration event concluded with playing of National Anthem.

The Republic celebrations were also held at all Tehsil, block Headquarters, Panchayats, Government Offices and Education institutions of the district where the National Flag was hoisted by the Heads of the institutions.

Ramban celebrates 79th I-Day with Patriotic Fervour

■ HT News Desk / DIPR

RAMBAN, AUG 15: The 79th Independence Day was celebrated with great enthusiasm and patriotic fervour at the District Police Lines (DPL) Ramban. Chairperson District Development Council Ramban Dr. Shamshad Shan hoisted the National Tricolour and took the salute from the contingents participating in march past.

MLA Ramban Advocate Arjun Singh Raju, Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Alyas Khan, SSP Arun Gupta, SSP Traffic Raja Adil Hamed, ADC Varunjeet Singh Charak, DPO ICDS Jahangir Hashmi, senior officers of the Civil and Police administration, and prominent citizens also attended the function.

Vice-Chairperson DDC Ramban Rabia Beigh, and



DDC members were among the distinguished guests.

The ceremony commenced with the hoisting of the National Flag, followed by the National Anthem. Dr. Shan inspected the parade and took the salute from contingents of Jammu and Kashmir Police, Women Contingent of J&K Police, IRP, FPF, Home Guards, and school children.

In view of the tragic cloudburst incident at Chishoti in Kishtwar, cultural programmes, High tea, and similar events were not held on the occasion.

In her address, Dr. Shamshad Shan paid homage to the freedom fighters and martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the nation's independence. She stressed the values of unity, integrity, and patriotism, urging the youth to play an active role in the nation's development.

The DDC Chairperson also highlighted major developmental projects completed in the district over the past year, along with newly sanctioned projects, and listed the achievements of various departments under different schemes.

Celebrating Independence Day, SDM Gool Imtiaz Ahmed, SDM Banihal Mohammad Naseeb Bajraan and SDM Ramsay Zahir Hussain also hoisted the National Flag at their respective Sub Division headquarters. Similarly Independence Day celebrations were held in all the Tehsils, Blocks, and institutions across the district.

Tricolour Soars High as PM Shri GHSS Bhalra Marks Independence Day with Fervour

■ Amir Iqbal Khan

BHADARWAH, AUG 15: The 79th Independence Day was celebrated with fervour at PM Shri Government Higher Secondary School Bhalra, Bhaderwah as students, faculty and guests came together to honour India's freedom.

Lt. Col. Ashish Patel, Commanding Officer of 108 CBS Bhalra, presided over the function as Chief Guest with Lt. Col. Manujendra Singh-Commanding Officer 10 J&K BN NCC Bhaderwah attending as Guest of Honour. Former DEPO Swami Raj Kotwal and social activist

Suresh Kotwal were among the special invitees.

NCC cadets in crisp uniforms escorted the dignitaries from the main gate to the stage. The celebrations began with Lt. Col. Patel unfurling the tricolour as the national anthem resonated across the campus.

In his address, Lt. Col. Patel lauded the NCC cadets for their discipline and turnout while extending Independence Day greetings. Mementoes were presented to the Chief Guest and Guest of Honour as a gesture of appreciation.

On this occasion, Senior Lecturer Om Parkash paid



tributes to victims of the Chishoti (Padder) cloudburst that struck a day earlier claiming several lives including those of pilgrims. A two-minute silence was observed and cultural performances were cancelled in line with administrative directions.

A smart march-past led by Cadet Sujal Kotwal drew applause from the gathering. The event was coordinated by Dr. Sanjeev Kumar Koul-Associate NCC Officer and Master Wasim Qazi under the guidance of In-charge Principal Irshad Ahmed and supervision of Principal Satish Kumar.

INDEPENDENCE DAY 2025 CELEBRATED WITH PATRIOTIC FERVOR IN BARAMULLA

■ HT News Desk / DIPR

BARAMULLA, AUG 15: Independence Day 2025 was celebrated with immense patriotic fervor at Professor Showkat Ali Sports Stadium, Baramulla, where Minister for Agricultural Production, Rural Development, Panchayati Raj, Javid Ahmad Dar, hoisted the National Flag, inspected the parade and received the salute on March Past.

The parade was comprised of contingents from BSF, CRPF, J&K police, Shastra Seema Bal, Home Guards, J&K Police Band, NCC cadets from government Degree College Baramulla, Boys' Higher Secondary Baramulla and various schools.

In his address to the gathering, the Minister extended Independence Day greetings to the people and paid tributes to the brave freedom fighters and martyrs who sacrificed everything to uphold the nation's freedom and democracy.

Javid expressed solidarity with the victims of the cloudburst in Chashoti village in Kishtwar district, assuring

that the entire Jammu and Kashmir stands with them. He emphasized that the government is making every possible effort to provide relief and support to those in need.

The Minister highlighted the district's significant achievements across various key sectors, including agriculture, healthcare, education, women and youth empowerment, Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), rural development, road connectivity, social welfare and self-employment initiatives.

Furthermore, the Minister emphasized that the government's core priority is to deliver transparent, accountable and people-centric governance with the aim of strengthening the overall economic fabric of Jammu and Kashmir.

On the occasion, the Indian Army had established a series of stalls under the "Know Your Army" campaign, offering the public a unique opportunity to witness an impressive display of their state-of-the-art weaponry, allowing the visitors to gain a closer insight into the army's operational capabilities and technological advance-

ments.

Meanwhile, Javid Dar visited the stalls set up by the Indian Army and by various departments showcasing a range of government schemes, services and facilities aimed at benefiting the public.

Member of the Legislative Assembly Baramulla, Javed Beigh, MLA Sopore, Irshad Ahmad Kar, MLA Pattan, Reyaz Bedar, MLA Uri, Dr. Sajad Ahmad, MLA Tangmarg, Farooq Ahmad Shah, Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, Minga Sherpa, Senior Superintendent of Police Baramulla, Gurinderpal Singh, Additional Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, Syed Altaf Hussain Mausvi, officers of the army and police, district and sectoral officers and heads of different departments besides a huge gathering of people, participated in the Independence Day celebrations.

Furthermore, similar Independence Day celebrations were organized with equal fervor and patriotic spirit across all subdivisions and tehsils of district Baramulla, creating an atmosphere filled with unity, pride and national spirit.

JKEDI celebrates 79th Independence Day with patriotic fervour

■ HT News Desk / DIPR

PAMPORE/JAMMU, AUG 15: The Jammu and Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI) celebrated the 79th Independence Day with great enthusiasm and patriotic fervour at its Main Campus, Pampore and Regional Centre, Bari Brahmana, Jammu.

The event was attended by staff of the institute and local dignitaries, who gathered to honour the nation's legacy and reflect on its journey towards progress and development.

Secretary in Industries and Commerce Department and Director JKEDI, Khalid Jahangir, presided over the function held at Main Campus Pampore. At Regional Centre, Bari Brahmana, Jammu, Chand Kishor Sharma, Joint Director JKEDI hoisted the national flag and addressed the gathering.

The celebrations at Pampore commenced with the hoisting of the national flag by the Director JKEDI, followed by the singing of the national anthem.

In his address on the occasion, Director JKEDI paid rich tributes to the supreme sacrifices made by the people of the country, particularly the freedom fighters, whose courage and selflessness paved the way for India's independence. He highlighted the pivotal role of Mahatma Gandhi, whose leadership and philosophy of non-violence became instrumental in achieving freedom for the nation.

He emphasized that as India marches towards the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047, there is a pressing need for progress in every field, economic, social and technological.

"JKEDI, as a premier institution for entrepreneurship and skill development in the Union Territory, has a responsibility to actively contribute to the nation's aspirations," he said, urging all the stakeholders to align their efforts with the larger goal of a developed India by 2047.

Joint Director JKEDI, Chand Kishor Sharma, hoisted the national flag at the JKEDI Regional Centre, Bari Brahmana, Jammu in presence of the employees.

The ceremony included singing of the national anthem and an address to the gathering by the Joint Director. In his address, the Joint Director JKEDI emphasized that economic empowerment and innovation are the cornerstones of a developed nation. The twin ceremonies stood as a testament to unity and national pride, evoking remembrance of the sacrifices made by freedom fighters and emphasizing the collective duty of citizens towards nation-building.

B.R.A. Bihar University Marks 79th I-Day with Focus on Progress

■ HT News Desk

MUZAFFARPUR, AUG 15: B.R.A. Bihar University celebrated the 79th Independence Day with great pride and enthusiasm. The Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Dinesh Chandra Rai, hoisted the national flag at Ambedkar Park, within the main administrative block of the university. In his address, Prof. Rai extended his best wishes for the

occasion. He emphasized that the day not only commemorates India's glorious history but also serves as an inspiration for the nation's progress and comprehensive development. He highlighted the university's unwavering commitment to academic excellence and social progress since its establishment. Prof. Rai noted that the university has made remarkable achievements in areas such as academic

quality, administrative reforms, research, innovation, and social inclusivity. He stated that through the combined efforts of students, teachers, and staff, the university has established a unique identity across the country. Drawing a parallel, Prof. Rai noted that just as the university is committed to achieving its goals of academic excellence, the nation is also rapidly advancing on the path of self-reliance and

comprehensive development. He added that India's economy, science, technology, and cultural heritage are receiving global recognition. He stressed that education is the very foundation through which the country can be established as a prosperous, self-reliant, and strong nation. Prof. Rai appealed to everyone to contribute to the vision of a "Viksit Bharat 2047". The Vice-Chancellor concluded

by urging everyone to rededicate themselves to building a self-reliant, prosperous, and strong India. The event was attended by various university officials and faculty members, including Madam Vice Chancellor Smt. Bibha Rai, Proctor Prof. B.S. Rai, Registrar Prof. Samir Kumar Sharma, Prof. Neelam Pandey, Prof. Rajeev Kumar, Prof. Alok Pratap Singh, Dr. Renubala, and Dr. Navin Kumar.

Shrine Board Reaffirms Commitment to Pilgrim Welfare on 79th Independence Day

■ HT News Desk / DIPR

KATRA, AUG 15: On the auspicious occasion of India's 79th Independence Day, Shri Sachin Kumar Vaishya, Chief Executive Officer, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVDSB), reaffirmed the Board's unwavering commitment to pilgrim welfare, after hoisting the national flag at the Shrine Board's Sports Complex, Katra.

Following a solemn tribute to the victims of the recent cloudburst tragedy in Kishtwar, the CEO extended greetings to the people and dedicated the occasion to the brave freedom fighters whose sacrifices have been instrumental in bringing India this far in its evolutionary journey.

He highlighted the various pilgrim-centric initiatives undertaken under the directions and guidance of Shri Manoj Sinha, Hon'ble Chairman, SMVDSB (Lt. Governor, JK-UT).

Emphasizing the Board's commitment to pilgrim safety and security, he mentioned the operationalization of an Integrated Command and Control Centre in Katra for facilitating real-time monitoring and efficient crowd management to ensure hassle-free pilgrimage.

The CEO highlighted several key infrastructure development projects completed and underway, including the augmentation of holding areas at Adhkuwari and the queue complex at Banganga aimed to streamline pilgrim movement throughout the year. Furthermore, to promote the traditional route, initiatives like track widening and enhanced street lighting have been implemented to improve accessibility and facilitate a smoother pilgrimage experience, he added.

Shri Vaishya also elaborated on the significance of the Shrine Board's Medical College, which has commenced operations at



Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University (SMVDU) in Kakryal and accommodating its first cohort of students from the academic session 2025-26. The institution aims to elevate healthcare standards in the region by providing quality medical education and improved patient care.

The CEO further outlined the Board's social outreach initiatives, including the construction and handover of five temples in

the villages of Harotkot, Dangakot, Tot, Devigarh, and Chasana in District Reasi. These temples have been entrusted to local communities for daily worship. He also mentioned the ongoing construction of a new helipad at Katra, which will facilitate helicopter services to Shiv Khori, thereby enhancing regional connectivity and accessibility for pilgrims.

In addition, Shri Vaishya

praised the successful implementation of various government schemes in District Reasi, including the establishment of a Block Public Health Laboratory and dialysis unit at CHC Katra, provision of quality water supply, installation of rooftop solar panels and distribution of ration to beneficiaries.

The CEO highlighted the Shrine Board's commitment to environmental conservation in

the Trikuta Hills and called upon the local community to join hands in making Katra a plastic-free holy town. He also asserted the introduction of an online helicopter quota for senior citizens and specially-abled pilgrims to enhance their access to the Holy Shrine.

Extending his congratulations, Shri Vaishya lauded the achievements of para-archers from the Shrine Board's Sports Complex including Rakesh Kumar, Sheetal Devi and Jyoti Baliyan for securing four medals at the Para Archery World Ranking Tournament in Rome. He also congratulated archer Hrithik Sharma for winning a silver medal at the World University Games in Germany.

Earlier, the CEO inspected march-past by contingents from the J&K Police, CRPF, NCC (Boys and Girls), Shrine Security Sahayaks and students from various educational institutions. Shri Vaishya distributed

cash prizes and commendations to outstanding Shrine Board staff and students judged best in the march-past. However, in light of the recent cloudburst tragedy, the cultural events planned for Independence Day have been canceled as a mark of respect and solidarity with the affected families.

The event was attended by the Additional CEO; Joint CEO; SMVDSB, SDM Katra; SP Katra; Commandant CRPF; FA/CAO; Dy CEO, Asstt. CEOs, Managers, Engineers and staff of the Shrine Board. Also present were members of civil administration, police and security forces, prominent citizens, heads of educational institutions, media personnel, local residents, teachers and school children.

As part of the Independence Day celebrations, the CEO also hoisted the national flag at the Central Office of the Shrine Board in Katra.

Independence Day 2025 Celebrated in Police District Handwara with Patriotic Fervour

■ Dr. Ab Qayoom

HANDWARA, AUG 15: Independence Day 2025 was celebrated with great enthusiasm and national pride across Police District Handwara, with the Tricolour hoisted at all police establishments, Tehsil and Block Headquarters, schools, Panchayat Ghars, and other public institutions. The main function took place at District Police Lines (DPL) Handwara, where Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Handwara, Shri Javed Naseem Masoodi (JKAS), presided as the chief guest. He hoisted the National Flag, inspected the parade, and delivered an inspiring address recalling the sacrifices of freedom fighters and martyrs. He reaffirmed the administration's commitment to national unity, peace, and development,



while also highlighting ongoing developmental projects and achievements in Handwara. SSP Handwara, Shri Mushtaq Ahmad Choudhary (JKPS), was the Guest of Honour. Along with other senior officers, he laid wreaths at the Martyrs' Gallery in DPL Handwara to pay homage to police personnel who sacrificed their lives in the line of duty. The SSP also interacted with families of the martyrs present at the ceremony. The event saw the participation of Addl. SP Handwara, SDPO Handwara, DySP Ops Handwara, DySP DAR Handwara, Tehsildar Handwara, and other senior civil and police officials. The parade, commanded by DySP Azhar Amin (JKPS), featured contingents from CRPF, District Police, Women Police, Home Guards, NCC, and local schools. Civil departments also showcased themes of ongoing welfare schemes being implemented in the region. The National Anthem marked the opening and closing of the function. In a mark of solidarity with victims of the tragic Kishtwar cloudburst, no cultural performances or prize distribution ceremonies were held this year. A large number of locals and children attended the celebrations. Handwara Police had made elaborate security arrangements to ensure the smooth conduct of the event, earning appreciation from the public for their efforts.

All JK Shia Association Observes Arbaeen with Majlis E Chelum Imam Hussain (AS) at Imam Bargah Zadibal

■ HT News Desk

SRINAGAR, AUG 15: The All JK Shia Association today held a deeply moving Arbaeen program at Imam Bargah Zadibal, marking the Majlis E Chelum of Imam Hussain (AS). The day began at 9 AM with Zakireen reciting soulful Marsiya, which continued until 12:30 PM, immersing the congregation in remembrance of Karbala. After a short break, the recitations resumed from 1:30 to 3:30 PM, creating an atmosphere of devotion and reflection.

At 3:30 PM, the Association's President, Molvi Imran Ansari, delivered the Majlis E Aza, focusing on the wilayah of Imam Ali (AS) and the life of Hazrat Abu Talib (AS). He spoke about Hazrat Abu Talib's unwavering protection of Prophet Muhammad (SAWW) during the most chal-

lenging years of his mission, recalling how he raised the Prophet as his own son, shielded him from harm, and stood firmly beside him despite intense opposition from Quraysh. Molvi Imran noted that the Prophet himself acknowledged, "So long as my uncle Abu Talib lived, the people could do me no harm," underlining Abu Talib's pivotal role in safeguarding Islam in its earliest days.

He also paid rich tribute to the courage of Bibi Zainab (AS) in the court of Yazid in Sham, where, even in captivity, she became the fearless voice of Karbala, delivering eloquent speeches that exposed tyranny and preserved the message of Imam Hussain (AS) for generations to come. Her steadfastness, he said, was a continuation of the same spirit of sacrifice that her brother embodied on the



plains of Karbala.

Later, at 5:30 PM, the Zuljanah Sharief procession was taken out under the leadership of AJKSA General Secretary Abid Ansari. The program was attended by prominent AJKSA leaders, including Vice Presidents Irfan Ansari and , District President Srinagar

Haji Firduas Mirza, Vice President Munshi Bashir, Secretary Yaseen Mustafa, and Joint Secretary Nisar Sultan, who all participated in the proceedings with reverence.

In his concluding remarks, Molvi Imran Ansari extended heartfelt gratitude to the administration for their support, par-

ticularly acknowledging SSP Srinagar, SP Hazratbal, dynamic SDPO Zadibal, SHO Zadibal, CMO Srinagar, ZMO Zadibal, ExN PHE Srinagar, KPDCLE AEE BAMK, the Chief Sanitation Officer of SMC, and the Ward Officer Zadibal, all the volunteers including Amjid Hussain bhat

Mehboob mustafa, Saqib ali, Saqib Hussain bhat, Abid Hussain Khan, Mehraan ali, Shabir Hussain allie, Zakir mohd ali, Wasi hyder, Mohd afzal, Noor mohd sultan, Ashiq Hussain Sultan, Mohd yaseen sofi, Saqib Hussain shawli, Mohd Hussain for ensuring the smooth and peaceful conduct of the day. He ended with a solemn prayer, invoking the blessings of Imam Hussain (AS) for the entire community, asking Allah to grant peace, unity, and spiritual strength to all, and to keep the message of Karbala alive in hearts forever.

Rana holds constructive dialogue with prominent citizens in Poonch

■ HT News Desk / DIPR

POONCH, AUG 15: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, today held an interactive session with the prominent intellectuals, former civil servants and members of civil society in Poonch today.

The session witnessed vibrant and insightful discussions on educational infrastructure, healthcare services and overall developmental gaps in the district.

Emphasis was laid on the urgent need for systemic reforms and administrative intervention to uplift the standard of living, particularly in remote and underdeveloped areas.

Civil society representatives suggested a series of strategic interventions aimed at building a more empathetic, inclusive and morally responsible society, rooted

in ethical values. They stressed the importance of community engagement, youth empowerment and value-based education to strengthen the district's social fabric.

Importantly, the civil society members also urged the Minister to take effective steps for preservation and promotion of local culture, heritage and indigenous tribal languages, recognizing them as vital elements of the region's identity and diversity. They further requested him for bringing tangible improvements in the sectors of health, education and infrastructure.

A key highlight of the interaction was the discussion around the untapped tourism potential of Poonch, with stakeholders strongly advocating for vigorous promotion of sustainable tourism. They underlined the strategic importance of completing critical infrastructure projects, especially

the Mughal Road tunnel and the Loran-Tangmarg Road, which are vital to improving year-round connectivity with the Kashmir Valley.

Responding to the concerns, Javed Ahmed Rana assured the attendees of his full commitment towards the holistic development of Poonch. He emphasized that inclusive dialogue and active civic participation are essential for effective governance. He assured that the feedback and recommendations shared would be taken up at the highest level for appropriate action.

The Minister also reiterated the Omar Abdullah Government's focus on equitable regional development, environmental sustainability, eco-tourism and tribal welfare. He highlighted several initiatives already underway to address some of the issues raised during the session.

JKPICCA Expresses Condolence, Stands in Solidarity with Kishtwar Victims

■ Mushtaq ul Islam

SRINAGAR, AUG 15: The Jammu & Kashmir Fruits & Vegetable Processing & Integrated Cold Chain Association (JKPICCA) has expressed deep sorrow over the tragic loss of lives and hardships faced by the people of Kishtwar following the recent disaster.

In a condolence and solidarity message, JKPICCA President, Mr. Bashir Ahmad Naik, said the association's "hearts go out to the families who have lost their loved ones and to all those enduring pain and uncertainty."

"No words can truly ease the sorrow, but please know that you are not alone. We stand in complete solidarity with you, sharing in your grief and hope," the statement read, adding that the resilience, courage, and unity shown by the Kishtwar community in these difficult times is inspiring.

The association prayed for eternal peace to the departed souls, strength and patience to the bereaved families, and a swift recovery for the injured, while also wishing for the safety, peace, and well-being of the entire Kishtwar district.

SATISH SHARMA VISITS RESIDENCES OF KISHTWAR CLOUDBURST VICTIMS; OFFERS CONDOLENCES, ATTENDS LAST RITES

■ HT News Desk / DIPR

JAMMU, AUG 15: Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Information Technology, Transport, Youth Services and Sports, Satish Sharma, today visited the residences of several victims of the tragic Kishtwar cloudburst mishap at Jammu to

offer condolences to the bereaved families.

During his visit, Satish Sharma interacted with the family members, expressed deep grief over the irreparable loss of precious lives and prayed for eternal peace to the departed souls. He also conveyed heartfelt sympathies and wished for strength and courage to the

families to bear the tragedy.

The Minister assured the affected households that the government stands with them in this difficult time. He said that all necessary support and relief measures would be extended without delay.

Satish Sharma said that the heartbreaking incident has

shattered the entire Jammu and Kashmir. He reiterated the government's commitment to provide full assistance and rehabilitation support to the families of the victims.

The Minister also attended the last rites of the victims held at different places in Jammu district.



HT EDITORIAL

Put all stray dogs in designated shelters

The stray dog menace has assumed alarming proportions across the Kashmir valley. Day in and day out there are reports of dog biting cases across the valley? As far as the Srinagar city is concerned the Srinagar Municipal Corporation years back had drawn up a plan for the sterilization of the dogs so that there is no further population of the canines. The plan was welcomed by one and all with the hope that things will improve.

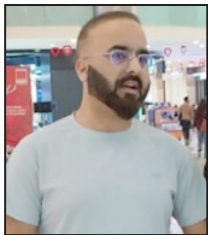
The sterilization programme carried on for some months and with the passage of time the campaign fizzled out. As on date the sterilization is nowhere in sight and as a result of the same there has been a huge increase in the population of dogs across the district. The uncontrolled population of the dogs has made the matters worse for the people especially the children and senior citizens. People fear to move during the early morning and evening, sensing they would be attacked by dogs.

Few days back the Supreme Court of India in a landmark judgment directed the Delhi government to create shelters for stray dogs and put all the canines in these shelters. If stray dogs in the national capital can be placed in the shelters then the same process can be applied in the Srinagar district and other districts of the Kashmir valley. As such the authorities of the union territory of Jammu & Kashmir should wake up and take the necessary steps in this regard.

Some years back then the government of erstwhile state of Jammu & Kashmir had dished out figures according to which the dog population in the Srinagar district stood at 90,000. Since the sterilization process has failed it is quite natural that this figure would have gone up even though no updated figures are available as on date. The government without any further delay should carry out the latest census of dogs not only in Srinagar and other districts of the valley.

Once the survey is completed the government will come to know about the steps that have to be taken for placement of dogs in shelters. This would give them a clear indication as to how many shelters would be needed district wise for placement of stray dogs. Once the shelters come up across the valley it would be somewhat easy for the people at helm to take the logical steps and provide relief to people from attacks of dogs.

A Call for Urgent Justice: Why J&K Needs the Supreme Court's August 11 Stray Dog Order Now



■ Hidayat Bukhari

In the quiet mornings of Srinagar, before the shutters rise on its centuries-old marketplaces and the first vendors begin their calls, a different kind of vigilance takes place in homes across the city. Parents, often still in their night clothes, stand silently at their doorways, scanning every corner of the lane, listening for the faintest bark or growl. Only when they are sure the path is clear do they allow their children to step outside. In the labyrinthine alleys of the old city, where sunlight barely pierces the tightly packed buildings, in the bustling commercial streets of Srinagar's central bazaars, along the narrow by-lanes of Baramulla, through Pulwama's quiet hamlets, and in the hillside neighbourhoods of Jammu, the ritual repeats itself. Mothers grip their children's hands tightly, hearts pounding with each turn in the road, while fathers often walk a few paces ahead, scanning for the sudden lunge of a dog from behind a parked vehicle or garbage heap. And yet, even such caution has not always been enough — countless families have witnessed the most harrowing of scenes: packs of stray dogs surrounding young children in a tight, circling formation, their growls turning into frenzied barks before mauling the helpless child, sometimes to the point of fatality. These tragedies are etched into the collective memory of neighbourhoods, adding an unshakable layer of fear to an already dangerous reality. This is not mere caution — it is a learned survival instinct, honed over years of living alongside an ever-growing population of stray dogs. For more than a decade, this daily, silent choreography has been part of life in Jammu & Kashmir, a constant reminder that the simple act of stepping outside one's home carries risks that no society should accept as normal.

The Magnitude of the Crisis

In 2024, 51,027 dog-bite cases were recorded — a surge from 34,664 in 2023 and 22,110 in 2022. In 2024 alone, there were five confirmed rabies deaths; in 2023, there were four. For a population of just 1.3 crore, that equates to nearly 400 cases per 100,000 people — proportionally far higher than in much larger states like Uttar Pradesh or Delhi.

Region: Jammu & Kashmir

- Population (approx.): 1.3 Crore
- Annual Dog-Bite Cases: 51,027
- Rabies Deaths (2024): 5
- Cases Per 100,000 People: ~392



"We are not doing this for us, it is for the public interest. So no sentiments of any nature should be involved. Action should be taken at the earliest. Pick up dogs from all localities and shift them to far off places."

- Supreme Court

Region: Uttar Pradesh

- Population (approx.): 24 Crore
- Annual Dog-Bite Cases: 2,00,000* (example)
- Rabies Deaths (2024): 0
- Cases Per 100,000 People: ~83

Region: Delhi-NCR**

- Population (approx.): 3 Crore
- Annual Dog-Bite Cases: 45,000* (example)
- Rabies Deaths (2024): 0
- Cases Per 100,000 People: ~150

*Illustrative numbers for comparison.

**Delhi-NCR covered by Supreme Court's Aug 2025 Order.

Srinagar's Anti-Rabies Clinic treated 12,833 victims from June 2024 to May 2025, with more than 6,200 of them dog bites — averaging over 1,000 per month. In Jammu division, GMC recorded 40,505 animal-bite cases and 13 rabies deaths between 2019 and 2023.

Centre/ Division: ARC, SMHS Hospital, Srinagar

- Period Covered: Jun 2024 – May 2025
 - Reported Bite Cases: 12,833
 - Rabies Deaths: 2*
- Centre/ Division: GMC Jammu
- Period Covered: 2019 – 2023
 - Reported Bite Cases: 40,505
 - Rabies Deaths: 13

*Includes suspected rabies deaths.

Why the Supreme Court Order Matters?

The Supreme Court's August 11, 2025 order, though issued for Delhi-NCR, offers a replicable model for J&K. It mandates the removal of stray dogs from public spaces within eight weeks and relocation to secure, government-managed shelters for vaccination, sterilisation, and humane care. This ensures public spaces — streets, markets, schools, and residential areas — are free from the threat of stray dog attacks

while protecting animal welfare.

If adopted voluntarily in J&K, this model would require a sustained and coordinated approach. The first step would be a comprehensive census of stray dog populations across all districts, identifying hotspots in both urban and rural pockets. Simultaneously, municipal bodies — especially Srinagar and Jammu Municipal Corporations — must establish special-ised action units trained and equipped to humanely capture, transport, and manage these animals in purpose-built shelters. These shelters must be expanded or newly constructed to accommodate the population, each equipped with sterilisation and vaccination facilities, veterinary care, and monitored living spaces to ensure humane treatment.

Beyond capture and relocation, waste management reform is vital. Open garbage dumps serve as the primary feeding grounds for stray packs. Closing these points, improving door-to-door waste collection, and enforcing penalties for illegal dumping would cut off a key driver of stray population growth. Public awareness campaigns can reshape community behaviour, discouraging public feeding of dogs in unregulated spaces and promoting adoption from shelters.

Why J&K's Strays Are More Aggressive

J&K's stray dog population exhibits a unique behavioural profile shaped by decades of environmental and socio-economic conditions. Harsh winters with sub-zero temperatures have favoured the survival of only the most physically resilient and aggressive dogs, leading to a gene pool that prioritises endurance, strength, and territorial dominance. Chronic food scarcity — worsened by inconsistent waste management — forces dogs into intense competition for limited resources, encouraging a heightened food-guarding instinct. Territorial

isolation in rural and semi-urban pockets means packs often defend their areas with extreme hostility toward outsiders, including humans. These dogs operate in highly coordinated packs with complex social hierarchies, enabling them to strategise during confrontations. Heightened reactivity to human presence is further amplified by repeated negative interactions with people, reinforcing defensive or preemptively aggressive behaviour. Over time, this natural selection has produced a stray population that is more physically robust, psychologically conditioned to survive scarcity, and significantly more dangerous than counterparts in metropolitan areas like Delhi, where climate, food availability, and human contact patterns differ substantially.

Beyond Safety: Economic, Cultural, and Social Impact

Unchecked dog menace affects the economy, culture, and public morale. Tourism — a major revenue source for J&K — suffers when visitors fear for their safety. Markets and festivals see reduced footfall. Medical costs for treatment of bites and rabies prevention strain both households and public health budgets. Culturally, fear has eroded once vibrant traditions of open-air social gatherings, community sports, and children's outdoor play. Psychologically, living in constant fear creates anxiety disorders, developmental delays in children, and isolation among senior citizens.

The Path Forward

Applying the Supreme Court's August 11 framework to J&K is not just about animal control — it is a public health, safety, and economic revitalisation strategy. Its adoption could transform the daily experience of residents: children could walk to school without armed escorts of anxious parents, elderly people could visit markets or mosques without fear, and tourists could explore the old city without the constant vigilance of looking over their shoulder. Economically, it would free public health resources currently tied up in treating dog-bite cases, redirecting them to preventive care and community welfare. Socially, it would help revive the culture of community interaction in open spaces, crucial for mental well-being. With committed municipal leadership ensuring operational enforcement, NGOs driving humane implementation and public awareness, and citizens actively participating in the solution, Jammu & Kashmir could set a national precedent — reclaiming its streets, restoring social life, and protecting its economic future, all while treating animals with dignity and compassion.

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Independence Reimagined: A Critical Lens on Freedom and Its Realities..

■ Yawar Hamid

Independence is often celebrated as the ultimate triumph of a nation the day when chains of oppression were broken and the voice of self-determination rose. In the Indian context, 15th August 1947 is remembered with deep emotion, for it marked the end of nearly two centuries of colonial exploitation. However, a critical view compels us to ask: Did independence truly fulfil its promises, or did it merely change the nature of the challenges we face?

Political freedom was achieved, but social and economic emancipation remains incomplete. Inequality persists, with wealth and opportunities concentrated in the hands of a few. The rural-urban divide, caste based discrimination, and gender inequality continue to undermine the vision of an equitable society envisioned by the freedom fighters. Independence

was meant to empower every citizen, yet millions still struggle for basic rights such as quality education, healthcare, and dignified employment.

Moreover, the colonial mindset did not vanish with the departure of the British. Corruption, bureaucratic inefficiency, and political opportunism have eroded public trust. In many ways, the rulers changed, but the structures of exploitation adapted rather than disappeared. The ideals of democracy and liberty are often overshadowed by divisive politics, where religion, caste, and language are manipulated for personal or party gains.

Economic policies post-independence brought industrial growth, but they also created dependence on global markets, leaving the country vulnerable to external pressures. The dream of self-reliance, central to the nationalist movement, still struggles against the realities of globalization and domestic policy gaps.

Independence should not be seen as a static achievement but as an ongoing responsibility. True freedom demands critical self-reflection, active participation, and the courage to challenge injustice in all forms. The spirit of 1947 must inspire us not just to wave the flag, but to ensure that its colors represent dignity, equality, and opportunity for all.

In the end, the measure of independence is not in annual celebrations, but in how far we have travelled toward the ideals for which countless lives were sacrificed. To honour that legacy, we must move beyond symbolic pride to create a nation where every citizen genuinely experiences the freedom they were promised.

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Shah Zubair: Luminary of Kashmiri & Urdu Literature



■ **Mohammad Arfat Wani**

In the peaceful town of Charar-i-Sharief, located in the heart of Budgam, where centuries of religious and cultural heritage infuse life into the beat of everyday life, an exceptional budding talent is taking shape in silence to chart the literary map of Kashmir. Shah Zubair, a 12th grader, is not just a young man going through the typical challenges of adolescence; he is a poet, writer, and playwright whose words have a richness and sensitivity well above his years warming hearts and inspiring minds throughout the valley. His entry into the literary realm was early, with an inherent curiosity, self-reflection, and an abiding passion for words, and at the eighth-grade level, he unearthed the potency of words understanding that emotions, ephemeral thoughts, and human experiences could be given eternal life in verses that could connect with people. Those initial forays into poetry, humble as they were, bespoke a spark that would develop into a brilliant literary presence, and by the tenth grade, Zubair had refined his art crafting a rhythm, sensitivity, and depth that drew readers into the real landscapes of his imagination.

It is not just his prodigious talent which differentiates Shah Zubair but also his unprecedented versatility in expression. He started writing in Kashmiri welcoming the musicality and cultural wealth of his native tongue and then slowly branched out to Urdu, which is the language of classical poetry, and then to English to make his thoughts universally accessible. Every language created a new richness to his prose but his heart still belongs to Kashmiri literature and as he explains, "I began with Kashmiri poetry because it is my mother tongue and I want to see it bloom over time I branched out to Urdu and English but my heart is still in Kashmiri lit-

erature" This passion is not only a love affair with words but also a commitment to upholding the spirit of his culture so that the beauty of Kashmiri expression continues to bloom in a contemporary world where native languages tend to fight for survival.

Through the years, Zubair's work has been prolific and wide-ranging, consisting of more than 150 poems, over 20 short stories, and over 10 plays each characterized by perceptive observation, emotional resonance, and cultural insight His writing has appeared in reputable newspapers and literary journals with every poem and story evidencing insight into human nature, societal issues, and the rich tapestry of Kashmiri life Beyond artistic creation, Zubair's life is deeply influenced by religious guidance and communal involvement, as for the last three years, he has been teaching the Quran at a local Madrasah and serving as an Imam at his local neighborhood masjid instilling a sense of responsibility, moral contemplation, and commitment to service to others, and as he states, "I believe knowledge should be shared teaching the Quran is not just a responsibility it is a privilege" exemplifying maturity, wisdom, and a harmonious balance of literary and religious pursuits.

Even with his ability and commitment, Zubair's path has not been without hurdles, especially financial limitations that have postponed his aspiration of producing a book collecting his poetry and tales but his resolve is unshaken demonstrating a toughness that defines his character and vision. "I have composed enough poetry to fill a book but printing costs money I hope to make this dream come true one day" he confirms, describing an ambition which goes beyond personal ego. His hopes manifest not only personal acknowledgment but also the spread of Kashmiri literature, conservation of linguistic and cultural heritage, and inspiration of the next generation of writers and thinkers.

Recognition has followed his endeavors and he has been awarded more than 20 awards for his literary work validating his position as a young keeper of Kashmiri literary tradition These awards commemorate his success while encouraging him



to keep probing, creating, and expressing each award marking a milestone in a journey characterized by persistence, dedication, and an unflinching love for the arts What makes Shah Zubair's journey so inspiring is the balance he achieves between literary aspirations and spiritual obligations While most young authors are concerned with personal progress, his works are filled with ethical contemplation, cultural sensitivity, and social responsibility His short stories probe human relationships, societal expectations, and moral challenges while his plays set characters and conflicts on stage arousing empathy, reflection, and contemplation His poetry, whether written in Kashmiri, Urdu, or English, goes beyond mere expression plucking universal strings of love, hope, loss, and determination offering readers

beauty along with deep introspection

In a time when cultural heritage and mother languages are neglected, Shah Zubair stands as a shining star of hope and inspiration His unshakeable passion for Kashmiri literature, coupled with enthusiasm for teaching and social service, embodies the invigorating potential of passion, persistence, and honor proving that age does not matter to leave an impact and that one person driven by talent and intent can bring change to a community His vision transcends individual achievements to nurture an environment of literature where young minds revisit the charm of language, the depth of culture, and the force of well-crafted words.

Shah Zubair's journey also showcases the determination of Kashmiri youth reminding us that talent developed with

perseverance can surpass social, economic, and cultural hurdles The vision of publishing his book, a compilation of his poems and short stories, is a beacon yet his endeavor involves much more than individual recognition It involves guarding a cultural heritage, encouraging moral and ethical consideration, and stimulating creativity and critical thinking in others His life is proof of what can be achieved by the youth of Kashmir showing that aspirations pursued with honesty, hard work, and vision can surmount barriers and make a lasting impact on society.

In Charar-i-Sharief, where spiritual and cultural heritage still defines everyday life, Shah Zubair is writing a legacy that will be told for generations His poems, dramas, and stories exhibit literary finesse, cultural pride, and youthful vision while his teaching and community work prove the synthesis of intellect, ethics, and spirituality He is a rare blend of tradition and innovation, passion and perseverance and proves that one young man can hold hope, inspiration, and cultural preservation within him As his words touch increasingly wider groups of people, and as his book makes its way into readers' hands, the power of his work will resonate on ever-deeper levels touching hearts, inspiring minds, and keeping the linguistic and cultural gems of Kashmir alive.

Shah Zubair is not just a young poet and narrator; he is a guardian of language, a symbol of hope, and a witness to the long-lasting power of commitment In an era where youth struggle to articulate themselves, his life teaches us that greatness depends not on age or means but on vision, determination, and unshakeable faith in the capacity to change He is a bright star whose path interweaves literature, culture, and spirituality, leaving behind an enduring mark on Kashmir and the world beyond, inspiring generations to accept the beauty, richness, and redemptive power of language and culture.

The author is a passionate writer, social activist, and medical student, hails from Kuchmulla Tral. His email address is wania6817@gmail.com

Social Media Should Be Brought Under Law



■ **Sahil Manzoor Bhatti**

Print media has always played an effective role in developmental works, followed by electronic media — and now social media. Social media has a significant role in today's world, but unfortunately this platform is running without limits. Many people still do not know how to use it responsibly. Therefore, it must come under law, and stringent action should be taken against those who misuse it to spread false information, abusive content, and disturb the peace of society.

Every human being should first be civilized and have the basic knowledge of how to communicate thoughts with others in an impressive and respectful way. The world today is heading towards other planets, where there is no component that supports life — no water, air, fertile land, or suitable temperature. Human beings believe that nothing is impossible. Even when we are assigned simple tasks, our people encourage us by saying, "This is not rocket science, you can do it!"

We encourage our youth — regardless of age or gender — to take part in development. In our country, every individual can contribute at any level, in any field. The sky is the limit. There are people who relentlessly strive to turn



the impossible into possible for the upliftment of the nation and humanity at large. Great minds never limit themselves; they think beyond their own kith and kin, and work for the welfare of all. Development is certain for any nation whose citizens take responsibility to stay informed and contribute.

Today, I want to share my opinion on why social media platforms are promoting what they should not be promoting. The world has immense goals and visions for innovation and inventions, aiming to benefit humanity. Every individual must become part of this journey — stay updated and encourage those who devote themselves to nation-building. At the same time, it is painful that many educated youth are sitting idle, blaming the sys-

tem and spoiling the nation's dignity.

An intelligent person is not one who scores 100 out of 100, but one who becomes a ray of hope for thousands. Intelligent people always find a way to support the hopeless and struggling.

On social media, people are ready to do anything foolish just for likes, views, or to go viral. They use abusive language, promote senseless trends and waste precious time. When we, as humans, have goals like making Mars habitable, we must be vigilant, smart, and hopeful. Our body language, thoughts, and actions must be graceful and meaningful.

Kashmir is known as "Resh Waer," the valley of Sufi saints. These saints spread the message of peace, brotherhood, and humanity taught by Prophet Muhammad (SAW). But unfortunately, some people are now spoiling the sweetness of our language by using abusive words on social media and sharing them proudly.

Social media, if used properly, is a powerful platform. In earlier times, people with talent in poetry, singing, drawing, mimicry, etc., did not get a platform to showcase their abilities, but today everyone has an opportunity to create a channel or account and present their thoughts and talents for the benefit of humanity. Every account holder must feel responsible and condemn senseless content. We should stop sharing videos and posts that contain vulgar language or stupidity, and instead promote positive, educational, and uplifting material.

sahilmanzoor411990@gmail.com

No One Writes for the Colonel's Wife



■ **Sidharth PK**

*I am here,
I can give you a rose
Don't wert over the silent fog
I like you to be still
And the meeting of my night
As the moon's dress falls
Down upon the cool world
I take a step into you,
Where the blush leaves me
Into meaningful time
I care you when he finds you
In fault
In extreme anger
I am still the youth,
My glow is my moon
And the music all feather
To our anguish.*

Antimicrobial Resistance The Silent Pandemic Threatening Global Health



■ Surinderpal Singh

The Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) is fastly and swiftly emerging as the gravest and fatal public health threats of the century. This threat has a new style and trends that are unmatched with other medical calamities. The deadliest features that makes AMR fatal is that unlike sudden epidemics that attract immediate attention AMR advances quietly yet its consequences are potentially catastrophic. The basic cause behind APR is microorganisms like bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites evolve to resist the drugs designed to kill them. This makes the infections more harder and from being treatable it converts into nearly untreatable.

What Is Antimicrobial Resistance ?

The term antimicrobial resistance refers to the ability of microorganisms to survive and multiply despite the presence of antimicrobial drugs such as antibiotics, antivirals, antifungals and antiparasitics. The resistance develops through genetic mutations or by acquiring resistance genes from other microbes. While resistance is a natural evolutionary process the pace of resistance has been dangerously accelerated by human activities particularly the overuse and misuse of antimicrobials in humans, animals and agriculture.

Consequences Of AMR

1. Treatment Failures:

The common infections like urinary tract infections, pneumonia or tuberculosis may no longer respond to standard medications.

2. Longer Hospital Stays:

The resistant infections require more complex, expensive and prolonged treatment which would result in increased healthcare costs.

3. Increased Mortality:

The various health surveys across the globe estimates that AMR would causes nearly millions of deaths directly each year with thousands more to be impacted and effected.

4. Risk to Modern Medicine:

The various medical procedures like open surgeries, organ transplants and radiation therapies like chemotherapy depends heavily on effective antimicrobials for the prevention and treatment of health infections. The AMR threatens the safety of these interventions.

5. Global Economic Impact:

It is expected that in coming future of humanity the AMR could cause up to 10 million deaths annually and cost the global economy hard due to lost productivity and healthcare expenses.

Key Drivers Of AMR

1. **Over-prescription and inappropriate use of antibiotics in humans.**
2. **The unregulated sale of antimicrobials medication without prescriptions.**
3. **The excessive use of antibiotics in livestock and aquaculture.**
4. **Poor infection control in health-**



care settings.

5. **The lack of clean water, sanitation and hygiene in communities.**
6. **The global travel and trade spreading resistant pathogens across borders.**

Ways To Protect From AMR

1. Rational Use of Antimicrobials:

Guidance and knowledge should be inculcated amongst the residents of the world about ANR and they should be made to believe that antibiotics should be taken only when prescribed by a qualified healthcare provider and the

full course should be completed.

2. Strengthening Infection Prevention:

Hand hygiene, vaccination, safe food handling and clean water are vital to reducing the spread of infections. Hence these hygiene practices should not be taught at the initiation of pandemic rather they should be considered as permanent part of the medical guidance system.

3. Antibiotic Monitoring Programs:

Hospitals and clinics of the whole world should take special steps of monitoring and providing guidance about antibiotic use to ensure they are used only when

necessary and in the right doses.

4. Regulation in Agriculture:

Proper legal and strict rules are to be framed to counter AMR with provision for limiting and regulating antimicrobial use in farming especially for medical management system which aids in growth promotion in animals.

5. Public Awareness Campaigns:

Stress should be laid upon the facilities for research on AMR with special emphasis on educating the different communities on the dangers of misuse and the importance of preventive healthcare.

6. Research and Innovation:

It is the dire need of the hour for the countries across the globe to develop new drugs, rapid diagnostic tools and alternative system of medical treatments to stay ahead of evolving pathogens.

Antimicrobial resistance is a slow paced global crisis with the potential to undo decades of medical progress. It is not a problem that is confined to the boundaries of the hospitals rather it would affects communities, economies and global health security. Keeping in view the grave circumstances that are bound to happen the addressing up of the AMR requires coordinated action from governments throughout the globe with equal and dedicated support from healthcare systems, industries and individuals. The choice is open for the world to either act collaboratively now with well informed, dedicated and responsible measures or be ready to face a future where minor infections would convert from deadly to fatal.

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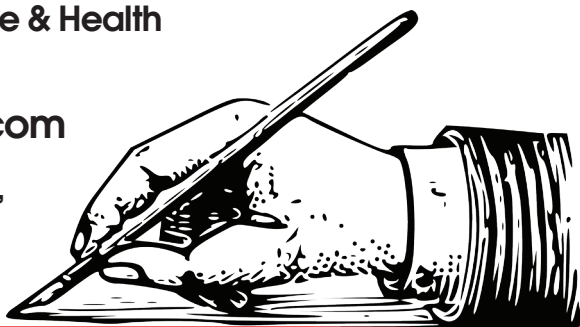
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INFORM, AND IGNITE; LET
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IT'S TIME TO ACT –
SAY NO TO DRUGS,
SAY YES TO HEALTHY FUTURE!

Youth are the backbone of our society. Let's unite to eliminate the curse of drug addiction once and for all. Together, we can build a healthier, stronger, and addiction-free tomorrow.

LET'S PLEDGE TODAY – TO STAND UNITED AGAINST DRUG ABUSE.



Space Devoted in Public Interest by HEADLINES TODAY

Dr. Tasaduk Nominated to Prestigious U.S. Endocrine Society's Board of Directors Panel

■ HT News Desk

SRINAGAR, AUG 15: Dr. Tasaduk Hussain Itoo, FRSPH (Fellow of the Royal Society for Public Health, UK), acclaimed physician, public health expert, medical educator, and writer, has been nominated to serve on the Board of Directors panel (Early Career Director position) of the U.S.-based Endocrine Society – the world's largest and most influential organization dedicated to hormone science and endocrine health.

Founded in 1916 and headquartered in Washington, D.C., the Endocrine Society represents over 18,000 scientists and



clinicians from more than 120 countries. Its Board of Directors plays a pivotal role in guiding global endocrine policy, advancing research, and improving patient care. Nomination to this prestigious body is highly selec-

tive, recognizing individuals who have demonstrated extraordinary contributions to the field, exceptional leadership, and a global vision for advancing endocrine science and healthcare.

Dr. Itoo's nomination underscores his impactful work in bridging clinical excellence with medical education, research advocacy, and public health awareness. Known for his commitment to improving healthcare standards, particularly in Diabetology and metabolic medicine, Dr. Itoo has also contributed extensively to scholarly publications and medical writing, influencing both policy and practice.

As an FRSPH, Dr. Itoo is recognized for his distinguished contributions to public health. His involvement with interna-

tional scientific societies – including the European Society of Endocrinology – reflects his dedication to fostering cross-border collaboration in medical research and clinical advancements.

In response to the nomination, Dr. Itoo stated, "It is a great honor to be considered for such a distinguished role in the world's leading endocrine body. This is not just a personal recognition, but also a testament to the capabilities and potential of medical professionals from India on the global stage."

If confirmed, Dr. Itoo will join an elite group of leaders influencing global endocrine research priorities, shaping clinical guidelines, and advocating for policies that improve hormone health and patient outcomes worldwide.

Board positions

Inbox



Kan, Elizabeth 01:02
to me

Dear Dr. Itoo,

You have been nominated for the Early Career Director position on the Board of Directors starting in June 2026. Please let me know if you are willing to be considered and I will provide you with more details regarding what is needed to complete your nomination.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Best,

Elizabeth



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Kashmir observes 79th Independence Day in a spirit of unity & patriotism

Chairpersons of DDCs hoist National Flag; pay tributes to martyrs, highlight developmental profiles

SRINAGAR, AUG 15: The 79th Independence Day was celebrated across Kashmir division today with a renewed spirit of patriotism and solidarity, commemorating the historic occasion and reflecting the region's rich cultural heritage and the resilient spirit of its people.

The day was marked by a host of events across all districts, including flag-hoisting ceremonies, addresses by the chief guests and heartfelt tributes to the freedom fighters who shaped the nation's journey toward independence. They also extended warm greetings to the people on the 79th Independence Day of the nation.

This year's celebrations hold special significance with the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign being observed under the broader initiative of 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav', commemorating India's rich journey of independence and the spirit of patriotism in every household.

On the occasion, tributes were paid to all those who lost their lives in yesterday's cloudburst incident in Kishtwar district.

As a mark of respect for those who lost their lives in the Kishtwar cloudburst incident, all cultural performances or felicitation ceremonies were cancelled.

At Ganderbal, the main function was held at Qamaria Stadium, where Chairperson District Development Council (DDC) Ganderbal, Nuzhat Ishfaq, hoisted the National Flag and took salute at the March Past parade. Contingents from J&K Police, JKP (Ladies), CRPF, SSB, PTS Manigam, SPO Ganderbal, Home Guard, Forest Protection Force, and students from various schools participated in the parade.

In her address, DDC Chairperson stated that Ganderbal is witnessing a new era of growth, with the district administration prioritizing public safety, doorstep delivery of services, women empowerment, enhanced healthcare, and avenues for socio-economic prosperity. She assured the people of the administration's commitment to ensuring holistic progress and welfare across the district.

The Independence Day function was attended by Vice Chairperson DDC, Bilal Ahmad Sheikh; Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal, Jatin Kishore; SSP Ganderbal, Khalil Ahmad Poswal; ADDC, ADC, DDC members, and a large gathering of officers, officials, besides citizens.

Flag hoisting ceremonies were also held at Sub-Division, Block, Tehsil, and Panchayat levels across the district.

At Pulwama, the main function was held at the District Police Lines (DPL) Pulwama, where District Development Council (DDC) Chairperson, Syed Abdul Bari Andrabi, hoisted the National Flag and took the salute at the parade.

The event was attended by MLA Rajpora, Ghulam Mohi Uddin Mir; Deputy Commissioner Pulwama, Dr. Basharat Qayoom; SSP Pulwama, P.D. Nitya; DDC Members; and senior officers from the Police, Army, Air Force, Paramilitary Forces and civil administration while senior citizens, families of martyrs, social activists, students, youth, civil society organizations and the general people in large numbers also attended the event.

The march-past featured contingents from JKP, JKAP, CRPF 182/183 BN, IRP 10th BN, Home Guards, Fire & Emergency Services, NCC Cadets, and students from various schools.

In his address, Chairperson highlighted the district's developmental progress. He reaffirmed the administration's commitment to equitable development, ensuring that every section of society benefits from government schemes. He urged the people of Pulwama to work together in the spirit of unity and progress for a prosperous and self-reliant future.

Andrabi lauded Pulwama's recent achievements, including its recognition at the national level for excellence in governance and development. He cited the outstanding performance of Block Ichegoza, which secured second place among 500 Aspirational Blocks in NITI Aayog's Q4 Delta Rankings, as well as National ODOP Award 2024 for exceptional efforts of Pulwama in realising Prime Minister's vision of Aatmanirbhar Bharat and its first-place standing in the Union Territory under the PARAKH report.

A parallel function was also held at



DPL Awantipora. Besides, Flag hoisting ceremonies were also conducted at various locations across the district, including sub-divisional headquarters, tehsil/block halqas, Panchayat Ghars, Kisan Khidmat Ghars (KKGs), district administration offices, schools, police stations, and other Police/CRPF establishments.

At Kulgam, the main Independence Day function was held at District Police Lines Kulgam where Chairperson, District Development Council (DDC) Kulgam, M Afzal Parrey hoisted the national flag and took the salute at the march past presented by the contingents of CRPF, JKP, JKP Ladies Police Group, District police band and Home guard, NCC besides school children and other contingents.

DDC Vice chairperson, Shazia Jan; Deputy Commissioner, Athar Aamir Khan; SSP Sahil Sarangal, Commandant CRPF, DDC members, ADDC, ADC and officers and officials from civil and police administration were present at the event, besides a large number of people from various areas of the district also attended the celebrations.

In his address, DDC highlighted the developmental scenario of the district and achievements registered by district administration in different sectors besides implementation of welfare schemes.

He appreciated all departments for their efforts in effectively implementing various schemes and programmes. Earlier, Deputy Commissioner Kulgam, Athar Aamir Khan also hoisted the National Flag at the mini-secretariat Kulgam.

Meanwhile, celebrations were also held across the district during which the national flag was hoisted in subdivision, block & tehsil levels, besides at health institutes, Police stations, municipalities, panchayats, schools, colleges and all other institutions and departments.

At Kupwara, the main Independence Day function was held at District Police

Lines (DPL) Kupwara where Chairman, District Development Council (DDC) Kupwara, Irfan Sultan Panditpori hoisted the National Flag, inspected the parade and took salute at March-past.

The parade was presented by contingents of CRPF, Women battalion of JKP, IRP, JKP, Home Guards, FPF, Special Commandos of police, NCC Cadets and school children who performed synchronized movements which reflected discipline and coordination, amid patriotic tunes played by JKP Band dressed in their ceremonial uniforms creating a dignified and inspiring atmosphere.

Vice Chairman DDC, Haji Farooq Ahmad Mir; Deputy Commissioner Kupwara, Shrikant Balasaheb Suse, SSP Kupwara, Gulam Jeelani; ADDC Kupwara, Mufti Fareed ud din; ADC Kupwara, Gulzar Ahmad, ACR, CPO, DDC Members, District officers, officials of all departments and large number of people from different areas were present during the function.

Addressing the function, Chairman highlighted various achievements and developments made by the district during the recent past. He said Kupwara was recently awarded the Prime Minister's Award for Excellence for being among the best performing districts of the country.

He expressed his delight over the sanctioning of Sadhna Tunnel by the Government which will provide all weather connectivity to the major border subdivision Karnah.

Earlier, the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Deputy Commissioner Kupwara and SSP Kupwara paid floral tributes at Martyr's Memorial.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kupwara, Shrikant Balasaheb Suse hoisted the National Flag at the DC Office Complex today, marking the occasion with great enthusiasm and patriotism. The event witnessed the participation of officers and officials of CRPF and local employees. The Independence celebrations were



also held at all subdivision Handwara, Lolab & Karnah, besides at tehsils, block Headquarters, Panchayats, Government offices and Education institutions of the district where the National Flag was hoisted by the heads of the institutions.

At Bandipora, Chairperson, District Development Council (DDC) Bandipora, Abdul Gani Bhat, hoisted the National Flag at S.K. Sports Stadium, Bandipora, and took salute at the march past presented by contingents of CRPF, J&K Police, JKIRP, JKAP women's wing, Fire & Emergency Services, SPOs, Home Guard, NCC, students, and the J&K Police Band Group.

MLA Bandipora, Nizamuddin Bhat; Principal District & Sessions Judge Bandipora, Khaleel Ahmad Choudhary; Vice-Chairperson DDC, Kowsar Shafeeq; Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, and Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Bandipora, Harmeet Singh, DDC members, senior officers from the civil and police administration, Army and paramilitary officials, and a large gathering of the public were present at the event.

In his address, Chairperson DDC highlighted the remarkable developmental progress in the district. He commended the efforts of district administration to promote tourism and improve governance in remote areas such as Gurez and Tulail, and highlighted advancements in healthcare, education, and rural infrastructure.

Earlier in the morning, DC Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib hoisted the National Flag at the Mini-Secretariat, Bandipora, in a ceremony attended by all district officers and employees, who participated with great enthusiasm and patriotism.

Independence Day celebrations were also held across Sub-Divisions Gurez and Sumbal, at block and panchayat levels, and in schools and colleges throughout the district. At Shopian, the Independence Day celebrations were today held with patriotic zeal and enthusiasm across Shopian district, with the main function held at District Police Lines (DPL) Shopian, where Chairperson, DDC Shopian, Bilqees Jan hoisted the National Flag and inspected the parade.

DDC Chairperson took salute at an impressive march past presented by contingents of CRPF, J&K Police, JK Ladies Police, FPF, Home Guards, NCC cadets and School children.

Deputy Commissioner Shopian, Shishir Gupta; SSP, Anayat Ali Choudhary; Vice Chairperson, Irfan Manhas; ADDC, Dr. Nasir Ahmad; DDC members, district administration officers besides a large number of people were present.

In her address, DDC Chairperson reiterated administration's commitment to transparent governance, speedy project execution, and citizen-centric service delivery. "Our vision is to make Shopian a model district in terms of infrastructure, social development and economic opportunities," she added.

She further stated that Shopian district is progressing by leaps and bounds by the efforts of district administration. Earlier, Deputy Commissioner, Shishir Gupta hoisted the National Flag at Mini Secretariat Shopian which was attended by District officers and officials of various departments and CRPF and Police.

Similar functions were also held at subdivision, tehsil & block levels, besides at district/ sectoral offices and educational institutions.

At Budgam, the main district-level Independence Day 2025 function was held at Sports Stadium Budgam, where the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Dr. Bilal Mohi-ud-Din Bhat, who was the chief guest, hoisted the National Flag and took salute at the ceremonial march-past parade.

Contingents from CRPF, J&K Police, IRP, JKAP, JKHG, NCC, and various schools of the district participated, marching in perfect sync to patriotic tunes.

The celebration was attended by SSP Budgam, Nikhil Borkar; ADC Budgam, ASP Budgam, senior officers from Army and Paramilitary Forces, all district and sectoral officers, PRI members, and a large gathering of citizens.

In his address, DC highlighted the remarkable progress achieved across all sectors. He said that the district is witnessing historic transformation, with major projects being executed in record time and with uncompromising quality.

He reiterated that Budgam is on the path of sustainable and inclusive development, with the administration committed to ensuring that benefits of every government scheme reach the last mile.

Earlier in the day, DC also hoisted the National Flag at DC residence, DC Office Complex Budgam, where officers and staff joined the celebrations.

Sakeena Itoo hoists National Flag at Shaheed Himayun Muzammil Memorial Government Degree College Anantnag

Says statehood restoration not a favour but genuine right of people of Jammu and Kashmir

■ HT News Desk / DIPR

ANANTNAG, AUG 15: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Sakeena Itoo today hoisted the National Flag at Shaheed Himayun Muzammil Memorial Government Degree College Boys here to mark the 79th Independence Day celebrations.

On the occasion, the Minister inspected the parade and took salute from the contingents of various wings of J&K Police, CRPF, NCC Cadets and school children who marched past the podium.

In her address on the occasion, the Minister said that this freedom is very precious gift that has been achieved with great difficulty for which our elders and forefathers have given countless sacrifices. She added that on this remarkable day we remember those great martyrs who have sacrificed their lives for the country and who have given us this freedom we are living today.

The Minister further said that this freedom of the nation reminds us that we should value our freedom and work together for the progress and

prosperity of our country. She added that we should respect the constitution, laws and regulations of our country and work together on this.

The Minister, in her address also remembered the contribution of Sher-i-Kashmir Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah in keeping the people of Jammu and Kashmir united to build the dream of a new Jammu and Kashmir. She added that he contributed in every sector of society, particularly health sector, education sector and agriculture sector.

The Minister further highlighted that after the present government come into power under the leadership of Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah, the trust of people and sense of security has been restored in these last nine months. She said that every kind of public infrastructure is being upgraded in each district with particular focus on health sector, adding that dialysis units, additional OPD blocks, advanced medical equipments, MRI machines, Cath Labs, Digital X-ray labs and other advanced equipments have been established across several health facilities of Jam-



mu and Kashmir.

The Minister also said that accountability has been estab-

lished in last 8,9 months of governance and every government employee has been made

accountable. She added that today a common man can ask questions and take answers

from every establishment of the government.

The Minister further said that what this government has promised will be achieved in five years and this government remains committed to that.

She highlighted that under the leadership of Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah, the cabinet passed the resolution for the restoration of Statehood, adding that Home Minister of India in the Parliament has made a commitment that Jammu and Kashmir will get back its state status.

"Statehood restoration is not a favour for Jammu and Kashmir but right of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, a genuine right", she stated.

She highlighted that the people of Jammu and Kashmir are not asking anything new as J&K was previously a state and considered the crown of India. She added that by the restoration of Statehood, the confidence of people of Jammu and Kashmir and the trust of people of Jammu and Kashmir will be restored.

The Minister also highlighted various achievements of the government in last 9 months like increase the disabled pension, widow pension, old age

pension, increase in marriage assistance from Rs. 50,000 to Rs. 75,000, free travel in government owned buses for women folk to empower them and make them independent, increase in ration besides other developmental initiatives including launch of youth centric schemes under Mission YUVA.

On the occasion, the Minister also paid rich tributes to the fallen soldiers and policemen in line of duty. She also remembered the Kishtwar cloudburst victims, expressed grief on the tragic incident and extended solidarity with their families.

DDC Chairman Anantnag, M.Y.Gorsi; MLA Anantnag, Peerzada Mohammad Syed; MLA Pahalgam, Altaf Ahmad Wani; MLA Bijbehara-Srigufwara, Dr. Bashir Ahmad Shah Veeri; MLA Anantnag East-Shangus, Reyaz Ahmad Khan; MLA Kokernag, Zaffar Ali Khatana; DIG South Kashmir Range, Javid Iqbal Mattoo; Deputy Commissioner Anantnag, Syeed Fakhruddin Hamid; SSP Anantnag, Amritpal Singh; senior officers of district administration, DDC members, large number of public and students were present on the occasion.

Dy CM interacts with cloudburst victims at Chashoti

ASSURES BEST POSSIBLE TREATMENT TO INJURED

■ HT News Desk / DIPR

JAMMU, AUG 15: Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary today visited Government Medical College (GMC) Jammu to meet with the victims and survivors of devastating cloudburst at Chashoti, Kishtwar.

He interacted with the patients and their attendants and enquired about the medical facilities being provided to them.

The Dy CM assured the patients that the government is committed to provide all necessary facilities to the patients for their early recovery. He conveyed



solidarity to the affected families, assuring them that they are not alone and government is all standing with them.

The Dy CM also directed the medical team for ensuring round the clock and quality treatment for the affected.

Principal GMC Dr Ashutosh Gupta, Superintendent GMC Dr Varinder Trishal, Dy Superintendent Dr Bharat Bhushan apprised the Dy CM about the condition of the injured.

Dy CM unfurls tricolour on I-Day at MA Stadium Jammu

■ HT News Desk / DIPR

JAMMU, AUG 15: Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary today unfurled the National Flag on the occasion of 79th Independence Day celebrations, at MA Stadium Jammu this morning.

The Dy CM inspected the contingents of the Independence Day Parade and took the ceremonial salute.

The I-Day Parade consisted of total 32 smart contingents from BSF, CRPF, SSB, IRP (Women & Male), J&K Police, JKAP, SDRF, J&K Fire and Emergency Services, J&K Forest Protection Force, NCC (Boys and Girls), several government and private schools contingents, Brass & Pipe Bands of BSF, J&K Armed Police and Band Troops (Girl & Boys) of different Schools.

The Deputy Chief Minister, at the outset, expressed deepest condolences to the grieving families who have lost their family members and relatives in the tragic cloudburst in Chashoti, Kishtwar. Expressing sympathies, he said that the government stands in solidarity with the affected families.

While addressing the gathering on the prestigious event, the Dy CM greeted the people of J&K and nation on the auspicious occasion of 79th Independence Day. He said Independence Day reminds us of the sacrifices of our brave ancestors and the struggle of our freedom fighters. He expressed gratitude towards the martyrs who sacrificed their lives to bring the light of freedom to the nation.

Highlighting the government's achievements recorded in past 10 months, the Dy CM proudly informed that 46 new industrial estates have started in Jammu and Kashmir and new factories are coming up in areas like Jammu, Samba, Kathua, Pulwama and Budgam. Likewise, the government has formulated a

Local Employment Policy so that the youth of J&K have the first right in the newly set up factories. He said that J&K is not only known for its mountains, rivers and beautiful weather, but also for centuries-old art and heritage.

"Our artisans and skilled people are the soul of this land, who with their own hands create amazing works of art that are appreciated all over the world."

The Dy CM said that the government has given GI tag to Kashmiri pashmina, kani shawl, paper mashi and walnut wood carving, along with Solai Honey of Ramban, Kaladi of Ramnagar, Guchchi Mushroom of Doda, Basmati of Jammu, Rajma of Bhaderwah and Saffron of Kishtwar and in Handicraft, Chakri Kala Rajouri, Basohli Pashmina Shawl and Basohli Paintings.

Underscoring government's care for the weak, poor and needy citizens, the Dy CM maintained that government has distributed 2 lakh safety kits among the workers, which included helmets, safety shoes, gloves and basic medical kits.

"Through pension schemes like ISSS and NSAP, the Omar Abdullah government has ensured to provide pension to the elderly, widows and the disabled from month to month to facilitate their living" he added.

The Dy CM said that giving more emphasis on health services, the government has given its biggest priority to the expansion of health services. Besides, MBBS and PG seats have also been increased so that more and more local students get the opportunity of medical education.

In education sector, the government has taken important steps including mobile schools for hilly and remote areas, where it was difficult to reach and New Education policy has been adopted in Jammu and Kashmir. The government has started teachers training programs, which focus



on new curriculum, activity-based teaching and student counselling, he added.

For the farmers, the government has started different schemes in agriculture, horticulture and sericulture to increase their income. Through the Saffron Mission, Saffron from Pampore is now reaching the world market with a GI tag, he said.

The Dy CM said that the government has also increased the Kisan Credit Card coverage for the farmers so that they can get loans at low interest. Also, the crop insurance scheme compensates for their losses, be it rains, hailstorms or falling market prices.

Regarding youth empowerment, the Dy CM emphasized that the government will provide skill training to more and more youth through Mission Yuva including training in areas like IT, tourism, handicraft, dairy farming, solar installation and modern agriculture. After the training, they will be given subsidized loans to start their business so that they do not have to just search for a job but they can become a source of employment for their city and village.

The Dy CM also informed that the Omar Abdullah government has taken many major steps for empowerment of women. Self

Help Groups (SHGs) have been formed in which women are starting their own small businesses such as dairy farming, tailoring units, pickle and jam making and online handicraft sales. These Self Help Groups have been provided with interest free loans, marketing training and latest accounting tools so that their work can not only survive but become a successful business.

He said that after the formation of the Omar Abdullah government, the Public Works Department has achieved many important milestones in the infrastructure development of Jammu and Kashmir. The Government of India has also approved several mega development projects for J&K.

He said that under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) - Phase IV, 1,741 km of roads are being constructed at a cost of 4,224 crore that will connect 2,400 rural habitations. In addition, the MORTH Project has approved 19 new national highway projects worth Rs. 10,637 crore. Many projects are also going on under NABARD, he added.

In the power sector, the government has strengthened the transmission and distribution system.

The Dy CM said that tourism is not just an industry for us, but a strong pillar of our identity, our pride and our economy. In view of increasing footfall of tourism and keeping in mind their convenience, new housing blocks, parking facilities and crowd management system have been adopted. He asserted that it's now our responsibility of preserving freedom, protecting it and taking the country forward is on our shoulders and especially it is the duty of our younger generation to preserve this freedom.

He exhorted that government will continue to work for the development of J&K with honesty, hard work and dedication.

I-Day celebrations held at District Court Complexes of B'la & Ang

■ HT News Network

BARAMULLA, AUG 15: At Baramulla, the 79th Independence Day was celebrated with all patriotic fervour and enthusiasm within the premises of the District Court Complex Baramulla. Chairman District Legal Services Authority/ Principal District and Sessions Judge, Jawad Ahmad, hoisted the National Flag and took the salute during the ceremony.

On this occasion, Principal

District and Sessions Judge conveyed his heartfelt greetings to the community, extending his best wishes to everyone on this momentous day.

He further, acknowledged the significance of the celebration, emphasizing the importance of national unity and the collective spirit of patriotism that the day embodies.

The function was attended by the 1st Additional Session Judge Baramulla, Secretary District Legal Service Authority

Baramulla), Judicial Magistrate First Class (Munsif) Baramulla, Public Prosecutors, Legal Aid Defence Councils, Bar members, and others.

At Anantnag, the District Judiciary Anantnag celebrated the 79th Independence Day today at the District Court Complex, Anantnag. The National Flag was hoisted by Tahir Khurshid Raina, Principal District & Sessions Judge Anantnag and Chairman DLSA, in the presence of all Judges posted at the dis-



trict headquarter.

The event was attended by members of the Bar Association Anantnag, staff of judiciary and DLSA, officers from the prosecution along with their staff, and Para Legal Volunteers.

The programme commenced with the ceremonial flag hoisting followed by an address from the Chairman DLSA, who highlighted the significance of Independence Day, congratulated the gathering, and appealed to their nationalistic spirit.

He urged everyone to take pride in being an Indian, to discharge their duties with sincerity, and emphasized the pivotal role of youth as the true wealth of the nation.

Similar programmes were organized at various Tehsil headquarters viz. Vailoo, Bijbehara, Aishmuqam, Dooru, and Shangus, presided over by the respective Chairpersons of the Tehsil Legal Services Committees, with active participation from staff members.



Obesity emerging as national health crisis, cut down cooking oil consumption: PM

■ United News of India

NEW DELHI, AUG 15: Prime Minister Narendra Modi today expressed deep concern over the rising trend of obesity in the country, calling it a looming national health crisis.

Addressing the nation from the Red Fort on the occasion of India's 79th Independence Day, Modi urged Indians to take small but meaningful steps towards better health. Among his suggestions was a call to buy at least 10% less cooking oil and to use 10% less oil in daily meals.

His statement comes in the backdrop of recent data from the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5), which says the prevalence of obesity among adults in India has doubled over the past decade. In urban areas, more than

33% of women and 29% of men are now considered overweight or obese, a trend driven by sedentary lifestyles and high-calorie diets.

To counter this alarming rise, the Prime Minister urged citizens to adopt simple, conscious changes. "I had made one small suggestion — that every family should resolve that when cooking oil comes into the house, it should be 10% less than usual, and its use should also be 10% less. By doing so, we shall make our contribution towards winning the fight against obesity."

In line with this call for healthier living, Modi also announced a comprehensive National Sports Policy, aiming to promote fitness and sports from the grassroots to the global stage.

"To promote sports, we have



brought forth the National Sports Policy— after several decades, we have introduced the 'Khelo India policy' in the country, so that there may be a comprehensive effort for the development of the sports sector," the Prime Minister

said.

Under the new framework, the government seeks to build a complete ecosystem — from school-level engagement to Olympic-level excellence. This includes investments in coaching

infrastructure, fitness programmes, playgrounds, sports equipment, and support to MSMEs manufacturing sports goods, he added.

"We wish to take this entire ecosystem to children even in the remotest areas," Modi added, underscoring the vision of inclusivity. The Prime Minister's remarks come at a time when India is also preparing for major international sporting events. Officials say that over Rs 3,000 crore has been allocated under the Khelo India Scheme since its launch, with thousands of youth receiving training and exposure.

By linking health and fitness to national development, Modi appealed to families, schools, and civil society to collectively work towards a fitter and healthier India. UNI AJ SSP

BJP undermining foundation of democracy to stay in power, alleges Kharge

■ United News of India

NEW DELHI, AUG 15: Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge today raised serious concerns over alleged large-scale electoral irregularities, accusing the ruling party of undermining the foundations of Indian democracy to stay in power.

In a video message on the occasion of 79th Independence Day, Kharge cited the historic words of Dr BR Ambedkar, who, on June 15, 1949, said, "Franchise is a most fundamental thing in a democracy. No person who is entitled to be brought into the electoral rolls...should be excluded merely as a result of prejudice..."

Kharge alleged that under the guise of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise, votes of opposition supporters are being deleted en masse. "People who are alive are being declared dead," he said, accusing the Election Commission of "bias" for refusing to disclose whose names were being removed and on what grounds.

Welcoming the Supreme Court's intervention, which directed the Election Commission to make the voter lists public, Kharge questioned the ruling party's silence over the deletion of 65 lakh voters. "This clearly indicates who benefited from this exercise," he said.

He also referred to Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi's data-backed claims showing how voter manipulation had altered election outcomes — including seats where the Congress had a lead in all Assembly segments but still lost due to a BJP lead in just one.

"This is not just our battle — this is the biggest challenge facing the world's largest democracy," he asserted.

Kharge called upon all Congress leaders and workers to thoroughly examine voter rolls in their respective booths. He urged them to identify names wrongly deleted, voters wrongly declared dead, names shifted to other booths, outsiders added, or voter IDs linked to multiple places.

He also claimed of a "new issue coming to light" — "additional voter lists" being issued just a day before polling, making it nearly impossible for candidates to review them in time.

Calling it a "conspiracy" by the ruling party, Kharge said, "The Congress party has created a website where you can provide information about all such irregularities".

"This is not just a fight to win an election," Kharge emphasised. "This is a fight to save Indian democracy and protect our Constitution."

He invoked India's great leaders — Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Dr B R Ambedkar, Maulana Azad, and Subhas Chandra Bose — saying their dreams cannot be shattered. "We must fight this battle with the same intensity with which we fought the battle for independence," he said.

"To carry this fight forward," Kharge added, "Rahul Gandhi will launch the 'Vote Adhikar Yatra' from Sasaram, Bihar, on the August 17. I urge everyone to join and make it a success." UNI RBE SSP

Police impound cab, fine driver Rs 29K after viral reckless driving video in Noida

■ United News of India

NOIDA, AUG 15: A cab driver in Noida drove rashly to avoid the police, leaving the family inside the vehicle severely frightened. Despite repeated pleas from the passengers, the driver continued his reckless driving. He was later caught by the Noida Police after the video of the incident went viral on social media.

The police said that they have impounded the vehicle after issuing him a challan of Rs 29,250.

"On August 14, a video went viral showing a cab driver speeding dangerously and refusing to let passengers exit the vehicle. Taking immediate cognisance of the matter, the police have registered a case against the accused cab driver.

The driver has been taken into custody and fined Rs 29,250 for traffic violations, and the vehicle has been impounded. Further legal action is being taken," said the police official.

The victim's family alleged that due to the rash driving, the cab collided with another vehicle. In the viral video, the voice of a frightened child crying can be heard. The victim shared the entire incident by posting the video on social media, where it went viral. However, the victim's family didn't lodge any complaint with the police.

The police took suo moto action in this respect.

"The affected family, including a wife and child, was travelling from Greater Noida to Delhi's Connaught Place. The incident reportedly occurred near the Parthala Bridge while coming from Greater Noida West," said the police official. UNI ATK ARN

Kharge, Rahul extend I-Day greetings, emphasise democratic values and unity

■ United News of India

NEW DELHI, AUG 15: On the occasion of Independence Day, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi today extended greetings to the nation, paying tribute to the country's freedom fighters and reaffirming their commitment to the values enshrined in the Constitution.

Mallikarjun Kharge, while extending his greeting in a post on X, emphasised the ongoing struggle to uphold constitutional principles in contemporary India.

"We pay humble tribute to the countless great freedom fighters, remembering their sacrifices and invaluable contributions to the national movement. Today is significant because we, the people of India, are now fighting for our rights — for the protection of constitutional institutions, social justice, economic empowerment, and brotherhood," he said.

He also called upon citizens to unite in safeguarding the interests of every Indian and carrying forward the spirit of the freedom struggle.

Meanwhile, Rahul Gandhi echoed similar sentiments, reminding citi-



zens of the moral foundation of India's independence.

"This hard-earned freedom, attained through the sacrifices of our great freedom fighters, is a pledge to build a nation where justice stands on the foundation of truth and equal-

ity, and every heart holds respect and brotherhood," he said.

Gandhi urged citizens to uphold the honour of India's legacy, calling it a "collective duty to protect the pride and values of this priceless inheritance." UNI RBE ARN

Israel fears new sanctions from more countries amid growing isolation – Reports

■ United News of India

JERUSALEM, AUG 15: Israel is growing increasingly worried about looming sanctions from more countries that are concerned about the war in the Gaza Strip, the Financial Times newspaper reported on Friday, citing current and former Israeli officials.

Further sanctions could include bans on Israel's participation in international events, a broader arms embargo, and the cancellation of visa-free travel for Israeli citizens to other countries, the report said.

The Israeli technology sector is already feeling the economic impact of the sanctions, the newspaper said. Investors are questioning their intentions to invest in Israel amid the blockade of humanitarian aid deliveries to the Gaza Strip.

"The idea of investing in a country that is directly blocking the influx of necessary aid is something we're



wrestling with on moral grounds," an investor told the daily.

On August 7, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that Israel would establish full control over the Gaza Strip to ensure a security perimeter, subsequently transferring it to a new "civilian administration." He added that Israel did not plan to

retain control over the enclave.

On August 8, Germany suspended permits for arms exports to Israel, which can be used in the war on the Gaza Strip. Netanyahu criticized the decision. According to UK media reports, the United Kingdom is also considering imposing sanctions against Israel. UNI

Alaska meeting with Putin has 25 pc chance of not being successful: Trump

■ United News of India

ANCHORAGE, UNITED STATES, AUG 15: US President Donald Trump on Thursday estimated that his upcoming meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin in the US state of Alaska has a 25 per cent chance of not being successful.

In an interview with Fox News Radio, Trump said his meeting with Putin is like "a chess game," adding that he believes Putin is arriving with the intention of making progress towards reaching a deal on the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

He said if positive progress is made during the meeting, it would lay the groundwork for a second one, which would also include Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky.

Trump on Wednesday warned that Russia would face "very severe consequences" if Putin refuses to



agree to a ceasefire in the ongoing conflict with Ukraine. The Putin-

Trump meeting is set for Friday in Anchorage, Alaska. UNI

Australia opens facility to protect 13 mln biodiversity specimens

■ United News of India

CANBERRA, AUG 15: Australia's national science agency has opened a biodiversity center to safeguard over 13 million specimens.

The new building, named Diversity, in the capital Canberra, unites the Australian National Wildlife Collection

and the Australian National Insect Collection under one roof in temperature-controlled, bushfire- and pest-resistant vaults, according to a statement released Thursday by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO).

Diversity houses one of the world's largest collections of

Australian and Papua New Guinean birds, a vast archive of insects, and other preserved specimens spanning 150 years, to aid biosecurity, conservation, climate resilience and environmental management.

"They are a hidden powerhouse, supporting everything from tracking pest incursions



to discovering new species and understanding the genetic diversity of Australia's native ecosystems," said CSIRO Chief Executive Doug Hilton.

Equipped with advanced genomics and digitization labs, the 90 million-Australian dollar (59 million-U.S. dollar) center will allow researchers and citizen scientists world-

wide to extract DNA, capture high resolution images and share data, according to the CSIRO.

Jointly funded by the CSIRO and the Department of Education, the project began in 2022, with construction taking just over two years and a further year to relocate the 13 million specimens, it said. UNI





Does Shubman Gill Fit Into India's T20I Plans?

■ Shashank Kishore

NEW DELHI: There's no question about Shubman Gill's place in the Indian team in two out of three international formats. He broke records as a batter while leading India to a 2-2 draw in England in his debut series as Test captain, and played important roles in India's run to the 2023 ODI World Cup final and their triumph in the 2025 Champions Trophy. Gill could even be the next ODI captain, whenever Rohit Sharma quits that format too.

But India's next assignment is the Asia Cup in September, to be played in the T20I format as preparation for the 2026 T20 World Cup in India and Sri Lanka, and the question arises: does Gill fit into India's plans for the shortest format?

His most recent T20 form is compelling - 650 runs at a strike rate of nearly 156 in IPL 2025. He's going to be a cornerstone of Indian cricket for the next decade. Both are reasons in his favour, but the selection question is more complex.

It has been a while since India picked a full-strength T20I squad; the last time they did so was for the 2024 T20 World Cup, which they won in the USA and West Indies. Gill was a travelling reserve for that tournament, outside the main 15. Since then, India's T20I selections have been influenced by scheduling and injuries.

Gill was captain of a second-string team for the T20I series in Zimbabwe immediately after the World Cup last year.

He was vice-captain of a near full-strength squad for the T20I series in Sri Lanka later in July that year. As Test cricket took precedence, however, Gill was not picked for India's home T20Is against Bangladesh in October, the T20Is in South Africa in November, and the home T20Is against England in January this year, which were scheduled soon after the Border-Gavaskar Trophy and shortly before the Champions Trophy. In his absence, Axar Patel was elevated to the T20I vice-captaincy.

The scheduling crunch is ever-present. For example, the Asia Cup final is on September 28, and India's home Test series against West Indies starts on October 2. This time, however, the selectors have to zero in on the best T20I combination for the Asia Cup with the larger goal of defending their World Cup title next year. They begin from a position of immense strength: since winning the World Cup, India have won 17 out of 20 bilateral T20Is.

In Gill's absence from the T20I side since August 2024, Abhishek Sharma and Sanju Samson have become the incumbent openers. Abhishek, the top-ranked batter in the format, scored 279 runs at a strike rate of nearly 220 in India's most recent T20I series, against England in January. While Samson had low scores in those five matches, he had hit three hundreds in five preceding T20Is.

The selectors could weigh up whether they want to continue with two ultra-explosive openers in Abhishek and Sam-

son, in keeping with India's brand of T20I cricket, or go for a more consistent yet aggressive option.

Like Yashasvi Jaiswal? Jaiswal, like Gill, has not played a T20I since July 2024 due to India prioritising his Test performances in a packed calendar. However, in India's previous full-strength squad, Jaiswal was picked as the back-up opener ahead of Gill for the 2024 T20 World Cup. He ended up being a back-up only because India made the relatively late decision to open with Rohit and Virat Kohli, whose retirements since then have put Jaiswal back as one of the frontrunners to open. At the time, Gill was coming off a not-so-hot performance in IPL 2024, and there isn't a massive difference between his and Jaiswal's numbers in IPL 2025 either.

If the team management doesn't want to break Samson and Abhishek up at the top, it's hard to see how Gill - or Jaiswal - can feature in India's first-choice T20I XI. And if the selectors want to keep the Asia Cup squad size to 15 - they will have to do that for the World Cup - it's hard to see how they can pick all four of Abhishek, Samson, Gill and Jaiswal, given the need for back-ups for other types of players in the squad. Samson, though, has the advantage of doubling up as a wicketkeeper too.

It could boil down to a choice between Jaiswal or Gill in the squad - who the selectors feel will have the stronger impact during India's T20 title defence.

Espnrcricinfo



Yuvraj Gushes Praise On India Star After England Heroics

■ United News of India

NEW DELHI: The former India all-rounder lauded India's star batter following his maiden assignment in the five-match series in England.

Yuvraj Singh couldn't be prouder of his protegee and Indian skipper Shubman Gill after he led them to draw a memorable Test series against England.

Yuvraj highlighted how the ICC Men's Player of the Month for July 2025 brushed aside the doubts regarding his overseas batting record, leading the team from the front.

"There were a lot of question marks over his overseas record. The guy became the captain and scored four Test hundreds. It's just unbelievable that when you're given responsibility, how you take it," Yuvraj said, speaking to ICC Digital on the sidelines of the '50 Days To Go' Women's Cricket World Cup event.

"So, very proud of them. I certainly feel it's a win for us, although it's a drawn series, because it's a young team. And it's not easy to go and play well in England and prove yourself."

Gill was named India's Player of the Series, having amassed a staggering 754 runs, averaging 75.40 from the five Tests, which included four centuries.

Yuvraj also showered praise on all-rounders Ravindra Jadeja and Washington Sundar for a gutsy, marathon stand to draw the fourth Test in Manchester.

"The moment in the tournament was when India drew the Test series. I've never seen, in a very long time, Washington and Jadeja got hundreds



and drew a Test match," he added.

"That speaks volumes. Obviously Jadeja has been there for a long time. But I think Washington Sundar, as a youngster coming into the team, I think it was incredible to do what he did."

Yuvraj conceded that what made India's resilient display through the five-Test series all the more remarkable was the fact that they did so in the absence of seasoned veterans in Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli.

"I think it's just fantastic because I felt when you have a young team going to England, it's a lot of pressure.

"You're filling the boots of somebody like Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma, it's not easy. I think the guys took it head-on."

The drawn series saw Gill and Co share the maiden Anderson-Tendulkar Trophy.

Yastika, Radha, Tanuja Fifties Seal One-Day Series for India A vs Australia A

■ United News of India

BRISBANE: Fine half-centuries from Yastika Bhatia, Radha Yadav and Tanuja Kanwar propelled India A to a thrilling series-clinching two-wicket victory over Australia A after Alyssa Healy's brilliant knock had set the bar high for the visitors in the second women's one-dayer on Friday.

Following the win, achieved with just one ball to spare, India has taken a 2-0 lead in the three-match series of the multi-format tour. India A had lost the three-match T20 series 0-3.

Chasing a healthy 265 for nine, built largely on Australian skipper Healy's 87-ball 91, India was in dol-drum at 193 for seven after losing Yastika (66 off 71 balls) and Radha (60 off 78 balls).

But spin-bowling all-rounder Tanuja rose to the occasion by batting responsibly for her 50 (57 balls) to fashion a fight back as India A won on the penultimate ball of the match.

Left-arm spinner Tanuja forged a 68-run stand for the eighth wicket with Prema Rawat (32 not out), who has been brilliant with the ball in the series, as the duo took it upon

themselves to thwart the home team's challenge.

The pair subdued their attacking instinct and focused on the huge task on hand. They relied on quick running between the wickets.

Tanuja was unlucky to be dismissed with the target in sight. But Prema and pacer Titas Sadhu weathered the Australia A challenge in the final over to score the five precious runs for victory.

It was wicketkeeper-batter Yastika who displayed the intent to fight early on after she saw her opening partner Shafali Verma (4) and Dhara Gujar (0) head back to

the dressing room in quick succession.

Yastika played with determination as she crafted her innings with the help of nine boundaries. India A's position wasn't looking good at 83 for four but Yastika continued to plod, finally departing in the 29th over and the team in a much better situation at 151 for five.

Skipper Radha, who shared a 68-run stand for the fifth wicket with Yastika, continued the good work before she too departed in the 39th over, leaving India at 193 for seven with quite a bit of distance to be covered.

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