

Good Morning

Kashmir

17th Year Of Publication

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PoJK Situation Sad, Regretful: CM In I-Day Speech



REHAN QAYOOM

SRINAGAR: Describing the situation in Pakistan occupied Jammu and Kashmir (PoJK) as “sad” and “regretful,” Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Saturday said that the circumstances prevailing across the Line of Control (LoC) have reinforced his belief that the decision taken by J&K leaders 80 years ago was the right one.

Addressing the main Independence Day function at Bakshi Stadium here, CM Omar as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), paid rich tributes to his late grandfather and National Conference (NC) founder Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. He

described him as the tallest leader of Jammu & Kashmir and the “Baba-e-Qaum.” Referring to the situation across the Line of Control, he said, “Looking at the circumstances there today reinforces my belief that the decision taken by the leaders of Jammu & Kashmir 80 years ago was the right one.”

CM Omar said that contribution of the people of J&K to defend the region in 1947 cannot be forgotten. He recalled the sacrifice of brave people who raised the call of “Hamlavar Khabardar; Hum Kashmiri Hain, Tayy-aar” and those who made the supreme sacrifice in resisting the tribal invasion.

The Chief Minister particularly remembered Master Abdul Aziz, a

Five Killed As Vehicle Plunges Into Chenab In Kishtwar

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JAMMU: At least five people were killed after a Mahindra Scorpio vehicle skidded off the road and rolled into the Chenab River in the Dachhan area of Kishtwar district on Saturday, officials said.

An official said that the accident occurred in the morning when the vehicle, bearing registration number HR29AG-0648, was travelling from Yainwan, Dangdaroo, towards Sounder and skidded off the road before plunging into the

Hailstorm, Rain Wreak Havoc On Apple Orchards In South Kashmir



JAHANGEER GANAIE

SHOPIAN: A devastating spell of hailstorm, heavy rainfall and gusty winds has caused extensive damage to apple orchards and other standing crops across several areas of Shopian and Kulgam districts, leaving growers facing what they describe as one of the worst agricultural losses in recent years.

According to details obtained, the affected areas

in Shopian include Feeripora, Mandujan, Pudsoo, Batagund, Kaprin, Rakhpora and adjoining villages, while in Kulgam damage was reported in Nihama, Samnoo, Rambhama, Chogalpora, Bathipora, Adijan, Gopalpora and Ladgoo areas of Kulgam.

In several of the worst-hit villages, growers claimed that 100 per cent of the standing apple crop has been damaged.

Truest Tribute To Martyrs Is To Work With Integrity, Safeguard Freedom: LG

Hoists National Flag At Lok Bhavan On Occasion Of 80Th Independence Day

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SRINAGAR: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Saturday hoisted the national flag at Lok Bhavan here to mark India's 80th Independence Day. Paying homage to the countless freedom fighters who sacrificed their lives for the nation, the Lieutenant Governor emphasized the difficult journey, struggle and sacrifice for independence. He also paid tribute to the civilians who tragically lost their lives in unfortunate natural calamities this year.

“On this historic day, I join all citizens in paying heartfelt tributes to our founding fathers and the valiant sons and daughters of Mother India who sacrificed their lives for country's freedom. Let us strive to realize their cherished dreams of building a peaceful, prosperous Jammu Kashmir and a great nation. The truest tribute we can pay to our martyrs and freedom fighters is to resolve to work with integrity and safeguard our hard-earned freedom,” the Lieutenant Governor said.



While acknowledging the challenges ahead, he expressed strong confidence in India's potential to emerge as a global leader. The Lieutenant Governor emphasized that citizens must unite to foster an inclusive society that prioritizes the public interest and extends compassion to the underprivileged.

“Let us strive for balanced growth and the economic empowerment of women to

- Lieutenant Governor emphasized difficult journey, struggle and sacrifice for independence

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Let us strive to realize their cherished dreams of building a peaceful, prosperous Jammu Kashmir

Let us strive for economic empowerment of women to build more humane, compassionate society

We must prioritize empowering women and youth, generating jobs and ensuring environmental sustainability

build a more humane and compassionate society. We must prioritize empowering women and youth, generating jobs and ensuring environmental sustainability. Our ongoing initiatives, such as

80Th I-Day Celebrated With Patriotic Fervour Across Kashmir

Functions Held At District, Sub-Division And Tehsil Headquarters

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SRINAGAR: Independence Day 2026 was celebrated with immense patriotic fervour across the districts of Kashmir, where Deputy Commissioners hoisted the National Flag, inspected the parade and took the salute at an impressive parade.

The Tricolour hoisting ceremonies were held amid impressive Parades and colourful cultural programmes at all venues of functions organized at district, sub-division and tehsil levels across Kashmir.

At Shopian: The 80th Independence Day was celebrated with great patriotic fervour and enthusiasm at District Police Lines (DPL) Shopian, where Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shopian, Shishir Gupta, hoisted



the National Flag and took the salute at an impressive parade.

The DC also inspected the parade and witnessed the March Past presented by contingents of CRPF, J&K Police, J&K Women Police, Forest Protection Force, Home Guards, NCC, GDC and school students.

At Kulgam: 80th Independence Day was observed with great enthusiasm at District

Under PM Modi's Leadership J&K Charted Journey From Fear To Freedom: Amit Shah

Says Where Hoisting Tiranga Once Invited Threats, Now Hosts Tiranga Yatras

SAJID RAINA

SRINAGAR: Terming the Independence Day celebrations in Jammu and Kashmir as a symbol of the transformative changes witnessed by the region in recent years, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, J&K has “charted a journey from fear to freedom.”

In a post on X, Shah, wrote: “Jammu and Kashmir has charted a journey from fear to freedom under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.”

Referring to areas once affected by violence, HM Shah said, “Where hoisting the Tiranga once invited threats,



J-K now hosts Tiranga Yatras, with millions waving our National Flag with joy and pride.”

“Celebrations in Jammu and Kashmir are symbol of the changes witnessed in the Union Territory in recent years. National flag is being

waved across J&K with joy and pride. People are participating in Independence Day celebrations without any fear and threats,” HM Shah said.

The remarks came on the 80th Independence Day, with celebrations being held across Jammu and Kashmir

amid heightened security arrangements.

Meanwhile, J&K is witnessing massive public participation in the Har Ghar Tiranga Campaign 2026, being held from August 9 to 17 to mark the 80th Independence Day.

The campaign also holds special significance this year as the country commemorates the 150th anniversary of India's National Song, “Vande Mataram”.

The administration has distributed more than 14 lakh National Flags across all 20 districts as part of efforts to ensure widespread participation and retain the Union Territory's top national ranking in public engagement under the campaign.

Pertinently, on

Statutory Post Of Dy Speaker Vacant For Nearly 2 Years

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SRINAGAR: On September 21, the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly will convene for its sixth session, but the key statutory post of Deputy Speaker remains vacant, with the ruling National Conference showing no inclination to fill the position.

Legally, the Deputy Speaker is the Assembly's second-in-command, stepping in whenever the Speaker is absent or the post is vacant. As per the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019, the Assembly is required to elect both a Speaker and a Deputy Speaker “as soon as may be.” Section 19 of the Act states: “The Legislative Assembly shall, as soon as may be, choose two members of the Assembly to be respectively Speaker and Deputy Speaker thereof and, so often as the office of Speaker or Deputy Speaker becomes vacant, the Assembly

Independence Day Tricolour-Wrapped Ghanta Ghar Turns Into Meeting Point For Tourists, Locals



REHAN QAYOOM

SRINAGAR: For many visitors, a trip to Kashmir begins with its mountains, lakes and Mughal gardens. But for tourists who made their way to Srinagar's historic Lal Chowk on Independence Day, the memory of the Valley came with a different

backdrop: the iconic Ghanta Ghar wrapped in Tricolour.

The Clock Tower became an unlikely meeting point for tourists and locals as Independence Day celebrations brought people together around one of the city's best-known landmarks.

Visitors stopped to take photographs, wave

MeT Predicts 4-Day Wet Spell From Today



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SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir is likely to witness spells of light to moderate rain and thunder-showers at many places between August 16 and 19, with the Meteorological Centre Srinagar warning of heavy and brief intense showers in some districts that may trigger flash floods, landslides and mudslides.

The weather office, said from August 16 to 19, several spells of light to moderate rain and thunder-showers are expected at many places, while heavy rain or brief intense heavy showers may occur in a few districts, particularly during the early morning and afternoon hours.

The Meteorological Centre said there is a possibility of heavy rain or brief intense heavy showers in a few districts of the Jammu division during this period, while one or two districts in the Kashmir division may also experience brief intense showers.

It cautioned that torrential rain and brief intense heavy showers could lead to flash floods, landslides, mudslides and waterlogging in low-lying areas.

Between August

CM Omar hosts ‘At Home’ on Independence Day at SKICC



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SRINAGAR: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah Saturday hosted an ‘At Home’ reception on the occasion of Independence Day at Sher-e-Kashmir International Convention Centre (SKICC) here this evening.

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, former Chief Minister Dr Farooq Abdullah, Speaker Legislative Assembly Abdul Rahim Rather, Cabinet Ministers, Members of Parliament, several Legislators, Judges of the High Court, Chief Secretary, Director General of Police, Administra-

tive Secretaries, senior civil and police officers, representatives of civil society and other prominent citizens attended the reception. The Chief Minister interacted with the guests on the occasion and exchanged Independence Day greetings and best wishes with them.

B'la celebrates 80th Independence Day with patriotic fervour

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

The Parade consisted 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 Ahmad Dar underscored the remarkable progress achieved by Jammu



and Kashmir, with District Baramulla making notable strides across diverse sectors including agriculture, healthcare, education, women and youth empowerment, rural development, road connectivity, social welfare and self-employment. He highlighted the administration's sustained commitment to ensure inclusive, balanced and holistic development across the district.

Furthermore, the Minister reiterated that the government remains firmly committed to ensure transparent, accountable and people-centric governance,

with a focused approach towards strengthening the economic foundation of Jammu and Kashmir.

Javid Dar emphasized that development must be inclusive and equitable, ensuring that its benefits reach every household and lay a strong foundation for sustained growth, prosperity and improved quality of life for the people.

On the occasion, various departments, including Education, Agriculture, District Youth Services and Sports and Municipal Council Baramulla, presented colourful tableaux showcasing their respec-

tive schemes, programmes and initiatives. They highlighted the key services and developmental interventions being undertaken by them.

Meanwhile, students from various schools, including St. Joseph's School, Honey Pots School and Police Public School Baramulla, presented vibrant cultural performances highlighting the social issues and celebrating the spirit of Independence Day.

Member Legislative Assembly (MLA) from Baramulla, Javid Hassan Beigh; MLA Sopore, Irshad

Ahmad Kar; MLA Pattan, Reyaz Bedar; MLA Uri, Dr. Sajad Ahmad; MLA Tangmarg, Farooq Ahmad Shah; MLA Wagoora Kreeeri, Irfan Hafiz Lone; DIG North Kashmir, Vinod Kumar; Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, S.F. Hamid; Chairman District Legal Services Authority/Principal District and Sessions Judge, Jawad Ahmad; Senior Superintendent of Police Baramulla, Gurinderpal Singh; Additional District Development Commissioner Baramulla, Pranjal J. Hazarika; Additional Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, Syed Altaf Hussain Mausvi; officers of Army and Police, district and sectoral officers, heads of different departments besides a huge gathering of people participated in the Independence Day celebrations.

Furthermore, similar Independence Day celebrations were organised with equal fervour and patriotic spirit at Sopore Sub-district, Sub-division Pattan, Uri Sub-division and tehsils of district creating an atmosphere filled with unity, pride and national spirit.

DIPR celebrates 80th Independence Day at Srinagar

Dir Information Shreya Singhal hoists National Flag

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SRINAGAR: The Directorate of Information and Public Relations (DIPR) Saturday celebrated the 80th Independence Day with patriotic fervour and enthusiasm at the DIPR Media Complex here.

The celebrations were led by Director Information, Shreya Singhal, who hoisted the National Flag.

On the occasion, the Director Information extended warm greetings to all officers and officials on the 80th Independence Day. She highlighted the significance of the day, recalling the sacrifices of the freedom fighters and the values of unity, democracy, integrity and national service that continue to guide the nation.

Joint Director Information (Hqrs), Dr. Zahoor Ahmad Raina; Deputy Director Information (PR/AV), Javid Ahmad Rather; other officers and officials of the DIPR were also present on the occasion.



Directorate of FCS&CA celebrates 80th I-Day

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SRINAGAR: Directorate of Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs (FCS&CA), Kashmir celebrated the 80th Independence Day with patriotic fervour and enthusiasm here Saturday.

The national flag was hoisted by Director, Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Kashmir, Nazim Zai Khan. Joint Director, Shaheena Khan; Financial Advisor/Chief Accounts Officer, Peerzada Ahtishamul Haq; Deputy Director, Mohammad Rafeeq Bhat; officers and officials of the department were also present.

On the occasion, the Director extended his warm greetings and heartfelt congratulations to the nation and all employees of the Department on the auspicious occasion of Independence Day.



He appreciated the participation of all employees in the celebrations and urged them to continue working with commitment and a spirit of public service towards strength-

ening the delivery mechanism and ensuring that the benefits of Government schemes reach the deserving population in a transparent and efficient manner.

AECO of DIPR Conferred Prestigious Award of Excellence

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SRINAGAR: Assistant Exhibition & Cultural Officer (AECO) of the Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR), Syed Shakeel Andrabi, popularly known as Syed Shakeel Shan, was conferred with a prestigious Award of Excellence by the Chief Minister of Jammu & Kashmir, Omar Abdullah, on the occasion of the 80th Independence Day at the grand Independence Day function held at Bakhshi Stadium, Srinagar, in recognition of his outstanding work, professional excellence and multidimensional contribution to broadcasting, literature, culture and public communication.

The prestigious recognition acknowledges Shan's sustained dedication, creative excellence and significant contribution across diverse fields. Over the years, he has established a distinctive identity through his versatility as a broadcaster, anchor, writer, poet, music composer and cultural activist, earning appreciation from administrative, literary, cultural and media circles.

Through his professional work with the Department of Information and Public Relations, Shan has played an important role in taking government initiatives, public-awareness campaigns and cultural programmes closer to the



people. His distinctive voice, effective communication skills, creative expression and dynamic stage presence have made him a familiar and respected face in Jammu & Kashmir's public and cultural landscape.

Besides his official responsibilities, Shan has remained actively associated with broadcasting, literature, music and cultural activities. His multidimensional abilities have enabled him to contribute to a wide range of programmes and public initiatives, where he has consistently used communication and the performing arts as effective mediums of public engagement.

Overwhelmed by the honour, Shan expressed his gratitude to the Chief Minister and the entire administration for recognising his work and contribution. He particularly thanked Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Shri Anshul Garg, for his constant encouragement,

support and appreciation, which, he said, have been a great source of motivation throughout his professional journey.

Shan also expressed gratitude to his colleagues, mentors, friends and all those who have encouraged and supported him over the years. He said the recognition would further inspire him to continue working with greater dedication and contribute meaningfully to the fields of communication, culture and public outreach.

The conferment of the Award of Excellence has been widely welcomed by members of the literary, cultural and media fraternity, including journalists, broadcasters, artists, officers and employees, who congratulated Shan on the prestigious recognition. They described the honour as a fitting acknowledgement of his long-standing commitment, professional excellence and creative contribution.

DC G'bal hoists National Flag at Mini Secretariat on I-Day

GMK NEWS NETWORK

GANDERBAL: As part of the 80th Independence Day celebrations, Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal, Jatin Kishore hoisted the National Flag at Mini Secretariat, Ganderbal Saturday.

The National Flag was hoisted in the presence of district officers and employees. A ceremonial Guard of Honour was presented on the occasion, marking the celebration of Independence Day with patriotic fervour and great zeal and enthusiasm.

The flag hoisting ceremony at the Mini Secretariat was attended by officers and employees from various departments, who joined the celebrations and reaffirmed their commitment towards discharging their responsibilities with dedication and contributing to the development and welfare of the district.

The Deputy Commissioner conveyed his greetings to the officers and employees on the occasion and called upon them to continue working with commitment, sincerity and a spirit of public service.

Dir Horticulture visits hailstorm-affected areas of Shopian

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SHOPIAN: Director Horticulture Kashmir, Vikas Anand along with Member Legislative Assembly Zainapora Showkat Ahmad Ganaie and Chief Horticulture Officer (CHO) Shopian, Saturday visited the hailstorm-affected areas of the district including Kapran, Pudsoo, Kanjiullar, Peeripora, Mandujan, Pandushan, HP Batagund and other villages to assess damage to local orchards.

During the visit, the Director interacted with affected orchardists and assured them that the department will take every possible measure to safeguard their interests. He instructed technical officers and subject matter specialists to immediately reach out to the farming community and provide effective guidance on crop management.

Furthermore, field functionaries were directed to expedite the assessment of crop losses so that a comprehensive report can be submitted to higher authorities at the earliest.

The Chief Horticulture Officer, Shopian, urged farmers to contact his office for technical support and guidance to minimize damage. Field officials have also been instructed to actively assist orchardists in managing their fields to protect crop yield and ensure better financial returns.

BOPEE celebrates Independence day at Jammu, Srinagar

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Board of Professional Entrance Examinations (BOPEE) celebrated the 80th Independence day with patriotic zeal and fervour.

The flag hoisting ceremony was simultaneously held at the JKBOPEE office Bagat-e-Barzulla Srinagar and JKBOPEE office Bahu Plaza, Jammu.

At the Srinagar office, Chairperson, J&K BOPEE, Professor Minu Mahajan unfurled the tricolour in presence of the officers and officials of JKBOPEE.

While speaking on the occasion, she paid homage to all those valiant heroes who laid down their lives for independence of the Nation. She along with all the officers and officials pledged to make all efforts for the prosperity and progress of our great nation.

The function was also attended by the Member, JKBOPEE Dr. Bashir Ahmad Lone.

At the Jammu office Member, J&K BOPEE, Professor Surinder Kumar Sharma, hoisted the flag in presence of the Secretary, JKBOPEE, Dr. Shabir Hussain Keen and other officers and officials of JKBOPEE.

Speaking on the occasion, Professor Sharma paid homage to the heroes of independence who laid down their lives to give us this independent nation on 15th of August, 1947.

80th Independence Day Celebrated at CAT Srinagar

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: The 80th Independence Day of the Nation was celebrated with patriotic fervour and enthusiasm at the Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT), Srinagar Bench, Saturday.

The main function commenced with the unfurling of the National Flag by the Head of Department and Member (Judicial), Central Administrative Tribunal, Srinagar Bench, M.S. Latief.

The hoisting of the Tricolour was followed by the rendition of the National Anthem, filling the atmosphere with a deep sense of patriotism and national

pride.

On the occasion, the Member (Judicial) also took the salute of the ceremonial march-past presented by the contingents of the Police and Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF). The disciplined march-past and ceremonial proceedings reflected the commitment, dedication and spirit of service of the personnel towards the Nation.

Addressing the gathering, M.S. Latief conveyed his warm greetings and best wishes to all on the auspicious occasion of the 80th Independence Day. He emphasized that Independence Day is not merely a celebration but also an

occasion to remember the immense sacrifices made by the freedom fighters and martyrs who laid down their lives for the freedom, unity and dignity of the country.

The Member paid rich tributes to the brave freedom fighters and martyrs of the Nation, whose supreme sacrifices enabled the present generation to live in a free and sovereign country. He recalled that countless men and women made unparalleled sacrifices during the freedom struggle and endured immense hardships so that future generations could live with liberty, dignity and democratic rights.

SRINAGAR: Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg Saturday hoisted the National Flag at the office premises at Amar Niwas Complex, Srinagar, as part of a ceremonial function to mark Independence Day.

On the occasion, the Divisional Commissioner received the salute from a contingent of the CRPF.

Addressing the gathering, Div Com Kashmir underscored the significance of Independence Day, saying that the occasion reminds us of the immense sacrifices made by the freedom fighters for the nation. He also noted that the country is commemorating the 150th year of the National Song making this I-Day more



significant.

He said the day serves as a reminder of the ideals, values and principles enshrined in the Consti-

tution. Emphasizing the importance of ethical and effective public administration, he called upon officers and officials to uphold integrity, enhance efficiency, make greater use of technology and demonstrate empathy towards the public in order to strengthen people's trust in government institutions.

He urged employees to adopt a citizen-centric approach in the discharge of their duties and ensure timely, efficient and responsive delivery of public services.

The function was attended by Deputy Commissioner Srinagar Akshay Labroo, Additional Commissioner Kashmir, ACC, officers and officials of the Divisional and District Administrations, besides security officers.

CM Omar pays floral tributes at Balidan Stambh on 80th I-Day



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SRINAGAR: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah Saturday paid floral tributes at the Balidan Stambh in Srinagar to honour the supreme sacrifices of the martyrs as the nation

celebrated its 80th Independence Day. The Chief Minister laid a wreath at the memorial and observed a moment of silence as a mark of respect for those who laid down their lives in the service of the

nation. Director General of Police, J&K, Nalin Prabhakar; ADGP Headquarters; Divisional Commissioner Kashmir; senior officers; security personnel and others were present on the occasion.

Sakeena Itoo hoists Tricolour at Anantnag, pays homage to martyrs

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ANANTNAG: The 80th Independence Day was celebrated across Anantnag district with great patriotic fervour, enthusiasm and national spirit.

The main function of the day was organised at Shaheed Himayun Muzamil Memorial Government Degree College, Khanabal, where a large gathering of people joined the celebrations to commemorate the historic occasion and honour the sacrifices of the freedom fighters who laid down their lives for the nation's independence.

Minister for Education, Higher Education, Health and Medical Education and Social Welfare Departments, Sakeena Itoo, was the chief guest at the main function. She hoisted the National Flag and took the salute from the impressive ceremonial parade presented by contingents of the Jammu and Kashmir Police and paramilitary forces. The parade also featured contingents of NCC cadets and school children, who marched with discipline and enthusiasm, adding to the patriotic spirit



of the occasion.

Addressing the gathering, Sakeena Itoo extended warm greetings to the people of Anantnag and the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir on the 80th Independence Day. She paid rich tributes to the freedom fighters, martyrs and national heroes whose courage, sacrifice and determination made the country's independence possible. She emphasised the importance of preserving the values of freedom, democracy and unity of the nation.

The Minister highlighted the achievements of the government in various sectors

and outlined the initiatives being undertaken for overall development, welfare and empowerment of the people. She said that sustained efforts are being made to strengthen the infrastructure, improve delivery of public services and ensure that the benefits of development reach every section of society.

Speaking about the healthcare sector, the Minister underscored the government's commitment to strengthen healthcare infrastructure, improve medical facilities and ensure better and more accessible healthcare services for the people especially women, children

and poorer sections of the society. She also highlighted the importance being accorded to education and other key sectors for building a stronger, prosperous and self-reliant society.

The Minister affirmed that development of infrastructure, promotion of education, strengthening of healthcare services, creation of employment opportunities and improvement in civic amenities remain among the key priorities of the government. She called upon all stakeholders, particularly the students and youth, to contribute actively towards the progress and development of the district and the nation at large.

Stressing the importance of Self Employment Schemes, the Minister said that the youth should come forward and avail the benefits of various flagship schemes so they become prosperous entrepreneurs and job providers.

The Independence Day function was attended by MLA Anantnag West, Abdul Majeed Bhat, MLA Pahalgam, Altaf Ahmad Wani, MLA Srigufwara-Bijbehara, Bashir Ahmed

Shah Veeri, MLA Kokernag, Zafar Ali Khatana, MLA Shangus-Anantnag East, Reyaz Ahmad Khan, MLA Devsar, Peerzada Feroze Ahmad, DIG SKR, Javid Iqbal Matoi, DC Anantnag, Dr. Bilal Mohiuddin Bhat, SSP Anantnag, Amod Ashok Nagpure, ADCs, SEs, College Principals, senior officers from civil administration, police, paramilitary and other security forces, former public representatives, officials from various government departments, teachers, students, NCC cadets, civil society members, social activists, and a large number of local residents.

On the occasion, colorful cultural bonanza on patriotic themes, local folk and national unity was presented by the students from various educational institutions.

The ceremony concluded with prize distribution for march past and cultural achievements and felicitation of employees from various departments, artists, social activists, sports personalities and ground level workers for exemplary public service and commendable work in respective fields.

J&K Resident Commission celebrates 80th I-Day

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NEW DELHI: The Jammu and Kashmir Resident Commission, New Delhi, Saturday celebrated the 80th Independence Day with high patriotic fervour and enthusiasm at its premises at 5, Prithviraj Road, New Delhi.

The celebrations commenced with the hoisting of the National Flag by Additional Resident Commissioner, Anil Sharma in presence of officers and officials of the Resident Commission and its subordinate offices.

The Additional Resident Commissioner paid rich tributes to the freedom fighters and national heroes whose courage, sacrifice and unwavering commitment laid the foundation of an independent India. He called upon the officers and staff to uphold the highest standards of integrity, dedication and professionalism in discharge of their responsibilities and remain steadfast in their commitment to public service and nation-building.

Highlighting the devel-

opmental initiatives undertaken by the Resident Commission, Anil Sharma said that the upgradation and improvement of the J&K House at Chanakyapuri, New Delhi, was undertaken during the last year, while



similar work was also carried out at the J&K House, Amritsar. He informed that work on the J&K House at Dwarka, New Delhi, is also expected to commence shortly, further strengthening and improving the facilities available for the visitors and officials of the Union Territory.

The Additional Resident Commissioner also complimented the officers and staff of the Resident Commission and its subordinate offices for their untiring efforts, dedication and commitment, acknowledging their contribution towards the smooth functioning of the offices and delivery of services.

The occasion was further enriched by a vibrant cultural programme presented by the staff and children, featuring patriotic songs and performances that reflected the spirit of national unity, pride and cultural diversity.

As part of the celebrations, mementoes and certificates of appreciation were presented to the staff members of the Resident Commission and personnel of the Jammu & Kashmir Armed Police (JKAP) in recognition of their dedicated services. Likewise, the certificates of appreciation were also presented to the children who participated in the cultural programme, acknowledging their enthusiastic contribution to the celebrations.

Advisor Wani hoists Tricolour, offers tributes to freedom fighters at DPL Kupwara

GMK NEWS NETWORK

KUPWARA: The 80th Independence Day was celebrated with patriotic fervour and gaiety at District Police Lines (DPL) Kupwara, where Advisor to the Chief Minister, Nasir Aslam Wani, hoists the National Flag and offered high tributes to freedom fighters and national heroes of India.

The programme commenced with singing of the national song, followed by hoisting of the National Flag and playing of the National Anthem. This was followed by an impressive march past by contingents of JKP, CRPF and other paramilitary and security forces, along with students of various educational institutions, which was inspected by the Chief Guest.

Alongside the parade, various departments of the district administration presented colourful tableaux, vividly depicting their key achievements, ongoing projects and the developmental works undertaken across the district. The tableaux drew widespread appreciation from the audience for effectively showcasing the strides made by different departments in their respective sectors.

Addressing the gath-



ering on the occasion, the Advisor extended his heartfelt congratulations to the people on the eve of the 80th Independence Day. He remarked that despite the challenges faced over the years, the people of the area have held the hand of democracy tight and reposed unwavering faith in the democratic process.

Highlighting the achievements and initiatives of the present government, the Advisor said that flagship schemes like Mission Youth are driving the development and empowerment of the youth of the district. He informed that an amount of Rs 103 crore has been earmarked under the District Capex Budget, under which around 1600 developmental projects have been taken up across various sectors.

He stated that macadamisation of 187 km of roads is being carried out in the district, while 11 roads have been taken up for execution under NABARD. A bridge at Regipora is also being constructed to improve connectivity in the area. He said that the Sadhna Tunnel project, once completed, will give a major boost to the region's economy and prosperity, adding that the DPR for the project is under process.

The Advisor also spoke about the proposed Multi Sports Academy at Galizoo, Kupwara, to be set up at a cost of Rs 16 crore, for which the DPR is under progress. He said a Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) for Kupwara town, costing Rs 13 crore, is also being taken up to improve civic infrastructure.

Rana hears public grievances in Jhulas; assesses issues post flash floods

GMK NEWS NETWORK

POONCH: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, Saturday interacted with the residents of Qazi Mohra and Jhulas and took stock of the issues and concerns being faced by them, particularly in the aftermath of recent flash floods and landslides. During his interaction at

Thereafter, the Minister held a public interaction at Jhulas, where the people projected various development-related issues and demands. The residents raised concerns regarding shortage of drinking water, damage to irrigation infrastructure and restoration of water supply schemes affected by the recent floods.

The people also apprised the Minister of the issues



Qazi Mohra, the residents highlighted the extensive damage caused to public infrastructure due to the recent floods and demanded immediate restoration of the affected areas. They apprised the Minister of the difficulties being faced by the people due to damage to roads, water supply infrastructure and other essential services.

The Minister gave a patient hearing to the residents and assured them that the government is committed to ensure timely restoration of damaged infrastructure and extend necessary support to the affected population.

pertaining to implementation of the Forest Rights Act (FRA), seeking effective settlement and protection of the legitimate rights of forest-dwelling communities.

Javed Rana assured the people that all the issues raised during the interaction would be examined on priority and taken up with the concerned departments for appropriate and time-bound action. He reiterated that resolution of public grievances and restoration of essential infrastructure damaged by the recent floods remain among the government's foremost priorities.

High Court of J&K, Ladakh celebrates 80th I-Day

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: The High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh celebrated the 80th Independence Day with patriotic fervour, enthusiasm and a spirit of unity at the High Court Complex, Srinagar.

The celebrations commenced with the hoisting of the National Flag by Acting Chief Justice, High Court of J&K and Ladakh, Sanjeev Kumar in presence of Judges of the High Court, former Judges, Senior Advocates, Judicial Officers, Government Advocates, officers of the Civil and Police Administration, officers and officials of the Registry, members of the Bar and other dignitaries.

A distinctive feature of this year's celebrations was the participation of lawyers representing all districts of the Kashmir Valley in the Independence Day function at the High Court. The initiative brought representatives of the legal fraternity from across the Valley together at the Srinagar Wing on the national occasion, lending the celebrations a wider and more inclusive character.

As part of the programme, the Advocates representing their respective districts addressed the gathering, sharing their perspectives and highlighting



concerns relating to the legal fraternity and the functioning of the justice delivery system in their districts. The interaction provided an institutional platform for representatives of the district Bars to articulate issues of relevance and facilitated direct and constructive engagement between the Bench and the Bar.

The Acting Chief Justice addressed the gathering and responded to the concerns and suggestions raised by the representatives of the district Bars. He assured the members of the legal fraternity that every possible effort would be made to appropriately address their genuine concerns and require-

ments. He emphasised the importance of sustained cooperation between the Bench and the Bar in strengthening the administration of justice.

In his address, the Acting Chief Justice highlighted the significant strides made in strengthening the judicial infrastructure and modernising the justice delivery system across the Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh.

Referring to the past eighteen months as a period of purposeful transformation, he outlined several initiatives undertaken under the e-Courts Project. This included Paperless Courts project in 20 Principal District and Sessions Courts, expansion of

e-filing and digitisation of judicial records, establishment of e-Sewa Kendras and deployment of advanced audio-visual and video-conferencing facilities.

He also emphasised that infrastructure development continues to remain a key priority of the High Court, with substantial investments being made towards new court complexes, judicial residences and facilities for litigants. Particular reference was made to the new High Court Complex at Bemina, Srinagar, which is envisaged as a state-of-the-art judicial campus equipped to meet the evolving requirements of the justice delivery system.

The Acting Chief Justice also highlighted the achievements and initiatives of the J&K Legal Services Authority and the J&K Judicial Academy, underscoring their important role in strengthening the justice delivery framework. He acknowledged the contribution of the Legal Services Authority in advancing access to justice and taking legal services to the grassroots through an extensive network of panel lawyers, Para Legal Volunteers and Legal Aid Clinics.

Referring to the assistance extended to thousands of beneficiaries, including prisoners, victims of crime, tribal com-

munities and defence personnel, the Acting Chief Justice reiterated the judiciary's commitment to ensure that justice remains accessible, affordable and effective for every citizen. The efforts undertaken through legal aid, legal awareness and outreach programmes, alternative dispute resolution mechanisms and other initiatives were highlighted as integral to make the justice delivery system more inclusive and responsive.

Addressing the role of the media in the digital age, the Acting Chief Justice urged the print, electronic and social media to exercise restraint, responsibility and institutional sensitivity while reporting the judicial proceedings and judgments. He cautioned against sensationalisation, selective presentation of judicial outcomes and attempts at personal glorification. He emphasised that the authority of a judgment flows from the Court and the law and that judicial proceedings and outcomes ought not to be converted into instruments of publicity or celebrity creation.

The address underscored that progress in the justice delivery system is a collective endeavour involving the Bench, Bar, Judicial Officers, Registry, Legal Services Institutions and other stakeholders.

I-Day celebrated with patriotic fervour at SANJY Base Camp



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ANANTNAG: The Nation's 80th Independence Day was celebrated with great enthusiasm and patriotic fervour at the Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra (SANJY) Base Camp, Chandanwari, Pahalgam, Saturday.

The National Flag was hoisted by the Chief Guest, Santosh Sharma, Additional Camp Director, Chandanwari, in the presence of officers and personnel of the ADHOC VI Unit, ITBP, along with representatives of the Army, Jammu & Kashmir Police, medical teams, SDRF, Shri Amarnath Ji Shrine Board and other departments engaged in the smooth conduct and management of the Yatra.

The ceremony witnessed the participation of senior officers and personnel, including Rajesh

Luthra, ADHOC Commander; Gyan Singh, DC (Ops); Kulwant; and Devender, Assistant Commandant. The impressive ceremonial parade was commanded by Sub-Inspector Sheetal, ITBP, who led the contingents with discipline and precision.

The 6 Dogra Regiment was represented by Major Jithin M., Lieutenant Parkhar Negi and Subedar Sumet Thakur. The 439 Field Hospital was represented by Captain Sree Hari and Captain Siddharth.

The Jammu & Kashmir Police contingent, led by Sub-Inspector Rashid, also participated in the ceremony along with the police team. Representatives and personnel from medical teams, SDRF, Shri Amarnath Ji Shrine Board, security forces and other departments actively participated in the celebrations.

EDIT

Good Morning Kashmir

EDITORIAL

When Schools Disappear, Access Must Not

The decline of government schools in Jammu and Kashmir is not merely a statistical trend. It is a warning about the changing character of public education in a region where geography, poverty and difficult terrain can make a neighbourhood school the only realistic gateway to learning for many children. Government data shows that the number of government schools in J&K declined from 23,874 in 2014-15 to 18,785 in 2023-24, a reduction of 5,089 institutions, or more than one-fifth of the network. While the government has described the process in terms of closure and merger, and the broader policy of rationalisation is intended to consolidate under-enrolled institutions and optimise resources, the numbers demand a much deeper examination. The question is not simply how many schools have disappeared from the records. The real question is: have children gained better access to quality education as a result? The latest NITI Aayog assessment makes that question even more pressing. Based on UDISE+ 2024-25 data, 146 government schools in J&K had zero students, while another 1,371 schools were functioning with only a single teacher. The zero-enrolment schools had 61 teachers posted among them, according to the report. A school without a single student is clearly a case for administrative scrutiny. Keeping such institutions on the books while continuing to allocate human and financial resources makes little sense if the ground reality has changed. Records must reflect reality, and decisions must be based on accurate, updated data. But the larger concern is the 1,371 single-teacher schools. A single teacher serving multiple grades, managing administrative duties and attempting to provide meaningful instruction across different subjects is being asked to perform an almost impossible task. The 32,303 students enrolled in these schools deserve more than a teacher physically present in a classroom. They deserve a learning environment in which individual attention, subject teaching and academic support are possible. Rationalisation, therefore, cannot become an accounting exercise. There is a legitimate case for merging schools where enrolment has collapsed and where students can be shifted safely and conveniently to better-equipped institutions. Consolidation can improve infrastructure, staffing and utilisation of public resources. But such restructuring must be accompanied by a careful assessment of distance, transport, terrain, weather, road connectivity and the socio-economic circumstances of children. What may look like a reasonable distance on a government map can be a formidable journey for a child in a remote mountainous village. Jammu and Kashmir cannot afford a one-size-fits-all approach to school rationalisation. A school in an urban locality and a school in a remote high-altitude or far-flung area cannot be judged by identical parameters. The learning-outcome dimension makes the matter still more serious. The objective of education policy cannot be reduced to maintaining buildings or reducing the number of institutions. The ultimate measure must be whether children are learning, whether teachers are adequately available, whether classrooms are functional and whether students are receiving the skills required to compete in a rapidly changing world. The government must therefore undertake a transparent, school-wise audit of the rationalisation exercise. Every merged or closed school should be mapped against the alternative institution to which its students have been shifted. Authorities should disclose how far children now travel, whether transport has been provided where necessary, whether enrolment has actually improved in receiving schools and whether teacher deployment has become more equitable. At the same time, single-teacher schools need urgent attention. Where enrolment justifies continuation, additional teachers must be provided. Where enrolment is genuinely too low, consolidation should be considered, but only after ensuring that children do not pay the price through longer journeys or reduced access. The presence of 146 zero-enrolment schools and 1,371 single-teacher schools exposes a contradiction that policymakers must address: we may have fewer schools, but that does not automatically mean we have a stronger school system. J&K needs fewer empty classrooms, certainly, but it needs more effective classrooms, adequately staffed schools and better learning outcomes. School rationalisation should ultimately be about putting resources where children are, not simply reducing the number of institutions on paper. In a region where education remains one of the strongest instruments of social mobility, every restructuring decision must pass one basic test: does it make quality education more accessible to the child? If the answer is yes, rationalisation is reform. If the answer is no, it is merely arithmetic.

Civil Services: The Road From Ambition To Nation-Building

MOHAMMAD HANIEF

In an era where career choices are expanding rapidly and the professional landscape is constantly evolving, young students are presented with opportunities that previous generations could scarcely imagine. Technology, entrepreneurship, medicine, engineering, research, media, and finance have all emerged as promising avenues for ambitious youth. Yet, amid these diverse possibilities, the Civil Services continue to occupy a unique place in the aspirations of millions of students across India. The Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Indian Police Service (IPS), Indian Foreign Service (IFS), and the Jammu and Kashmir Administrative Service (JKAS) remain

These services are not merely prestigious government positions; they represent a lifelong commitment to public welfare, ethical governance, and national development. They provide young professionals with an opportunity to participate directly in shaping policies, strengthening institutions, resolving public issues, and improving the quality of life for citizens.

symbols of leadership, responsibility, and national service, attracting young minds who aspire to build meaningful careers while contributing to society. These services are not merely prestigious government positions; they represent a lifelong commitment to public welfare, ethical governance, and national development. They provide young professionals with an opportunity to participate directly in shaping policies, strengthening institutions, resolving public issues, and improving the quality of life for citizens. At a time when India is witnessing unprecedented economic growth, technological advancement, and social transformation, the demand for capable, visionary, and compassionate civil servants has become more significant than ever before. Among the various services, the Indian Administrative Service continues to be regarded as the cornerstone of public administration. IAS officers occupy



leadership positions at the district, state, and national levels, where they oversee the implementation of government programmes, supervise developmental initiatives, coordinate administrative machinery, and ensure that public welfare schemes reach their intended beneficiaries. Their responsibilities span diverse sectors, including education, healthcare, agriculture, rural development, urban planning, infrastructure, environmental conservation, disaster management, and economic governance. Every decision taken by an administrator has the potential to influence the lives of thousands of people, making the profession both challenging and deeply rewarding. Equally vital to the nation's governance is the Indian Police Service. The role of an IPS officer extends far beyond maintaining law and order. Modern policing demands strategic leadership, technological competence, and an unwavering commitment to justice. IPS officers lead efforts to combat organised crime, terrorism, cybercrime, financial fraud, narcotics trafficking, and other emerging security challenges while simultaneously strengthening community policing and ensuring public confidence in law enforcement. As society becomes increasingly interconnected through digital technologies, the responsibilities of police leadership continue to expand, requiring officers who combine courage with sound judgment and administrative excellence. The Indian Foreign Service offers another distinguished avenue for students who aspire to represent India on the global stage. Diplomacy has become one of the defining instruments of national progress in the twenty-first century. IFS officers serve in embassies, consulates, and international organisations across the world, promoting India's diplomatic, economic, cultural, and strategic interests. Their responsibilities include strengthening bilateral relations, negotiating international agreements, facilitating trade and investment, protecting Indian citizens overseas, and enhancing India's role in global affairs. As India continues to emerge as a major global power, the significance of skilled diplomats has grown substantially, making the Foreign Service one of the country's most intellectually demanding and internationally respected careers. For the youth of Jammu and Kashmir, the Jammu and Kashmir Administrative Service represents an equally meaningful opportunity to contribute towards regional progress and effective governance. JKAS officers serve as key administrators responsible for implementing government policies, supervising developmental projects,

improving public service delivery, and addressing local administrative challenges. Their work directly influences sectors such as education, healthcare, tourism, agriculture, employment generation, infrastructure development, and rural welfare. Possessing a deep understanding of the region's social, cultural, and geographical realities, these officers bridge the gap between government policies and the everyday aspirations of the people. The enduring appeal of these services lies not merely in their prestige but in the opportunity they provide to create lasting societal impact. Civil servants are entrusted with responsibilities that require integrity, impartiality, and sound decision-making. Their work often involves balancing competing interests, responding to emergencies, resolving public grievances, and ensuring that governance remains transparent, accountable, and inclusive. Such responsibilities demand individuals who possess not only academic excellence but also empathy, resilience, emotional intelligence, and a deep commitment to constitutional values. Preparing for these careers requires sustained effort and disciplined planning. The Civil Services examinations are among the most competitive in the country because they seek individuals capable of understanding complex social, economic, political, and international issues. Aspirants must cultivate a strong foundation in subjects such as history, geography, economics, polity, science, technology, environmental studies, ethics, and current affairs. More importantly, they must develop the ability to analyse issues objectively, communicate ideas effectively, and make informed decisions based on facts and reason. The foundation for such preparation is laid much before students appear for competitive examinations. School and college years play a crucial role in nurturing curiosity, strengthening conceptual understanding, improving communication skills, and developing habits of disciplined learning. Reading newspapers regularly, engaging with quality literature, participating in debates and discussions, writing essays, and staying informed about national and international developments gradually build the intellectual maturity required for public administration. These practices not only improve examination performance but also shape thoughtful and responsible future leaders. One of the most inspiring aspects of the Civil Services journey is that success is not confined to students from metropolitan cities or privileged educational backgrounds. Every year, aspirants from remote villages, small towns, government schools, and economically modest families achieve

remarkable success through perseverance, self-belief, and disciplined preparation. The rapid expansion of digital education has further democratised access to quality learning resources. Online lectures, digital libraries, virtual mentoring, mock tests, and educational platforms have enabled students from every part of the country to compete on equal terms. Parents and educational institutions also play an indispensable role in nurturing these aspirations. Encouragement, proper guidance, emotional support, and an environment that values learning over mere examination scores help students build confidence and resilience. Schools and colleges must focus on developing critical thinking, ethical leadership, civic responsibility, and social awareness so that students grow into capable professionals equipped to handle the complexities of modern governance. The responsibilities entrusted to civil servants continue to evolve alongside changing national priorities. Issues such as digital governance, artificial intelligence, climate change, cybersecurity, sustainable development, urban expansion, healthcare management, disaster resilience, and economic transformation require administrators who are innovative, technologically aware, and socially sensitive. The future of governance will increasingly depend upon officers capable of combining traditional administrative principles with modern solutions that promote inclusive and sustainable development. For young students, choosing the Civil Services is not simply about securing a respected profession or achieving social recognition. It represents a conscious decision to dedicate one's abilities towards strengthening democratic institutions, improving governance, and serving the nation with honesty and compassion. Every successful civil servant becomes an instrument of positive change whose decisions shape communities, influence policies, and leave a lasting impact on generations to come. India's progress in the coming decades will depend significantly on the quality of leadership emerging from its classrooms today. Every school, college, and university has the potential to produce future administrators, diplomats, police leaders, and policymakers capable of steering the nation through new opportunities and complex challenges. The journey towards the IAS, IPS, IFS, or JKAS may demand years of preparation, unwavering determination, and extraordinary perseverance, but it remains one of the most meaningful and rewarding pursuits available to the country's youth. For every young dreamer determined to build a life of purpose, the Civil Services continue to offer a path where knowledge becomes service, ambition transforms into leadership, and individual success contributes directly to the progress of society and the nation. In an age driven by rapid change and increasing expectations, these careers stand as enduring reminders that true achievement lies not only in personal accomplishment but also in the ability to create lasting value for others through dedicated public service.

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PRECISION AND SAFETY

How Navigated Technology Is Changing Spine Surgery

DR. NAVEEN PANDITA

Neck pain has become increasingly common in today's fast-paced, screen-driven world. Long hours at desks, frequent mobile phone use, and poor posture are placing added strain on the cervical spine, the part of the spine that supports the head and allows neck movement. While the majority of the episodes of neck pain are temporary, some cases where pain is persistent for more than 2-3 weeks and is accompanied by pain radiating to the shoulders or arms may indicate underlying problems that require medical attention. What Causes Cervical Spine Problems? The cervical spine is made up of a chain of seven disc-shaped bones called vertebrae, which are separated from intermediate cone-like structures called discs that act as cushions between them and help in maintaining the space for the nerves, travelling from the spinal cord. Apart from that, the spine is enveloped circumferentially by layers of muscles and ligaments that help maintain its posture and stability. With age or repeated strain, degenerative changes can affect



these structures, including vertebrae, discs, and muscles. Among the general public, one of the most common causes of neck pain is a slipped disc or disc prolapse. It is important to understand that not every neck pain is caused by disc prolapse, and in the majority of these cases, the causative factor is strain on adjoining muscles, usually due to abnormal neck posture or prolonged screen use. Talking about the disc prolapse, commonly referred to as a slipped disc, means the central core of the intervertebral disc, which is structurally a jelly-like substance, leaks out through a tear in the

surrounding tough shell and irritates the adjacent nerves. When a disc bulges or slips, it can press on nearby nerves, leading to nerve compression. In other cases, narrowing of the spinal canal (cervical stenosis) or bone changes may also put pressure on the nerves or spinal cord. Cervical spine problems can present in several ways. Some of the common symptoms include:

- Persistent neck pain or stiffness
- Pain radiating from the neck to the shoulder, arm, or hand
- Numbness or tingling in the arms or fingers

- Weakness in the arms or reduced grip strength
 - Headaches starting from the back of the neck
- In more advanced cases, individuals may experience difficulty with balance, coordination, or fine motor activities. Such symptoms should not be ignored and require prompt medical evaluation. Why Lifestyle Matters Modern lifestyle habits play a significant role in the increasing number of cervical spine issues. Sitting for long hours without proper back support, looking down at screens for extended periods, and a lack of physical activity can all contribute to neck strain. Simple measures such as maintaining correct posture, taking regular breaks, adjusting screen height, and performing neck-strengthening exercises can help reduce the risk. When is Treatment Needed? Most cases of neck pain improve with conservative treatment, including rest, physiotherapy, medication, and lifestyle changes. However, when symptoms persist, worsen, or involve nerve-related issues such as weakness or severe pain, further evaluation is required. Imaging tests such as MRI scans help identify the

exact cause and guide treatment decisions. Role of Advanced and Navigated Spine Surgery When non-surgical treatment does not provide relief, surgery may be advised to reduce pressure on affected nerves or the spinal cord and to restore stability. Modern spine surgery has become more precise and less invasive. Techniques using smaller incisions help reduce tissue damage, leading to less pain and quicker recovery. Navigated spine surgery, similar to a GPS, allows surgeons to visualise the spine in real time, improving accuracy and enhancing overall safety. Looking Ahead Cervical spine problems are common but often manageable if identified early. Timely care can prevent progression and improve outcomes. With advances in treatment, many individuals can return to normal activities with greater comfort and function. Maintaining good posture, staying active, and seeking early advice remain essential for long-term spine health. (The author is Principal Consultant Spine Surgery & Spinal Deformity, Max Super Speciality Hospital, Vaishali (Ghaziabad))

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Zero Risk, Zero Transmission: Sustaining An HIV-Free Generation



SHOBHA SHUKLA

Cambodia's recent achievement of achieving the 95-95-95 HIV-related targets demonstrates what determined national leadership and community partnership can accomplish, said Eamonn Murphy, UNAIDS Regional Director for Asia Pacific, Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Cambodia is the first and only country in Asia Pacific region so far to do so.

These targets refer to 95 percent of people know their HIV status, 95 percent of them are on lifesaving antiretroviral treatment, and 95 percent of those on treatment have undetectable viral load. Undetectable viral load is vital because undetectable equals untransmittable, as there is zero risk of any further HIV transmission and person stays healthy and lead normal lives.

UNAIDS latest report 2026 released two weeks ago states that by 2025, there were 14 countries worldwide that had achieved 95-95-95 HIV goals: Botswana, Cambodia, Denmark, Eswatini, Lesotho, Namibia, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Sweden, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. UNAIDS' Eamonn Murphy added that these experiences show that sustainable progress depends on genuine partnerships between governments, health systems and communities. These success stories also illustrate that investing in communities is not simply socially just - it is also good public health.

95-100-98 in Cambodia

Over 95 percent of people with HIV know their status in Cambodia, 100 percent of them are receiving lifesaving antiretroviral therapy, and 98% of those on therapy have achieved undetectable viral load, said Cambodian government's head of HIV programme Dr Ouk Vichea. Dr Vichea serves as Director of the National Centre for HIV/AIDS, Dermatology and STI (NCHADS) at Cambodia's Ministry of Health. "Cambodia's progress in the HIV response offers a clear lesson: ambitious public-health targets can be reached when political leadership, evidence-based action and communities work together." Dr Ouk stressed that the achievement is not simply a technical success. It reflects strong

leadership and commitment, combined with the ability to turn evidence and innovation into action.

Choub Sok Chamreun, Executive Director of KHANA Cambodia, similarly attributed the country's HIV achievement to a strong partnership that has existed from the beginning of the response. "The success of Cambodia is because of very strong partnership from the beginning," he said, describing how government, civil society, communities and people living with HIV worked together to shape and deliver the response.

Political leadership turned commitment into action

Dr Ouk said Cambodia's progress has been rooted in sustained political commitment. For decades, leadership through the Royal Government of Cambodia, the Cambodia National Authority and the Ministry of Health has helped keep HIV firmly on the national agenda. That commitment, he explained, went beyond declarations. It produced clear policies, coordinated multisectoral action and engagement with development partners, including UNAIDS, the World Health Organization (WHO), the Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB and Malaria (The Global Fund), and others.

For Chamreun, government leadership was equally important. From the beginning, the government took full leadership and brought stakeholders together to determine what needed to be done and how challenges should be addressed.

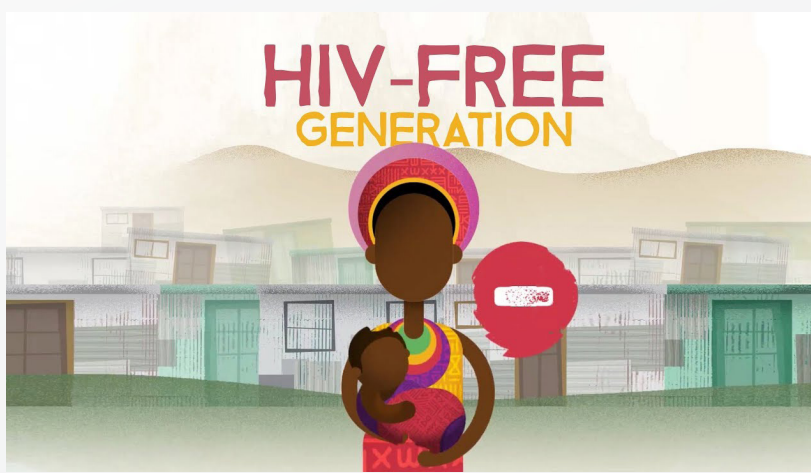
This approach created space for key populations and people living with HIV to participate in the response - not simply as people being consulted, but as participants in service delivery and monitoring.

Communities move from consultation to leadership

Chamreun argued that high-impact HIV and TB interventions require investment in communities. Consultation alone is not enough, he said. Key populations must be involved in planning and implementation and must be "in the forefront" of programming.

In Cambodia, people living with HIV and key populations have been closely involved in delivering services. This includes gay men and other men who have sex with men, transgender people, people who use and inject drugs, and female entertainment workers.

Community involvement also helps identify gaps in service quality. People with lived experience of HIV and the needs of their communities can work alongside health professionals to observe, monitor and improve services. For Chamreun, this is particu-



larly important in places and situations where government services may struggle to reach people.

Community workers can operate in remote areas, at night and during weekends, while also reaching people who may remain hidden because of stigma and discrimination.

A network of frontline workers

The scale of community participation is reflected in the numbers Chamreun cited from KHANA Cambodia's programmes. The HIV response includes 153 outreach workers in one programme, 49 outreach workers serving female entertainment workers, and another 153 outreach workers reaching gay men and other men who have sex with men and transgender populations. The TB response includes 309 volunteers engaged in service delivery.

These networks illustrate the practical meaning of a community-led response. Rather than treating communities as recipients of services, the model places them directly within the delivery system.

Chamreun said people living with HIV and members of key populations understand the problems and needs of their communities because they have direct experience of them. That lived knowledge can make them valuable partners for government, particularly in places where official services cannot easily reach.

Innovation and data strengthen the response

Political commitment and community leadership have been reinforced by innovation and the use of data. Dr Ouk described Cambodia's approach of making HIV combination prevention strategies rather than relying on a single intervention. The country has expanded differentiated HIV testing, Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) for HIV prevention and other new HIV

prevention tools, while also integrating services to help close prevention gaps, particularly among key populations.

Data has also become central to decision-making

Cambodia uses what Dr Ouk described as a "triangle" of routine program data, integrated biological and behavioural surveillance (IBBS) and community monitoring data. The aim is to identify gaps and adjust the response so that programmes remain targeted and responsive. The emphasis is therefore not only on making services available, but on making them accessible, acceptable and trusted.

Progress has not eliminated the gaps

Dr Ouk pointed to a continuing gap between what is known and what is being done. New HIV infections remain concentrated among key populations, while structural barriers - including stigma, discrimination and social inequality - continue to restrict access to services for people most at risk. That means Cambodia must build on the factors that produced its progress rather than treating the 95-95-95 achievement as an endpoint.

For Chamreun, the same principle applies to HIV and TB more broadly. Government, civil society and communities need to continue working together, particularly when resources are limited.

Partnership matters even when funding is difficult

As funding conditions become more challenging, it becomes even more important to sustain health responses. Partnerships become even more critical when funding plummets, says Chamreun. Dividing efforts can increase costs, while collaboration allows organisations and institutions to share expertise and resources to support lifesaving community work. Dr Ouk likewise

called for sustained political leadership in the context of declining external funding, alongside greater domestic financing, particularly for prevention and community responses.

He also stressed the need to scale up innovation and ensure that new approaches reach the people who need them most. The message is straightforward: financial constraints make collaboration more - not less - important.

Cambodia enters a new phase

Dr Ouk described Cambodia as entering a new phase focused on greater country ownership and sustainability. The achievement of the 95-95-95 target, he emphasised, is a milestone rather than an endpoint. The challenge now is to sustain the gains, deepen the response and make it more equitable. That will require continued political commitment, domestic investment, innovation and community leadership.

Chamreun's message is similarly forward-looking. The response must continue to recognise the people living with HIV and the communities most affected as central partners in solving the problems. Their experience, he argued, provides insight into what communities need and where existing services fall short.

A lesson in turning possibility into action

Cambodia's HIV achievement therefore stands not simply as a numerical milestone, but as an example of what sustained collaboration can accomplish. Dr Ouk and Chamreun both state this from different perspectives: leadership creates the direction, partnership connects the system, innovation strengthens it, and communities make services reach the people who need them.

Dr Ouk summarised Cambodia's experience as proof that the gap between knowing-what-works and actually putting it into practice can be bridged. For Chamreun, the lesson is even more direct: when government, civil society, communities and people with lived experiences work together, what appears impossible can become possible.

(Shobha Shukla is a feminist, health and development justice advocate. She serves as Chairperson of Global AMR Media Alliance (GAMA), Host and Coordinator of SHE & Rights (Sexual Health with Equity & Rights), President of Asia Pacific Media Alliance for Health, Gender and Development Justice (APCAT Media), and founder leader of DJOP (Development Justice for Older Persons) initiative.

The Greyhound Who Never Stopped Moving

A Life Of Courage, Sacrifice And Extraordinary Determination



SHIBEEEN RAINA

Major General Sunil Kumar Razdan, Kirti Chakra and Vishisht Seva Medal (Retd), of 7 PARA, passed away on 13 August 2026, at the age of 71. His life was an extraordinary story of courage under fire, sacrifice in the line of duty and an unyielding determination to overcome adversity.

Born on 8 October 1954, Maj Gen Razdan came from a distinguished Kashmiri family. His grandfather had served with the British Indian Army during the Burma Campaign of the Second World War, and his father too had served in the Army. The armed forces were therefore not merely a profession in the Razdan family; they were a tradition of service.

From his youth, Razdan was known for his exceptional physical endurance. A keen long-distance runner, he possessed the stamina and determination that would later become hallmarks of his military career. His comrades gave him the affectionate nickname "Greyhound"—a name that would remain associated with his remarkable spirit throughout his life.

The Damal Kunzipur Operation

One of the defining chapters of his life came on 8 October 1994, his 40th birthday. At the time, then Lieutenant Colonel Razdan was serving in Jammu & Kashmir. News reached his unit that nine terrorists had abducted 14 young women, aged between 14 and 30, and were holding them captive at Damal Kunzipur. The situation demanded immediate action.

Razdan set out with a small team of just 20 soldiers. After an arduous 12-hour march, they reached the four-storey house in which the women were being held hostage. Displaying extraordinary tactical courage and leadership, Razdan and his men succeeded in getting the hostages out through a kitchen window. But the operation was far from over. During the fierce exchange of fire that followed, a terrorist fired at Razdan from point-blank range.

The bullets tore through his abdomen and caused devastating damage to his spine. Razdan was left paralysed below the waist. Yet the injury that permanently changed his physical life could not break his spirit. For his conspicuous gallantry and exceptional courage during the operation, he was awarded the Kirti Chakra, one of India's highest peacetime gallantry awards.

From the Battlefield to a Wheelchair—But Never Away from Duty

For many, such an injury might have marked the end of a military career. For Razdan, it became the beginning of another extraordinary chapter. Despite being paralysed from



the waist down, he chose to remain in uniform. He continued his military career with remarkable determination, refusing to allow his disability to define the limits of his service.

Through sheer perseverance, professional competence and an indomi-

Born on 8 October 1954, Maj Gen Razdan came from a distinguished Kashmiri family. His grandfather had served with the British Indian Army during the Burma Campaign of the Second World War, and his father too had served in the Army.

table will, he continued to rise through the ranks. Eventually, he became the first wheelchair-borne officer in the history of the Indian Army to attain the rank of Major General. He subsequently served with distinction at Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff, demonstrating that leadership, courage and commitment are not diminished by physical limitations.

The soldier who had once been

known as the "Greyhound" had lost the use of his legs, but he had not lost his ability to move forward.

A Legacy Beyond the Uniform

Maj Gen Sunil Kumar Razdan's story is not simply one of battlefield bravery. It is a story of resilience. The bullets that struck him on his 40th birthday altered his life forever. They left him confined to a wheelchair, but they could not confine his ambition, his sense of duty or his commitment to the Army.

His journey from a paratrooper and gallantry awardee to a Major General in a wheelchair stands as a powerful reminder that courage is not merely the absence of fear or injury. It is the determination to continue one's journey despite them. He belonged to a generation of soldiers for whom duty came before self.

As India remembers Major General Sunil Kumar Razdan, it remembers not only the brave officer who risked his life to rescue 14 young women, but also the extraordinary human being who refused to surrender to the consequences of his sacrifice. The Greyhound may have lost the ability to run, but he never stopped moving forward. Our respectful salute to Major General Sunil Kumar Razdan, Kirti Chakra, VSM (Retd)—a paratrooper, a gallantry awardee, an inspiring soldier and an extraordinary Indian Brave.

May his memory remain an inspiration to generations of soldiers and citizens alike.

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Javed Rana hoists National Flag on 80th I-Day at Poonch

GMK NEWS NETWORK

POONCH: The 80th Independence Day was celebrated with patriotic fervour and enthusiasm at District Headquarters, Poonch, where Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, hoisted the National Flag amid high patriotic fervour and enthusiasm.

He took salute at the impressive march past presented by the contingents of J&K Police, IRP, CRPF, Forest Protection Force, NCC cadets and school children at the main ceremonial function held at Sports Stadium Poonch.

MLA Surankote, Choudhary Mohammad Akram; Deputy Commissioner Poonch, Ashok Kumar Sharma; Principal District and Sessions Judge Poonch, Sushil Singh, Additional District and Session Judge, Mir Wajahat, Chief Judicial Magistrate Poonch, Sarfraz Nawaz, Secretary DLSA Poonch, Rafaqat Hussain, Senior Superintendent of Police Poonch, Shafqat Hussain Bhat; senior officers of the civil administration, Police, Army, prominent citizens and a large gathering public were present on the occasion

Addressing the gathering, the Minister paid rich tributes to the freedom fighters and national leaders whose courage, sacrifice and vision secured the country's freedom and laid the foundations of its democratic journey. He said Independence Day is an occasion to remember the sacrifices of the past and reaffirm the collective resolve to uphold



the ideals of justice, liberty, equality, fraternity and national unity.

Highlighting Poonch's glorious legacy of courage and resilience, Javed Rana said the people of the district have made an enduring contribution towards safeguarding national unity and strengthening the democratic ethos of the country.

The Minister said India has made remarkable strides since Independence in various fields, including education, employment, science and technology and called upon citizens to contribute actively towards building a stronger, inclusive, peaceful and prosperous nation.

Giving an overview of development achievements in the district, the Minister said Rs 6716.84 lakh were made available under the District Capex Budget during 2025-26, of which, Rs 5519.28 lakh (82.17 per

cent) have been utilised.

He said focused attention is being accorded to strengthening the power infrastructure, with Rs 640.41 crore allocated for the sector, of which, Rs 528.59 crore have been spent and around 72 per cent of the work completed. The project is expected to add 37.5 MW capacity and benefit around 22,000 consumers. He also highlighted the ongoing widening and macadamisation of the 198-km Poonch-Akhnoor road, along with associated road improvement works.

Under the VB-G-RAM-G scheme, Rs 80 crore have been approved, with Rs 2.49 crore utilised between January and June, generating 83,124 person-days. Under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, 49,079 of 49,254 targeted houses have been completed while 55,698 additional houses have

been identified under the new survey.

Highlighting the government's focus on water security, Javed Rana said 132 Jal Jeevan Mission schemes are under implementation in the district, with 18 completed and 42 nearing completion. He said 84,791 of 1,07,048 households have already been provided clean drinking water.

Under AMRUT 2.0, Rs 84.58 crore have been approved for improving the water supply system in Poonch town.

The Minister said the government remains committed to the welfare and empowerment of tribal communities and effective implementation of the Forest Rights Act, 2006. He informed that FRA Cells have been established in Deputy Commissioner offices to facilitate recognition and settlement of the rights of forest-dwelling communities.

He further informed that proposals for new Eklayva Model Residential Schools at Mendhar and Surankote have been submitted to the Ministry of Tribal Affairs.

The Minister said 520 km of roads have been taken up for widening, including 170 km under the road connectivity programme, while five NABARD schemes have been completed at a cost of Rs 1710.33 lakh.

Under the Agriculture Department, 77.02 lakh saplings have been distributed among the farmers, bringing more than 324 hectares under plantation. He said Rs 169 crore have been sanctioned for a 64-km road under the J&K Rural Infrastructure

Development Fund. The Mandhi bypass is nearing completion and is expected to be ready by March 2027 while the Dharamrahi-Mandi link road has been sanctioned at a cost of Rs 36 crore along with 43 additional village roads.

Under PM-KISAN, Rs 16.42 crore have been deposited for the benefit of 41,067 farmers.

Speaking about the social welfare measures, the Minister said assistance is being provided to 62,512 widows, elderly and differently-abled persons at Rs 1,000 per month. Financial assistance is also being extended to 890 children from poor families for their education.

Under the Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Unnat Gram Abhiyan, Rs 6 crore were utilised for 28 villages during the last financial year while Rs 566 lakh has been approved for 30 villages during the current year. He said free ration is being provided to 70,902 households covering 3,11,568 persons under the Pradhan Mantri Anna Kalyan Yojana.

The Minister also highlighted the district's achievements in sports, informing that 115 children participated in national-level competitions during the year with four securing medals. He said 1,419 Anganwadi centres are functioning across the district, providing supplementary nutrition to children.

Referring to the damage caused by recent heavy rains, Minister Rana said 22 people have lost their lives and 366 houses have been damaged while restoration of five motorable roads is underway.

Edu Institutions, Govt Departments celebrate 80th I-Day across Kashmir



GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: The celebrations for 80th Independence Day were Saturday held in various educational institutions and Government departments across Kashmir division with patriotic fervour and enthusiasm.

SDD: Director, Skill Development Department (SDD), Dr. Owais Ahmad, hoisted the National Flag at Government Polytechnic for Women, Srinagar today as part of the Independence Day celebrations.

The flag-hoisting ceremony was held on the college grounds and was attended by a large and diverse gathering that included senior officials from the Police and paramilitary forces, representatives from the Directorate of Skill Development, principals of polytechnic colleges and ITIs across the region, faculty members, and students from various polytechnic colleges and ITIs.

The event commenced with the National Anthem following the flag hoist. In his brief address, Dr. Owais Ahmad highlighted the importance of skill

development in nation building and urged students to seize vocational training opportunities to contribute to local and national development. He lauded the role of technical education institutions in empowering youth and praised the collaboration between training providers and industry partners in supporting community resilience.

Dr. Owais Ahmad welcomed and thanked all participating institutions and security personnel for their support in ensuring the ceremony's smooth conduct. The programme also included patriotic songs by students and trainees, showcasing discipline and enthusiasm.

He also felicitated the students of Government Polytechnic for Women for their exemplary performance in the recently held examinations, applauding their hard work and dedication.

The occasion reinforced the Department of Skill Development's commitment to merging patriotic values with practical skill-building, and to preparing students for meaningful

employment and entrepreneurship.

JKEDI: The Jammu and Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI) celebrated the 80th Independence Day at its main campus at Sempora, Pampore, with patriotic fervour and enthusiasm.

The National Flag was hoisted by Mohd. Younis Malik, Director, JKEDI, in the presence of officers and officials of the Institute.

Addressing the employees, Director, JKEDI emphasized the importance of strengthening entrepreneurship and self-employment as key drivers of economic development in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. He stressed the need to scale up entrepreneurial activities and create greater opportunities for sustainable livelihoods and employment generation.

The Director reiterated the vision of "Viksit Bharat @2047", underlining that entrepreneurship and self-employment would play a major role in shaping a developed and economically empowered India.

Satish Sharma felicitates Kathua achievers in DIPR J&K competitions

GMK NEWS NETWORK

KATHUA: Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Transport, Science & Technology, IT, Youth Services & Sports and ARI & Trainings, Satish Sharma, Saturday felicitated the winners from Kathua district in various competitions organised by the Department of Information and Public Relations, J&K, during the Independence Day celebrations at Sports Stadium, Kathua.

In the Painting Competition, Kanwalnain Kaur secured the first position followed by Abhinav Sharma and Veenakshi at second and third positions respectively.

In the National Anthem Competition (13-18 years, Individual Category), Sanchit Dalotra, Sidarath Sangral and Simran Rajwal secured first, second and third positions respectively.

In the National Anthem Competition (Above 18 years, Individual Category), Neelam Kumari bagged the first position, while Dheeraj Kumar and Prianka secured second and third positions.

In the National Anthem Competition (Group Category), Vikram of Santosh Music & Dance Coaching Institute, Kathua, clinched the first position followed by Learning Temple High School at second position and Manu Shiksha Kendra Higher Secondary School, Rajbagh at third position.

In the Essay Writing Competition, Avasyu Gupta secured first position, Chahat Devi second and Mehul Jasrotha got the third place.

The Minister congratulated all the winners and appreciated their talent, creativity and patriotic spirit, encouraging them to continue excelling in their respective fields and contributing positively to society.

GMC Anantnag restricts entry of Medical Representatives in OPDs, wards

JAHANGEER GANAIE

ANANTNAG: Government Medical College (GMC) Anantnag has imposed strict restrictions on the entry and movement of Medical Representatives (MRs) in the Out Patient Department (OPD), wards and casualty areas of the institution and its associated hospitals during duty hours. The decision, was taken after the college administration noticed that Medical Representatives were freely moving inside sensitive patient-care areas and, in some instances, were found checking patients' prescriptions.

An order issued by the Principal, GMC reads that such activities were considered detrimental to patient care and hospital discipline. The administration observed that the presence and move-

ment of MRs in clinical areas could interfere with the smooth functioning of healthcare services.

The order stated that Medical Representatives shall not enter or approach doctors or patients in OPDs, wards or casualty areas for promotional or professional purposes during duty hours.

The administration has, however, clarified that MRs may meet the concerned doctors after duty hours, provided such meetings do not cause any disturbance to patient care or the normal functioning of the hospital.

The restrictions cover OPDs, wards and casualty areas of GMC Anantnag as well as its associated hospitals, effectively placing a bar on promotional activities by pharmaceutical representatives in areas where patients are receiving treatment.

Dy CM hoists National Flag at M.A. Stadium Jammu

Urges youth to stay away from drugs, become partners in Nation-Building

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Kumar Choudhary Saturday hoisted the National Flag at M.A. Stadium here on the occasion of 80th Independence Day.

The Deputy Chief Minister inspected the parade and took salute to the participating contingents.

Addressing the gathering, the Deputy Chief Minister extended warm greetings to the people of Jammu and Kashmir and the nation on the 80th Independence Day and paid rich tributes to the freedom fighters and martyrs who made the supreme sacrifice for the country's independence. He recalled the long and historic struggle for freedom and highlighted the sacrifices of countless freedom fighters who fought against colonial rule. He said the Tricolour is a symbol of sacrifices, unity, brotherhood and collective aspiration of every Indian.

The Deputy Chief Minister also paid rich tributes to the Armed Forces, Jammu and Kashmir Police and security forces for their unwavering commitment to safeguarding the nation and maintaining peace and secu-



rity in Jammu and Kashmir.

Speaking on the development journey of the country, he said India has made remarkable progress since independence and is today among the leading economies of the world. He credited farmers, soldiers, scientists, engineers, entrepreneurs, workers and citizens from all walks of life for contributing to the nation's progress.

Highlighting Jammu and Kashmir's role in Nation-building, the Deputy Chief Minister said the Government remains firmly committed to ensuring all-round, balanced and inclusive development across the Union Territory. He said focused attention is being given to roads, bridges, power, water supply, healthcare, education, agriculture, industries and other vital sectors.

The Deputy Chief Minister said strengthening the

industrial sector is one of the Government's priorities and efforts are underway to establish new industries and generate employment opportunities for local youth. He emphasised that the youth of Jammu and Kashmir must receive priority in emerging employment and entrepreneurial opportunities.

On youth empowerment, the Deputy Chief Minister said the Government is working to create opportunities in both government employment and self-employment. He referred to recruitments made in various departments and vacancies referred to the JKSSRB and JKPS, expressing hope that the recruitment process would be completed at the earliest.

He also highlighted initiatives in education and healthcare, saying that efforts are being made to

improve access to quality education and expand healthcare infrastructure and opportunities for medical education in Jammu and Kashmir.

Describing farmers as the backbone of Jammu and Kashmir's economy, he said the Government is committed to ensuring that farmers prosper through agriculture, horticulture and allied sectors. He stressed the need to provide farmers with better support, modern facilities and opportunities to enhance their income.

Expressing serious concern over drug abuse among youth, the Deputy Chief Minister appealed to young people to stay away from drugs and criminal activities. He said the Government is committed to building a drug-free Jammu and Kashmir and called upon families, educational institutions, civil society and the youth to join the campaign against substance abuse.

He urged the youth to utilise their energy and talent in education, sports, innovation, entrepreneurship and nation-building, saying that the future of Jammu and Kashmir depends largely on the aspirations, determination and constructive participation of its young generation.

50,000 MT cold storage capacity proposed to boost J&K's horticulture: Min Dar

WARIS FAYAZ

BARAMULLA: The Jammu and Kashmir government has planned an expansion of cold storage, agricultural technology and horticulture infrastructure across the Union Territory, with an additional 50,000 metric tonnes of cold storage capacity proposed to support farmers and strengthen post-harvest management.

Speaking after hoisting the national flag at Baramulla on Independence Day, Minister Javed Ahmad Dar, said the additional capacity would take the overall cold storage capacity in Jammu and Kashmir to around 3.5 lakh metric tonnes. More than half of the capacity, he said, would be made available for farmers.

Dar said the government was focusing on modernising agriculture through technology, better irrigation facilities and improved market access.

"Crop digitisation was being undertaken across all districts, with more than 10 lakh agricultural plots targeted to be brought onto a digital platform," he said, adding that 16,000 hectares of land had been brought under irrigation during the current financial year to improve agricultural production.

The government also plans to promote oilseed cultivation across 3 lakh hectares, which the minister said would help boost the income of growers and contribute to economic growth.

For vegetable and floriculture sectors, the government plans to establish Centres of Excellence in every district.

Dar said Jammu already has such a centre, while facilities in Kathua, Rajouri, Baramulla and Srinagar would be established during the current year.

The minister said the government was also working to strengthen horticulture infrastructure, particularly storage, grading, packaging and marketing facilities.

He said fruit mandis at Beerwah, Pattan, Tangmarg and Tral would be established during the current financial year. Funds have already been allocated, and work would commence soon, he said.

The minister said existing fruit markets, including Narwal in Jammu and Jablipora in Anantnag, had been equipped with modern packing, grading and storage facilities, while the Sopore Fruit Mandi was also being considered for infrastructure upgradation.

Family alleges negligence after 16-month-old dies at Bemina hospital

JAHANGEER GANAIE

SRINAGAR: The family of a 16-month-old child who died at Government Children's Hospital, Bemina, Srinagar, has alleged medical negligence, even as the hospital administration has rejected what it described as incomplete accounts circulating on social media. It has ordered an in-house enquiry to establish the facts surrounding the death.

The child, from north Kashmir's Bandipora district, died in the Paediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) of the hospital on August 14. The family has alleged that

delays in conducting important diagnostic investigations and an alleged delay in recognising the seriousness of the child's condition contributed to the deterioration and eventual death.

However, a detailed clarification issued by hospital authorities has presented a different account of the clinical sequence, stating that the child was brought to the hospital with a serious acute illness and subsequently developed convulsions, cardiac dysfunction and hemodynamic instability despite treatment.

According to the paediatrics department, the child presented

with fever accompanied by seizures, lethargy, restlessness, sore throat and swelling involving the face and neck. The department said the child was clinically evaluated and appropriate investigations were undertaken during treatment.

The hospital said the child subsequently developed active convulsions, which were managed with anticonvulsant therapy.

An echocardiography examination, according to the hospital, showed mild left ventricular dysfunction with an estimated left ventricular ejection fraction (LVEF) of around 50 per cent.

The department said that as the child's clinical condition worsened and he developed hemodynamic instability, the treating team proceeded with advanced supportive measures, including intubation, mechanical ventilation and vasopressor support.

"Despite active and appropriate resuscitative and supportive measures, the child's condition continued to deteriorate," the hospital said, adding that the child could not be revived and was declared dead at 8:25 PM on August 14.

The treating doctors had considered several serious clinical possibilities, including meningoencephalitis, atypical febrile seizure and shock, the hospital said, adding that the final cause of death would be determined on the basis of the complete clinical assessment and available investigations. The family alleged that the child's condition had been deteriorating for days and questioned the alleged delay in conducting investigations after the child was admitted to the hospital.

According to family members, the child was initially brought to the hospital around two days before his death after developing a throat-related health problem.

They alleged that after an initial assessment, the child was administered an injection and prescribed medicines, with the family being told that his condition would improve.

The relatives claimed that instead of recovering, the child's condition worsened and that when he was brought back to the hospital the following day, similar treatment was provided before they were advised to return.

The Medical Superintendent (MS) of the hospital has asked the Head of the Department of Paediatrics to conduct an in-house enquiry into the death.

1st Test: The way Padikkal adapted to conditions was crucial rather than his No.3 position, says Kotak



SIANS

GALLE: India batting coach Sitanshu Kotak has pointed to the hard work done by batter Devdutt Padikkal, who returned to the side after a big gap and scored his maiden century in the first Test against Sri Lanka here on Saturday.

Playing in Tests for the first time since November 2024, Padikkal scored an unbeaten 134 as India dominated Sri Lanka to reach 288/2 in 73 overs when stumps were called early because of bad light on a rain-hit opening day at the Galle International Stadium.

Having opted to bat first after winning the toss in their 600th Test, India were given a fluent start by their opening pair of Yashasvi Jaiswal (32) and vice-captain KL Rahul, who retired hurt on 77 in the final session due to cramps. But left-handed Padikkal looked the part to get a big score - using the crease well and showcasing great footwork, as well as running hard for his ones and twos- to hit 131 not out off 178 balls, laced with 12 fours and a six.

"I'm so happy for him. Because he actually was waiting for this opportunity, and he got an oppor-

tunity. So, the way he played in both innings in the warm-up and here (1st Test), it's really encouraging. Because I feel it's a young team but very promising guys who are waiting for their opportunity," said Kotak in the day-end press conference on Saturday.

He also talked about the preparation and hard work put in by the Karnataka batter in the lead-up to the series.

He said he had closely observed Padikkal's preparations when he was with the team and also when he was at the NCA.

"I would say, overall, the way Devdutt, when I was in NCA, also the way he was preparing, he was working on his basics. He was working on his back-foot game. And we try that anyway. We try and work on step-out, sweep, or back-foot game. And I think he has done well. But it's not just preparation now, I think. A lot of credit goes to him. The way he has prepared himself for the last couple of years. So, I wouldn't say it is just what we prepared," said Kotak.

India's batting coach also noted the confidence the team gained from playing the three-day warm-up game before the start of the series.

"Yes, we got a very good three-day game and a six-net session to work with them. But I would still give a lot of credit to them for where they have batted," he said.

Since 2021, India have experimented with batters at the No.3 slot in the batting line-up. In the last few Tests, they have played Sai Sudarshan in that position while Padikkal got the opportunity in Galle.

"See, I think he batted really well. So, Sai also has been batting really well at that number. But the thing is, they all are new-ball batsmen. So, they open; they go No. 3. So, we are very flexible in a way. So, mainly I would look at the way they bat, how they are adapting to conditions. How they are dealing with the different stages, the way the match started; the pitch was a bit damp.

"Fast bowlers' deliveries were not coming that much. In the second spell, after the rain, when fast bowlers bowled, it started swinging, and the ball was going through. So, at different phases, how they bat, that is very important for me rather than batting position -- No. 3 or 4 or 5. So, I am pretty happy about that," he said.

APL 2026: Malakar's knock seals nail-biting win for bottom-placed Tezpur Titans

SIANS

GUWAHATI: Tezpur Titans chased down a mammoth 201 in a thrilling run-fest, edging past Guwahati Royals by two wickets with just two balls to spare in match number 30 of the Assam Premier League (APL) 2026 at the ACA Stadium in Guwahati on Saturday.

Dibash Hazarika's blazing knock laid the platform for the chase, before skipper Ayushman Malakar produced a late cameo to see Titans home in a dramatic finish. Earlier, Sanjay Kumar Singh's unbeaten 81 propelled Guwahati Royals to 200.

Having won the toss and opting to field, Titans endured an early setback as Guwahati Royals lost Rohit Sen and skipper Rishav Das inside the powerplay but recovered through Sanjay Kumar Singh. Singh anchored the innings from one end, remaining unbeaten on 81 off 57 balls with four fours and six sixes. Nibir Dekha struck a rapid 22 off 13

balls, while Gunjan Jyoti Dekha contributed 41 off 27 before being run out. Nipan Dekha then produced a sensational late cameo, smashing an unbeaten 43 off just 10 balls, including 35 runs off the final over of the innings, as Guwahati Royals piled up 200/4 in their 20 overs. Wasim Akram Haque and Danish Ahmed were the only bowlers to find success for Titans, picking up two and one wicket respectively.

In response, Titans lost Wasim Akram Haque cheaply, but Dibash Hazarika and Nihar Dekha steadied the chase with a stand for the second wicket. Hazarika played a superb knock of 73 off 42 balls with six fours and six sixes, while Nihar Dekha chipped in with 25. Roshan Topno then struck 39 off 24 balls to keep the chase on track, but wickets continued to fall at the other end as Bastab Roy proved a constant threat, finishing with figures of 3/33.

With the equation tightening in the closing overs, skipper Malakar took charge, striking a blistering 41 off just 18 balls with four sixes to keep Titans in the hunt. Wickets kept tumbling around him, including a double blow in the same over that saw both Malakar and Abhinav Choudhury depart, but Prachurya Kataki held his nerve at the death, remaining unbeaten on 7 off just 2 balls, to guide Tezpur Titans over the line. The visitors reached 203/8 in 19.4 overs to complete a thrilling two-wicket win in one of the highest-scoring contests of the season.

Brief scores:

Guwahati Royals 200/4 in 20 overs (Sanjay Kumar Singh 81*, Nipan Dekha 43*, Gunjan Jyoti Dekha 41; Wasim Akram Haque 2/39, Danish Ahmed 1/15).

Tezpur Titans 203/8 in 19.4 overs (Dibash Hazarika 73, Ayushman Malakar 41, Roshan Topno 39; Bastab Roy 3/33, Nipan Dekha 2/34, Samrat Biswas 1/30).

Result: Tezpur Titans beat Guwahati Royals by 2 wickets.

Sandhu, Sharma miss cut in Danish Golf Championship

SIANS

DENMARK: The struggle continued for both Yuvraj Sandhu and Shubhankar Sharma as both the Indian golfers missed the cut at the Danish Golf Championship in Great Northern, Kerteminde, Funen, Denmark.

Sandhu shot 72-71 and still missed out by one for his fourth straight missed cut, while Sharma has made just one cut on the DP World Tour since the first week of March, and that was T-65 at the Turkish Airlines Open.

The duo hopes for a reversal next week at the Nexo Championships.

Meanwhile, Cameron Adam and Antoine Rozner both fired course records on day two to share the lead heading into the weekend.

Frenchman Félix Mory had set the mark with a 65 in round one, but countryman Rozner bettered that on Friday with a 64 to set the target at 11 under par.

It looked for a long time like the three-time DP World Tour winner would lead alone after 36 holes, but Scot Adam had other ideas, birdieing the par-three 18th to lower the mark once again with a nine-under 63 and join him at the top of the leaderboard.

Scotland's Ewen Ferguson sits in third place on ten under par, a shot clear of Julian Perico, who became the first Peruvian to make the cut in a DP World Tour event, England's Matthew Jordan, Frenchman Romain Langasque, South African Brandon Stone and American Caleb Surratt.

Two-time Masters cham-

pion Bubba Watson and Chinese teenager Yanhan Zhou share ninth place on eight under.

Earlier on the opening day, Shubhankar Sharma was almost sure to miss the cut after a round of 2-over-par 74 on the first day of the Danish Golf Championship.

Also struggling was Sandhu, whose even-par 72 included three birdies, a closing double and a bogey earlier on. He was T-75.

Sharma had four birdies against six bogeys as his struggles in the season continued.

Frenchman Félix Mory matched the lowest round of his DP World Tour career and set a course record to lead after day one of the Danish Golf Championship.

The Frenchman posted a seven-under-par round of 65 at Great Northern to move one shot clear of home favourite Lucas Bjerregaard and South African Brandon Stone.

Jr Women's Hockey Nationals: Karnataka, Bihar, Mizoram register wins on Day 4



SIANS

PUNE: The 16th Hockey India Junior Women National Championship 2026 witnessed another day of exciting action across Divisions 'B' and 'C', with Hockey Karnataka, Bihar, Mizoram, Assam, Gujarat and Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu registering victories in their respective encounters in Pune on Saturday.

Hockey Karnataka produced the biggest win of the day in Division B, Pool B, defeating Hockey Uttarakhand 6-1, while Hockey Bihar blanked Goans Hockey 6-0 in the same pool.

In Division B, Pool A, Hockey Mizoram defeated Kerala Hockey 2-0, while Assam Hockey edged past Hockey Andhra Pradesh 2-1.

Hockey Karnataka were in complete control against Uttarakhand, with captain Manish Ponnamma CD leading the way with a hat-trick. She scored in the 19th, 42nd and 46th minutes.

Pearlin Ponnamma A.G. (23rd), Meher Kaur Mehta (24th) and Vyshnavi Arul (25th) also found the net for Karnataka. Hockey Uttarakhand's only goal came from Upadhayay Kashish in the 29th minute.

Hockey Bihar secured a comfortable 6-0 victory over Goans Hockey. Sidhi Kumari opened the scoring in the 23rd minute before Khushi Kumari doubled the lead four minutes later.

Khushi completed her hat-trick with goals in the 37th and 43rd minutes, while Sidhi scored again in the 37th minute. Kumari Anjali added another in the 46th minute to complete the emphatic win.

Hockey Mizoram also registered a clean-sheet victory, beating Kerala Hockey 2-0. Loicy Lalantpuii gave Mizoram the lead in the 15th minute before Zothanmawii doubled the advantage in the 29th minute.

Assam Hockey came from behind to beat Hockey Andhra Pradesh 2-1. Andhra Pradesh took the lead through Rajeswari Vydadi Sai Dhana in the 58th minute, but Tanya Chaurasiya struck twice in the closing stages, scoring in the 48th and 60th minutes, to hand Assam the win.

In Division C, Hockey Gujarat defeated Le Puducherry Hockey 3-1 in Pool B. Dhruviba Parmar scored twice, in the second and 35th minutes, while Jadeja Bhavnaba added another in the 36th minute. R Kareesma Dass scored Puducherry's lone goal in the 27th minute.

Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu Hockey defeated Hockey Arunachal 2-0 in Division C, Pool A, with Gupta Shreyanshi and Supriya Chauhan scoring in the 45th and 48th minutes respectively.

Hockey Rajasthan and Hockey Jammu & Kashmir were also awarded 5-0 victories by forfeit over Tripura Olympic Association and Telangana Hockey, respectively.

The tournament will enter a major phase on Sunday, with Division A set to begin in Pune.

INOX

SRINAGAR

AWARAPAN 2

THE JOURNEY CONTINUES...

THE END OF OAK STREET

BATWARA

1947

SPIDER-MAN: BRAND NEW DAY

3D (ENGLISH) (U/A 13+)

16TH

AUGUST

SUNDAY

10:35 AM

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