

## !! Continuations from Page 1 !! 10 senior IAS...

Principal Secretary Anil Kumar Singh and IGP Sujit Kumar on August 21 and 22.

Financial Commissioner and Additional Chief Secretary Shaleen Kabra and IGP Suleman Chaudhary will be deployed on August 23 and 24, followed by Secretary Shahid Iqbal Choudhary and IGP Vivek Gupta on August 25 and 26.

Rescue operation continued amid rain on Monday, the fifth day since the tragedy, to rescue those buried under debris in the remote village.

Wearing raincoats, the rescue teams were seen working at multiple locations, especially at the major impact spot near a langar (community kitchen) site. Earthmovers were at work to clear the rubble as police dogs sniffed for signs of life.

The annual Machail Mata yatra, which began on July 25 and was scheduled to conclude on September 5, remained suspended for the fifth consecutive day.

The 8.5-km trek to the 9,500-foot-high shrine starts from Chishoti, about 90 km from Kishtwar town.

## Two more bodies recovered...

Corps, in a post on X, said five relief columns of the force are engaged in the rescue and relief operations and efforts have been further intensified with additional medical teams deployed.

"Despite adverse terrain and weather, a bridge over Chisoti Nala was completed on August 17, expediting relief and evacuation. Additional equipment is being moved forward to strengthen operations and senior Army functionaries are on ground to oversee relief and rescue," the army said, adding close coordination with civil agencies continues to expedite relief efforts.

The flash-floods triggered by the cloudburst left a trail of destruction, flattening a makeshift market, a langar site for the annual Machail Mata yatra, damaging 16 houses and government buildings, three temples, four water mills and a 30-metre-long bridge, besides over a dozen vehicles.

"Today is the fifth day of the operation, and combined efforts are underway to recover the mortal remains of the missing persons. The weather is challenging in view of the rain. We also have a warning (of heavy rains) for the day, but still we are trying our best," a CISF officer said.

The joint teams of police, army, National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), CISE, Border Roads Organisation (BRO), civil administration, and local volunteers are engaged in the rescue efforts.

Army engineers on Sunday built a Bailey bridge over Chisoti nullah, providing much-needed connectivity to the village and the Machail Mata shrine. The Army has also inducted a couple of all-terrain vehicles as part of the efforts to intensify the rescue and relief operation, officials said.

The rescuers conducted half a dozen controlled explosions over the last two days to blow up giant boulders hampering the search. The rescuers are utilising over a dozen earth-movers and other heavy equipment, while the NDRF mobilised its resources, including dog squads, to speed up the rescue operation.

## Schools in Jammu...

School Education said in an order here.

The Meteorological Department had issued a weather advisory for Jammu and Kashmir predicting heavy rains and thundershowers from August 17 to 19.

"Risk of cloudbursts, flash floods, and landslides in vulnerable areas. Districts on alert include Jammu, Reasi, Udhampur, Rajouri, Poonch, Samba, Kathua, Doda, Kishtwar, Ramban and parts of Kashmir," it said.

## Putin dials Modi...

Alaska between US President Donald Trump and President Vladimir Putin of Russia," the MEA had said.

"Their leadership in the pursuit of peace is highly commendable," it had said.

India has been consistently calling for ending the Russia-Ukraine conflict through dialogue and diplomacy.

In July last year, PM Modi travelled to Moscow and told Putin that a solution to the Ukraine conflict is not possible on the battlefield and peace efforts do not succeed in the midst of bombs and bullets.

The next month, Modi visited the Ukrainian capital city of Kyiv and conveyed to President Volodymyr Zelenskyy that both Ukraine and Russia should sit together without wasting time to end the war.

The prime minister had said India was on the side of peace since the beginning of the conflict.

## VDG member thrashed...

be submitted within a fortnight," the spokesperson added.

In addition, the conduct of the then Thathri Station House Officer, DySP Afeer Jaleel, will also be thoroughly examined, he said.

"The inquiry officer has been directed to assess his role and submit specific findings for further necessary action," the spokesperson added.

Meanwhile, VDG member Balbeer Singh Manhas said he had fired two rounds in the air following suspicious movement near his village after a voice warning a day before Independence Day.

"We were told to be alert about any suspicious movement as Independence Day was near. There was also a threat perception. I was only performing my duty," he said while leaving the hospital.

Manhas was admitted to Government Medical College Hospital in Doda after being badly thrashed.

Expressing anger over such incident, Manhas said, "What is the point of becoming a VDG member when you are not allowed to do anything to protect your village during suspicious circumstances?"

## Essential that de...

Galwan Valley clashes in 2020.

"Having seen a difficult period in our relationship, our two nations now seek to move ahead. This requires a candid and constructive approach from both sides," the external affairs minister said.

"In that endeavour, we must be guided by the three mutuals - mutual respect, mutual sensitivity and mutual interest. Differences must not become disputes, nor competition conflict," he said.

The Chinese foreign minister is in India primarily to hold a fresh round of Special Representatives (SR) dialogue on the boundary question with National Security Advisor Ajit Doval. The SR talks will be held on Tuesday.

Wang and Doval are the designated special representatives for the boundary talks.

"This (SR talks) is very important because the basis for any positive momentum in our ties is the ability to jointly maintain peace and tranquillity in the border areas. It is also essential that the de-escalation process move forward," Jaishankar said.

The talks covered economic and trade issues, pilgrimages, people-to-people contacts, river data sharing, border trade and connectivity.

"I would like to follow up on some particular concerns that I had brought up with you, when I visited China in July," Jaishankar said without elaborating.

The external affairs minister also dropped enough hints of discussion on the international situation.

"We seek a fair, balanced and multi-polar world order, including a multi-polar Asia. Reformed multilateralism is also the call of the day. In the current environment, there is clearly the imperative of maintaining and enhancing stability in the global economy as well," he said.

"The fight against terrorism in all its forms and manifestations is another major priority. I look forward to our exchange of views," he added.

Jaishankar said New Delhi expects that the discussions would contribute to building a stable, cooperative and forward-looking relationship between India and China -- "one that serves both our interests and addresses our concerns".

"You are visiting India, shortly before the SCO summit that China is hosting in Tianjin. We have worked closely with the Chinese side during its Presidency. We wish you a successful Summit with strong outcomes and decisions," he added.

In the SR talks, both sides are expected to deliberate on new confidence-building measures besides reviewing the overall situation along the LAC.

Though the two sides disengaged troops from the friction points, they are yet to de-escalate the situation by pulling back the frontline forces from the border.

Each side currently has around 50,000 to 60,000 troops along the LAC in the eastern Ladakh region.

NSA Doval travelled to China in December last and held the SR talks with Wang, weeks after Prime Minister Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping decided to revive various dialogue mechanisms between the two sides at a meeting in the Russian city of Kazan.

The military standoff in eastern Ladakh began in May 2020 and the clashes at the Galwan Valley in June that year resulted in a severe strain in bilateral ties.

The face-off effectively ended following completion of the disengagement process from the last two friction points of Demchok and Depsang under an agreement finalised on October 21 last year.

In the last few months, the two sides also took a number of initiatives to rebuild the ties that included resumption of Kailash Mansarovar Yatra and New Delhi

restarting issuance of tourist visas to Chinese nationals.

## CISF ADG visits...

"When some of our people were able to save themselves from the impact, they came running to and rescued many women and children from the rubble and sent them to hospital in private vehicles. They were the first respondents to the tragedy," he said

The officer said one-and-a-half company strength, comprising 150 personnel, were also rushed from Kishtwar and Dul Hasti power project locations to assist other agencies and civil administration in the rescue efforts.

Asked about the weapons of the jawans, he said by and large all the weapons are intact. "It is difficult to verify the stock but once the stock verification is done the reality will emerge and any shortcoming will be addressed."

"CISF is always prepared to face any type of challenge. Our men met the challenge in a professional manner and their dedication and determination shows how well trained they are," the ADG said.

Talking about the ongoing rescue operation, he said, "I have been told that there is a plan for blasting to go deep, as far as possible. There are about 20-22 JCBs working on the ground on war footing."

## Govt introduces Jan...

of Provisions) Bill 2025, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said it seeks to enhance trust-based governance for ease of doing business.

The Bill was then referred to the Select Committee of the Lok Sabha for scrutiny. It has been tasked to submit its report to the House by the first day of the next session of Parliament.

The Bill was introduced amid din as Opposition parties protested, demanding a discussion on the voter rolls revision in Bihar and other issues.

The legislation has proposed to decriminalise norms related to a number of laws, including Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, New Delhi Municipal Council Act, 1994 (NDMC Act), and The Road Transport Corporations Act, 1950.

Four Acts - the Tea Act, 1953, Legal Metrology Act, 2009, Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, and Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 - were part of Jan Vishwas Act, 2023 and are proposed for further decriminalisation under the current bill.

In the Motor Vehicles Act, the bill proposed to provide relaxation and clarity in compliance, including state-wide vehicle registration instead of jurisdiction-specific; driving licence renewal effective from the date of renewal if applied after expiry; a grace period of 30 days after licence expiry; and claims tribunals empowered to condone filing delays up to 12 months.

A total of 355 provisions are proposed to be amended through this Bill. It includes 288 provisions to be decriminalised to foster ease of doing business, and 67 others to facilitate ease of living.

The legislation is part of the government's efforts to enhance the country's business climate.

The 2025 Bill expands this reform agenda to cover 16 central Acts administered by 10 ministries and departments.

As per the bill, first time offenders under 10 laws will be given advisory or warning for 76 offences.

It also proposes to replace imprisonment for minor, technical or procedural defaults with monetary penalties or warnings. Penalties are also proposed to be made proportionate, with graduated penalties for repeated offences.

Further, the 2025 bill has proposed rationalisation of penalties; and revision of fines and penalties. Under the bill, designated officers will be empowered to impose penalties through administrative processes, thus reducing judicial burden.

"The Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2025 marks a significant milestone in India's regulatory reform journey," the commerce and industry ministry said.

In NDMC law, the bill proposes replacing the rateable value method of property tax with the Unit Area Method, introducing a transparent and formula-based system linked to property size, usage and location.

Further, under the Apprentices Act, 1961, there will be a provision for warning instead of fine for offences like asking an apprentice to work overtime without approval of Apprenticeship Adviser. Currently such offences are punishable with a fine of Rs 1,000. Under the Central Silk Board Act, 1948, the bill seeks to abolish imprisonment for furnishing any false statement. Imprisonment (up to one year) and fine (up to Rs 1,000) is proposed to be removed for obstructing officer of the Board in exercise of any power.

## Advocate murder case...

special designated court under the NIA Act has formally framed charges under Sections 16, 18, and 38 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act against Qayoom," an official said.

He said the charges pertain to terrorism and conspiracy to commit a terrorist act. Qayoom is the father-in-law of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh High Court judge Justice Javed Iqbal Wani.

The Srinagar police first filed a charge sheet in the case against six accused in the Special UAPA Court, Srinagar, in 2021.

In August 2022, the police conducted searches at Qayoom's residences and those of two other lawyers in Srinagar, seizing various digital devices, bank statements and documents, as part of the ongoing probe.

In September 2023, the SIA announced a reward of Rs 10 lakh for any information leading to solving Qadri's murder.

The police had alleged the involvement of Saqib Manzoor, a LeT commander, in Qadri's killing. Manzoor was killed during a police encounter in Srinagar alongside another militant commander in 2022.

Qadri, a human rights expert who frequently appeared on television debates, was fatally shot at his residence in the Hawal area of downtown on September 24, 2020. He had narrowly survived an assassination attempt in 2018.

Qadri was a founder of a dissident group known as the 'Kashmir Lawyers Club'. He was actively critical of Qayoom -- particularly accusing him of using the Kashmir Bar Association to further a secessionist agenda.

Earlier in December last year, the SIA filed a 340-page supplementary chargesheet against Qayoom in the special NIA court here for offences under various sections of the IPC and UAPA -- including murder.

The initial chargesheet in the case had been filed before the Special NIA Court, Srinagar. However, in December 2023, the High Court had transferred the trial to Jammu, taking a serious view of the "interference in the judicial process" by Qayoom as well as "intimidation" of the family of the deceased.

According to the SIA chargesheet, Qayoom has a history of being a terrorist sympathiser and dihard secessionist.

Several cases already stand registered against him for his anti-national activities and he had earned notoriety for treating JKHCBA, Kashmir as his fiefdom and virtually converting it into a constituent of All Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC), the SIA chargesheet read.

During the major unrests, post 2008 in Kashmir, he was at the forefront of anti-India demonstrations and his calls for shutdowns coincided with the hartal calendars issued by Hurriyat, it said.

The SIA said he was very close to hardline Hurriyat leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani, whom he regarded as his political 'guru'.

He had also declared in open court during High Court proceedings that he neither considered himself a citizen of India nor believed in the Indian Constitution, the SIA chargesheet had said.

## Oppn should have...

adding that these parties should have risen about partisan conduct on the issue of space, which is very important in the 21st century for India's strategic and scientific interests.

He said that the heights India is reaching in its space sector development under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership are unprecedented.

The Opposition could have offered constructive criticism and suggestions by participating in the discussion, Singh said.

Initiating the discussion, Union Minister Jitendra Singh said amid the din of opposition's protest that an Indian astronaut will herald 'Viksit Bharat' by landing on the moon in 2040.

Parliament's Monsoon session has seen little transaction of official business in order, except for a two-day discussion on Operation Sindoor in both the Houses, due to the protests.

## Govt launches PM...

covered under the scheme, he said, adding that one can avail the incentive benefit by either registering on the portal or by uploading their UAN number on the UMANG App.

While Part A of the scheme is for first-time employees, Part B supports employees, Mandaviya said.

Under Part A, a one-time incentive equivalent to an average one-month wage (Basic+DA) of up to Rs 15,000 will be offered to first-time employees in two instalments, he explained.

The employer is entitled to get incentives under three slabs. If the salary of an employee is Rs 10,000 per month, then the employer will get an incentive of Rs 1,000. The employer of an employee with a monthly salary ranging between Rs

10,000-20,000 will get an incentive of Rs 2,000. Employers whose new employee has a salary up to Rs 30,000 will get a one-time incentive of Rs 3,000.

"The scheme will promote new job creation in the country and support new employees with the encouragement amount," the Minister said.

In a note, the ministry said employees with gross wages up to Rs 1 lakh will be eligible for the scheme under Part A.

Part B will provide an incentive for generation of additional employment in all sectors, with a special focus on the manufacturing sector.

"Under this part, the establishment will get an incentive up to Rs 3,000 per month for each additional employee (both first timer and re-joiner), for a sustained period of at least six months. The incentive shall be paid for 2 years. However, for establishments in the manufacturing sector, the incentives will be provided for 4 years," it said.

To be eligible under this part, establishments will be required to hire at least two additional employees (for employers with fewer than 50 existing employees) or five additional employees (for employers with 50 or more existing employees), on a sustained basis for at least six months.

As per the ministry, exempted establishments under the EPF & MP Act, 1952, are also included. They must file the electronic challan-cum-Return (ECR), and open UANs for all their existing & new employees using the facility provided on the UMANG App.

## Modi chairs high-level meet on next-gen reforms

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday chaired a high-level meeting, which included top Union ministers, secretaries and economists, to deliberate on the roadmap for the next generation reforms, one of the key announcements he had made in his Independence Day address. Union ministers Rajnath Singh, Amit Shah, Nitin Gadkari, Nirmala Sitharaman, Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Piyush Goyal and Lalan Singh attended the meeting, besides senior bureaucrats heading different ministries and economists. Modi said on X, "Chaired a meeting to discuss the roadmap for Next-Generation Reforms. We are committed to speedy reforms across all sectors, which will boost Ease of Living, Ease of Doing Business and prosperity." He had on August 15 announced the formation of a task force for 'next-generation reforms' and revision of GST laws, as he devoted a major part of his 103-minute speech to highlight the goal of making India self-reliant in a host of sectors ranging from semiconductors to fertilisers.

## Rain pounds Jammu region causing extensive damage; 2 persons washed away

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Heavy rains triggered flash floods and landslides at several places in the Jammu region on Monday, damaging multiple structures and roads, while two persons, including a minor, were washed away in the gushing torrent in the Rajouri-Poonch belt. Over a hundred people have been moved from the flood-hit areas to safer locations in the twin border districts of Rajouri and Poonch, officials said.

The downpour has disrupted daily life, with floodwaters entering homes and vehicular traffic disrupted. Officials said that farmers have also reported extensive damage to land and crops.

In Rajouri district's Mubarakhpura village, Atif Shah (20) got swept away by strong currents while crossing a river. Authorities have launched a massive search operation, but he is still missing.

In another such incident, 8-year-old Asia Kouser got washed away in a nallah in the Buzliar area of Poonch district and has not been traced yet, officials said.

"Heavy rains have wreaked havoc in Poonch district, causing widespread disruption. Rivers and streams, including the Pulis river and the Betaar nallah, are in spate," an official said.

Three houses on the banks of the Betaar nallah got washed away, while flash floods also struck several parts of Poonch, damaging two houses and a school, the official said, adding another house was damaged in a landslide.

"While no loss of life has been reported, property damage is significant. Rescue teams are removing people from vulnerable areas. The Jammu and Kashmir Police and the district administration have urged people to stay safe and avoid going near rivers and streams," another official said.

The deputy commissioner of Poonch, Ashok Kumar Sharma, who visited several flood-hit areas to assess the situation, said an advisory, warning of heavy rainfall in the next 56 hours, had been issued.

"We have relocated families from houses that were washed away. The civil administration, police, PWD and the flood control department are monitoring the situation closely," he added.

Incessant heavy rain triggered landslides in the Panjnara village of Rajouri district, prompting swift action by the administration. "Forty-eight people from 13 families were safely relocated to PHC Panjnara, preventing any loss of life," an official said. Earlier, Rajouri administration officials and an SDRF team assessed the damage and met the displaced families.

Land subsidence has damaged 22 houses, forcing immediate evacuation of locals to safer locations, officials said, adding the Suktoh and Sabto rivers were also in spate in Rajour. In Ramban, authorities issued a high-risk alert for landslides in five areas of the district following heavy rains.

"A high-risk alert has been issued for Ramban, Rajgarh, Pogal-Paristan, Khari and Banihal areas. Citizens are advised to avoid steep slopes and hill roads, stay vigilant, and follow official advisories," an official said.

Traffic on the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway remained suspended between Ramban and Banihal due to landslides and shooting stones, triggered by continuous heavy rainfall. Schools in the entire region remained shut.

In Jammu's Reasi, Samba and Kathua districts, rivers and nallahs, including the Chenab, Tawi, Ujh and Basantar, were flowing at high speed, flooding low-lying areas and localities.

The deputy commissioner of Kathua, Rajesh Sharma, visited various flood-hit areas on Monday and took stock of the damage. He directed authorities to ensure the restoration of the damaged roads at the earliest.

Multiple landslides triggered by incessant rains hit the Daggar area of Bani in Kathua district, blocking roads and forcing residents to commute on foot, officials said. A wall collapse at PHC Daggar damaged laboratories and testing equipment.

Following a recent cloudburst in Kathua's Jodh Ghati area that claimed seven lives and injured over six others, Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary on Monday visited the affected region along with senior National Conference leaders.

He inspected relief camps, met the victims, and reviewed damage to infrastructure, including a washed-out bridge.

## JKSAC seeks Schedule Tribe-II category certificates to Pahari speaking people of 1947 from POJK

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Jammu Kashmir Sharnarhi Action Committee (JKSAC) in a meeting held at Jammu apprised its senior participant members that a letter has been penned to Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah and Lt. Governor, Manoj Sinha to seek their immediate intervention for issuance of Schedule Tribe-II category certificates to the Pahari speaking people of 1947 from POJK, settled in other districts of Jammu region beyond Rajouri and Poonch.

The said certificates are not issued to them by the concerned administrative department and its designated authorities despite of crystal clear rules framed in this regard by the govt. JKsac also urged to Dr. Jitendra Singh, Vikram Randhawa and Arvind Gupta all Members Legislative Assembly to take up this legitimate issue immediately with the govt. as they have been given massive mandate by the Pahari speaking displaced persons residing in their respective constituencies.

Speaking in the meeting Gurdev Singh President alongwith Capt. Puran Singh Chib and Ajit Singh (Vice Presidents), Netar Parkash and V.K.Sudan (Secys.), Dwarka Nath Khajuria and Rajesh Khajuria said that certain vested interested elements within the concerned administrative departments has deliberately created the confusion and misinterpreting the rules/law leading to further complications for the govt. The participants strongly condemned this callous and discriminatory attitude of the concerned bureaucracy continuously in process to create discord between Pahari speaking ethnic group of 1947 from POJK and govt. of J&K.

He told the participants that it has become imperative now to highlight, that thousands of families migrated from the areas of Poonch, Muzfrabad and Mirpur districts of erstwhile princely state of J&K now POJK under unavoidable circumstances.

These displaced people were temporarily rehabilitated by the then govts., under its rehabilitation policy in different district/tehsils of Jammu region as per the availability of lands allotted to them, with the result that these POJK DP families having same distinct culture, ethnic and linguistic identities of Pahari community/ clan, speaking Pahari language got scattered.

He said that it is highly discriminatory that DPs residing in Poonch and Rajouri have been granted ST-2 status whereas their other relations residing in Jammu/Kathua/Samba/Udhampur etc. are denied the legitimate rights of being granted ST-II status.