

!! Continuations from Page 1 !! Rescue work underway...

near the border fencing in the Karkhola area of R S Pura, while another was found in the Teli Basti area of Bari Brahmana.

Men and machinery have been hard at work in low-lying areas to clear debris, mud, and stranded vehicles. Dozens of roads remain blocked due to several landslides. Reports suggest that connectivity to nearly 50 villages has been disrupted. More than 12,000 people have been evacuated from flood-hit areas so far. Water level in major rivers, such as Tawi, Chenab, Basantar; Ravi, and Ujh, has receded.

Extensive damage has been reported to public infrastructure, bridges, houses, and commercial establishments.

Northern Railways, which had cancelled 58 trains to and from Jammu and Katra on Wednesday, arranged special trains to ferry over 2,000 stranded passengers from Jammu. The death toll from the Vaishno Devi landslide in Reasi district has risen to 34 after more bodies were retrieved from the debris.

Officials said 24 bodies have been identified, 14 of them are women.

At least 20 others injured in the incident are undergoing treatment at different hospitals.

The landslide struck near Indraprastha Bhojnalaya at Ardhkuwari - around halfway on the 12-km trek from Katra to the shrine - around 3 pm on Tuesday.

In other rain-related incidents, four people died in Doda district on Tuesday.

The body of a BSF jawan was recovered from Pragwal, while another body was found in Akhnoor; it is yet to be identified.

In Lakhampur; along the Punjab border; the body of an irrigation department employee was recovered.

On August 14, a cloudburst triggered flash floods in Chisoti - the last motorable village en route to the Machail Mata shrine in Kishtwar district - leaving behind a trail of devastation.

At least 65 people, mostly pilgrims, were killed in those floods, over 100 were injured, and 32 remain missing.

Schools across Jammu...

access to schools. Heightened risk of landslides, mudslides and shooting stones in hilly and mountainous regions, poses serious threats to the safety of students and staff. Damage to road infrastructure, including blocked and eroded roads has made travel unsafe. Additionally, numerous representations and requests are being received from civil society members, parents and stakeholders across different districts, urging the administration to continue the closure of schools in the interest of student safety and security.

In light of the above circumstances, and keeping the safety and well-being of students, teachers and school staff as the highest priority, it is hereby ordered that all Government and private Schools across Jammu Division shall remain closed up to 30th August 2025.

The order further directs that 'Heads of Institutions (Hols) are advised to assess the feasibility of conducting online classes, especially for students of Classes 9 to 12, wherever suitable infrastructure and internet connectivity are available. It is reiterated that all Chief Education Officers (CEOs) and Hols, before resuming physical classes shall ensure strict compliance with the Standard Operating Procedures (Sops) for safe reopening of schools."

Parents and students have been requested to stay informed through official school communication channels for updates regarding the resumption of academic activities. All School Authorities must ensure thorough cleaning, sanitation and safety inspections of school buildings and premises prior to reopening.

CEOs and HOs shall consult the local administration before opening the Schools.

"The situation is being continuously monitored. Any further directions will be issued as per evolving weather and ground conditions. This order shall come into effect immediately and shall remain valid till 30th August 2025," the order added.

Inclement Weather: LA...

stand postponed/cancelled in light of the prevailing situation, arise due to the adverse weather conditions. The Secretariat further stated that since the administration is fully engaged in tackling the emergent situation arising out of adverse weather conditions, it has been decided to defer all scheduled meetings till September 5, 2025.

Will sit with...

He said just two days of rain brought Kashmir to the brink of floods.

"What will happen if it rains for four days? We will face a situation like 2014. We had then (2014) endured it (rainfall) for seven days and drowned on the eighth day. But now, we endured two days of rains with difficulty," he said.

Abdullah said the government needs to take corrective measures as people cannot live in the fear of floods every year. "After some days, I will sit with the officers and try to understand what we did after 2014. What was the money spent? How much carrying capacity of the flood channel was increased? How much did we succeed in increasing the carrying capacity by undertaking dredging in the Jhelum? "We have to take corrective measures wherever we are lagging..." he said.

Reviews preparations for...

not face any inconvenience in reaching the holy Hazratbal shrine. Transport should be managed in a manner that ensures safety, comfort, and it should be available easily and frequently," he stated.

On security arrangements, Omar Abdullah called for visible police presence, both male and female, to instill a sense of safety and prevent incidents of theft or disorder. He directed that sufficient deployment of lady police should be ensured in sensitive zones.

The Chief Minister instructed the Power Development Department to provide uninterrupted electricity during the Eid Milad celebrations. He said alternate arrangements such as generators with adequate fuel should be kept ready to deal with emergencies.

On sanitation, the CM stressed the use of newly procured mobile toilet units, regular deployment of sanitation workers, and proper waste management in and around shrine. He also directed to maintain availability of dewatering pumps, ambulances, fire tenders, health clinics, and standby hospitals to meet any contingency.

The Chief Minister further underscored the need to regulate the activities of NGOs and voluntary groups providing food, water, and other services. He directed that such camps should be set up in designated areas to avoid congestion and obstruction in movement.

Omar Abdullah also instructed all officers to ensure similar arrangements at other major shrines across Srinagar; including Aasar-i-Sharief Hazratbal, Jenab Sahib Soura, Aasar-i-Sharief Kalashpora, and other prominent religious locations, so that uniform facilities and safety measures are available to devotees everywhere.

The Chief Minister also stressed on making adequate availability of safe and clean drinking water which must be ensured throughout the religious occasion, along with sufficient deployment of public transport. He also directed the Food Safety Department to carry out regular checks to maintain quality and hygiene of food items being distributed and sold during the occasion.

Earlier, Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, SSP Srinagar and heads of departments briefed the Chief Minister about the preparations, including arrangements for electricity, health services, medicines, paramedics, mobile sanitation units, and parking facilities.

The meeting was attended by Advisor to the CM, Nasir Aslam Wani, MLA Hazratbal Salman Ali Sagar; Additional Chief Secretary to the CM Dheeraj Gupta, Director Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Commissioner SMC, Director Health Services Kashmir, Superintending Engineer R&B, Assistant Commissioner Revenue, SDM East, CMO Srinagar; Tehsildar Khanyar/North, Assistant Commissioner Food Safety, senior officers of Traffic, PHE, PDD, Fire & Emergency Services, officers of other line departments, Tehsildar J&K Wafk Board, and administrators of prominent shrines.

Earlier in the day, the Chief Minister visited the Hazratbal Shrine, which houses the revered Holy Relic of Prophet Muhammad (SAW), and took stock of the arrangements being made for the forthcoming observance of Eid-e-Milad-un-Nabi (SAW).

During his visit to the shrine premises, Omar Abdullah interacted with the shrine management, Wafk Board officials, and officers of the district administration. He was briefed about the measures being put in place to facilitate the expected large gatherings of devotees, particularly to address the issues of sanitation, electricity, water supply, health services, and fire safety.

Railways run special...

Public Relations Officer (PRO), Railways, Jammu, said.

Passengers can board the train from Jammu, Kathua, and other stops en route, he added.

This step has been taken by railway authorities following multiple requests to ensure greater convenience for passengers. Passengers are stranded at various railway stations, particularly Jammu, waiting for the Railways to resume train traffic.

Heavy rainfall in Jammu-Pathankot has affected the rail services in the Jammu division as railway tracks and bridges bore the brunt of the floods. Train services remain badly hit, leaving hundreds of passengers stranded at Jammu railway station. A majority of them are pilgrims returning from the Mata Vaishno Devi shrine in Katra, which was hit by a landslide on Tuesday, killing 34 people and injuring 20 others, officials said. Katra, the base camp for the pilgrims visiting Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine, also recorded a 24-hour rainfall of 284 mm on Wednesday.

Babita Jaisswal, a resident of Kanpur; said, "We were in Katra for two days, but were asked to leave and told that trains were operating from Jammu. We reached Jammu somehow by bus. There is no train or bus available from here... How will we go home now?

There is no place to stay, no provision for washrooms... Where will we go?" She said the stranded passengers want train services to be restored as soon as possible. Rail traffic, which was briefly restored on Wednesday morning with six trains departing from Jammu after a day-long suspension, has again been halted due to flash floods and heavy soil erosion in the Chakki river area, officials said.

Providing details, the PRO said 58 trains were cancelled, three partially cancelled, one partially restored, five fully restored, and three diverted. Additionally, 18 trains had short origins and 46 short terminations. In a humanitarian step, the Railways reached out to stranded passengers at several railway stations and took measures to provide food and lodging facilities in the prevailing bad weather conditions in the Jammu region. Food items and water were arranged in coordination with local NGOs and civil society for passengers of stranded trains at Manwal, Sangar and Gaghiwal, with the help of station staff, Railway Protection Force and Government Railway Police.

Two terrorists killed...

attack on a CRPF camp at Lariyar on May 20, 2025," the official said.

He added that a pistol, a pistol magazine and seven live 9 mm rounds were recovered from the suspect's possession.

CB arrests cashier...

by Chief Engineer immediately after financial irregularities and forgery were detected by the departmental enquiry committee, official said.

Senior Superintendent of Police Crime Jammu, Benam Tsh - confirmed that accused involved in case FIR No. 79/2022 under Section 409, 420, 465, 467, 468, 471 RPC, r/w Sec 5(2) Prevention of Corruption Act has been arrested and further legal process is underway.

CJI B R...

oath of office on July 23, 2023.

Justice Aradhe was transferred as the Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court and assumed charge on January 21, 2025.

He was enrolled as an advocate on July 12, 1988 and practised on civil and constitutional, arbitration and company matters in the Madhya Pradesh High Court. He was designated as a senior advocate in April 2007.

Born on May 28, 1968 at Ahmedabad, Justice Pancholi was elevated as an Additional Judge of the Gujarat High Court on October 1, 2014 and was confirmed as a permanent judge on June 10, 2016.

He was transferred to the Patna High Court and took oath as a judge there on July 24, 2023. Justice Pancholi became the Chief Justice of the Patna High Court on July 21, 2025. He entered the Bar in September 1991 and started practice as an advocate in the Gujarat High Court. He was appointed as an Assistant Government Pleader and Additional Public Prosecutor in the Gujarat High Court and served as such for seven years till March 2006. He also worked as a visiting faculty at Sir LA Shah Law College, Ahmedabad, from December 1993 for 21 years.

Let-up in...

has started receding, they added.

The tributaries of the river were also flowing below the flood alert level.

According to the officials, water has also started receding in the areas that were inundated on Wednesday. However, monitoring by various departments continues and teams are on alert.

The meteorological department said the weather in the valley has been mostly dry during the day so far, but a brief spell of rain is likely at a few places towards late afternoon and late night. A spell of light to moderate rain at scattered to fairly widespread places with a possibility of moderate to heavy rain or thundershowers in a few districts of Jammu is likely from August 30 to September 1, it said.

From September 2 to 6, a brief spell of rain or thundershowers is expected at a few places, it added. Addressing a press conference, Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir, Anshul Garg said while the situation is under control and there is no need to panic, the coming fortnight will be crucial.

"The water levels are receding, the levels at Sangam and Ram Munshibagh are receding and the weather forecast is similar for the next couple of days," he said.

PM Jan Dhan...

Yojana achieved. It enhanced dignity and gave people the power to script their own destiny." The prime minister, in another post, shared a post by MyGov on how PM Jan Dhan Yojana transformed lives across India. "Not math formulas, but Bharat's growth formulas. India's financial revolution is powered by one idea: inclusion through innovation. From last-mile banking to women-led empowerment, from transparent DBT transfers to trust in governance, PM Jan Dhan Yojana has transformed the way India banks, saves and grows," the MyGov post said. Another post by MyGov said, "11 years ago, PM Narendra Modi gave Bharat a promise that no poor family would remain outside the world of banking. Jan Dhan was never just about accounts, it was about opening doors for a mother to save with dignity, for a farmer to receive support without middlemen, and for a villager to feel part of the nation's growth." "PM Modi's vision turned financial inclusion into a reality, bringing hope into every home and confidence into every life," it said.

Terrorists targeted Baisaran...

disclosed the identities of the three assailants as Pakistani nationals affiliated to the proscribed outfit Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT).

The two men provided food, shelter and logistical support to the terrorists, NIA officials had said.

The three LeT terrorists, who were killed in the July 28 encounter code-named Operation Mahadev on the outskirts of Srinagar; had been hiding in the Dachigam-Harwan forest belt since the attack, they said.

In response to the Pahalgam attack, the Indian armed forces on May 7 carried out precision strikes at terrorist hideouts in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) under Operation Sindoor.

The operation targeted nine sites, including the headquarters and training centres of LeT and Jaish-e-Mohammed, from where terror attacks against India were planned and directed.

India hopeful of...

entire BTA (because of these high tariffs).

"Both (25 per cent reciprocal tariff and another 25 per cent penalty for buying Russian oil) need to be resolved to strike the deal," the official said.

The negotiations were progressing well but because of this blip, the sixth round of talks got postponed.

"We hope that we will get back to the table soon," the official said, adding whenever the deal is struck, the tariff issues need to be addressed.

The two countries started negotiations for BTA in March. So far, five rounds of negotiations have been completed. The US team, which was scheduled to visit India from August 25, for the next round of negotiations for the agreement, postponed the meeting.

The talks are paused as the US is pressing for greater market access in politically sensitive areas such as agri and dairy sectors, which India cannot accept as it affects the livelihood of small and marginal farmers.

When asked whether India will impose retaliatory duties on the US, the official said: "Retaliation and negotiations cannot go hand-in-hand. Right now, the talks are only postponed, it has not been taken off the table. So, why should we be worried?Retaliation is something which we can do at any point of time."

India has reserved its rights under the WTO (World Trade Organisation) norms to impose retaliatory duties on the US against Washington's taxes on steel and aluminium and auto and auto components.

The official added that the Indian industry's key demand is that "we should do the deal in the best interest of the country".

"We are engaged. We feel that India and the US are complementary economies and both countries need to arrive at a deal, but a deal which is a win-win proposition and which is in the national interest of both the countries," said the official who did not wish to be named.

Jammu-Srinagar NH...

police official said. He said commuters belonging to Katra and Udhampur towns are requested to keep their photo ID cards to prove their identity so that their movement can be facilitated smoothly. The men and machines of the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) are working to clear the highway of blockades, which occurred on Tuesday following heavy rains and flash floods, they said. According to the traffic advisory, the Kishtwar-Sinthan-Anantnag highway is closed for vehicular movement. It said subject to fair weather and good road condition, and after getting a green signal from the BRO, traffic movement shall be allowed in a regulated manner on the Srinagar-Sonamarg-Gumari road. LMVs followed by HMTs shall be allowed from Sonamarg towards Kargil between 1130 hours and 1730 hours. "No vehicle shall be allowed after the cut-off timing. Security forces convoys plying from Srinagar to Kargil and vice versa shall plan their movement in such a manner so that civil traffic is not disturbed," the advisory said. According to the advisory, movement of LMVs shall be allowed on Mughal Road between Shopian district of Kashmir and Poonch district of Jammu region, subject to fair weather and good road condition, after getting a green signal from road maintenance agencies. "LMVs and private cars shall be allowed from both sides on Mughal Road, i.e., from Jammu towards Srinagar and vice versa via Poonch. These vehicles shall be allowed from Behramgala in Poonch and Herpora in Shopian between 0700 hours and 1800 hours," it said.

'Unprecedented cloudburst-triggered landslide on Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Track'

■ **STATE TIMES NEWS**

KATRA: A few media reports have been circulating since yesterday alleging that Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Yatra was allowed to proceed in complete disregard to weather advisories and at the expense of pilgrim safety. Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVDSB) expressed deep sorrow and pain at the unfortunate loss of lives of pilgrims in the natural disaster on 26th August, and places on record the correct factual position to dispel the impression being created by the insinuating media reports. The Board categorically denies the allegations as false and baseless.

A Board spokesperson said that "The weather conditions had remained clear and conducive for pilgrimage on 26th August morning until around 10:00 AM, during which time the yatra proceeded normally, so much so that even the helicopter services were operating seamlessly during that time. In fact, the Board had made elaborate arrangements of positioning its enforcement staff and Disaster Management Task Force along the entire track as per its established standard operating procedure. The Board monitored weather updates closely and as soon as the forecast for moderate rains was received, registrations were immediately suspended. Majority of the Yatris were moving down the track after completing darshan at the Holy Cave Shrine. Thousands of yatris en-route had smoothly completed their pilgrimage back to Katra by then.

"However, many pilgrims stayed on in the shelter sheds en-route at designated halt points on the old track. These are those points/ stretches which have never been susceptible to landslides in the past. These halt points have been specifically created in the safest zones of the track, for pilgrim safety" Spokesperson said .

It was further informed that the new track between Katra and Adhkwari (through Tarakote), which is susceptible to landslides and weather-related disruptions, had already been closed since 24th August in the interest of pilgrim safety. The old track, which is generally secure and not prone to slides/shooting stones (having stabilized over the last many decades), was kept open for pilgrim movement with a close watch on weather conditions. Even yatra on this track was suspended by 12:00 noon on 26th August upon issuance of the specific weather advisory.

The location where this unfortunate disaster happened was near Inderprastha Bhojanalaya on the old track. This is one of the safest locations on the track. However, nature's fury struck in the form of sudden severe cloudburst in this stretch of around 50 meters only, which triggered the massive landslide at 2:40 PM. It was unpredictable and unforeseen from any count. No such event of land slide has ever been recorded in this area in the past. The event was a force majeure.

The Shrine Board's Disaster Management Task Force which was spread along the track immediately responded in close coordination with District Administration, Reasi, J&K Police, CRPF, Army, NDRE, SDRF, and volunteers, launching swift evacuation and relief operations. 18 pilgrims who had sustained injuries were safely evacuated and shifted for superspecialty care in Shrine Board's Hospital at Kakryal after giving them first aid along the track. Stranded pilgrims were safely evacuated to Katra through Tarakot Marg by the evening of 26th August. Simultaneously debris clearance, slope inspection, and stabilization were undertaken on a war footing. The Board has, over the years, taken concerted steps to undertake slope stabilization and mountain binding activities. Robust shelter sheds to guard against stray shooting stones have been laid along almost the entire track.

The Board reiterates that every reasonable precaution was taken keeping in view weather forecasts. The unfortunate cloudburst resulting in loss of precious lives was not humanly foreseeable and was thus, beyond anyone's anticipation or control. The Board has at all times acted strictly in line with official weather forecasts and advisories, with pilgrim safety and well-being as its foremost priority. "The Shrine Board stands firmly with the bereaved families in this hour of grief and every possible assistance will be provided to the NoKs of the deceased devotees. Injured are being provided with the best possible medical treatment and the Shrine Board prays to Mata Vaishno Devi for their quick recovery" Spokesperson said.

Magistrate acted as 'Post Office' of Police: HC slams PSA detention

■ **STATE TIMES NEWS**

JAMMU: The High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh quashed the preventive detention of a Kulgam resident under the Public Safety Act (PSA), remarking that the District Magistrate had acted as a "post office" of the police dossier without applying his independent mind.

Justice Rahul Bharti, while allowing petition, set aside detention order No. 20/DMK/PSA/2024 dated September 10, 2024, passed by the District Magistrate, Kulgam against Rayees Ahmad Thoker of Shounch, Kulgam.

Thoker, represented by Advocate Wajid Mohammad Haseeb, was booked in two FIRs of 2019 and 2020 but had already been granted bail. Despite this, the Superintendent of Police, Kulgam, recommended his detention, projecting him as an active Over Ground Worker (OGW). Acting on the dossier; the District Magistrate ordered custody under PSA. The Court observed that the detention order's wording-"on the basis of grounds placed before me by the Superintendent of Police, Kulgam"-made it clear that the Magistrate had abdicated his duty of independent application of mind. Justice Bharti said such practice was "antithetical to law" and declared the detention "illegal from inception." The Court directed that Thoker, presently in Central Jail, Srinagar; be released forthwith unless required in any other case.

State-Track Court convicts man for raping 6-year-old minor

■ **STATE TIMES NEWS**

JAMMU: In a landmark judgment delivered today, the Presiding Officer Fast Track Court Jammu Amarjeet Singh Langeh convicted Sohan Lal alias Sonu for raping a 6-year-old girl in 2015. Presiding Officer Amarjeet Singh Langeh held the accused guilty under Section 376 of the Ranbir Penal Code (RPC), observing that the prosecution had "proved complicity of the accused beyond reasonable doubt."

The gruesome crime occurred on May 2, 2015, when the minor was returning home after buying onions from a nearby shop. According to the prosecution, the accused lured her into a wheat field, gagged her mouth, and sexually assaulted her. The child's father, on hearing her screams, rushed to the spot and saw the accused fleeing, leaving his daughter bleeding and injured.

The victim required emergency medical treatment and remained admitted in hospital for nearly a month due to severe injuries. Medical and forensic reports confirmed sexual assault, with human spermatozoa found on the victim's clothes and the underwear of the accused.

Eye-witnesses, including the victim's father and owner of a nearby poultry farm, corroborated the prosecution case. The accused, however, claimed innocence, alleging false implication, but the court found his defence unreliable. "The testimony of the minor victim, supported by medical, forensic and ocular evidence, is coherent and wholly trustworthy," the court observed, declaring Sohan Lal guilty. The court will now hear arguments on the quantum of sentence on August 30, 2025.

Unidentified Nepali national found dead under suspicious circumstances

■ **STATE TIMES NEWS**

JAMMU: An unidentified dead body, suspected to be that of a Nepali national, was found under mysterious circumstances in the Chak Dena area of Marh on Wednesday.

According to official sources, the body was found early in the morning by locals, who immediately informed the police. Responding promptly, personnel from Police Station Domana arrived at the scene and took charge of the situation.

Inquest proceedings under Section 194 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) have been initiated to determine the cause and circumstances surrounding the death. The deceased, whose identity remains unknown, has been shifted to the mortuary at Government Medical College (GMC), Jammu. Authorities are currently awaiting identification and further leads.

Police have appealed to the public to come forward with any information that may help identify the deceased. "We request citizens to have a close look at the deceased at the mortuary and report to Police Station Domana if any identification is possible," a police spokesperson stated.

Further investigation is ongoing, and forensic and medical examinations will assist in establishing both the identity and cause of death.

