

Cont. From Page 1

46 killed, scores missing as cloudburst hits Machail yatra's base camp debris. All the injured were shifted to the nearby Atholi hospital. However, the seriously injured were later referred to the Kishtwar district hospital.

The body of one CISF official had been recovered, and three others remained missing. They were deployed on a temporary internal security assignment at the temple.

Two teams of NDRF had been rushed from Udhampur to Chositi.

Officials said a large-scale rescue operation was underway by NDRF, SDRF, police, Army and local volunteers. At least 300 Army troops were engaged in the rescue operation, officials said.

Chositi is about 90 km from Kishtwar town. A langar (community kitchen) set up for the pilgrims, some shops and a security picket bore the brunt of the cloudburst as all these structures were washed away, officials said.

The yatra to the Machail Mata shrine was suspended following the tragedy as the authorities had mobilised all resources for the rescue operations, officials said.

The rescue operations were continuing when reports last came in tonight.

Meanwhile, Union Home Minister Amit Shah spoke to LG Manoj Sinha and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah to take stock of the situation and assured them all possible help needed by the people.

Shah also said that the local administration was conducting relief and rescue operations and teams of the National Disaster Response Force had rushed to the site.

"Spoke with the LG and Chief Minister of J&K on the cloudburst in Kishtwar district. The local administration is conducting relief and rescue operations. NDRF teams have promptly been rushed to the site," he wrote on 'X'.

The home minister said the central government is closely monitoring the situation and stand firmly with the people of Jammu and Kashmir through every situation. "Assured of all possible assistance to the people in need," he said.

Ktwr cloudburst: LG says rescue operation in full swing post in X.

"Rescue & relief operations at Chositi are in full swing. Men and machinery have been put at the site. Other teams have also been rushed," he said.

At least 20 people, including two CISF personnel, were killed and many feared trapped after a massive cloudburst struck the remote mountain village on Thursday, officials said. While 98 people had been res-

IGP Sujit, SSP Sundeep, martyr Himayun among GM Awardees
DIGs Rashmi, Junaid get PM for Distinguished Service



JAMMU, AUG 14: IGP (crime) Sujit Kumar, SSP, Srinagar, G V Sundeep Chakravarthy, and martyr DSP Himayun Muzzamil are among the 127 police officers who have been awarded the Gallantry Medal (GM) on the Independence Day.

Muzzamil, also a Kirti Chakra awardee (posthumously), attained martyrdom while fighting terrorists in an encounter in south Kashmir's Anantnag district on September 13, 2023.

Two DIGs - Rashmi Wazir and Sheikh Junaid Mahmood - have been awarded the President's Medal for Distinguished Service (PSM).

While Rashmi is currently posted as DIG UR Range, Junaid is posted as DIG IR, Kashmir.

cued so far, the condition of 28 was said to be serious.

The LG said he briefed the home minister on rescue and relief operations by various agencies.

"The home minister has assured all possible assistance," Sinha said.

Every possible help will be provided: PM on Ktwr cloudburst

The disaster struck Chositi when a large number of people had gathered for the annual Machail Mata yatra.

In a post on X, Modi said, "My thoughts and prayers are with all those affected by the cloudburst and flooding in Kishtwar, Jammu and Kashmir. The situation is being monitored closely. Rescue and relief operations are underway."

"Every possible assistance will be provided to those in need," he added.

J&K police bags 127 Gallantry Medals, highest in country

made as part of the Union Ministry of Home Affairs' list of medal awardees across Police, Fire, Home Guard, Civil Defence, and Correctional Services.

These awards recognise acts of bravery, distinguished service, and meritorious contributions by police personnel across states and Union Territories.

Along with the gallantry honors, the Jammu and Kashmir Police also received two President's Police Medals for Distinguished Service (PSM) and 14 Police Medals for Meritorious Service (MSM).

The impressive tally highlights the continued role of J&K police in counter-insurgency operations, internal security management, and maintaining law and order in one of the most sensitive regions in the country.

The 127 Gallantry Medals awarded to J&K personnel far outnumber the medals awarded to other forces such as the CRPF (20), Chhattisgarh Police (14), Uttar Pradesh Police (17) and Odisha Police (9). This underlines the extraordinary operational challenges and exem-

J&K statehood 'restoration'

Consider ground realities, remember Pahalgam attack: SC to petitioners

NEW DELHI, AUG 14: The Supreme Court today asked petitioners, seeking direction to the union government to make good its promise to restore Jammu and Kashmir's statehood, to be aware of the 'ground realities' like the Pahalgam terror attack.

The court also sought a response from the Centre on the plea.

"You also have to take into consideration the ground realities. You cannot ignore what has happened at Pahalgam," Chief Justice of India (CJI), on a bench comprising Justice K Vinod Chandran, said when counsel including senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan sought an early hearing.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, sought dismissal of the plea and said in the past too, the court had imposed costs on such pleas.

"Elections are held, my lords are aware of the peculiar position emerging from this part of the country and there are several considerations which go into decision-making," Mehta said.

The bench posted the plea for hearing after eight

weeks.

Sankarnarayanan, appearing for one of the petitioners, said it had been 21 months since that judgment was passed by the Constitution bench on issues including the abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution.

"There has been no movement partly because, my lords fairly trusted the Union when they made this statement before the court that they will implement the statehood," he said. Referring to the judgment, he said the bench did not address the issue in view of the assurance given by the solicitor general that the statehood to Jammu and Kashmir will be restored. Sankaranarayanan said the bench had merely directed that restoration of statehood at the earliest and did not set any timeline.

On December 11, 2023, the Supreme Court unanimously upheld the revocation of Article 370, which accorded a special status to the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir, even as it ordered that assembly elections be held in the union territory by September 2024 and its statehood be restored "at the earliest".

play bravery exhibited by the J&K police in the face of adversity.

LG Kavinder pushes for global branding of Ladakh pashmina

cantly enhance the income of artisans, entrepreneurs and self-help groups (SHGs). He also expressed deep grief over the Kishtwar cloudburst tragedy.

He asserted that making the Pashmina sector more lucrative and secure would rekindle the interest of youth from the Changthang region, encouraging them to embrace it as a sustainable livelihood.

The LG reiterated the UT administration's firm commitment to extend timely assistance for value addition and marketing of pashmina products outside Ladakh to ensure better market access and higher returns for local producers.

Interacting with artisans, entrepreneurs and the members of All Changthang Pashmina Growers Cooperative Marketing Society during his visit to the Pashmina Dehairing Plant and Lena Weaving Unit at Leh Industrial Estate, he emphasised enhancing the quality of pashmina wool, diversifying product lines, and adopting modern processing techniques.

He called for a comprehensive branding strategy rooted in authenticity, cultural heritage, and premium quality, supported by effective national and global outreach campaigns.

To gain firsthand insight into the facilities and benefits extended to artisans, start-ups, and entrepreneurs by the UT administration through the Industries & Commerce and Animal/Sheep Husbandry departments, the LG inspected multiple units at the industrial estate, including aluminium and steel fabrication, woodcarving, sculpting and pashmina weaving units.

He also called for the need to foster entrepreneurship among local youth, urging them to actively explore opportunities in the pashmina sector and re-

lated industries.

He stressed that the youth should not depend solely on government jobs; instead, they should strive to become job providers rather than becoming job seekers.

He encouraged them to take full advantage of various Centrally Sponsored Schemes and financial assistance programmes launched by the Government of India, which provide skill development, start-up support, and market linkages.

By combining Ladakh's traditional craftsmanship with modern business models, he said, the youth can create sustainable livelihoods, generate local employment, and carry forward the rich legacy of the region's artisanal heritage to national and global markets.

Administrative secretary Rudra Goud PT informed Gupta that the Pashmina Dehairing Plant had the capacity to process 10 kg of raw pashmina per hour, greatly benefiting stakeholders in the sector.

Members of the cooperative apprised the LG of the functioning of the Pashmina Scouring and Dehairing machines.

During his visit to the woodcarving unit of Padma Shri awardee Tsering Namgyal, Gupta lauded his exceptional artistry and urged him to continue making Ladakh proud through his creations.

Councillors from Chushul and Kungyam, senior government officials, and the directors of concerned departments accompanied the LG during his visit to the Leh industrial estate.

Meanwhile, the LG also expressed deep sorrow over the tragic loss of lives caused by a massive cloudburst and resulting flash floods at Chashoti in Kishtwar district of Jammu.

In his message, he conveyed his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families and prayed for the speedy recovery of those injured. He also prayed to the Almighty for the safety and well-being of all residents in the affected area.

"Words cannot lessen the grief of the families who have lost their loved ones in this calamity. My prayers and thoughts are with them in this hour of profound sorrow. I also commend the tireless efforts of the rescue & relief teams working in difficult conditions to save lives," the LG said.

RDD JE held in graft case

Himalayan Mail News
JAMMU, AUG 14

The ACB today arrested a junior engineer of rural development department in a graft case.

According to officials, the ACB received a written complaint, stating that a payment of Rs 7.5 lakh, pertaining to works executed by the complainant, was pending with RDD, Shopian but the JE concerned allegedly demanded Rs 20,000 for facilitating the release of the payment.

The complainant then approached ACB. After discreet verification, a case under section 7 of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, was registered at ACB police station, Anantnag, and investigation was initiated, officials said.

A trap team, along with independent witnesses, was constituted to carry forward the investigation. During the operation, the accused JE was caught red-handed while demanding and accepting the bribe amount of Rs 20,000, which was recovered from his possession in the presence of witnesses. He was arrested on the spot.

Immediately after registration of the FIR, searches were conducted at his residential premises at Kachdoora, Shopian, and Kanipora, Nowgam, Srinagar.

Further investigation into the case was in progress.

3 OGWs held with pistol

Himalayan Mail News
JAMMU, AUG 14

Security forces today apprehended three OGWs from HAJIN Kralgund area of North Kashmir's Handwara district.

Officials said that a joint team of Army, police and CRPF, during a search operation, arrested three terrorist associates (OGWs).

They were identified as Mohammad Iqbal Pandith, son of Shareef Din Pandith of Bumpora Langate, Sajad Ahmad Shah, son of Bashir Ahmad Shah of Chekparin, and Ishfaq Ahmad Malik, son of Shabir Ahmad Malik of Kralgund.

From their possession, one pistol along with its two rounds, 20 rounds of AK and 20 posters were recovered, officials said.

Police had registered case in this regard.

Satish launches Mascot, Logo, Anthem, Jerseys for Khelo India Water Sports Festival 2025

SRINAGAR, AUGUST 14: Minister for Youth Services and Sports, Satish Sharma and Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA), Zadibal, Tanvir Sadiq, on Thursday released the logo, mascot, anthem, jingle and jerseys for the athletes and support staff, volunteers and officials of the first-ever Khelo India Water Sports Festival 2025.

In a historic first, the Khelo India Water Sports Festival 2025 is being hosted by Jammu and Kashmir on the pristine water of the Dal Lake in Srinagar from August 21 to 23.

Himalayan Kingfisher inspires the vibrant mascot of the Khelo India Water Sports Festival 2025. Swift, fearless and at home on the water, it embodies the spirit of adventure, nature and competition on Dal Lake. With its bold orange and blue, it represents energy, tranquility and the beauty of Kashmir. More than a symbol, it's the festival's ambassador, promoting eco-friendly sports, tourism and youth engagement nationwide.

The Khelo India Water Sports Festival logo captures the essence of Kashmir, featuring a Shikara gliding on Dal Lake, framed by snow-capped moun-

tains and pine trees. Its calm reflections mirror the beauty of Kashmir while the Khelo India colours unite tradition, nature and the energy of sport.

The anthem and jingles for the Khelo India Water Sports Festival 2025 celebrate the region's breathtaking beauty, youthful energy and spirit of sportsmanship. These blends Kashmiri, Urdu and Hindi verses to showcase Dal Lake's shimmering waters, the colourful stories cradled in Kashmir and the cultural charm of the region. The lyrics evoke pride and unity, sporting a caravan of dreams that inspire athletes to turn their aspirations into reality. The tracks fuse soulful imagery with uplifting beats, creating an anthem that mirrors the beauty, passion, and togetherness of the games.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister, who also performed the host city activation of the event, said that the 800 athletes and hundreds of other visiting officials from 28 states and eight union territories, who would participate in the Khelo India Water Sports Festival would return as the brand ambassadors of Jammu and Kashmir. He said that hosting of the



first-ever Khelo India Water Sports Festival will go a long way in promoting not just sports but also tourism in Jammu and Kashmir.

Speaking on the occasion, MLA Zadibal, Tanvir Sadiq, said that hosting major event like Khelo India Water Sports Festival will help in uplifting the economy of the region, besides promoting sports and tourism.

The Khelo India Winter Sports Games have already crowned Gulmarg as India's

winter sports capital. With the launch of the Khelo India Water Sports Festival on Dal Lake, we are set to redefine the region's sports landscape and establish it as a national water sports hub," Sadiq said, proudly highlighting the significance of this moment for Jammu and Kashmir.

Earlier, while briefing the dignitaries about the Khelo India Water Sports Festival, Commissioner Secretary Social Welfare and Youth Services and Sports,

Sarmad Hafeez said the different stakeholders like the hoteliers, shikarawalas, travel agents and various departments had been roped in to make the event a success.

Sarmad Hafeez said that the festival would showcase the diverse culture of Jammu and Kashmir, including Kashmiri, Gujjar and Bakerwal, Dard Shina and Dogri. He said that the registrations for the event were being done by the Sports Authority of India (SAI) while

Doordarshan would provide live coverage.

Secretary J&K Sports Council, Nuzhat Gul, presented the vote of thanks.

Pertinently, the maiden Khelo India Water Sports Festival, 2025, will be inaugurated in Dal Lake on August 21. This marks a proud moment for Jammu and Kashmir, bringing national sports attention to Dal Lake and its athletes. The event will present a unique opportunity to showcase Kashmir's diverse charm on a national platform and transform into a grand celebration of local tourism, handicrafts, art and culture.

All concerned departments including Tourism, Power Development Department (PDD), Jal Shakti, Traffic, Hospitality and Protocol, Civil Aviation, Airports Authority, Lakes and Waterways Management Authority (LCMA), Handicrafts and Handloom, State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), Health, and Fire and Emergency Services have been instructed to deliver their responsibilities with the highest standards of efficiency.

Kashmir, which has already hosted all five editions of the Khelo India Winter Games, is

ready with robust arrangements to welcome around 800 athletes and officials from 28 states and eight Union Territories, competing across five water sports disciplines over the three days event.

The competitions will include Kayaking, Canoeing and Rowing, along with demonstration sports such as Dragon Boat, Water Skiing and a unique Shikara Race. Besides, Coordination Committees have been formed for various functional areas, with a dedicated State Liaison Officer (SLO) assigned to each team for seamless facilitation.

An elaborate opening ceremony is set to feature a drone light show, traditional folk dances, celebrity performances and stalls showcasing local street cuisine, art, culture and Self-Help Group (SHG) products.

Being organised by the J&K Sports Council in collaboration with the Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports and the Sports Authority of India (AI), the festival is poised to be a landmark event celebrating Kashmir's natural beauty, adventure spirit and cultural richness.