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11 killed, several missing as flash floods, landslides wreak havoc

hammad Hafiz, and three children, aged between two and six years, were, however, rescued with injuries and shifted to a hospital, officials said.

Shahzaib Ahmad lost his life when his house collapsed at Sanglani, while a minor girl, who was identified as Iram, drowned in a swollen stream at Marhote. An unidentified body of a woman was also fished out from a stream near Dhundak Lathoong bridge, officials said.

Nearly half a dozen houses gave way to heavy rains at Haveli, Poonch, resulting in the death of a person and critical injuries to another, officials said.

The body of a woman was also fished out from a river in Rajouri town which was hit by flash floods following incessant overnight rains, forcing hundreds of residents to move to safer locations as floodwaters inundated low-lying areas.

Dozens of vehicles were swept away or submerged after overflowing rivers breached their banks, causing widespread disruption, officials said.

Rescue & relief teams, assisted by local administration, were engaged in evacuating affected families and assessing the damage.

The rescuers pulled a couple of individuals safely from Rajouri's Muradpur area after they got trapped by rapidly rising water levels triggered by persistent heavy rainfall.

Meanwhile, the district administration urged people to avoid visiting rivers, streams, and other flood-prone areas, as water levels remained dangerously high.

"I spoke to senior officials and reviewed the situation in Rajouri and Poonch districts affected by incessant rains and flash floods. In Rajouri, rescue teams from the civil administration, police, Army, SDRF and local volunteers are actively working on the ground. Affected families have already been moved to safety. All departments are on high alert, and they are prioritising immediate relief & repair work. I urge residents to stay calm and follow official updates. I am deeply saddened by the loss of lives in Rajouri and Poonch's Haveli and Surankote areas. My heart goes out to the grieving families. The heavy rains have also damaged several homes across Rajouri and Poonch. I have directed officials to provide immediate aid to all affected families in both districts and ensure that emergency teams remain fully prepared for any situation," the LG said in a post on X.

The chief minister also took to X to announce that he was returning from Delhi, and would personally monitor the situation on the ground.

"In light of the weather warning put out by the meteorological department and the seriousness of the situation unfolding across parts of Jammu division, I will leave Delhi to fly to Jammu this afternoon to personally monitor the situation on the ground," he said.

"Since first light this morning, I've been closely monitoring the situation arising from the extremely heavy rains in parts of Jammu, especially Rajouri town & surrounding areas. I've been in touch with local MLAs. While the situation continues to unfold, the first priority of the administration is to safeguard precious lives. The government will do everything possible to aid & assist affected people who have suffered property loss/damage due to the rains & flash floods," he said.

Abdullah also stated that the NC's planned statehood protest in Delhi on July 20 would continue as scheduled under the leadership of party president Farooq Abdullah.

"The government will do everything possible to aid & assist affected people who have suffered property loss/damage due to rains & flash floods. Intense rainfall has resulted in severe flooding across Poonch and Rajouri, where rising waters from Dharhali River devastated local infrastructure and public transport facilities at Bela Bus Stand," he said.

Meanwhile, in a swift and coordinated rescue operation lasting several hours, police and SDRF successfully rescued three boys stranded in Tawi River near Peer Kho Temple in Jammu, following a sudden rise in the water level.

They were identified as Randeep Singh of Jhullaka Mohalla, Munish Sharma of Afghana Mohalla and Vikas Kumar of Bihar.

In another successful rescue operation, Army, police and SDRF personnel rescued two boys who were found trapped in flooded Dhangri river and another nine stranded persons in Thanamandi area of Rajouri.

Shah speaks to LG, CM; reviews J&K flood situation

time to trace the missing amid continuing rain and damaged roads, officials said.

Officials said the LG and the CM gave the home minister details of the damages caused by cloudburst and rain-triggered landslides.

Sinha also reviewed the situation in the rain and flash flood-hit districts and directed officials to ensure immediate relief and assistance to the affected families.

Abdullah, who was in Delhi for the proposed statehood protest, said he was cutting short his visit and would return to Jammu in the afternoon in view of the worsening situation across parts of the division.

Shiv Khori yatra suspended

"In view of the weather forecast of heavy rains issued by the IMD and the inclement weather in Ransoo area, the pilgrimage to Shiv Khori shrine has temporarily been suspended," officials said.

"The situation is being continuously monitored," officials said and urged devotees to check the latest updates before planning their visit to the shrine.

Officials said a decision regarding the resumption of the pilgrimage would be taken based on improvement in weather conditions and safety assessments.

Pak drone recovered from Purmandal

tion was conducted in the area soon after the recovery of the quadcopter, officials said.

The drone was sent for forensic examination to determine its origin, technical specifications, and whether it was used for any cross-border activity, the officials added.

Earlier on July 14, a drone was seized from an open field near Devak village.

2 detained for 'obscene act' near Bhawan

boys and two girls had engaged in an obscene activity, which had inconvenienced pilgrims and hurt their religious sentiments.

Taking cognisance of the matter, police registered an FIR under relevant sections of BNS and launched an investigation to identify and apprehend the accused.

During investigation, a special police team detained two accused: Pritam Singh of Talwara and a juvenile. The juvenile was handed over to his family after completing necessary legal formalities in accordance with the provisions of the Juvenile Justice Act, officials said.

Officials said efforts were underway to trace the remaining accused.

NTA warns against AI-generated OMR sheets

that many of the OMR sheets submitted with complaints appeared to be fake or created using artificial intelligence (AI).

"NTA is closely monitoring and scrutinising all complaints. In the wake of many OMR sheets submitted for scrutiny turning out to be fake/AI-generated, students and parents are advised to submit only original OMRs for scrutiny. Any fake/AI-generated OMR may invite legal action against the complainant," the agency said in an advisory.

The results for the medical entrance were announced on July 16, with 11.21 lakh candidates qualifying the exam.

The NTA cancelled the May 3 exam on May 12 amid allegations of a paper leak; the CBI is investigating the matter, and the exam was re-conducted on June 21.

Following the controversy over the paper leak and alleged irregularities in the exam process, the Centre announced that the exam will now be conducted as a computer-based test (CBT) instead of pen-and-paper mode.

Detailed deliberations have been ongoing for several years between the education and health ministries on whether to conduct NEET-UG in pen-and-paper or online mode.

The National Eligibility cum Entrance Test-Undergraduate (NEET-UG) is the country's largest undergraduate entrance exam, with nearly 25 lakh candidates registering annually.

The NTA conducts the test every year for admission into medical colleges, where 108,000 seats are available for the MBBS course. Of these, approximately 56,000 are in government hospitals and about 52,000 are in private colleges. Undergraduate courses in dentistry, Ayurveda, Unani and Siddha also utilise NEET results for admissions.

Jitendra calls for public movement against lifestyle diseases

municable diseases must move beyond hospitals and become a mass public movement centred on early detection, right medical advice and evidence-based healthcare.

"The country today faces not merely a lack of awareness but also the challenge of widespread health misinformation, making scientific communication and evidence-based health communication more important than ever for realising the vision of Viksit Bharat," he said while addressing the launch of "UNBROKEN: My Battle with Cancer and the Will to Lead", eminent Scientist and former Senior Adviser, Department of Science & Technology, Dr Akhilesh Gupta.

The event was attended by eminent medical professionals, academic and scientific fraternity, senior government officials, researchers and members of the scientific community, who came together to celebrate Dr Gupta's remarkable journey of resilience after overcoming cancer.

Describing the book as much more than a personal memoir, Dr Singh said it chronicles an extraordinary journey of courage, resilience, integrity and unwavering faith in science.

Having read the book in its entirety, he said it offers important lessons not only for patients battling serious illnesses but also for doctors, scientists, administrators and young professionals, demonstrating how determination and the right medical guidance can transform adversity into inspiration.

EAM meets Zanzibar Prez, resolves to expand bilateral ties

ing example of our close partnership and India's enduring commitment to Africa's education and development priorities."

The high-profile meeting aligns with the broader momentum between India and Tanzania as the two democracies accelerate their strategic alliance via technology transfers, institutional growth, and shared capacity-building projects.

President Mwinyi reached the capital city after anchoring trade and academic events in Chennai, where he participated as the Chief Guest at the 63rd Convocation Ceremony of the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras on Friday.

During his southern India itinerary, the visiting leader strongly advocated for robust academic exchange programmes, pinpointing the IIT Madras Zanzibar operational facility, the premier international outpost for any IIT, as the anchor of this relationship.

On Saturday evening, Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal received the African dignitary at the airport.

"Warmly welcome Hussein Ali Mwinyi, President of Zanzibar, United Republic of Tanzania and Chairman of the Revolutionary Council, as he arrives in New Delhi," Jaiswal said in a post on X.

He said, "The visit follows President Mwinyi's successful engagements in Chennai yesterday, where he attended the 63rd Convocation Ceremony of IIT Madras as the Chief Guest."

Underlining the geopolitical weight of the state visit, Jaiswal added, "The visit reflects the growing momentum in the India-Tanzania Strategic Partnership, building on long-standing people-to-people ties and our shared priorities as partners in the Global South."

The ongoing visit will catalyse future-ready pacts in healthcare infrastructure, industrial capacity building, and digital public architecture, positioning the iconic IIT Madras Zanzibar campus as the blueprint for India's geopolitical and educational outreach across the Global South.

Govt defends inviting rebel TMC MPs

tive support to bills".

He was speaking after the all-party meeting convened ahead of the Monsoon session.

As many as 20 out of 28 TMC MPs have revolted against the party leadership following its defeat in assembly elections in West Bengal and joined the Nationalist Citizens Party of India (NCPI).

Rebel TMC MPs Sudip Bandyopadhyay and Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar attended the all-party meeting, drawing protests from the opposition parties, which staged a symbolic walk-out. The opposition later returned to participate in the meeting.

"The NCPI requested recognition from the Lok Sabha Speaker; how can you ignore them? It is the government's duty to invite everyone," Rijiju told reporters.

Rijiju said the Government has listed eight bills for the Monsoon Session, and if there is additional business, it will follow necessary procedures.

He said in the past, protests by the opposition led to disruptions in the House, harming the interests of the country and its people.

"By protesting, no one is going to benefit politically. That is why I requested members of all political parties to take part in the proceedings wholeheartedly," he said.

The minister said all parties should work together for the nation and the Government has noted the suggestions of the opposition.

"All parties have the right to speak in parliamentary democracy; I urge them to give their positive support to bills," he said.

The all-party meeting was chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Union Health Minister JP Nadda, Rijiju and opposition leaders from different political parties.

The monsoon session will begin on Monday and will continue till August 13.

Govt to table Bill giving 'Vande Mataram' legal protection

President Rajendra Prasad had stated that the song Vande Mataram composed by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, which played a historic role in the Indian freedom struggle, shall be honoured equally with 'Jana-Gana-Mana' and shall have equal status with it, the Statement of Objects and Reasons of the Bill said.

"Presently, there is no specific legal provision to prevent insults to the singing of Vande Mataram, which is honoured as the National Song," it said.

Army Commander visits Ladakh frontline

acted with participants of the Fire and Fury Corps' multi-modal white-water rafting and mountain terrain biking adventure expedition that was conducted in the run-up to the Kargil Vijay Diwas -- observed annually on July 26.

"Army Commander visited a frontline division in Ladakh sector. He was briefed on the measures undertaken towards absorption of niche technologies, induction of next-generation weapons and equipment and adoption of innovative procedures to enhance operational effectiveness," the Northern Command said in a post on X.

It said Lt Gen Sharma interacted with all ranks and appreciated the formation's operational dynamism and innovative strategies curated to meet diverse contingencies.

"He commended troops for their professionalism, indomitable courage and relentless devotion to duty in the challenging high-altitude operating environment.

"Felicitating the troops for their invaluable contribution, the Army Commander exhorted all ranks to sustain the momentum of excellence, train harder and remain resolute in overcoming every challenge with a strong determination," it said.

Mahayajna breathing new life into our spiritual legacy: LG

from Baramulla across Jammu & Kashmir and the entire country. For many centuries, Baramulla remained a gateway of culture, a confluence of ideas, and a great centre of spiritual knowledge. Through the today's sammelan, we are reviving our glorious heritage of Baramulla," he added.

"Our ancestors, sages and seers prayed 'Loka? Samasta? Sukhino Bhavantu' - may all beings everywhere be happy and healthy. The view of our sages was always inclusive and compassionate, and today, as the world struggles with divisions and conflicts, the prayers rising from this sacred land of Baramulla, and the verses of Vedas and the Bhagavad Gita offer humanity a powerful message of peace, goodwill and coexistence," Sinha said.

"Our great tradition teaches us to see God in every person," he said and added, "The spirit of our spiritual tradition removes distinctions of language, region, caste and custom and India stands as a symbol where all religions have flourished," he added.

"This sammelan is a living expression of that national unity, and that is India's true identity. In the rapidly changing world and a new way of life, we must strengthen the tradition of brotherhood and cultivate virtues such as patience, compassion, sensitivity and selfless love in the younger generation. Secondly, conserving nature should be our spiritual duty. Thousands of years ago, our ancestors and sages taught us to revere nature. We called rivers our mothers, regarded trees as life-givers, and the Earth is worshipped as a mother-goddess in the Sanatan tradition. When we leave this earth, we should pass it on in a better condition for future generations," the LG said.

"The third issue concerns cultural revival. We must take pride in our glorious history, preserve our languages, literature, arts and culture, and pass on the wisdom of our ancestors to coming generations. This sammelan will be truly successful only when its message reaches the youth and

National awards: 'Article 370' best feature film; Mammotty, Yami, Kartik best acting



NEW DELHI, JUL 18: Political drama "Article 370" emerged as the biggest winner at the 72nd National Film Awards on Saturday, bagging the best feature film honour, while its lead star Yami Gautam was named best actress.

Veteran Malayalam actor Mammooty and Bollywood star Kartik Aaryan shared the best actor award for "Bramayugam" and "Chandu Champion" respectively.

Inspired by the government's decision to abrogate the special status accorded to the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir, "Article 370" features Gautam as an intelligence officer involved in a covert operation linked to the developments leading up to the abrogation. It is directed by Aditya Suhas Jambhale.

Announcing the awards for the year 2024, chairperson of the 11-member central jury, Malayalam filmmaker Jayaraj, said the film "centres on the mission to fully integrate Jammu and Kashmir into Indian union. Emphasising a unified and indivisible nation, it highlights the battle against local corruption and dismantling of a conflict economy".

Released in February 2024, months ahead of the Lok Sabha elections, the film drew political attention over its portrayal of the

constitutional change.

On Gautam's role, Jayaraj said the actor delivered "a nuanced performance that portrays a law enforcement agent's unwavering pursuit of truth and justice with sensitivity, courage and compassion. A performance that leaves a profound and lasting impact".

Actor-filmmaker Randeep Hooda won the best debut director award for "Swatantrya Veer Savarkar", his first directorial venture in which he also plays Vinayak Damodar Savarkar.

The Hindi biographical drama traces Savarkar's life, including his years as a revolutionary in London, his incarceration in the Cellular Jail in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and his later political career.

Praising Hooda's directo-

inspires them. In a world of rapid change, moral strength is necessary to remain competitive. It is my desire to see that India's youth lead the world. They must innovate, guide ideas, and write a new chapter of progress with compassion. I want our youth to carry forward India's great cultural heritage and to show the world that modernity and spirituality can go hand in hand," he said.

Among those present on the occasion included Brij Lal Bhat; Brij Mohan Sharma, Principal Secretary, Culture Department; Vinod Kumar, DIG North Kashmir Range; Syeed Fakhruddin Hamid, Deputy Commissioner, Baramulla; Gurinderpal Singh, SSP Baramulla; Shivanand Rohit Raina, President, Maharishi Kashyap Colony, Baramulla; senior officials, civil society members, religious leaders, prominent citizens and people in large number.

Azad expresses anguish over cloudburst, flood tragedy

every family that suffered the loss of loved ones, homes, livestock, crops, and livelihoods.

He said the administration must deploy every available resource to ensure uninterrupted rescue and relief operations, provide immediate medical assistance and shelter to those affected, restore essential services on a war footing and ensure adequate compensation and comprehensive rehabilitation for all affected families without delay.

Azad expressed hope that the affected families would receive timely assistance and every possible support to rebuild their lives with dignity.

Cong stages sit-in for statehood; march to LG's residence foiled

Bhavan, police stopped them at Jewel Chowk which resulted in a brief scuffle, with protesters attempting to push past the barricades.

In the process, dozens of Congress activists and leaders, including Karra, AICC general secretary G A Mir, working president Raman Bhalla and several former ministers and legislators were detained, officials said.

Earlier, Karra told reporters that Congress had been campaigning for the restoration of statehood for nearly two years, taking the message to all 20 districts of Jammu and Kashmir through district-level programmes, hunger strikes and campaigns under the slogans "Chalo Srinagar", "Chalo Jammu" and "Chalo Delhi".

Asked about his party's participation in July 20 NC protest at Jantar Mantar, he said he, along with Mir, were leaving for New Delhi, while the party's central leadership would decide which other leaders would participate.

The Congress leader also urged the government to announce a comprehensive rehabilitation package for people affected by the recent flash floods in Poonch and Rajouri, saying the disaster had caused extensive loss of life and property.

Former minister G M Saroori noted that restoring statehood was essential for protecting the democratic rights and constitutional aspirations of the people and reaffirmed that the Congress would continue its peaceful agitation until the demand was fulfilled.

US launches airstrikes to 'swiftly punish' Iran for deaths of its troops

Irbil has been targeted by drone attacks multiple times over the past four days, which coincided with a visit by new Iraqi Prime Minister Ali al-Zaidi to Washington last week and an ongoing escalation between the U.S. and Iran.

No group has claimed responsibility for the attacks, but in the past both Iran and Iran-backed Iraqi militias have launched attacks in the Kurdish region, where both U.S. troops and armed Kurdish Iranian dissident groups are present.

Minutes before the U.S. announced the troop deaths earlier Saturday, Iran's supreme leader warned of "unforgettable lessons" if the U.S. keeps attacking the Islamic Republic.

The remarks read out on state TV and attributed to Mojtaba Khamenei, still unseen since the war began, also called President Donald Trump's signature "worthless and invalid."

An Iranian negotiator said Tehran was suspending its commitments to the interim deal signed about a month ago and aimed at permanently ending the fighting.

Deepika Padukone and Kamal Haasan, the film blends elements from Indian mythology with a futuristic dystopian setting and was among the biggest commercial successes of the year.

Tamil film "Captain Miller", directed by Arun Matheswaran and starring Dhanush, won the award for best feature film promoting "National, Social and Environmental Values"

Set during the British Raj, the film follows a former soldier who rebels against colonial rule.

Rajkumar Periasamy was named best director for "Amaran", the Tamil biographical action drama based on the life of Ashok Chakra awardee (posthumous) Major Mukund Varadarajan.

Actor Sanjay Mishra won the best actor in a supporting role award for the Hindi crime drama "Bhakhshak", which centres on a journalist investigating abuse at a shelter home.

Lyricist Manoj Muntashir won the best lyrics award for the song "Jaane Do" from the Hindi film "Maidaan", starring Ajay Devgn. The film is based on the life of legendary football coach Syed Abdul Rahim, who guided the Indian football team during one of its most successful periods.