

India rejects Pakistan's attempt to mark Aug 5 as 'Youm-e-Istehsal'

NEW DELHI, Aug 5 (PTI)

INDIA on Wednesday categorically rejected Pakistan's "futile attempts" to observe August 5 as 'Youm-e-Istehsal' or 'Day of Exploitation' to oppose the scrapping of the special status of Jammu and Kashmir seven years ago.

External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said Pakistan's attempts to interfere in India's internal matters were intended "solely" to deflect attention from its own "dismal" human rights record and its status as the "global epicentre of terrorism".

The Indian Government on August 5, 2019 had revoked the special status of Jammu and Kashmir and bifurcated the State into two Union territories.

Since then Pakistan has been

marking the day as the Youm-e-Istehsal.

"India categorically rejects the political absurdity and futile attempts by Pakistan to observe the so-called Youm-e-Istehsal to spread malicious propaganda against India," Jaiswal said.

He was responding to certain comments made by Pakistan Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar who said New Delhi's action seven years back had complicated efforts to bring peace and stability in South Asia.

He asserted that the Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh "are, have always been, and shall forever remain an integral and inalienable part of India".

Jaiswal said the constitutional changes made in 2019 are entirely an internal matter of India.

IMD forecast of El Nino helped Govt prepare for weak monsoon: Minister

■ The IMD also indicated the likely development of El Nino conditions during the Southwest Monsoon season in its seasonal forecasts, to alert stakeholders in advance.

NEW DELHI, Aug 5 (IANS)

THE India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a below-normal rainfall forecast for the 2026 Southwest Monsoon season due to the El Nino event, thereby providing advance guidance for preparedness and planning by the stakeholders concerned, the Parliament was informed on Wednesday.

The IMD also indicated the likely development of El Nino conditions during the Southwest Monsoon season in its seasonal forecasts, to alert stakeholders in advance. In addition, the IMD provides regular updates on monsoon rainfall at daily intervals and El Nino conditions at

monthly intervals. It also provides rainfall at district and block levels to all stakeholders and participates in meetings conducted by the PMO, the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of Agriculture regularly and provides relevant inputs. Under crop weather watch of the Ministry of Agriculture every week, the IMD provides past rainfall and forecast of rainfall for the next two weeks, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Earth Sciences Dr Jitendra Singh said in a written reply to a question in the Lok Sabha.

In its First Stage Long Range Forecast, issued on April 13, the IMD predicted the seasonal rainfall to be 92 per cent of the Long Period Average (LPA), which was subsequently revised to 90 per cent. In general, during the El Nino event, the Indian summer monsoon is weaker than normal, and the intensity of the El Nino also decides the amount of impact on the monsoon. Since 1950, there have been 16 El Nino years, out of which 7 years had

impacted Indian monsoon rainfall when rainfall was below normal. However, there is a stronger inverse relationship between El Nino and rainfall during the latter half of the monsoon season, particularly in September, the minister pointed out.

The IMD regularly issues weather and climate forecasts, seasonal outlooks, and early warnings related to rainfall, heatwaves, and other extreme weather events, which are disseminated to all Central Ministries, state governments, and other stakeholders concerned to support preparedness and appropriate response measures, the minister said.

Besides, the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), based on the experimental forecast of 2026 in the seasonal to short and medium range, is working with the Agriculture and Dam Management departments to provide the impact of rainfall and developing ENSO in agriculture and water management, the minister added.

Flood situation in Assam critical as overnight rains threaten inundation

GUWAHATI, Aug 5 (PTI)

THE flood situation in Assam remained grim on Wednesday, with overnight rains threatening fresh inundation in low-lying areas even as the death toll reached 89 and more than 1.22 lakh people remained affected across five districts.

Union Health Minister JP Nadda is scheduled to visit the flood-hit areas during the day to assess the situation and review relief and rehabilitation measures with State officials. According to the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA), the Dhansiri river at Numaligarh in Golaghat district continued to flow in a "severe flood situation" on Wednesday morning.

"Due to the continuous rise in the water level of the Dhansiri at Numaligarh, citizens are advised to stay away from the river," an ASDMA spokesperson said.

The ASDMA's latest flood bulletin said two more people died

in the last 24 hours -- one each in Sivasagar and Golaghat districts -- taking this year's flood-related death toll to 89.

More than 1,22,100 people remained affected, with Sivasagar being the worst-hit district where nearly 60,000 people have been impacted, followed by Charaideo with over 31,000 affected and Jorhat with nearly 20,000. The administration is operating 55 relief camps and relief distribution centres in four districts, where 17,857 displaced people are currently taking shelter.

KERALAM GOVT ANNOUNCES RELIEF PACKAGE AS MONSOON TOLL RISES TO 26: KERALAM Chief Minister V D Sathiesan on Wednesday announced a series of relief measures for families affected by the ongoing monsoon, including enhanced compensation for those who lost their lives, houses and property in rain-related disasters.

So far, 26 people have lost their lives in monsoon-related inci-



An SDRF official during a rescue operation amid waterlogging due to heavy rainfall at Rukminigaon in Guwahati district Assam on Wednesday. (PTI)

Heavy rains continue to lash Keralam, more people shifted to relief camps

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, Aug 5 (PTI)

HEAVY rains continued to batter several parts of Keralam on Wednesday, causing widespread waterlogging and inundation of roads. More relief camps have been opened and people from low-lying areas were evacuated, authorities said.

The southern districts of Pathanamthitta, Alappuzha and Kottayam continued to bear the brunt of the rain fury, with incessant showers and overcast skies disrupting normal life.

dents. Eleven people have been injured and four others remain missing, he said.

Addressing a press conference after the Cabinet meeting, the Chief Minister said 462 relief camps are currently functioning across the State, providing shelter to 27,048 people displaced by heavy rain, floods and landslides.

OMAR ABDULLAH VISITS POONCH, MEETS VILLAGER WHO LOST EIGHT MEMBERS OF FAMILY IN CLOUDBURST

TRAGEDY: JAMMU and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Wednesday visited Murrah village in Poonch district and met a villager, who lost eight members of his family in cloudburst-triggered flash floods and landslide last month. Abdullah arrived in the border district to assess the ground situation in the flash flood and landslide-affected areas following the rain fury, which had claimed 16 lives and left six others missing.

Indian Railways utilises 39% of FY27 capex spent till July: Govt

NEW DELHI, Aug 5 (IANS)

INDIAN Railways has incurred capital expenditure of over Rs 1.14 lakh crore or about 39 per cent of the budgetary allocation for 2026-27 till July, while expanding the deployment of its indigenous train collision avoidance system Kavach and upgrading tracks to support higher train speeds, the Government informed Parliament on Wednesday.

In a written reply to the Lok Sabha, Union Minister for Railways Ashwini Vaishnaw said

the Government had spent Rs 1,14,973 crore out of the budgetary allocation of Rs 2,93,030 crore for the current financial year.

The Minister said expenditure on safety-related activities has increased steadily over the years, rising from Rs 39,200 crore in 2013-14 to Rs 1,20,389 crore in 2026-27.

On Kavach, the indigenous Automatic Train Protection (ATP) system, Vaishnaw said Version 4.0 has been commissioned over 2,633 route kilometres as of July 31, covering key sections of the Delhi-Mumbai and Delhi-Howrah high-density corridors.

The upgraded version incorporates higher location accuracy, improved signal information in larger yards, optical fibre-based station-to-station interfaces and direct integration with electronic interlocking systems, enabling large-scale deployment across the railway network, he said.

Trackside Kavach implementation has been taken up over 21,794 route km covering the Golden Quadrilateral, Golden Diagonal, high-density network and other identified sections, while Kavach has been installed in 6,290 locomotives.

Iran, Oman working on plan to reopen Strait of Hormuz

■ By Elena Becatoros and Samy Magdy
CAIRO, Aug 5 (AP)

IRAN and Oman are inching toward a deal to reopen the disputed Strait of Hormuz and potentially help bring an end to the war.

The emerging agreement calls for ships to enter the Persian Gulf through an Iranian-controlled route and exit through a route controlled by Oman, two regional officials told 'The Associated Press'.

Any deal, though, appears contingent on the United States lifting its blockade on Iran's ports. The Trump administration has previously ruled out any deal that would give Iran control over the Strait.

US officials suggest Strait deal imminent: Senior US officials struck an optimistic tone on Tuesday, suggesting a deal to reopen the strait could be reached soon.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio confirmed



there has been progress made in talks between Iran and Oman, "but not finality yet". Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent told CNBC that "there is a chance we may have a deal today or tomorrow to open the Strait and move towards a more normalised position in this conflict".

Qatar's emir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al

Thani, said he also spoke to US President Donald Trump on Tuesday as the Arab country tries to broker a resolution to the war.

Al Thani's office said in a statement that on the phone call, the two discussed ways to bridge the divide "in a way that enhances the prospects of reaching a sustainable diplomatic settlement to the crisis".

Ships attacked in Strait of Hormuz and in Red Sea: A cargo ship reported being "hit by an unknown projectile" while traversing the Strait of Hormuz, according to the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations Centre.

The centre said the reported strike damaged the vessel at around 2 am local time while it was about 37 kilometres (23 miles) northeast of Al Khasab, a port city in Oman.

It is unclear what flag the ship was sailing under or whether it was carrying cargo, but the British maritime security firm Ambrey said the ship sustained damage.