

Now, UT LGs to be part of Inter-State Council meets during President's Rule

NEW DELHI, Sept 19 (PTI)

LIEUTENANT Governors of Puducherry, Jammu and Kashmir, and Delhi will be able to participate in the meetings of the Inter-State Council if there is President's Rule in these Union Territories, as the related provisions have been amended by President Droupadi Murmu.

The amendment in the Inter-State Council Order, 1990, which had established the council, was notified by the Ministry of Home Affairs on September 9 and published on Friday.

According to the May 1990 order, the council consists of the Prime Minister, Chief Ministers of all States, specified Union Territory representatives, and six Union Ministers of Cabinet rank.

Its proviso, introduced in July that year, addressed the attendance of a Governor when a proclamation under Article 356 was in force in their respective States, or when the order issued by the Governor of the erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir under section 92 of the Constitution of Jammu and Kashmir was in force.

In 2019, Jammu and Kashmir was bifurcated into two Union Territories, Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh, after Article 370 was abrogated.

The 2026 order replaces that July 1990 proviso with a four-part provision.

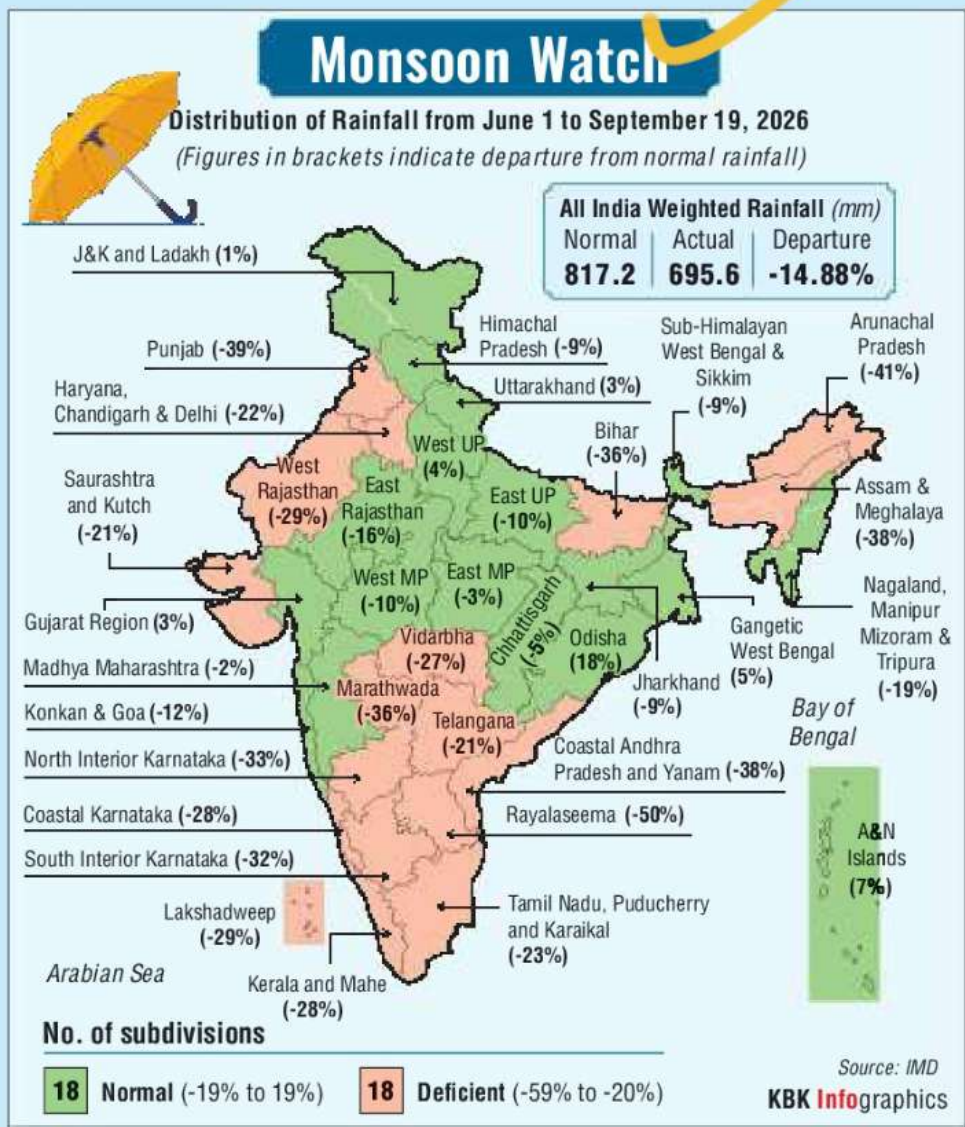
It retains the provision for a State under Article 356, specifying that "the Governor of that State shall be invited to attend the meetings of the Council".

It then adds three provisions covering Union Territories with Assemblies.

The amendment provides for the Lieutenant Governor's participation in the council meetings when the President's rule is imposed under the respective provisions of the laws governing the three Union Territories with assemblies -- Puducherry, Jammu and Kashmir, and the NCT of Delhi.

For Puducherry, it provides that when an order under Section 51 of the Government of Union Territories Act, 1963, is in force, "the Lieutenant Governor of the Union territory of Puducherry shall be invited to attend the meetings of the council".

South-West monsoon withdraws from some parts of West Rajasthan: IMD



NEW DELHI, Sept 19 (PTI)

THE South-West monsoon has withdrawn from some parts of West Rajasthan as of Saturday, according to the India Meteorological Department. It adds that conditions are favourable for further withdrawal from some more parts of Rajasthan and some parts of Punjab, Saurashtra, and Kutch during the next 3 to 4 days. “The South-West monsoon has withdrawn from some parts of West Rajasthan today, the 19th September, 2026, against the normal date of 17th September,” the IMD said in a statement.

India was entirely covered by the South-West monsoon on July 9 after its onset over Kerala took place on June 4. The country is facing a nation-wide rainfall deficit of 15 per cent between June 4 and September 19, according to IMD data. Currently, the worst affected region is the Southern Peninsula, where the deficit is 29 per cent. In its monthly forecast on August 31, the IMD had noted that the last month witnessed a rainfall of 213.3 mm over India, which was the seventh lowest for August since 2001.

One key reason for the deficit rainfall this monsoon season has been the emergence of El Nino conditions over the equatorial Pacific in June.

Afghanistan has right to defend its country: Taliban warns Pak

KABUL, Sept 19 (ANI)

AFGHANISTAN has the right to defend its territory against any Pakistani military action, Taliban spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid said, warning Islamabad of a "crushing response" if it carries out strikes inside Afghanistan.

In an interview with Al Arabiya English, Mujahid rejected Pakistan's allegations that Afghan territory is being used by militant groups to recruit, train and launch attacks against Pakistan.

"If Pakistan invokes Article 51 to violate the sanctity of Afghan territory, Afghanistan has the right to defend its country, and we will do so," Mujahid said.

He warned that any military operation inside Afghanistan would constitute a violation of Afghan sovereignty and could trigger a strong response from Kabul.

Mujahid was responding to allegations made by the spokesperson for the Pakistani army in an earlier interview with Al Arabiya English.

The Pakistani military official had alleged that militant groups were using Afghan territory to recruit, train and arm fighters who subsequently carry out attacks inside Pakistan.

The Taliban spokesperson rejected the allegations and said Kabul does not permit the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)

to operate from Afghan soil. He also denied that the Taliban administration supports armed groups carrying out attacks against other countries.

Mujahid instead urged Pakistan to address its internal security challenges, arguing that unrest

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involving the TTP and Baloch armed groups predates the Taliban's return to power in Afghanistan.

The remarks come amid strained relations between Kabul and Islamabad, with Pakistan repeatedly raising concerns over militant activity along its western border.

Despite his warning against military action, Mujahid said Afghanistan remains open to dialogue with Pakistan. He called for stronger mechanisms for intelligence-sharing and bilateral cooperation to address security concerns.

Mujahid also welcomed a greater role for Saudi Arabia in mediating between the two countries.

He said Riyadh maintains friendly relations with both Afghanistan and Pakistan and could contribute positively to efforts aimed at resolving their differences.

The Taliban has previously called for dialogue to address disputes with Pakistan, while Islamabad has continued to demand action against militant groups it says are operating from Afghan territory.

Iran war cost America \$43.6 bn in new estimate

WASHINGTON, Sept 19 (AP)

THE US military's price tag for the Iran war has grown to USD 43.6 billion as of September 3, according to a new estimate provided this week to lawmakers.

The figure from US Central Command, which oversees operations in the Middle East, offers the most up-to-date cost for the conflict since it was launched by the United States and Israel on February 28. A Congressional Budget Office report released Tuesday said the war had cost USD 38 billion through August 1 and will continue to rack up expenses of around USD 3 billion a month depending on the conflict's intensity.

The new breakdown, seen by *The Associated Press* and report-

Explosions heard in Saudi capital Riyadh

RIYADH, Sept 19 (IANS)

EXPLOSIONS were heard in the Saudi capital Riyadh on Saturday. Local residents received air defence alerts via mobile apps.

The Saudi Directorate of Civil Defence later issued a statement on X saying the danger has

passed in Riyadh and Al-Kharj and urged residents to continue following its instructions and avoid gathering or filming. Earlier it had warned: "An alert has been issued by the National Early Warning Platform for Emergency Cases in Al-Kharj Governorate to warn of a danger."

ed earlier by *Punchbowl News*, also showed the continued use of expensive munitions by American forces. Weapons costs jumped by more than USD 6 billion in just over a month, from USD 21.7 billion listed in the CBO report to USD 28.1 billion in US Central Command's estimate.

The financial cost is just one

measure of the impact of the Iran war, which also is affecting oil prices and the stock market and has led to deaths and injuries of American troops. The political costs will be calculated in November's midterm congressional elections, with Republicans facing increasing headwinds from the war's unpopularity.

Trump signs Russia sanctions bill into law

Clears way for 100% tariffs on India, China

WASHINGTON, Sept 19 (PTI)

PRESIDENT Donald Trump signed the Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act, which seeks to impose steep levies on Moscow and its top energy buyers such as China and India.

"On Friday, September 18, 2026, the President signed into law: H.R. 5334, the "Lindsey O. Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act of 2026," which authorizes and expands statutory sanctions, tariffs, and prohibitions on Russia and extends existing sanctions on Iran," the White House said.

The House of Representatives on Wednesday passed the Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act, which seeks to impose sanctions on Russia's leadership and energy sector -- as well as on collab-



orators in Moscow's defence industry and its so-called shadow fleet.

The Act also authorises President Trump to impose tariffs of up to 100 per cent on countries buying Russian oil and gas, including China and India. The law gives Trump wide discretion

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Priority of India is our people: MoS Singh on bill

LUCKNOW, Sept 19 (ANI)

UNION Minister of State for External Affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh on Saturday stressed that India will pursue an independent foreign policy and take decisions based on the country's interests, while responding to US President Donald Trump's signing of the "Lindsey O. Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act of 2026" into law.

Speaking to ANI, Singh said India's priority remains the country's people and that the Government will take steps necessary to ensure their convenience, as well as the strength and stability of the country.

"The priority of the country of India and our Government is our people, our people of 140 crores. We will take every step which is necessary for the convenience of our people. We will take every strong step for the strength and stability of our country, our population of 140 crores. We have our own independent foreign policy. We will not follow any country based on what our country is doing. We will do whatever is good for our country," Singh said.

The remarks came after Trump signed the "Lindsey O. Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act of 2026" into law on Friday.

ASIAN GAMES OPEN IN NAGOYA WITH COLOURFUL CEREMONY

■ By Philem Dipak Singh

NAGOYA, Sept 19 (PTI)

JAPAN, on Saturday, showcased its technological and industrial might as well as its deep cultural moorings, in a frugal yet colourful opening ceremony of the Asian Games offering a silver lining after the organizational and logistical troubles significantly marred the build-up to the mega event.

The next 15 days will see around 11,000 athletes from 45 nations competing in 43 sports, 71 sub-events, and a total of 469 gold medals till the closing day on October 4. Competitions for basketball, football, cricket and some other events have already started.

With the concept theme 'Harmonic Heart Beat', Japan welcomed the Asian athletes for



India's double Olympic medalist from Paris 2024 Manu Bhaker and kabaddi player Pawan Sehrawat lead the contingent at the athletes' parade, during the opening ceremony of the 20th Asian Games, in Nagoya, Japan on Saturday. (PTI)

the third time in its history after 1958 Tokyo and 1994 Hiroshima.

The centerpiece of the ceremony was the heart-shaped main stage which was chosen to visually anchor the theme of 'One Asia', symbolizing athletes and people from across the continent connecting 'heart to heart'.

The spectacular show at the 30,000-capacity full-to-the-brim Mizuho Park Athletic Stadium seamlessly blended local Aichi industrial technology with classical art, featuring a traditional Japanese Kabuki stage element paired with a massive industrial robot arm waving a flag.

Japanese Emperor Naruhito declared the 20th Asian Games open midway the two-hour long opening ceremony in the presence of Empress Masako, Olympic Council of Asia

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