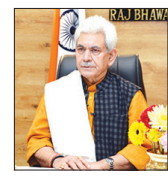


Good Morning Kashmir

17th Year Of Publication

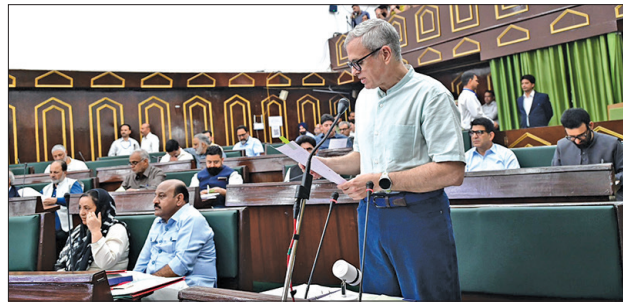
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J&K's Culture & spiritual treasures will play a vital role in shaping a brighter future to all. Jammu's soil brims with rich traditions. Dogri songs weaving life's values, crafts embedding experiences, art infused with devotion are our vibrant legacies breathing new life.

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Govt To Prioritise Recruitment To Fill Up Vacancies In Departments: CM



GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah Tuesday informed the House that as many as 48,958 non-gazetted and 10,217 gazetted posts—across both direct recruitment and promotion quotas—are lying vacant in 38 government departments. The Chief Minister was replying to a question raised by MLA Pulwama Waheed ur Rehman Para during the Question Hour of the ongoing Budget Session of the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly. He stated that under the direct recruitment quota, 24,507 non-gazetted and 3,808

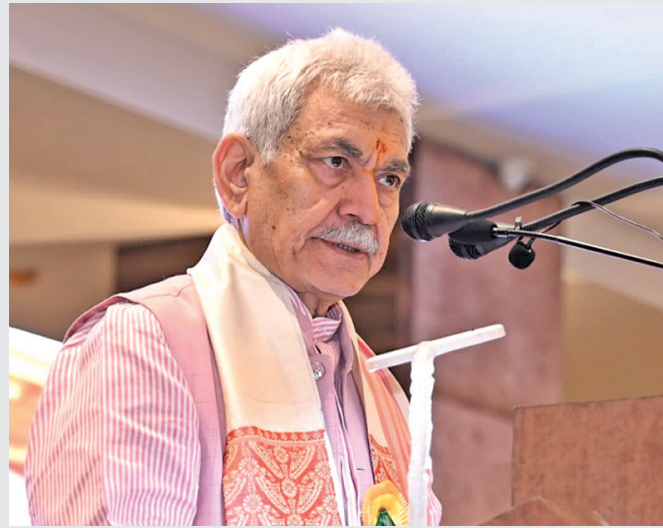
gazetted posts are vacant, while under the promotion quota, 24,451 non-gazetted and 6,409 gazetted posts remain unfilled across these departments. The Chief Minister further informed that, at the district level, a total of 16,812 non-gazetted and 2,798 gazetted posts are vacant across all 20 districts of Jammu and Kashmir. He added that during the previous year (2025), 959 gazetted vacancies were referred to the Jammu and Kashmir Public Service Commission, while 6,340 non-gazetted posts were referred to the Jammu and Kashmir Services Selection Board for recruitment.

LG Calls For Imbibing Mahavira's Teaching Of Non-Violence Amid Global Strife

Says India Stands Resolute Today Under Leadership Of PM Narendra Modi

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Tuesday said that amid global conflicts and strife, humanity must draw lessons from Lord Mahavira's teachings, which foster enduring peace and unbreakable brotherhood. Addressing a gathering at the Mahavir Janma Kalyanak celebrations, Sinha extended his greetings to the people and called upon the younger generation to adopt non-violence and reform their attitudes towards nature, which he said has long been exploited as a mere utility. "Amid global conflicts and strife, humanity must draw lessons from Lord Mahavira's teachings, which foster enduring peace and unbreakable brotherhood," Sinha said, stressing that true progress stems from responsibility and accountability for one's actions. The Lieutenant Governor extended his felicitations and



best wishes to all on the auspicious occasion. In his address, the Lieutenant Governor spoke on Lord Mahavira's teachings of Ahimsa and Anekantavada, emphasizing right faith, knowledge, and conduct in today's world, which urgently needs compassion,

embedding experiences, art infused with devotion are our vibrant legacies breathing new life," the Lieutenant Governor said. The Lieutenant Governor

ing courage and this is a time to build bridges, not battlefields," the Lieutenant Governor said. The Lieutenant Governor said that amid global conflicts and strife, humanity must draw lessons from Lord Mahavira's teachings which fosters enduring peace and unbreakable brotherhood. "True progress stems from responsibility and accountability to one's actions. To envision a better future, we must bridge divides among people, fostering trust through understanding diverse cultures, ideas, and experiences," the Lieutenant Governor said. The Lieutenant Governor observed that Lord Mahavira focus on introspection, individual transformation and his teachings of discipline, faith, and awareness can elevate society. "By internalizing Ahimsa, restraint, austerity, Anekantavada, non-possession, and truth, we can contribute meaningfully to nation-building. Our impact depends on

Snowfall, Rain Disrupt Life Across J&K



SAJID RAINA

SRINAGAR: Higher reaches of Kashmir received fresh snowfall while plains witnessed widespread rainfall on Tuesday, leading to a drop in temperatures and disruption in road connectivity, officials said. Snowfall was reported from Tulail Valley, Razdan Pass and Sadhna Top in Kupwara district, while several parts of the Valley recorded moderate to heavy rainfall over the past 24 hours. According to data available, Baramulla recorded the highest rainfall at 73 mm, followed by Poonch in Jammu region at 68.5 mm. Other major stations included Qazigund (48.6 mm), Kupwara (40.8 mm), Kulgam (42.2 mm), and Srinagar (31.6 mm). Jammu city recorded 12 mm of rainfall. The Meteorological Centre Srinagar said erratic weather conditions are expected to continue till April 10, with intermittent spells of rain and snow likely

₹18382 Cr Liabilities Cleared, CM Tells Assembly,

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah Tuesday informed the House that bills amounting to 12,561.31 crore under various heads, including gratuity, commutation, leave salary and contractor payments, have been cleared up to March 27, 2026, while GPF bills worth 5,821.43 crore have been settled up to December 31, 2025.

The Chief Minister was replying to a question raised by legislator Sham Lal Sharma during the Question Hour of the ongoing Budget Session of the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly. The Chief Minister, who also holds the Finance portfolio, stated that financial liabilities of the Government in the form of bills presented at Treasuries are being cleared on a regular

J&K's Culture, Spiritual Treasures Will Play Vital Role In Shaping Brighter Future To All: LG

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Tuesday emphasised that the culture and spiritual treasures of

Jammu Kashmir will play a vital role in shaping a brighter future to all. "Jammu's soil brims with rich traditions. Dogri songs weaving life's values, crafts

embedding experiences, art infused with devotion are our vibrant legacies breathing new life," the Lieutenant Governor said. The Lieutenant Governor

was speaking at the inaugural ceremony of "Jammu Kashmir Cultural Festival", organised by Shri Kailash Jyotish and Vedic Sansthan Trust, in Jammu.

J&K Has Sufficient Stock Of Petroleum Products: Satish Sharma

Says Deptt Monitoring LPG, Petrol Supply To Prevent Hoarding

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Minister for Food, Civil supply and Consumer Affairs, Satish Sharma Tuesday informed the House that the Department is maintaining regular monitoring of availability and distribution of LPG and Petroleum products across Jammu and Kashmir. "As per the daily stock position reports furnished by Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs), the availability of Petrol, Diesel and LPG is adequate as on date, with availability of petroleum products" maintained the Minister. The Minister was replying to the Calling Attention Notice moved by Legislator Mohammad Yousuf Tarigami in the Legislative Assembly. He said that geopolitical



tensions have triggered panic buying and spike in Petrol, Diesel and LPG consumption beyond normal levels. He gave out that as per the report furnished by the Oil Marketing Companies, stocks are adequate, urging the public

to ignore rumours, as the overall supply remains stable and sufficient despite the temporary surge in demand. Satish Sharma said that the Divisional and District Level Control Rooms are in place and functional. He said that the department is conducting regular inspections across the districts to strictly check and prevent any instance of hoarding and black marketing. The government is taking strict action against those found violating norms, imposing fines and penalties for any irregularities found. The Minister said that the department is conducting detailed inspections and raids besides undertaking punitive action including fine, penalties against the hoarders and black marketers, FIRs

CS Reviews Roadmap For Comprehensive Management Of Disasters

₹3,340 Cr Being Utilized To Strengthen Disaster Readiness Across J&K

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo Tuesday chaired a high-level review meeting to assess the roadmap and ongoing initiatives aimed at strengthening disaster management mechanisms across the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir. Emphasizing a proactive and resilient approach, the Chief Secretary directed the concerned departments to effectively plan and utilize funds amounting to 3,340 Cr earmarked under various components of disaster management, mitigation, and risk reduction across all districts. The meeting was attended

by Additional Chief Secretary, Finance; Additional Chief Secretary, PWD; Principal Secretary, DMRR&R; Divisional Commissioner, Jammu / Kashmir, Director CD & SDRF, CEO, ERA, and other senior officers. Deputy Commissioners from all districts participated through video conferencing. During the meeting, the Chief Secretary underscored the need for a focused and structured approach across six key verticals of disaster management including Early Warning Systems, Risk Reduction, Relief & Response, Rehabilitation, Reconstruction, and Capacity Building &



Tulip Garden Records Nearly 1.78 Lakh Visitors In First 15 Days



REHAN QAYOOM

SRINAGAR: The Tulip Garden in Srinagar has recorded a footfall of 1,77,869 visitors in the first 15 days, with officials saying the final count is likely to be higher as online ticketing data has not been included. Assistant Floriculture Officer In-charge Tulip Garden Srinagar, Imran

Ahmad said that the current figures are based on available offline ticket records. "The footfall in the first 15 days is 1,77,869. This does not include online ticketing data, which will be compiled after the garden closes," he said. Ahmad said the visitors include locals, domestic tourists and foreign tourists among them, though their separate count

994 Posts Allocated For ReKhel Regularisation: Govt

AGENCIES

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir government on Tuesday said that 994 vacant posts of Physical Education Teachers (PETs) have been kept reserved for the regularisation of Rehbar-e-Khel (ReK) candidates under the existing policy. Replying to an unstarred question by MLA Aga Syed Muntazir Mehdi, the government, said that as per the policy issued under Government Order No. 141-Edu (YSS) of 2017, a total of 2,395 Rehbar-e-Khel candidates are to be regularised in a phased manner after completion of seven years of satisfactory and continuous service. The government informed that these 994 vacant PET posts, along with other available posts, are required to accommodate the regularisation process of ReK candidates. It added that the modalities for implementation of the regularisation process are currently under consideration. Regarding recruitment, the government clarified that there is no proposal under consideration to de-

...Doors Open, Benches Empty

Govt Colleges In J&K Face 'No Takers' Crisis

RIYAZ BHAT

SRINAGAR: In a blow to government plans of bringing higher education to doorsteps, there are 'no takers' of the government colleges in Jammu and Kashmir that are facing dismal student enrolment. "At present, Government Degree College Baghi Dilwar Khan and Government Degree College Chattisinghpura have no active student enrolment, as the previous enrolment levels were not adequate to sustain a viable academic environment and the institutions have not attracted sufficient student admissions," the government said. It also said "GDC Chattisinghpura and GDC Baghi Dilwar Khan are presently placed under the charge of Government Degree College, Anantnag and S.P College, Srinagar, respectively, for adminis-



trative oversight." The figures further reveal that in 14 colleges in Jammu and Kashmir, fewer than 50 students were enrolled in each college. Furthermore, 24 government colleges were having less than 100 students enrolled in each college. The government figures also reveal that in 13 colleges of Jammu and Kashmir, only 100-300 students were enrolled in each college. The houses was informed that in Government College of Education, M A

Multi-Pronged Strategy In Place'

J&K Grapples With Rising Drug Abuse Among Youth: Govt

Over 70,000 Substance Users Identified In Kashmir Division

JAHANGEER GANAIE

SRINAGAR: The Government of Jammu & Kashmir on Tuesday acknowledged the growing menace of drug abuse in the Union Territory, stating that the issue, particularly among youth has emerged as a serious social and public health concern requiring sustained and coordinated intervention. Replying to a question raised by MLA Sham Lal Sharma in the Assembly, Health and Medical Education Minister Sakina Itoo said that said that J&K, like several other regions in the country, is facing the challenge of increasing use of nar-



cotic drugs and psychotropic substances. "It is a fact that the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir is confronted with the menace of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. This challenge has particularly affected a section of the

youth, thereby posing serious social and public health concerns," the Minister informed the House. The Minister said that a joint survey conducted in 2022 by the Health Department and Social Welfare Department across 10 districts of Kashmir division revealed that around 70,000 individuals are involved in substance use. "Out of these, nearly 50,000 are heroin users, and a significant number consume drugs through the intravenous route, which raises additional health risks," she said. Sakina Itoo said the government is fully aware of the gravity of the situation and has adopted a

BUDGET SESSION

Legislators raise public issues during Zero Hour in Assembly

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Several members of the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly Tuesday raised pressing public concerns during Zero Hour, drawing government attention towards critical gaps in healthcare, education, infrastructure, public utilities and administrative functioning across their constituencies.

MLA Shagun Parihar highlighted the issue of vacant administrative posts at District Hospital Kishtwar, stressing the urgent need for specialists such as an anaesthetist and a radiologist to ensure uninterrupted healthcare services.

MLA Irfan Hafiz Lone called for the extension of the Power Amnesty Scheme for another year to provide relief to consumers and prevent power disconnections.

MLA Dr. Shafi Ahmad Wani raised concerns regarding acute manpower shortages in Budgam district, particularly the absence of key positions

including Deputy Chief Education Officers (Dy CEOs), Zonal Education Officers (ZEOs), headmasters and principals in higher secondary schools.

MLA Ghulam Mohi-ud-din Mir urged the government to resume construction work on the long-pending Government Degree College Rajpora, which has remained stalled for several years.

MLA Javaid Riyaz Bedar demanded posting of an Executive Officer for the Municipal Committee Pattan and the filling up of vacant posts such as ZEOs and Block Development Officers (BDOs) in his constituency.

MLA Tariq Hamid Karra flagged the issue of inflated electricity bills allegedly caused by load enhancements without consumers' consent, seeking intervention from the concerned authorities.

Dr. Devinder Kumar Manyal emphasized the need for timely admissions of NEET-PG candidates to ensure that aspirants from the region are not disadvantaged at the national level.



MLA Prof. Gharu Ram Bhagat sought early repayment of long-pending dues to the depositors from the J&K SCARD Bank.

MLA Waheed ur Rehman

Para requested for posting of a radiologist at District Hospital Pulwama to strengthen the diagnostic services.

MLA Javaid Ahmad Mirchal called for filling up of vacant

posts in the Health and Irrigation departments in his constituency, urging prompt intervention by the government.

MLA Choudhary Mohamad Akram pressed for the

early release of the provisional list of field functionaries in the Agriculture Production Department. He also sought streamlining of the National Pension System (NPS) across J&K in light of recent amendments.

MLA Muzaffer Iqbal Khan demanded rehabilitation of families affected by road slip-pages in his constituency. He advocated for extending hostel facilities in Pahari Hostels to postgraduate students as well.

MLA Surinder Kumar raised concerns over disparities between rural and urban areas in accessing LPG services under existing norms.

MLA Zaffar Ali Khatana sought filling up of vacant posts including Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Kokernag and Executive Officer, Municipal Committee Kokernag and also supported the extension of the Power Amnesty Scheme.

MLA Arjun Singh Raju urged the government to improve road conditions in his constituency to facilitate smooth operation of SRTC buses.

MLA Javaid Iqbal demanded a detailed inquiry into the mysterious deaths reported in Budhal, Rajouri last year and also sought provision of additional buses to improve public transport in his area.

MLA Sheikh Ahsan Ahmad Pardesi requested the government to formulate a plan for optimal utilization of the vacant GB Pant Hospital premises, mentioning the lack of adequate healthcare facilities in the surrounding areas after relocation of the pediatric hospital.

MLA Satish Sharma called for an in-depth inquiry into the damage to recently constructed volleyball and badminton courts due to rains and demanded deployment of a fire tender in his constituency to meet emergency needs.

The issues raised during Zero Hour reflect a wide spectrum of public concerns, with legislators urging timely and effective intervention by the government to address these challenges and ensure improved service delivery across Jammu and Kashmir.

Div Com reviews availability of Essential Commodities in Valley

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: To ensure uninterrupted availability of essential commodities across the Kashmir Valley, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg, on Tuesday chaired a high-level review meeting to assess stock positions and streamline supply mechanisms.

The meeting emphasized enhancing public interface systems to enable more efficient monitoring and assessment of demand and supply trends.

Deputy Commissioners from across the Valley, the Additional Commissioner Kashmir, Assistant Commissioner Central, representatives from medical institutions, universities, Agriculture Department, and sales officers from oil marketing companies—including Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL), and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL)—attended the meeting.

During the review, the Divisional Commissioner assessed the availability of petroleum products and LPG across districts and company depots.



On the occasion, the Joint Director, Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs (FCS&CA), informed that the combined stock position of oil companies for Motor Spirit (MS) is 6,919 KL, sufficient for approximately 13.6 days, High-Speed Diesel (HSD) is 12,980 KL, sufficient for approximately 18.5 days and Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) is 4,371 MT, sufficient for approximately 15.6 days.

Regarding foodgrain reserves at Food Corporation of India (FCI) depots, it was informed that the stocks are sufficient for 65 days.

On the status of eKYC verification for LPG con-

sumers, it was reported that 1,107,947 verifications have been completed, while 8,77,145 cases remain pending.

The Divisional Commissioner directed concerned agencies to expedite the completion of pending eKYC processes within a stipulated timeframe while availing the services of CSCs.

He also instructed oil companies to ensure home delivery of LPG cylinders and take strict action against unauthorized spot deliveries. Additionally, he directed the operation of the Pampore HPCL plant on Sundays to meet peak demand requirements.

To improve inventory

accuracy, the Divisional Commissioner called for immediate reconciliation of discrepancies between physical stock at distribution agencies and system records maintained by oil marketing companies. He further urged Deputy Commissioners to ensure adequate supply of commercial LPG to industries and institutions like SKIMS, GMC, Hospitals, SKUAST-K, KU, CUK and other educational institutions.

The Joint Director Agriculture also briefed the meeting on fertilizer availability, stating that sufficient stocks are in place for the upcoming Kharif season and are being regularly replenished.

Meanwhile, the Divisional Commissioner stressed the need to safeguard the interests of workers in industrial and service sectors, directing authorities to ensure that labourers are neither laid off nor deprived of timely wages.

He also instructed FCS&CA officials to compile and analyze supply and demand data from the past 15 days to identify consumption trends and support informed decision-making.

DC Budgam reviews progress of 125-Bedded DH, 100-Bedded CCU

GMK NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Athar Aamir Khan, Tuesday chaired a comprehensive review meeting to assess the progress of the under-construction 125-bedded state-of-the-art District Hospital and the 100-bedded Critical Care Unit (CCU) at Reshipora, Budgam.

At the outset, the DC took a detailed appraisal of the physical and financial progress achieved so far on both major healthcare projects.

Emphasizing the critical importance of timely completion, he directed all executing agencies and concerned departments to further accelerate the pace of work while strictly adhering to quality standards.

The DC underscored that these flagship projects are of immense public significance and are poised to transform the healthcare delivery system in the district. He noted that upon completion, these facilities will substantially enhance the district's capacity to provide specialized and critical



care services locally.

While reviewing the progress, the DC expressed satisfaction over the pace of work on the ground and appreciated the coordinated efforts of all stakeholders. He reiterated the administration's commitment to ensuring that both projects are completed well within the stipulated timelines.

The DC stated that the upcoming District Hospital, equipped with modern infrastructure and advanced medical facilities, will significantly reduce the referral burden on tertiary care hospitals and ensure quality health-

care services within the district.

The 100-bedded CCU, he added, will play a pivotal role in managing emergency and critical cases, thereby improving patient outcomes.

The DC emphasized that the District Administration, in close coordination with the Health and R&B Departments, is closely monitoring the progress of works on a regular basis.

During the meeting, the DC also directed the concerned departments to initiate and expedite the preparation of Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) for essential allied infrastructure,

including transmission lines, oxygen plant, electrical works, PHE pipelines, Sewage Treatment Plant (STP), and other allied works to ensure seamless functionality of both healthcare facilities upon completion.

"Our focus remains on ensuring timely and quality completion of these vital healthcare projects. Every aspect is being closely monitored so that these facilities are dedicated to the public ahead of schedule, significantly strengthening healthcare delivery in Budgam," the DC said.

The DC also directed officers to maintain strict adherence to timelines, ensure optimal utilization of resources, and enforce accountability at all levels. He stressed the need for sustained on-ground supervision to achieve smooth and accelerated progress.

The meeting was attended by SE R&B, Circle Budgam, Iram Lone, CPO Budgam, CMO Budgam, Medical Superintendent District Hospital Budgam, Executive Engineers, AEEs, and representatives of executing agencies.

A&T Dept bids warm farewell to Abdul Hamid, felicitates retiring officers

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: A heartfelt farewell was accorded to Abdul Hamid Kumar on his superannuation as Director, Accounts & Treasuries, Kashmir, marking the culmination of a distinguished and dedicated career in government service.

The farewell function was attended by Director General, Accounts & Treasuries, Fayaz Ahmad Lone; DG Resources/Funds, Mohd Yaqoob Ito; DG Codes, Mahesh Dass; DG Budget, Mohd Sultan Malik; along with Directors from A&T Jammu, Finance (Resources), Finance Health, and Treasury Officers from Kashmir who joined the event virtually.

Speaking on the occasion, the officers lauded Abdul Hamid Kumar for his exemplary leadership, professionalism, and unwavering commitment throughout his illustrious career. They highlighted his significant contributions towards strengthening the financial management system and acknowledged his role in enhancing institutional efficiency within the department.

The participants extended their heartfelt wishes for his good health, happiness, and a fulfilling post-retirement life.

On the occasion, several other officers of the Accounts cadre who also attained superannuation were felicitated for their dedicated services. Their contributions to the department were widely appreciated.

Among those honoured were Accounts Officers Mohammad Ayoub Mir (Directorate of Horticulture, Kashmir), Fayaz Ahmad Wani (Pay & Accounts Office, Chief Engineer Office, JKPTCL, Srinagar), Kamal Kishore (J&K ERA), Amarjit Singh Sandhu (Water Regulatory Authority), Rajinder Kumar Bhat (State Motor Garages), Mohd Yasin Sofi (District Fund Office, Srinagar), Daulat Ram (Municipal Council Samba), Abdul Rashid Khan (KPDCL, Pulwama), Ashwani Kumar (JKPTCL), Davinder Kumar Sharma (Kishtwar Tourism Development Authority), Jan Mohd Sofi (Treasury Officer, Pattan), Mohd Farooq Mir (Govt. College of Engineering & Technology, Ganderbal), Satvir Singh Manhas (Bhaderwah), Syed Arif Yaseen (Directorate of Animal Husbandry, Kashmir), Mangat Ram Khajuria (Central Store, JPDCL, Jammu) and Jai Dev Singh (Deputy Director Audit & Inspections, Jammu).

JKEDI organizes Credit Linkage Meets for Startups under D-BRAP Reforms

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Jammu & Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI), through its District Startup Cells in Srinagar and Budgam, organized Credit Linkage Meets for startups under the District Business Reform Action Plan (D-BRAP) reforms, aimed at strengthening the startup ecosystem and facilitating access to finance.

At Srinagar, the JKEDI District Startup Cell conducted its first Credit Linkage Meet in collaboration with the Jammu and Kashmir Bank. The primary objective of the programme was to facilitate credit linkage opportunities for startups and address the bottlenecks faced by them in accessing financial assistance.

Representatives from J&K Bank, Riyaz Ahmad Bhat, Financial Literacy & Credit Counselor and Shaista Muneer, Manager Advances, graced the occasion. They held an in-depth interaction with the participating startups, elaborating on various financial schemes offered by banks, explaining procedures for availing credit, and addressing key challenges faced by entrepreneurs in securing funding.

Speaking on the occasion,



Shabir Hussain Shah, District Nodal Officer, Srinagar, provided a comprehensive overview of the D-BRAP reforms, highlighting initiatives aimed at strengthening the startup ecosystem in the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir.

Meanwhile, JKEDI Budgam organized a Credit Facilitation Camp at ITI Budgam for startups registered with JKEDI as well as aspiring entrepreneurs. The programme focused on enhancing credit linkages and raising awareness about banking support systems available for startups.

The Lead District Manager Budgam, Jammu and Kashmir Bank, Mohammad Muzaffar, graced the occasion and interacted extensively with participants. He elaborated on various banking schemes, explained the processes involved in availing credit, and addressed

the bottlenecks encountered by startups in accessing financial assistance.

The programme also included an interactive knowledge-sharing session followed by a Q&A segment, allowing participants to directly engage with banking officials from the J&K Bank.

Speaking on the occasion, Syed Nazneen, District Nodal Officer, Budgam, presented a detailed overview of the D-BRAP activities being undertaken at the district level, emphasizing JKEDI's efforts to improve ease of doing business and facilitate the growth of startups in the region.

The sessions featured an interactive knowledge-sharing segment followed by a question-and-answer session, enabling participants to directly engage with banking officials and seek clarifications on their queries.

Div Com reviews progress of flood plain Zoning in Valley

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir, Anshul Garg Tuesday reviewed the progress of Flood Plain Zoning and the notification of flood basins across the Kashmir Valley.

During the meeting, it was noted that, based on the inundation patterns observed during the September 2014 floods, six wetlands—Hokersar, Nowgham Jheel, Hygam Jheel, Narkara Nambal, Anchar Lake, and Wullar Lake—along with a flood plain on the left side of the River Jhelum (from Sangam to Padshahibagh), have been identified as key flood basins.

The Divisional Commissioner was informed that the Jammu & Kashmir Water Resources Regulatory Authority (JKWRA) has already invited public objections for three wetlands—Hygam, Nowgham, and Hokersar. No objections have been received for Hygam and Nowgham, while the KMZ file for Hokersar is pending submission by the Irrigation & Flood Control (I&FC) Department.

The Divisional Commissioner directed that the required details be expe-



ditated within three days to facilitate the invitation of public objections for Hokersar as well.

The Chief Engineer, I&FC Kashmir, informed that revised revenue details for Anchar Lake have been obtained from the offices of the Deputy Commissioners of Srinagar and Ganderbal.

Regarding Wullar Lake, where a major portion falls within Bandipora district, the concerned Deputy Commissioner has been requested to share the necessary details. Similar information pertaining to the Baramulla portion of Wullar Lake is also being sought from the district administration.

The Chief Executive Officer, Jhelum & Tawi Flood Recovery Project (JTFRP), stated that the consultant engaged for

the project has completed hydrological modelling for a 1-in-25-year return period flood. This modelling will aid in demarcating the regulatory zone of the flood plain from Sangam to Padshahibagh, and is expected to be shared with the I&FC Department within the next two days.

Emphasizing the importance of timely completion, the Divisional Commissioner directed that all requirements for the notification of flood basins and flood plain zoning be finalized by April 30, 2026, enabling the Government to take further necessary action.

The Chief Engineer, I&FC Kashmir, was instructed to closely monitor progress and ensure continuous coordination with district administrations to achieve timely and result-oriented outcomes.

CS reviews impact of MSME Health Clinic under RAMP scheme

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: The Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, Tuesday chaired a comprehensive review meeting of the Industries & Commerce Department to assess the progress and impact of the MSME Health Clinic established under the Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP) scheme, aimed at revitalizing stressed and sick industrial units across Jammu and Kashmir.

Emphasizing the need for a robust and result-oriented approach, the Chief Secretary directed the department to optimally leverage available institutional and human resources. He stressed that, in addition to technical support from Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Jammu, the department should actively utilize the expertise of Functional Managers, resources from the Entrepreneurship Development Institute (EDI), and faculty and students from universities across the Union Territory.

He underscored the importance of constituting multidisciplinary teams comprising

professionals and trained interns to carry out a structured assessment of MSMEs. These teams, he noted, should initially undertake virtual evaluations followed by field visits for on-the-spot assessment and advisory support to units requiring intervention. He also called for the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based tools to streamline the diagnostic process and determine the severity and nature of interventions required.

The Chief Secretary further advised the department to set realistic daily and monthly targets to ensure timely outreach to MSMEs, either through digital platforms or physical visits. He stressed that each unit should be systematically evaluated and categorized as stable, stressed, or sick, followed by the provision of appropriate advisory and financial assistance in coordination with Jammu & Kashmir Bank to facilitate their stabilization and revival.

Highlighting the need for innovative financial solutions, he suggested exploring col-



laboration with J&K Bank for addressing financial stress among MSMEs, including examining possibilities of loan restructuring in line with the bank's internal policies and regulatory framework.

The Chief Secretary also emphasized aligning insights generated from the MSME Health Clinic with the evolving Industrial Policy of Jammu and Kashmir. He observed that data and findings from enterprise-level assessments could be effectively utilized to fine-tune

policy incentives, ensuring a more evidence-based and targeted approach to industrial support.

He further directed the department to plan extensive physical outreach programmes in collaboration with IIM Jammu and leverage the Small Business Development Units (SBDUs) under Mission YUVA for organizing workshops and providing expert guidance to MSMEs. He urged the management of IIM Jammu to play a proactive role in transforming

the MSME Health Clinic into a model initiative in the region.

On this occasion, the Director, IIM Jammu, B S Sahay, suggested developing comprehensive informational material, including pamphlets outlining standard operating procedures, dos and don'ts, and key diagnostic parameters for MSME assessment. He assured full institutional support in terms of training human resources and constituting dedicated teams to accelerate the implementation of the initiative.

During the meeting, Commissioner Secretary, Industries & Commerce, Vikramjit Singh, informed that a total of 3,968 MSMEs have registered on the Health Clinic portal so far. He stated that Phase I and Phase II of the initiative have been successfully completed, with 1,238 enterprises digitally assessed. Of these, 994 units (80.29%) were found to be stable, 237 units (19.14%) were identified as stressed, and 7 units were categorized as sick.

He further informed that verification of MSME credentials is being carried out in coordination with J&K Bank to enhance outreach and increase registrations. Additionally, chatbot-based support systems are being developed to provide real-time assistance and guidance to MSMEs.

Director Industries & Commerce, Jammu, Arun Manhas, apprised that the initiative has covered 12 districts so far, with 162 online interactions already completed. The remaining cases are expected to be finalized shortly. He added that 14

units have been identified for targeted rehabilitation, with field visits conducted to validate assessments and extend on-ground support.

Highlighting the ongoing Phase III, he informed that 1,544 MSMEs have been digitally assessed, out of which 1,309 units (84.47%) were categorized as stable, 229 units (14.83%) as stressed, and 6 units as sick.

It was also noted that in-depth diagnostic studies and structured interviews of the 229 stressed MSMEs will commence shortly, marking a transition from broad-based assessments to focused, case-specific interventions aimed at revival and capacity enhancement.

It is worth mentioning here that the MSME Health Clinic initiative under the RAMP scheme represents a strategic intervention by the Government of India to enable early identification of stress, provide expert diagnostics, and facilitate structured revival pathways for struggling enterprises, thereby fostering a resilient and competitive MSME ecosystem.

₹3.80 Cr UT subsidy disbursed to 4288 beneficiaries under PM Surya Ghar Yojana: CM

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah Tuesday informed the Legislative Assembly that ₹3.80 crore has been disbursed as UT subsidy in favour of 4,288 consumers of Kashmir and Jammu Power Distribution Companies under the PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana.

The Chief Minister was replying to a question raised by legislator Shakti Raj Parihar regarding the scheme.

The Chief Minister, who also holds the Power portfolio, said that ₹1.80 crore has been disbursed in favour of the first 2,053 consumers of KPDCCL, in line with the Central Financial Assistance (CFA). Similarly, ₹2 crore has been disbursed in favour of 2,235 beneficiaries of JPDCCL under the scheme.

He informed the House that under the PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana, the subsidy component is primarily borne by the Government of India through the Ministry of New and



Renewable Energy, with an additional subsidy component provided by the UT.

The Central Financial Assistance (CFA) is provided to residential consumers installing rooftop solar systems at ₹33,000 per kW for the first 2 kW of installed capacity and ₹19,800 per kW for the next 1 kW, taking the total maximum subsidy to ₹85,800 for systems up to 3 kW.

In addition, the UT provides a subsidy of ₹3,000 per kW—₹6,000 for 2 kW and up to ₹9,000 for 3 kW (capped at 3 kW)—taking the total subsidy up to ₹94,800 for a 3 kW system,

he added.

The Chief Minister further stated that delays, wherever applicable, in the release of the UT's share are primarily due to the verification of beneficiary installations, scrutiny of supporting documents, and integration of subsidy disbursement through the national portal.

He said that the J&K Administration is taking necessary steps to streamline the process and assured that the pending UT subsidy share will be released to eligible beneficiaries upon completion of verification formalities.

Govt endeavouring to boost J&K's educational ecosystem: Sakeena Ito

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Minister for Education Sakeena Ito Tuesday informed the House that the government is endeavouring hard to boost the educational ecosystem in Jammu and Kashmir, with special focus on establishing all kind of facilities in the government schools.

The Minister stated this while replying to a question of Legislator, Khursheed Ahmad Sheikh in the Legislative Assembly regarding introduction of new subjects.

She informed that components relating to general studies, computer education, digital literacy and vocational skill-based education have been introduced at different levels of schooling in a phased manner depending upon the levels of institution, availability of infrastructure, trained manpower and other requisite facilities.

She added that Computer Science, Information Practices and IT as separate subjects have already been introduced in the curriculum at Higher Secondary School Level (XI to XII). Besides, vocational/skill based education with 15



different trades have also been implemented in High and Higher Secondary in alignment with the recommendations of the National Education Policy-2020, particularly in respect of digital literacy, multidisciplinary learning and vocational education. She informed that the National Education Policy 2020 advocates an integrated and holistic approach to curriculum design, and accordingly, domains like Digital Literacy and Skill Education are embedded within the curriculum from the Foundational Stage onwards.

She also gave out that the teachers are being oriented and trained to effectively integrate these competencies into classroom practices, thereby ensuring the acquisition of relevant skills and learning outcomes in a holistic manner.

and experiential learning, the Minister further said.

She added that these competencies are being systematically embedded across subjects through curriculum rationalization, revised pedagogical approaches, competency-based assessments and integration of skill-oriented modules at the Secondary and Senior Secondary levels.

The Minister also informed that the existing curriculum is aligned with the National Education Policy-2020, particularly in respect of digital literacy, multidisciplinary learning and vocational education. She informed that the National Education Policy 2020 advocates an integrated and holistic approach to curriculum design, and accordingly, domains like Digital Literacy and Skill Education are embedded within the curriculum from the Foundational Stage onwards.

She also gave out that the teachers are being oriented and trained to effectively integrate these competencies into classroom practices, thereby ensuring the acquisition of relevant skills and learning outcomes in a holistic manner.

....BUDGET SESSION

1190 AWCs functional in Srinagar, 152 in Shalteng Constituency: Sakeena Ito

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Minister for Social Welfare, Sakeena Ito, Tuesday said that 1190 Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) are functional in Srinagar district with 152 AWCs functioning in Central Shalteng Constituency.

The Minister informed this in reply to a question raised by Legislator Tariq Hameed Karra regarding Social Welfare schemes in the Legislative Assembly.

She said that at present there is no proposal under consideration of the government regarding opening/establishment of new Anganwadi Centres in Central Shalteng Constituency as the existing centres are catering to the needs of the target beneficiaries of the said Constituency.

The Minister further said that the that any proposal regarding opening of new AWCs that fulfil the criteria would be examined for submission to the Government of India.

She also informed that the monthly honorarium to Anganwadi Workers (AWWs) and Anganwadi Helpers (AWHs) is in con-

sonance with the honorarium provided to AWWs and AWHs at the National level on the pattern of 90:10. She added that the Government of J&K is already giving additional state share to AWWs and AWHs and the matter would be taken up with Central Government to examine enhancement of honorarium subject to availability of resources.

Giving details about the beneficiaries covered under social welfare schemes in Central Shalteng constituency, the Social Welfare Minister informed that 6756 beneficiaries are covered under Old Age Pension, Widow Pension and various other Centrally and UT sponsored welfare schemes in the constituency.

She apprised that the old age pension under the Integrated Social Security Scheme (ISSS) and National Social Assistance Programme has recently been enhanced along with other components and the persons aged below 60 years are paid Rs.1250/- per month, between 60-79 years Rs 1500/- per month and 80 years and above @ Rs 2000/- per month.

No structural deficiency or safety concern on Sopore Bye-pass Bridge: Dy CM

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary Tuesday informed the House that Sopore Bypass Bridge was originally constructed with a rigid Cement Concrete (CC) deck surface to bear heavy structural loads and provide a stable base for traffic movement over a long period of time.

The Deputy Chief Minister was replying to the Calling Attention Notice moved by Legislator Irshad Rasool Kar in the Legislative Assembly today.

He informed that to enhance riding comfort for road users and to provide a smoother driving experience, an additional bituminous (blacktop) layer was laid over the concrete deck to improve surface smoothness and reduce vibrations during travel.

He also said that minor localized distress (damage) can develop in the top bituminous layer which appears in the form of small patches, cracks, unevenness or surface peeling at isolated locations. He added that due to heavy and continuous traffic load associated with Sopore Fruit Mandi, bridge experiences a high volume of vehicular movement

accelerating wear and tear of the bituminous overlay.

The Deputy Chief Minister also said that there is no structural deficiency or safety concern in the bridge itself and the main concrete structure remains fully intact, stable, and safe for vehicular movement.

He also added that prompt action was taken by the concerned authorities and Project BEACON has already initiated necessary repair measures like careful removal of the damaged bituminous portions, treatment of the affected areas to ensure proper bonding restoration using more durable, concrete-based or suitable materials to prevent recurrence.

The Deputy CM also said that at present repair work is being carried out on a priority basis and the situation is being closely monitored by the executing agency. He added that all necessary resources have been mobilized and the remaining repair work will be completed expeditiously. He highlighted that the safety of the bridge remains uncompromised, and necessary corrective measures are already underway to restore full riding quality for the public at the earliest.

MLAs can allocate up to ₹50L from CDF for housing aid to calamity victims: CM

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah Tuesday informed the Legislative Assembly that funds under the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) Scheme are being utilized across all Assembly constituencies in Jammu and Kashmir for works identified and recommended by respective MLAs, in accordance with guidelines issued by the Finance Department.

The Chief Minister was responding to a Calling

Attention Motion moved by MLA Habba Kadal Shamim Firdous during the ongoing Budget Session of the J&K Legislative Assembly.

He said that the Government has amended the CDF guidelines to expand the scope of assistance. As per the revised provisions, MLAs can now allocate up to ₹50 lakh from their CDF for providing housing assistance, including reconstruction and repair of houses for families affected by calamities, for the FY 2026-27.

The Chief Minister

further informed that the assistance to an individual family is capped at ₹1 lakh, and importantly, the benefit is not restricted to tribal or BPL families but is available to all affected families.

Clarifying the scope of the term "calamity" in the amended guidelines, he stated that it includes all events causing significant damage or harm, including fire incidents.

Referring to District Srinagar, the Chief Minister said that 24 cases were received from MLA Habba Kadal

for providing assistance to fire victims under the CDF Scheme, involving an estimated cost of ₹12.80 lakh. Of these, five cases have already been cleared for additional assistance after completing all required formalities.

He added that the remaining 19 cases are under examination and assessment in the office of the Deputy Commissioner, Srinagar, and assured that all eligible cases recommended by the MLA will be processed in accordance with the prescribed norms.

Calling Attention Motion

JJM reducing dependence on tanker service across rural areas: Govt

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Minister for Agriculture Javid Ahmad Dar Tuesday informed the Legislative Assembly that the completion and commissioning of schemes under the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), will significantly reduce the dependence on tanker services in rural areas.

The Minister was replying to a Calling Attention Motion raised by MLA Baldev Raj Sharma regarding water supply shortage in Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Constituency. He was replying on behalf of Minister for Jal Shakti, Javed Ahmed Rana.

Javid Dar informed that the government is strictly adhering to the

established norms and regulations while ensuring uninterrupted water supply to the public in the constituency and other areas. He added that to meet any urgent water requirement during occasional disruptions, peak summer demand or peak pilgrimage period, private tankers shall be hired as and when required.

The Minister reiterated that the ongoing expansion of water supply infrastructure under JJM is aimed at ensuring sustainable and reliable drinking water access, thereby minimizing reliance on temporary arrangements and strengthening overall service delivery across Jammu and Kashmir.

Metrolite, Light Metro projects under Govt consideration: Sakeena Ito

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: The Government of India is currently reviewing proposals for Metrolite and Light Metro projects in Jammu and Srinagar, aiming to enhance the cities' transportation infrastructure.

This was stated by Minister for Education Sakeena Ito in the Legislative Assembly Tuesday while replying to a question of Legislator Mohan Lal, regarding the matter, on behalf of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah.

The Minister informed that in Jammu city, comprehensive ground surveys, traffic studies, feasibility analysis and DPR preparation has been completed through M/s RITES Limited. She added that the DPR included alignment planning, ridership projections (2.84 lakh daily ridership by 2035), cost estimates, land requirements (29.58 hectare permanent and 1.50 hectare temporary), environmental and seismic design considerations besides financial structuring.

It was also apprised that the Economic Internal Rate of Return (EIRR) has



been assessed at 18.92%. The current proposal is confined to the Jammu urban corridor from Bantala to Bari Brahmana covering 23 km with 22 stations, she said.

It was told that at present no proposal is under consideration for extending the Metrolite corridor to Akhnoor town and any future expansion would be subject to separate feasibility assessment and approval of the Government of India.

Regarding Srinagar city, the Minister said that detailed topographical surveys, traffic and ridership assessments, engineering feasibility studies, financial and economic analyses and alignment planning have been undertaken through M/s RITES Ltd.

She added that DPR for both the projects has been finalized and submitted to the Government of India for appraisal.

Good Morning Kashmir

EDITORIAL

Big Payments, Bigger Questions:

The developments in the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly offer a clear glimpse into the Union Territory's financial condition—one that brings a sense of relief, but also raises important questions.

On the surface, the government clearing over 12,500 crore in pending bills, along with 5,800 crore in GPF claims, looks like a strong step forward. For many contractors and retired employees, this isn't just about numbers—it's about payments that were long overdue. It means pensions finally reaching those who waited, and businesses getting funds that were stuck for months or even years.

But while this progress is welcome, it naturally leads to a bigger question: how did such a large backlog build up in the first place?

The government says it is now clearing liabilities regularly, which suggests efforts are being made to improve the system. Still, the fact that such clearances need to be highlighted shows that delays have been a long-standing issue. Payments like gratuity, commutation, and contractor dues have often been delayed in Jammu and Kashmir, affecting both trust in governance and people's day-to-day lives.

The Chief Minister's point about funds being allocated head-wise rather than division-wise follows standard financial practice. However, on the ground, this method doesn't always address concerns about whether all regions are benefiting equally—something that continues to be debated.

Questions raised by legislators like Sham Lal Sharma and RS Pathania reflect what many people are thinking: Are payments being made fairly? Are they being made on time? And can the system be improved so that such backlogs don't happen again?

Ultimately, the real challenge for the government is not just clearing dues, but ensuring they don't pile up again. Payments should be timely by default—not something that becomes news when achieved. Improving treasury management, planning budgets better, and ensuring accountability at every level will be key.

For a region aiming for stability and growth, strong financial discipline is essential. While the recent steps are encouraging, what matters most now is consistency. Only then will this be seen not just as a temporary fix, but as a meaningful and lasting improvement.

Result-Oriented Education

The Only Antidote To Nepotism And Slow Performance

MOHD ISHAQ SHAH

Education has been the top-most priority of every civilised society since times immemorial. From caves to colonies, the world has experienced the contribution of education in the development of nations and societies. But the topic under discussion is not all about the development of educational systems throughout the world but about how the educational process becomes result-orientated and how the learners become real-life intellectuals. And what makes their foundations strong is that the building of education remains intact. My personal tendency has always been like thinking out of orthodoxy and dogmas that still have imprints on our education system. Despite having the well-developed infrastructure and qualified staff, why do we, as a system, often fail to achieve the desired results and goals in educating our young generations? In our govt/private education sector, students are enrolled in thousands and lakhs, but it is very disgusting that still we are far behind achieving the universal goal. The reasons that I consider worth mentioning are recorded here.

Mere promotion and the zero-detention policy have further aggravated the situation, and only the 10s are educated in a real sense, and the rest of the stock remain as backward as they would have been if not enrolled in schools and colleges at all. As a student, my experience has been like the stress was laid upon basic literacy and numeracy up to the 5th standard. The focal areas used to be Maths and Urdu, as English was not yet the medium of education in Jammu And Kashmir State. The transition could only be seen in the 2000s when certain changes took place in the curriculum and methodology of teaching. A B.Ed. became the mandatory degree. Unintentionally came into vogue, and stress was given to the coverage of a wide area of knowledge at College and University level. But the primary and middle standards still followed the same trend of teaching in an old way of giving notes to students and making them memo-



rise those notes. During the early years of my teaching career, I could hardly see any management giving stress on foundational literacy and numeracy. No doubt the students were made to memorise the alphabet (1-26) and numbers (1-100) combined with mathematical tables (1x10 and only up to the table of 10). What the use of these letters and numbers was never told to the students. The result would be that the students would not be worth creating the words and large numbers on their own. Students were never asked to try their own minds to write down an essay, letter, story, etc. of their own, but only readymade material was served to the students and compelled to be memorised for exam purposes.

FLN is the building block of a strong and enduring intellectually structured society. So, let's understand what FLN means. It technically means that, at the primary level, a student is able to read and write the textbooks that are given to him at the primary level. If s/he is able to recognise the alphabet and create words on his own. If he is able to create new words and sentences and comprehend the text, we can surely say that the student is in possession of foundational literacy. While reaching the middle stage, he should be able to rearrange the

jumbled words into a meaningful sentence. He should be able to arrange the sentences into a meaningful paragraph. For example, Goes/Ram/to every day/school (Ram goes to school every day.) After reaching Secondary and Senior Secondary level the students must be introduced to phrases, idioms, proverbs and sayings that will help them make their speaking and writing skills strong. Introduction to creative writing skills will surely help them to develop a strong writing skill. Writing skills are much too helpful in qualifying for higher-level descriptive exams.

So as far as foundational numeracy is concerned, a child should be able to do counting and put the numbers in ascending and descending order. He should be able to add, subtract, multiply and divide. At a middle level he should be able to solve the problems related to four basic operations. He must be able to apply BODMAS in order to simplify the complex operational problems. The problems like $[50 \times 60 + 90 - 30 / 10]$ should come in his range. The problem can be solved as $[50 \times 60 + 90 - 30 / 10] = 50 \times 60 + 90 - 3 = 3000 + 90 - 3 = 3090 - 3 = 3087$.

The range of such problems can be enhanced from simple to complex with the passage of time. At Secondary level, the children should be

given firsthand exposure to problems related to menstruation, trigonometry, and arithmetic progression which, although they are there in the related curriculum, the students are not able to apply in real-life situations and especially during the board exams. The fact is that most of the state/central level exams ask about these basic concepts, and the irony is that students from the same background and with the same qualifications can't crack such exams. Correlating FLN with higher-order learning, let me mention here a paradoxical scenario, like a 12th pass-out candidate can't crack the competitive exam of the same level. And a graduate can't crack the competitive exam of graduation level until they reach the PG level, and only some of them can crack it. Obviously it can be called a slow performance and development. The only reason behind it is that the student has been promoted to subsequent grades with little consideration to FLN.

To conclude my topic, let me put forward some modest proposals to concerned faculty, HOIs and Officers that as a joint venture we should come forward with a new teaching trend that serves the basic objective of creating an intellectually strong student community, and only then can we expect intelligent, creative and impactful public servants, officers and employees of the future. This must be treated as a moral and professional duty to work in such a way that it is result-orientated and objective-specific. And I am quite sure that this process will result in homogeneity of intellectual products, and the competition will be more perfect, and the competitive market will look like an economically perfect competitive market. That will further pave the way for curbing the social evils like corruption and nepotism. If we prefer intellectualism over favouritism, definitely we shall be able to build a strong nation that no one can defeat. And all the lamenting stories will come to an end along with the accusations.

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AI In Classrooms: A Wake-Up Call For Jammu & Kashmir



DR YASH PAUL

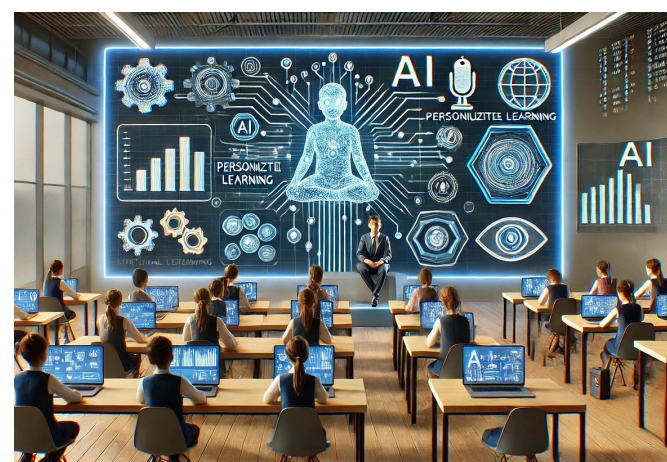
Artificial Intelligence (AI) is now rapidly becoming a reality in Indian classrooms to reshape the educational ecosystem of the nation. The transformation has begun to show its effects in several forward-looking states of India. The government schools in Kerala now use AI and robotics through the Little KITEs program, which enables students to learn coding and innovation from an early age. Karnataka established AI-equipped public educational institutions and digital learning centres to improve students' computational skills, while Delhi integrated AI into its school curriculum to provide students with skills needed for future employment. Through public-private partnerships, Maharashtra has expanded access to smart classrooms and digital tools throughout the state. Even states like Gujarat and Punjab are progressing through curriculum reforms and pilot initiatives. All these initiatives enable personalised learning, which includes real-time assessment capabilities and hands-on experience with new technologies to demonstrate that AI technology improves both teaching methods and student learning results. The current educational transformation through AI creates a main challenge for Jammu & Kashmir to match with these changes. The National Education Policy 2020 establishes AI as a basic skill which schools must teach according to its guidelines. As per the Ministry of Education govt. According to India and CBSE data, more than 18800 Indian schools have introduced AI as an educational subject or module.

In line with these developments, India recently hosted the India AI Impact Summit

2026 in New Delhi, which brought together policymakers, technology leaders, researchers, and innovators from across the world. The discussions strongly highlighted the need to integrate AI into education systems so that students are equipped with future-ready skills in an increasingly digital world.

The Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir operates a large educational system, which includes about 18724 government and 5413 private schools that serve more than 26 lakh students. Government schools alone enrol around 13.5 lakh students while private schools, despite being fewer in number, attract nearly 12.6 lakh students. More concerning is the issue of underutilization. As per the education minister of Jammu & Kashmir UT, it is indicated that over 3,192 government schools in J&K have fewer than 10 students, highlighting serious challenges related to infrastructure use, quality perception, and public trust. Of such schools, 1494 are in the Jammu division and 1698 in the Kashmir division. Kathua in Jammu with 505 and Baramulla in Kashmir with 396 are at the top of such schools. Srinagar and Poonch districts in Kashmir and Jammu, respectively, have the lowest number of such schools. These facts and figures show that public interest has begun to move away from governmental schools toward private schools. According to national trends and regional analysis, under 10 per cent of Jammu and Kashmir schools provide students with actual AI-based learning opportunities. Private schools in urban areas of Srinagar and Jammu provide basic coding and AI education to 15 to 25 per cent of their students. Government schools show a major deficiency, and only 3 to 8 per cent of their students receive minimal exposure to ICT and AI-based learning. Educators throughout Jammu and Kashmir now realise that Artificial Intelligence, together with digital learning technologies, serve as essential components for effective school education.

The Union Territory has nearly 24000 schools, of which only 150 to 180 schools have



CBSE affiliation because 99 per cent of schools belong to JKBOSE, which includes government and local private institutions. The CBSE schools show better implementation of Artificial Intelligence through 40 to 60 per cent of their programs in Jammu and Kashmir, which include AI-related modules, because their number in the educational system remains small. The majority of JKBOSE-affiliated schools show minimal AI access because they only have 4 to 9 per cent of their students using AI technology, and face challenges from missing infrastructure, untrained teachers and a lack of AI educational programs. The national progress shows that AI exists in almost 60 per cent of CBSE schools, yet Jammu & Kashmir has less than 10 per cent AI adoption, which creates a severe digital divide that needs immediate policy solutions and system changes. The educational system in Jammu and Kashmir does not recognise AI as a standard practice because it considers AI to be an exceptional case.

The Central University of Kashmir has established the necessary academic and technical facilities to conduct extensive teacher training programs which focus on Artificial Intelligence education. The university intends to work with the Government of Jammu & Kashmir to develop educational resources for school teachers while implementing AI technology into their educational programs.

The International Conference on Artificial Intelligence,

which the university is organizing will take place from 17th to 19th June 2026 and will feature experts from the USA, Europe and leading scientists from other parts of the world. The platform will create opportunities for knowledge exchange and policy discussions, which will help develop practical methods to improve AI educational systems which address the specific needs of Jammu and Kashmir.

The core issue, however, remains the absence of a dedicated policy framework for AI in school education in the Union Territory. The region requires a concrete roadmap which includes plans for teacher training and infrastructure development because digital technology continues to expand its presence in society.

The implementation of Artificial Intelligence in school education must proceed through systematic development steps which match the National Education Policy 2020 vision and its subsequent curricular reforms. The teaching of AI concepts should start at the basic level, maybe from class 3rd through hands-on activities and from middle school onwards, in line with competency-based education under the National Curriculum Framework 2023. At the secondary level, AI may be offered as a skill subject, supported by coding, data literacy, and problem-solving modules already encouraged by CBSE and national digital initiatives.

The integration of AI in gov-

ernment schools in Jammu & Kashmir faces challenges such as limited infrastructure, a lack of trained teachers, digital connectivity gaps, and geographical constraints. A phased, policy-driven approach with focused investment and institutional support will be essential for effective and inclusive implementation.

For effective implementation of AI in Jammu & Kashmir, the existing ICT infrastructure under Samagra Shiksha should be systematically upgraded into AI-enabled learning environments, ensuring access to devices, connectivity, and digital platforms. A key priority must be large-scale teacher capacity building through continuous professional development programmes, leveraging institutions such as the Central University of Kashmir for training, certification, and curriculum support. In addition, blended learning models, virtual labs, and centralised digital content repositories can help overcome geographical barriers and ensure inclusion of students in remote and underserved areas.

The integration of artificial intelligence needs to be understood as a strategic approach that improves educational outcomes while driving innovation and modernising public education systems. The implementation of AI-powered classrooms in Jammu and Kashmir will help government schools that experience declining enrollment because these classrooms will attract students while building public trust and establishing modern educational standards.

Jammu & Kashmir stands at a critical juncture. The foundation for digital education has been laid, the need for transformation is evident, and the opportunity is immense. What is required now is vision, coordination, and timely policy action.

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■ Exploitation Or Volunteering

What Is The Real Way To Protect Women?

DR. PRIYANKA SAURABH

The debate about the status of women in Indian society is nothing new. The question has been raised time and again as to whether the modern freedoms afforded to women are truly beneficial to them, or whether they are putting them at greater risk of exploitation. Recent events and societal reactions to them have reignited this debate. Some believe that women's increasing freedom is leading to their exploitation, while others consider this a narrow and misguided viewpoint. Therefore, it is essential to approach this issue with logic, facts, and a balanced perspective, rather than with emotions.

First, it's important to understand the root cause of exploitation. Can a woman's education, self-reliance, or independent living truly lead to exploitation? The simple and clear answer is no. Exploitation is always rooted in the mindset of the perpetrator. When someone mistreats a woman, the responsibility lies solely with that person. Linking this to a woman's freedom or behavior is not only wrong, but also akin to blaming the victim.

There's a societal belief that women are safer if they are under the supervision of their father, brother, or husband. This idea stems from traditional thinking, where safety and control are considered synonymous. However, the reality is far more complex. Numerous cases have emerged where women have been abused by acquaintances or within their own families. This means that mere surveillance or control cannot guarantee safety. Safety is not about restricting individual freedom, but about strengthening justice, law, and awareness within society.

It is also said that women are emotional by nature and therefore easily influenced. While this may be partly true, it is a grave mistake to consider this a weakness. Emotions are part of human nature, whether male or female. The real problem arises when someone exploits these emotions. Therefore, the solution is not to suppress women's emotions or limit their freedom, but to take strict action against those in society who exploit others.

In modern society, women have gained access to education, employment, and the right to make their own decisions. This is a positive change that has empowered them and made them self-reliant. However, it has



Despite being educated and independent, many women are victims of exploitation. According to this school of thought, one reason for this is their emotional nature, which some people exploit. It argues that women are more trusting and sensitive by nature, which sometimes makes them vulnerable to the wrong people. In this context, the traditional social system is considered more secure, where women live under the care of their father in childhood, their brother in adolescence, and their husband after marriage. This system is associated with protection and guidance. Meanwhile, some consider modern freedom to be risky, arguing that it forces women to make decisions alone, making them more vulnerable to exploitation.

also brought some challenges. It is every individual's responsibility to use freedom wisely. This applies not only to women but also to men. If a person makes a wrong decision, they may suffer the consequences, but this does not mean that freedom itself is wrong. It is important to understand the difference between the misuse of freedom and freedom itself.

It's often argued that women were safer in earlier times because they lived within the confines of their homes. But this notion is not entirely accurate. Even then, women faced injustice and exploitation, but they were unable to speak out. Today, at least, women can stand up for their rights, speak out, and demand justice.

This change is a positive sign for society.

The rising number of rapes and other crimes is certainly a cause for concern. But the reason for this is not women's freedom, but the mindset of the perpetrators, weak law enforcement, and the prevailing misconceptions in society. To find a solution to a problem, we must understand its true causes. Limiting women's freedom is not a solution; it is, in fact, a form of running away from it.

On the contrary, we must envision a society where women are both safe and independent. This requires taking several important steps. First, the education system must incorporate the values of gender equality

and respect. Children must be taught from childhood that it is important to respect every individual. Second, the legal system must be strengthened so that criminals receive swift and severe punishment. Third, women must be encouraged to develop self-defense and self-confidence, enabling them to face any situation.

Furthermore, the media and society must also understand their responsibility. They must stop objectifying women or questioning their character. Society must understand that a woman's dignity is not tied to her clothes, her behavior, or her decisions, but to her very existence.

Ultimately, it's safe to say that women's freedom and safety are both

equally important. Pitting one against the other is a flawed approach. We must strike a balance where women can fully exercise their rights and yet not fear exploitation.

True development of society is possible only when every individual—whether male or female—can live a life of dignity, security, and freedom. Empowering women instead of keeping them under "surveillance" is the right direction. This is the only path that can create a better and safer future not only for women but also for society as a whole.

(Dr. Priyanka Saurabh, PhD (Political Science), is a poet and social thinker.)

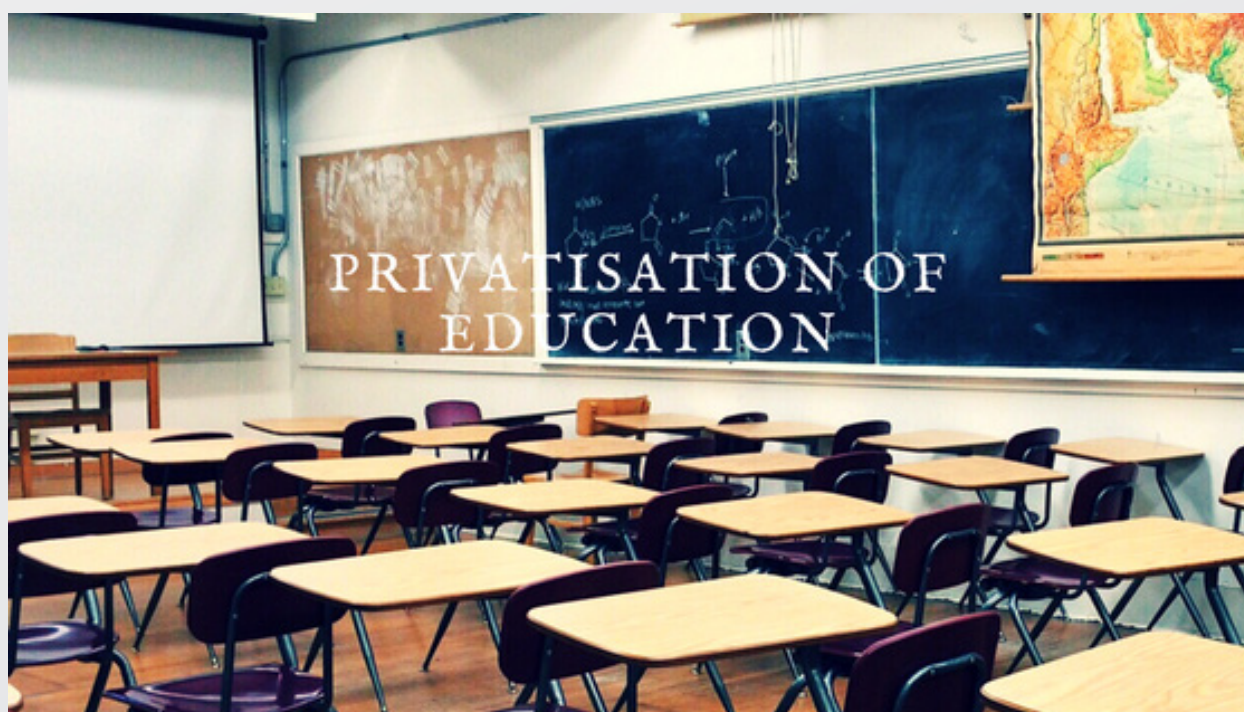
Privatisation Takes Hold: Government Schools Face Deepening Crisis

In A Decade, 94,000 Government Schools Closed, 51,000 Private Schools Opened, Every Fifth School-Going Child Is Out Of School

DR. SATYAVAN SAURABH

India's education system is facing a serious crisis. Nearly 94,000 government schools have closed in the past decade, while over 51,000 private schools have opened during the same period. This situation not only exposes the weaknesses of the government education system but also exposes the social inequality caused by increasing privatisation. Article 21A of the Indian Constitution guarantees every child the right to free and compulsory education, but under current circumstances, this right appears to be gradually eroding. Between 2014-15 and 2023-24, the number of government schools declined from 1,107,101 to 1,017,660, a decrease of approximately 89,441 schools, while the number of private schools increased from 2,88,164 to 3,31,108. This trend is particularly worrying for rural India, where access to education is becoming increasingly difficult for children from poor and disadvantaged sections.

A major cause of the crisis in government schools is the "School Merger Policy," under which small schools with low enrollment are merged into larger ones. This has made access to school difficult for children in rural and tribal areas. Thousands of schools have closed in states like Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, accounting for a large portion of the total closures. Furthermore, teacher shortages, poor infrastructure, and the ineffective implementation of schemes like the Mid-Day Meal are also major reasons for the decline in enrollment. Certain provisions of the National Education Policy 2020,



such as discouraging single-teacher schools, also contribute to this process, resulting in a sharp decline in enrollment in government schools, while the number of students in private schools has increased rapidly. Children from poor families are now forced to turn to private schools, but high fees become a major barrier.

The number of private schools is rapidly increasing, and a large number of children are studying in private schools in urban areas. However, this growth also raises several concerns. Private school fees are increasing significantly, making it increasingly difficult for low- and middle-income families to access education. This increasing privatiza-

tion of education is turning it into a business rather than a social service. Under the Right to Education Act, 25 percent of seats are reserved for poor children, but its effective implementation is not being implemented, further deepening social inequality. While the affluent receive education in private schools with better resources and facilities, the poor are confined to government schools with limited resources.

This imbalance is also having a direct impact on dropout rates. Millions of children have dropped out of school in recent years, a large number of them adolescent girls. This is due to several factors, including poverty, child labor, family migration, distance

to schools, and lack of security. Girls, especially in rural areas, find it more difficult to access education. When families cannot afford private school fees and government schools are not available nearby, children are almost certain to drop out of education. This situation could further exacerbate unemployment and social inequality.

Privatization of education is not just an educational problem, it also deepens social and economic inequality. When all sections of society do not have equal educational opportunities, the imbalance in opportunities in society increases. In India, only about 3 percent of GDP is spent on education, while the target of increasing it to 6 percent remains unfulfilled.

This impacts women's empowerment, employment opportunities, and the country's overall economic development. If this situation continues, it could also pose a threat to democracy, because an educated society produces informed and responsible citizens.

To address this crisis, the government must take concrete and effective steps. The school merger policy should be reconsidered and small schools in rural areas should be protected. Vacant teaching positions should be filled promptly, and special attention should be paid to teacher training. Basic amenities such as toilets, clean drinking water, and digital resources should be ensured in all schools. The quality of the Mid-Day Meal Scheme should be improved, and private school fees should be controlled and monitored. The provisions of the Right to Education Act should be strictly enforced, and public investment in education should be increased to 6 percent of GDP.

In conclusion, the growing influence of privatization has become a serious challenge for government schools. The declining number of government schools and the increasing number of private schools indicate that education is gradually shifting from a fundamental right to a business. This is having the greatest impact on the poor and disadvantaged. If appropriate measures are not taken in time, this inequality will deeply impact society. It is essential to strengthen education, not as a commodity of the market, but as the foundation of social development, because the future of future generations depends on it.

(Dr. Satyavan Saurabh, PhD (Political Science), is a poet and social thinker.)

₹18382 Cr Liabilities

basis. He added that payments relating to contractors and retired employees are also processed at regular intervals.

He further informed that during the financial year (2025-26), the Government has cleared 2,864.14 crore in gratuity, 1,123.22 crore in commutation, 773.47 crore in leave salary and 7,800.58 crore in contractor bills up to March 27, 2026, while GPF claims amounting to 5,821.43 crore have been settled up to December 31, 2025.

The Chief Minister also clarified that allocations are made on the basis of Heads of Expenditure rather than on a divisional basis, and accordingly, payments in the Treasuries are accounted for head-wise.

Legislator RS Pathania also raised a supplementary to the question.

LG Calls For Imbibing

the character we cultivate," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor called upon the young generation to infuse non-violence into its mindset and reform attitudes toward nature, long exploited as mere utility. "True Ahimsa transcends ethics, becoming the sharpest environmental strategy," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor emphasized that Lord Mahavira's legacy is a refined guidebook for navigating complexity.

"Lord Mahavira declared Ahimsa, restraint, and austerity the supreme auspiciousness. One whose mind dwells therein earns even god's salutations. This is his bequest and heritage for every generation.

Through Anekantavada, Lord Mahavira taught humility. He affirmed truth's multifaceted nature, no single viewpoint captures it fully. Today, amid echo chambers, people mistake opinions for absolute truth, eroding balance. On Mahavira Jayanti, embrace intellectual humility, questioning one's opinion exemplifies supreme wisdom," the Lieutenant Governor said.

On the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor also felicitated the achievers from diverse fields.

Shri Suneel Jain, President, SS Jain Sabha; Shri Devki Nandan, Jain, Vice President, Shri Pavinder Vijay Jain, General Secretary and other members of SS Jain Sabha, Jammu, prominent citizens and people from different walks joined the celebrations.

Shri Justice Rajnesh Oswal, Members of Legislative Assembly, Shri Yudhvir Sethi and Shri Arvind Gupta; Shri Anand Jain, ADGP Armed; Shri Ramesh Kumar, Divisional Commissioner Jammu; Shri Bhim Sen Tuti, IGP Jammu and other senior officers were also present.

J&K's Culture, Spiritua

Anant Shri Vibhushit Junapeethadheeshwar Acharya Mahamandaleshwar Pujyapad Shri Swami Avdhesanand Giri Ji Maharaj also graced the occasion.

The Lieutenant Governor said that Jammu Kashmir Cultural Festival aims to preserve rich heritage, recommit to folk arts, spiritual foundations, traditions and strengthens our identity

"I am confident traditional performances will enliven the atmosphere with color and melody, cultural displays will carry our priceless legacy to all, and farmer awareness programs will honor the hands nourishing this Union Territory's soul," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor observed that emerging India's duty is to empower our knowledge economy and to propagate innovations, cultural values, and philosophical ideas globally.

"In this defining moment as global strife fractures societies and humanity quests for peace, India stands tall to illuminate a new path for the world. We are heirs to a civilization that lit lamps of knowledge, culture, and spirituality across continents millennia ago," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor said that the world awaits fresh ideas, and youth inherit the tradition birthing transformative thought.

He called upon the youth to return to their roots, cultivate new ideas and innovation and use cultural heritage as a potent tool to transform society.

"In this interconnected era, strengthen brotherhood's bond, Champion compassion over conflict worldwide," the Lieutenant Governor told the youth.

The Lieutenant Governor observed that art and culture wield profound insight, purpose, and craft, which is essential for nation-building. For India, art, spirituality, philosophy, and ethics are bridges linking generations, he said.

"This is modern history's toughest phase, and we are fortunate that Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi is leading the country, establishing new benchmarks in progress and welfare," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor highlighted that India's transformation over the past 12 years has been extraordinary. He emphasized that the society must accelerate this transformation collectively. In coming decades, we must harness new energy and resolve to build technologies and systems reshaping domestic and global industries, the Lieutenant Governor further added.

"On international platforms, India has reclaimed ancient glory and confidence. Indian engineers, scientists, industrialists, and innovators now steer global discourse; their technologies and talents earn worldwide acclaim. I see this as a renaissance, reviving India's glorious history," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Jammu Kashmir Cultural Festival featured various activities including cultural exhibition, traditional folk performances, Kisan Mela and free medical camp.

On the occasion, distinguished individuals were also felicitated for their outstanding contributions in their respective fields.

Members of Legislative Assembly, Shri Sham Lal Sharma and Ms. Devyani Rana; Mahant Rohit Shastri, President, Shri Kailakh Jyotish and Vedic Sansthan Trust; Shri Mukul Kanitkar, prominent citizens and people in large numbers attended the cultural festival.

Shri Suresh Kumar Sharma, Member, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board; Shri Ramesh Kumar, Divisional Commissioner, Jammu and senior officials were also present.

Snowfall, Rain Disrupt

across the Union Territory.

"Between March 31 and April 2, brief spells of light rain or snow may occur at isolated places, particularly towards late afternoons. From April 3 to 4, generally cloudy conditions with light to moderate rain or snowfall at many places are expected, accompanied by thunder and gusty winds," an official said.

The advisory further said partly cloudy conditions are likely between April 5 and 7, while fresh spells of light to moderate rain and snow in higher reaches are expected from April 8 to 10.

Authorities have also warned of thunderstorms and gusty winds reaching speeds of 30-40 kmph at isolated places, particularly during late afternoon hours on March 31, April 3 and 4.

Meanwhile, the Traffic Police Headquarters issued an advisory stating that the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway (NH-44) remained blocked for several hours due to landslides and shooting stones between Ramban and Banihal.

Although the road was later partially restored, commuters have been advised to avoid travel during night hours due to the risk of shooting stones. Passenger Light Motor Vehicles (LMVs) are being allowed from both sides under regulated conditions, subject to weather and road status.

The Srinagar-Sonamarg-Gumri (SSG) Road remains closed for vehicular movement towards Kargil due to fresh snowfall, with only stranded vehicles being allowed after clearance by road maintenance agencies.

Similarly, the Mughal Road connecting Shopian and Poonch has been closed due to snow accumulation.

Meanwhile, the Bandipora-Gurez road via Razdan Pass has also been closed following fresh snowfall, officials said. Traffic on the nearly 85-kilometre stretch has been suspended till further orders.

Officials said the Sinthan-Anantnag-Kishtwar road also remains closed following administrative orders due to unsafe conditions.

Passengers and transport operators have been advised to prefer daytime travel on the highway and strictly follow lane discipline to avoid congestion and accidents.

The administration has urged people to check the latest traffic and weather updates before undertaking journeys, warning of possible landslides and shooting stones at vulnerable locations.

Farmers have been advised to resume agricultural activities between March 31 and April 2, when weather conditions are expected to remain relatively stable.

Authorities said the situation is being closely monitored and necessary measures are in place to ensure public safety.

Furthermore, the Army and police on Tuesday rescued 34 students and staff trapped in a government school in Watergam area of Baramulla district after flash floods triggered by heavy rainfall inundated the premises, officials said.

The rescue teams evacuated 30 students and four teachers from the hostel after water levels in a nearby nallah rose suddenly.

Officials said the swift joint operation averted a major tragedy, and all those rescued are safe—(KNO)

Tulip Garden Records

was not available this time.

Officials said the garden is witnessing a steady rise in visitors and expect a further surge in the coming days as the bloom reaches its peak.

Situated at the foothills of the Zabarwan range overlooking Dal Lake, Asia's largest Tulip Garden, this year features around 70-75 varieties of tulips and remains a major highlight of Jammu and Kashmir's spring tourism season—(KNO)

J&K Has Sufficient

have also been lodged. He said that since 17 March 2026 a total number of 3442 inspections/raids have been conducted and several FIRs have been launched and 252 goods/articles have been seized/impounded with 2443 grievances/complaints redressed.

With regard to ensuring uninterrupted supply of Motor Spirit (MS) and High Speed diesel (HSD), the Minister informed that daily monitoring of Petroleum Products including LPG from stockiest/outlet level to bulk level of OMC's (State level) is being monitored.

The Minister said that steps taken for ensuring uninterrupted Supply of MS/HSD/CNG Movement of LPG and Petroleum products in coordination with SLC/OMC (State level) is being facilitated with review of stock at stockiest/outlet level monitored by respective District Level Committee headed by Deputy Commissioners/District Magistrates. He said that other field functionaries drawn from different Departments for enforcement including punitive action against hoarders, black marketers, conducting of surprise visits stands encouraged.

He stated that there's no panic buying and no reports of rumours, with all channels being monitored for such activity. He added that from March 15 to 24, 36 media interactions, briefings, and social media engagements have been conducted, along with on-ground community interactions.

The Minister said that regular review meetings are also being held to monitor the availability and the measures being taken to ensure the same at different levels.

CS Reviews Roadmap

Training. He called for sustained efforts to build a disaster-resilient Jammu & Kashmir through long-term, evidence-based planning.

Stressing the importance of expert-driven policy formulation, he directed the department to undertake detailed analysis through the constituted expert committee for developing precise, actionable recommendations tailored for each department. He further emphasized leveraging mitigation funds under Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOF), landslides, and floods, to reduce vulnerabilities and enhance preparedness.

Highlighting the approaching monsoon season, the Chief Secretary instructed all Deputy Commissioners to identify vulnerable areas in advance

and implement preventive measures based on past experiences. He also laid emphasis on strict enforcement of disaster management laws, calling for the formulation of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and their effective implementation at the district level to ensure compliance and accountability.

Additional Chief Secretary, Finance, Shailendra Kumar, stressed the need to safeguard critical connectivity infrastructure along with life and property. He advocated for adoption of modern, technology-driven early warning systems and recommended detailed studies of vulnerable regions, particularly the Chenab basin, to guide mitigation strategies.

Additional Chief Secretary, PWD, Anil Kumar Singh, highlighted the department's efforts towards permanent restoration of damaged infrastructure and implementation of mitigation measures aimed at ensuring minimal disruption to connectivity during disasters.

Principal Secretary, DMRR&R, Chandraker Bharti, informed that comprehensive mitigation guidelines have already been issued, urging departments to formulate projects in accordance with these guidelines to secure funding. He also indicated that fresh allocations would soon be released to districts to address emergent situations.

Divisional Commissioner, Jammu, Ramesh Kumar, highlighted the importance of training and capacity building of volunteers, especially in remote and far-flung areas, to significantly reduce response time.

Similarly Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir, Anshul Garg, called for strengthening early warning mechanisms, flood zoning, and modeling, along with early operationalization of the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) at Budgam.

Director SDRF, Imtiaz Hussain Mir, emphasized the need for augmenting manpower and strengthening logistical capacity, including procurement of advanced equipment to enhance disaster response capabilities across the UT.

The CEO, ERA, Shreya Singhal apprised the meeting about the current status of completion of the EOC at Budgam assuring that the department is trying its best to partially handover the same for use by April end after construction of boundary wall and completing it fully by August this year. She also divulged that the necessary procurement of equipment has also been undertaken for its smooth operation soon.

Deputy Commissioners also shared field-level insights, highlighting requirements related to consultancy support, equipment, and capacity building, while also detailing measures taken in response to past disasters.

Earlier, the Department presented a comprehensive roadmap for upgrading disaster management systems in the UT. It was informed that a Multi-Hazard Vulnerability and Risk Assessment is currently underway, with pilot districts including Ramban, Kishtwar, and Srinagar. A dedicated expert committee has been constituted, and a Risk Atlas is being developed to identify critical hazard hotspots.

It was added that the Department has also secured substantial financial assistance, including over 330 Cr from the High-Level Committee on the basis of IMCT report besides over 1,579 Cr had been approved by the Ministry of Home Affairs for recovery and reconstruction of infrastructure here in J&K. Additionally projects worth 1,431 Cr under SASCI had been allocated for restoration of damaged infrastructure too.

In order to institutionalize the mechanism the UT has established a Directorate of Disaster Management, while steps are underway for the creation of an Urban Disaster Management Authority. A dedicated Mitigation Fund has been operationalized, supported by project appraisal committees to facilitate targeted interventions.

In a significant step towards strengthening institutional capacity, the Department has signed an MoU with UNDP for technical support and is working closely with the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) to develop hyper-local early warning systems. The Incident Response System (IRS) has been notified up to the tehsil level, complemented by regular mock drills and capacity-building programmes.

Key capacity-building initiatives include specialized training programmes for engineers, officers, and community stakeholders, along with a focus on gender-inclusive disaster risk reduction strategies. Priority is also being given to landslide risk mitigation and structural safety assessments.

Line departments such as Housing & Urban Development, Public Works (R&B), and Jal Shakti are actively integrating disaster-resilient features into infrastructure planning, including earthquake-resistant construction, floodplain mapping, slope stabilization, and installation of advanced flood monitoring systems.

The UT Government has also initiated critical policy reforms, including strengthening building bye-laws, enforcing land-use regulations, floodplain zoning, and mandating disaster risk reduction measures in all major developmental projects, reaffirming its commitment to building a safer and more resilient Jammu & Kashmir.

J&K Grapples With

comprehensive strategy to combat drug abuse. This includes: awareness campaigns to educate youth and communities about the harmful effects of drugs, preventive interventions at grassroots levels, strengthening enforcement mechanisms to curb supply and expansion of treatment and rehabilitation services. "The government is addressing the issue through a multi-pronged approach, combining prevention, treatment, and enforcement," she added.

The Minister informed that a wide network of de-addiction and rehabilitation centres has been established across the UT, including in District Hospitals, Government Medical Colleges, and police-run facilities.

"Youth identified as drug dependent are being provided treatment, counselling, and rehabilitation services through these centres," she said.

According to official figures, around 69,000 patients have so far been treated or rehabilitated across various addiction treatment facilities in J&K.

"These numbers are being regularly documented, and services are being further scaled up under the National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction (NAPDDR) and other schemes," she added.

Providing details of infrastructure, the Minister said: De-Addiction Centres (DDACs): Three functional in Kashmir division (Kulgam, Pulwama, Bandipora) and One functional in Jammu division (Rajouri); Outreach and Drop-In Centres (ODICs): Functional in Kupwara, Srinagar, and Jammu and Community-Based Peer-Led Interventions (CPLI): Operational in Srinagar and Jammu.

"All these institutions are functioning under the supervision of the respective Deputy Commissioners," she said.

The Minister emphasized that while the government acknowledges the seriousness of drug abuse among youth, institutional mechanisms for prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation are already in place and are being strengthened continuously.

"The government remains committed to tackling this issue in a systematic and sustained manner," she said—(KNO)

994 Posts Allocated

freeze these posts or refer them to the Jammu and Kashmir Services Selection Board (JKSSB) for fresh recruitment, as the posts have been reserved in line with the Rehbar-e-Khel policy.

The reply further stated that the registration of unemployed youth on the employment portal is voluntary, and as of January 2026, around 3.50 lakh unemployed youth have registered.

Among them, 440 candidates with B.P.Ed and 473 with M.P.Ed qualifications are registered with the Employment Department.

The government added that 20 Physical Education Lecturers have been appointed against sanctioned posts, while 2,395 physical education graduates have been engaged under the Rehbar-e-Khel policy to provide job opportunities—(KNO)

Govt Colleges In J&K

Road Srinagar only 14 students were enrolled in the year 2025 followed by 11 students in JKIMS, 16 students in Govt Degree College Chatroo Kishtwar, 10 in GDC Langate, 18 in GDC Dangiawachi Baramulla, 28 students in GDC Tulai Bandipora.

The government also informed that the GDC Verinag was functioning with a student enrolment of 29 in the year 2025 followed by 27 student enrolment in Govt Degree College Marwah Kishtwar, 27 students in Govt Degree College Mandi Poonch, 22 students in Govt Degree College Dharmari Reasi, 26 in Govt Degree College, Dudu Bastargarh Udhampur, 26 in Govt Degree College Kralpora Kupwara and 27 students were enrolled in GDC Vilgam Kupwara.

The concerned minister said this while replying to the query as to how many GDC's were presently functional in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir indicating also the overall student enrolment in each college for the last two academic years.

"Currently, 143 Degree Colleges, Government College of Engineering and Technology (GCETs) across the UT of Jammu and Kashmir are having active enrolment," the government informed the house.

It also said that there has been a slight decline in the enrolment of GDC Bijbehara during the previous two years. "Colleges across the region have been witnessing some decline in enrolment over the past few years owing to a variety of factors affecting admission patterns."

"However, during the last academic year, several initiatives have been undertaken by the Department to strengthen the admission process and improve student outreach. These include, inter-alia, admissions through a centralized admission portal and the rationalization or rejig of subject offerings in colleges to better align with student demand," the government said.

The house was further informed that additionally, the implementation of the fourth year under the Four-Year Undergraduate Programme (FYUP) has also generated increased student interest and participation in Government Degree Colleges across the Union Territory.

"As a result of these measures, the overall enrolment in colleges has shown improvement during the academic's session 2025-26, with colleges in Anantnag district registering an increase of about 11.8 percent in enrolment," the government said—(KNO)



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JKEDI Shopian concludes MDP-IX under RAMP Scheme at Zainapora

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SHOPIAN: Jammu & Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI), District Centre Shopian Tuesday concluded the Management Development Programme (MDP) - IX under RAMP Scheme at Sub Division Zainapora.

The programme witnessed enthusiastic participation from 20 candidates, all of whom successfully completed the training.

Notably, the batch comprised entirely female participants, highlighting inclusive engagement and the growing interest of women in entrepreneurship across the region.

The MDP-IX, conducted under the Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP) Scheme, was designed to equip participants with essential knowledge and skills in



key areas such as entrepreneurship development, business planning, financial management, marketing strategies, awareness of government schemes,

and critical soft skills required for sustainable enterprise development. The sessions were delivered through a mix of interactive lectures, group

discussions, case studies, and activity-based learning to ensure practical exposure.

On the concluding day, Nafia Nazir, Senior Manager, JKEDI, interacted with the participants, reviewed the training framework, and commended the overall conduct and outcomes of the programme. She encouraged the trainees to translate their business ideas into viable enterprises and to actively avail themselves of various government schemes aimed at promoting entrepreneurship.

During the interaction session, Sayeem Rafiq also addressed the participants, emphasizing the role of JKEDI in nurturing grassroots entrepreneurship. He assured continued mentoring, guidance, and hand-holding support to help participants succeed in their entrepreneurial journeys.

Airtel Announces US\$1 Billion Investment in Nxtra

AGENCIES

SRINAGAR: Bharti Airtel (NSE: BHARTIARTL) ("Airtel"), today announced an investment of US\$ 1 Billion by Alpha Wave Global, Carlyle (NASDAQ: CG) and Anchorage Capital, through their affiliates, in Nxtra Data Limited ("Nxtra"), a subsidiary of Bharti Airtel engaged in the data center business, to expand its network across India and accelerate growth. Airtel will also participate in this round.

As part of the pact, Alpha Wave Global will invest US\$435 million, Carlyle US\$240 million, Anchorage Capital US\$35 million, with the rest being infused by Airtel. The investors' final shareholding will be subject to finalized post-closing adjustments. Airtel will continue to retain a controlling stake in Nxtra. The deal is subject to regulatory approvals in India.

Nxtra - the first data center company in India to deploy AI at scale for predictive maintenance, energy efficiency, and automated operations - intends to deploy proceeds from the fund infusion to accelerate its growth plans. It plans to extensively scale its infrastructure and broaden its portfolio of services, catering to the evolving needs of enterprises, hyperscalers,



and government organisations across the country.

India's data center sector is currently witnessing rapid growth, driven by accelerating digital transformation across enterprises, rising adoption of cloud services, and expanding demand from hyperscalers. According to a Savills India report, India's data center market is expected to grow at a CAGR of around 21% between 2024 and 2030 to reach nearly 3,400 MW of IT capacity.

"At Nxtra, we have built one of India's most advanced and sustainable data center networks, designed to meet the evolving needs of enterprises, hyperscalers, and government. With ~300 MW capacity today, we aim to scale to 1 GW in the next few years, targeting ~25% market share," Gopal Vittal, Executive Vice Chairman, Airtel, said.

Strategic partnerships with global investors and technology leaders are central to our growth roadmap, enabling us to accel-

erate expansion, harness world-class expertise, and deliver next-generation digital infrastructure solutions at scale. With strong market demand, we are committed to stepping up investments and strengthening India's position as a leading data center hub.

"We have built a strong partnership with Airtel and continue to believe Nxtra is well-positioned to benefit from India's long-term digital infrastructure tailwinds. The company has made significant progress in expanding its capabilities, strengthening customer relationships and building a scalable platform, and we look forward to further working with Airtel and Nxtra's management team to build the company into one of the largest datacenter players in India," said Kapil Modi, Partner at Carlyle India Advisors.

Rick Gerson, Co-Founder & CIO, Alpha Wave Global, said, "Alpha Wave has a particular focus on identifying and backing

AI-first businesses including Anthropic, OpenAI, Cerebras, SpaceX, X.ai, Ramp, Cognition and Long Lake Management. We are excited to partner with Mr. Sunil Mittal and the Bharti Group — a franchise defined by outstanding leadership and a remarkable track record of executing at scale alongside institutional investors - as Nxtra scales to become India's leading data center business."

Navroz D. Udawadia, Co-Founder, Alpha Wave Global, added, "India has an immense AI opportunity ahead of it — Indians already meaningfully interact with and on Chat GPT, Claude and other AI platforms. As such India is set to see its data center capacity grow meaningfully to keep up with hyperscaler and LLM demand."

Headquartered in New Delhi, Nxtra operates 14 large core data centers and 120+ edge facilities across India, offering co-location, cloud infrastructure, managed hosting, data backup, disaster recovery, and edge computing services. It has a state-of-the-art facility in Pune and is developing additional AI-ready campuses in Chennai, Mumbai, and Kolkata. Nxtra has recently partnered with Google to build a gigawatt-scale AI data center campus, backed by a \$15-billion investment.

Calling Attention Motion Four ambulances available at SDH Bijbehara: Health Min

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Sakeena Itoo, Tuesday informed that the Critical Care Ambulances (CCA) procured under the 108-Emergency Services with World Bank assistance were distributed among various health institutions strictly on the basis of assessed requirement and institutional priority.

The Health Minister stated this while replying to a calling attention motion moved by Legisla-

tor Dr. Bashir Ahmad Shah Veeri in House today.

She informed that the allocation of ambulances was undertaken after due consideration of factors like patient load, service demand, geographical coverage and the existing emergency response infrastructure across the health institutions.

The Minister also said that at present, four ambulances are available with SDH Bijbehara, including one under the 108 service and there is no immediate requirement for an additional ambulance for the hospital.

'Govt working to ensure reliable water supply in Sonawari'

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Government Tuesday informed the Legislative Assembly that it is actively working to complete the Retrofitting of Water Supply Scheme (WSS) SK Bala under the Jal Jeevan Mission (JMM) in Dudwan area of Sonawari Constituency.

This was informed by Minister for Agriculture Javid Ahmad Dar in the House while replying to Calling Attention Motion moved by MLA Hilal Akbar Lone regarding water supply in Dudwan Saderkote Bala in Sonawari Constituency. He was replying on behalf of Minister for Jal Shakti, Javed Ahmed Rana.

The Minister said that strenuous efforts are underway to complete the remain-

ing work of the scheme in order to ensure reliable piped water supply to Sonawari.

Elaborating, the minister said that the scheme, based on a borewell source, is presently under execution, with electro-mechanical works and laying/fitting of rising mains to the Service Reservoir at Dudwan in progress.

The Minister informed that as an interim measure to cater to the demands, the department is providing water through deploying tanker service on a scheduled roster.

It further informed that, regrettably, on 26th March 2026 while on a routine duty, an unfortunate incident occurred wherein a minor girl got killed. An FIR has been registered, and a formal investigation is underway, he said.

B'pora admin organise IEC awareness campaign under NMBA in Gurez



GMK NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA: As part of the ongoing activities under the Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan (NMBA), an IEC (Information, Education and Communication) awareness campaign was organised by Government Degree College (GDC) Gurez in collaboration with District Administration Bandipora in Gurez to sensitise students and the community about the harmful effects of drug abuse and to promote a healthy, drug-free lifestyle. During the campaign, a series of activities including speeches, poster presentations, community outreach rallies, and awareness lectures were conducted. A Nukad Natak was also presented to highlight the social consequences of substance abuse.

The Health Department conducted awareness sessions and documentary screenings, while the Social Welfare Department distributed awareness pamphlets among students and the local community.

On the occasion, Sports activities such as carrom, chess, and yoga sessions

were also organised by the Youth Services and Sports Department to promote physical and mental well-being among the youth.

The programme witnessed the presence of Principal GDC Tulail, Prof. Tariq Ahmad Wani, and Principal GDC Gurez, Prof. Bilal Ahmad Sheikh. A significant number of students, community members and officials from different departments were also present on the occasion. Students enthusiastically took part in various activities, demonstrating strong engagement and commitment towards the cause.

Speakers on the occasion emphasised the importance of collective efforts in combating drug abuse and urged students to adopt a healthy lifestyle and act as ambassadors against substance abuse in their communities.

The campaign aimed to create awareness about the ill effects of drug addiction, motivate youth towards a drug-free lifestyle, strengthen community participation, and encourage students to play an active role in spreading awareness.

Veteran DIPR Artist Hilal Ahmad Mattoo retires

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Joint Directorate of Information & Public Relations, Kashmir Tuesday bid a heartfelt farewell to its veteran artist and senior official, Hilal Ahmad Mattoo, on his superannuation.

On the occasion, a grand farewell function was organized at Joint Directorate of Information, Kashmir, where officers and officials gathered in large numbers to bid him a warm send-off.

Joint Director Information Kashmir, Syed Shahnawaz Bukhari, congratulated Mattoo on his retirement and praised his distinguished service. Deputy Director Kashmir, Mohammad Rafiq Zullah appreciated the retiring official for his dedicated

service even in odd times. Cultural Officer, Burhan Hussain also extended his best wishes to Mattoo for a successful and fulfilling post-retirement life.

Speaking on the occasion, AECO, Syed Shakeel Shan lauded Mattoo for his unwavering dedication and commitment to duty. He said that retiring official had always performed his responsibilities with sincerity and professionalism, rising to the occasion whenever his services were required under all circumstances.

In his farewell address, Hilal Ahmad Mattoo fondly recalled his long and fulfilling career, describing it as a "golden period" marked by learning, service, and memorable experiences.

SWD Srinagar continues Educational Kit Distribution Drive

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: On the second consecutive day of its ongoing outreach initiative, the Social Welfare Department (SWD)- SANKALP Hub for Empowerment of Women Srinagar continued its efforts to promote education and support underprivileged sections of society by distributing educational kits among girl students at Government Boys Middle School, Moti Mohalla Kalan Dal, and Government Girls Middle School, Latti Mohalla Dal.

The initiative aims to encourage girl students to actively pursue their education by providing essential learning materials, thereby reducing barriers to access and enhancing academic participation. The distributed kits comprised basic educational



supplies necessary for daily school activities, helping create a more supportive and resourceful learning environment.

Officials from the SANKALP Hub for Empowerment of Women Srinagar reiterated the importance of empowering girls through

education and reaffirmed their commitment to ensuring that no child is deprived of learning opportunities due to financial constraints. They emphasized that sustained efforts like these are crucial in fostering inclusivity and strengthening the education system at the

grassroots level. School authorities expressed their sincere appreciation for the department's continued support, describing the initiative as a significant and impactful step toward improving the educational experience of students in need.

FROM THE OFFICE OF ADVOCATE SALEEM JAHANGIR AND ASSOCIATES.

In the case of: Burhaan Ayoub Wani S/o Mohammad Ayoub Wani R/o Sempora Panthachowk 2, Tanszeela Mushtaq W/o Burhaan Ayoub Wani R/o Sempora Panthachowk Srinagar (Caveators) Vs Public at large (Non-Caveator)

In the matter of: Caveat Petition in terms of Section 148-A of CPC The Caveators have reasons to believe/apprehension that Non-Caveators may file any suit, Application, Appeal, Petition or any other type of proceedings before this Hon'ble Court and on the ground of distorted facts/misrepresentation and cooked story may succeed in obtaining some relief / order at their back/ in equity against the Caveators and in such eventuality the caveators will be put to an irreparable loss and inconvenience. It would be proper that Caveators are given Opportunity of being heard by the Hon'ble Court before passing any order.

Sd/- Advocate

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is for the information to the general public I intend to correct the name on my J&K Bank Account passbook bearing No.0753040100002182 from Ayesha Bano W/o Mohd Shafi Reshi R/o Khimber Chattrahama to Asha As per my Aadhar Card (bearing No. 332426703787). In this regard if anybody have any kind of objection he/she may file the same with Branch Manager JK Bank Branch Habak Srinagar within a period of 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. No objection will be entertained afterwards.

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR (UT) OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER R&B DIVISION PULWAMA

Phone:-01933-295302

TENDER NOTICE

E-NIT No: 177/EEP/RNB/of 2025-26/12729-39 | Dated: 31/03/2026

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, J&K UT term e-tenders (In Single Cover system) are invited on %age Basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with J&K State Govt. CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Government for the following work :-

S. No	Name of Work	Adv. Cost (Rs. Lacs.)	Cost of T/D (Rs.)	Earnest Money (In %age)	Time of Completion in working Days	Class of Contract	Major Head of Accounts	Administrative Approval No:	Call No:
1	Middle school Narwa Headmaster Room (S.No. 1667)	9.43	600/-	2% of DV.cost	90 working days	CEE/ DEE	Samagra Shiksha	314 -Chirag of 2025 dt.01.12.2025	Ist call
2	Middle school Pinglana Resource Room (S.No. 1672)	9.43	600/-	2% of DV.cost	90 working days	CEE/ DEE	Samagra Shiksha	314 -Chirag of 2025 dt.01.12.2025	Ist call

The Bidding documents consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in as per schedule of date given below:-

1.	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	31-03-2026
2.	Bid downloading Start Date	31-03-2026 from 10:00 A.M
3.	Bid submission Start Date	31-03-2026 from 10:00 A.M
4.	Bid Submission End Date	09-04-2026 upto 0 4:00 P.M
5.	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	10-04-2026 at 11.00 A.M in the Office of the Executive Engineer R&B Div.Pulwama
6.	Submission of Performance Security(PS)	Within three (03) days of receipt of LOA. (The First lowest successful bidder has to provide 5% of allotted cost as Performance Security in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG and EMD of 2% shall be released after receipt of 5% Performance security.

- Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in the shape of Treasury Challan /Receipt as per Annexure -C (Debited to M.H.0059 PWD) and EMD in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG pledged to the Executive Engineer R&B Div. Pulwama (The Date of Treasury Challan and EMD should be between the date of start of bid and Bid Submission End date.
- The date and time of opening of Bids shall be notified on Web site www.jktenders.gov.in and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The bids of responsive bidders shall be opened online on same Web Site in the office of Executive Engineer R&B Div. Pulwama
- The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of bids.
- EMD in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG in favour of the Executive Engineer R&B Div. Pulwama
- The Contractors are advised to visit the site and to be aware of the conditions for launching at site of work before quoting the rates.
- The contractor shall also be responsible for any theft/ damage to any of the component at site and the cost of damage/ theft if any shall be deducted from the work done or CDR of the Contractor till completion of work and handing over.
- The 1st lowest bidder has to produce an amount equal to 5% of contract as Performance Security in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Division Pulwama within three (03) days after the date of receipt of letter of acceptance and shall be released after successful completion of DLP. The Bank Guarantee should be valid for 45 days beyond DLP

Head Draftsman DIPK-12277-25 DT: 31/03/2026 Technical Officer Executive Engineer R&B Division Pulwama

Leander Paes thanks Home Minister Amit Shah after joining BJP

IAN S

NEW DELHI: Tennis legend Leander Paes has expressed his gratitude towards Home Minister Amit Shah for inducting him into the Bharatiya Janata Party and said he will strive to live up to his faith with dedication and sincerity.

In a post on X, Paes said, "Deeply honoured and grateful to Shri Amit Shah Ji @AmitShah for inducting me into the Bharatiya Janata Party @BJP4India and reposing his trust in me. I will strive to live up to his faith with dedication and sincerity. Till today, I wore the Tiranga on my chest. Now I carry it on my shoulders too and will work towards empowering our youth and strengthening sports across the nation. Jai Bharat Jai Hind," Paes met Shah in New Delhi on Tuesday.

In another social media post, Paes said he is committed to working with a strong focus on youth



development and growth of sport in the country after joining the BJP earlier on Tuesday, just ahead of elections in West Bengal.

He also thanked Nitin Nabin, the BJP's national president, for believing in him.

"I sincerely thank Shri Nitin Nabin Ji @NitinNabin for being instrumental and inspiring, for his encouragement, and for believing in me as I begin this new journey with the Bharatiya Janata Party. I am committed to working with dedication and integrity, with a strong focus

on youth development and the growth of sport in our country. Jai Bharat Jai Hind," Paes said in a post on X, formerly Twitter.

Paes formally joined the BJP in New Delhi in the presence of senior party leaders, days after meeting the state BJP chief, Nitin Nabin, in Kolkata, which had fuelled speculation about his political move.

Welcoming him into the party, Union Minister Kiren Rijiju said, "There is no need for a separate introduction of the legendary Leander Paes. Across

India, there is no need to explain who Leander Paes is. Even so, today, Leander Paes' entry into the BJP family is historic. Inspired by the work Prime Minister Modi has done for sports and athletes over the past 12 years, Leander Paes has joined our party as a BJP member..."

Paes, one of India's most celebrated tennis players with multiple Grand Slam titles, had earlier entered politics by joining the All India Trinamool Congress in 2021. He had campaigned for the party during the 2022 Goa Assembly elections but did not contest any polls.

His switch comes at a crucial time as political activity intensifies in West Bengal ahead of the Assembly elections. The contest in the state is expected to be primarily between the ruling All India Trinamool Congress, led by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, and the BJP, which is aiming to expand its footprint in the state.

IPL 2026: He was calm and composed', says Shreyas Iyer on Connolly's match-winning knock against GT

IAN S

NEW CHANDIGARH: Skipper Shreyas Iyer praised debutant Cooper Connolly for his calm and composed innings after Punjab Kings (PBKS) registered a three-wicket win over Gujarat Titans (GT) in their Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 opener at the PCA's New International Cricket Stadium in New Chandigarh on Tuesday.

Chasing 163, Punjab Kings rode on Connolly's unbeaten 72 to cross the line in 19.1 overs despite losing wickets at regular intervals towards the end.

Iyer, who got injured during the chase, also spoke about his fitness, saying, "All I can say about the hand is that it's nice, same as it was before. I don't want to jinx anything."

The Punjab skipper was full of praise for Connolly's batting display. "Some of the shots he played were surreal to watch, especially the one off Rashid," he said.

Iyer admitted there was a tense moment during the chase when Punjab



lost quick wickets. "I was focused on my hand inside, icing it. Suddenly, we lost two wickets back-to-back; these things happen in the IPL. You have to stay composed, Cooper was there, he was composed and calm," he added.

He also revealed how the team assessed the pitch early in the game. "After the third over, we realised the wicket was slow. Arshdeep came and said it was holding a bit. We tried to make the ball old as soon as possible," Iyer said.

The captain also lauded

Vijaykumar Vyshak, who took three wickets for his performance with the ball. "Vyshak is carrying forward the form he performed in the last season. He is a big match player," he noted.

Iyer also shared a light moment from the game, saying he was surprised by an unusual field placement. "I was surprised to see a short leg for me. I told Shubman I had never seen that before, it's good to see captains attacking," he said, referring to Shubman Gill.

Player of the Match Connolly expressed his delight after his impressive debut performance. "I was looking forward to the experience of playing with some world-class players, but to put that performance in tonight, I'm very happy. I spent some time with friends and family at home before this just to reset," he said.

The Australian added that he prefers to play according to the situation. "I'm just more of a tempo player, feel the flow of my hands, don't hit too many big sixes ... working with Ricky is great. Not a lot was said; we were quite relaxed, in a great position out there, nice to get the win with Xavier, looking forward to the rest of the tournament," he said.

Connolly also spoke about facing Rashid Khan for the first time. "That was the first time I played Rashid Khan; it was nice to get the win," he added.

Punjab Kings will next face five-time champions Chennai Super Kings (CSK) at the M.A. Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai on Friday.

Asian Cup Qualifiers: India end Asian Cup qualifiers on a high with a win over Hong Kong

IAN S

KOCHI: Ryan Williams and Akash Mishra scored in each half of the match as India prevailed over past Hong Kong 2-1, to end their AFC Asian Cup Saudi Arabia 2027 Qualifiers Final Round Group C campaign on a high at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in Kochi on Tuesday. With this, India recorded their first win at Kochi.

Early strikes from debutant Williams and a second-half goal

by left-back Mishra ensured the Blue Tigers secured their first win of the qualifying campaign. India ended their campaign on five points, with a win, two draws, and three losses. Singapore topped the group with 14 points to seal qualification for the Asian Cup.

Head Coach Khalid Jamil handed a much-awaited debut to Ryan Williams, while Bijoy Varghese also made his first India appearance off the bench.

India made a perfect start to the game, with Ryan Williams



marking his debut with a goal in the fourth minute. A swift transition down the right flank saw a well-timed pass by Abhishek Singh Tekcham release Manvir Singh, who squared the ball for Williams to tap it in past the goalkeeper and open the scoring.

It was also the fastest goal scored by a debutant for India, surpassing the previous record of sixth-minute strikes by K Appalaraju against Ceylon (Sri Lanka) in a pre-Olympics match in Colombo in 1963 and Mehtab Hossain against Nepal in the 2005

SAFF Cup in Karachi.

The home side played with confidence after taking the lead, enjoying the majority of possession and looking assured on the ball and dictating the tempo. Manvir Singh then delivered a searching cross towards Lallanzuala Chhange inside the box, but a Hong Kong defender did well to clear the danger.

The Indian defence denied Hong Kong's attackers any space in their own half with four to five blue shirts surrounding the attackers when-

ever a chance opened up. The defence were always behind the ball whenever the visitors showed any glimpse of promise in their attacks.

India looked dangerous in counterattacks whenever there was an opportunity. Williams received the ball from midfield and passed it to Manvir on the right, and the forward flicked it to Chhange on the first touch. The winger then let a shot with his weaker right foot, but Hong Kong defender Shinichi Chan did well to block it and concede a corner.

Remembrance



Dr. Muhammad Ramzan

He was a pillar of strength and a servant of the people. We pray that Allah (SWT) grants him the highest rank in Jannah.

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