

Good Morning

Kashmir

17th
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3.65 Lakh Cases Pending In J&K Courts: Law Ministry



GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: As many as 3,65,645 cases are pending in district and subordinate courts of Jammu and Kashmir, including 63,876 cases pending for more than five years and 20,767 cases pending for over 10 years, the Union Ministry of Law and Justice informed the Lok Sabha on Friday.

As per the reply by Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Law and Justice Arjun Ram Meghwal to an unstarred question by MP Sasikanth Senthil, the figures are based on data available on the National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG) as on July 30, 2026.

The ministry, said that in Jammu and Kashmir, district and subordinate courts

have 3,65,645 pending cases. Of these, 20,767 cases have remained pending for more than 10 years, while 63,876 cases have been pending for more than five years.

Sasikanth Senthil had asked the government about the total number of pending cases in the Supreme Court, High Courts and district and subordinate courts, including cases pending for more than five and 10 years. He also sought details of funds approved and utilised under the e-Courts Project and steps being taken to reduce pendency and strengthen judicial infrastructure.

In response, Meghwal said that as per NJDG data, 44,557 cases were pending before the High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh as on July 30 •P-06

CM Omar Reviews Restoration Works On NH-44

GMK NEWS NETWORK

UDHAMPUR: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Friday travelled by road from Jammu to Srinagar via National Highway-44 to personally assess the condition of the highway and review the restoration

works being carried out following the recent spell of adverse weather that triggered landslides and disrupted traffic at several locations.

During the journey, the Chief Minister was briefed by officials of the National •P-06

J&K, Ladakh Likely To Face 14% Power Crunch This Aug

RIYAZ BHAT

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh are likely to face nearly fourteen percent power deficit against the total availability during the peak hours in the ongoing month of August.

According to the official documents figures available, Northern Regional Power Committee (NRPC) in a recent meeting has anticipated a power deficit of minus 13.9 percent during the peak hours for the month of August-2026.

The officials have projected that there will be a total

of 2334 Megawatts (MWs) power availability in Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh against the total anticipated requirement of 2710 MWs during the peak hours.

The committee however said that there will be surplus power of 4seven percent during the other hours except from the peak hours.

Pertinently, KNO in March this year reported that from the upcoming financial year 2026-27, Jammu and Kashmir will likely require 3813 MWs of power during the peak demand.

The authorities had further projected •P-06

India-Pakistan Ties Can Move Ahead Only In Terror-Free Environment: EAM Jaishankar

Says Islamabad Continues Cross-Border Terrorism; Details Measures Taken After Pulwama, Pahalgam Attacks

RAJA SYED

SRINAGAR: India's relations with Pakistan can only move ahead in an environment free of terror, hostility and violence, Union External Affairs Minister Dr Subrahmanyam Jaishankar informed the Lok Sabha on Friday, asserting that Pakistan continues to follow a policy of cross-border terrorism and uses terrorism as an instrument of State policy against India.

The minister was responding to Starred Question No. 289 raised by Member of Parliament (MP) Dharmendra Yadav regarding the bilateral relations between India and Pakistan. The question was answered in the Lok Sabha on August 7, 2026.

The MP, had sought to know the present status of bilateral relations between India and Pakistan since the Pulwama terror attack to date, along with changes at the political, diplomatic and trade levels between the two countries.

He also sought details of the number of bilateral talks held between India and Pakistan at various levels during the last five years and the issues discussed therein, besides asking whether the government still maintained that normal bilateral relations with Pakistan were not possible until cross-border terrorism ends and, if so, the details of its present policy.



In its response, the government said that following the Pulwama terror attack, India withdrew the Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status to Pakistan and increased customs duty on all goods originating in or exported from Pakistan to 200 per cent.

Islamabad subsequently announced certain unilateral measures, including downgrading diplomatic relations and suspension of bilateral trade with India.

The government said that in response to the Pahalgam terror attack on April 22, 2025, perpetrated by Pakistan-sponsored terrorists, India took

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Inclement Weather Stalls Tourism Boom At Kashmir's Offbeat Destinations

SAJID RAINA

SRINAGAR: Repeated cloudbursts and prolonged spells of inclement weather have dealt a blow to tourism at Kashmir's offbeat destinations, with visitor arrivals witnessing a sharp decline in recent weeks in areas such as Gurez, Keran, Sonamarg, Doodhpathri, Bangus Valley and other scenic locations.

Local residents and tourism stakeholders said that the adverse weather conditions, marked by frequent rainfall, flash floods, landslides and cloudbursts, have disrupted road connectivity and prompted many tourists to either cancel or postpone their travel plans.

According to official figures, the Kashmir has witnessed around 35 cloudbursts this year, triggering flash floods and damaging roads, bridges and other infrastructure in several districts.



In the picturesque Gurez Valley near the Line of Control (LoC), hoteliers and local residents said tourist arrivals have dropped considerably over the past few weeks.

"We had expected this season to be one of the best after the steady increase in tourist arrivals over the last few years. However, the continuous rains and reports of cloudbursts have discouraged visitors. Hotels that were nearly full are now witnessing low occupancy," said Mushtaq Ahmad, a hotel owner in Gurez.

He said several tourists cancelled their bookings after news of weather-related incidents emerged from different parts of Kashmir.

In Keran, another emerging tourist destination in north Kashmir's Kupwara district, residents said businesses dependent on tourism have suffered losses.

"Most families here earn during the summer season through homestays, •P-06

J&K Aims To Retain Top National Ranking In 'Har Ghar Tiranga' Campaign



GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, Friday chaired a high-level meeting of all the concerned Administrative Secretaries; Divisional Commissioners, DCs and HoDs to review the preparations and departmental action plan for the 'Har Ghar Tiranga-2026' campaign, being organised in conjunction with the third phase of the 150 Years of Vande Mataram commemorative celebrations.

The meeting reviewed the responsibilities assigned to different departments and

the logistical arrangements prepared by the Department of Culture, the nodal department, for smooth implementation of the campaign across all 20 districts of Jammu and Kashmir from August 9 to August 17, 2026.

Emphasising the need to sustain this momentum, the Chief Secretary directed the Divisional Commissioners and Deputy Commissioners to ensure maximum public participation by involving every panchayat, ULB and educational institution so that Jammu and Kashmir continues to maintain its premier position at the •P-06

■ Rs 3,248 Cr Expenditure Reported

Rs 3,003 Cr Released To J&K Under NHM In 3 Years

RAJA SYED

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir received Rs 3,003.12 crore in central releases under the National Health Mission (NHM) during the financial years 2023-24 to 2025-26, while expenditure of Rs 3,247.96 crore was reported during the period, the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare informed the Lok Sabha on Friday.

As per the reply by Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare Prataprao Jadhav to an unstarred question raised by MPs Bhumare Sandipanrao Asaram, Sanjay Uttamrao Deshmukh and Delkar Kalaben Mohanbhai, the central release to Jammu and Kashmir stood at Rs 805.22 crore in 2023-24, Rs 1,040.76 crore in 2024-25 and Rs 1,017.14 crore in 2025-26.

The ministry, said expenditure under NHM in Jammu and Kashmir was Rs 956.95 crore in 2023-24, Rs 1,110.30 crore in 2024-25 and Rs 1,180.71 crore in 2025-26.



For Ladakh, the central release under NHM stood at Rs 120.44 crore in 2023-24, Rs 135.98 crore in 2024-25 and Rs

142.24 crore in 2025-26, totalling Rs 398.66 crore. The expenditure reported during the same period was Rs 119.67 crore, Rs 150.50 crore and Rs 138.98 crore respectively, totalling Rs 409.15 crore.

The MPs had asked whether thousands of posts of specialist

doctors, physicians, nurses and paramedical staff were lying vacant against the sanctioned strength in Central and state government hospitals and sought details of vacant posts, measures taken to fill them, incentives for specialist doctors and nursing staff, as well as projects and funds for new medical colleges, district hospitals and trauma care centres.

In reply, Jadhav said public health and hospitals are State subjects and the primary responsibility for strengthening the public healthcare system rests with state governments and Union Territories.

He said the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare provides technical and financial support to States and UTs, including Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, under the National Health Mission based on proposals •P-06

India, China Review LAC Situation

GMK NEWS NETWORK

NEW DELHI: India and China reviewed the overall situation along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and held discussions on key issues related to boundary delimitation, border management and trans-border cooperation during diplomatic talks in New Delhi, MEA said on Friday.

"The two sides engaged in frank discussions and reviewed the situation along the LAC," the MEA said in a statement.

Both sides emphasised that maintaining peace and tranquillity in the border areas remains essential for the overall development of bilateral relations. They also agreed to continue utilising existing diplomatic and military channels, including the WMCC, local commander-level meetings and other agreed mechanisms, to resolve outstanding issues and prevent misunderstandings and •P-06

Amarnath Yatra Sees Uptick In Pilgrims, Crosses 4.76 Lakh Mark



UMAISAR GULL

QAZIGUND: With 21 days left for the conclusion of the annual Amarnath Yatra, 5,095 pilgrims paid obeisance at the Holy Cave Shrine on Friday, taking the total number of devotees who have performed darshan this year to 4,76,683.

According to official figures obtained, 2,871 men, 1,544 women, 25 children, 61 sadhus, eight sadhvis, three transgender devotees and 583 security personnel completed the Yatra on Friday.

The 29th batch of 926 pilgrims passed through the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway under a multi-layer security arrangement en route to the Baltal base camp.

The batch had left Bhagwati Nagar Yatri Niwas in Jammu early Friday in a 42-vehicle convoy comprising 21 buses, three MMVs, 17 LMVs and one two-wheeler. It included 693 men, 178 women, 34 sadhus and 21 sadhvis towards the Baltal base camp as the Pahalgam route remains closed.

On the return journey, the 27th down convoy carrying 133 pilgrims left the Baltal base camp for Jammu in seven vehicles. The returning batch comprised 110 men, 21 women and two children, officials said.

The 57-day •P-06

CM Omar inaugurates upgraded Residency Road– High Street in Jammu

₹9.18 crore Smart City project enhances urban infrastructure, public amenities

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah Friday inaugurated the upgraded Residency Road–High Street in Jammu, a landmark urban infrastructure project executed by Jammu Smart City Limited (JSCL) under the Smart City Mission at a cost of ₹9.18 crore.

The project has transformed nearly 1.2 kilometres of the Residency Road–High Street corridor, covering the stretches from Raghunathi Mandir to CM House, Vivekanand Chowk to Raghunath Mandir Chowk, and Vir Marg Chowk to Vivekanand Chowk.

As part of the upgradation, an underground communication corridor has been constructed and communication cables have been shifted underground to streamline utility infrastructure and enhance the area's visual appeal. The project also includes the development of new paver-block footpaths, a bituminous concrete road surface and RCC drains,



significantly improving civic infrastructure along the corridor.

The upgraded corridor is expected to enhance pedestrian convenience, improve traffic movement and utility management, and contribute to a cleaner, more organised urban environment while lending a renewed aesthetic character to one of Jammu city's key commercial and

civic corridors.

MLA Jammu East Yudhvair Sethi, Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Dheeraj Gupta, Commissioner Secretary, Housing & Urban Development Department, Mandeep Kaur, Chief Executive Officer, Jammu Smart City Limited, Devansh Yadav, and other senior officers were present on the occasion.

DC Sgr inspects newly developed alternate entry gate at B&J Hospital

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo, Friday inspected the newly created alternate entry gate and additional parking space at Bone & Joint Hospital, Barzulla.

The DC also took an onsite review of the ongoing Sunner Kul Bund road development works being executed to streamline traffic movement around SMHS Hospital and Super Specialty Hospital.

The inspection was undertaken as part of the District Administration's sustained efforts to improve traffic management and strengthen infrastructure around major healthcare institutions to ensure hassle-free access for patients, attendants, healthcare workers, ambulances and other emergency services.

At Bone & Joint Hospital, the Deputy Commissioner reviewed the newly developed alternate entry gate along with the connecting link road and associated infrastructure aimed at facilitating smooth entry and exit of vehicles. He also inspected the additional parking space created to address parking constraints and reduce congestion around the hospital premises.

The alternate entry and parking facility would significantly ease vehicular movement, particularly during peak hours, besides ensuring uninterrupted



passage for ambulances and other emergency vehicles.

Later, the Deputy Commissioner visited the newly developed Sunner Kul Bund road behind Super Specialty Hospital, Shreen Bagh and inspected the progress of the road development works undertaken to provide an alternate traffic corridor for the SMHS Hospital and Super Specialty Hospital area. He took onsite stock of the status of road construction, allied infrastructure works and measures being implemented to improve connectivity and facilitate smooth traffic flow.

The DC stressed the need for timely completion of the remaining works while maintaining quality standards and directed the concerned departments to work in close coordination to ensure early operationalisation and efficient utilisation of the facilities.

On the occasion, the DC said that the road development forms part of the broader mobility improvement and traffic regulation plan along the Nawab Bazar–Kak-sarai–Darish Kadal cor-

ridor aimed at streamlining vehicular movement through the Sunner Kul route. He said the Bund road, along with the dedicated parking facility being developed around the high-priority healthcare zone comprising SMHS Hospital, Super Specialty Hospital and the Dental Hospital, would help prevent roadside congestion and facilitate smoother access for patients, attendants, healthcare workers and emergency vehicles through the Sunner Kul corridor.

The DC further added that the ongoing initiatives, including alternate access routes, expanded parking facilities and improved traffic management are expected to significantly improve vehicular movement and make access to major healthcare institutions more convenient for patients and attendants.

Earlier, the Deputy Commissioner also visited Paediatrics Hospital, Bemina and inspected the initiation of work of Foot Over Bridge near the hospital aimed at improving mobility in and around the Hospital.

Comm SMC launches online Community Hall Booking Portal to strengthen DPSD

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: In a significant step towards strengthening e-governance and enhancing citizen-centric municipal services, the Commissioner, Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC), Faz Lul Haseeb, Friday inaugurated the Online Community Hall Booking Portal at the SMC Headquarters, Karan Nagar.

The newly launched portal has been developed to provide a seamless, transparent, and user-friendly digital platform for the online booking and management of SMC community halls. The initiative aims to simplify the booking process, eliminate unnecessary manual procedures, improve operational efficiency, and ensure greater transparency, accountability, and convenience in the allot-

ment of community halls.

Speaking on the occasion, the Commissioner stated that the launch of the portal reflects Srinagar Municipal Corporation's continued commitment to leveraging technology for improving governance and delivering efficient public services. He observed that the adoption of digital platforms is essential for building a responsive, transparent, accountable, and citizen-friendly urban administration.

The Commissioner directed the concerned officers to ensure the effective implementation, smooth operation, and regular monitoring of the portal to provide hassle-free services to the public. He also emphasized the importance of conducting widespread public awareness and outreach initiatives

so that citizens are well informed about the online booking facility and can conveniently avail themselves of its benefits.

Highlighting the broader vision behind the initiative, the Commissioner remarked that the portal is fully aligned with the Government's objective of promoting digital governance and transforming public service delivery through technology-driven solutions that enhance accessibility, efficiency, and transparency.

The launch of the Online Community Hall Booking Portal marks another significant milestone in SMC's digital transformation journey and reaffirms the Corporation's commitment to delivering modern, accessible, efficient, transparent, and technology-enabled municipal services to the citizens of Srinagar.

Enforcement drive carried out on Doodhpathri routes

GMK NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM: Acting on the directions of Deputy Commissioner Budgam, Athar Aamir Khan, the Assistant Regional Transport Office (ARTO) Budgam Friday conducted a road safety enforcement drive on various routes leading to Doodhpathri to ensure compliance with the Motor Vehicles Act.

The drive, led by ARTO Budgam, Sheikh Manzoor Ahmad, targeted two-wheelers and commercial vehicles, with a special focus on vehicles operating without functional Speed Limiting Devices (SLDs) and other traffic violations.

During the drive, 20 on-the-spot challans amounting to an expected Rs 65,000 were issued for offences including riding without helmets, triple riding and operating commercial vehicles without functional SLDs. The team also recommended the suspension of five driving licences and 15 Registration Certificates (RCs) of commercial vehicles found with tampered Speed Limiting Devices.

The enforcement team also inspected dealers dealing in new and second-hand vehicles to verify compliance with statutory provisions and directed them to ensure all legal formalities are fulfilled before the sale of vehicles.

ARTO Budgam said such enforcement drives will continue across the district to enhance road safety and ensure strict adherence to transport laws.

DC Anantnag reviews 'Har Ghar Tiranga Campaign' preparations

GMK NEWS NETWORK

ANANTNAG: As prelude to the Independence Day-2026 celebrations, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Anantnag, Dr. Bilal Mohiuddin Bhat, Friday chaired a comprehensive meeting at Dak Bunglaw Khanabal to review the action plan and arrangements for the upcoming Har Ghar Tiranga campaign 2026 in the district.

The meeting was attended ADC, GM DIC, SEs Jal Shakti, PDD and PWD alongwith Exens, PO ICDS, Principal GDC, CPO, ACR, ACD, SDMs, DFOs, DSEO, CMO, CAHO, CAO, CEO, DSHO, CHO, AD FCS&CA, DSWO, ARTDO, DMQ, DRC, Tehsildars, AD Handloom/Handicrafts, DYSSO, DySP Traffic, DFO, AD Fisheries, DIO NIC, EOs of MCs, Heads of Educational Institutions and other concerned officials.

At the outset, the Chief Planning Officer briefed the chair about the schedule of activities and events that have been planned under the campaign. He informed that the campaign will span from 09th to 17th August, 2026 during which a range of programs such as flag hoisting and pledge ceremonies, Mega Tiranga Rallies, community sanitation drives, essay writing and painting competitions, cultural, art and creative engagements besides community based drives shall be organised.

Addressing the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner emphasized that the campaign aims to instill a deep sense of patriotism and national unity among the citizens. He called for active involvement of government officials, students, civil society members, volunteers, youth clubs, NSS/NCC Cadets, SHGs and other organisations to make the campaign vibrant and inclusive across the district.

Dr. Bilal instructed all departments to actively coordinate for the smooth execution of planned activities and ensure community involvement at district, subdivision, tehsil and panchayat levels. He stressed to create a festive and patriotic atmosphere through various thematic and unique initiatives scheduled under the campaign.

Dr. Bilal further directed the concerned departments to integrate activities such as cleanliness of public offices and assets which shall be followed by flag hoisting ceremonies at offices, prominent public places and other key locations.

Concluding the meeting, the DC expressed confidence that all departments will make dedicated efforts to conduct the scheduled activities in a smooth and seamless manner across the district.

J&K Judicial Academy concludes Induction Training for 39 Civil Judges

Justice must not only be done but be seen to be done: Acting Chief Justice

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir Judicial Academy, under the patronage of Acting Chief Justice High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, Justice Sanjeev Kumar and the guidance of Justice Rajnesh Oswal, Judge, High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh and Chairman, Governing Committee, J&K Judicial Academy, Friday concluded the academy-based phase of the Pre-Appointment Induction Training Programme for 39 Trainee Civil Judges (Junior Division), Batch-2026.

The programme was graced by Acting Chief Justice (Acting), High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, Justice Sanjeev Kumar, Registrar General, High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, M K Sharma and other Judicial Officers of the registry.

In an engaging interactive session, the Acting Chief Justice congratulated the trainee Civil Judges on successfully completing the Academy-based phase of the induction programme. He said that the training had equipped them with the knowledge, skills and values essential for discharge of judicial functions effectively.

He emphasized that the office of a Judge is not merely a position of authority but a solemn constitutional trust, requiring the highest standards



ing the highest standards of integrity, impartiality, patience, humility and unwavering commitment to the rule of law.

Stressing that justice must not only be done but must also be seen to be done, the Acting Chief Justice exhorted the trainee officers to consciously guard against every form of bias, whether personal, social, cultural or unconscious. He asked them to ensure that every judicial determination is guided solely by the Constitution, the law and the evidence placed on record.

The Acting Chief Justice further highlighted the contemporary challenges confronting the justice delivery system, including inadequate judicial infrastructure, shortage of judicial officers, among other challenges. He observed that these challenges call for greater efficiency, resilience and commitment from judicial officers while reaffirming that they should never compromise the quality or fairness of justice.

He urged the trainee officers to remain fearless and independent in discharge of

their judicial duties, courteous and compassionate in their conduct. He impressed upon to embrace technology as an aid to justice and pursue continuous learning and self-improvement to effectively meet the evolving demands of judicial service.

Appreciating the dedicated efforts of the Director, Resource Persons, officers and staff of the J&K Judicial Academy in successfully conducting the induction programme, the Acting Chief Justice expressed confidence that the newly appointed Civil Judges would uphold the highest traditions of the Indian judiciary and discharge their constitutional responsibilities with courage, wisdom, integrity and compassion.

In his special address to the trainee officers, M. K. Sharma, Registrar General, High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, described their appointment as the acceptance of a solemn constitutional responsibility. Emphasizing that the office of a Judge is a public trust, he exhorted them to uphold the highest standards of integrity, impartial-

ity, patience, humility and diligence in the discharge of their judicial functions. He urged them to treat every litigant with dignity, remain steadfast in upholding the rule of law without fear or favour and continue enriching their legal knowledge through constant learning and technological advancement.

Stressing that public confidence in the judiciary is earned through fairness, competence and exemplary conduct, he encouraged the officers to discharge their duties with courage, wisdom and compassion. He also appreciated the dedicated efforts of the Academy, its Resource Persons and staff in successfully conducting the induction programme.

Earlier, welcoming the dignitaries, Naseer Ahmad Dar, Director, J&K Judicial Academy, expressed his gratitude to Chief Justice for his continued encouragement to judicial education. He said that the academy-based phase had equipped the trainee Civil Judges with a sound foundation in law, judicial skills, court administration, technology-enabled justice delivery and the core values of the judicial office. He informed the trainees that the forthcoming Court Attachment would provide them with valuable practical exposure to court proceedings and judicial administration, enabling them to translate classroom learning into courtroom practice.

Ambri Apple revival takes Centre Stage at SKUAST-K Field Day at Shopian



GMK NEWS NETWORK

SHOPIAN: Conservation of Kashmir's iconic Ambri apple, scientific orchard management and mechanisation took centre stage at a Field Day-cum-Fruit Show organised by Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-K) under HADP-18 at the Ambri Apple Research Centre (AARC), Pahnoo, Shopian, Friday.

The programme was inaugurated by Vice-Chancellor, SKUAST-K, Prof. Nazir Ahmad Ganie, in the presence of scientists, extension experts, progressive orchardists and other stakeholders.

Addressing the gathering, Prof. Nazir Ahmad Ganie highlighted the unique quality and legacy of the Ambri apple and called for scientific orchard management, efficient pollination and judicious pesticide use to produce high-quality, export-oriented apples.

He also inaugurated the Fruit Show, featuring elite apple cultivars, promising selections and technical literature developed by SKUAST-K.

Director Extension, SKUAST-K, Dr. Raihana Habib Kanth, stressed the adoption of modern technologies, scientific canopy management, balanced nutrition and precision orchard practices to enhance productivity in both traditional and high-density apple orchards.

Dr. Ashiq Hussain Pandith, Professor & Head, Division of Fruit Science, highlighted the advantages of High-Density Plantation (HDP) systems and outlined the University's strategy for promoting their wider adoption among growers.

Dr. Hamidullah, Senior Scientist, AARC, highlighted the Centre's research and extension activities and took the participants through the research orchard and fruit exhibition.

DC Ramban, SSP conduct security review of vital Installations

GMK NEWS NETWORK

RAMBAN: Deputy Commissioner Ramban Mohammad Alyas Khan and SSP Arun Gupta Friday chaired a Joint Security Review (JSR) meeting to review the security of vital installations, critical infrastructure and vulnerable areas.

The meeting attended by senior officers and representatives from companies operating in the district assessed adherence to pre-

arrangements in place for employees residing and working at various project sites.

Emphasizing the importance of employee safety and welfare, the DC directed all companies to conduct monthly reviews of their security and safety arrangements. He further stated that compliance reports would be monitored regularly at the district level to ensure effective implementation of prescribed safety protocols.

The Deputy Commis-



scribed Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and the safety, security and welfare measures undertaken for their employees.

The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner Varunjeet Singh Charak, Lead District Manager, General Managers from various companies, representatives from NHPC and other concerned officers.

The Deputy Commissioner sought detailed information from the companies operating in the district regarding total workforce, including local and non-local employees. He also reviewed the safety and security

sioner also instructed all General Managers to ensure that every eligible employee is covered under the Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY) and Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY), thereby providing financial security to employees and their families in case of unforeseen incidents.

Addressing the meeting, the SSP stressed the need to strengthen security infrastructure at all company establishments. He directed the companies to install adequate CCTV surveillance systems at employees' residential accommodations as well as work sites.

JKEDI organizes High-Impact Startup Mentoring, Orientation Session

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: The Jammu & Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI) organized a high-impact orientation and mentoring session for startups, aspiring entrepreneurs, business owners, students, and young innovators at its Main Campus, Pampore.

The session, organized from August 5 to August 7, was conducted by Prof. Sunil Handa, Founder of the Eklavya Foundation, alumnus of BITS Pilani and IIM Ahmedabad, and a distinguished entrepreneur and startup mentor who has guided thousands of ventures across India.

As part of the programme, Prof. Handa conducted inten-



sive one-on-one mentoring sessions with 43 emerging startups from across Jammu & Kashmir. During these personalised interactions, he provided practical guidance tailored to the unique challenges and growth aspirations of each startup. Drawing upon his rich entrepreneurial experience, he shared actionable insights on business strategy, customer acquisition, market positioning, scaling operations, and building sustainable enterprises. The mentoring sessions enabled participating

startups to critically evaluate their business models, refine their growth strategies, and gain a deeper understanding of the practical realities of entrepreneurship.

Addressing the participants during the orientation session, Prof. Handa emphasised that startups from Jammu & Kashmir should broaden their outlook beyond regional markets and strategically position themselves to cater to national and global customers. Through practical examples and real-world

case studies, he highlighted the evolving dynamics of the startup ecosystem and underscored the importance of understanding market trends, customer behaviour, and industry structures for building competitive and sustainable businesses.

He further encouraged aspiring entrepreneurs to focus on solving real-world problems through innovation and value creation. Stressing the importance of clarity, commitment, and disciplined execution, he advised participants to pursue one objective at a time rather than dispersing their efforts across multiple ideas. According to him, sustained focus, consistent execution, and a strong problem-solving mindset are fundamental to entrepreneurial success.

CM lays foundation stones of ₹124.19 crore water supply project for Udhampur

GMK NEWS NETWORK

UDHAMPUR: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah Friday laid the foundation stones for two major infrastructure projects worth over 140 crore aimed at strengthening drinking water supply and sewerage management in the districts of Udhampur and Reasi.

The projects include the ₹124.19 crore Augmentation of Water Supply Scheme for Udhampur Town under AMRUT 2.0 and the ₹16.33 crore Used Water Management Project, including construction of a 3.0 MLD Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) at Reasi under SBM 2.0.

The Udhampur water supply project is designed to address the town's long-standing drinking water requirements by augmenting and modernising the existing infrastructure. On completion, it will ensure a sustainable supply of safe and quality drinking water, cater to the town's growing population and



support planned urban development. The Chief Minister also virtually laid the foundation stone for the Reasi sewage management project, which will significantly improve wastewater treatment and sanitation infrastructure in the district.

Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs Javed Ahmed Rana, MLA Udhampur West Pawan Kumar Gupta, MLA Reasi Kuldeep Raj Dubey, Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Dheeraj Gupta, Commissioner Secretary, Housing & Urban Development, Mandeep Kaur,

Deputy Commissioner Udhampur Minga Sherpa, senior officers from the civil administration and the Jal Shakti Department, and a large gathering of local residents were present on the occasion.

The Chief Minister received a warm welcome on his arrival at Riwayat Hall, Udhampur.

Addressing the gathering, the Chief Minister reaffirmed the government's commitment to ensuring the availability of safe, adequate, sustainable and quality drinking water to every citizen. He emphasised that water conservation is a shared responsibility and urged

people to use drinking water judiciously while avoiding its wastage.

Highlighting the importance of the Udhampur water supply project, he said it marks a significant step towards strengthening the town's water infrastructure and improving the quality of life of its residents through assured access to safe drinking water.

The Chief Minister also called upon the public to adopt the 'Catch the Rain' campaign and promote rainwater harvesting for gardening, agriculture and other non-potable uses. He stressed the need to preserve water resources and construct check dams to enhance water conservation and groundwater recharge.

Reiterating his government's commitment to inclusive development, the Chief Minister assured the people and their elected representatives that all genuine public demands would be examined and addressed on priority.

Launches J&K AI Centre of Excellence at IIT Jammu

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah Friday launched the J&K Artificial Intelligence Centre of Excellence (AI CoE) at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Jammu and dedicated Project Phoenix, an AI-enabled digital commerce platform at IIT Jammu.

The initiatives are aimed at promoting technology-driven governance, fostering innovation and entrepreneurship, and expanding economic opportunities through the adoption of emerging technologies and enhanced digital market access.

Addressing faculty, students, entrepreneurs, artisans and officials, the Chief Minister said Artificial Intelligence should be harnessed

to improve governance and deliver tangible benefits to citizens.

"Artificial Intelligence must ultimately translate into better outcomes for people. The Centre of Excellence will help us build more efficient, responsive and citizen-centric governance, while Project Phoenix will create new opportunities for artisans, self-help groups, startups and MSMEs to access wider markets," he said.

Highlighting the practical applications of AI, the Chief Minister said the technology should be deployed in sectors such as agriculture, healthcare, education and disaster management to bridge the urban-rural divide and improve public service delivery.

Referring to recent

cloudbursts in Rajouri and Poonch, he stressed the need for AI-enabled early warning systems capable of identifying localised risks and saving lives through timely alerts. He also said AI could assist farmers and horticulturists by providing timely information on crop diseases, treatment and scientific use of agrochemicals.

The Chief Minister said Project Phoenix would complement the Government's flagship Mission YUVA initiative by strengthening market access, mentorship and incubation support for startups and local enterprises. He called for close collaboration between the Government and IIT Jammu to build a vibrant innovation ecosystem capable of generating employment and attracting

investment.

The J&K Artificial Intelligence Centre of Excellence, established at IIT Jammu with the support of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), Government of India, and the Information Technology Department, Government of Jammu & Kashmir, will serve as a hub for AI research, solution development, benchmarking, technology evaluation and deployment support.

The Centre will work with government departments, academia, startups and industry partners to develop AI-enabled solutions for real-world challenges across sectors including governance, education, healthcare, agriculture, infrastructure and disaster management.

12 Day Care Cancer Centres functional in J&K: GoI

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Twelve Day Care Cancer Centres (DCCCs) are currently functional in Jammu and Kashmir, the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare informed the Lok Sabha on Friday.

The details were provided in response to Starred Question No. 294, raised by Shri Kesinini Sivanath, regarding the number of Day Care Cancer Centres set up or proposed to be set up across the country, the number operational State/UT-wise and district-wise, funds allocated and

utilised, and proposals for setting up additional centres.

Union Health and Family Welfare Minister Jagat Prakash Nadda, in his reply, said a total of 524 Day Care Cancer Centres are functional across the country, as reported by States and Union Territories.

As per the State/UT-wise details annexed with the reply, Jammu and Kashmir has 12 functional DCCCs. The Ministry, said that DCCCs were envisaged to be established in District Hospitals across the country over a three-year period, as announced in the Union Budget 2025-26.

The government further stated that the requirement for DCCCs is assessed by States and UTs through gap analysis, with requirements reflected in proposals submitted under the Programme Implementation Plan (PIP) of the National Programme for Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases (NP-NCD).

It said that where States and UTs propose additional DCCCs, such proposals are examined in accordance with prescribed norms, adding that 313 DCCCs have been sanctioned accordingly.

J&K has 12 medical colleges with 1,875 MBBS seats: Centre

RAJA SYED

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir has 12 medical colleges offering a total of 1,875 MBBS seats, including 11 government medical colleges with 1,725 seats and one private medical college with 150 seats, the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare informed the Lok Sabha on Friday.

As per the reply by Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare Anupriya Patel to an unstarred question raised by MP Anto Antony, the figures are based on the State/UT-wise data as on July 30, 2026.

The ministry, said Jammu and Kashmir has 11 government medical colleges with an approved capacity of 1,725 MBBS seats, while one private medical college has 150 MBBS seats, taking the total number of colleges to 12 and total MBBS seats to 1,875.

Anto Antony had sought details of students appearing in NEET-UG and NEET-PG, the number of medical colleges and MBBS seats State/UT-wise, seats per million population, faculty vacancies in AIIMS and other Central Government medical institutions, and steps taken to ensure equitable expansion of medical education.

In response, Patel said the number of medical colleges across the country has increased from 387

to 846, while undergraduate medical seats have risen from 51,348 to 1,39,864 and postgraduate seats from 31,185 to 86,360 between 2014 and July 2026.

The minister said filling vacant faculty posts is a continuous process and depends on factors including availability of qualified candidates, reservation roster and location-specific requirements of institutions.

"The government has constituted Standing Selection Committees in each AIIMS for faculty recruitment, allowed engagement of retired faculty on contract up to 70 years of age and introduced a Visiting Faculty Scheme to augment teaching resources," Patel said.

The National Medical Commission (NMC) has also framed the Medical Institutions (Qualification of Faculty) Regulation, 2025 to address faculty shortages, while provisions under the Compulsory Rotatory Medical Internship Regulations require interns to be paid stipends fixed by the appropriate authority.

The NMC, through a public notice issued on March 12, 2026, also reiterated regulatory provisions and directions regarding payment of stipends and asked Deans, Principals, State Medical Councils and Directorates of Medical Education to ensure compliance.

National Handloom Day celebrated with focus on aesthetic packaging, GI labelling

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Department of Handicrafts and Handloom, Kashmir, Friday organised an exhibition of high-value textile products made by the finest artisans and weavers from Kashmir, to commemorate the National Handloom Day.

The exhibition was inaugurated by Director, Handicrafts and Handloom, Kashmir, Mussarat Islam, at S. K. Park, here. Development Officer, Textiles, Arjumand Yaqub, AD Srinagar, Sadia Ahmed, PEO, Riyaz Ahmad Kawoosa and other senior officers were also present on the occasion.

In a press statement issued here today, a spokesperson of the Handicrafts and Handloom Department Kashmir stated that every year on August 7, a fervent appeal is issued to the buyers and art lovers to join the 'Be Vocal for Local' campaign, which goes a long way in making our artisans and weavers self-sustained. "It is very pleasing to note that a large number of visi-



tors turned up at SK Park to buy famous handcrafted Pashmina, Kani and Sozni shawls made by the golden hands of artisans and weavers from Kashmir," he added.

Earlier, the Director went around the stalls and interacted with the artisans and weavers and encouraged them to get their products tested and labelled at Pashmina Testing & Quality Certification Centre (PTQCC), CDI Srinagar. "Apart from Vocal for Local campaign, our Department urges tourists and buyers to insist on QR Coded GI products to overcome the serious challenge posed by the counterfeit products, sold in the

13 vacancies in J&K and Ladakh HC, 55 in subordinate courts: Centre

RAJA SYED

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh High Court has 13 vacant posts against a sanctioned strength of 25 judges, while 55 posts are vacant in the subordinate judiciary of Jammu and Kashmir, the Union Ministry of Law and Justice informed the Lok Sabha on Friday.

As per the reply by Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Law and Justice Arjun Ram Meghwal to an unstarred question raised by MP Tangella Uday Srinivas, the J&K and Ladakh High Court has a sanctioned strength of 25 judges, of whom 12 are currently working, leaving 13 vacancies as on August 3, 2026.

The ministry, said the subordinate judiciary in Jammu and Kashmir has a sanctioned strength of 322 judicial officers, against which 267 are working, and 55 posts remain vacant.

In Ladakh, the subordinate courts have a sanctioned strength of 17 judi-

cial officers, of whom eight are working, leaving nine vacancies.

Uday Srinivas had asked the government about the sanctioned, working and vacant strength of judges in the Supreme Court, High Courts and subordinate courts, besides seeking details of judicial appointments made during the last five years and steps taken to address vacancies and case pendency.

In reply, Meghwal said appointment of judges in the higher judiciary is a continuous, integrated and collaborative process between the executive and judiciary and involves consultation and approval from various constitutional authorities at the State and Central levels.

He said that from May 2014 till August 3, 2026, a total of 77 judges had been appointed to the Supreme Court and 1,178 judges to various High Courts.

During the last five years, nine judges were appointed to the Supreme Court in 2021, three in 2022, 14 in

2023, four in 2024, seven in 2025 and five till August 3, 2026. In the High Courts, 120 appointments were made in 2021, 165 in 2022, 110 in 2023, 34 in 2024, 157 in 2025 and 22 till August 3, 2026.

The minister said filling vacant positions of judicial officers in district and subordinate courts is the responsibility of the concerned High Courts and State Governments.

He said the respective state governments, in consultation with the High Courts, frame rules and regulations for appointment and recruitment of judicial officers, while the Supreme Court's January 2007 order in the Malik Mazhar Sultan case has stipulated timelines to be followed by States and High Courts for recruitment in district and subordinate courts.

The ministry said the sanctioned strength of judicial officers in district and subordinate courts across the country increased from 24,492 in 2021 to 30,868 as on August 3, 2026, while the

working strength increased from 19,328 to 23,558 during the same period.

On case pendency, Meghwal said disposal of cases pending in various courts lies within the domain of the judiciary and depends on several factors, including availability of judges and judicial officers, supporting staff, infrastructure, complexity of cases, quality of investigation, evidence and cooperation of stakeholders.

"The government is committed to speedy disposal of cases and reducing pendency and has taken several measures, including timely appointment of judges, improvement and computerisation of court infrastructure, policy and legislative measures, promotion of Alternate Dispute Resolution, implementation of new criminal laws, establishment of Fast Track Special Courts, re-engineering of court procedures and human resource development," the minister said—(KNO)

Chief Secretary reviews functioning of MSME Health Clinic

Calls for faster assessment and revival of stressed MSMEs across J&K

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, Friday chaired a comprehensive review meeting to assess the functioning and progress of the J&K MSME Health Clinic, a digital initiative aimed at monitoring, diagnosing and revitalizing Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) across the Union Territory through timely assessment and targeted interventions.

The meeting was attended by Additional Chief Secretary, Public Works Department; Commissioner Secretary, Industries & Commerce Department; Director Industries & Commerce, Jammu/Kashmir; Director Handloom & Handicrafts, Kashmir/Jammu; besides other senior officers of the Industries & Commerce Department.

The meeting deliberated upon the progress made under the initiative, status of assessment of industrial units, capacity-building measures and strategies for expediting rehabilitation of stressed enterprises through coordinated institutional support.

Emphasising the need for strengthening the support ecosystem for MSMEs, the Chief Secretary directed the Industries & Commerce Department to augment the existing Small



Business Development Units (SBDUs) functioning across the districts by providing adequate dedicated human resources or inducting representatives from other stakeholder departments, wherever required, to make these units more effective and result-oriented.

He also stressed the need for conducting regular capacity-building programmes by IIM Jammu for SBDU members across all districts to ensure professional and quality assessment of industrial units. He directed that the SBDUs should actively analyse the reports prepared after health assessment of MSMEs and closely monitor implementation of the recommendations made therein to facilitate timely revival of stressed units.

Calling for expeditious assessment of MSMEs, the Chief Secretary asked the concerned to substantially enhance the pace of health assessment by adopting a hybrid approach involving both physical and virtual visits to industrial units.

He further advised Additional Chief Secretary, Public Works Department, to hold consultations with J&K Bank for exploring suitable mechanisms for restructuring loans of sick MSMEs based on the recommendations emerging from the Health Clinic assessments.

Earlier, the Commissioner Secretary, I&C, Vikramjit Singh apprised the meeting that the MSME Health Clinic has emerged as a significant platform for identifying financially stable enterprises as well as units requiring rehabilitation, thereby facilitating evidence-based policy interventions for strengthening the industrial ecosystem across the Union Territory.

He also apprised the meeting about the compliance with directions issued by Chief Secretary during the previous meeting. He revealed that an interactive chatbot has been integrated into the MSME Health Clinic portal, while its upgraded version has been shared with IIM Jammu for further refinement.

Selection of Haj Trainers for Haj-2027

Haj Committee of India invites Online Applications

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Haj Committee of India has invited online applications from eligible and interested candidates for selection as Haj Trainers to impart orientation and training to the selected pilgrims of Haj-2027 (Hijri-1448 H).

As per a circular issued by the Haj Committee of India, eligible applicants desirous of serving as Haj Trainers are advised to carefully go through the detailed guidelines and eligibility criteria contained in the circular and submit their applications online in accordance with the prescribed instructions.

The detailed circular and application-related information are available on the official website of the Haj Committee of India, (<https://www.hajcommittee.gov.in>).

Interested candidates are advised to submit their online applications well before the deadline. The last date for submission of online applications is August 23, 2026.

National Handloom Day Celebrated with Tiranga Yatra at Lukung, Changthang

Swadeshi Spirit Echoes from Ladakh's High Himalayas

GMK NEWS NETWORK

LUKUNG: The District Administration Changthang, in collaboration with the Department of Handlooms & Handicrafts, Leh, celebrated National Handloom Day with great enthusiasm at Lukung village, nestled on the banks of the iconic Pangong Lake at an altitude of over 14,000 feet above sea level.

Observed every year on 7th August, National Handloom Day commemorates the historic Swadeshi Movement of 1905, which inspired the use of indigenous products and became a defining milestone in India's freedom struggle. The celebration reaffirmed the importance of handloom as a symbol of India's rich cultural heritage, self-reliance and sustainable livelihoods.

Deputy Commissioner, Changthang, Shri Nitish Rajora, IAS, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. Addressing the gathering, he highlighted the significance of preserving Ladakh's unique handloom traditions



while encouraging artisans to embrace innovation and improve the quality and marketability of their products. He appreciated the dedicated efforts of the Department of Handlooms & Handicrafts, Leh, and the Sub-Divisional Administration, Changthang, for organising the celebration in one of the country's highest inhabited regions and for their continuous commitment towards the welfare and empowerment of local artisans and weavers.

To strengthen the handloom sector and enhance the productivity of local artisans, Amber Charkhas and Fly Shuttle Looms were distributed among weavers under various departmental initiatives.

The programme commenced with a welcome

address by the Assistant Director, Handlooms & Handicrafts, Leh, who highlighted the significance of National Handloom Day and the Department's initiatives for promoting traditional crafts, skill development and artisan welfare. The programme concluded with a formal vote of thanks.

A major highlight of the event was a Tiranga Rally led by local artisans and handloom weavers carrying a beautifully hand-knitted National Flag crafted by local women weavers. The rally witnessed enthusiastic participation from weavers, students, officials of the District Administration, government functionaries and members of the public, symbolising unity, patriotism and pride in India's rich handloom heritage.

Good Morning

Kashmir

EDITORIAL

Dissent Is Not Disloyalty

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah's endorsement of RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat's recent remarks has unexpectedly reaffirmed one of democracy's most fundamental principles: criticism of a government is not criticism of the nation.

It is unfortunate that such a truth even needs repeating. Over the years, India has witnessed an increasingly dangerous tendency to label every dissenting voice as "anti-national." Students demanding fair examinations, farmers seeking justice, unemployed youth protesting recruitment delays, journalists asking uncomfortable questions, or citizens challenging public policy have too often found themselves facing accusations that question their patriotism rather than address their concerns. A democracy cannot thrive if disagreement is treated as sedition. Governments are temporary. Nations are permanent. Those in power must never confuse themselves with the Republic they have been elected to serve. The Constitution guarantees every citizen the right to question authority, protest peacefully, and seek accountability. These rights are not acts of rebellion, they are the very foundation of democratic governance. When Mohan Bhagwat stated that opposing the government is different from opposing the nation, he articulated a constitutional truth. Omar Abdullah's agreement with that position deserves attention because it cuts across political lines and reinforces a principle that should unite every democratic institution.

The ongoing protests by recruitment aspirants in Jharkhand are a reminder that young people are not taking to the streets because they dislike their country. They are demanding transparency, fairness, and opportunities. Branding such aspirations as anti-national neither creates jobs nor restores public confidence. Dialogue does. History offers a simple lesson: governments that listen become stronger, while those that silence criticism only deepen public distrust. Every major reform in India's democratic journey has been shaped by citizens who questioned authority, not by those who remained silent.

The true test of patriotism lies not in unquestioning obedience but in the courage to speak when institutions falter. Constructive criticism exposes weaknesses before they become crises. It strengthens governance rather than weakens it. If the political establishment genuinely accepts the distinction between dissent and disloyalty, then it must go beyond speeches. Cases against peaceful protesters should be reviewed. Students should be heard instead of harassed. Peaceful demonstrations should be facilitated, not criminalised. Public institutions must learn to engage with criticism instead of fearing it. Democracy is not measured by the volume of applause a government receives. It is measured by how confidently it tolerates criticism. A nation that fears questions fears its own citizens. A confident democracy welcomes them.

Handloom Weaving: The Future Of Viksit Bharat



GIRIRAJ SINGH

The making of a developed nation is not defined by technology alone. It is shaped by the ability to transform enduring strengths into engines of future growth. As India advances towards Viksit Bharat 2047, we are investing in frontier technologies, strengthening manufacturing and building globally competitive industries. Yet one of our greatest strengths has been with us all along - our handloom tradition. On 7 August, as India marks the 12th National Handloom Day, it is time to view handloom as a strategic sector for a world that values sustainability, authenticity and resilient supply chains.

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's vision of Viksit Bharat 2047 is built on prosperity, self-reliance, inclusivity and cultural confidence. Handloom embodies this vision by bringing together heritage and innovation, while driving women-led development, rural entrepreneurship, livelihoods and global competitiveness.

As the Ramcharitmanas reminds us, "In the Vijay Rath discourse, Lord Rama teaches that lasting victory is built not on power, but on values. Those very values have sustained India's handloom tradition for centuries. Every handwoven fabric reflects the courage to preserve tradition, the patience to perfect every thread, the integrity of honest craftsmanship and the wisdom passed down through generations. That is why handloom is not merely a craft, but one of India's greatest civilisational strengths.

From the Indus Valley Civilisation, where cotton was first cultivated and woven, to the eighteenth century when Indian textiles dominated global trade, India set global benchmarks in textile excellence. Bengal's legendary muslin, so fine that a 25 metre length could pass through a ring, along with Banarasi silk, Kanchipuram weaves, Pochampally Ikat and countless regional traditions, earned India worldwide admiration. Today, as the world turns towards authentic, sustainable and handcrafted products, we have a historic opportunity to reclaim that leadership. Our next handloom revolution must export not just textiles, but craftsmanship, heritage, innovation and trust, making every handwoven product an ambassador of Brand India.

Handloom is India's largest cottage industry, supporting the livelihoods of more than 35 lakh weavers and allied workers, nearly 72 per cent of whom are women. Over the past decade, the Government has strengthened the sector through the Raw



Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's vision of Viksit Bharat 2047 is built on prosperity, self-reliance, inclusivity and cultural confidence. Handloom embodies this vision by bringing together heritage and innovation, while driving women-led development, rural entrepreneurship, livelihoods and global competitiveness.

Material Supply Scheme, 797 handloom clusters, over 1.24 lakh improved looms, skill upgradation for nearly 97,000 artisans, and initiatives such as Producer Companies, GI tagged products, the Handloom Mark, India Handmade certification, Urban Haats and Design Resource Centres.

Today, 29 Weavers' Service Centres provide end-to-end support through training, upskilling, design development, raw material assistance and market linkages, while the 11 Indian Institutes of Handloom Technology are being strengthened to expand advanced training and develop niche, high value handloom products. These initiatives mark a shift from supporting handloom as a welfare activity to building it as a globally competitive creative industry. The forthcoming National Handloom and Handicraft Programme will strengthen 1,800 clusters across 500 districts, benefit 65 lakh weavers and artisans, and establish Handmade in India as a globally recognised brand.

The forthcoming National Handloom and Handicraft Programme will accelerate this transformation by strengthening 1,800 clusters across more than 500 districts, benefiting 65 lakh weavers and artisans and establishing Handmade in India as a globally recognised brand.

Innovation has always been part of India's handloom journey. Mahatma Gandhi's Ambar Charkha made spinning easier, faster and more efficient, advancing the vision of self-reliance. More recently, Assam's Maina Loom and the Chitrnanjan Handloom developed in Sivasagar have shown how better loom design can make weaving easier and more productive.

Building on this legacy, the Centre of Excellence for Handloom Technology, established with the Indian Institutes of Technology, is developing lighter, stronger and easier to use looms that reduce physical effort and improve productivity, including for persons with disabilities. Under the Centre, the Handloom 4.0 initiative uses digital tools and Artificial Intelligence to monitor productivity, quality and maintenance, and is being piloted on 100

looms before expanding across the States.

Technology should empower the artisan, not replace the artisan. Platforms such as VisionNXT can help forecast demand, identify design trends, authenticate genuine handloom products and connect weavers directly with global markets. At the same time, product diversification into premium silk, natural fibres, sustainable fibres and innovative blends can create high value products and unlock new markets. Combined with better branding, value addition and direct market access, these innovations can significantly enhance weavers' incomes. Our vision is to enable every weaver to earn a dignified and aspirational income, with the ambition of 50,000 per month in the years ahead.

The future of handloom depends as much on mindset as on markets. Our weavers are not merely a workforce. They are entrepreneurs, innovators and creators of value. By enabling them to build brands, move up the value chain and reach global markets, we can transform handloom into one of India's most dynamic creative industries. This is also a call to India's youth to bring together heritage and technology, creativity and enterprise, to shape the next chapter of handloom.

On this National Handloom Day, let us celebrate our weavers not only as custodians of our heritage, but as architects of India's progress. And let us make handloom a part of our everyday lives. Every handloom product we buy and wear strengthens a weaver's livelihood, preserves a timeless tradition and carries India's story to the world. By choosing handloom, we do not just wear our heritage - we help weave the future of Viksit Bharat. Courtesy: PIB

The author is the Union Minister of Textiles.

STRENGTHENING WHAT WORKS

Improving Breastfeeding In The Indian Context

DR ASWATHY VIJAYAKUMAR / NEHA GEHI

Every year, World Breastfeeding Week reminds us of one of the simplest and most powerful ways to give every child the best possible start in life. It highlights the importance to begin breastfeeding within the first hour after birth, feeding babies only breast milk for the first six months, and continue breastfeeding alongside complementary foods until the age of two years or beyond. This year's theme, "Breastfeeding for a Sustainable Start in Life: Strengthen What Works," highlights the need to promote, and support breastfeeding as a cornerstone of child survival, maternal health, and sustainable development.

Breastfeeding is often described as nature's first vaccine, but it is much more than that. It provides ideal nutrition, protects against infectious diseases, supports cognitive development, lowers the risk of obesity and non-communicable diseases later in life, and contributes to maternal health by reducing the risk of breast and ovarian cancers and type 2 diabetes.

The National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-6 data shows significant improvements in breastfeeding indicators in India. Early initiation of breastfeeding, defined as a baby being breastfed within the first hour after birth, has increased from 41.8% to 50.1%. This is significant progress as the first hour is a window that is very important for establishing bonding, ensuring exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months of life, and strengthening newborn immunity. Breastfeeding is often seen



solely as a mother's responsibility, but in reality, it is a shared responsibility. Mothers need the right support. They need skilled counselling during pregnancy and immediately after childbirth to build confidence and address common challenges. When difficulties arise, access to trained health workers and lactation support can make all the difference. Families also have an important role to play by encouraging mothers, sharing household responsibilities, and creating a supportive environment.

For working mothers, supportive workplace policies, including paid maternity leave, flexible work arrangements, breastfeeding breaks, and safe, private spaces to express and store breast milk are essential. When families,

communities, health systems, employers, and governments work together, mothers are better able to breastfeed successfully, giving every child the healthiest possible start in life.

A study analysing data from the NFHS-4 and NFHS-5 found that mothers who attended more antenatal care visits and those who delivered in public health facilities were more likely to exclusively breastfeed their infants.

Conversely, exclusive breastfeeding was less likely among mothers under 20 years of age, babies born with low birth weight, and cases where breastfeeding was initiated more than an hour after birth. These findings highlight how quality counselling and support from the health system can play a

crucial role in helping mothers successfully breastfeed.

As this year's theme emphasises "Strengthen What Works," it is important to build on the initiatives that are already in place. The Poshan Abhiyaan, under the Ministry of Women and Child Development, identifies Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) as a key strategy to address inadequate and inappropriate infant and young child feeding practices.

Through annual Poshan Maah and Poshan Pakhwada campaigns, the programme has brought breastfeeding and infant and young child feeding to the national spotlight by promoting awareness, strengthening counselling services, and enhancing the engagement of frontline workers. However, these efforts need to be strengthened further through greater convergence with community-based platforms.

Inadequate breastfeeding is estimated to contribute to 73,417 child deaths from diarrhoea and acute respiratory infections each year, while imposing an economic burden of nearly US\$16.6 billion annually. World Health Assembly's target is of achieving 70% exclusive breastfeeding by 2030. Reaching this goal demands policies and implementing programmes that will need to galvanise actions that help mothers overcome obstacles and ensure adequate support to achieve the recommended practices of early, exclusive, and continued breastfeeding.

The Global Breastfeeding Collective calls for a range of policy measures, including increased funding to raise rates of early, exclusive, and continued breastfeeding; enforcement of the Infant Milk Substitutes (IMS) Act by imposing stricter penalties on violators and increasing the Act's

overall uptake across sectors; broader paid leave and workplace provisions for all workers; adoption of the 10 Steps to Successful Breastfeeding across maternity facilities; increased access to skilled breastfeeding counselling, reinforced by closer links between health facilities and communities; and stronger monitoring systems to track progress against breastfeeding targets.

This year's theme, "Strengthen What Works," is already reflected in several ongoing efforts in India. Ministry of Women and Child Development continues to run BCC and Information, Education, and Communication campaigns to spread breastfeeding messages widely, alongside efforts to strengthen enforcement of the IMS Act to check aggressive formula marketing.

At the field level, digital solutions such as the Poshan Tracker not only enable effective monitoring of Anganwadi services but also provide tools within the application for effective interpersonal counselling at home, tracking breastfeeding indicators from the child's birth.

The recently launched Home Visit Scheduler, which aligns joint home visits with health functionaries, and beneficiary module where beneficiary can access integrated information videos are just one such initiative already in place. Strengthening these efforts across health and nutrition systems will be key to closing India's breastfeeding gap and meeting both India's own nutrition goals and the global 2030 target. Courtesy: PIB

(The Authors are Research Lead, Anuvaad Solutions and Nutrition Lead, Anuvaad Solutions.)

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■ Kashmir's Santoor Legacy Lives On

From Great-Grandfather To Great-Grandson

MOHAMMAD HANIEF

In an era when cultural identities are increasingly shaped by digital algorithms, streaming platforms and global entertainment trends, the quiet work of preserving traditional art forms has become one of the defining challenges of the twenty-first century. Across the world, communities are striving to protect their intangible heritage from the erosive effects of time and changing tastes. In Kashmir, where history and culture have long found expression through poetry, craftsmanship and music, that responsibility rests in significant measure with an extraordinary father-son duo.

Adil Amin Tibetbaqal and Master Muhammad Abdullah Tibetbaqal are not merely musicians. They are inheritors of a legacy spanning more than a century, custodians of a tradition that has helped shape Kashmir's cultural consciousness, and living symbols of the region's enduring relationship with its artistic heritage. Representing the third and fourth generations of the renowned Tibetbaqal musical dynasty, they stand today at the intersection of history and modernity, carrying forward a family tradition that has survived shifting political landscapes, evolving social realities and rapidly changing cultural preferences.

Their story assumes particular relevance in contemporary Jammu and Kashmir. In recent years, the Union Territory has witnessed a renewed emphasis on cultural revival. Heritage festivals, literary gatherings, educational initiatives, and government-supported programmes have sought to reclaim and celebrate Kashmir's artistic traditions.

At the same time, younger generations continue to navigate a world dominated by smartphones, short-form video, and global entertainment. This paradox defines the present cultural moment in Kashmir: a society striving to honour its past while adapting to the demands of the future. It is within this landscape that the Tibetbaqals have emerged as among the Valley's most influential cultural ambassadors.

The origins of their story lie with Ustaad Muhammad Abdullah Tibetbaqal (1914-1982), the legendary musician remembered across Kashmir as the "King of the Santoor." Few artists have left as profound an imprint on the region's cultural identity. At a time when the Santoor remained largely

Their story assumes particular relevance in contemporary Jammu and Kashmir. In recent years, the Union Territory has witnessed a renewed emphasis on cultural revival. Heritage festivals, literary gatherings, educational initiatives, and government-supported programmes have sought to reclaim and celebrate Kashmir's artistic traditions.

confined to accompaniment within traditional ensembles, he reimagined its possibilities and elevated it into a distinguished solo concert instrument.

His mastery of Sufiyana Mousiqi—Kashmir's classical music tradition rooted in Sufi philosophy and shaped by Persian and Central Asian influences—ensured that one of the Valley's oldest musical forms continued to flourish. In 1972, he became the first artist from Jammu and Kashmir to receive the prestigious Sangeet Natak Akademi Award, a watershed moment in the region's cultural history.

His broadcasts on Radio Kashmir reached households across the Valley, and for generations of listeners, the sound of the Santoor became inseparable from his name. More importantly, he established a legacy rooted not merely



in performance but in preservation—a legacy that would eventually find expression through his descendants.

Among those descendants, Adil Amin Tibetbaqal has emerged as one of the foremost custodians of the family's heritage. A Santoor artist, academician, and mentor, Adil has dedicated his professional life to ensuring that the musical traditions of Kashmir remain relevant in an increasingly globalised world. An All India Radio B-High graded artist and gold medallist, he combines performance with rigorous teaching and mentorship.

Through years of classroom instruction and practical guidance, he has introduced countless students to the intricacies of Indian classical Santoor and Kashmiri Sufiyana Mousiqi. In doing so, he has assumed a role that extends far beyond that of an educator: he has become a steward of cultural memory. At a time when many traditional art forms struggle to attract younger practitioners, Adil's sustained efforts have helped nurture a growing appreciation for Kashmiri music within academic institutions and cultural circles. His work reflects a broader understanding that heritage survives not only through archival preservation but through active participation and transmission.

Within the Tibetbaqal household, however, his most significant contribution has been as a father. For Master Muhammad Abdullah Tibetbaqal, Adil is not simply a parent but a mentor whose guidance has shaped the artistic journey of a child prodigy now rec-

ognised far beyond the Valley. Their relationship reflects a tradition deeply embedded in Kashmiri society—the transmission of knowledge from one generation to the next through shared experience, patient correction, and daily practice.

Muhammad Abdullah grew up in an environment where music was not an occasional pursuit but a constant presence. The sounds of rehearsals, discussions about ragas and maqams, and stories of his great-grandfather's contributions formed the backdrop of his childhood. In many ways, his introduction to the Santoor began long before he was old enough to hold the mallets. Family members soon recognised that his connection with the instrument was unusual. Possessing a remarkable sense of rhythm and an instinctive understanding of melody, he demonstrated an aptitude that distinguished him from his peers at an exceptionally young age. Under the careful guidance of his father, his natural talent began to evolve into disciplined artistry.

At the age of five, he made his first public appearance, earning recognition as one of the youngest Santoor performers of note. What followed was a journey that attracted attention from cultural institutions, educational organisations, and media platforms. Today, despite still being a student of Class VIII at Green Valley Educational Institute in Srinagar, Muhammad Abdullah has already established himself as one of Kashmir's most promising young musicians. His repertoire encompasses

es Indian classical, Kashmiri classical, Sufiyana Mousiqi, folk traditions, and traditional instrumental compositions. His performances have drawn admiration from audiences across generations, and his achievements have been acknowledged by several dignitaries and institutions.

Yet beyond the accolades lies a deeper significance. Muhammad Abdullah represents a generation often described as digitally native—a generation raised amidst unprecedented technological advancement and global connectivity. His commitment to a centuries-old musical tradition challenges assumptions about the declining relevance of classical arts among young people. In many ways, his journey offers a compelling response to one of the central questions confronting contemporary societies: Can tradition survive in the digital age?

The answer, it would seem, lies in the relationship between father and son. Together, Adil Amin Tibetbaqal and Muhammad Abdullah Tibetbaqal embody two complementary dimensions of cultural preservation. One represents experience, scholarship, and mentorship; the other symbolises continuity, possibility, and the future. Their partnership illustrates that heritage is not inherited automatically. It must be nurtured, practised, and consciously passed from one generation to the next.

As Jammu and Kashmir continues to invest in cultural preservation, the story of the Tibetbaqals serves as a timely reminder that institutions alone cannot sustain heritage. Ultimately, it is preserved through individuals willing to dedicate their lives to its survival. For Adil Amin Tibetbaqal, that dedication has manifested through education, performance, and fatherhood. For Muhammad Abdullah Tibetbaqal, it is expressed through youthful passion and artistic promise.

Together, they represent more than four generations of musical excellence. They represent the enduring spirit of Kashmir itself. And as the notes of the Santoor continue to echo through classrooms, concert halls, and cultural gatherings, they carry with them a simple but profound truth: traditions do not disappear when they are cherished. They endure, finding new life in every generation willing to listen, learn, and carry them forward.

(The author is a senior analyst and environmentalist. Feedback can be sent to m.hanief@gmail.com. Twitter/X: @haniefmha)

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

A Strong Policy Weakened By Irregular Salary Disbursement

IRFAN AHMAD MIR

The Government of India's Vocational Education Scheme, implemented under the umbrella of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and the Samagra Shiksha programme, aims to bridge the gap between classroom education and industry requirements.

By introducing skill-based education in schools, the scheme seeks to improve employability, entrepreneurship, and practical learning among students. Vocational Teachers (VTs) are the backbone of this initiative. They equip students with technical knowledge, workplace skills, and career guidance that are essential for a rapidly changing economy.

However, while the policy vision is progressive, its implementation in Jammu & Kashmir presents a serious administrative challenge. One of the most pressing concerns is the inconsistent and delayed payment of salaries to Vocational Teachers. This issue is affecting not only the teachers themselves but also the overall effectiveness of vocational education.

The Problem of Unequal Salary Disbursement

A major concern is the absence of a uniform salary disbursement system. Different implementing agencies or companies engaged under the scheme follow different payment practices. Some release salaries regularly every month, while others delay payments for several months without a predictable timeline.

As a result, teachers performing the same duties under the same government scheme receive unequal treatment. Such inconsistency creates confusion, frustration, and a sense of injustice among the teaching workforce. A centrally sponsored programme should function with uniform administrative standards rather than varying according to the practices of individual imple-



menting agencies.

Personal Impact on Vocational Teachers

Salary is not merely a financial benefit; it is the foundation of a family's economic stability. Delayed salaries place Vocational Teachers under continuous financial stress. Many struggle to meet household expenses, children's education costs, rent, loan repayments, healthcare expenses, and other essential commitments.

Financial uncertainty also affects mental well-being. Teachers who remain uncertain about when they will receive their salaries experience anxiety, reduced morale, and declining job satisfaction. Such conditions discourage talented professionals from continuing in vocational education and make the profession less attractive to qualified candidates.

Professional Impact on Education Quality

The effects extend beyond teachers and directly influence students. Vocational education requires enthusiasm, innovation, industry interaction, practical demonstrations, and continuous

student engagement. A teacher facing months of salary uncertainty cannot reasonably be expected to perform with maximum motivation.

Low morale may reduce participation in school activities, industrial visits, skill competitions, project-based learning, and career counselling initiatives. Ultimately, students receive a weaker learning experience despite the government's investment in vocational education.

Implications for NEP 2020

NEP 2020 places significant emphasis on integrating vocational education into mainstream schooling. The policy envisions quality skill education reaching every learner, supported by motivated and professionally competent teachers.

This vision cannot be achieved if those responsible for delivering vocational education face prolonged financial insecurity. Policy reforms require equally strong administrative reforms. Delayed salary payments contradict the principles of professionalism, accountability, and quality education promoted by NEP 2020.

One of the most pressing concerns is the inconsistent and delayed payment of salaries to Vocational Teachers. This issue is affecting not only the teachers themselves but also the overall effectiveness of vocational education.

If implementation remains inconsistent, the scheme risks becoming administratively fragmented rather than institutionally strong. A programme designed to build skilled human capital cannot succeed when its own workforce lacks financial stability.

The Need for Systemic Reform

The issue is not simply delayed salaries; it is the absence of a standardized payment mechanism across all implementing agencies. Administrative differences between companies should never determine whether teachers receive their salaries on time.

A centrally funded educational programme should guarantee equal treatment, transparency, and accountability regardless of the implementing part-

ner. Uniform financial management is essential for maintaining trust among educators and ensuring uninterrupted educational delivery.

Conclusion: The Vocational Education Scheme has enormous potential to transform India's education system and prepare students for future employment. However, this objective cannot be achieved unless equal attention is given to the welfare of Vocational Teachers.

The following measures can significantly improve implementation in Jammu & Kashmir:

- Establish a uniform monthly salary disbursement policy applicable to all implementing agencies.
- Introduce fixed salary release dates with mandatory compliance.
- Implement strict contractual penalties for agencies that delay salaries without valid justification.
- Create a digital monitoring dashboard where salary releases are tracked transparently by the concerned authorities.
- Strengthen coordination between the Ministry of Education, Samagra Shiksha, the Jammu & Kashmir School Education Department, and implementing agencies to ensure uninterrupted fund flow.
- Develop a central grievance redressal mechanism for Vocational Teachers to report salary-related issues promptly.

Vocational education is central to India's vision of creating a skilled and employable workforce. Achieving that vision requires more than sound policy; it demands timely implementation, administrative consistency, and respect for the professionals entrusted with delivering it. Ensuring regular and uniform salary disbursement is not merely a financial obligation; it is a prerequisite for the successful realisation of NEP 2020.

(The author teaches Tourism and Hospitality)

3.65 Lakh Cases

, 2026. Of these, 6,106 cases were pending for more than 10 years, and 7,328 cases had been pending for more than five years.

For Ladakh, the Ministry said 1,745 cases were pending in district and subordinate courts as on July 30, 2026. Of these, 12 cases had been pending for more than 10 years, while 98 cases had been pending for more than five years.

On the e-Courts Project, Meghwal said the government has approved Phase III for 2023-27 with a budget outlay of Rs 7,210 crore. The phase aims to transform courts into digital and paperless courts, expand video conferencing facilities to all courts, jails and hospitals, and integrate stakeholders of the criminal justice system.

The minister said the project also envisages universal saturation of eSewa Kendras, a cloud-based repository for digitised court records and deployment of emerging technologies, including Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Optical Character Recognition (OCR), for case analysis and forecasting.

"More than 753 crore pages of court records have been digitised so far, while 2,584 eSewa Kendras have been established across the country. Courts have conducted more than 4.18 crore hearings through video conferencing and around 1.25 crore cases have been filed electronically through the eFiling platform," he said.

According to the ministry, Rs 3,225 crore was allocated under Phase III of the e-Courts Project from 2023-24 to 2026-27, against which Rs 2,543.81 crore had been spent.

The government also said the primary responsibility for development of infrastructure facilities for district and subordinate courts rests with state governments and UT administrations. However, the Centre has been implementing a Centrally Sponsored Scheme for development of judicial infrastructure since 1993-94.

The scheme covers court halls, residential units for judicial officers, lawyers' halls, toilet complexes and digital computer rooms. The Centre has provided Rs 12,858.25 crore to States and UTs under the scheme since its inception, the reply said—(KNO)

CM Omar Reviews

Highways Authority of India (NHAI) and the executing agencies on the progress of repair, restoration and stabilisation works being undertaken along the affected stretches of the highway.

The Chief Minister was accompanied by Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister, Dheeraj Gupta, senior NHAI officials, Traffic Police officers and other concerned officers.

Emphasising that the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway is the lifeline of Jammu and Kashmir, the Chief Minister directed the concerned agencies to expedite restoration works and take all necessary measures to ensure smooth, safe and uninterrupted movement of traffic.

He laid particular emphasis on facilitating the movement of trucks carrying fruit and other agricultural produce, noting that any prolonged disruption on the highway adversely impacts growers, traders and the overall economy.

The Chief Minister also stressed the importance of coordinated efforts among the NHAI, executing agencies, Traffic Police and the district administration to minimise inconvenience to commuters and ensure effective traffic management during the ongoing restoration works.

He instructed the officers to closely monitor vulnerable stretches, deploy adequate manpower and machinery wherever required, and complete the remaining works at the earliest while maintaining the highest safety standards.

The Chief Minister's visit comes in the wake of the recent spell of heavy rainfall that triggered landslides, shooting stones and mudslides at multiple locations along the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway, leading to repeated closures of the arterial road over the past several days.

India-Pakistan Ties

normal bilateral relations require an end to cross-border terrorism".

The government reiterated that India-Pakistan relations can move ahead only in an environment free of terror, hostility and violence, maintaining that Pakistan continues to follow a policy of cross-border terrorism and uses terrorism as

an instrument of State policy against India—(KNO)

MeT Warns Of Heavy

August 9-11.

A MeT official said that as per the forecast, August 8 will witness one or two spells of light to moderate rain and thundershowers at many places. Brief intense showers are also expected at a few places.

The MeT predicted few spells of light to moderate rain and thundershowers at most places between August 9 and 11.

It specifically warned of heavy to very heavy rainfall in a few districts of Jammu division and brief intense heavy showers are likely at a few districts in Kashmir division.

From August 12 to 17, the weather department said there is a possibility of light rain and thundershower at many places, with brief intense showers at a few places.

The department has issued an advisory for August 9 to 11, citing the possibility of heavy to very heavy rain and brief intense heavy showers at a few districts.

Torrential rain and brief intense heavy showers may generate flashfloods and landslides at vulnerable places and cause water logging in low lying areas," the MeT said.

People have been advised to stay away from nallahs, landslide-prone areas and other vulnerable spots, while authorities have been asked to remain alert

According to the MeT Department, Srinagar recorded a maximum temperature of 28.5 degrees Celsius, 1.4 degrees below normal, while Pahalgam settled at 23.5 degrees Celsius, 2.2 degrees below the seasonal average. Kupwara recorded 28.3 degrees Celsius, 2.4 degrees below normal, and Gulmarg registered a maximum of 20.2 degrees Celsius.

Jammu recorded a maximum temperature of 33.7 degrees Celsius, marginally above normal.

Light rainfall was recorded at Qazigund (1.3 mm), Katra (2 mm) and Bhaderwah (1.4 mm) during the day, while severe stations in Kashmir reported trace rainfall over the previous 24 hours—(KNO)

J&K, Ladakh Likely

that in the financial year 2027-28 Jammu and Kashmir will require 3964 MWs of electricity during the peak hours followed by 4117 MWs of energy in the financial year 2028-29.

Apart from peak demand, the authorities had also projected that there will be an electrical energy requirement of 23,372 Million Units (MU) in the financial year 2026-2027.

It also said that in the year 2027-28, Jammu and Kashmir will likely require 24,559 MU of energy followed by 25,780 MU in the year 2028-29—(KNO)

Inclement Weather

transport services and small eateries. The bad weather has reduced tourist footfall significantly, affecting our income," said Shabir Ahmad, a resident of Keran.

Tour operators in Srinagar said inquiries from domestic tourists have slowed, particularly for offbeat destinations that require long road journeys.

"The concern is not just rainfall but uncertainty over road conditions. Tourists do not want to risk getting stranded because of landslides or road closures. Many are choosing to stay in Srinagar or Gulmarg instead of travelling to remote destinations," said Fayaz Ahmad, a local tour operator.

The impact has also been felt in Sonamarg, where hoteliers and pony operators said the number of visitors has fallen compared to expectations for the peak tourist season.

"We were hoping for a busy August, but repeated weather advisories and intermittent road disruptions have affected business. Most tourists are making only day visits instead of staying overnight," said Ghulam Nabi, a hotelier in Sonamarg.

Officials said restoration work is underway at affected locations, with road clearance and repair operations being carried out to ensure connectivity wherever weather conditions permit.

The Meteorological Department has forecast intermittent rainfall over the coming days and advised tourists and residents to remain cautious, particularly in vulnerable areas prone to landslides, flash floods and cloudbursts.

Tourism stakeholders expressed hope

that an improvement in weather conditions would revive tourist arrivals during the remaining part of the summer season, especially to Kashmir's lesser-known destinations that have emerged as popular attractions in recent years—(KNO)

J&K Aims To Retain Top

national level.

The Chief Secretary directed that all flags procured must strictly conform to the Flag Code of India. He also instructed that procurement should be undertaken through local Self Help Groups and the Department of Posts to ensure quality and timely availability.

Stress was also laid on extensive publicity for the campaign. The Chief Secretary directed the Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR) and district administrations to undertake widespread awareness drives, highlighting the importance of respectful handling, collection and proper custody of the National Flag after Independence Day celebrations.

During the meeting, the Chief Secretary was apprised by the Principal Secretary, Culture, Brij Mohan Sharma that Jammu and Kashmir has emerged as the leading performer in the nationwide patriotic campaign, securing the No. 1 rank in successive phases of the Vande Mataram celebrations.

The meeting was informed that the Union Territory-level flagship event will be held on August 12 in Srinagar. The event will commence from the lawns of the Sher-i-Kashmir International Conference Centre (SKICC) and culminate at the Botanical Garden. Deputy Commissioners from all districts will participate virtually.

As part of the celebrations, a Tiranga Bike Rally involving the Paramilitary and J&K Police, a Tiranga Mela showcasing local handicrafts, Self Help Group products and tricolour-themed merchandise, besides a patriotic concert featuring renowned national and local artists, will also be organised.

Reviewing the nine-day programme, the Chief Secretary was informed that exhibitions on the history and evolution of the National Flag and the freedom movement would be organised at prominent public institutions and locations across the Union Territory. Educational institutions will conduct Tiranga-themed activities, including board art, walkathons, letter-writing campaigns for armed forces personnel and Rakhi-making workshops.

The programme will also feature community singing of the National Song Vande Mataram and the Tiranga Anthem across blocks and municipal areas in accordance with the prescribed Standard Operating Procedure. A pre-event car and bike rally along the SKICC–Cheshmashahi–Botanical Garden route has also been scheduled for August 11.

The meeting was informed that 14,03,496 National Flags have been requisitioned by districts for distribution across Jammu and Kashmir to facilitate large-scale participation in the campaign.

Citizens were also encouraged to upload photographs of their participation on the official Har Ghar Tiranga portal to strengthen the spirit of public participation and national unity.

Rs 3,003 Cr Released

submitted through Programme Implementation Plans.

"NHM provides several incentives to encourage doctors and healthcare workers to serve in rural, tribal and remote areas, including hard-area allowance for specialist doctors, honorarium for specialists and doctors trained in emergency obstetric care and life-saving anaesthesia skills, and incentives for doctors and Auxiliary Nurse Midwives," the minister said.

States are also allowed to offer negotiable salaries to attract specialists, while non-monetary incentives include preferential admission in postgraduate courses for staff serving in difficult areas and improved accommodation facilities in rural areas.

Jadhav said multi-skilling of doctors and skill upgradation of existing healthcare personnel are also supported under NHM to address shortages of specialists.

He further said the Family Adoption Programme has been incorporated into the MBBS curriculum to improve healthcare access in rural areas, while under the District Residency Programme of the National Medical Commission, second- and third-year postgraduate students of

medical colleges are posted in district hospitals.

On medical colleges, the minister said the Centrally Sponsored Scheme for establishment of new medical colleges attached with existing district or referral hospitals gives preference to underserved areas and aspirational districts where there is no existing government or private medical college.

He said all 157 medical colleges envisaged under the scheme have already been approved.

The ministry clarified that the expenditure figures are provisional and include expenditure against Central releases, State releases and unspent balances at the beginning of the year. The Central releases mentioned in the annexure relate to Central Government grants and do not include the State share contribution—(KNO)

India, China Review

miscalculations along the LAC.

As a follow-up to the outcomes of the previous round of Special Representatives talks, India and China held detailed exchanges on matters related to boundary delimitation, border management, mechanism-building and trans-border cooperation, the MEA said.

The Indian side also reiterated the need for an early convening of the next meeting of the expert-level mechanism on trans-border rivers. It further stressed the importance of sharing technical details regarding upstream projects.

The Indian delegation at the talks was led by Sujit Ghosh, Joint Secretary (East Asia) in the Ministry of External Affairs, while the Chinese delegation was headed by Hou Yanqi, Director General of the Boundary and Oceanic Affairs Department at China's foreign ministry.

Amarnath Yatra Sees

annual pilgrimage began on July 3 and is scheduled to conclude on August 28—(KNO)



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Ladakh has significant potential for high-altitude medicinal plants: Centre

AGENCIES

SRINAGAR: Ladakh has significant potential for cultivation of high-altitude medicinal plants such as Seabuckthorn, Rhodiola, Artemisia and Aconitum, the Union Ministry of Ayush informed the Lok Sabha on Friday.

As per the reply by Minister of Statefor Ayush Prataprao Jadhav to a question by Ladakh MP Mohmad Haneefa, the government has taken cognisance of the region's potential and the National Medicinal Plants Board (NMPB) is implementing a Central Sector Scheme for conservation, development and sustainable management of medicinal plants.

The ministry, said the scheme supports quality planting material, farmer awareness, post-harvest management and marketing, value addition, and quality testing and certification of medicinal plant raw material.

It said NMPB has also launched the e-CHARAK mobile application and web portal for promotion and marketing of medicinal plants and herbs. The application provides fortnightly market prices of 100 medicinal plants from 25 herbal markets across India, including Ladakh, and facilitates market linkages for farmers and collectors.

Haneefa also sought details of projects sanctioned in Leh and Kargil under the National Medicinal Plants Board and National AYUSH Mission (NAM) during the last five years, including funds sanctioned, released and

utilised.

In response, Jadhav said the Ministry of Ayush had released Rs 705.11 lakh during the last five years for implementation of various approved activities and projects under NAM in Ladakh, of which Rs 534.24 lakh had been utilised, as reported by the UT Government.

The ministry clarified that there is no provision for release of district-wise funds under NAM.

Haneefa further asked whether the government had assessed the commercial potential and constraints related to cultivation, certification, processing, transportation and market access for medicinal plants in Ladakh.

Jadhav replied that the State Medicinal Plant Board (SMPB), UT Ladakh, had assessed the opportunities and constraints in the medicinal plant sector. He said capacity-building programmes are being undertaken to address the constraints and promote sustainable cultivation and commercialisation.

He further said the Regional-cum-Facilitation Centre NR-II has consistently supported the establishment of post-harvest processing and quality-testing infrastructure in Ladakh to promote sustainable cultivation and generate local employment.

The MP also asked whether the government proposed to establish processing centres, quality-testing laboratories, Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) and assured market linkages in Ladakh, and whether any

timeline had been fixed.

In reply, Jadhav said the NMPB Central Sector Scheme provides project-based support for livelihood linkages, training, workshops, research and development, promotion of marketing and trade of medicinal plant produce, and forward and backward linkages in the supply chain.

The ministry further informed that a Centre of Excellence (CoE) for Seabuckthorn has been established at Nimoo, Leh, with financial assistance of Rs 789.33 lakh under the Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH).

The project was initiated during 2020-21 and is being implemented by the Department of Horticulture, UT Ladakh, with technical support from DRDO's Defence Institute of High-Altitude Research (DIHAR), Leh.

The centre comprises a scientific orchard, model nursery, demonstration and training facilities, a primary processing unit and capacity-building programmes for farmers, FPOs, Self-Help Groups (SHGs), women and entrepreneurs.

According to the annexure, seven projects were approved under the NMPB Central Sector Scheme during the last five years.

These include a Rs 5 lakh national-level conference on identification and conservation of medicinal plants and flora of Ladakh at the Biodiversity Research Centre, Kargil Campus, University of Ladakh, in 2022-23; and a

Rs 5 lakh national seminar on Himalayan medicinal plants at Elizer Joldan Memorial College, Leh, during the same year.

In 2024-25, Rs 1.35 lakh was sanctioned for establishment of a herbal garden at the Central Institute of Buddhist Studies, Choglamsar, Leh, of which Rs 0.75 lakh was released.

A project on conservation status, germplasm collection and resource augmentation of priority medicinal plants in the cold deserts of Ladakh received Rs 13.48 lakh, with Rs 13.48 lakh released and Rs 13.46 lakh utilised.

Another Rs 5 lakh was sanctioned and released for a national seminar on medicinal plant conservation and management at the High Mountain Arid Agriculture Research Institute, SKUAST-K, Stakna, Leh.

For 2025-26, Rs 9.92 lakh was sanctioned for enhancing salidroside content through various means in Rhodiola imbricata from the cold desert of Leh through in-field and in-vitro approaches.

A nucleus centre maintenance grant for SMPB, UT Ladakh, covering 2023-24 to 2025-26, received Rs 81 lakh, with the entire amount released and Rs 74.52 lakh utilised.

The government said the initiatives are aimed at strengthening conservation, scientific cultivation, processing, value addition and market linkages for medicinal plants in Ladakh, besides promoting sustainable cultivation and generating local employment—(KNO)

1,238 PG medical seats available in J&K, 14 in Ladakh: Centre

RAJA SYED

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir has a total of 1,238 Post-Graduate (PG) medical seats for the academic year 2026-27, including 1,175 seats in government institutions and 63 seats in private institutions, the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare informed the Lok Sabha on Friday.

The details were provided by Union Health and Family Welfare Minister Jagat Prakash Nadda in response to Starred Question No. 297, raised by Kumari Sudha R, seeking details of PG medical seats in Central Government institutions, State Government colleges and deemed universities, seats created since 2014, proposals to increase PG seats, conversion of Diploma seats into full-fledged PG medical

DC G'bal reviews preparations for 'Har Ghar Tiranga' Campaign



GMK NEWS NETWORK

GANDERBAL: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Ganderbal, Jatin Kishore, Friday chaired a meeting to review the preparations for the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' Campaign, scheduled to be observed from 09 to 17 August 2026, and directed all stakeholder departments to ensure its successful implementation through coordinated efforts and maximum public participation across the district.

At the outset, the Deputy Commissioner reviewed the action plan prepared by the concerned departments for the smooth conduct of the campaign. Stressing the importance of the national initiative, he emphasized that all departments should work in close coordination to make the campaign a vibrant celebration of patriotism, national unity and pride.

Reviewing the preparations department-wise, the Deputy Commissioner directed all concerned offi-

cials to launch an extensive door-to-door awareness campaign to encourage every household to hoist the National Flag during the campaign period.

The Deputy Commissioner directed all Urban Local Bodies, Rural Development Department and other stakeholder departments to organise Swachhta Pakhwada across Panchayats, towns, government institutions and public places as part of the campaign. He stressed that special cleanliness drives should be undertaken to promote cleanliness and civic responsibility alongside the patriotic initiative.

To ensure wider public participation, the Deputy Commissioner directed the concerned departments to organise cyclothons, mega Tiranga rallies, awareness marches and other patriotic programmes at the district, block and panchayat levels. He further instructed that Shikara rallies and pony rallies be organised to enhance public outreach and strengthen the visibility of the campaign.

DC Pulwama finalises Independence Day arrangements



GMK NEWS NETWORK

PULWAMA: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Pulwama, Dr. Basharat Qayoom, Friday chaired a comprehensive meeting at Circuit House Pulwama to review and finalise arrangements for the smooth conduct of the forthcoming Independence Day celebrations across the district.

The meeting also reviewed the action plan for the Har Ghar Tiranga Campaign 2026, to be observed from August 09 to 17, integrated with the third phase of the commemoration of 150 years of the National Song "Vande Mataram".

At the outset, the Deputy

Commissioner took a detailed review of preparations relating to venue readiness, parade contingents, cultural programmes, power and water supply, public address system, stage management, illumination and decoration, seating arrangements, invitations, parking facilities, traffic regulation, sanitation, medicare, security and other logistical arrangements for the Independence Day function.

Senior Superintendent of Police, Pulwama, Tanushree, apprised the chair of the security arrangements and informed that adequate measures are being put in place to ensure the smooth conduct of all Independence Day events across the district.

0194-2310283

UNION TERRITORY GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

mb-rajbagh@jk.gov.in

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (R&B) DIVISION RAJBAGH SRINAGAR.

H.Q'S: LAL MANDI, NEAR L.D HOSPITAL SRINAGAR-190008.

NOTICE INVITING TENDERS

E-NIT No. 59/R&B/RAJ of 2026-27 issued under Endorsement No: 5282-92 Dated: 06.08.2026.

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

S.No.	Name of Work	Base Cost Excl. GST (₹ in Lacs)	TOTAL / Adv. Cost (Base Cost + GST) (₹ in Lacs)	Cost of T/ Doc.	Earnest Money Deposit	Time of Completion	Major Head	Class of Contractor / Agency
1	2	3		4	5	6	7	8
1.	Improvement of road at Chinar Colony Rawalpura Astanpora.	3.56	4.20	₹200/-	₹8400/-	12 Days	3054-M&R 2026-27)	DEE (Civil)
2.	Restoration of Road at Ayesha Colony (Natipora Budshah Nagar)	2.97	3.50	₹200/-	₹7000/-	12 Days		
3.	Restoration of Road at Shaheen Colony Wanabal.	2.97	3.50	₹200/-	₹7000/-	12 Days		
4.	Restoration of road at Naikpora Lane 1 new colony LHS	2.97	3.50	₹200/-	₹7000/-	12 Days		
5.	Restoration of Road Surface at Allo-chibagh Srinagar	2.97	3.50	₹200/-	₹7000/-	12 Days		
6.	Laying of Cross Drainage pipes including construction of Kacha drain at various stretches from Baghat Chowk to Rangreth (Old Airport Road)	2.97	3.50	₹200/-	₹7000/-	12 Days		
7.	Maintainance of IG Road by way of washing of grill, Bush cutting including Repair of Center verge and removal of Mulba from 0-3Km	2.95	3.48	₹ 200/-	₹7000/-	12 Days		
8.	Restoration of road Berm from Ram-bagh to Jawahir Nagar Behind KGP.	2.80	3.30	₹ 200/-	₹6600/-	12 Days		
9.	Restoration of road at Naikpora Lane 1 new colony RHS	2.37	2.80	₹ 200/-	₹5600/-	12 Days		
10	Repair / Restoration of Manholes along Major District Road within Jurisdiction of R&B Sub Division Rambagh.	2.20	2.60	₹ 200/-	₹5200/-	10 Days		
11	Retoration of drainage at Allochi bagh Srinagar.	2.12	2.50	₹ 200/-	₹5000/-	10 Days		

12	Restoration of road at Ladakhi Colony Lane-3 Padshahi Bagh	1.96	2.30	200/-	4600/-	10 Days	3054-M&R 2026-27)	DEE (Civil)
13	Raising of Manhole Covers at various spots from IG Road and allied links Al-lochibagh	1.95	2.30	200/-	4600/-	10 Days		
14	Restoration of road at Rawalpura Mas-jid Shareef RHS.	1.95	2.30	200/-	4600/-	10 Days		
15	Restoration of drainage at Humhama Chowk.	1.77	2.09	200/-	4200/-	10 Days		
16	Restoration of drainage at Hyderpora opposite J.K Bank.	1.75	2.07	200/-	4200/-	10 Days		
17	Restoration of drainage at Hyderpora Chowk.	1.75	2.07	200/-	4200/-	10 Days		
18	Restoration of road surface leading to Graveyard at Padshahibagh.	1.68	1.98	200/-	4000/-	08 Days		
19	Repair of Drain/Trash Guard from L.D Junction to Bostan Hotel B.W.O Clearance/Trash Guard	1.78	2.10	200/-	4200/-	10 Days		
20	Repair of Drain/Trash Guard from L.D Junction to Amar Singh College Junction	1.70	2.00	200/-	4000/-	08 Days		
21	Raising of Manhole Covers at various spots from TRC Chowk to Budshah Bridge with allied links.	1.61	1.90	200/-	3800/-	08 Days		
22	Restoration of drainage near Post office Jawahar Nagar.	1.60	1.90	200/-	3800/-	08 Days		
23	Maintenance of IG road by way of washing of grill, bush cutting including repair of central verge and removal of mulba from 3-3.50 KM.	1.61	1.90	200/-	3800/-	08 Days		
24	Construction of New Drain from Hotel Kaboo to Town Square.	1.45	1.71	200/-	3500/-	08 Days		
25	Raising of Manhole Covers at various spots from Amar Singh College to Hattrick and allied links.	1.23	1.45	200/-	2900/-	08 Days		
26	Raising of Manhole Covers at various spots from Lal Mandi Chowk to Hattrick with allied links.	1.10	1.30	200/-	2600/-	08 Days		
27	Restoration of Road at Iran Lane Sector F.	3.39	4.00	200/-	8000/-	15 Days		
28	Restoration of Road at Usmania Colony Baghe Mehtab	3.39	4.00	200/-	8000/-	15 Days		
29	Repair / Renovation of Sub Divisional office by way of Construction of Ramp, including Repair of Chowkidar Quarter.	2.55	3.01	200/-	6000/-	15 Days		

Position of AAA: Authorization vide NO. CE/R&B/CK/BS/13998-99 Dated: 27.07.2026. & SE/Pig/F-45/3539-40 Dated: 31.07.2026.

Position of TS: 8

Position of Funds: Accrued

Position of Funds: Budgeted / Committed.

1. The Bidding documents Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Drawings, 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 dates given below:-

1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	06.08.2026.
2	Period of downloading of bidding documents	07.08.2026.from 10:00 AM
3	Bid submission Start Date	07.08.2026.from 10:00 AM
4	Bid Submission End Date	11.08.2026 Up to 04:00 PM
5	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	12.08.2026 at 11:30 AM in the office of Executive Engineer R&B Division Rajbagh Srinagar.

2. Bids must be accompanied with the cost of Tender document in the shape of Treasury Challan under M.H-0059 in favour of the Executive Engineer R&B Division Rajbagh Srinagar (Tender inviting Authority) (The Date of Treasury Challan & EMD should be between the Date of Start of Bid and Bid Submission End date) pledged to the Executive Engineer R&B Division Rajbagh Srinagar (Tender Receiving Authority).
3. At the time of tendering, all bidders must upload Earnest Money/Bid security as mentioned above in the form of CDR/FDR/TDR/BG pledged to the Tender Receiving Authority, i.e. Executive Engineer R&B Division Rajbagh Srinagar. The Earnest Money/Bid security will be released to the successful bidder only after the submission of Performance and Additional Performance Security (if applicable) and Drawl of Agreement as per FORM-25 (Double Cover).

*Abnormally Low Bid Price :

As per the Circular instructions of Finance Deptt. Vide NO.FD-Code/441/2021-02-158 Dated:08.08.2025, which is reproduced as :

► Where the bid price is below 10% but not below 20% of the Project Cost put to bid, the additional Performance Gurantee/ Security Percentage shall be incremented by 0.1% for every percentage of bid price below 10% of the project cost put to bid starting at 11% with the additional bid performance guarantee being 0.1% and this additional performanc gurantee percentage shall be applied on the bid price.

► Where the bid price is 20% or more below of the project cost put to bid, the additional performance gurantee percentage shall be incremented by 0.2% for every percentage of bid price below 20% of the project cost put to bid in addition to 1% of the bid price and this additional performance gurantee percentage shall be applied on the bid price.

► The additional performance security shall be treated as part of the performance security & shall be released after the DLP is over successfully. 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 the Executive Engineer R&B Division Rajbagh Srinagar (Tender Receiving Authority).

5. The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of Technical bids.

6. Instruction to bidders regarding e-tendering process.

7. Bidders are advised to download bid submission manual from the "Downloads" option as well as from "Bidders Manual Kit" on website www.jktenders.gov.in to acquaint bid submission process.

8. To participate in bidding process, bidders have to get 'Digital Signature Certificate (DSC)' as per Information Technology Act-2000. Bidders can get digital certificate from any approved Vendor.

9. The bidders have to submit their bids online in electronic format with digital Signature. No bid will be accepted in physical form.

10. Bids will be opened online as per time schedule mentioned in Para-1.

► Bidders must ensure to upload scanned copy of all necessary documents with the technical bid.

11. All other terms conditions shall remain as per the J&K Engineering Manual 2020 and other standing Guidelines of the Govt. of India / Govt. of J&K UT and as per PWD FORM (25) Double Cover.

No. 5282-92
Dated : 06.08.2026

DIPK-4248-26
DT: 07/08/2026

Sd/-
Executive Engineer,
R&B Rajbagh Division Srinagar

