

Good Morning

Kashmir

17th
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'Will Do It, But Not Before August 15'

CM Omar Abdullah

on cabinet expansion



GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Monday said that the long-awaited expansion of the J&K Council of Ministers will take place, but indicated that the exercise is unlikely to be completed before August 15.

Speaking on the issue, Omar Abdullah said the government intends to go ahead with the cabinet expansion and expressed hope that the process would move forward after the Independence Day celebrations.

The Chief Minister's remarks come amid growing speculation within political circles over the possible induction of new ministers into the Omar Abdullah-led government.

The proposed expansion is expected to address the need for greater representation and strengthen the functioning of various departments

as the administration continues to implement its governance agenda across Jammu and Kashmir.

While Omar did not disclose the names of prospective ministers or provide a specific date for the expansion, his statement makes it clear that the exercise is on the government's agenda.

"Will do it, but not before August 15," Omar said, indicating that the cabinet expansion could be taken up after the Independence Day programme. Kashmirtravel guide

The development is being closely watched by political circles in Jammu and Kashmir, particularly amid discussions within the ruling alliance regarding ministerial representation and allocation of portfolios.

The Chief Minister is expected to take forward consultations on the matter before the final decision is announced. (KNC)

Frisking, Vehicle Checks Intensified

Security Beefed Up Across J&K

Ahead Of Independence Day

Multi-Layered Arrangements Put In Place Across Cities, Sensitive Border Areas

SAJID RAINA

SRINAGAR: Security has been beefed up across Jammu and Kashmir ahead of Independence Day, with security forces stepping up frisking, vehicle checking and surveillance in Srinagar and other areas of the Union Territory.

According to the details available, security personnel have increased their presence at several locations and are conducting checks of vehicles and their occupants as part of preventive measures ahead of August 15 celebrations.

In Srinagar, security forces were seen conducting frisking and vehicle checks at multiple points, particularly along busy roads, commercial areas and other important locations. Personnel were also keeping a close watch on the movement of people and vehicles as part of the heightened security arrangements.

Similar measures have been put in place in other parts of



the Valley, including Baramulla, Kupwara, Kulgam and Anantnag, where security personnel have intensified checking and surveillance at key entry and exit points.

Security has also been strengthened in Jammu region, including Jammu city, Samba, Rajouri and Poonch, with additional checking of vehicles and increased deployment of personnel at vulnerable and strategically important locations.

Authorities have also stepped up security along the Srinagar-Jammu National Highway. Security personnel are maintaining heightened vigilance along the highway and at important points to monitor vehicular movement and prevent any untoward incident.

Enhanced security measures have been put in place in areas close to the Line of Control (LoC) and the International Border,

particularly in sensitive sectors.

In North Kashmir, heightened vigilance has been maintained in areas including Uri, Keran, Tangdar and Gurez, with security forces keeping a close watch on movement and conducting checks at important locations.

In the Jammu region, security has been intensified in the Krishna Ghati (KG) sector and Poonch, as well as areas close to the International Border, including Kathua and other sensitive stretches.

Security forces have also increased surveillance in border villages and along important routes leading towards frontier areas as part of the overall security arrangements ahead of Independence Day.

The measures are aimed at maintaining a high level of alertness and ensuring smooth and peaceful Independence Day celebrations across Jammu and Kashmir.

Officials have maintained that preventive security measures, including intensified checking, frisking and

Warns Of Flash Flood, Landslides

MeT Predicts Heavy Rainfall In J&K Today



SAJID RAINA

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir is likely to receive widespread rain and thundershowers over the next few days, with the Weather Department forecasting heavy to very heavy rainfall in parts of the Jammu division on Tuesday August 11.

The Meteorological Centre, Srinagar, said the wet spell is expected to intensify tomorrow, when heavy to very heavy rain could occur at a few places in Jammu, while some areas of Kashmir may experience short-duration intense showers.

According to the forecast, light to moderate rain and thundershowers are likely at most places across Jammu and Kashmir till August 11, with the highest activity expected during the day and night of August 11.

The weather office has specifically warned that one or two locations could receive heavy to very heavy rainfall during the night of August 11.

Intense or torrential showers may lead to flash floods in vulnerable

Crackdown Widens

Two Held Over Alleged Radical Content On SM

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: The Counter Intelligence Kashmir (CIK) has arrested two suspects in connection with a case involving the alleged dissemination of radical and anti-national content through social media platforms, officials said today.

The arrests followed searches conducted by the CIK on August 8 at multiple locations across the Kashmir Valley in connection with FIR No. 03/2023 registered at Police Station CIK Srinagar under Sections 505 and 153-A of the IPC and Sections 13 and 18 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA). TravelGuides & Travelogues

During the searches, investigators seized six digital devices and seven SIM cards, which have been taken

up for detailed examination, officials said.

The two suspects arrested on Sunday, August 9, have been identified as Mehran Qazi, son of Atta Mohammad Qazi, a resident of Hiller Shahbad, Dooru, Anantnag, and Babar Hamid Dar, son of Abdul Hamid Dar, a resident of Chankan, Sopore.

According to the CIK, the case pertains to the alleged dissemination of radical and anti-national content through social media platforms.

During the course of the investigation, the two arrested suspects were allegedly found to have shared content containing what investigators described as radical and anti-national overtones. The material allegedly included radical narratives, glorification and projection of individuals

ASI Allocates Rs 22.72 Cr For Conservation Of Protected Monuments In J&K Since 2023-24

RAJA SYED

SRINAGAR: The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has allocated Rs 22.72 crore for conservation, preservation and environmental development of protected monuments in Jammu and Kashmir during the last three financial years and the current fiscal, with Rs 20.13 crore spent so far, according to a Lok Sabha reply.

The details were provided by Union Minister of Culture and Tourism Gajendra Singh Shekhawat in a written reply to Lok Sabha regarding conservation of national cultural heritage under the National Culture Fund and the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958.

As per the reply, the ASI undertakes conservation and maintenance of protected monuments every year based on the requirement of monuments and



availability of resources. Regular inspections are also carried out by ASI officers to assess conservation and renovation works.

According to the annexure, Jammu and Kashmir received an allocation of Rs 7.17 crore in 2023-24, against which the entire amount was spent.

In 2024-25, Rs 4.90 crore was allocated and Rs 4.89 crore was spent, while in 2025-26, Rs 5.95 crore was allocated and the

35,961 Houses Completed Under PMAY In J&K Till June 2026

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: A total of 35,961 houses have been completed and delivered to beneficiaries in Jammu and Kashmir under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban (PMAY-U) and PMAY-U 2.0 since the inception of the scheme, the Centre informed the Rajya Sabha on Monday.

According to the data presented by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, 45,982 houses have been sanctioned in the Union Territory so far, of which 43,907 have been grounded. The Centre has approved Rs 734.44 crore in assistance for J&K, with Rs 544.40 crore released so far.

Of the total sanctioned houses, 3,398 have been sanctioned under PMAY-U 2.0, which was launched in September 2024 as the revamped version of the urban housing scheme. The new scheme aims to support one crore additional eligible beneficiaries across urban areas



and is being implemented through four components — Beneficiary Led Construction, Affordable Housing in Partnership, Affordable Rental Housing and the Interest Subsidy Scheme.

District-wise, Jammu has the highest number of sanctioned houses at 7,638, followed by Baramulla with 5,273 and Anantnag with 4,148. Srinagar has 3,809 sanctioned houses, while Bandipora has 3,569.

Among completed houses, Jammu accounts for 5,588, followed by Baramulla with 3,878, Anantnag with 3,483 and Srinagar with 3,278.

During 2025-26 and 2026-27 up to June 2026,

1,778 Hectares Of Degraded Land Restored In J&K Since 2015-16: Govt

RAJA SYED

SRINAGAR: As many as 1,778 hectares of land have been brought under plantation and eco-restoration activities in Jammu and Kashmir under the Green India Mission (GIM) since 2015-16, the Union Government has informed the Lok Sabha.

Minister of State in the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Kirti Vardhan Singh, stated this in a written reply to Lok Sabha regarding restoration of degraded forest land.

As per the reply, the Green India Mission, one of the nine Missions under the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC), has been under implementation since 2015-16 with the objective of restoring



degraded forest and non-forest landscapes through an integrated landscape approach.

The Ministry said that the GIM has brought 1,84,467 hectares under eco-restoration across 17 States and one Union Territory since 2015-16.

Jammu and Kashmir accounts for 1,778 hectares under creation of plantation/eco-restoration activities.

The government further stated that plantation and maintenance activities under the Green India Mission are

undertaken through local institutions, including Joint Forest Management Committees (JFMCs), Village Forest Committees (VFCs) and other community-based organisations, as per approved Annual Plans of Operation.

Local communities, including JFMCs and Self-Help Groups (SHGs), are also engaged wherever provided for in approved activities, particularly in plantation maintenance, nursery raising and allied livelihood activities.

Regarding monitoring, the Ministry said the plantations under the Green India Mission are monitored through a multi-tiered mechanism involving both Central and State-level systems.

The Mission promotes technology-enabled

Two Arrested Over Alleged Kidnapping, Rape Of Minor

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Police in north Kashmir's Bandipora district have arrested two persons in connection with the alleged rape of a 12-year-old girl, officials said, claiming the case was solved within 12 hours.

Police received information about the alleged incident around noon on Sunday, following which an investigation was immediately initiated to ascertain the circumstances of the case and identify those involved.

During the course of the investigation, police identified two suspects who, according to officials, were not previously known to the minor.

A senior police officer said the two accused were apprehended during overnight raids conducted at different locations as part of the investigation.

A case has been registered under relevant provisions of law, including

Protecting Planting Material

Saffron Corm Transport Barred Outside Valley

JAHANGEER GANAIE

PAMPORE: Amid concerns over the availability of saffron corms, the Agriculture Department has intensified measures to conserve the vital planting material in Kashmir, including restrictions on its transportation outside the Valley and plans to establish Saffron Seed Multiplication Nurseries in the Pampore area of Pulwama district.

Officials said the measures have been taken to ensure the availability of quality planting material for local saffron growers and to prevent depletion of corms, which are essential for maintaining and expanding saffron cultivation in the region.

The department has prohibited the transportation and export of saffron corms outside Kashmir and warned that any violation of



the restrictions would invite action under the Saffron Act, 2007 and the Seed Act, 1966.

The move assumes significance as the extraction of saffron corms and their subsequent sowing is scheduled to begin from August 15. In view of the approaching season, officials said surveillance, field inspections and checking have been stepped up across saffron-growing areas to prevent unauthorised movement of corms.

Agricultural Extension Officer Mir

DC Sgr takes Tehsil wise stock of Revenue services delivery

Stress laid on time-bound and enhanced citizen-centric service delivery

GMK NEWS NETWORK

zXIn order to assess Tehsil-wise progress on key revenue matters, delivery of revenue-related services and the implementation of AgriStack and Farmer IDs under Digital Crop Survey across the district, a meeting of senior Revenue Officers was held Monday under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo, at the Conference Hall of the DC Office Complex.

The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Mir Imtiyaz Ul Aziz, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Aadil Fareed, Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar, SDM West, Irfan Bahadur, SDM East, Zubair Ahmad, Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Umar Gulzar, all Tehsildars, Chief Agriculture Officer, District Manager, CSC, and other concerned.

During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner conducted a detailed Tehsil wise and village-wise review of the implementation of the AgriStack project and generation of Farmer IDs, besides taking a Teh-



sil-wise assessment of various revenue-related initiatives, with particular focus on the status of digitisation of revenue records.

The DC took detailed feedback from the concerned Officers regarding the status of targets achieved and the areas requiring further intervention. He stressed the need for time-bound completion of all set targets and directed the Officers to intensify efforts to ensure that the ongoing initiatives are implemented efficiently and within the prescribed timelines.

Emphasising the importance of accurate and timely digitisation of land and agricultural records, the DC called for close monitoring of the

AgriStack and Farmer ID-related work at the Village and Tehsil levels. He laid stressed on time-bound achievement of set targets across the district.

The DC also stressed the importance of efficient, transparent and citizen-centric delivery of revenue services, directing the officers to ensure that revenue-related services are provided to the public in a timely and hassle-free manner under the PSGA fixed timelines. He further called for enhanced coordination among the Revenue Department, Agriculture Department and other stakeholders to ensure effective implementation of the initiatives and achievement of all set targets within the stipulated timelines.

Kashmir Grape Growers benefit from Expert Guidance at KVK G'bal

GMK NEWS NETWORK

GANDERBAL: Kashmir's grape growers received valuable insights from renowned grape expert and Krishi Ratna Anil G. Meher, popularly known as the 'Grape Man of India', during a Grape Day organised by Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) Ganderbal at Kralbagh in collaboration with J&K Bank, Shuhama, today.

The farmer-centric programme brought together scientists, agricultural experts and a large number of growers to promote scientific grape cultivation, improved orchard management and stronger farmer-scientist linkages.

Prof. Raihana Habib Kanth, Director Extension, SKUAST-Kashmir, was the Chief Guest, while Shri Anil G. Meher attended as the Guest of Honour. Officers and officials of SKUAST-Kashmir, scientists and farmers participated in the programme.

Prof. Raihana Habib Kanth underscored the importance of farmer-scientist interaction in addressing field-level challenges and accelerating the adoption of improved agricultural technologies. She encouraged farmers

ADC Handwara holds meeting to finalize arrangements for Tiranga Rally

GMK NEWS NETWORK

HANDWARA: Additional Deputy Commissioner, (ADC), Handwara, Javed Naseem Masoodi, on Monday chaired a meeting with concerned officers and stakeholders in his office chamber to review and finalize arrangements for the upcoming Tiranga Rally in Handwara Town under the Har Ghar Tiranga Campaign.

During the meeting, detailed discussions were held on various aspects, including security arrangements, traffic management, the proposed rally route, participation of students and the general public, sanitation, civic amenities and other logistical arrangements required for the smooth, peaceful and successful conduct of the rally in Handwara Town.

The ADC directed all concerned officers and stakeholders to ensure close coordination and timely completion of their assigned responsibilities. He stressed the importance of making all necessary arrangements well in advance to ensure the successful conduct of the rally. The ADC further emphasized that the Har Ghar Tiranga Campaign is an important initiative aimed at promoting patriotism, national unity and a sense of pride in the nation, and called upon all stakeholders to ensure active public participation in the campaign.

The meeting was attended by Additional Superintendent of Police, (ASP), Handwara, SDPO Handwara, Tehsildar Handwara, Dy CEO Kupwara HQ Handwara, ZEO Handwara, officials from the Education and Physical Education Departments, representatives of Municipal Council Handwara, Auqaf Committee, Traders Federation and Transport Association, besides other concerned officers and officials.

DC B'pora inaugurates CBC's Two-Day Outreach Programme on NMBA

GMK NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, Monday inaugurated a two-day Integrated Communication and Outreach Programme (ICOP) on Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan (NMBA), organised by the Central Bureau of Communication (CBC), Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, in collaboration with District Administration Bandipora at Government Higher Secondary School, Gadakhud, Sumbal.

The programme aims to spread awareness about the harmful effects of substance abuse and promote prevention, counselling, rehabilitation and community participation in the fight against drug abuse.

In her address, the Deputy Commissioner urged young people to channelise their energy into education, sports, creativity and other constructive pursuits. Emphasising the importance of individual determination, she said that strong willpower, supported by family and community, can help individuals resist addiction and overcome even difficult challenges.

She stressed that the fight against drugs requires not only effective enforcement but also awareness, prevention, counselling, rehabilitation and collective social responsibility. She called upon parents, teachers, community leaders and youth to work together towards creating a safe and healthy environment for the younger generation.

The inaugural session witnessed enthusiastic participation of students, teachers, parents, officials and members of the local community. Resource persons from the Health, Social Welfare, School Education, Police and District Administration sensitised participants about the causes and consequences of substance abuse, prevention, treatment, counselling and rehabilitation.

The session also covered the role of law enforcement in curbing drug trafficking, including the modus operandi and emerging trends in the illegal drug trade, along with relevant provisions of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act.

Participants were sensitised about the health consequences of substance abuse, the importance of timely intervention, professional counselling and rehabilitation, as well as the Government of India's Tele-MANAS initiative and its toll-free helpline 14416. The support mechanisms and social welfare interventions available for individuals and families affected by substance abuse were also highlighted, with speakers stressing the importance of collective efforts to keep young people away from drugs.

Chief Education Officer, Bandipora, Mohammad Rafiq Mir, highlighted the importance of education, guidance and a supportive environment in shaping the future of young people.

Earlier, welcoming the participants, Field Publicity Officer, CBC Srinagar, highlighted the mandate of CBC in taking information on flagship initiatives and welfare programmes of the Government of India to the grassroots.

Field Publicity Officer, CBC Anantnag said the campaign seeks to educate, inspire and empower people, particularly the



DC Budgam chairs Capacity Building Session on SWM Rules 2026



GMK NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM: District Administration Budgam, in collaboration with Swachh Bharat Mission Urban 2.0 (J&K), MoHUA and Swaaha Resource Management, Monday organized a Capacity Building Session on the Solid Waste Management (SWM) Rules, 2026 at the New Conference Hall, DC Office, Budgam.

The training session aimed to sensitize stakeholders about identification, regulation and management of Bulk Waste Generators (BWGs), besides strengthening compliance with the SWM Rules, 2026.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Athar Aamir Khan, who presided over the programme, said keeping Budgam clean is a shared responsibility requiring active participation of government departments, Urban Local Bodies, institutions, BWGs, commercial establishments and citizens.

"Every stakeholder, particularly Bulk Waste Generators and institutions, must take ownership of waste management, ensure segregation at source and adopt proper and scientific methods of waste disposal," the Deputy Commissioner said.

The session focused on statutory provisions, compliance requirements, digital monitoring, technological interventions and enforcement mechanisms under the Rules. Participants were sensitized about four-stream segregation at source—wet, dry, sanitary and special-care/domestic hazardous waste—and the responsibilities of BWGs.

The Deputy Commissioner said the new rules mark an important shift towards a scientific, accountable and technology-driven waste management system. "Our priority must be source segregation, traceability, decentralized processing and effective compliance at every level," he said.

DC B'la chairs meeting of My Bharat District Advisory Committee

GMK NEWS NETWORK

BARAMULLA: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Baramulla, Dr. S.F Hamid Monday chaired a meeting of the My Bharat District Advisory Committee (MYB-DAC) to review and deliberate upon the implementation of Mera Yuva Bharat (MY Bharat) initiatives in the district.

The meeting focused on strengthening inter-departmental convergence, youth participation and effective implementation of youth-oriented programmes under the MY Bharat framework.

The DC stressed the need for coordinated efforts by all concerned departments and stakeholders to ensure meaningful engagement of youth in developmental, social, cultural, sports and nation-building activities.

The meeting was attended by the Additional District Development Commissioner Baramulla, Pranjal J. Hazarika, District Youth Officer, MY Bharat, Baramulla, and representatives from various departments and insti-



tutions, including Industries, Health, Education, Panchayati Raj, Social Welfare, Information, Employment, Skill Development, NSS, NCC, Bharat Scouts & Guides, Youth Services & Sports and other stakeholder organisations.

The DC emphasised that the MY Bharat platform should be effectively utilised to connect young people with opportunities for volunteering, leadership, skill development and community participation. He called for regular coordination and monitoring so that youth-centric initiatives reach beneficiaries at the grassroots level.

The meeting also deliberated on the role of the MY Bharat District Samavay Committee (MYB-DSC) as

the executive mechanism for translating the strategic directions of the District Advisory Committee into actionable plans and ensuring timely field-level implementation.

The DC directed the concerned stakeholders to maintain close coordination, prepare actionable plans and ensure regular reviews of progress, with a focus on providing young people with greater opportunities to contribute to the development of the district.

The meeting marked an important step towards building a coordinated district-level ecosystem for empowering youth and channelising their energy towards constructive community engagement and nation-building.

DC Anantnag chairs MY Bharat District Advisory Committee meeting

GMK NEWS NETWORK

ANANTNAG: A meeting of the District Advisory Committee of MY Bharat, Anantnag was held Monday under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Anantnag, Dr. Bilal Mohiuddin Bhat at the DC Office.

The meeting was attended ADC, GM DIC, ACR, CMO, DIO, DYSSO, DD MY Bharat, representatives from colleges, other members of the committee besides concerned officials of various departments.

At the outset, Deputy Director MY Bharat Anantnag, Khushal Gupta, briefed the committee about the mandate, functioning and various initiatives of MY Bharat, Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, Government of India. He highlighted the importance of the MY Bharat portal as a platform for providing youth with diverse opportunities for volunteering, experiential learning, engagement and participation in nation-building activities. He also briefed about the Annual



Action Plan of MY Bharat for the year 2026-27, outlining the proposed activities and areas of convergence with various departments.

Addressing the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner emphasised the need for concerted efforts to implement the program in letter and spirit in the district. He called for integrating the program with Nasha Mukht Abhiyan, Sports, Youth Club activities, Disaster Management and other government engagements to tap the true potential of youth of the district. He stressed the

importance of creating greater awareness regarding harmful effects of substance abuse through MY Bharat so the dream of Nasha Mukht Yuva for Viksit Bharat @2047 is realised.

Dr. Bilal asked the MY Bharat officials to prepare a detailed action plan and undertake coordinated awareness, outreach and youth engagement activities in consultation with Education, YSS, Colleges, Social Welfare, RDD and other departments. He urged all departments to facilitate the onboarding of eligible youth on the portal so that maximum

convergence and youth participation could be ensured.

Highlighting the significance of the programme, the Deputy Commissioner directed all departments to actively participate in the Intensive Registration Drive and ensure that maximum youth are registered on the MY Bharat portal. He further instructed the departments to get onboarded on the portal for regular publishing of suitable Experiential Learning Programmes (ELPs) for the benefit of local youth.

The DC asked the General Manager, District Industries Centre (GM DIC) to ensure maximum registration of eligible youth and regular monitoring in consultation with ACD, DYSSO, BDOs and other officers. He issued directives to departments for nominating their respective MY Bharat Nodal Officers and Campus Ambassadors to strengthen coordination, facilitate youth engagement and ensure effective implementation of MY Bharat initiatives at the grassroots level.

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
R&B DIVISION GUREZ

NOTICE INVITING TENDERS

(R&B) E-NIT No.38/2026-27/EE/R&B/Grz/4711-17/E-tendering/Dated:-08-08-2026

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, Union Territory of 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 each of the following works:-

S. No	Name of Work	Estimated Cost (Rs in Lacs)	Cost of T/Doc. (in Rs)	Time of Completion	Earnest Money (In Rs)	Major Head of Account	Class of Contractor	Project Authority
1	Repair Renovation of TRC Building along with Electric Work at Mastan Dawar Gurez (Civil Part)	15.89	800	12 Month	31780	Capex Budget 2026-27	CEE/BEE/Start-up MSMS	Director Tourism Kashmir
2	Construction of Niabat office Buduab Gurez Bandipora	14.76	600	12 Month	29520	Capex 2026-27	DEE/CEE/BEE	District Development Commissioner
3	Construction of Niabat office Purana Tulail.	14.71	600	12 Month	29420	Capex 2026-27	DEE/CEE/BEE	District Development Commissioner
4	Construction of Residential Accommodation for Revenue office at Tulail Bandipora	21.89	800	12 Month	43780	Capex 2026-27	CEE/BEE	District Development Commissioner

Position of AAA =Accorded
Position of TS = Accorded

1.	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	08-08-2026
2.	Period of downloading of bidding documents	10-08-2026 from 10.00 AM
3.	Date & time of Pre-bid meeting	14-08-2026 from 11.00 AM
4.	Bid submission Start Date	10-08-2026 from 10.00 AM.
5.	Bid Submission End Date	19-08-2026 up to 4.00 PM.
6.	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online) (Tech. Bids)	20-08-2026 11:00 A.M in the office of Executive Engineer R&B Division Gurez

DIPK-4364-26
DT: 10/08/2026

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
R&B Division Gurez

NEWS

National Handloom Award

CM Omar congratulates Manzoor Hajam, Fayaz Wani

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah Monday extended warm congratulations to artisan weavers Manzoor Ahmad Hajam and Fayaz Ahmad Wani on receiving the prestigious National Handloom Award from President of India Droupadi Murmu.

Hajam and Wani were conferred the National Award for their joint entry, “Chand-Daar



Kani Shawl,” at a function held in New Delhi to commemorate National Handloom Day recently. The award carries a citation and cash prize

of ₹2.5 lakh. Congratulating the two artisans, the Chief Minister said their achievement celebrates the timeless legacy and artistic excellence of Jammu and Kashmir’s handloom tradition. He said the Government remains committed to empowering local artisans, preserving traditional heritage and promoting indigenous crafts on national and global platforms.

Sakeena Itoo reviews functioning of key departments across Jammu

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Minister for Health & Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo Monday called for more resilient construction practices and cost-effective approach to infrastructure development across Jammu and Kashmir in view of increasing frequency of floods.

The Minister stated this while chairing a high-level review meeting at Civil Secretariat here to assess the functioning of various departments and take stock of ongoing development and restoration works across Jammu division in view of recent cloudbursts. The meeting was attended by Managing Director, J&K Medical Supply Corporation; Mission Director, Poshan/ICDS J&K; Director, FCS&CA Jammu; Director School Education Jammu; Director Social Welfare Jammu; Director Colleges J&K; Director Health Services Jammu; Director Ayush J&K; Director Family Welfare J&K; all concerned Chief Engineers of R&B, PDD, I&FC and PHE Jammu, besides Principals of GMC Jammu, Udhampur, Kathua, Doda and Rajouri, either in person or through video conferencing.

During the meeting, the Minister undertook a comprehensive review of the functioning of the various departments, with particular focus on delivery of essential public services, infrastructure restoration, healthcare preparedness, supply of essential commodities and implementation of welfare and education-related schemes.

Taking detailed feedback on the damage caused to public infrastructure in



Rajouri and other areas due to recent floods, Sakeena Itoo sought status report on restoration of roads, macadamization, drinking water supply and other essential services in the affected areas.

Calling for a pragmatic and cost-effective approach to infrastructure development, the Minister said that the increasing frequency of floods requires to move towards more resilient construction practices.

“We have to learn from the recurring floods and build infrastructure that is capable of withstanding such challenges. Lightweight and cost-effective construction technologies should be explored wherever feasible so that public money is utilized judiciously while ensuring durability and resilience”, she observed.

She directed the concerned departments to maintain close coordination during restoration works and ensure that people in affected areas do not face prolonged disruption of essential services.

The Minister also reviewed the healthcare scenario in Jammu and took detailed feedback from the health authorities regarding the preparedness of healthcare institutions on water borne diseases due to monsoon rains.

Sakeena Itoo directed the Health, Education and PHE departments to work

in close coordination and undertake preventive and awareness measures on a sustained basis to contain the spread of water borne diseases.

“Dengue prevention requires a coordinated response. Health, Education and PHE departments must work together at the field level and ensure that preventive measures, sanitation and awareness activities reach every vulnerable area”, the Minister said.

Emphasizing the importance of hygiene in healthcare institutions, Sakeena Itoo directed the concerned authorities to ensure proper cleanliness and sanitation in and around hospitals and other health facilities.

She further called for issuance of a comprehensive public advisory to educate people about preventive measures and symptoms of dengue and advised the health authorities to strengthen public awareness campaigns.

The Minister directed that students be sensitized about preventive measures, including the importance of wearing full-sleeve clothing, particularly in areas vulnerable to mosquito-borne diseases. She also asked the concerned authorities to ensure that testing laboratories remain fully equipped and functional so that suspected cases are tested without unnecessary delay.

IGP calls for robust security presence, heightened surveillance for I-Day celebrations

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Kashmir Zone V K Birdi Monday chaired a security review meeting at PCR Kashmir to assess the overall security scenario and review arrangements for the forthcoming Independence Day celebrations and other events scheduled to be held across all districts of Kashmir Valley.

The meeting was attended by IG BSF Ftr. Hqrs (K), IG CRPF KOS, Addl. Commissioner SB Srinagar, IG CRPF Srinagar, DIG SSB Srinagar, DIG CID Kashmir, all range DisG of Kashmir Zone, DIG Traffic Kashmir, DIG IR/Armed Kashmir, DisG of CRPF South/North Srinagar, DIG ITBP Srinagar, DIG RPF Kashmir, SSP PCR Kashmir, all district SSsP of Kashmir Zone, Col GS (IS) 15 Corps, SSsP of Railways Kashmir, Traffic Rural Kashmir, CID SB (K), APCR Srinagar, CID CI (K), Security Kashmir, CO, SDRF 1st Bn Srinagar, Traffic City Srinagar, Asstt. Director SIB Srinagar, SP East City Srinagar, SP Cargo, SP South City Srinagar, and other senior officers.

At the outset, IGP Kashmir was briefed by senior officers on the security arrangements put in place to ensure the smooth and peaceful conduct of Independence Day celebrations and other events. The District SSPs also briefed the chair about the preparations and security arrangements being made in their respective districts with regard to Independence Day celebrations. The IGP directed all participating officers to ensure that all necessary preparations are completed well in advance.

During the meeting, IGP Kashmir reviewed the



nagar, SP East City Srinagar, SP Cargo, SP South City Srinagar, and other senior officers.

The IGP directed the participating officers to further strengthen security checkpoints, particularly during night hours, at vulnerable locations and along the entry and exit routes of the city. He also directed

security arrangements for the various events planned across the valley including rallies and assigned specific responsibilities to concerned officers. The IGP also reviewed the security arrangements for the main function scheduled to be held at Bakshi Stadium, Srinagar, and directed the officers concerned to further strengthen security measures and ensure comprehensive security arrangements for the event.

The IGP directed the participating officers to further strengthen security checkpoints, particularly during night hours, at vulnerable locations and along the entry and exit routes of the city. He also directed

officers to intensify area domination and patrolling, particularly in sensitive and vulnerable areas, to maintain a robust security presence and ensure effective surveillance. IGP Kashmir emphasized strict vigilance against elements inimical to peace and security and called for enhanced alertness across all jurisdictions.

The meeting concluded with a collective commitment towards heightened vigilance, enhanced inter-agency coordination and effective implementation of security protocols to ensure the peaceful and orderly conduct of Independence Day celebrations and other scheduled events across the Valley.

Sakeena Itoo visits GMC Jammu, enquires about well-being of injured students



GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Minister for Health & Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo Monday visited Government Medical College (GMC), Jammu and took detailed stock of the health condition and treatment being provided to girls injured in road accident yesterday evening.

During her visit, the Minister went around the hospital wards and interacted with the injured girls, enquiring about their well-being, medical treatment and facilities being extended to them. She also interacted with the attending doctors and hospital authorities and sought a detailed briefing on the nature of injuries and the treatment plan being followed in each case.

The Minister directed the GMC administration and medical teams to ensure the best possible treatment, round-the-clock monitoring and comprehensive medical care to all the injured. She stressed that all necessary

medical resources should be mobilised to facilitate their speedy recovery.

“The health and well-being of every injured girl is our foremost concern. The government stands firmly with the affected families in this difficult time. Every possible facility will be made available to ensure their best possible treatment”, the Minister said.

She further directed the doctors and concerned officers to maintain continuous monitoring of the condition of critically injured patients and ensure timely intervention wherever required.

“There must be no lapse in patient care and every injured girl should receive prompt and quality treatment, with special attention to those in critical condition”, she said.

The Minister also asked the hospital authorities to ensure proper coordination among various departments and availability of medicines, diagnostics, surgical facilities and other requisite support for the injured.

Committee on Govt Assurances reviews functioning of PWD, HUDD

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: The Committee on Government Assurances of the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly Monday convened a meeting at the Assembly Complex here to review the functioning of the Public Works Department (PWD) and Housing & Urban Development Department (HUDD).

The meeting was chaired by Chairman of the Committee, Ali Moham-

mad Sagar and attended by members including MLA Ghulam Mohi Ud Din Mir, MLA Iftkar Ahmad, MLA Waheed ur Rehman Para and MLA Shabir Ahmad Kullay.

Commissioner Secretary, HUDD, Mandeep Kaur; Commissioner SMC, Fazlul Haseeb; Commissioner JMC, Devansh Yadav; VC LCMA, VCs of JDA and SDA besides Secretary, JKLA, Manoj Kumar Pandita and officers of the Assembly Secretariat were also present in the meeting.



directed the departments to ensure equitable distribution of resources. Taking serious note of water logging in Srinagar, he observed that citizens face immense difficulties during rains. He directed the HUDD to furnish detailed ATRs and submit a time-bound action plan to resolve drainage issues before the onset of the next season.

Ali Sagar, while addressing the officers, said that the Committee values the experience and institutional knowledge of officers.

During the meeting, the Committee held detailed deliberations on the constituency-wise allocation of funds under the Roads Sector for 2026-27. The Committee also reviewed the status of UT Capex Budget, NABARD works and PMGSY projects across J&K.

Speaking during the meeting, the Chairman Ali Mohammad Sagar emphasized that development must reach every corner of J&K without any bias and

Ex-terrorist gets life imprisonment in 2020 Srinagar murder case

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: A court has sentenced Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Dar, an ex-terrorist, to life imprisonment for the murder of Abdul Gani Dar in a case registered at Police Station Maisuma in 2020, Srinagar Police said on Monday.

According to police, Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Dar, son of Abdul Gani Dar and a resident of Bichwara, Dalgate, Srinagar, was convicted under Section 302 of the Indian Penal Code in FIR No. 03/2020. History

The court awarded him rigorous imprisonment for life and imposed a fine of 50,000.

Police said Dar was among the founding members of Tehreek-ul-Mujahideen (TuM), which, according to the police statement, emerged as a terrorist outfit associated with the Jamiat-e-Ahl-e-Hadith movement in Kashmir.

Police further said that during his period of militancy, Dar was allegedly involved in various violent activities, including grenade attacks, attacks on security checkpoints, weapon-snatching incidents and targeted killings of civilians and security personnel. He was also allegedly involved in providing logistical support and facilitating networks with other militant outfits, including Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Hizb-ul-Mujahideen (HuM), before his arrest.

The conviction followed an investigation by Srinagar Police and prosecution proceedings before the court, police said. Kashmirtravel guide

The case, police added, demonstrates that serious criminal offences are pursued through due process irrespective of the accused’s background or past association with terrorism.

DC Shopian reviews arrangements for Mega Tiranga Celebration

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SHOPIAN: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shopian, Shishir Gupta Monday chaired a preparatory meeting to review and finalize arrangements for the upcoming grand Tiranga celebration scheduled to be held in the district on August 12, 2026.

During the meeting, the DC took a detailed review of arrangements pertaining to venue management, seating, security, traffic regulation, sanitation, power and water supply, decoration, cultural programmes, public participation and other logistical requirements.

The concerned officers and departments were directed to ensure close coordination and meticulous planning for the smooth and successful conduct of the event.

The meeting concluded with directions to the concerned departments to remain fully geared up and ensure flawless execution of the programme.

► FRAME BY FRAME

The Story tellers’ Meet held at Jammu ahead of 1st IFFJK-2026

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: The Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR) Monday organised Frame by Frame: The Storytellers’ Meet at DIPR Media Complex, Jammu, as a precursor to the upcoming 1st International Film Festival of Jammu & Kashmir (IFFJK)-2026.

Commissioner Secretary, Information, R Alice Vaz graced the occasion as the Chief Guest and interacted with filmmakers, actors, producers, artists and other stakeholders from the film and media fraternity.

Director Information, Shreya Singhal; Special Secretary, Information, Pawan Singh Rathore; Director Floriculture, Nagendra Jamwal; Director Tourism, Jammu, Vikas Gupta; Additional Secretary, J&K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages, Sonali Arun Gupta; Joint Director Information, Jammu, Deepak Dubey; and prominent members of



the film fraternity, including Padma Shri awardee and artist Mohan Singh Slathia, actor Ajay Pal Andotra, director/producer Tariq Khan, line producer Atul Duggal, artist Kusum Tickoo, Rajesh Khajuria of Cine Association of J&K, members from media fraternity, artists, writers and other distinguished were also present on the occasion.

Addressing the gathering, Commissioner Secretary Information, R Alice Vaz, described the first International Film Festival of Jammu & Kashmir as a landmark initiative aimed at opening a new chapter in the cultural and creative journey of

the Union Territory.

“Jammu and Kashmir has a rich and enduring association with cinema. The first International Film Festival of Jammu & Kashmir is an important step towards building on this legacy and creating new opportunities for the film fraternity,” she said.

She said that the department has taken note of the valuable suggestions and expectations put forth by members of the film fraternity during the interaction and assured that these inputs would be duly considered while framing policies and initiatives to facilitate the growth of the film sector in Jammu & Kashmir.

“The department is committed to creating a more conducive and enabling environment for filmmakers, artists and other creative professionals. The suggestions received today will certainly be considered while shaping future initiatives for the benefit of the fraternity,” she added.

R Alice Vaz said that the festival, being organised by DIPR, is envisioned not merely as a platform for film screenings but also as a space for meaningful dialogue, interaction, collaboration and cultural exchange.

She invited filmmakers, producers, directors, actors and other members

of the film fraternity to participate in the festival in large numbers, saying that elaborate arrangements have been made for the screenings and associated activities.

“The festival is not only about showcasing films, it is about bringing together filmmakers, producers, artists, audiences and the wider creative community. We want this platform to encourage dialogue, collaboration and new creative possibilities,” she said.

The Commissioner Secretary also underlined the wider potential of the festival in promoting Jammu & Kashmir as an attractive destination for filmmakers and visitors.

“While cinema remains at the heart of the festival, we also expect important collateral benefits, particularly in terms of tourism and showcasing the breathtaking landscapes, culture and creative potential of Jammu & Kashmir to audiences across the country and the world,” she said.

Speaker tours Budgam villages; reviews developmental works

GMK NEWS NETWORK

CHRAR-I-SHARIEF: Speaker, Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, Abdul Rahim Rather, Monday undertook an extensive tour of Wanpora, Qazipora Takiya Hayatpora and Sarie areas of the Chrar-i-Sharief constituency to take stock of ongoing developmental works.

He interacted with the people to understand their development needs and concerns.

During the visit, the Speaker visited different locations across the areas and reviewed the progress of developmental activities being undertaken there. He emphasised on improving road connectivity, strengthening infrastructure and addressing the long-pending demands of the people.

A major highlight of the visit was the launching of macadamisation work on the Wanpora link roads. The project is expected to significantly improve the condition of the existing road network, provide smoother and safer connectivity to the residents and facilitate better access to



adjoining areas.

Abdul Rahim Rather stressed that proper quality should be maintained during the execution of the macadamisation work so that the roads provide durable and long-term benefits to the people.

The Speaker also visited various spots where bridges have been proposed for construction and took an on-the-spot assessment of the requirements. He examined the locations and discussed the proposed works with the concerned engineers and local representatives. The importance of bridge infrastructure is essential for improving connectivity particularly for residents who face difficulties during adverse weather conditions. He announced that bridge on Takiya Nagam – Hayatpora-Dalwan road and bridge on

Wanpora- Sarie road will be taken up at a cost of Rs 2 crore and Rs 80 lakh respectively.

Abdul Rahim Rather interacted with the local residents at Qazipora and listened to their concerns and demands. The people apprised him of various issues related to roads, connectivity and other basic infrastructure requirements.

The Speaker assured them that their genuine demands would be taken up with the concerned departments for appropriate and timely action. He said Mukhadam Mohalla and Dooninar link roads in Qazipora will be macadamised soon. He called upon the concerned authorities to maintain close coordination and ensure that approved works are completed within the stipulated timelines without compromising on quality.

Good Morning Kashmir

EDITORIAL

J&K Must Build A Sporting Culture

The distribution of 2.71 crore among 580 outstanding sportspersons and international athletes from Jammu and Kashmir is a welcome recognition of talent that too often grows despite the system rather than because of it.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah deserves credit for acknowledging a simple truth: medals are not produced on the day of a competition. They are produced through years of training, coaching, sacrifice, discipline and, above all, access to the right infrastructure.

The cash awards covering 2023-24 and 2024-25 are meaningful, but they should not become the destination. They must be the beginning of a much larger and sustained investment in sport. For years, Jammu and Kashmir has produced exceptional athletes across disciplines, often from modest backgrounds and places where even basic sporting facilities remain inadequate. Many young athletes train on poor playing surfaces, lack synthetic tracks and indoor facilities, struggle to find quality coaching and sometimes have to spend heavily on equipment and travel. Families frequently carry a burden that should, at least in part, be shared by institutions.

This is where policy must move beyond ceremonies. Jammu and Kashmir needs a clearly defined grassroots sporting strategy. Every district should have functional, accessible and properly maintained sporting facilities. Mountainous and winter-bound areas require special attention because weather can keep outdoor athletes away from training for months. Indoor facilities, synthetic tracks, multipurpose halls and sport-specific training centres should not be treated as luxuries.

The Union Territory also possesses a natural advantage that has remained insufficiently exploited, its altitude, terrain and climate. Properly planned high-altitude training centres could attract athletes from across the country while providing local sportspersons with opportunities that currently remain limited.

Equally important is the need to broaden the sporting ecosystem. Cricket will naturally command attention, but Jammu and Kashmir's sporting ambitions cannot be built around one discipline. Athletics, football, martial arts, boxing, wrestling, winter sports, cycling and other emerging disciplines deserve systematic support

Reclaiming Nature's Right-Of-Way

Why J&K Must Enforce Statutory Buffer Zones Along Its Waterways



DR. RIZWAN RUMI

Every monsoon season, a grimly predictable narrative unfolds across the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. From sudden cloudbursts carving paths of destruction through the steep valleys of Kishtwar and Poonch to swollen, raging currents spilling over the banks of the Tawi in Jammu and the Jhelum in Kashmir, seasonal deluges repeatedly trigger widespread panic and catastrophic loss.

While extreme precipitation is an escalating reality in fragile mountain ecosystems, the scale of destruction we witness today is largely an engineered disaster. Over decades, unchecked urban expansion, commercial encroachment, and unmonitored construction have choked our rivers, seasonal rivulets, and drainage channels (nallahs). By stripping our waterways of their natural floodplains, we have left surging waters with nowhere to go, except through homes, markets, roads, and critical infrastructure.

Disaster management in Jammu & Kashmir can no longer begin in the aftermath of a crisis, amidst relief camps and compensation packages. It must begin at the source: statutorily protecting nature's drainage network.

The Ecology of Waterways: Why Buffers Matter

A river, mountain stream, or seasonal rivulet is never confined solely to the narrow channel seen during dry months. Waterways are dynamic ecological systems that expand during peak rainfall. A healthy floodplain acts as a natural sponge and buffer, slowing down water velocity, absorbing excess momentum, and recharging underground aquifers.

When concrete structures, roads, and illegal encroachments intrude directly into these zones:

- Carrying Capacity Collapses: Narrowing the channel creates a dangerous bottleneck, forcing water to rise exponentially faster and surge into neighboring habitations.
- Infiltration Is Destroyed: Replacing permeable soil and riparian vegetation with concrete stops natural absorption, multiplying surface runoff into rapid, destructive flash floods.
- Debris and Structural Traps: Unplanned



walls and structures built near stream beds collapse under heavy flow, creating temporary dams that eventually breach with catastrophic force downstream.

The Fundamental Rule of Hydrology

Water always reclaims its historic pathway. When we build inside a river's buffer zone, we are not developing land—we are merely borrowing space from a future deluge.

The J&K Reality: A Fragile Landscape Under Strain

The hydrometeorological profile of Jammu and Kashmir makes it uniquely susceptible to extreme weather events. The topography ranges from steep, landslide-prone mountain catchments in the Jammu

Waterway Classification	Relevant J&K Examples	Mandatory No-Build Buffer Zone
Major Rivers	Jhelum, Tawi, Chenab, Indus	100 – 150 meters from the High-Flood Line (HFL)
Primary Tributaries & Large Streams	Sukhnag, Vaishav, Poonch River, Neeru Nallah	50 meters clear buffer on both banks
Local Streams, Rivulets & Nallahs	Urban drainage lines, seasonal mountain streams	20 – 30 meters unobstructed buffer

and Ladakh arcs to the broad, flat alluvial bowl of the Kashmir Valley.

Despite existing statutory tools—such as the Jammu and Kashmir Flood Plain Zones (Regulation and Development) Act, 2005—enforcement has struggled to keep pace with rapid urbanization.

The Jammu Arc: Major floodplains along the Tawi—including areas around Peerkho, Nikki Tawi, and Beli Charana—have experienced intense residential and commercial build-outs directly on active flood channels. During high-intensity rainfall events, these low-lying zones bear the immediate brunt of the surge.

Mountain Tributaries: In districts like Kishtwar, Rajouri, Poonch, and Ramban, narrow mountain streams (nallahs) are frequently constricted by construction on stream banks. When localized cloudbursts occur, these constrictions amplify the destructive power of water and debris.

The Jhelum Basin: The primary drainage spine of the Kashmir Valley relies on 17 major tributary catchments. Hundreds of encroachments along both the main river channel and its flood spill channels severely restrict the basin's capacity to evacuate excess water safely during heavy rain spells.

A Legislative Imperative: Proposing

Clear Buffer Standards

To protect lives and public assets, the UT administration needs an unyielding, unified statutory mandate that sets clear, scientifically derived no-construction zones based on hydrological scale and terrain:

Strategic Action Plan for Long-Term Protection

Transforming flood management from reactive emergency response to proactive preservation requires a structured, multi-pronged approach:

- Digital Boundaries & GIS Mapping: Deploy satellite imaging, high-resolution LiDAR, and historic flood mark data to

Disaster management in Jammu

& Kashmir can no longer begin in the aftermath of a crisis, amidst relief camps and compensation packages.

digitally register the exact coordinates of every river, stream, and nallah buffer in public land records.

2. Strict Zoning Integration: Automatically reject any building permit, commercial license, or zonal land-use conversion that encroaches upon a demarcated buffer zone, regardless of municipal jurisdiction.

3. Clearing Critical Choke Points: Empower flood control and revenue departments to clear high-risk obstructions along primary drainage arteries prior to peak weather windows.

4. Developing Blue-Green Corridors: Convert cleared buffer lands into public parklands, riverfront greenways, bio-swales, and riparian afforestation strips. Deep-rooted indigenous trees along riverbanks naturally absorb runoff, stabilize soil against landslides, and beautify urban spaces.

Prevention is Sound Economics

Rebuilding washed-away roads, bridges, homes, and commercial hubs costs exponentially more than enforcing sound land-use regulations. Enacting and enforcing strict statutory buffer zones along our natural waterways is not an impediment to development—it is the ultimate safeguard for human lives, public investments, and the sustainable future of Jammu and Kashmir.

If we give our rivers and mountain streams the space they naturally require, they will protect our towns and villages in return.

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False Bestseller: The Reader's Verdict (A Book Can Be Sold, But A True Reader Cannot Be Bought)



DR. PRIYANKA SAURABH

A book is more than just a book's pages. They embody the author's thoughts, experiences, emotions, imagination, and years of creative work. A good book fosters a connection with its reader that transcends momentary fame or commercial success. But in today's publishing industry, the term "bestseller" has become a mere publicity tool. Little information is available about a book's actual sales, yet it can be promoted as a bestseller through its cover, advertisements, social media pages, or authors. This raises an important question: Can the mere label of "bestseller" make a book a bestseller?

Ideally, "bestseller" should imply actual sales and sustained reader demand. When a book sells reliably and transparently, and sells a large number of copies, it can be considered a bestseller. However, if sales or ranking figures, platforms, or measurement periods are not provided, the claim becomes questionable. It's natural for readers to ask, "Bestseller according to which list? How many copies sold? During what period? On which platform was the book most popular? Is there any independent verification of the figures?" If you don't know the answers to these questions, "bestseller" will become a

marketing gimmick rather than a genuine achievement.

With the advent of social media, this type of promotion has become much easier. Creating eye-catching posters, taking appropriate photos for book launches, making videos, securing support from schools, and receiving reviews and congratulatory messages can all make a huge impact. A book can be found anywhere on the web and thus appear to be very successful. However, there is no clear correlation between visibility and readership. A hundred likes doesn't necessarily mean you have as many readers. Seeing a photo of someone holding a book doesn't mean they actually read it. Similarly, having a lot of comments doesn't mean readers are deeply interested in the content.

You can buy a book, but you can never buy a reader.

Sometimes, hundreds or thousands of copies of books are sold during a campaign, institutional event, network, or organized promotion. But this is not a lack of sales. Both authors and publishers have the right to profit from and promote their books. The problem begins when sales are exaggerated to create the illusion of popularity. There is not much difference between honest and misleading promotion, but it can have a profound impact on readers' trust.

This creates a true readership. A true reader buys a book, reads it carefully, ponders its contents, discusses it, and recommends it to others. A reader who reads such a comment is far more valuable than hundreds of artificial promotional comments. There's nothing better for an author than having someone



say years later, "I read your book, and it changed my perspective on something." This kind of response doesn't come from advertising. It's only possible through quality writing.

The problem isn't limited to book sales. Excessive praise isn't limited to other areas of art: the same applies to book reviews. In the modern era, almost every new book is called "brilliant," "historic," "unforgettable," or "a work of genius." When every book is called a masterpiece, it becomes difficult to distinguish it from other books. A good book review focuses on the positive aspects of a book but also highlights its shortcomings. Providing constructive criticism is not an insult to an author. Literature is an important aspect of literary development. If people receive honest criticism, they can improve themselves as writers, and they have a better basis for deciding what they should read.

Readers should consider the subject matter, the quality of the writing, the author's previous works, unbiased reviews, and

suggestions from writers whose literary criticism they respect. Readers should draw their own conclusions from reading this book. Literature becomes meaningful if it is not analyzed and appreciated.

A bestseller is primarily driven by commercial success, while a timeless book is driven by cultural success. Bestseller lists change, publicity periods expire, and market trends fade. However, a valuable book can remain relevant for many years. A book that is little read at the time of publication sometimes becomes very popular later. Its true success can be gradual, as readers discover it, appreciate it, and tell others about it. Word of mouth remains the best and most reliable way to spread the word about a literary work.

Advertising can bring the reader to the book and the book can keep them in the book.

Therefore, transparency in the use of the term "bestseller" is essential. It is crucial for authors and publishers to clarify the basis for making such claims, on

which platforms, and over what period. Literary institutions and publishing platforms can also establish systems that keep reliable records of sales and assess actual readership. This will prevent readers from being misled and ensure truly successful authors receive the recognition they deserve.

A work is truly created only after it's completed. Words like "great," "popular," "excellent," and "bestseller" may attract readers' attention, but the final decision rests with readers and time. An author can promote a book, but they can't create a genuine love connection with readers.

There are no statistics available to determine what constitutes the best book in literature – the most important achievement isn't the number of copies sold. Rather, it's the number of readers who feel a change within themselves after reading it. A book may be a bestseller, but that doesn't necessarily give the author more readers. True readers are attracted by honest writing, powerful ideas, rich use of language, and emotional connection.

Ultimately, the market can provide visibility, advertising can arouse curiosity, and a bestseller can make an impression. However, trust is only established by a good book. So, while sales figures can tell us how many copies were sold, it's only over time that we can determine how many readers remember a book. This is the difference between a book that sells and one that stays.

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

India's Second School: The Coaching Classroom



DR. REYAZ AHMAD

Once intended to support weak students, private tuition has evolved into a parallel education system, one that exposes the failures of formal schooling while deepening inequality, stress and financial insecurity. Every afternoon, a familiar scene unfolds across India. A child returns from school, hurriedly eats a meal, changes clothes and leaves again, this time for tuition. The school bag may remain the same, but the classroom changes. For the next two or three hours, the student sits in another crowded room, studies many of the same subjects and prepares for many of the same examinations.

This second journey has become so normal that few people pause to ask an uncomfortable question: If children must attend another classroom after spending six hours in school, what exactly is the first classroom failing to provide? Private tuition was once considered remedial support for students who struggled with a particular subject. Today, it has become an almost compulsory extension of schooling. From neighbourhood tutors teaching primary children to giant coaching institutes preparing teenagers for engineering, medicine, civil services and university entrance examinations, India has created an enormous parallel education system. The coaching classroom is no longer merely supporting the school. In many cases, it is replacing it.

Parents do not spend their savings on coaching without reason. They do so because they fear that ordinary schooling will not be enough. Large classes, unfinished syllabi, teacher shortages, uneven instructional quality and examination-oriented curricula frequently leave students with unresolved learning gaps.

The Annual Status of Education Report 2024 demonstrates the scale of the problem in rural India. Only 48.7 per cent of children in Class V could read a Class II-level text, while just 30.7 per cent could perform a basic division problem. The same report shows that paid tuition has become widespread even among younger children: approximately three out of every ten primary and upper-primary students in several major categories were receiving private tuition.

These figures reveal a serious contra-

diction. Children are progressing from one class to another, but many are not acquiring the competencies expected at those levels. Promotion continues; learning does not always follow. Coaching enters this gap and promises to repair it. The tutor reteaches what was not understood in school, provides additional worksheets, predicts examination questions and offers individual attention that a teacher handling 40 or 50 students may be unable to provide. The success of coaching, therefore, is partly built upon the weakness of formal schooling. Every child sent to tuition is not necessarily evidence of parental ambition; sometimes, it is evidence of institutional failure.

A troubling change has taken place in parental thinking. Tuition is increasingly purchased not only when a child is weak, but also when the child is performing well. Parents fear that while their son or daughter studies independently, competitors are receiving additional notes, mock tests, shortcuts and examination strategies.

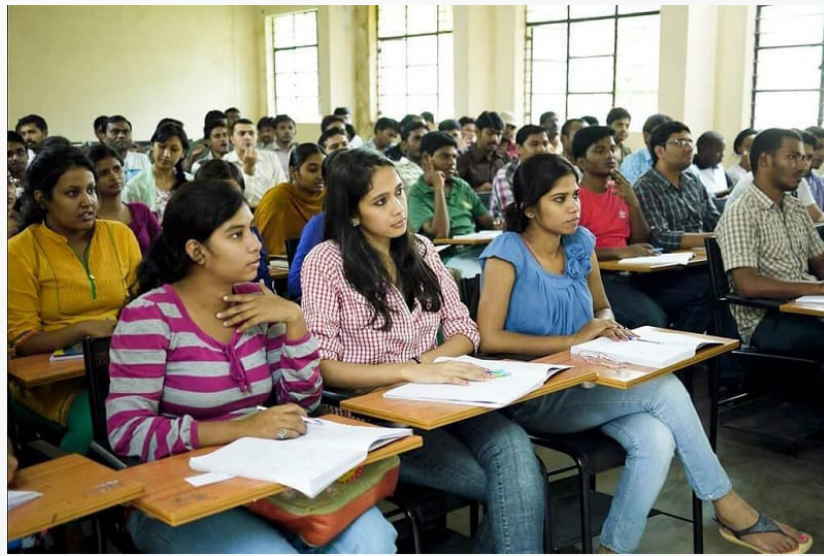
This produces what economists call a positional race. Families spend more not necessarily because education has improved, but because they are afraid of falling behind those who are spending more.

A child who attends one tuition class begins to feel disadvantaged when classmates attend two. A student preparing through free online material feels insecure when others enrol in expensive residential coaching. Coaching thus changes from an optional academic service into a form of educational insurance.

The question is no longer, "Does my child need tuition?" It becomes, "Can we afford not to provide it?"

The cost of education is no longer limited to school fees, uniforms, transport and books. Families must now budget for subject tutors, test series, digital subscriptions, entrance-examination packages, transportation to coaching centres and, in some cases, accommodation in coaching hubs. An analysis by the Centre for Economic Data and Analysis, based on the government's 2025 Comprehensive Modular Survey on Education, found that rural households were spending approximately 7,000 to 7,300 annually on private tuition or coaching for each child, in addition to school-related expenditure. In urban areas, average coaching expenditure was about 12,500 to 13,600. By Classes XI and XII, coaching accounted for almost as much household expenditure as formal schooling itself.

For wealthy families, such expenses may be manageable. For lower- and middle-income households, they can determine the entire family budget. Parents reduce healthcare spending, postpone repairs, avoid social obligations, borrow money or sacrifice retirement savings



because education is viewed as the only reliable path to upward mobility. In families with several children, difficult decisions arise: Who will receive the best coaching? Which subject can be dropped? Should the daughter receive the same expensive preparation as the son? Can the family risk investing in another year of entrance-examination preparation? The tuition economy is therefore not merely an educational phenomenon. It is a system that redistributes household income towards an increasingly commercialised race for limited opportunities.

The greatest danger is not that coaching exists. Additional academic help can be useful and, in many cases, transformative. The danger is that access to quality preparation is increasingly determined by purchasing power. Two equally talented students may sit for the same competitive examination, but they do not necessarily approach it from the same starting line. One may have trained teachers, personalised mentoring, repeated mock examinations, updated study material and a quiet room. The other may depend on an overcrowded school, borrowed books and an unstable internet connection.

The examination treats them as equal on test day, even though the preparation system has treated them very differently for several years. This weakens the principle of merit. What society calls "merit" may actually be a combination of talent, family income, location, parental education, access to information and the ability to purchase sustained preparation. When premium coaching becomes the unofficial entrance fee to prestigious institutions, education stops functioning as a ladder of mobility. It begins reproducing the inequalities it was expected to remove.

There is another price that does not appear in household accounts: the loss

of childhood. A typical student may spend the morning in school, the evening in tuition and the night completing assignments from both. Weekends are consumed by tests. Holidays become crash courses. Recreation is treated as laziness, and sleep is sacrificed in the name of discipline. Children are repeatedly ranked, compared and divided into batches. Their identity becomes attached to marks, percentile scores and projected examination ranks. A temporary academic setback is interpreted as a judgement on their intelligence and future worth. Learning under such conditions becomes an act of fear rather than discovery.

A mathematics problem is no longer something to explore; it is a possible mark to lose. A scientific concept is not studied because it explains the world, but because it may appear in an entrance examination. Literature, art, sport and conversation are pushed aside because they are not considered "scoring subjects."

The result may be examination competence without intellectual curiosity, students trained to select the correct option but hesitant to question, create or think independently.

It would be unfair to portray every tutor or coaching institute as exploitative. Many dedicated tutors help students who would otherwise remain behind. They provide flexibility, motivation and individual attention. Some coaching institutions have enabled students from disadvantaged backgrounds to enter professions previously beyond their reach.

But genuine demand does not justify unregulated expansion, misleading success claims, excessive fees or systems that profit from anxiety. India's Ministry of Education acknowledged these concerns in its 2024 model guidelines, referring to exorbitant fees, undue student stress, safety failures and other

malpractices. The guidelines proposed reasonable fees, pro-rata refunds, counselling support, restrictions on classes during school hours and safeguards concerning younger students. Regulation is necessary, but regulation alone will not resolve the deeper problem. Even the best-regulated coaching centre will continue to flourish if families have little confidence in schools.

The solution is not to abolish tuition. It is to make tuition optional again. Schools must identify learning gaps early rather than allowing them to accumulate over several years. Remedial support should be provided within the school timetable and without additional charges. Teachers need manageable class sizes, continuous professional development and freedom from excessive administrative duties. Assessment must move beyond memorisation and predictable question patterns. When examinations reward mechanical repetition, coaching centres will understandably specialise in that repetition. When examinations test reasoning, application, communication and creativity, both schools and coaching institutions will have to change their methods.

Public libraries, community learning centres and free high-quality digital resources can provide academic support to children whose families cannot afford private tutors. Schools can also organise supervised study periods, peer-learning groups and teacher consultation hours. Most importantly, the number of quality opportunities in higher education must expand. When millions of students compete desperately for a limited number of seats, anxiety becomes inevitable and coaching becomes profitable. No reform of the coaching sector can succeed without addressing the scarcity that fuels the competition.

India's tuition economy sends a clear message: families value education deeply and are willing to make extraordinary sacrifices for it. That commitment should be respected. It should not be exploited. A strong education system should not require every child to attend school twice—once because it is compulsory and again because the first experience was insufficient. The true measure of educational progress is not the number of coaching centres opened, test packages sold or students studying until midnight. It is whether a child, regardless of family income or postal address, can enter an ordinary classroom and receive an extraordinary opportunity to learn. Until that becomes possible, India's second school will continue to grow—and the distance between those who can afford it and those who cannot will grow with it.

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White Gold: India's Cotton Story

PIB BACKGROUND

6-year-old Vinodbhai Virjibhai Vadodriya, a farmer living in Gujarat's Rajkot, has been producing cotton throughout his life. Often the changing temperatures and plant diseases forced him to bear heavy losses. When he was introduced to the High-Density Planting System, he implemented this system in his field. The outcome surprised him. He produced 15 quintals of cotton per acre, a jump of 30-35 percent over his previous produce using the old method.

In the previous agriculture year, instead of the usual 135 cm by 45 cm spacing, Vadodriya packed his plants closer, at 90 cm by 15 cm.

Vinodbhai says he was informed that he should harvest earlier, which meant less damage from the pink bollworm, one of cotton's most stubborn pests. Most of the farmers in the neighbourhood noticed the change in the outcome and they also decided to follow suit.

Six hundred kilometres away, in Maharashtra's Jalgaon, Bhaskar Tapiram Chaudhary was also introduced to the High-Density Planting System, in 2025. Bhaskar, who is in his 50s, remembers how he was initially reluctant to switch to closer spacing, because that was not his usual method. However, he went on, cleaned up his fertilizer use, and managed pests and nutrients carefully.

The results also surprised him. His yield rose from 8 quintals an acre to 11 (37.5% rise), despite a dry spell that would normally have hurt his crop.

The improved produce of thousands of farmers indicated how India's cotton policy: small, practical changes in farming technique, backed by government support, is producing significant outcomes.

And likely so, India's cotton sector remains in need of reforms.



According to official statistics, India has more land under cotton cultivation than anyone else globally. The country, at present, has 114.84 lakh hectares, about 38 percent of the world's cotton area.

India is the only country wherein all four known cotton species are cultivated.

The industry is so widespread that at least 6 million farmers grow cotton here, and almost 40-50 million people earn a living from processing and trading it. That is why cotton is "White Gold" for most Indians.

Despite its critical importance,

India ranks only second in actual production, behind its massive acreage lead.

In 2025-2026, output stood at 290.91 lakh bales, while domestic demand ran higher, at 328 lakh bales. The reason behind this gap is that India's fields simply have not been able to produce as much cotton per acre as compared to Brazil and the US.

However, the farmers of Rajkot and Jalgaon have shown that this gap can be altered using basic and modern methods.

What is the government doing to fix it?

In the recent past, the central government has responded with a mix of price support and productivity push. The Minimum Support Price for 2026-27 was raised to INR 8,267 per quintal for medium-staple cotton and INR 8,667 for long-staple (an increase of INR 557 over the previous year).

The Cotton Corporation of India expanded its procurement network from 508 centres to 571, now covering 152 districts, and bought 105.09 lakh bales worth INR 41,530 crore this season alone.

On the productivity side, a five-year Mission for Cotton Productivity was

launched in 2025-26 with INR 5,659 crore allocated for it, aiming to nearly double output — from 297 lakh bales to 498 lakh bales by 2031. It will reach 32 lakh farmers across 140 districts.

The High-Density and Closer Spacing planting systems, the very techniques that worked for farmer Vinodbhai and Bhaskar, are central to this new change. Field trials have already recorded yield gains of roughly 40 percent under high-density planting and over 32 percent under closer spacing.

Technological intervention has also made it easier for farmers. As per records, Kaps Kisan app now has over 41 lakh farmers registered, letting them book procurement slots, get Aadhaar-linked payments, and track updates by SMS — turning what used to be long queues into a paperless process.

And there's a quieter, longer-term bet: Kasturi Cotton Bharat, a branding and traceability programme using QR codes and blockchain to certify premium Indian cotton for global buyers.

Estimates suggest that over 3.29 lakh bales have been certified so far, a small start toward positioning Indian cotton as a mark of quality abroad rather than just a cheap bulk export.

The future ahead

There is a lot that needs to be taken into consideration before we expect greater outcomes. It's spacing between plants, apps for slot booking, QR codes on bales. India's cotton sector doesn't need a revolution — it needs to replicate what farmers in Rajkot and Jalgaon have done and the process needs to be replicated across millions of acres.

To summarise, if the Mission for Cotton Productivity delivers even a fraction of its 2031 target, India won't just grow the most cotton land in the world. It will finally grow enough cotton to match it.

Courtesy: PIB Srinagar



Rs 3.4-cr development works cleared for Kangan constituency: Mehar Ali

RAJA SYED RATHER

KANGAN: Development works worth over Rs 3.4 crore have been allocated across Kangan constituency, with the tendering process underway, MLA Mian Mehar Ali said.

He said the works include healthcare equipment and ambulances, bridges, transformers, libraries, playgrounds, canal fencing and other public infrastructure.

In a statement issued, Mian Mehar Ali said the works are aimed at strengthening healthcare infrastructure, improving road and bridge connectivity, augmenting power supply and developing public amenities across the constituency.

According to the details shared by the MLA, Rs 16.50 lakh has been allocated for a video endoscope system for SDH Kangan, while Rs 6.50 lakh has been sanctioned for construction of a ticket counter at SDH Kangan.

Similarly, Rs 25 lakh has been earmarked for a Digital X-Ray machine at MMC Watlar and Rs 9 lakh for a CBC analyser, biochemistry analyser and urine analyser at the facility.

Funds have also been allo-



cated for healthcare facilities, including Rs 9.30 lakh for an ECO ambulance for Health Centre Anderwan, Rs 30 lakh for a BLS ambulance for PHC Hari Ganiwan, Rs 25 lakh for a Digital X-Ray machine at PHC Wussan and Rs 10 lakh for a health centre at Chountwilar.

Under connectivity and infrastructure, Rs 17 lakh has been sanctioned for a motorable

bridge over Nallah Shutain at Gagangair, Sonamarg-B, Rs 9.50 lakh for Satrina Bridge Phase-V and Rs 23 lakh for construction of a bridge at Doga Wangath-C.

He said Rs 35 lakh has been allocated for construction of a library at Kangan, Rs 10 lakh for development of a public park at Bonpora Haripora, Rs 8 lakh for a playground at Burnbugh, Rs 7.50 lakh for a playground at

Pethpora Chattergul and Rs 5 lakh for development of a playground at Prang.

For strengthening power infrastructure, funds have been sanctioned for installation of transformers at various locations, including Awan Pati Mammar, Rayil Khowur, Thune, Rayil, Kaniwas Sumbal, Nin-hama, Krishan Chountwilar-C and Arhama. Funds have also been allocated for creation of a 63 KVA transformer at Thikery Pathi Hariganiwan and a 20 KV generator for PHC Gund.

For irrigation and canal protection, Rs 15.50 lakh has been allocated for fencing of the canal from Headwork Kullan to 4-Way Sumbal and BR-Ganiwan, while Rs 25 lakh has been sanctioned for fencing of the canal in the Mammar-Thune area.

Mian Mehar Ali said the allocation covers key sectors including healthcare, power, connectivity, irrigation, education, sports and public infrastructure.

He said the works are now being taken forward through the tendering process and expressed hope that their timely execution would provide better facilities and services to the people of Kangan constituency.

Sakeena Itoo meets scores of public delegations, individuals at Jammu

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Minister for Health & Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo Monday met scores of public delegations and individuals from different parts of Jammu division at Civil Secretariat here and took detailed note of their concerns and developmental issues.

The delegations and individuals from different areas of Jammu division, brought forth a wide range of issues pertaining to healthcare, education, social welfare, public infrastructure, roads, power supply, water supply and other matters concerning public welfare before the Minister and sought their timely redressal.

Giving a patient hearing to the visiting delegations, the Minister interacted with the representatives and individuals in detail and sought feedback on the implementation of various government schemes and services at the grassroots level. She assured them that their genuine issues would be examined on priority for appropriate resolution.

The Minister highlighted that regular inter-



action with the public is an important component of responsive governance and Government remains committed to ensuring that the concerns of people are heard, acknowledged and addressed through a time-bound mechanism.

“The Government belongs to the people and our foremost responsibility is to remain accessible to them. We will continue to strengthen mechanisms that ensure people get timely response and delivery of services”, the Minister said.

She emphasized that governance cannot be effective unless it remains connected with the aspirations and day-to-day concerns of the people.

The Minister also directed the concerned officers to examine the issues raised by the delegations and individ-

uals and ensure necessary follow-up action within the prescribed timelines. She stressed upon officers to maintain close coordination with the public and ensure that eligible beneficiaries do not face unnecessary difficulties in accessing Government schemes and services.

“Government’s focus is on translating policy decisions and welfare programmes into tangible outcomes for citizens, particularly for vulnerable sections and people living in remote and underserved areas”, she maintained.

She also urged public representatives and citizens to continue providing constructive feedback to the Government, saying that sustained public participation is vital for building an efficient, responsive and accountable administration.

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

Security Beefed

surveillance, are being undertaken as part of the routine arrangements ahead of the national event.

Security personnel have urged commuters and motorists to cooperate with checking teams, with authorities maintaining that the heightened presence is intended to ensure safety and security during the Independence Day celebrations.

The security arrangements are expected to remain in place in the run-up to August 15, with forces maintaining enhanced vigil across urban centres, highways, border areas and other strategically important locations in Jammu and Kashmir.

Meanwhile, Inspector General of Police (IGP), Kashmir Zone, V K Birdi reviewed security arrangements for the upcoming Independence Day celebrations and other scheduled events across Kashmir, directing officers to strengthen checkpoints, patrolling and area domination in vulnerable areas.

IGP Birdi chaired a security review meeting at Police Control Room (PCR) Kashmir, which was attended by senior officers from the Jammu and Kashmir Police, Army, CRPF, BSF, SSB, ITBP, RPF, CID, traffic police and other security agencies.

During the meeting, senior officers briefed the IGP on the arrangements put in place for the smooth and peaceful conduct of Independence Day celebrations across all districts of the Valley.

District Superintendents of Police also briefed the meeting about preparations and security arrangements in their respective districts.

IGP Birdi directed the officers to ensure that all necessary preparations are completed well in advance and assigned specific responsibilities for various events planned across the Valley, including rallies.

The IGP also reviewed security arrangements for the main Independence Day function at Bakshi Stadium in Srinagar and directed officers concerned to further strengthen security measures and ensure comprehensive arrangements at the venue.

He directed officers to strengthen security checkpoints, particularly during night hours, at vulnerable locations and along entry and exit routes of Srinagar city.

The IGP also called for intensified area domination and patrolling, particularly in sensitive and vulnerable areas, to maintain a robust security presence and ensure effective surveillance.

He stressed the need for strict vigilance against elements inimical to peace and security and called for enhanced alertness across all jurisdictions.

The meeting was attended by senior officers including IG BSF Frontier Headquarters Kashmir, IG CRPF Kashmir Operations Sector, IG CRPF Srinagar, DIG SSB Srinagar, DIG CID Kashmir, range DIGs of Kashmir Zone, DIG Traffic Kashmir, DIG ITBP Srinagar, DIG RPF Kashmir and district SSPs.

Senior officers from the Army, including Col GS (IS), 15 Corps, besides offi-

cials from the Security Wing, CID, Armed Police, SDRF, Railway Police, traffic police and other agencies also participated in the meeting.

The meeting concluded with a commitment to heightened vigilance, enhanced inter-agency coordination and effective implementation of security protocols to ensure the peaceful and orderly conduct of Independence Day celebrations and other scheduled events across the Valley—(KNO)

MeT Predicts Heavy

areas and trigger landslides, mudslides and waterlogging, particularly in low-lying areas, it said.

The advisory comes amid an active monsoon phase in the Union Territory, where intense rainfall has triggered flash floods and landslides at several locations in recent weeks.

The weather is likely to remain unsettled thereafter, with light rain and thundershowers expected at many places from August 12 to 16. Brief spells of intense rain cannot be ruled out at isolated locations during this period.

Another spell of light to moderate rain and thundershowers is forecast across many areas from August 17 to 19, with isolated intense showers also possible.

Meanwhile, the weather remained largely dry across Jammu and Kashmir during the 24 hours ending 8.30 am on Monday.

Srinagar recorded a maximum temperature of 33.2 degrees Celsius, which was 3.2 degrees above normal, while the minimum settled at 19.4 degrees Celsius.

Jammu recorded a maximum of 34.6 degrees Celsius against a normal of 33.1 degrees, while the minimum temperature was 25.1 degrees Celsius.

Pahalgam recorded a maximum of 27.2 degrees Celsius and a minimum of 17 degrees, while Gulmarg saw a high of 22.8 degrees and a low of 11.8 degrees.

The Meteorological Centre has advised people and authorities to remain cautious in vulnerable areas and stay alert to the possibility of flash floods, landslides and temporary waterlogging during periods of intense rainfall—(KNO)

Two Held Over

associated with terrorism, propagation of extremist viewpoints and narratives that investigators believe had the potential to influence or radicalise impressionable minds.

The CIK said the investigation is currently underway and the seized digital material is being subjected to further examination in accordance with law.

Further action will follow based on the findings of the ongoing investigation, officials said.

ASI Allocates Rs 22.72

The project is listed under Jammu and Kashmir in the details of NCF projects for

conservation, renovation and development works at ASI-protected monuments.

The government clarified that monuments and heritage sites are not protected under the National Culture Fund itself. Instead, the NCF provides financial assistance for conservation, renovation and development works at some monuments and cultural heritage sites protected by the ASI.

The Ministry further stated that ASI regularly reviews visitor facilities, digital documentation, conservation works and heritage promotion programmes at monuments under its jurisdiction across the country.

Through its field offices, ASI also organises community-driven and people-centric heritage promotion programmes, including walkthroughs, talks, drawing and painting competitions, photo exhibitions and consultative meetings with local communities and stakeholders to raise awareness about heritage protection—(KNO)

35,961 Houses

2,126 houses were sanctioned and 5,069 were completed across the Union Territory.

The ministry said completion timelines generally range from 12 to 36 months, depending on the scheme component and the detailed project reports. Delays can occur due to factors including availability of encumbrance-free land, statutory clearances, beneficiaries’ ability to arrange funds and availability of the state share.

The government has also encouraged convergence of PMAY-U with schemes including Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban 2.0, Ujjwala Yojana, PM Surya Ghar, Ayushman Bharat, PM Vishwakarma and other programmes to improve the delivery of basic amenities to beneficiaries.

The ministry said the PMAY-U scheme period has been extended up to September 30, 2026, for completion of under-construction houses and release of funds.

1,778 Hectares Of

monitoring, including geo-tagging of plantation sites, GIS-based mapping, geo-tagged photographs and KML files. State Forest Departments also undertake periodic field inspections and third-party monitoring, with corrective measures such as gap filling and maintenance based on survival assessments.

The reply added that drone-based monitoring, wherever undertaken by States, may supplement field verification, while the Forest Survey of India (FSI) conducts biennial assessments of forest cover through remote sensing supported by ground verification.

The Ministry also stated that it is implementing the Nagar Van Yojana for development of 600 Nagar Vans and 400 Nagar Vatikas during 2020-21 to 2026-27 to enhance urban green cover and ecological benefits.

Under the Green India Mission, Rs 57.08

crore has been allocated during 2026-27 so far to seven States for approved activities, while funds under Nagar Van Yojana are released from the National Authority CAMPA based on approved proposals of States—(KNO)

Two Arrested Over

sections applicable to offences against children, and further investigation is underway.

Police said efforts are continuing to establish all facts and circumstances surrounding the alleged incident. [KNT]

Saffron Corm Transport

Ashiq Ahmad said that the department was taking a series of measures to protect Kashmir’s traditional saffron cultivation and ensure that farmers have access to adequate and quality planting material.

“Restricting the transportation of saffron corms outside the Valley is an important step towards conserving the planting material available in Kashmir,” the officer said.

He said the department was also working towards establishing Saffron Seed Multiplication Nurseries in Pampore, which would help in multiplying quality corms and making them available to farmers.

According to officials, the proposed nurseries are expected to reduce pressure on existing planting material while creating a more dependable source of quality corms for saffron growers. The initiative is also aimed at supporting the expansion of saffron cultivation and strengthening the crop’s long-term sustainability.

Saffron cultivation remains an important component of the agricultural economy of south Kashmir, particularly in and around Pampore, where the crop has been cultivated for generations. Besides its economic value, saffron is closely associated with the region’s agricultural heritage.

Officials said that indiscriminate removal of corms from Kashmir could adversely affect the availability of planting material and eventually impact the area under saffron cultivation. The restrictions, they said, are therefore aimed at ensuring that the crop’s basic planting resource remains available to local growers.

The Agriculture Department has appealed to farmers and traders not to sell or transport saffron corms outside the Valley and to cooperate with officials during the extraction and sowing period.

Agriculture officer Ahmad urged all stakeholders to adhere to the prescribed regulations, saying collective efforts were required to protect Kashmir’s saffron heritage and ensure the crop continues to provide a sustainable livelihood to growers.

With the August 15 extraction period approaching, the department is maintaining close monitoring of saffron-growing areas to check illegal movement of corms and ensure that the planting material is utilised for strengthening saffron cultivation within Kashmir—(KNO)

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CM honours 580 outstanding J&K sportspersons with ₹2.71 cr cash awards

Calls for stronger sports infrastructure, greater support for athletes

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah Monday presented cash awards amounting to ₹2.71 crore to 580 outstanding sportspersons and international athletes from Jammu and Kashmir at a Special Cash Award Ceremony held at the Sher-i-Kashmir International Convention Centre (SKICC) here, recognising their achievements in the field of sports.

The cash awards pertain to the years 2023-24 and 2024-25. The Chief Minister personally handed over awards to 22 sportspersons, while the awards to the remaining beneficiaries were disbursed through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) directly into their bank accounts.

Addressing the gathering, the Chief Minister congratulated the awardees and said the cash awards marked the beginning of the Government's efforts to provide greater support and encouragement to sporting talent in Jammu and Kashmir.

"I would like to congratulate all the awardees from the bottom of my heart. This is the result of your hard work," he said, stressing that athletes can deliver better results when provided with the right facilities, coaching, equipment and training opportunities.

Acknowledging the contribution of parents and families in supporting young athletes, the Chief Minister said efforts would be made to ensure that sportspersons do not face undue financial pressure for coaching, training, equipment and travel.

"We should also increase this gradually, so that our



athletes do not have to worry about investing in coaching, training, equipment, travel, etc. We should not put too much pressure on your families and parents," he said.

Emphasising the need to address gaps in sports infrastructure, Omar Abdullah said Jammu and Kashmir must significantly improve facilities at the grassroots level. He pointed to the shortage of synthetic tracks, quality playing surfaces, indoor facilities and other training infrastructure, particularly in mountainous and winter zones where adverse weather limits outdoor training for several months.

The Chief Minister said Jammu and Kashmir's altitude was an inherent advantage that could be leveraged to establish high-quality training centres for athletes.

"We have to capitalise on this. We have to use this by establishing high-quality training centres. And we have to pay attention to different sports," he said.

Calling for greater attention to both established

and emerging sporting disciplines, the Chief Minister referred to the recent achievements of J&K sportspersons in cricket and Mixed Martial Arts (MMA), stressing the need to maintain a balance in promoting different sports.

He also called for greater support for disciplines beyond cricket and welcomed growing corporate participation in sports, particularly in coaching and athlete development.

Linking sports with the wider effort to keep young people away from drugs, the Chief Minister said sustained investment in sports infrastructure and engagement with youth was essential to making the anti-drug campaign effective.

"Staying away from drugs is not just a slogan for one day a year. Twelve months of that year, seven days a week, and that will only happen when we can give infrastructure to sports and get the attention of the kids," he said.

On the occasion, the Chief Minister felicitated J&K MMA fighter Owais Yaqoob for his remarkable

victory at BRAVE CF 107 in Bulgaria, where he defeated an unbeaten two-time IMMAF World Champion in a display of skill, determination and grit.

He also launched an anti-drugs and anti-doping campaign by handing over a campaign torch to a sports icon from Jammu and Kashmir. The torch will travel through different schools and areas of Srinagar as part of the awareness campaign.

The Chief Minister said sports icons would play an important role in spreading awareness against drug abuse and doping, while promoting clean and fair competition.

Minister for Sports Satish Sharma, Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, MLA Hazratbal Salman Ali Sagar, Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister, Commissioner Secretary, Youth Services & Sports, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Secretary Sports Council, sports icons, sportspersons, athletes, coaches, awardees and their parents were present on the occasion.

APL 2026: Rohit, Nibir steer Guwahati Royals to 5-wicket win over Dibrugarh Warriors, top of the table



SIANS

GUWAHATI: Guwahati Royals produced a brilliant performance as they chased down 122 to prevail against Dibrugarh Warriors by five wickets in the Assam Premier League (APL) 2026 at the ACA Stadium, Guwahati on Monday. With this win, Royals moved to the top of the table.

Rohit Sen's aggressive batting performance set the platform for the chase, before a superb cameo from Nibir Deka handed Warriors their first loss of the season. Earlier, Bastab Roy, Mrinmoy Dutta, Nipan Deka and Deepak Gohain all picked up a couple of wickets each to bundle out Warriors for 121.

Having won the toss and opted to field, Royals ran riot to reduce Warriors to 20/3 inside five overs as Parvej Musaraf, Ronit Akhtar and Ayush Agarwal succumbed early. Skipper Saahil Jain fell soon after, leaving the Warriors in further trouble at 37/4.

Jay Borah and Jitumoni Kalita then combined for a 54-run stand for the fifth wicket to steady the innings, with Kalita striking 39 off 29 balls and Borah contributing 32 off 38. However, Warriors lost their last five wickets for just 30 runs as the innings fell away in the closing

overs. With that staggering collapse, they were eventually bowled out for 121 in 19 overs.

In response, Guwahati Royals suffered an early wobble, losing Sanjay Kumar Singh, skipper Rishav Das and Bishal Sarma inside the first four overs. With his side reeling at 19/3, Rohit took charge, combining with Nibir in a 60-run stand for the fourth wicket to steady the chase. Sen struck a rapid 46 off 29 balls with seven fours before being dismissed by Sidhartha Sankar Baruah.

Nibir then anchored the innings from thereon, remaining unbeaten on 40 off 28 balls, and found support from Nipan Deka, who struck an unbeaten 12 off 12. Doikho Das kept the chase interesting for Warriors with figures of 3/20, but Royals ensured there were no further hiccups as they chased down 122 in 16.1 overs to complete a five-wicket win.

Brief scores:
Dibrugarh Warriors: 121/10 in 19 overs (Jitumoni Kalita 39, Jay Borah 32; Bastab Roy 2/16, Nipan Deka 2/14, Deepak Gohain 2/23).

Guwahati Royals: 122/5 in 16.1 overs (Rohit Sen 46, Nibir Deka 40; Doikho Das 3/20, Sidhartha Sankar Baruah 1/12).

Result: Guwahati Royals beat Dibrugarh Warriors by 5 wickets.



Davis Cup: Nagal, Bhambri to lead India against South Korea

SIANS

NEW DELHI: India will bank on singles leader Sumit Nagal and doubles specialist Yuki Bhambri when the team travels to Seoul for a high-stakes Davis Cup Qualifiers second-round tie against South Korea on September 18 and 19, with a place in the Final 8 at stake.

The tie will be played on hard courts at the Olympic Tennis Centre, with the winner earning a berth in the Davis Cup Final 8 in Bologna, Italy, in November.

Nagal, ranked 235th in the world, will spearhead India's singles contingent alongside Dhakshinewar Suresh (No. 393) and 19-year-old Manas Dhamne (No. 362), who receives his maiden Davis Cup call-up.

Bhambri, India's highest-ranked doubles player at No. 28, is set to team up with N Sriram Balaji, ranked 57th in doubles. The selection largely retains the group that delivered a 3-2 victory over the Netherlands in Bengaluru in the opening round.

Suresh was the standout performer in that tie, contributing to all three Indian wins. He began by defeating world No. 88 Jasper de Jong in the second singles rubber before combining with Bhambri to claim the doubles point. He then held his nerve in the deciding fifth rubber, defeating Guy Den Ouden to secure India's passage to the second round.

The inclusion of Dhamne is the only major addition to the core squad,

with Siddharth Rawat named reserve and Arnab Paparkar included as an additional reserve following his recent performances.

The Seoul clash carries added significance for India as it will be the country's first appearance in the second round of the Davis Cup Qualifiers since the current format was introduced in 2019. Victory would also take India into the Final 8 for the first time under the revamped structure.

South Korea, meanwhile, have experience of competing at the expanded Davis Cup Finals, having featured in the 16-team event in 2022 and 2023.

India have a strong historical record in the competition, finishing runners-up three times, in 1966, 1974 and 1987, although those achievements came under previous formats. Their most recent meeting with South Korea was in 2016, when India registered a 4-1 win in an Asia/Oceania Group I tie on grass in Chandigarh.

With Seoul offering a direct route to the Final 8, India will be seeking to build on the momentum from their victory over the Netherlands and make a breakthrough under the current Davis Cup format.

India squad for Davis Cup tie vs South Korea: Sumit Nagal, Manas Dhamne, Dhakshinewar Suresh, Yuki Bhambri, N Sriram Balaji

Reserve: Siddharth Rawat

Additional reserve: Arnab Paparkar

135TH DURAND CUP SC Delhi book quarterfinal spot with a seven-goal win over Indian Air Force FT

BY IANS

RANCHI: SC Delhi produced another emphatic attacking display to rout Indian Air Force FT 7-1 and seal their place in the quarter-finals as Group C winners of the 135th IndianOil Durand Cup at the Birsamunda Stadium in Ranchi on Monday.

Juan Sebastián Peña scored twice, while Rodriguinho, Duvan Mina, Lalrinliana Hnamte, Clarence Savio Fernandes and Richard Ndayishimiye were also on target for SC Delhi. Samuel K. Vanlalpeka scored the consolation goal for Indian Air Force.

The victory saw SC Delhi complete their group-stage campaign with a perfect record of three wins from three matches and nine points, while Indian Air Force remain third in the group with three points from two matches and will face Jamshedpur FC in their final group fixture on August 13.

SC Delhi head coach Tomasz Tchórz made three changes to his starting XI for their final group-stage fixture, with Ashutosh Mehta returning from suspension and Joseph Sunny also coming back into the lineup. Juan Sebastian Peña was



handed his first start for the club, while Augustine Lalrochana, Sourav K. and the injured Mohammed Aimen dropped out of the starting lineup. Meanwhile, Indian Air Force head coach Priya Darshan made one change to his starting XI, with experienced goalkeeper Dinesh coming into the lineup in place of Subhajit Basu.

Indian Air Force made the brighter start in opening exchanges, but it was SC Delhi who broke the deadlock in the 11th minute. Juan Peña spotted the forward run of left-back Yanglem Sanatomba Singh into the box and threaded a perfect pass into his path. Sanatomba squared the ball across the six-yard box, where Rodriguinho had made a clever run ahead of his marker and was left with a simple tap-in for his sixth strike of the tournament.

Indian Air Force looked to respond after falling behind, adopting a more direct approach with long balls and attempting to exploit set-piece situations. However, the SC Delhi backline remained alert to the danger and dealt comfortably with the aerial threat, denying the Airmen any clear-cut opportunities. At the other end, SC Delhi continued to threaten as Joseph Sunny sent an effort over the crossbar, while Rodriguinho came close to adding another with an acrobatic attempt that was deflected behind for a corner by a well-positioned defender.

After a period of both teams battling for control in midfield, SC Delhi doubled their advantage through a moment of individual brilliance from Juan Sebastián Peña. The midfielder brought down a high ball from the

defence with an excellent first touch, immediately beating his marker before unleashing a powerful right-footed strike that flew into the top corner, past the diving effort of the goalkeeper.

SC Delhi finished the half strongly, launching a late flurry of attacks on the Indian Air Force goal. The Delhi side won five corners in the final minutes of the half, with Joseph Sunny coming close to adding a third when he met a clearance from one of the set-pieces, only to see his effort crash against the crossbar. The forward also side-footed his effort wide of the post after finding himself free at the back post in stoppage time as they went into the half with only the two-goal advantage.

Indian Air Force halved the deficit within five minutes of the restart through Samuel Vanlalpeka. Somananda Singh controlled the second ball after Clarence Fernandes cleared a long delivery into the box before setting up Vanlalpeka. The midfielder then produced a superb curling effort that flew into the top corner, leaving SC Delhi goalkeeper Nora Fernandes rooted to the spot.

U.S. Soccer opposes FIFA in latest controversy despite Trump support

SIANS

NEW YORK: Amidst growing dissatisfaction against FIFA among Continental bodies and national associations, U.S. Soccer has come out in support of the global body and opposed the stance of the country's legislative organisation against the global governing body.

FIFA had publicly announced its proposal to sell shares of the World Cup to investors through a subsidiary company instantly valued at \$20 billion. FIFA President Gianni Infantino's plan—first revealed in media leaks and put forth without consulting member associations—was immediately met with heavy backlash from several confederations and higher-ups in the soccer world, all claiming the sport's most prestigious affair should not be



"for sale."

With many stakeholders, including UEFA, CONCACAF, the English Football Association and the Norwegian Football Federation, opposing what they call FIFA's attempts to "sell" the flagship FIFA World Cup and other major tournaments, U.S. Soccer has chosen its stance, and that does not align with the nation's president, Donald Trump.

"U.S. Soccer, Canada Soccer, CFU (Caribbean Football Union) and UNCAF (Central American Football Union) stand together, along with our colleagues around the world, in calling for meaningful change that strengthens FIFA's governance, transparency and accountability," the federation posted to X on Monday morning.

According to a news

report, unlike its European counterparts, though, the U.S. has not vowed to boycott FIFA competitions, but rather, seems most focused on witnessing a structural overhaul at the governing body's most senior levels. It is an emphasis that Concacaf has likewise made, particularly highlighting "the lack of due process surrounding [Infantino's initial] proposal, the artificially short deadline imposed, and the absence of any review or approval by the relevant FIFA governance bodies."

According to the reports, with support for Infantino wavering, the White House has reportedly pledged its fidelity. Trump and Infantino have become close over several years, a relationship that itself invited backlash and controversy all summer long at the 2026 World Cup across North America.

BRAND NEW DAY

THE ODYSSEY

INOX SRINAGAR

MOVIES Schedule

TUESDAY, 11TH AUGUST

SPIDERMAN: BRAND NEW DAY - HINDI (U/A 13+)

03:10 PM

SPIDERMAN: BRAND NEW DAY - 3D ENGLISH ATMOS WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES (U/A 13+)

11:00 AM
02:05 PM
05:10 PM
08:15 PM

SPIDERMAN: BRAND NEW DAY - ENGLISH WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES (U/A 13+)

12:05 PM
03:40 PM
06:45 PM

THE ODYSSEY - ENGLISH WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES (A)

12:15 PM
06:15 PM

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