

Good Morning

Kashmir

17th
Year Of Publication

SRINAGAR • Wednesday 19, August 2026 • Vol: 17 • Issue No: 197 • Pages: 08 • Price: ₹ 2/- (Air Surcharge for Delhi, Jammu & Ladakh 50/- Paisa) RNI No. JKENG/2010/36998

IFFJK 2026

CM Reviews Prep for Inaugural Int'l Film Fest



GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah Tuesday chaired a high-level meeting to review the final preparations for the inaugural International Film Festival of Jammu & Kashmir (IFFJK) 2026, scheduled to be held from September 7 to 10 across Srinagar and Jammu.

The four-day festival is being envisioned as a premier international platform celebrating cinematic excellence, cultural exchange, creative collaboration and emerging filmmaking talent, while providing an opportunity to forge partnerships with film fraternity across different countries and showcasing the rich cultural and cinematic heritage of Jammu and Kashmir.

Commissioner Secretary Information, R Alice Vaz, briefed the Chief Minister on the festival, which includes screenings across categories such as International Competition, Cinema of the World, Bharat Pan-

Red Fort Blast Case

Delhi High Court Denies Default Bail To 'In-House Engineer' Jasir Wani



GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: The Delhi High Court on Tuesday rejected the default bail plea of Jasir Bilal Wani alias Danish, an accused in the November 2025 Red Fort area car bomb blast case.

A Division Bench comprising Justice Prathiba M Singh and Justice Vikas Mahajan dismissed Wani's appeal challenging the trial court's decision. The detailed order is awaited.

Wani, a 20-year-old resident of Anantnag district, is accused by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) of being part of the alleged terror conspiracy linked to the November 10, 2025 blast near Delhi's Red Fort.

The investigating agency has alleged that Wani worked closely with Dr Umer-un-Nabi, who allegedly drove the explosive-laden vehicle used in the attack.

According to the NIA, Wani provided technical assistance

to the alleged terror module, including modifying drones and attempting to develop rockets. The agency's chargesheet filed in May 2026 has reportedly described him as the module's "in-house engineer".

Investigators have further alleged that Wani stayed at Al Falah University in Faridabad during 2024-25 in connection with the alleged conspiracy.

The plea before the High Court was for default bail, a statutory right that may arise when an investigating agency fails to

J&K Braces For Prolonged Wet Spell



GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir is likely to witness a spell of fairly widespread to widespread light to moderate rain and thunderstorms over the next several days, with the Meteorological Centre Srinagar forecasting continued wet weather across both divisions.

According to the weather bulletin issued by the Meteorological Centre, Srinagar, on Tuesday, fairly widespread to widespread light to moderate rain or thunderstorms are expected across J&K during the next 24 hours. Similar conditions are likely to continue over the subsequent two days.

The forecast for Kashmir indicates fairly widespread rainfall from August 18 to 21, followed by widespread rainfall on August 22 and 23. Rainfall activity is expected to become isolated on August 24. In Jammu division, widespread rainfall has been forecast from August 18 through August 23, with isolated activity likely on August 24.

The weather office has also warned of isolated thunder and lightning accompanied by

Rajya Sainik Board Meet

LG Reviews Welfare Measures For Veterans, Veer Naris

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha Tuesday chaired the 81st Meeting of Jammu Kashmir Rajya Sainik Board, at Lok Bhavan.

The meeting was attended by Lieutenant General Pratik Sharma, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief (GOC-in-C), Northern Command; Shri Atal Dulloo, Chief Secretary; Maj Gen Paramvir Singh Dagar, Chief of Staff, HQ White Knight Corps; Maj Gen KS Dhadwal, Chief of Staff HQ Chinar Corps; Shri Shailendra Kumar, Additional Chief Secretary, Finance Department; Shri Chandraker Bharti, Principal Secretary, Home; Dr Mandeep K. Bhandari, Principal Secretary to Lieutenant Governor; Ms. Neena Mishra, Principal Director, Department of Ex-Servicemen Welfare, GoI; Brig. Pankaj Chib (Retd.) Director Sainik Wel-

Jaishankar Arrives In Singapore Ahead Of 4Th Ministerial Roundtable

IAN S

SINGAPORE: External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar arrived in Singapore on Tuesday ahead of the 4th India-Singapore Ministerial Roundtable (ISMRT).

"Great to welcome Hon'ble EAM S Jaishankar to Singapore for the 4th India-Singapore Ministerial Roundtable ISMR! - HC Wong," Singapore's High Commissioner to India, Simon Wong, stated on X.

According to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), the fourth round of ISMR will be held in Singapore on August 20.

It noted that, along with EAM Jaishankar, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal, and Jitin Prasada, Minister of State in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and in the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, are going to partici-



pate in the roundtable from the Indian side.

During their visit, the ministers will interact with their counterparts and will also call on the Singaporean leadership.

According to the MEA, the mechanism of ISMR is an important platform to drive cooperation, including in new and emerging areas. Its inaugural meeting was held in New Delhi

'Just A Trailer'

BJP Warns Of Stronger Movement Against NC Govt

AGENCIES

JAMMU: BJP MLA Sham Lal Sharma on Tuesday warned that Jammu and Kashmir could witness a much stronger public movement if the National Conference-led government continued to ignore people's concerns and failed to fulfil the promises made in its election manifesto.

Referring to the BJP's protest in Jammu yesterday, Sharma said the demonstration was only an indication of the growing resentment against the government.

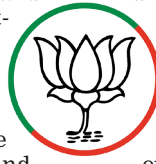
"Yesterday's protest was just a trailer. If the NC Government continues to ignore the voice of the people and fails to fulfil its promises, J&K will witness a much stronger movement," Sharma said.

He accused the Omar Abdullah-led government of having failed on the governance front and rejected its argument that the absence of full statehood was responsible for its shortcomings.

"The government has collapsed. They are making excuses in the name of lack of statehood, which has nothing to do with governance," he said.

Sharma said the BJP would continue to function as a responsible opposition and hold the government accountable for its decisions and performance.

He alleged that the government had failed to deliver on several commitments contained in the National Conference manifesto and questioned the status of promises relating to free electricity, free gas, regularisation of daily wagers and an increase in pensions.



Residents Of PoK Need Sympathy, Solidarity From International Community: MEA

IAN S

NEW DELHI: The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Tuesday stated that the residents of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) continue to face several issues, including shortage of daily essentials, and urged that they need the sympathy and solidarity of the international community.

"Many lives have been lost there, and a large number of people have suffered casualties and injuries... Severe restrictions have been imposed on essential commodities and everyday items. The situation is such that the local population needs and deserves sympathy and solidarity from the international community," MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said during a bi-weekly media briefing in New Delhi.

Thousands of people took part in protest rallies held across PoK over the weekend, expressing full support to the Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC) and making public the brutal violence unleashed by Pakistani forces since last many months.

Several videos were posted on social media platforms, including by JAAC, showing people gathered in large numbers on the streets of Muzaffarabad, Rawalakot, Bokhara and Mandhol to express their anger against the Pakistani authorities.

"Once again, the people of Rawalakot took to the streets in support of the Action Committee and raised their voices against the forces' brutal violence," JAAC posted on X.

A large number of women and children carrying flags held a protest rally in Bokhara and chanted slogans like "Inquilab ayege" (revolution would take place). Similarly, thousands of women and children held a protest rally in the Mandhol area of PoK's Poonch district.

JAAC alleged that several people were injured in firing by Pakistani security forces in Rawalakot and also urged the international human rights groups and media to monitor the situation in PoK. The video shared by JAAC on X shows several people gathered in a room while a man was undergoing treatment. In the video, a man said that many people were injured after security forces open fired at people in PoK. They also vowed to continue the protest.



US Ambassador Sergio Gor To Visit Kashmir Today

AGENCIES

SRINAGAR: United States Ambassador to India, Sergio Gor, will arrive in Kashmir tomorrow on his maiden visit to the Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh after assuming office.

Official sources said that Ambassador Gor is scheduled to meet Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah during his stay in Srinagar.

Gor, who also serves as the U.S. Special Envoy for South Asia and Central Asia, is expected to travel to Ladakh as part of his visit.

U.S. diplomats have also been visiting Kashmir in the past, interacting with different political and non-political groups.

In 2024, just ahead of the assembly polls, a U.S. diplomatic delegation met various political leaders during their Kashmir visit—(KNO)

NTA Revamps Examination Team, Removes 600 Experts

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI: The National Testing Agency (NTA) has revamped its examination team, removing around 600 experts and onboarding new ones as part of efforts to enhance transparency and accountability, sources told ANI on Tuesday.

The new premises of the NTA will be located at Minto Road, the sources said. Earlier in the day, in a post on X, the Ministry of Education said Union Education Minister Pralhad Joshi had directed that all necessary security and related infrastructural facilities be put in place for the smooth conduct of examinations.

"Following directions from the Minister, DG, NTA apprised on the action taken by NTA: A revamp of the examination team was undertaken with 600 experts being removed and new experts being onboarded," the Ministry said.

The Ministry said a further question paper checking system would be introduced to strengthen the scrutiny of examination papers. "A further question paper checking system will be put in place to strengthen the scrutiny of examination papers. 20-25 officials to be inducted in next two to three weeks. Further induction plan was also reviewed," it said.

The Ministry said the measures were reviewed as part of a follow-up



UFM Committee meeting on August 20: JKBOSE

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: The Unfair Means Committee (UFM) of the Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education (JKBOSE) is scheduled to hold a meeting on August 20, 2026, to examine cases of alleged use of unfair means by certain candidates of Classes 10, 11 & 12 Session Annual Private/Bi-Annual 2026 of Summer Zone and Winter Zone areas of Jammu Division and Class 10 JKSOs, Annual/Bi-annual 2024-25.



The meeting would be chaired by the Joint Secretary, Secrecy/UFM, Jammu Division and will commence at 10:30 AM onwards at the JKBOSE Office, Rehari Colony, Jammu.

The Committee would review and dispose of the cases in accordance with the relevant regulations. The concerned candidates are required to appear before the Committee to present their cases along with supporting evidence.

The details regarding roll numbers of the candidates and the schedule of the meeting, as notified by the Joint Secretary, Secrecy, Jammu Division are available on the official website of JKBOSE: jkbose.jk.gov.in.

DC Anantnag reviews Progress of PMAY

Emphasises adherence to timelines, facilitation of prospective beneficiaries



GMK NEWS NETWORK

ANANTNAG: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Anantnag, Dr. Bilal Mohiuddin Bhat, Tuesday chaired a meeting at the DC Office, to review the progress of the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), Rural and Urban, in the district. The meeting was attended by the Assistant Commissioner Development, Chief Planning Officer, Block Development Officers, Chief Executive Officers, Municipal Council Anantnag, Executive Officers of Municipal Committees, and other concerned officials.

Briefing the chair about progress of both components of the scheme, the ACD informed that the district has achieved around

95 percent progress under PMAY-G as well as PMAY-U so far, while the remaining 5 percent gap is expected to be covered soon.

Regarding PMAY-G, the meeting was informed that around 32,000 applications have been received in the district. Of these, 17,884 applicants were found eligible as per the prescribed PMAY-G guidelines, while around 14,000 applications were rejected on account of ineligibility under the scheme guidelines.

The Deputy Commissioner directed the concerned officers to ensure that the remaining targets are completed within the stipulated timeframe. He also stressed upon the Block Development Officers (BDOs) to establish grievance cells at all blocks to facilitate appli-

cants, respond to their queries and promptly address issues related to PMAY cases.

Dr. Bilal said that issues concerning prospective landless beneficiaries and applicants residing in areas falling under forest land should be examined and taken up with the concerned authorities for early resolution.

The Deputy Commissioner further directed the officers to ensure regular updation of beneficiary registration and verification, besides closely monitoring the physical and financial progress of sanctioned housing units. He also emphasized the timely release of installments to eligible beneficiaries so that construction work is not delayed.

DC Kulgam inaugurates Aadhaar Seva Kendra in Kulgam

GMK NEWS NETWORK

KULGAM: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Shahzad Alam Tuesday inaugurated a dedicated Aadhaar Seva Kendra (ASK) at the Kulgam, near Grid Station.

Seva Kendra has been established by UIDAI to provide hassle-free, reliable, and transparent Aadhaar-related services to residents of Kulgam.

The Kendra will function as a one-stop facility for all Aadhaar services including new aadhaar enrolment, mandatory biometric updates, demographic updates like name, address, date of birth, gender, mobile number, and email ID corrections, biometric updates like fingerprints, iris, and photograph updates, Aadhaar print / re-print, Aadhaar download and e-Aadhaar, lock / unlock biomet-



rics and Aadhaar authentication Services and on-spot grievance redressal.

Speaking on the occasion, the DC said the inauguration of the ASK is aimed at easing access to Aadhaar services and reducing the burden on Common Service Centres and banks in the district while also ensuring service delivery at approved affordable rates.

The new Kendra shall be handy in improving

accessibility, ensure faster service delivery, enhanced transparency, support to welfare delivery and promoting digital empowerment, the DC added.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by Shoaib Mohammad Khan, Project Manager, UIDAI; Peer Mubashir Shah, Cluster Manager, J&K; and Danishwar Hamid, Operations Manager, Kulgam, besides other officials and concerned persons.

DC Sgr inaugurates ICT Labs in five Govt Schools under CSR initiative

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo, on Tuesday inaugurated state-of-the-art ICT Labs established in five Government Schools across the District under a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative funded by NTT DATA and implemented by ELFA International, marking a significant step towards strengthening digital education and expanding equitable access to technology-enabled learning opportunities.

The inauguration ceremony was held at Government Girls Higher Secondary School (GGHSS), Nawakadal, where Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Akshay Labroo, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest and inaugurated the ICT Labs established in five educational institutions including Government Girls Higher Secondary School, Nawakadal, Government Boys High School, Dara, Government Boys High School, Panzinar, Government Boys High School, Bakshipora and Government Girls High



School, Balhama.

The initiative, supported by NTT DATA and ELFA International, under its CSR programme was aimed to foster stronger collaboration among the Administration, Corporate sector and Community, thereby contributing to the overall welfare and development of the society.

Following the inauguration, the Deputy Commissioner interacted virtually with the faculty members and students of the other four beneficiary schools. He urged the students to make optimum use of the newly established ICT facilities and leverage digital resources to enhance their learning, skills and exposure to technology.

Addressing the gathering, the DC said that access to digital tools can significantly enhance student motivation, strengthen foundational competencies and broaden learning opportunities, particularly for students studying in schools located in remote areas of the district. He appreciated NTT DATA for supporting the initiative through its CSR programme and ELFA International for effectively implementing the project, stating that such interventions demonstrate the positive impact that responsible corporate participation can have in strengthening public education infrastructure.

The DC remarked that the establishment of ICT Labs is not merely about introducing technology into classrooms, but about opening new horizons of opportunity for students who have long faced limited access to digital resources. He emphasized that technology-enabled education can help students acquire the confidence, skills and competencies needed to participate meaningfully in an increasingly digital world.

Underscoring the importance of collaboration, the DC called for stronger public-private-community partnerships, stating that coordinated efforts by the administration, corporate sector and community can create equitable opportunities for students and contribute substantially to sustainable social development and the overall welfare of society.

He also urged ELFA International to continue undertaking similar CSR-led initiatives in District

Srinagar, appreciating the organization's efforts towards strengthening the education ecosystem and complementing government initiatives through meaningful community-focused interventions.

The CEO & President, ELFA International, while speaking on the occasion, stated that the ICT Lab initiative, supported by NTT DATA under its CSR programme, is aimed not only at providing infrastructure but also at creating an enabling environment where students can develop curiosity, confidence, digital awareness and practical capabilities.

Adding that ELFA International remains committed to working with corporate partners such as NTT DATA and the administration to implement initiatives that generate long-term social impact. He also assured that the organization would continue to undertake and support similar initiatives in the future to further strengthen digital education and expand technology-enabled learning opportunities for students across District Srinagar.

BIS JKBO conducts DLO Sensitization Programme at Shopian

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SHOPIAN: The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), Jammu & Kashmir Branch Office (JKBO), in coordination with the Legal Metrology Department, Shopian, conducted a District Level Officers (DLO) Sensitization Programme at the Mini Secretariat, Shopian.

The programme was presided over by Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC), Dr. Nasir Ahmad Lone.

The programme aimed to sensitise government departments and other stakeholders about the role of BIS in ensuring the quality, safety and reliability of products used by consumers and government organisations, while promoting greater awareness and adoption of Indian Standards.

During the programme, Manish Kumar, Scientist-D/Joint Director, BIS, and Saaqib Rahi, Scientist-C/Deputy Director, BIS,



provided comprehensive insights into the activities and initiatives of BIS. The sessions covered an overview of BIS, Conformity Assessment, Mandatory and Voluntary Certification, Quality Control Orders (QCOs), Hallmarking, the BIS CARE App, and other important aspects of standardisation and quality assurance.

A key focus of the programme was on the procurement of products conforming to the relevant Indian Standards by government departments and public institutions. The importance of specifying applicable Indian Standards and ensuring conformity with prescribed quality requirements during procurement was discussed in detail.

The participants were also sensitised about BIS Hallmarking and its role in assuring the purity and authenticity of precious metal articles. The discussion highlighted the importance of purchasing hallmarkmarked jewellery and the role of consumers and government stakeholders in promoting quality-conscious practices.

The ADDC appreciated the initiative of BIS and the Legal Metrology Department in creating awareness among government officials and stakeholders regarding quality standards and consumer protection.

DC Anantnag reviews arrangements for Chhari Mubarak of SANJY-2026

GMK NEWS NETWORK

ANANTNAG: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Anantnag, (Yatra Officer Pahalgam Axis), Dr. Bilal Mohiuddin Bhat, Tuesday chaired a comprehensive meeting at DC Office, to review the arrangements for Chhari Mubarak of Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra (SANJY)-2026.

The meeting was attended by SSP Anantnag, Amod Ashok Nagpure, Commandant 8th JKAP, Chief Executive Officer PDA, Camp Directors of Nunwan Base Camp, Chandanwari, Sheshnag and Panjtarni Stations, SDM Pahalgam, besides representatives of the Shri Amarnath Ji Shrine Board (SASB) and other concerned officers.

During the meeting, the arrangements for the smooth and safe passage of Chhari Mubarak



which is expected to leave Srinagar on 22nd August and reach the Holy Cave on August 28, after halting at various locations en route, were reviewed in detail.

It was informed that the Chhari Mubarak will participate in religious ceremonies at various temples, including the Shiv Temple at Bijbehara, Martand-Tirth Mattan and Gourishankar Temple, Pahalgam.

The Deputy Commissioner directed all concerned concerned

officers to ensure that all necessary arrangements and essential facilities including firewood, food, pooja samagri, drinking water, accommodation and sanitation remain available throughout the journey of Chhari Mubarak. He emphasized the need for close coordination among all concerned departments and directed the officers to remain vigilant and ensure that all arrangements are put in place well in advance up to the Holy Cave.

DC Anantnag reviews SWM, Sanitation measures

GMK NEWS NETWORK

ANANTNAG: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Anantnag, Dr. Bilal Mohiuddin Bhat, Tuesday chaired a meeting at the DC Office, to review the status of Solid Waste Management and Sanitation in the district.

The meeting was attended by the Assistant Commissioner Development, Chief Planning Officer, Block Development Officers, Chief Executive Officer, Municipal Council Anantnag, Executive Officers of Municipal Committees, and other concerned officials.

During the meeting, the ACD briefed the chair about the measures being undertaken for effective waste management across rural areas. It was informed that 62 Panchayats have been covered under door-to-door waste collection, while nine functional waste segregation sites have been established in the district.

The meeting was further informed that around 10,000 individual compost pits have been created to promote decentralized waste management. Besides, various Panchayats have been outsourced for waste collection and segregation, while one Plastic Waste Management facility has been established in each block.

The Deputy Commissioner directed the concerned officers to identify suitable land for dumping and waste segregation sites in each block to strengthen the solid waste management system. He also stressed the need for proper identification and demarcation of rural and urban boundaries and formulation of Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) between the concerned agencies for coordinated and scientific disposal and management of waste.

Dr. Bilal further directed the officers to identify sanitation gaps and critical areas requiring administrative intervention, and to formulate appropriate measures for addressing these gaps in a time-bound manner. He emphasized inter-departmental coordination, regular monitoring and effective implementation of sanitation measures to ensure a cleaner and healthier environment across the district.

Concluding the meeting, the DC called for creating greater community awareness and mobilisation both in rural and urban areas so the scientific and sustainable sanitation and waste management measures are implemented with better impact at grass roots level across the district.

PM Vishwakarma Awareness-cum-Capacity Building Programme held in B'la

GMK NEWS NETWORK

BARAMULLA: A one-day PM Vishwakarma Awareness-cum-Capacity Building Programme on Branding and Marketing was organised Tuesday by the Br-MSME Development and Facilitation Office, Srinagar, in collaboration with the District Administration Baramulla at Dak Bungalow, Baramulla.

Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC) Baramulla, Pranjal J. Hazarika, presided over the programme and, speaking on the occasion, emphasised the importance of capacity building, effective branding and modern marketing techniques for strengthening the businesses of traditional artisans and craftsmen.

The ADDC highlighted the growing importance of social media and digital platforms in promoting locally made products and encouraged PM Vishwakarma beneficiaries to use social media and e-commerce platforms to showcase their products, connect with customers, build their brand identity and access wider markets. Experts and resource persons from the Ministry of MSME and other concerned institutions also spoke on the occasion, providing practical guidance on branding, product presentation, packaging and marketing strategies, including the effective use of social media platforms for product promotion and customer outreach.

The capacity-building sessions also covered Udyam registration, QR code generation, e-commerce onboarding, credit facilitation and other MSME support initiatives. The programme aimed to enhance the knowledge, skills and business capabilities of PM Vishwakarma beneficiaries, enabling them to adopt modern branding and marketing practices and improve the visibility and market reach of their products.

SBDU review meeting held to accelerate Mission YUVA implementation

GMK NEWS NETWORK

KULGAM: A review meeting of the Small Business Development Unit (SBDU) under Mission YUVA was held Tuesday at the Meeting Hall, Kulgam, under the chairmanship of the Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC), Kulgam Altaf Ahmad Khan.

The meeting was attended by the SBDU team consisting of Assistant Director Employment, District Nodal officeJKEDI, Lead District Manager JKB,



,IPO DIC, Credit Incharge, Cluster bank JKB, Career Counselling Officer and Employment officer from Employment department.

The newly posted Assistant Director Employment, Kulgam, Rahil

Amin, briefed the Chair on the targets, progress and achievements registered under Mission YUVA in the district through a detailed presentation. Individual targets and performance of members of the SBDU-

BHD teams were also discussed and reviewed.

A comprehensive presentation on the district's performance against key Mission YUVA Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) was followed by a detailed

review of block-wise applications, BHD/SBDU verification, DLIC approvals, bank sanctions and disbursements, first-tranche releases, CGTMSE coverage, interest subvention, rejected cases, capacity building, mentorship, completion reports and market access through ONDC.

The progress under the Lakhpatri Didi initiative and Udyam Jagriti 5.0, particularly the initiatives for students relating to Hackathon and Neo-Innovative Applications, was also reviewed. The meeting laid

emphasis on grassroots mobilisation, panchayat-wise performance and strengthening the four key pillars of Mission YUVA—Culture, Capital, Capacity and Connectivity (4Cs).

The Chair emphasised the need for intensified awareness and outreach activities, timely verification of applications, stronger coordination and linkages with banks, expeditious disposal of pending cases and continuous handholding of aspiring entrepreneurs at every stage of the process.

CM Omar meets MLAs to discuss developmental, public welfare issues



GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Several Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) Tuesday called on Chief Minister Omar Abdullah at the Civil Secretariat here and discussed key developmental matters and public welfare issues concerning their respec-

tive constituencies. MLA Baramulla Javid Baigh, MLA Rajpora Ghulam Mohi Uddin Mir, MLA Poonch-Haveli Ajaz Ahmad Jan and MLA Bandipora Nizamuddin Bhat met the Chief Minister and apprised him of various issues and developmental priorities of their respective con-

stituencies. The Chief Minister gave a patient hearing to the visiting legislators and assured them that all genuine issues raised by them concerning their constituencies would be addressed on priority, in accordance with the applicable rules and available resources.

Secy RDD calls for mission-mode push on VB-G RAM G implementation



GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Secretary, Rural Development Department (RDD) and Panchayati Raj, Mohammad Aijaz Asad, Tuesday chaired a review meeting to assess the progress on the Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission (Gramin) [VB-G RAM G], calling for a renewed and focused push to strengthen the Person Days (PD) generation, activate worksites, ensure timely wage payments and tighten field-level supervision across the Union Territory.

The meeting was attended by Director, Rural Development, Kashmir, Riyaz Ahmad Wani; Director, Rural Development, Jammu, Shahnaz Akhtar; Director, Social Audit, Rajneesh Gupta; Additional Secretary, Waseem Raja; Superintending Engineers (REW), Jammu and Kashmir; Assistant Commissioners Development (ACDs) and Executive Engineers (REW).

Asad directed the Executive Engineers to process wage-component bills without delay, stressing that once the wage component is released, bills should be prepared simultaneously so that payments are not held up. He also asked to ensure that material payments be processed alongside wage payments.

The Secretary directed for immediate and focused intervention to ensure timely initiation of works at all worksites. He emphasised that all eligible Panchayats must be enabled to undertake works at the earliest, with a clear focus on strengthening employment

generation and ensuring effective implementation of VB-G RAM G at the grassroots level.

Holding Assistant Commissioners Development (ACDs) responsible for effective leadership at the block level, Aijaz Asad observed that the districts with proactive ACDs were delivering better results while few others were visibly lagging. He directed the ACDs to take ownership of field-level implementation and cautioned that continued underperformance on certain parameters could invite accountability measures. Supervisory gaps, he stressed, must be promptly identified and corrected rather than allowed to persist.

The Secretary also reviewed the e-KYC status of semi-skilled and skilled workers, whose payments will now be routed through the wage component. He directed the Executive Engineers to complete the process within the stipulated timeline.

He informed the meeting that MORD is expected to issue a detailed Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) within the next few days regarding the proposed shift under which semi-skilled and skilled workers, currently often booked under the material component, will be reclassified under the wage component. He directed the field officials to ensure that the transition is properly captured and implemented at the ground level.

Acknowledging that certain villages in hilly, remote and snow-bound areas may naturally record comparatively lower figures during win-

ters months, Aijaz Asad directed the officers to accord special attention to such parts so that the benefits of the scheme reach all sections of the rural population.

Reviewing wage-payment performance, the Secretary directed the district authorities to expedite generation of Fund Transfer Orders (FTOs) against wage claims under VB-G RAM G, stressing that timely FTO processing is essential for ensuring prompt payment of wages to workers.

Aijaz Asad emphasised the importance of Panch Sammelans as a platform for strengthening the grassroots participation, direct engagement and coordination among the elected representatives and field functionaries. He directed the concerned officers to ensure that the proceedings and outcomes of all Panch Sammelans are properly documented, with completion reports submitted promptly. The deliberations, he stressed, must translate into concrete follow-up action at the Panchayat level.

Reviewing Area Officer Monitoring Reports, the Secretary directed the ACDs to undertake regular field visits and improve the quality of monitoring. He described field monitoring as a routine yet critical responsibility that must be discharged with seriousness and purpose. He also directed the officials to expedite geo-tagging and complete e-KYC within the prescribed timeframe.

Regarding administrative discipline, Asad reiterated that no employee would be permitted to leave the place of duty without prior permission. He directed both the Directors to undertake random attendance checks, noting instances of employees remaining away from assigned duties without authorisation. He stressed the need for strict enforcement of workplace discipline and accountability.

Rather reviews Pakherpora Urs arrangements, calls for advance preparedness

GMK NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM: Speaker, Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, Abdul Rahim Rather, Tuesday chaired a meeting to review arrangements for the forthcoming Urs of Hazrat Sultan Ali Aali Balkhi (RA) at Pakherpora, with a focus on ensuring adequate civic amenities, uninterrupted essential services, effective crowd management and hassle-free facilities for devotees.

The Speaker took a detailed review of the arrangements being put in place by various departments. He issued a series of directions for ensuring coordinated and timely execution of all necessary measures during the Urs period. He stressed the need for advance preparedness and close inter-departmental coordination, particularly in view of the large number of devotees expected to visit the shrine during the Urs.

The Speaker directed the concerned authorities to ensure sufficient availability of potable water in and around the shrine and adjoining areas. He called for installation of temporary drinking water points, if required and directed that round-the-clock water



availability be ensured in washrooms for the devotees. He also directed that water tankers be kept readily available for deployment in case of any emergency or shortage.

Reviewing electricity and lighting arrangements, Rather directed the concerned authorities to ensure uninterrupted power supply throughout the Urs celebrations. He also called for adequate lighting arrangements around the shrine and its surroundings.

On health and medical preparedness, the Speaker directed the Health Department to deploy medical teams and first-aid stations within the shrine premises to attend to any medical emergency. He called for ensuring the availability of ambulances and other emergency medical services on the spot besides main-

taining adequate stocks of essential medicines and medical supplies.

With regard to Food and Civil Supplies, Rather directed the concerned department to ensure timely distribution of ration among the residents of Pakherpora. He also called for examining the requirement of an additional ration quota in view of the anticipated increase in local requirements during the Urs period.

The Speaker gave specific directions regarding sanitation and cleanliness, calling for adequate deployment of toilets, waste bins and sanitation staff at appropriate locations. He stressed for regular cleaning, proper segregation and timely disposal of waste to maintain hygienic conditions in and around the shrine and congregation areas.

Reviewing market arrangements, Rather directed the concerned authorities to conduct regular inspections of shops and temporary stalls operating during the Urs. He emphasized strict checking of food hygiene, prices, weights and measures to ensure that devotees are provided quality food items and are protected against overcharging and other malpractices.

Regarding the transport and traffic management, the Speaker directed the concerned agencies to ensure adequate availability of public transport and identify designated parking and drop-off/pick-up points for the convenience of devotees. He also called for effective traffic regulation, including diversions wherever necessary, while ensuring unhindered access for ambulances and

other emergency vehicles. The Speaker also emphasized that inter-departmental coordination would be crucial for successful conduct of the Urs and directed all concerned departments to clearly define department-wise responsibilities.

Rather stressed that all concerned departments must work in close coordination and maintain round-the-clock readiness throughout the Urs period to ensure that devotees, local residents and visitors are provided with safe, clean, convenient and hassle-free facilities.

Senior officers of the concerned departments were present in the meeting.

Earlier, Speaker kick-started the upgradation and blacktopping works of the inner link roads at Takiya Hayatpora, being executed at an estimated cost of ₹40 lakh.

Speaking on the occasion, the Speaker said that better road connectivity is a key priority of the government, as well-maintained roads play a vital role in improving the quality of life of people and facilitating access to education, healthcare, markets and other essential services.

Javid Dar seeks greater ICAR focus on J&K-specific agricultural research



GMK NEWS NETWORK

NEW DELHI: Minister for Agriculture Production, Rural Development & Panchayati Raj, Cooperative and Election Department, Javid Ahmad Dar, Tuesday participated in the 97th Annual General Meeting of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) in New Delhi.

Speaking at the meeting, Javid Dar called for greater focus on J&K-specific agricultural research and innovation, keeping in view the Union Territory's unique agro-climatic conditions, fragile ecosystems and potential in agriculture, horticulture and allied sectors.

He proposed establishment of a State Council for Agricultural Research in J&K to coordinate research priorities and strengthen convergence among ICAR

institutions, agricultural universities, government departments, scientists, industry and farmers.

Highlighting J&K's research capabilities, the Minister noted that SKUAST-Jammu and SKUAST-Kashmir have secured 143 patents over the past four years. He stressed the need to translate such scientific potential into field-level solutions.

Javid Dar identified climate-resilient horticulture as a key research priority, with emphasis on disease-free and true-to-type planting material, corm multiplication, climate-resilient saffron, precision irrigation, mechanisation, quality testing, value addition, branding and export-oriented production.

He also called for a dynamic, scientific and region-specific plant quarantine system, based on

species- and host-specific Pest Risk Analysis, biological Post-Entry Quarantine, molecular indexing and process-based phytosanitary certification.

The Minister further sought stronger research and innovation in animal husbandry, dairy, fisheries, post-harvest management, processing and value addition. He stressed that agricultural research should ultimately deliver higher productivity, lower input costs, climate resilience, better market access and increased farmers' incomes.

He called for stronger collaboration between ICAR, J&K's agricultural universities, government departments, scientists, industry and farmers to ensure that research remains closely aligned with the specific needs of the Union Territory.

Sakeena Itoo tours Chatroo; lays foundation stone for remodelling of GHSS

GMK NEWS NETWORK

KISHTWAR: Minister for Health & Medical Education, School Education, Higher Education and Social Welfare, Sakeena Itoo, Tuesday conducted an extensive tour of Sub-Division Chatroo in Kishtwar district, during which she inaugurated key development projects and reviewed the major infrastructure initiatives aimed at strengthening education and healthcare facilities in the area.

During the tour, Sakeena Itoo laid the foundation stone for remodelling of Government Higher Secondary School (GHSS) Chatroo, being executed at an estimated cost of ₹13.27 crore. The project is expected to give a significant boost to educational infrastructure and provide improved facilities to the students of the area. The Minister also inaugurated NTPHC Inderwal and inspected the ongoing work on Government Degree College (GDC) Chatroo, for which she had sanctioned ₹10.62 crore.



Sakeena Itoo was accompanied by MLA Inderwal, Pyare Lal Sharma and ADDC Kishtwar, Vinod Kumar Behal, along with other officers and officials.

During interaction with the public at TRC Chatroo, several issues concerning the upgradation of schools and strengthening of health infrastructure were brought to the notice of the Minister. She gave a patient hearing to the concerns and assured the people of every possible support for their early resolution.

The Minister also asked the MLA Inderwal to submit a consolidated list of the demands and issues raised by the public so that the same could be taken up for immediate redressal on a priority basis.

In a significant announcement, Sakeena Itoo stated that NTPHC Mughal Maidan would be upgraded to a PHC, while PHC Chatroo would be upgraded to a Sub-District Hospital. These measures are aimed at further strengthening the healthcare delivery system and ensuring improved medical facilities for the people closer to their homes.

At TRC Chatroo, Sakeena Itoo distributed motorized tricycles, wheelchairs, baby kits and baby blankets among beneficiaries. Under the "Beti Bachao Beti Padhao" initiative, she also distributed sports kits and school bags to various Government Schools and handed over hearing aids to beneficiaries.

EOW Chargesheets Man Accused Of Trying to Influence Crime Branch Probe

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) Kashmir of the Crime Branch J&K has filed a chargesheet against a Budgam resident for allegedly attempting to influence an ongoing Crime Branch investigation by transferring money into the bank account of an investigating officer.

The chargesheet was filed before the Special Judge, Anti-Corruption, Srinagar, in FIR No. 28/2026 against Ghulam Ahmad Ganie, son of Ghulam Mohammad Ganie, a resident of Mirgund, Budgam. He has been booked under Section 8 of the Prevention of Corruption Act and Sections 228 and 229 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).

According to the EOW, the case was registered following a written complaint alleging that Ganie, who is himself an accused in FIR No. 11/2021 of Crime Branch Kashmir, now EOW Kashmir, transferred Rs 10,000 into the bank account of an investigation officer.

The transfer was allegedly made with the intention of bribing the officer and influencing the investigation in the earlier case.

Following the complaint, a probe was ordered during which the allegations were examined and relevant evidence collected. The investigation, the EOW said, established the accused's alleged involvement in the act, following which the chargesheet was presented before the court for judicial determination.

The EOW also urged the public not to offer or pay bribes to public servants for securing any favour or service and to report demands for bribes or other corrupt practices to the competent authorities.

Sakeena Itoo visits residence of RS MP Sajad Kitchloo

Conveys condolences on sister-in-law's demise

GMK NEWS NETWORK

KISHTWAR: Minister for Health & Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo Tuesday visited the residence of Member of Parliament Rajya Sabha Sajad Ahmad Kitchloo to express her heartfelt condolences on the demise of his sister-in-law.

The Minister met the bereaved family members and conveyed her sympathies to them in this hour of grief. She prayed for eternal peace to the departed soul and strength and fortitude to the family to bear the irreparable loss.

Sakeena Itoo expressed deep sorrow over the passing away of the deceased and extended her solidarity with the bereaved family and prayed that Almighty grants them courage to overcome this difficult period. MLA Inderwal, Pyare Lal Sharma also accompanied the Minister during the visit.

Javed Rana meets delegations at Civil Secretariat; discusses Dev issues

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, Tuesday met multiple delegations at the Civil Secretariat here and took stock of various developmental issues and public concerns raised by them.

The delegations apprised the Minister of issues pertaining to water supply, irrigation infrastructure and other developmental requirements in their respective areas.

Responding to the issues of the delegations, the Minister assured them that all their genuine issues would be examined on priority and necessary steps would be taken for their time-bound resolution.

A delegation led by Taranjit Singh Toni from Suchetgarh raised the issue of a defunct borewell in their area, stating that its non-functioning had adversely affected the operation of lift irrigation schemes and consequently caused difficulties to the farming community.

The delegation also sought desilting and restoration of irrigation channels to improve the functioning of the irrigation network and ensure adequate availability of water for agricultural activities.

The Minister directed the concerned officers to assess the issues on the ground and take appropriate measures for restoration of the defunct borewells and improvement of the affected lift irrigation schemes. He also stressed the need for timely desilting and maintenance of irrigation channels, particularly in view of the requirements of farmers during the ongoing agricultural season.

Javed Rana reiterated that ensuring reliable water supply and strengthening irrigation infrastructure remain among the priority areas of the Government. He said that the concerns raised by people through their representatives and delegations would be given due consideration, with emphasis on prompt resolution of genuine issues.

Good Morning Kashmir

EDITORIAL

■ Capex Delay

A Construction Season Slowly Slipping Away

In Jammu and Kashmir, the construction season is not merely a period on the calendar, it is a race against nature. Every year, contractors, engineers and government departments get only a limited window to build roads, bridges, drains and public infrastructure before harsh weather begins to close that window. It is against this backdrop that the delay in the release of the Union Territory Capex Budget deserves serious attention. For an ordinary resident, the issue may sound like another administrative delay. But on the ground, its consequences can be very real. A road awaiting macadamisation means more potholes for commuters. A drainage project pushed back means another season of waterlogging. A bridge delayed means communities continuing to depend on difficult and sometimes unsafe connectivity. The concern is particularly acute because many major civil works cannot simply be carried out at any time of the year. Asphalt laying requires appropriate temperatures, while cement and concrete structures need favourable conditions for proper curing. Snowfall, freezing temperatures and prolonged winter conditions can bring several categories of construction to a halt in large parts of the Union Territory. When funds arrive late, departments are left with a shrinking construction window. Projects that could have been planned and executed methodically may then have to be compressed into the final months of the season. That is where another concern emerges: development should not become a race against the clock. When contractors and executing agencies are forced to complete a large volume of work in a short period, the pressure can affect supervision, workmanship and curing time. The objective should not merely be to show that money has been spent or that a project has been completed on paper. Public works are ultimately judged by how long they last and how effectively they serve people. For contractors too, uncertainty over funding creates difficulties. Machinery, labour and material have to be planned in advance. A delayed start can mean higher costs and logistical complications, while workers who depend on construction activity may also lose valuable employment opportunities. The public ultimately bears the cost of every delay. Jammu and Kashmir has ambitious infrastructure requirements. From rural roads and drainage systems to bridges, government buildings and other public assets, development works are essential not only for economic growth but also for improving everyday life. The Capex Budget, therefore, should not be viewed simply as a financial document. It is the mechanism that converts development promises into physical assets visible on the ground. The administration must ensure that procedural and financial delays do not consume the very construction season during which these projects are supposed to be delivered. There is still time to act. An early release of funds, swift administrative clearances and timely mobilisation by departments can help salvage the remaining construction window. Jammu and Kashmir cannot afford to lose months waiting for funds and then expect contractors to achieve in weeks what should have been planned over an entire season. Development requires money, but it also requires time. In a region where nature itself imposes a deadline, every month lost to administrative delay is a month that cannot easily be recovered. The government must therefore treat the release of the Capex Budget as an urgent development priority, not merely to increase expenditure, but to ensure that roads are built properly, bridges are completed safely, public infrastructure lasts longer and the people of Jammu and Kashmir receive the projects they have been promised.

■ Bridging The Gap

How CSR, NGOs, And Govt Can Unite For J&K's Development



RAKSHANDA GUL

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has become an important part of development across the world. This is not restricted to philanthropy or donations alone anymore. Today, CSR is increasingly viewed as a tool for creating social, economic, and environmental impact through community and collaboration with governmental institutions. In the Darakshan Sitaray Podcast, an expert shed light on the current condition of CSR, the involvement of NGOs, and the prospects for sustainable development in Jammu & Kashmir.

The discussion started with a description of the model of CSR, which has been used for several decades. According to Section 135 of the Companies Act, 2013, there is a provision that all such companies that have met the prescribed criteria will have to invest 2% of their average net profit of the previous three years into CSR activities. While this legal provision exists, the discussion highlighted that many eligible corporate houses still do not invest the required amount. The conversation explored, "if every eligible company fulfilled this responsibility sincerely, the impact on society would be much greater".

CSR has gradually expanded beyond financial donations. Today, it covers several sectors, including education, healthcare, women's empowerment, child welfare, livelihood generation, environmental conservation, and skill development. The speaker mentioned that thousands of CSR initiatives are already in place across various parts of the country and are working with government departments. Even small-scale projects that have been regularly implemented have positively impacted the local ecosystem and community life.

The other topic that was discussed during the podcast was about the children. It was discussed that children should always be kept at the center of any development program. This has been made possible through the contribution of the CSR program, as it created an environment that is conducive to learning and growth of the children. Sports, recreation and emotional well-being are equally important. Investing in children today, the expert remarked, is an investment in a better society tomorrow.

Women's development was another major theme of the conversation. The discussion also focused on how CSR has helped many women become economically independent through self-help groups and livelihood programmes. Women are developing skills and creating businesses and even providing job openings for other women. Such



efforts enhance income levels while strengthening self-confidence and decision-making abilities in families. Sustainable development can be achieved only if women are involved in economic and social processes on equal terms.

The discussion extended to the broader scope of corporate social responsibility. CSR encompasses social well-being, economic development and environmental protection. Contemporary CSR has much in common with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations, which promote balanced development and preservation of natural resources. While CSR was traditionally perceived as philanthropy, the expert pointed out that the modern world requires a strategic approach. More money should be invested in addressing climate change, biodiversity preservation, environmental protection and resource management. The problem of climate change is becoming topical for all people, the expert noted.

While appreciating positive developments, the expert also raised certain concerns. In some cases, CSR funds are not utilised for their intended purpose and fail to reach communities that genuinely need support. Another point raised was that corporate social responsibility must never be an individual gain. To ensure transparency, accountability and improvement in the lives of the people, each project must contribute towards making things better for them. It is not the amount that goes into CSR projects, but its impact which matters most.

The discussion soon moved on to the involvement of NGOs in J&K. While appreciating the contribution made by various NGOs in areas of education, welfare of the community, raising awareness and environment-related activities like rainwater harvesting in the state, the expert pointed out a marked difference between the NGOs and government institutions. According to expert, the lack of confidence in NGOs among government institutions is visible even though many organizations have been working selflessly for the welfare of people.

Comparing the situation of NE states, the expert said, "that NGOs enjoy more public confidence

there. As a result, they have been able to contribute significantly to local development". The expert expressed the hope that a similar environment of trust can gradually develop in Jammu and Kashmir. Strong partnerships between government agencies, NGOs and local communities would create better outcomes than working in isolation.

Another important point raised during the discussion was the need for NGOs to remain closely connected with the people they serve. Development cannot be planned from offices alone. Organisations should spend time with communities, meet people at hours convenient for them, understand their concerns and create safe and comfortable spaces where they can speak openly. The expert appreciated that several NGOs are already adopting such community-based approaches, although some gaps remain. These shortcomings, however, can be addressed with patience, continuous learning and stronger community participation.

The expert also encouraged NGOs to think beyond grants and funding. Their focus should remain on creating lasting social impact, with financial assistance serving as a tool to achieve that goal. Instead, organisations should focus on creating lasting social impact. The most important question for any CSR or NGO initiative, the expert suggested, should always be: What positive change has this project brought to the community?

According to the expert, Jammu and Kashmir have tremendous economic possibilities which can be further enhanced via well-thought-out corporate social responsibility (CSR). This could be seen via the handicraft industry in Jammu and Kashmir. Handicrafts from Kashmir have gained acclaim all over the world because of their high-quality workmanship. With the combination of both traditional methods and modern technologies, artisans can be able to access international markets.

The horticulture sector offers another promising opportunity. Kashmir already produces world-famous apples, cherries, walnuts and several other fruits. These goods can be accessed by broader global markets through better infrastructure

and value addition. The expert made it clear that supportive policy and market linkages were equally important. Providing training to youth in processing, packaging and marketing can generate jobs as well as increase income levels of the farmers.

The session brought out the points to need for sustainable livelihood options rather than short-term aid. The expert asked how we can keep on distributing food kits when solutions are available. NGOs and CSR activities must aim at giving skills to people which will allow them to earn without being dependent on outside sources. It provides them with self-respect and financial independence.

Various examples from across the nation were discussed to show how such an approach would be implemented. For instance, mushroom farming is one such activity that families can do from home with small investments and great profits. In the same manner, the Makhana model in Bihar proved how CSR, government, and local community can all combine to produce effective results. Local people were educated about the product, helped to connect with markets and eventually became self-reliant by building sustainable livelihoods. This initiative also improved nutrition and health benefits.

The expert also referred to Kashmir's saffron, describing it as one of the Valley's most valuable agricultural products. Besides its economic importance, saffron is widely recognised for its health benefits. With better awareness, scientific cultivation, branding and market access, saffron can contribute even more significantly to the region's economy. CSR initiatives can support farmers by providing technical knowledge, modern processing facilities and stronger market connections.

At the end of the discussion, the expert shared a personal hope to see a practical and useful CSR model put in place across Jammu and Kashmir. The expert believed this model would involve young people, support local businesses, and create steady jobs instead of only offering short-term help. People also need to know more about CSR so that they understand its purpose and join in development efforts.

The expert concluded by encouraging young people to involve themselves in social work, community service and corporate initiatives. More corporate organisations should be invited to invest in Jammu and Kashmir through CSR programmes, treating these initiatives as opportunities to build lasting partnerships for development. If government institutions, NGOs, corporate houses and local communities work together with a shared vision, Jammu and Kashmir has the potential to build stronger livelihoods, empower its people and create a more sustainable future for generations to come.

Author writes on themes related to women's empowerment, rural livelihoods, entrepreneurship, health, and changing social realities in the Kashmir Valley. She can be mailed at rakshandagul629@gmail.com

Europe's Security Retrospection Within NATO



NAVEED QAZI

For more than three decades after the Cold War, European security rested on a simple assumption: the United States would remain the continent's ultimate military guarantor. Although disagreements arose over interventions in Iraq, trade disputes, or diplomatic priorities, few European governments seriously questioned Washington's commitment to NATO or Article 5's promise of collective defence.

That assumption has become less certain. Donald Trump's return to the White House has revived concerns first raised during his previous presidency. His repeated criticism of European allies for inadequate defence spending, his willingness to question long-standing American security commitments, and his transactional approach to alliances have intensified a debate already fuelled by Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Increasingly, European governments recognise that the continent must be capable of defending itself even if American political priorities shift.

This does not imply that the transatlantic alliance is collapsing. Rather, many observers have suggested that Europe must shoulder a much larger share of its own defence while preserving the alliance that has underpinned its security for more than seventy-five years.

The debate has largely centred on the European Union's pursuit of 'strategic autonomy.' Championed most prominently by French President Emmanuel Macron, the concept argues that Europe should acquire the capacity to act militarily without depending on Washington.

In particular, the European Union has supported this ambition through initiatives such as the European Defence Fund, Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), Common

Security and Defence Policy, and EU Mutual Assistance Clause, while the European Commission has increasingly framed defence as part of Europe's broader strategic sovereignty.

The objective is understandable. The practical obstacles, however, remain formidable.

The European Union is not a military alliance. It has no standing army, no integrated operational headquarters comparable to NATO's Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE), and no unified command responsible for planning and executing large-scale military operations. Defence procurement, force structure, budgeting, and deployment remain overwhelmingly the responsibility of national governments.

By contrast, NATO has spent decades developing an integrated military architecture. Its permanent command structure, common operational planning, intelligence-sharing arrangements, interoperability standards, joint exercises, and established logistics enable forces from thirty-two member states to operate together effectively. The Alliance's 2022 Strategic Concept reaffirmed that these integrated capabilities remain the foundation of credible deterrence and collective defence in Europe.

Building an equivalent European system would require far more than additional funding. It would also demand unprecedented political integration, including the willingness of member states to transfer significant authority over their armed forces to supranational institutions. That remains politically contentious.

The divisions are particularly evident in Central and Eastern Europe. Poland and the Baltic states, which view Russia as their principal security threat, continue to regard the United States as indispensable to deterrence. Rather than replacing NATO, they have consistently argued for stronger European military capabilities within the Alliance.

Many leading security scholars share this position. Lawrence Freedman of King's College London has long argued that military capability alone cannot sustain deterrence without credible alliances. Claudia Major of the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP) similarly contends that



Europe should strengthen its armed forces while reinforcing NATO's cohesion. Jana Puglierin of the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR) argues that greater European capability should complement, not compete with, the transatlantic partnership. Former US Ambassador to NATO Ivo Daalder has repeatedly maintained that stronger European militaries would produce a healthier and more balanced Alliance, while Sten Rynning of the University of Southern Denmark likewise advocates a stronger European pillar inside NATO rather than an alternative security structure.

Collectively, these scholars reject the notion that Europe must choose between dependence and complete independence. Instead, they argue that Europe should become more militarily capable while preserving NATO, reducing its reliance on Washington without weakening the alliance that has underpinned European security for decades.

This thinking increasingly reflects mainstream European politics. The European People's Party continues to support higher defence spending while reaffirming NATO as the cornerstone of European security. Germany's Christian Democratic Union has adopted a similar position, advocating stronger European capabilities that reinforce rather than replace the Atlantic Alliance. Even governments favouring deeper EU defence cooperation generally stop short of proposing NATO's replacement.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has reinforced these conclusions. The conflict exposed major weaknesses in Europe's military preparedness, including shortages of ammunition, air-defence systems, logistics, and defence-industrial capacity. Assessments by the European Defence Agency, the European Commission's 2024 European Defence Industrial Strategy, and the International Institute for Strategic

Studies (IISS) all highlight the need for sustained investment to rebuild Europe's military capabilities.

Despite its enormous economic strength, Europe continues to depend heavily on American intelligence, strategic airlift, satellite capabilities, precision-guided munitions, missile defence, and command-and-control systems. These shortcomings predated Trump's return to office, but renewed uncertainty in Washington has made them considerably more difficult to ignore.

Public opinion also reflects changing transatlantic perceptions. According to recent German Marshall Fund Transatlantic Trends surveys and Eurobarometer data, Canadians increasingly express more favourable views of the European Union than of the United States. While this hardly signals a rupture in North American-European relations, it suggests that Europe's reputation as a predictable, rules-based actor has strengthened even as American political consistency has become less certain.

There is also a consensus that Europe should also resist assuming that an EU-only defence framework could provide security for the entire continent. Infact, Europe's strategic geography extends well beyond the European Union itself.

The United Kingdom remains one of Europe's foremost military powers, possessing nuclear weapons, world-class intelligence capabilities, and highly experienced armed forces. Turkey fields NATO's second-largest military and occupies a pivotal position linking Europe, the Black Sea, the Middle East, and the Caucasus. Norway plays a vital role in Arctic surveillance and maritime security, while several Western Balkan states occupy strategically important positions for regional stability.

A security architecture centred exclusively on EU institutions would inevitably leave these countries outside its core decision-making mechanisms. NATO avoids this problem by integrating both EU and non-EU members within a single command structure, common planning process, and collective defence framework. Replicating those arrangements elsewhere would risk unnecessary duplication and strategic fragmentation.

The wider debate reflects a profound historical reversal. For much of the post-Cold War period, European leaders believed economic integration, democratic enlargement, and diplomacy would gradually export stability to neighbouring regions. Instead, instability has increasingly flowed towards Europe. Russia's aggression has transformed Eastern Europe into the continent's principal security frontier deserving strong attention, while conflicts across the Middle East, North Africa, and the Sahel have intensified migration pressures, terrorism, energy insecurity, and geopolitical competition.

As Ivan Krastev argued in After Europe, the European Union has increasingly shifted from exporting stability to managing instability around its borders. Mark Leonard of ECFR likewise observes that geopolitics has returned to Europe, replacing the optimism that characterised the post-Cold War era.

The strategic implications are becoming increasingly clear. Scholars including Lawrence Freedman, Claudia Major, Sten Rynning, and Sven Biscop argue that Europe requires higher defence spending, a stronger defence-industrial base, deeper military cooperation, and armed forces capable of sustaining high-intensity operations. Most European governments now accept these priorities, even if they disagree about the pace and depth of integration. The emerging consensus is not to build an alternative to NATO but to construct a far stronger European pillar within it.

It all shows that Trump's presidency has undoubtedly accelerated Europe's security reassessment. Whether this moment ultimately strengthens or weakens the transatlantic alliance will depend less on political cycles in Washington than on Europe's willingness to convert unprecedented defence commitments into lasting military capability while preserving the alliance that remains the foundation of the continent's collective defence.

Naveed Qazi is a prolific author and serves as Editor at Large for Science Matters India. Feedback at naveedqazi@live.com

IDEAS, OPINIONS AND VIEWS EXPRESSED IN ARTICLES PUBLISHED ARE WRITERS' OWN AND MAY NOT BE FOUND IN ACCORD WITH THOSE OF GOOD MORNING KASHMIR

■ Connecting Care

Community-Based Model Transforming TB And HIV Services

When Every HIV Visit Becomes A Chance To Stop TB



SHOBHA SHUKLA

TB continues to be the most common opportunistic infection as well as biggest cause of deaths of people living with HIV despite decades of progress in diagnosis, treatment and prevention. TB is preventable and curable but it was not so for over 150,000 people living with HIV who died of TB in 2024, as per latest UNAIDS report 2026 launched at 26th International AIDS Conference 2026 (AIDS 2026).

"If we could have prevented TB better among people with HIV or found TB earlier in them and treated it with medicines that work against their TB bacteria, we could have saved these lives. No one needs to die of TB, or HIV" says Prevent-Find-Treat ALL TB campaign. There were over 570,000 deaths in 2025 due to AIDS-related illnesses.

The challenge is not simply the availability of medical tools - it is ensuring that people are identified early enough and connected to care before the disease progresses - with human dignity and respect to their human right to health.

Experiences shared by Humana People to People India (HPPI) experts at AIDS 2026 suggest that one of the most effective ways to bridge this gap may already exist within India's health system: integrating latest science and evidence-based TB services into established HIV care and prevention platforms rather than creating entirely new programmes - and that too in person-centred manner and led by communities.

HPPI's National Partnership Officer Jahangeer Alam (a TB survivor and TB champion himself) and National Technical Advisor for TB, HIV and Health Dr Sugata Mukhopadhyay, described how strengthening collaboration between Government of India's National TB Elimination Programme (NTEP) and National AIDS Control Programme (NACP) is helping identify TB earlier, improve treatment completion and place people - not diseases - at the centre of healthcare.

A Hidden Challenge

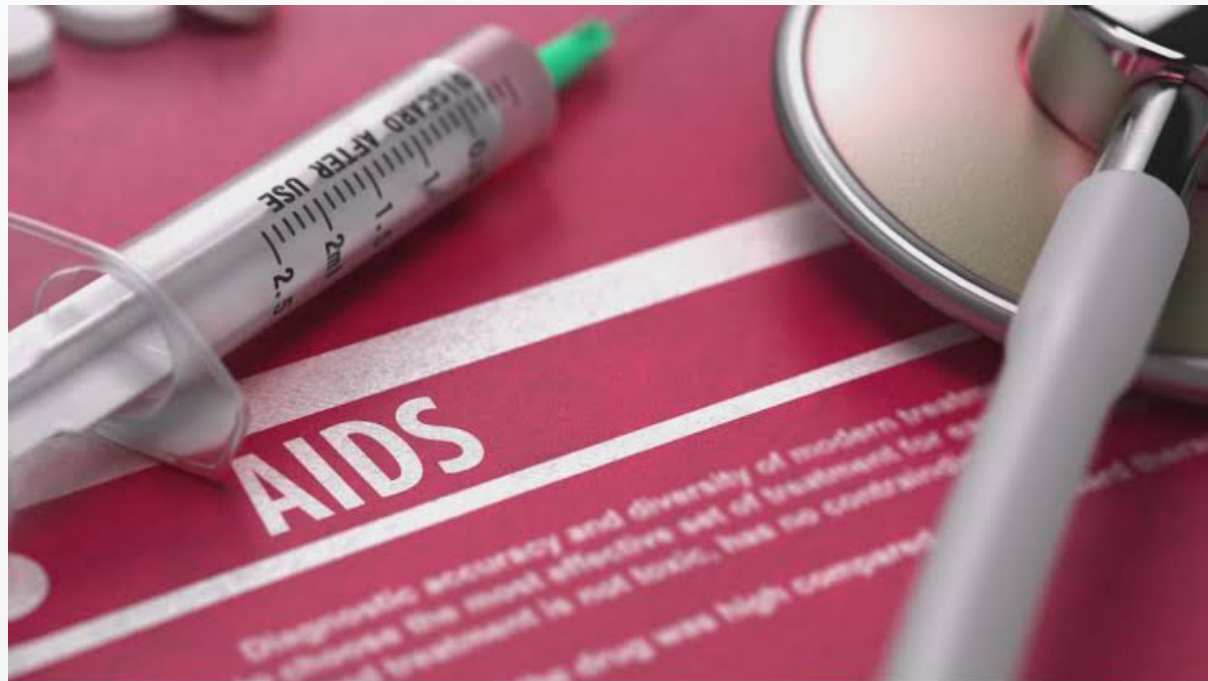
According to Jahangeer Alam, TB remains the leading cause of death among people living with HIV, accounting for one in four HIV-related deaths globally. The concern, he explained, is that TB among people living with HIV often does not follow the classic clinical picture. Many individuals may not present with persistent cough, fever, weight loss or other commonly recognised symptoms. When healthcare systems depend solely on symptom-based screening, many infections remain undetected until the disease has already advanced. Late diagnosis not only worsens health outcomes for the individual but also increases opportunities for continued transmission.

Another obstacle is that TB screening is not always fully integrated into routine HIV care and antiretroviral therapy (ART) services. Layered on top of this is the persistent intersectional stigma surrounding both HIV and TB, which is a formidable barrier for many people from seeking care early. These realities make service integration more than a matter of efficiency - it becomes a clinical and human rights necessity.

Turning every HIV visit into an opportunity to stop TB

To address these challenges, HPPI worked alongside government-run ART centres (where persons living with HIV come for collecting their lifesaving antiretroviral medicines and accessing other services) in Delhi and the government's National TB Elimination Programme to strengthen TB-HIV integration using an intentionally simple approach.

Rather than establishing new systems, the organisation used existing HIV care platforms to actively search for TB among people already attending ART centres. Since 7th December 2024, Government's TB programme had already made a science- and evidence-based foundational shift on how it finds TB by deploying artificial intelligence (AI) enabled handheld ultraportable X-Ray TB screening and offering upfront molecular test



to those with presumptive TB. More importantly, these tools were taken in a van to the high-risk communities across the country. Government-run programme found over a million asymptomatic people with TB disease in a year - none of them would have been found so early without this approach.

Between May and July 2026, HPPI screened 1,363 people living with HIV using a comprehensive ten-symptom verbal screening tool alongside chest X-ray assessment. Individuals identified as having presumptive TB subsequently underwent upfront rapid molecular testing.

The results highlighted the value of proactive screening

Among the 1,363 people screened, 259 were identified as presumptive TB cases, all of whom received diagnostic testing. Twenty-one individuals were diagnosed with TB and promptly linked to treatment. Perhaps the most significant finding, however, was that 12 of the 21 confirmed TB patients—57 percent—had no symptoms. For Alam, this was a powerful reminder that the absence of symptoms does not necessarily mean the absence of disease.

Without systematic screening that combined symptom assessment with chest X-ray and rapid molecular diagnostics, more than half of these TB cases could potentially have remained undetected. The experience reinforced an important lesson: every

existing outreach workers.

Community staff received training to conduct TB symptom screening, educate communities about both TB and HIV, reduce stigma and establish referral pathways with the National TB Elimination Programme for diagnosis, treatment and preventive therapy. The approach demonstrated that integration can be both practical and sustainable because it builds on trusted relationships that already exist within communities.

Rather than introducing unfamiliar health workers, the programme relied on outreach teams who already knew where vulnerable populations lived, worked and sought support. Trust, both HPPI leaders suggested, became one of the programme's strongest assets.

Beyond detection to continuum of care

HPPI's experience extended well beyond finding TB cases. Dr Sugata Mukhopadhyay emphasised that the organisation adopted an approach that follows individuals across the entire continuum of care.

Instead of stopping at diagnosis, the HPPI model supports people through TB treatment initiation, adherence, treatment completion and, where appropriate, TB preventive treatment for eligible household contacts and people living with HIV. Community-based regular follow up and support is so critical to help so many underserved people to journey

with TB, and all were started on treatment. In addition, 301 eligible people living with HIV completed TB preventive treatment. For Mukhopadhyay, however, the numbers tell only part of the story.

The greater achievement lay in demonstrating that comprehensive TB services can be delivered through existing HIV programmes without establishing parallel systems or requiring major additional financial resources.

No parallel systems, better out-

The challenge is not simply the availability of medical tools - it is ensuring that people are identified early enough and connected to care before the disease progresses - with human dignity and respect to their human right to health.



interaction between people living with HIV and healthcare providers represents an opportunity to identify TB before symptoms become severe.

The power of community platforms

While ART centres offer one important point of contact, Dr Sugata Mukhopadhyay described another equally significant opportunity - the extensive community-based HIV prevention network already operating across India. India's HIV prevention programme currently reaches approximately 15.8 million people through Targeted Intervention projects, Link Worker Scheme projects, Opioid Substitution Therapy centres and other outreach platforms.

Many of these populations - including female sex workers, gay men and other men who have sex with men, transgender people, people who inject drugs, migrant workers and truckers—not only face elevated HIV risks but are also vulnerable to TB. Instead of creating parallel TB programmes for these communities, HPPI strengthened the capacity of

from diagnosis to treatment to cure.

Drawing on experiences from four HPPI projects - three Targeted Intervention projects in Delhi, Unnao (Uttar Pradesh) and Kathakota (Telangana), together with one Link Worker Scheme project in Lucknow—the organisation integrated TB activities into routine HIV outreach without creating a separate service-delivery structure. The results over the five-year period from 2020 to 2025 demonstrated the potential of this approach.

Among HIV high-risk populations, more than 113,000 people were screened for TB symptoms. This led to 671 individuals being diagnosed with TB, initiated on treatment and successfully ALL completing treatment. The programme also extended beyond those directly diagnosed with TB. A total of 433 eligible household contacts completed TB preventive treatment, reducing their future risk of developing active disease.

Among people living with HIV, more than 500 individuals were screened, 11 people were diagnosed

tical and cost-effective. As Mukhopadhyay noted, the model was about "doing things differently - not necessarily doing more things separately."

Lessons from the field

Jahangeer Alam and Dr Sugata Mukhopadhyay call for 5 actions: First, symptom-based screening alone is insufficient for people living with HIV. Additional diagnostic approaches - including chest X-rays and upfront rapid molecular testing - can identify TB even when individuals have no obvious symptoms. But most essential is that all services must be person-centred, community-based and community-led, rights-based and ensure equitable access.

Second, every interaction with HIV services should be viewed as an opportunity for TB screening. Waiting until symptoms become severe risks delayed diagnosis, catastrophic costs, more infection spread, and poorer outcomes.

Third, successful integration depends on strong coordination between government-run HIV services and the National TB Elimination Programme. Screening alone has little value unless people are rapidly tested, promptly started on treatment and supported throughout their care.

Fourth, community-based outreach remains one of the strongest assets available to both TB and HIV programmes. Trusted frontline workers can overcome stigma, improve awareness and maintain continuity of care far beyond the clinic walls.

Finally, both Alam and Mukhopadhyay stressed that integration is not just a public health imperative but also financially sensible. Existing health systems, trained staff and established community platforms already provide much of the infrastructure required. Better coordination - not necessarily greater expenditure - can produce significant gains.

Putting people before programmes

Healthcare systems often organise themselves around diseases. People, however, experience health very differently. A person living with HIV does not separate TB, HIV, nutrition, mental health or other health concerns into distinct 'silos' or 'programmes.' They experience them as a single life with interconnected challenges. Both experts argued that health services should reflect this reality.

When TB and HIV services function independently, opportunities for early diagnosis, prevention and treatment may be lost. When services are integrated, people receive more comprehensive care, healthcare providers can respond earlier and programmes can work together rather than in isolation. The emphasis, therefore, shifts from managing diseases to supporting people.

A model for the future

As India continues its efforts to eliminate TB and AIDS by 2030, HPPI's experiences point towards a practical pathway that builds on existing strengths rather than creating new systems.

Proven impact of HPPI-run projects demonstrates that integrating community-based and supported TB screening, diagnosis, treatment and prevention into established HIV platforms is not only feasible but capable of identifying otherwise hidden cases, improving treatment completion and expanding preventive care among vulnerable populations.

Equally important, these initiatives show that collaboration between national programmes, community organisations and frontline workers can strengthen the continuum of care while making efficient use of available resources.

Ultimately, both Jahangeer Alam and Dr Sugata Mukhopadhyay delivered the same central message from different perspectives at AIDS 2026: people should never have to navigate fragmented health systems simply because diseases are managed separately. When healthcare is organised around the needs of individuals rather than around programmes, opportunities for synergy are less likely to be missed, treatment begins earlier, preventive care reaches more people and health outcomes improve.

Integrating TB and HIV services is about more than efficiency. It is about ensuring that no person living with HIV remains undiagnosed, untreated or left behind - and recognising that one person deserves one coordinated system of care.

Shobha Shukla is a feminist, health and development justice advocate. She can be mailed at ramakantbobby@gmail.com

Emergency hospitals to come up in Uri, Poonch

WARIS FAYAZ

SRINAGAR: The Government is set to establish dedicated emergency and accident hospitals in Uri and Poonch, with the facilities expected to strengthen healthcare access for residents living in the border areas along the Line of

Control (LoC).

The proposed hospitals, are expected to cater to residents of LoC villages, where access to immediate medical treatment remains a challenge, particularly during shelling and other emergencies.

During his Independence Day speech at Baramulla, Cabi-

net Minister Javed Ahmad Dar said, "The dedicated hospitals are part of the government's broader focus on strengthening healthcare infrastructure across Jammu and Kashmir."

Speaking to KNO, MLA Uri Sajjad Shafi while welcoming the initiative said the facility would cater to LoC villages

where residents often struggle to receive timely treatment. "The hospital will cater to LoC villages. We often witness shelling in these areas, and people were not getting immediate treatment. It is a welcome step," he said.

Shafi said funds for the Uri hospital have already been

allocated, while land has been identified at Mohra and transferred to the Health Department.

He said the Detailed Project Report for the hospital has also been framed, indicating that key preparatory work for the project stands completed. The MLA said the proposed

facility would provide residents of remote and shelling-prone areas with quicker access to emergency medical care and reduce their dependence on distant hospitals.

The government has also proposed a dedicated emergency and accident hospital in Poonch, another border dis-

trict with a substantial population living close to the LoC.

The two facilities are expected to strengthen emergency healthcare services in the border belt and improve access to timely treatment for accident victims and people requiring urgent medical intervention—(KNO)

Sopore Fruit Mandi caught in dispute between two trader groups

WARIS FAYAZ

SOPORE: Asia's second-largest Fruit Mandi has become the centre of a dispute between two rival fruit traders' bodies, with mandi president Fayaz Ahmed Malik urging authorities to act against those allegedly attempting to disrupt its functioning. He said the livelihood of thousands is linked to the mandi's uninterrupted operations.

President of the Fruit Mandi Sopore (Kashmir Fruit Growers and Dealers Association), Fayaz Ahmed Malik @ Kaka Ji, told that the Association, registered in 1979, had been working for the welfare of the Fruit Mandi and its associates.

Malik's remarks came after a general council meeting of the association was allegedly disrupted by some individuals.



He urged SSP Sopore to take cognisance of the incident and register an FIR against those allegedly involved. He also sought verification of their past

records.

"Those who disturb the Mandi operations should think 100 times before doing so," Malik said, adding that any disruption

could have a wider impact on the functioning of the Mandi and the livelihood of thousands associated with it.

He said the Association was ready to provide any details sought by the administration in the interest of the Fruit Mandi. At the same time, he urged authorities to act swiftly against elements attempting to disturb peace and disrupt operations.

Sopore Fruit Mandi is a major horticulture trading centre in Jammu and Kashmir and serves as an important link between fruit growers and the wider market. Its functioning supports thousands of growers, traders, commission agents, transporters, labourers, packers and other people directly and indirectly associated with the fruit trade.

Meanwhile, Zahoor Ahmed

Bhat, president of a newly formed body functioning parallel to the Kashmir Fruit Growers and Dealers Association, said he had no personal grudge against Malik.

Bhat called for accountability and fair means in the functioning of the Mandi body, saying that if Malik could prove himself right, they would stand by him.

He also urged mandi associates not to be misled amid the ongoing dispute.

The rival positions have brought the functioning and representation of the Sopore Fruit Mandi into focus, with both sides calling for accountability while urging that the dispute should not affect the normal functioning of the mandi and the livelihoods linked to it—(KNO)

Authorities direct eateries to disclose meat type on menus

Mutton, beef, chicken, fish must be clearly mentioned: FDA

AGENCIES

SRINAGAR: Authorities have directed hotels, restaurants, cafes, dhabas, sweet shops, bakeries, caterers and other food business operators to clearly disclose the type of meat used in food preparations.

In an advisory, Commissioner Food & Drugs Administration J&K, Khalid Jahangir said establishments serving meat or meat products should clearly mention whether a preparation contains mutton, beef, chicken, fish or any other type of meat.

"Such information should be displayed on menu cards, Food Safety Information Boards and display counters or menu displays, wherever applicable, and should be accurate, legible, visible and updated," Jahangir said.

The administration has

also directed food business operators to display Food Safety Information Boards at prominent places in their establishments, containing details including the FSSAI licence number and customer care number.

It further advised establishments such as "Meat Curry", "Meat Biryani", "Meat Kebab" or "Non-Vegetarian" without specifying the type of meat used.

All Designated Officers and Food Safety Officers have been directed to disseminate the advisory among food business operators and verify compliance during inspections.

The advisory stated that non-compliance with applicable provisions of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, and rules and regulations made thereunder would attract appropriate action in accordance with law—(KNO)

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

CM Reviews Prep for

filmmakers, artists, delegates, guests and audiences.

He directed all concerned departments and agencies to remain fully geared up and ensure that every aspect of the festival is put in place well ahead of its commencement.

Omar Abdullah called for prominently showcasing Jammu and Kashmir's rich heritage, cuisine, handicrafts, traditional art forms and iconic tourist destinations during the festival.

He stressed that meticulous planning and seamless coordination among all stakeholders would be essential to establish IFFJK as a premier annual event on the global film calendar.

The meeting also took stock of security and traffic arrangements, airport facilitation, hospitality and protocol, accommodation, transportation, medical facilities, power supply, sanitation, beautification, venue preparedness and other logistical requirements. Dedicated liaison and nodal officers are being put in place to facilitate coordination with the Information Department and visiting guests.

The Information Department was tasked with maintaining a consolidated action matrix covering departmental responsibilities, timelines, progress and pending issues, besides coordinating invitations, participant facilitation and media arrangements. Plans for extensive publicity and branding of IFFJK at regional and national levels through print, electronic, digital and outdoor media were also discussed.

The festival is expected to bring together filmmakers, artists, storytellers, industry leaders, policymakers, academicians, students and audiences from across the country and abroad, creating opportunities for dialogue, networking and collaboration through cinema.

The Chief Minister stressed that IFFJK should emerge as a flagship international event that showcases Jammu and Kashmir's cultural richness and creative potential to the wider world, while creating meaningful opportunities and a wider platform for local filmmakers and emerging talent.

The meeting was attended by Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Dheeraj Gupta, ACS Finance, ACS Tourism, Commissioner Secretary Information, Secretary Education, Secretary Culture, Secretary Transport, Secretary Hospitality & Protocol, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Inspector General of Police Kashmir Zone, IGP Security, Director Information, Heads of Departments of line departments, and senior officers of the concerned departments and agencies.

The officers briefed the Chief Minister on the status of preparations and the action being taken to ensure the successful conduct of the festival. The outstation officers participated in the meeting through video conferencing.

NIA Court Issues

Yaqoob was among 23 individuals designated as terrorists by the Union Home Ministry on July 4. He operates as an LeT operational commander based in Islamabad (Chatta Bakhtawar) and also coordinates financial and logistical support for other LeT cadres active in Kashmir to carry out terrorist activities in India.

According to the court order dated July 16, the officials said the warrant was sought by the NIA against Yaqoob, who is listed as a designated terrorist under Section 35 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, in connection with an ongoing investigation in a case registered under UAPA, Arms Act and Explosive Substances Act at a police station in Srinagar.

The case stems from the arrest of a motorcyclist Mohammad Naqeeb Bhat at Gujar Tent, Pandach and recovery of a Chinese grenade and 15 live rounds early this year.

Bhat's arrest led to the busting of a major terror network spread across different states of the country and arrest of four more terrorists including two Pakistani nationals - Abdullah Rajput alias Kamran Ahmed and Khubaib alias Usman Jatt.

The NIA told the court that investigation had revealed the involvement of Pakistan-based handler Mohammad Yaqoob, based on material collected and disclosures made by the arrested terrorists.

The agency said Yaqoob had provided directions to the arrested accused to carry out terrorist activities in the Valley, including attacks on security forces and civilians.

After examining the application and record, the court observed that the accused was at large and that the investigating agency had been unable to secure his attendance through ordinary means, the officials said.

The court accordingly allowed the application and issued a general non-bailable warrant of arrest, forwarding it to the Deputy Inspector General, NIA Jammu for execution in accordance with law, they added.

J&K Braces For

gusty winds reaching 30-40 kmph in Kashmir during the coming days. Isolated heavy rain has also been forecast for August 22 and 23.

For Jammu division, the forecast carries a more significant weather impact, with iso-

lated heavy rain, thunderstorms, lightning and gusty winds of 30-40 kmph likely during the period. The department has cautioned about the possibility of landslides, mudslides, shooting stones and flash floods at vulnerable places.

Meanwhile, temperatures remained above normal in several parts of J&K during the past 24 hours. The maximum temperature was 33.0°C in Srinagar in Kashmir division and 35.0°C at Kathua in Jammu division. Minimum night temperatures were also 1-2°C above normal at many places in Kashmir, while they remained near normal at several places in Jammu division.

Gulmarg recorded the lowest minimum temperature in Kashmir division at 12.7°C, while Bhaderwah recorded the lowest in Jammu division at 17.8°C.

The weather bulletin also recorded light to moderate rain and thunder across parts of the region, with Mirpur receiving the highest precipitation at 81.6 mm during the period under review.

For Wednesday, August 19, Srinagar is expected to remain generally cloudy with light rain or thunderstorms, with the maximum and minimum temperatures likely to hover around 30°C and 22°C, respectively. Jammu is forecast to have a generally cloudy sky with light to moderate rain or thunderstorms, with temperatures expected around 32°C and 25°C.

The weather office has advised people to remain alert, particularly in areas vulnerable to landslides, mudslides, shooting stones and flash floods during spells of heavy rainfall.

The seven-day forecast issued by the Meteorological Centre covers the period from 8:30 am on August 18 to 8:30 am on August 25.

LG Reviews Welfare

improved coordination on pension-related matters.

The Lieutenant Governor reiterated his commitment to the welfare of veterans and their families, assuring that every step will be taken to honour their sacrifices and guarantee a life of dignity.

The Board also discussed empanelment of government hospitals including AIIMS Jammu, GMC Rajouri, GMC Doda and Government Hospital Kupwara with ECHS for enhanced healthcare access.

The Lieutenant Governor also chaired the State Management Committee (SMC) meeting on the Armed Forces Flag Day Fund.

The Committee considered welfare-oriented proposals covering medical and health support, infrastructure, outreach, education and skill development.

The Committee also proposed several key initiatives including education and career

incentives, psychological counsellors in identified areas, skill-development support and improved welfare infrastructure.

Jaishankar Arrives

Partnership (CSP Roadmap), which was unveiled during the visit of H.E. Mr Lawrence Wong, Prime Minister of Singapore, to India in September 2025," the MEA stated while reflecting on the significance of the roundtable.

"The 4th round of ISMR will enable both sides to review the progress of various ongoing initiatives, and identify avenues to further strengthen India-Singapore collaboration," it added.

The fourth edition of the India-Singapore Business Roundtable, which serves as a strategic and advisory forum of key business leaders, will also be held along with ISMR.

BJP Warns Of Stronger

"Where is the free electricity? Where is the gas? What happened to regularisation of daily wagers and increase in pension?" he asked.

The BJP leader said the opposition would continue to raise issues affecting the people and seek answers from the government on promises made before the elections. [KNT]

NTA Revamps

meeting on the NTA, with the focus on strengthening security and infrastructure for the conduct of examinations.

The NTA offices will be shifted to the new premises at Minto Road, while security arrangements will also be strengthened."NTA offices will be shifted to the new premises on a war footing where security will be reinforced with CISF teams," the Ministry said.

Meanwhile, on Monday, Education Minister Pralhad Joshi held a meeting with the Secretary, Department of Higher Education, NTA Director General, and other senior officials to review steps taken by the National Testing Agency (NTA) following recent issues and discuss reforms in the examination system.

During the meeting, the Minister was apprised that more than 50 NTA staff members had been removed as part of the steps being taken to reform the agency.

The NTA was directed to conduct a thorough audit of all examination processes and submit a report on the corrective action taken. Joshi directed officials to ensure strict compliance with established examination protocols. (ANI)

ADDRESS:- SADAT MARKET, NEAR PNB, SHADIPORA SUMBAL

+91- 9906230114- 6006600834

DAR MATTING SHOP

DEALS IN:- BLANKETS, BED SHEETS, BED COVERS, PILLOW COVERS, DOOR MATS, ROOM SHEETS, GRAPHICS, LINING, ROTTERY & MUCH MORE

J&K Sets District-Wise Roadmap for Sports Infrastructure, Wider Access to Sporting Facilities

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Commissioner/Secretary, Department of Youth Services & Sports, Dr Shahid Iqbal Choudhary, today chaired a comprehensive review of the department's sports infrastructure, ongoing capital works, Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS), Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment (SASCI) projects and programmes for strengthening sports and youth engagement across Jammu and Kashmir.

The review took stock of the work undertaken by the department over the past several months and set out a district-level roadmap for expansion, upgradation and better utilisation of sports facilities, with particular emphasis on equitable access, athlete development and time-bound completion of projects.

The meeting was attended by Director General Youth Services & Sports J&K Anuradha Gupta, senior officers of the department, Planning, Financial Advisor and Sports Council representatives, Chief Planning Officers, District Statistical and Evaluation Officers and District Youth Services & Sports Officers from across the Union Territory.

A detailed presentation was



made on the portfolio of sports infrastructure projects taken up under CapEx, SASCI and CSS, along with the status of ongoing works, funding, execution and future requirements. The department has taken up 210 new sports projects under CapEx and 17 projects under SASCI, with a cumulative investment of over ₹500 crore. Against these projects, around ₹160 crore has already been released to the concerned Heads of Departments and executing agencies.

Dr Shahid directed the concerned agencies to expedite tendering and execution while maintaining quality standards and ensuring that projects are completed within approved timelines. He stressed that the focus should not only be on creation of new assets but also on making existing infrastructure functional,

accessible and suitable for regular sporting activity.

The Commissioner/Secretary emphasised that infrastructure planning must be linked with a clear pathway for identification, nurturing and development of sporting talent. Facilities are to be assessed not merely as physical assets but for their ability to support regular coaching, competitions, access to equipment, fitness and conditioning, talent identification and progression of promising athletes.

The department will accordingly work towards strengthening the sporting ecosystem from the grassroots, with appropriate linkages between schools, colleges, district-level facilities, coaching programmes and higher-level training opportunities.

He also directed that existing playgrounds and indoor facilities be

designed around actual local requirements and receive sustained community utilisation.

Particular attention, he directed, should be given to border and remote areas, hilly and difficult terrain, tribal areas and other underserved regions, besides ensuring adequate sporting opportunities in schools, colleges and other educational institutions. The approach will seek to create a more balanced sports ecosystem in which access to facilities is not determined by geographical location.

The Commissioner/Secretary emphasised that infrastructure planning must be linked with a clear pathway for identification, nurturing and development of sporting talent. Facilities are to be assessed not merely as physical assets but for their ability to support regular coaching, competitions, access to equipment, fitness and conditioning, talent identification and progression of promising athletes.

The department will accordingly work towards strengthening the sporting ecosystem from the grassroots, with appropriate linkages between schools, colleges, district-level facilities, coaching programmes and higher-level training opportunities.

He also directed that existing playgrounds and indoor facilities be

assessed for essential equipment, amenities and support systems so that the substantial public investment already made translates into greater utilisation and sporting outcomes.

Regularisation and career progression of Rehbar-e-Khel : The meeting also reviewed the status of regularisation of Rehbar-e-Khel (ReKs) engaged by the department. The Commissioner/Secretary was informed that formalities relating to the proposed regularisation of around 1,800 ReKs are at an advanced stage, while a proposal covering another 500 ReKs has been submitted to the Finance Department.

Dr Shahid Iqbal directed that the process be pursued on priority and with the objective of completing the regularisation process for all eligible ReKs during the current year, subject to completion of requisite statutory and financial formalities.

The meeting also reviewed the status of Physical Education Masters, Zonal Physical Education Officers and Physical Education Lecturers, with particular focus on career progression, regularisation and convening of Departmental Promotion Committees at different levels. Directions were issued for completing the pending processes in a time-bound manner.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have changed my name from (old name) Saleema Begum to (new name) Saleema Banu. In future, i will be know as (new name) Saleema Banu. If anybody is having any objection , he/ she may contact Passport Office, Srinagar within 7 days. After 7 days no objection will be accepted.

CORRECTION

It is hereby notified for the information of all concerned that the name in my son was incorrectly registered as Mirab Maqbool, Daughter of Mohd Maqbool Chat, resident of Pulwama instead of Merab Maqbool, Daughter of Mohammad Maqbool Chat, resident of Pulwama. Now i want to correct it. Any person having any objection in this regard may contact office of the Principal Lyceum International School, Pulwama within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. No objection will be entertained after this period.

Merab Maqbool
Daughter of Mohammad Maqbool Chat
Resident of Chatapora Pulwama

CORRECTION

It is hereby notified for the information of all concerned that the name in my Aadhaar bearing No. 222437702513 was incorrectly registered as GH MOHI UD DIN MALIK, son of ABDULLAH MALIK, Resident of DOLIPORA, KREERI, BARAMULLA, instead of GH MOHI DIN MALIK S/O ABDULLAH MALIK, Resident of DOLIPORA, KREERI, BARAMULLA. Now i want to correct it. Any person having any objection in this regard may contact the concerned authorities within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. No objection will be entertained after this period.

GH MOHI DIN MALIK
S/O ABDULLAH MALIK
DOLIPORA KREERI BARAMULLA

CEO FSSAI convenes interactive session with Food Business Operators

Assures support for strengthening food safety infrastructure

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), Rajit Punhani, Tuesday chaired an interactive session with the representatives of Food Business Operators (FBOs), trade and industry associations and other stakeholders at the SKICC, Srinagar.

They discussed issues related to food safety, regulatory compliance, testing infrastructure, training and ease of doing business in Jammu and Kashmir.

The session was attended by Devesh Kumar Mahla, Director, Northern Region, FSSAI; Khalid Jahangir, Commissioner, Food & Drugs Administration, J&K; Joint Commissioner Food Safety, Deputy Commissioners Food Safety, Jammu/ Kashmir and other senior officers of the Department.

Representatives of Kash-



mir Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI), Hotels and Restaurants Associations, Confederation of All India Traders, All Kashmir Houseboat Owners Association, Kashmir Bakers and Confectioners Association, Federation of Trade and Industry, Spices Industries Kashmir besides other trade bodies and Food Business Operators participated in the interaction. They shared their concerns and suggestions regarding the licensing, food testing, training, regulatory compliance and other matters concerning the food business sector.

The interaction also focused

on licensing, registration, training and capacity building of Food Business Operators and other issues relating to food safety regulations.

The CEO encouraged the FBOs to participate in FSSAI training programmes and comply with the prescribed food safety standards and regulatory requirements.

While appreciating the role of the FDA, J&K, in streamlining the licensing and registration process and facilitating ease of doing business, the representatives of various trade bodies informed that the Food Business Operators

are increasingly adopting the prescribed food safety and quality standards and working towards achieving conformity with the applicable requirements. They requested FDA, J&K, to continue its supportive, facilitative and handholding approach, with greater emphasis on guidance and compliance while taking necessary enforcement action wherever required. The participating associations and FBOs assured their full cooperation with FDA, J&K and FSSAI in strengthening food safety compliance. They also appreciated the Department's efforts in conducting training and awareness programmes and providing handholding support, particularly to hotels, restaurants and bakery establishments. The stakeholders stated that these initiatives have contributed to improved awareness and better compliance with the food safety requirements.



GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

HEALTH & MEDICAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

CIVIL SECRETARIAT, J&K,

Subject:- Compassionate appointment of Smt. Santosh Kumari W/o Late Sanjay Kumar Bhat, Ex-Jr. Pharmacist, R/o Bongam, Tehsil & District Kulgam, (A/P H.No. 440 Sec. 2 Vinayak Nagar Muthi, Jammu), J&K, Directorate of Health Services, Jammu (Division cadre) under Jammu & Kashmir Rehabilitation Assistance Scheme-2022.

Reference:- i. Minutes of the meeting of Evaluation Designated Committee held on 03.07.2025 in Civil Secretariat, Jammu/Srinagar;
ii. Form No. 159234 dated 23.06.2026 received from Criminal Investigation Department, J&K;
iii. General Administration Department U.O No. GAD-RAS/26/2026 (7748064) dated 12.05.2026.

Government Order No. 617-JK(HME) of 2026.
Dated:- 10.08.2026

In exercise of the powers conferred under Clause-3 of Jammu and Kashmir Rehabilitation Assistance Scheme, 2022 notified vide S.O. 429 dated 6th September, 2022 read with S.O. 397 dated 16th of August, 2024, sanction is hereby accorded to the temporary appointment of Smt. Santosh Kumari W/o Late Sanjay Kumar Bhat, Ex-Jr. Pharmacist, R/o Bongam, Tehsil & District Kulgam, (A/P H.No. 440 Sec. 2 Vinayak Nagar Muthi, Jammu), J&K, in Directorate of Health Services, Jammu, Division Cadre Jammu as MTS in the Pay Level SL-1 (14800-47100). The appointee shall report to the Director, Health Services, Jammu, within a period of 21 days from the date of issuance of this Government Order, failing which she shall forfeit her right to appointment and the same shall be deemed to have been cancelled ab-initio without any further notice.

The appointee shall be allowed to join only on the production of the following certificates (in original) to be verified subsequently:-

- Academic Qualification Certificates.
- Date of Birth Certificate.
- Health Certificate from the concerned Chief Medical Officer of the District.
- Domicile Certificate.
- Certificate of Current Marital Status issued by the competent authority concerned.
- All other relevant documents as are required under the J&K Rehabilitation Assistance Scheme-2022.

The appointment of the appointee shall be subject to completion of all codal formalities as envisaged under relevant rules and regulations as well as fulfillment of following conditions:

- The applicant shall give an undertaking in writing as per format prescribed in the Scheme that she shall maintain properly the other family members who were dependent on the deceased and in case, it is proved subsequently, at any time that the family members are being neglected or are not being maintained properly by her, appointee shall be terminated forthwith.
- Any claim for transfer of appointment to any other family member shall invariably be rejected.
- The appointee shall be adjusted against appropriate category to which she belongs. In case the appointee fails to produce any valid category certificate, she shall be adjusted against General category.
- That she shall give an undertaking in the shape of an Affidavit to the effect that if on verification, her Qualification/Date of Birth/Category Certificates, if any, from the concerned issuing authority are found to be fake/forged, the claim of the appointee for appointment as Class- IV/Multitasking Staff (MTS) shall be deemed to have been cancelled ab-initio and legal action as warranted under rules shall be initiated against her.
- That she shall give an undertaking in the shape of an Affidavit duly attested by the Judicial Magistrate First Class, to the effect that the applicant is unemployed as on date and none of the family members other than the applicant has taken benefit of compassionate appointment under J&K Rehabilitation Assistance Scheme-2022. In case, it turns out that the applicant is already appointed or the benefit of compassionate appointment under the Scheme has already been extended to the family of the deceased, then the instant appointment shall be deemed to have been withdrawn ab-initio without any further notice.
- That if the candidate has taken loan for self-employment from District Industries Centre (DIC) / Employment Department, to be ascertained from the DIC and District Employment & Counselling Centre of the domicile District, she shall relinquish the proprietorship of unit/enterprise and also stakes, if any, in such self-employment unit/enterprise before joining the Government service. She shall be required to repay the entire loan liability in suitable EMIs to be worked out by the DDO concerned from her salary. The DDO concerned shall obtain an affidavit from the concerned appointee regarding both relinquishment of proprietorship and stakes, if any, in such a self-employment unit/enterprise and recovery to be made and also personally monitor its recovery.
- The salary of the appointee shall not be drawn and disbursed to her unless a satisfactory report in respect of genuineness of Qualification/Date of Birth/Category Certificate, if any, is received from the concerned authorities.
- The appointee shall be on probation for a period of two years.
- The appointment of the candidate shall be governed by the "New Pension Scheme" as notified vide SRO-400 of 2009 dated 24.12.2009.
- The appointment of the appointee shall be subject to outcome of writ petition(s), if any, pending before competent Court of Law.

By order of the Government of Jammu & Kashmir.

No: HD-NG-J/147/2024-02 (CC. No. 7585228)
Dated:- 16.08.2026
DIPK-4716-26
DT: 18/08/2026

Sd/-

(M. Raju IAS,

Commissioner/Secretary to the Government,

Health & Medical Education Department.



GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR (U T)

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER MECHANICAL & HOSPITALS DIVISION HANDWARA

MECHANICAL & HOSPITALS ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT, KASHMIR.

email: xenmhd-handwara@jk.gov.in

CORRIGENDUM 02 (RETENDER)

Name of work:- Annual Operation and Comprehensive Maintenance of Oxygen Generation Plants at SDH Kupwara for the year 2026-27.

Reference: 1) e-NIT No. - MHDH/TS/2026-27/e NIT/38 Tender ID No.: 2026 PWDJK 318894 1

Due to no response, the above referred NIT is hereby re-tendered as under.

S. No.	Description	Date & Time
1	Document Submission End Date	25/08/2026 up to 1400hrs
2.	Date of Opening Cover-I	25/08/2026 at 1600hrs

All other terms, conditions and specifications of the NITs shall remain unchanged.

No: MHDH/TS/1576-79
Date:- 17/08/2026.
DIPK-4710-26
DT: 18/08/2026

Sd/-

Executive Engineer

Mechanical & Hospitals Division

Handwara



GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PWD (R&B) DIVISION

ANANTNAG.

NOTICE INVITING TENDERS

NIT NO 68 OF R&B/Anantnag/2026-27 /E-TENDERING/ 5859-68 DATED 17-08-2026

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, Union Territory of J&K e-tenders are invited on %age 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)	Earnest Money (In Rs)	Time of Completion	Major Head of Account	Class of Contractor
1.	Upgradation of DC Camp Office at Khanabal , Anantnag	28.00 Lacs Contract Price exclusive of GST: 23.73 + (18% GST Amount 4.27)	1100	56000/-	30 Days	District Capex Budget 2026-27 (Untied Grants)	AAY, BEE Class & MSME's Only

Project Authority : District Development Commissioner Anantnag.

Position of AAA : Accorded vide Order No. 389 - DDCA of 2026, Dated 11.04.2026.

1. The NIT Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms-and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental websitewww.jktenders.gov.in as per schedule of dates given below:

S. No.	Particulars	Dated	
1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	17-08-2026	
2	Period of Downloading of bidder documents	From 17-08-2026 To 24-08-2026	(04:00 PM)
3	Bid submission Start Date	From 17-08-2026	(04:00 PM)
4	Bid Submission End Date	To 24-08-2026	(04:00 PM)
5	Date and time of opening of bid(online)	25-08-2026	(10:30 AM)

In the office of Executive Engineer PWD(R&B) Division Anantnag.

- Bids must be accompanied with cost of tender document in shape of Treasury Challan / Receipt (Under MH- 0059 PWD) in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Division Anantnag [Tender Inviting Authority] (NIT No. and Name of Work/ Item No. to be mentioned on the Treasury Challan / Receipt and the Date of Treasury Challan should be between the date of Start of Bid and Bid Submission End Date) and EMD (2% of advertised Cost) in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG pledged to Executive Engineer PWD(R&B) Division Anantnag (Tender receiving Authority). (The Date of EMD (CDR/FDR/BG) should be between the date of Start of Bid and Bid Submission End Date and validity of EMD at the time of opening of Bids shall be a period of 45 Days beyond Bid Validity of 120 Days). The same EMD should not be used in more than one Tender/Bid.
- All the Bidders have to submit Earnest Money/Bid Security (EMD@2% of Advertised Cost) in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG. Non submission of Earnest Money/Bid Security shall render the bidder as Non-responsive.
- The 1st lowest responsive (Successful) Bidder has to produce an amount equal to 5% of contract as Performance Security in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Division Anantnag (Tender receiving authority) within 03 Days before fixation of Contract and shall be released 60 Days after successful completion of Defect Liability Period (DLP) of the work. The date of Performance Security (CDR/FDR/BG) should be after the date of issuance of letter/LOI to deposit the performance security. Failure to produce Performance Security shall render the L1 as non-responsive and case for debaring of the Contractor for a period of 01 Year be forwarded to Higher Authorities.
- The Earnest Money Deposit (EMD@2% of Advertised Cost) in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG of the successful Bidder shall be released after receiving Performance security @5% of the allotted cost in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG and same shall be released 60 Days after successful completion of Defect Liability Period (DLP) of the work.
- The rates quoted in the BOQ are exclusive of GST. GST @18 Percent shall be added to the contract value by the allotting authority at the time of issuance of allotment.
- The date and time of opening of Bid shall be notified on Web Site www.jktenders.gov.in and conveyed to the bidders automatically through e-mail message on their e-mail address. The bids of Responsive bidders shall be opened online on same Web Site in the office of Executive Engineer PWD(R&B) Division Anantnag.
- The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 days from the date of Opening of Technical bids.
- The Earnest Money/Performance Security shall be forfeited if:
a) Any bidder/tenderer withdraws his bid/tender during the period of bid validity or makes any modification in the terms and conditions of the bid.
b) Failure of successful bidder to furnish the required performance security within specified time period before issue of letter of intent.
c) Successful Bidder fails to execute the agreement within 28 days after fixation of contract.
d) If at any stage of work, the Bidder backup from the contract, again the Performance security/ EMD as well as work done claim will be forfeited.

35. Performance Security shall be released 60 Days after DLP is over successfully.

36. All other terms and conditions are as same as laid in PWD Form 25.

DIPK-4663-26
DT: 18/08/2026

Sd/-

(Er Mohammad Waseem)

Executive Engineer, R&B Division Anantnag

