



Committed to welfare of veterans, Veer Naris: LG Sinha

Chairs 81st meeting of J&K Rajya Sainik Board

State Management Committee proposes edu, career incentives for veterans' families

KT News Desk

Jammu, Aug 18: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Tuesday chaired the 81st Meeting of the 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; 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; Shailendra Kumar, Additional Chief Secretary, Finance Department; Chandekar Bharti, Principal Secretary, Home; Dr Mandeep K. Bhandari, Principal Secretary to Lieutenant Governor; Neena



Mishra, Principal Director, Department of Ex-Servicemen Welfare, Gol; Brig. Pankaj Chib (Retd.), Director Sainik Welfare Department, J&K; Brig Sandeep Kaushal, Cdr 21 Sub Area; Air Commodore VP Singh; Col Pradeep S Karki, Director, DRZ (North); Brig. Virender Singh Slathia (Retd.); and other senior officials.

The Board deliberated on

key issues concerning veterans, Veer Naris, widows, and dependents, covering welfare delivery, grievance redressal, healthcare, and institutional strengthening. These include the establishment of a ZSWO at Kishtwar and improved co-ordination 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 the empanelment of government hospitals—including AIIMS Jammu, GMC Rajouri, GMC Doda, and Government Hospital Kupwara—with ECHS for enhanced | [More on P6](#)

IFFJK to foster cultural exchange, creative collaboration: CM Omar

Reviews final preparations for inaugural International Film Festival of J&K, directs seamless coordination

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Aug 18: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on 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 Panorama, J&K Select, Best Debut Film, Documentary/Hybrid and Short Films. The programme will also feature masterclasses, panel discussions, in-conversation sessions, round tables and workshops involving filmmakers, actors,

critics, scholars and other prominent personalities from the film industry.

The meeting reviewed arrangements at the principal festival venues, including Sher-i-Kashmir International Convention Centre (SKICC), INOX Shivpora Srinagar and Waves Cinema Jammu, besides the proposed floating cinema at Lalit Ghat. Preparations for the Gulmarg excursion for a select group of filmmakers | [More on P6](#)

SFs launch searches in Udhampur, Reasi after suspicious movement

**KNO Correspondent**

Jammu, Aug 18: Security forces on Tuesday launched search operations at several locations in Udhampur and Reasi districts following reports of suspicious movement.

Official sources told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) the joint teams of the Jammu and Kashmir

Police and the CRPF launched a cordon-and-search operation in Talot village of Udhampur after receiving information about the suspected movement of some persons in the area last night.

Meanwhile, security forces also conducted a search operation in the Sadini forests of Pouni in Reasi district following reports of suspicious movement. "The operations | [More on P6](#)

Authorities direct eateries to disclose meat type on menus

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

KNO Correspondent

Srinagar, Aug 18: 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, accessed by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), 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 to avoid generic descriptions | [More on P6](#)

US ambassador Sergio Gor to visit Kashmir today

KNO Special Correspondent

Srinagar, Aug 18: 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 told news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) 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)

Employees of five new GMCs begin indefinite strike over pending recruitment rules

Warn strike to continue until service rules notified

Jahangeer Ganaie

Srinagar, Aug 18: The employees of five newly established Government Medical Colleges (GMCs) in Jammu and Kashmir have started an indefinite strike over the prolonged delay in finalising Service Recruitment Rules (SRRs), with the protesting staff warning that the agitation will continue until the rules are formally notified.

The strike, which began on Monday at GMC Rajouri, GMC Doda and GMC Kathua, spread to GMC Anantnag and GMC



Baramulla on Tuesday, bringing employees of all five new medical colleges under the banner of the ongoing agitation.

The employees, associated with the All India Registered

Nurses Federation (AIRNF), J&K UT Committee, are demanding immediate finalisation of service rules governing non-gazetted employees recruited for the five new GMCs established

in 2019.

The protesting employees, as reported by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said the prolonged absence of a formal service framework has left thousands of workers without regular promotional avenues despite several years of service.

More than 3,300 non-gazetted employees, including nursing, paramedical, clerical and multitasking staff, are reportedly affected by the issue. Employees said many of them have completed the required years of service but have not been considered for regular promotions due to the non-finalisation of the rules and the absence | [More on P6](#)

Mother killed, son injured as scooty skids off road

KNO Correspondent

Shopian, Aug 18: A woman died while her son sustained injuries after the scooty they were travelling on skidded off the road in the Amerbugh area of Imam Sahib in south Kashmir's Shopian district on Tuesday.

An official told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that the woman was travelling as a pillion rider on the scooty being driven by her son when the vehicle skidded off the road at Amerbugh.

He said that the woman sustained critical injuries in the incident and died on the spot, while her son suffered minor injuries.



The deceased was later identified as Saja Banoo, wife of Ghulam Qadir Naikoo, a resident of Kharwara, while her injured son was identified as Shakeel Ahmad Naikoo, son of Ghulam Qadir Naikoo.

Police have taken cognisance of the incident and further investigation is underway. (KNO)

Man killed after scooty collides with truck

KNO Correspondent

Srinagar, Aug 18: A 50-year-old man was killed after the scooty he was riding collided with a truck at Fruit Mandi in Parimpora area of Srinagar on Tuesday, officials said.

An official told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that the accident occurred at Fruit Mandi, Parimpora, when the man's scooty collided with a truck bearing registration number JK13C-9806.

He said the man sustained injuries and was shifted to a nearby hospital, where doctors declared him dead.

The man was later identified as Mohd Anwar Magray (50), son of | [More on P6](#)

FSSAI assures support for strengthening food safety infrastructure in J&K

10,000 FBOs to be trained, lab capacity expanded under food safety push

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Aug 18: Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), Rajit Punhani on 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 Kashmir 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 | [More on P6](#)

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

Agricultural research should ultimately deliver higher productivity, lower input costs, climate resilience, better market access, increased farmers’ incomes



KT News Desk

NEW DELHI, AUGUST 18: 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, as per an official statement, called for greater focus on J&K-specific agricultural research and innovation, keeping in view the Union Territory’s unique

agro-climatic conditions, fragile eco-systems 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.

DC Anantnag reviews arrangements for Chhari Mubarak of SANJY-2026



KT News Desk

ANANTNAG, AUGUST 18: 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, as per an official statement, was attended by SSP Anantnag, Amod Ashok Nagpure, Commandant 8th JKAP, Chief Executive Officer PDA, Camp Directors of Nunwan Base Camp, Chandanwari, Sheshnag and Panjarni 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 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.

Streamlining Aadhaar Services Delivery DC Kulgam inaugurates Aadhaar Seva Kendra



KT News Desk

KULGAM, AUGUST 18: 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 biometrics 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, as per an official statement, 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.

ADC Sopore reviews progress of Agri-Stack Work in several Tehsils

KT News Desk

BARAMULLA, AUGUST 18: Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Sopore, Dr. S.A. Raina, Tuesday took stock of the ongoing AgriStack work in Tehsils Dangi-wacha, Dangerpora and Dangi-wacha, reviewing the progress being made towards completing the exercise within the stipulated timeline.

During the visit, the ADC interacted with the concerned field staff and officials engaged in the exercise and took detailed feedback regarding the ground-level progress, particularly the challenges being faced during the course of the work.

The ADC emphasized that AgriStack is an important initiative aimed at strengthening the digital agricultural ecosystem and ensuring accurate and comprehensive agricultural data.

He directed the concerned officials and field functionaries to work in close coordination and make all possible efforts to achieve the assigned targets within the given timeframe.

While acknowledging the various challenges being encountered at the field level, the ADC stressed the need for a proactive and coordinated approach, timely resolution of bottlenecks and regular monitoring of progress.

SBDU review meeting held to accelerate Mission YUVA implementation in Kulgam

KT News Desk

KULGAM, AUGUST 18: 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 officer(KEDI), 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.

BIS JKBO conducts DLO Sensitisation programme in Shopian



KT News Desk

SHOPIAN, AUGUST 18: 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, as per an official statement, 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 hallmarked 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.

Around 80 participants from various departments, including Health, Roads & Buildings (R&B), Education, Legal Metrology, Consumer Affairs, Tehsil Offices and other government departments, actively participated in the programme. The interactive sessions provided an opportunity for participants to raise queries and seek clarification on BIS certification, procurement requirements, hallmarking and applicable standards.

The programme concluded with an emphasis on strengthening coordination between BIS and government departments and promoting the use of quality-assured, standards-compliant products in public procurement and service delivery.

Har Ghar Jal Certification ADDC Shopian chairs review meeting on JJM 2.0 compliance

KT News Desk

SHOPIAN, AUGUST 18: A meeting was held Tuesday at the Mini Secretariat, Shopian, under the chairmanship of Additional District Development Com-

missioner (ADDC) Shopian, Dr. Nasir Ahmad Lone to review the mandatory compliance under Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) 2.0.

The ADDC, as per an official statement, directed the concerned officers

to expedite the certification process for all eligible villages without delay. He further instructed officials to strictly review ongoing works in areas where progress has been relatively slow to ensure timely completion.

ZONAL POLICE HQR’s KASHMIR SRINAGAR.

Phone/Fax No. 01942450299

E-mail: igkmr@jkpolice.gov.in

01942457689

GIST Re-Tender

Online tenders through GeM Portal in two bid system i.e., Technical bid and Financial bid are hereby invited from reputed Tour & Travel Operators, registered firms / Dealers for facilitating tour and travel (Bharat Darshan Tour Programme 2025-26 By Air) for five separate student groups (200 in each group) of six days tour to destination as given hereunder by way of air travel facility, transportation, hotel accommodation full day meals and for supply of uniform / clothing items as detailed hereunder:-

(Air Tickets from Srinagar to 05 destinations in India).

S.No.	Category	Name of District	Destination.
1	Group A	Ganderbal.	Srinagar to Delhi, Delhi to Hyderabad, Hyderabad to Srinagar.
2		Budgam.	
3	Group B	Bandipora.	Srinagar to Delhi, Delhi to Kolkata, Kolkata to Srinagar.
4		Kulgam.	
5	Group C	Baramulla (including PD Sopore).	Srinagar to Delhi, Delhi to Bangalore, Bangalore to Srinagar.
6.		Srinagar.	
7	Group D	Kupwara (including PD Handwara).	Srinagar to Delhi, Delhi to Mumbai, Mumbai to Srinagar.
8		Pulwama (including PD Awantipora).	
9	Group E	Anantnag.	Srinagar to Delhi, Delhi to Chennai, Chennai to Srinagar.
10		Shopian.	

The details of uniform 1 clothing items are as under:-

S.No.	Name of Items.	Quantity. 1000 No's.
1	Track Suits.	
2	T-Shirts.	1000 No's.
3	Sports Shoes.	1000 No's.
4	Caps.	1000 No's.
5	Tracking Bags.	1000 No's.
9	Cotton Hand Towels.	1000 No's.

7	Socks.	1000 No's.
8	Transportation for pickup / drop from Hotel / Airport to Sightseeing (05 days).	1000 Souls
9	Hotel accommodation for 5 days.	1000 Souls
10	Meals / Water / Refreshment for 06 days.	1000 Souls/day
11	Opening / Closing, Publicity, Memento, Banner for tour expenses.	1000 Souls
12	Tickets expenses at various monuments.	1000 Souls

The tenders should be accompanied with bid security (CDR/FRD/TRD) pledged to Accounts Officer ZPHQ Kashmir worth Rs. 10,00,000/- (Rupees ten lakhs only). The tender documents can be accessed / downloaded from the GeM Portal. Intending bidders should enclose all the following requisite documents at the time of submission of online tenders:-

1. GeM registration certificate issued by the competent authority.
2. Self-attested copy of GST registration Certificate / PAN Card.
3. Self-attested copy of registration of firm / supplier.
4. In case of Partnership Firm or Limited Company, copy of Partnership Deed or copy of certificate of incorporation along with articles of association and memorandum.
5. Copies of ownership documents in respect of firms / company.
6. GST clearance certificates for last three years.
7. Address proof of the authorized signatory (copy of passport, telephone, electricity bill / voter ID etc.).
8. Copy of income tax returns for last 3 years.
9. Affidavit duly attested by 1st Class Magistrate to the effect that the tenderer or any of the partners or representative were never black listed by any Government Department / PSUs / Corporation.
10. Any experience of similar tour may be enclosed.

No: Accts/26/BDT-198-B/37413-33
Dated: 18/08/2026

DIPK-4713/26

DATED: 18-08-2026

V.K Birdi IPS
INSPECTOR GENERAL OF POLICE, KASHMIR ZONE.

CM Omar holds MLA meet on development, welfare issues



KT News Desk

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

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

constituencies.

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.

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, Cabinet 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 district 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)

Delegations call on LG Sinha



KT News Desk

Srinagar: Brig. Chirag Ghura, Chief Engineer, Project Beacon, Border Roads Organisation (BRO), called on Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha today.

Brig. Ghura briefed the Lieutenant Governor on the track development for Shri Amarnathji Yatra and discussed various other ongoing BRO infrastructure projects across the Union Territory.

He was accompanied by Brig. S. Deepak, Chief Engineer (Designate), Project Beacon.

In the meantime, Dr. Touseef Bhatt, President, Rotary Club of Kashmir, called on Lieutenant Governor and discussed Rotary's initiatives

aimed at Youth Empowerment, Environmental Conservation, and Drug De-addiction.

He also expressed heartfelt gratitude to the Lieutenant Governor for his continued support and steadfast commitment to societal welfare and development of the UT.

Subsequently, Sameer Bakto, President, Eco-tourism Association of Kashmir, also met the Lieutenant Governor and highlighted important matters pertaining to sustainable tourism, preservation and conservation of the region's natural heritage and fragile ecosystems, and driving "No-Polythene" practices across hill stations.

Ganderbal administration crippled by additional charges, vacant posts

KNO

Ganderbal, Aug 18: Administrative functioning in Ganderbal district has been affected as several key departments are either functioning without regular heads or have officers holding additional charges, leading to difficulties in the smooth disposal of public matters.

Among the posts reportedly lying vacant are those of Tehsildar Ganderbal and Tehsildar Tulmulla. Several other important offices are also functioning under officers holding additional responsibilities.

The situation is particularly noticeable in the Rural Development Department, where Block Development Offices, including Gund and Safapora, are functioning amid administrative constraints. The posts of Project Officer ICDS and other key departmental positions have also been affected by additional-charge arrangements.

Sources said that officers in departments including Fisheries, Floriculture, and Mining are also holding additional charges, with some officials entrusted with responsibilities outside their respective districts, further adding to the administrative burden.

Locals said several public issues related to these departments remain pending. They further said that the practice of assigning additional charges and

Continued on
www.kashmirthunder.in

Fruit Mandi dispute pits traders against each other



Waris Fayaz

Sapore, Aug 18: 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 Sapore (Kashmir Fruit Growers and Dealers Association), Fayaz Ahmed Malik @ Kaka Ji said 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 Sapore 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.

Sapore 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.

Continued on
www.kashmirthunder.in

Chargesheet filed for influencing CB probe

KNO

Srinagar, Aug 18: The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) Kashmir of Crime Branch J&K on Tuesday said it has filed a chargesheet against a Budgam man for allegedly attempting to influence an ongoing investigation by transferring Rs 10,000 into the bank account of an Investigation Officer.

In a statement, a spokesperson said the EOW Kashmir has filed the chargesheet before the Court of Special Judge, Anti-Corruption, Srinagar, in case FIR No. 28/2026 against Ghulam Ahmad Ganie, son of Ghulam Moham-mad Ganie, a resident of Mirgund, Budgam, for offences punishable under Section 8 of the Prevention of Corruption Act and Sections 228 and 229 of the BNS.

He said the investigation was initiated on the basis of a written complaint alleging that the accused, who is also an accused in the ongoing investigation of FIR No. 11/2021 of Crime Branch Kashmir, now EOW Kashmir,

transferred Rs 10,000 into the bank account of an Investigation Officer with the alleged intention of bribing and influencing the investigation in the case.

The spokesperson said that upon receipt of the complaint, a probe was ordered. During the investigation, the allegations were examined and relevant evidence was collected. The investigation established the involvement of the accused in the alleged act, following which the chargesheet was prepared and presented before the court for judicial determination in accordance with law.

He said the general public is advised not to offer or pay bribes to any public servant for obtaining any favour or service. Any demand for a bribe or involvement in corrupt practices should be immediately reported to the competent authorities for necessary legal action.

Public cooperation and timely reporting are essential to curb corruption

Continued on
www.kashmirthunder.in

Contractors protest, lock Jal Shakti office

Jahangeer Ganaie

Anantnag Aug 18: Contractors associated with the Jal Shakti Department on Tuesday staged a protest at the Public Health Engineering (PHE) Division office in Bi-jbehara, demanding the immediate release of their long-pending payments, deposited amounts and bills for developmental works completed under various government schemes.

As part of the protest, the agitated contractors locked the office of the Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti, Bijbehara, expressing strong resentment over what they described as prolonged official inaction in clearing their outstanding dues.

The contractors said several works executed by them have remained unpaid for years, with some payments pending since 2019. They said the delay had pushed many members of the contracting community into severe financial distress, as they had already invested substantial amounts in labour, material and other expenses to complete the assigned works.

Abdul Waheed Khan, President of the South Kashmir Contractors Association, said contractors had repeatedly approached the concerned authorities seeking settlement of their dues, but their grievances had not been addressed adequately.

"We have completed the works



entrusted to us and fulfilled our responsibilities, but our payments have remained pending for years. How can contractors survive when the money invested in government works is not re-leased on time?" Khan said.

He appealed to the Lieutenant Governor, Chief Minister and senior officers of the Jal Shakti Department, including the Chief Engineer, to intervene in the matter and ensure that the pending payments are cleared without further delay.

Local contractor Fayaz Ahmad said contractors were facing mounting financial liabilities because of the prolonged withholding of payments.

"We have borrowed money, paid labourers and purchased material

to complete these works. Our bills and other legitimate dues are still pending. Many contractors are now struggling to meet even their basic financial obligations," Ahmad said.

The protesting contractors said timely payment was essential for the smooth functioning of government development works and for sustaining the contracting sector, which employs a large number of people directly and indirectly.

They urged the authorities to release deposited amounts and clear payments against completed works on priority.

The protesters warned that if their outstanding payments were not

Continued on
www.kashmirthunder.in

5 CRPF personnel injured in Qazigund road accident

UMAISAR GULL GANIE

Qazigund, Aug 18: At least five CRPF personnel were injured after a truck collided with a CRPF bunker vehicle at Levдора area of Qazigund in south Kashmir's Kulgam district on Tuesday, officials said.

An official said that the accident occurred at Levдора, Qazigund, involving a truck bearing registration number JK02DU-4386 and a CRPF bunker vehicle bearing registration number JK02CG-5795.

Following the collision, the CRPF bunker vehicle turned turtle, leaving five personnel with minor injuries. They were shifted to the MI Room of 163 Battalion CRPF, Qazigund, for treatment.

Police have reached the spot and initiated an investigation into the incident—(KNO)

EDITORIAL

When The Watchdog Becomes The Hunted

A pack of stray dogs chasing a senior journalist at Srinagar's Press Colony, causing him to fall and sustain injuries, is a symptom of a larger governance failure that has turned the workplace of those who inform the public into a zone of fear. When journalists, whose profession demands they be the watchdogs of society, find themselves being

hunted by stray dogs, the irony is impossible to ignore. The fact that a photojournalist had to enter his office through the back door to avoid the dogs is a telling commentary on the state of affairs. The workplace, which should be a sanctuary for professionals, has become a place where employees must run for their lives to enter. The stray dog menace in Press

Colony is not a new problem. It has been festering for years, with repeated complaints from journalists and other employees falling on deaf ears. Last week, a correspondent was bitten near the same area. The problem is not being addressed, and the situation is deteriorating. The Srinagar Municipal Corporation's admission that its Animal Birth Control (ABC)

programme has been affected due to outsourcing issues is revealing. How long must citizens wait while the administration sorts out its contractual matters? Meanwhile, the dogs continue to multiply, and the danger continues to escalate. This is not about blaming stray dogs. They are animals acting on instinct. The fault lies with the system that has failed

to manage the population humanely and effectively. The ABC programme must be restored immediately. Sterilisation drives, vaccination, and responsible relocation efforts are not optional; they are essential. The Press Colony incident should serve as a wake-up call. If journalists cannot even safely enter their offices, what message does that send about the

state of public safety in Srinagar? The authorities must act now, not when the next victim is bitten or worse. The solution is not a temporary fix but a sustained, well-funded, and scientifically managed programme to address the stray dog problem. Our journalists deserve to work without fear, just as every citizen deserves to live without fear.

UDISE+ 2025-26 Report (NEP Structure)

Beyond The Numbers: Decoding India's School Education Progress

Press Information Bureau

The UDISE+ Report 2025-26 presents a comprehensive assessment of school education in India, covering 14.67 lakh schools, 1.03 crore teachers, and 24.72 crore students. It highlights improvements in enrolment, Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER), teacher availability, pupil-teacher ratios, retention and transition rates, alongside reduced dropout rates. The report also records progress in digital and physical infrastructure, greater participation of women teachers, and continued advances in gender equity, social inclusion, and accessible education, reinforcing evidence-based planning under NEP 2020.

Data-Driven Governance in Education: Insights from UDISE+

The Unified District Information System for Education Plus (UDISE+) is a digital platform developed by the Department of School Education & Literacy (DoSE&L) to collect and manage comprehensive school education data across India. Since its launch in 2018-19, UDISE+ has facilitated evidence-based planning, policy-making, and monitoring of educational progress. It also serves as a key data repository for tracking the implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which seeks to ensure universal access, equity, quality learning, and improved student retention.

School Education Landscape

The UDISE+ 2025-26 report reflects a strengthening Indian school education system that comprises nearly 14.67 lakh schools, 1.03 crore teachers, and over 24.72 crore enrolled students. This sustained enrolment and improved teacher availability translates to an average of seven teachers and 169 students per school. Consequently, the system maintains a highly favourable overall Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR) of 24:1, sitting comfortably well within the NEP 2020-recommended benchmark of 30:1.

Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER): Expanding Access to School Education

The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) at the Secondary stage improved to 71.7%, while the Middle stage GER stood at a consistently high 89.6%. Enrolment remained well distributed across all stages of school education, with the Secondary stage accounting for 27.16% of total enrolment, followed by the Preparatory stage (25.60%), Middle stage (25.58%), and Foundational stage (21.66%). Together, this balanced distribution and the rising secondary GER reflect India's continued progress in expanding educational access and sustaining student participation throughout the schooling continuum.

Favourable Pupil-Teacher Ratio: Improving Learning Outcomes

In 2025-26, the PTR across all stages of school education reflected continued improvements in teacher availability. The stage-wise PTR stood at 10:1 at the Foundational stage, 12:1 at the Preparatory stage, 17:1 at the Middle stage, and 21:1 at the Secondary stage.

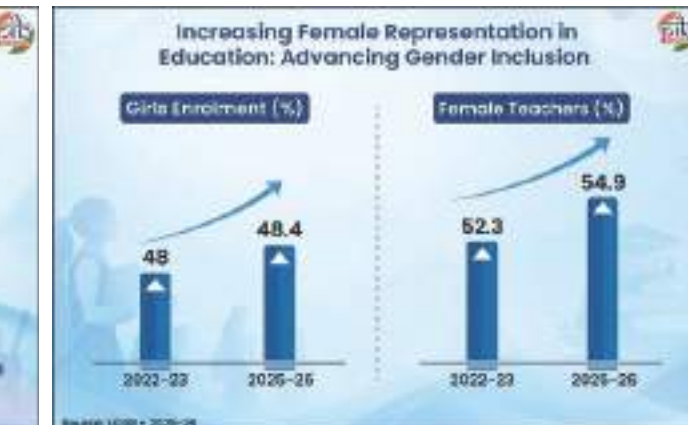
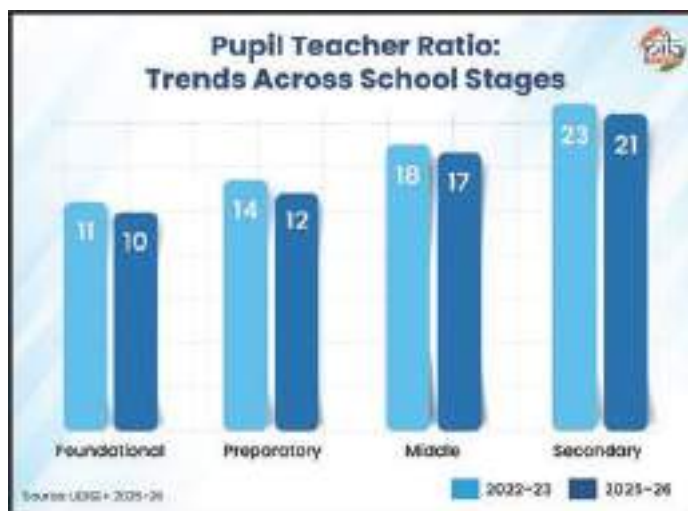
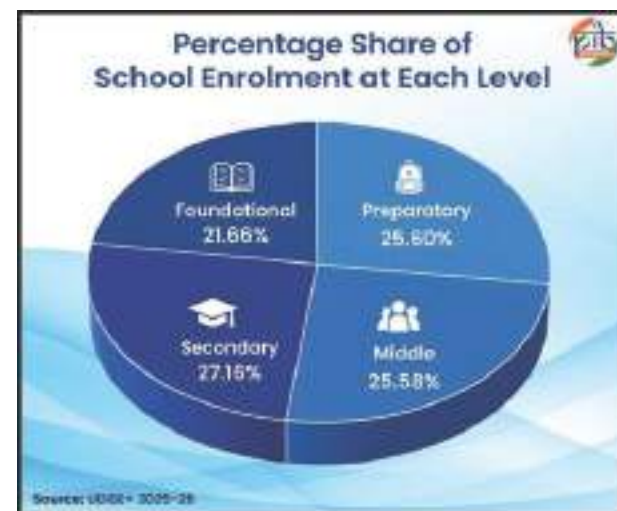
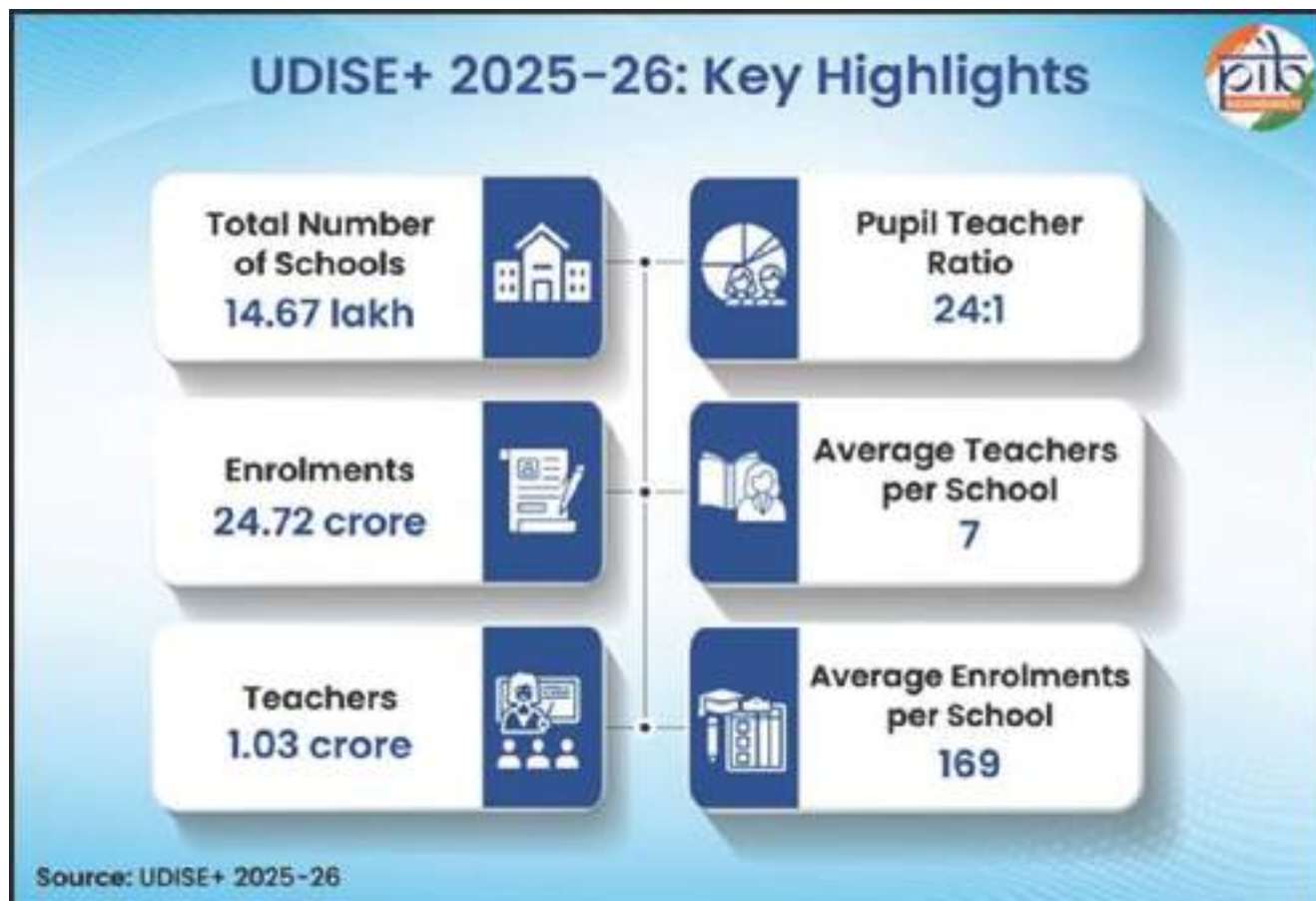
These highly favourable ratios enable greater individual attention, foster effective classroom engagement, and create an optimal environment for improved learning outcomes.

Pupil-Teacher Ratio

The pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) measures the number of students per teacher at a specific level of education. For example, a PTR of 10:1 means, on average, one teacher is available for 10 students at a particular stage. A lower PTR enables teachers to provide greater individual attention, develop stronger teacher-student interactions, and improve the quality of teaching and learning.

Improved Student Retention and Lower Dropout Rates

The UDISE+ 2025-26 report highlights sustained progress in keeping children within the Indian school system. The dropout rate notably declined to 1.8% at the Preparatory stage and 7.0% at the



Secondary stage. While the Middle stage saw a marginal increase to 3.6%, dropout rates across all three stages remain significantly lower than in 2022-23.

This positive trend is mirrored by strong student retention rates, which stood at 98.5% (Foundational), 91.1% (Preparatory), 83.7% (Middle), and 51.9% (Secondary). Furthermore, transition rates between successive stages remained robust—with 99.2% of students progressing from the Foundational to the Preparatory stage, 93.8% moving to the Middle stage, and 88.3% advancing to the Secondary stage. Together, these metrics underscore a clear and improving continuum of educational access and student progression.

Decline in Single-Teacher and Zero-Enrolment Schools

In 2025-26, the number of schools operating with a single teacher decreased by approximately 3% to 1,00,845, while

zero-enrolment schools saw a significant 29% decline compared to the previous year (2024-25), dropping to 5,663. These improvements reflect continued efforts to rationalise teacher allocation, optimise deployment, and ensure that educational resources are more effectively aligned with student needs across the country.

Gender and Social Inclusion

The UDISE+ 2025-26 report reflects continued progress towards a more inclusive school education system. Girls accounted for 48.4% of total student enrolment, indicating a balanced gender distribution across schools. Women also continued to play a significant role in the teaching workforce, constituting 54.9% of all teachers.

The social composition of school enrolment remained broad-based and representative. Students from Other Backward Classes (OBCs) accounted for the largest share at 44.9% of total enrolment, followed by the General category (27.5%), Scheduled Castes (17.7%), and Scheduled Tribes (10%). Together, Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe students comprised 27.7% of total enrolment, reflecting sustained efforts to promote equitable access to school education. This commitment to inclusivity also extends to Children with Special Needs (CWSN), a demographic comprising 57.16% boys and 42.84% girls. Collectively, this data highlights India's dedication to advancing inclusive education through accessible infrastructure, specialised support services, and equitable learning opportunities for all students.

Infrastructure Development

The UDISE+ 2025-26 report highlights significant strides in modernising school infrastructure to create a more conducive environment for teaching and learning. On the digital front, the proportion of schools equipped with computers increased to 69.9%, and internet connectivity rose to 67.4%, expanding opportunities for technology-enabled education.

Basic infrastructure in schools also recorded steady gains with the availability of:

- Electricity in 95% of schools
- Safe drinking water in 99.5% of schools
- Girls' toilets in 98.5% of schools
- Boys' toilets in 97.2% of schools
- Handwashing facilities in 96.9% of schools

- Libraries in 90.5% of schools
- Rainwater harvesting in 29.9% of schools
- Ramps with handrails in 58.2% of schools

Together, the expansion of these digital and physical facilities reflects a sustained commitment to improving accessibility, inclusivity, and the overall quality of India's educational landscape.

Decoding Progress: Key Takeaways from UDISE+ 2025-26

The UDISE+2025-26 report reflects continued progress in strengthening India's school education system through improved access, equity, quality, and infrastructure. The new report highlights key gains in teacher availability, favourable pupil-teacher ratios, student retention and transition, gender parity, social inclusion, digital readiness, and school infrastructure, underscoring sustained efforts to improve educational outcomes across the country.

As a comprehensive national database, UDISE+ continues to enable evidence-based planning, informed policymaking, and effective monitoring of the school education sector. Its findings reaffirm the steady progress towards the vision of the NEP 2020 to create an equitable, inclusive, technology-enabled, and learner-centric education system.

References:

Ministry of Education
<https://udiseplus.gov.in/#/en/page/publications>
<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2282141®=48&lang=1>
<https://dashboard.udiseplus.gov.in/>

The views expressed by contributors on this page are their own and do not necessarily reflect the policies or positions of the newspaper

Sakeena Itoo lays foundation stone for remodelling of GHSS, inaugurates NTPHC Inderwal



KT News Desk

KISHTWAR, AUGUST 18: Minister for Health & Medical Education, School Education, Higher Education and Social Welfare, Sakeena Itoo, on 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 Rs 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, as per an official statement, also inaugurated NTPHC Inderwal and inspected the ongoing work on Government Degree College (GDC) Chatroo, for which she

had sanctioned Rs 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.

On the occasion, she also distributed appointment letters among the newly appointed Anganwadi Workers.

POICDS Kishtwar, Rishi Kumar Sharma; CEO KDA Kishtwar, Kaiser Bhawani; CAO Kishtwar, Kushal Chandel; CEO Kishtwar, Sajid Mustafa; CEO Kishtwar, Sanjay Dogra; CAHO Kishtwar; SDM Chatroo, Nayem Ur Rehman; DSWO Kishtwar, Tariq Parvaiz Qazi; DIO Kishtwar/CDPO Inderwal, Dr. Kuldeep Kumar; Dy. SP Chatroo, Nitish Sharma besides other officers and concerned staff were present on the occasion.

Rather reviews Pakherpora Urs arrangements, calls for advance preparedness

Launches Rs 40 lakh road upgradation works at Takiya Hayatpora

KT News Desk

BUDGAM, AUGUST 18: 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, as per an official statement, 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 maintaining 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.

JKEDI Baramulla concludes RAMP Programmes, trains 310 candidates in entrepreneurship



KT News Desk

BARAMULLA, AUGUST 18: Jammu and Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI), Baramulla, successfully concluded two programmes, MDP XIII and MDP XIV, under the Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP) initiative, with 50 candidates successfully completing the training.

During these programmes, participants were provided comprehensive, domain-specific knowledge aimed at strengthening their entrepreneurial capabilities.

The training was facilitated by Mohammad Rafiq Mir and Sheikh Nowshreen as Trainers. The designated reviewer, Waseem Ahad, Project Manager, evaluated both programmes and interacted with the participants. He encouraged them to utilise the knowledge and

skills acquired during the training and translate their learnings into sustainable entrepreneurial ventures.

With the successful completion of the two programmes, a total of 310 candidates have now been imparted training under RAMP at Baramulla, contributing towards entrepreneurship promotion and strengthening the MSME ecosystem in the district.

While concluding the programmes, District Nodal Officer Imtiyaz Ahmad Malla informed the candidates that JKEDI Baramulla will shortly commence the next batch and assured that suitable references from the current batch would be considered for inclusion in the upcoming programme.

The initiative reflects JKEDI's continued efforts towards fostering entrepreneurship, enhancing skills and creating opportunities for aspiring entrepreneurs in the district.

NTT DATA, ELFA International CSR initiative

DC Srinagar inaugurates ICT Labs in 5 Government Schools

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, AUGUST 18: 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, as per an official statement, 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, Panzinaara, 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.

Mission YUVA: DLIC Budgam approves 230 cases

KT News Desk

BUDGAM, AUGUST 18: The District Level Implementation Committee (DLIC), Budgam, under the chairmanship of District Development Commissioner (DDC) Budgam, Athar Aamir Khan, reviewed and approved 230 applications duly verified by the Small Business Development Unit (SBDU) under the Mission YUVA (Yuva Udyamita Vikas Abhiyan) scheme.

The meeting was convened to examine and approve applications submitted by young aspiring entrepreneurs under Mission YUVA, a flagship initiative aimed at promoting entrepreneurship among youth by extending financial assistance, handholding and capacity-building support for establishing and sustaining viable business ventures.

During the meeting, the committee thoroughly examined the applications and approved all 230 cases that had been duly verified by the SBDU, paving the way for eligible beneficiaries to avail the benefits available under the scheme.

The initiative is aimed at encouraging young people to pursue self-employment and entrepreneurship, thereby creating sustainable livelihood



opportunities and contributing to local economic growth and employment generation in the district.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chair emphasized the importance of Mission YUVA in fostering entrepreneurship and generating sustainable employment opportunities for the youth. He stressed for timely processing of cases and coordinated efforts among all stakeholder departments to ensure effective implementation of the scheme at the grassroots level.

The meeting was attended by the GM DIC Budgam, JD Planning Budgam, Deputy Director Employment, Budgam, District Social Welfare Officer, Budgam; District Nodal Officer, JKEDI; and Lead District Manager (LDM), besides other concerned officials.

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

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, AUGUST 18: Secretary, Rural Development Department (RDD) and Panchayati Raj, Mohammad Aijaz Asad on Tuesday chaired a review meeting to assess the progress on the Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) [VB-G RAM G], calling for a renewed and focused push to strengthen the Person Days (PD) generation, activate work-sites, ensure timely wage payments and tighten field-level supervision across the Union Territory.

The meeting, as per an official statement, 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 work-sites. 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 winters 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.

The Secretary directed the senior officers and field functionaries to implement the instructions with immediate effect and ensure rigorous follow-up at every level to achieve the targets set under VB-G RAM G.

India vows to continue fight against cross-border terrorism: MEA

PTI

New Delhi, Aug 18: India on Tuesday reaffirmed its resolve to counter all forms of terrorist activities, particularly cross-border terrorism after Pakistan sought to dismiss the busting of an ISI-backed terror network as merely a distraction from internal security challenges.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday said over 200 operatives of the ISI-backed terror group, Shahzad Bhatti Network, were arrested during coordinated operations in 14 states ahead of Independence Day, thwarting plans of the organisation to launch subversive attacks.

In its reaction, Pakistan's foreign ministry rejected Shah's allegations linking Pakistan to the arrests.

Terrorism is taken very seriously by India, External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said at his bi-weekly media briefing.

He was responding to a question on cross-border terrorism emanating from Pakistan.

"India has been hit hard by terrorism. We have over the last several years taken a lot of effort to galvanise and strengthen global action



to fight terrorism, including cross-border terrorism, and our fight to deal with terrorism will continue further," he said.

"Whatever action is required to be taken on that account to defeat the scourge of terrorism, we will continue to take," he added.

The Indian government has put forth its position and that is where it stands, Jaiswal said in the context of busting of the Shahzad Bhatti Network.

Shah said security forces seized IEDs (Improvised

Explosive Devices), grenades, pistols, ammunition and CCTV cameras used for espionage.

Responding to Shah's statement, Pakistan Foreign Office spokesperson Tahir Andrabi described the remarks as "baseless". He accused India of using Pakistan-related assertions to "divert attention from its domestic security challenges".

To a separate question, Jaiswal said the situation in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir is serious and that the people

there need the sympathy and solidarity of the international community.

Many people were killed and several others injured in the region because of a crackdown by Pakistani security forces, he said, adding even restrictions have been imposed on the supply of essential commodities.

"The situation is such that the people there need the sympathy and solidarity of the international community and they should get that," he said.

Javed Rana meets delegations at Civil Secretariat; discusses development issues

KT News Desk

Jammu, Aug 18: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana on 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.

He directed the concerned departments to maintain close coordination with the field agencies and ensure that developmental works and restoration measures are executed efficiently and within the stipulated timelines.

SC to set up high-powered panel to probe allegations of police excesses during NEET protest

PTI

New Delhi, Aug 18: The Supreme Court on Tuesday said it would constitute a high-powered committee comprising retired apex court and high court judges, a former DGP, and an ex-CBI director to examine allegations of police excesses against student protesters in Delhi recently and violence against police personnel.

Chief Justice of India Surya Kant said the court will consider using its plenary powers under Article 142 of the Constitution to quash FIRs in which there is no controversy or doubt and that clearly involve students.

The bench also comprising justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana further said that everyone has to be mindful of the rights of students under Article 19 of the Constitution and emphasised that the right to protest or express dissent peacefully must be protected.

It said an order for constituting the committee would be released on Wednesday after it

receives suggestions from different parties on other members to be included in the panel.

It said the high-powered committee will be entrusted with the task of fact-finding and it will be provided with all the necessary facilities.

"We are quite sure that the committee will give an immediate voice and audience to any victim who approaches it. We will await the recommendations which the committee will make from time to time, and the necessary legal consequences would follow," the top court said, after counsel for several petitioners submitted they were targeted by the authorities and public for participating in the protest.

The court said that the committee will also look into allegations concerning sexual assault and online harassment of female protesters and victimisation of other vulnerable persons through social media.

"Whosoever is responsible, there can be no excuse and no justification. It must be taken



seriously and taken to its logical conclusion. That is why we are constituting a high-powered committee. The committee will look into each and every aspect of these matters." CJI Kant said, adding that the panel would also examine complaints and allegations made by female protesters who were reportedly targeted during the protest march in Delhi and other areas.

The top court further said that it would direct the handing over of video footage and CCTV recordings of the violence during the July 20 Parliament march in Delhi to the high-powered committee for examination.

The bench was hearing a batch of pleas alleging police excesses against student protesters during the agitation spearheaded by the Cockroach Janta Party

(CJP) and allegations of violence against police personnel.

The bench asked Solicitor General Tushar Mehta to furnish details of FIRs implicating the student protesters, which are to be quashed, indicating that the court may exercise its plenary powers under Article 142 of the Constitution.

"It is the life of students, which is at stake. We have to consider this. They have a future ahead. They have the right to protest under Article 19," the bench told a counsel, opposing quashing of cases against student protesters without them tendering an apology.

Mehta said police had identified more than 2,800 "anti-social elements", who had been involved in heinous offences in the past, as responsible for the violence during the July 20 protest.

Senior advocates Menaka Guruswamy, Vrinda Grover and N Hariharan, appearing for several victims of violence said that police were not authorised to use surveillance techniques,

facial recognition and other digital tracking methods and store data with a private entity, as it was a violation of their privacy.

The bench said the constitutional questions concerning facial recognition technology, surveillance, privacy and Article 21 will ultimately be decided by the court itself, and not by the committee.

"The committee will only examine the factual questions, including whether the use of force was excessive. Pursuant to its report, the larger legal and constitutional questions concerning facial recognition technology will be considered by this court," it said.

Mehta clarified that the facial recognition technique used by the police does not scan the faces of all the persons, but flags only those persons, who were earlier involved in some heinous crime and their data was available with the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB).

On August 3, the top court clarified that the expression "criminal antecedents" in its

order on releasing student protesters referred only to those involved in grave and heinous offences, and said states could close or withdraw FIRs against the remaining students in accordance with law.

The apex court had earlier observed that police excesses or a 'lathi charge' cannot be justified merely because there is an agitation and underlined that the right to peaceful protest was "absolutely guaranteed".

The CJP-led march on July 20 in Delhi saw clashes between protesters and security personnel, who used lathis and tear-gas shells to disperse crowds attempting to move towards Parliament.

The student-led protests, which spread to several cities, were centred around the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan.

The agitation, which began at Jantar Mantar on June 20, was called off on July 25 after Pradhan resigned and the government accepted the CJP's other demands.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Committed to 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.

IFFJK to foster

were also discussed, including visits to the Gondola, Golf Course, Gulmarg Club and other prominent attractions.

The Chief Minister emphasised the need for close inter-departmental coordination and timely completion of all arrangements to ensure a seamless experience 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 co-ordinating 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. (KNO)

SFs launch searches

were launched as a precautionary measure to verify the inputs and ensure the safety and security of the local population. Security personnel are maintaining a close vigil and thoroughly checking vulnerable areas," said an official.

The forces have intensified surveillance in the areas and are continuing the searches to rule out any suspicious presence, he added.

Deputy Inspector General (DIG), Udhampur-Reasi Range, Shiv Kumar Sharma said: "Security forces are acting promptly on the inputs received from villagers and are maintaining a close vigil to ensure public safety. The operation is continuing."

Further details will emerge as the search operations progress, officials said. (KNO)

Authorities direct

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)

Employees of five

of functioning Departmental Promotion Committees (DPCs).

AIRNF J&K UT Committee State President Vishav Sharma said employees had repeatedly raised the matter with the concerned authorities but were compelled to resort to an indefinite strike after failing to receive a concrete resolution.

He said their principal demand is the immediate framing, finalisation and notification of SRRs, followed by constitution of DPCs for all eligible cadres so that promotion cases can be processed in accordance with established government norms.

"The absence of DPCs has effectively blocked their career progression, with several employees continuing in the same posts for years despite gaining experience and fulfilling the required period of service," Sharma said.

The protesters also highlighted what they describe as a disparity between employees of the new GMCs and staff working in older institutions such as GMC Srinagar and GMC Jammu, where established service rules provide defined promotional avenues.

According to the employees, they are performing duties similar to their counterparts in established medical colleges but lack a comparable mechanism for career advancement.

The issue has also assumed significance amid the continued expansion of healthcare infrastructure at the five new GMCs.

"New departments, units, laboratories and

other facilities have been added over the years, but the staff remains the same. The workload is increasing while employees continue to face uncertainty about their own career progression," Sharma said.

The employees said the delay in finalising service rules has implications beyond promotions, alleging that it has also created uncertainty over seniority, pay fixation and other service-related benefits linked to career progression.

They have demanded that the government establish a time-bound mechanism for completing the process and initiate promotion exercises immediately after notification of the rules.

The protesting staff has also sought consideration of retrospective promotional benefits, wherever legally permissible, along with consequential benefits arising from the delay in conducting promotion exercises.

The employees have appealed to Health and Medical Education Minister Sakina Itoo and senior officials of the department to intervene and resolve the issue at the earliest.

The finalisation of the SRRs, they said, would not only address their immediate concerns but also establish a transparent framework for recruitment, seniority, promotions and other service conditions in the five newly established GMCs.

The protesting employees have made it clear that the strike will continue until the Service Recruitment Rules are finalised and the process for regular promotions is set in motion. (KNO)

Man killed after

Mohd Abdullah Magray, a resident of Kilwar Tangmarg.

Police have taken cognisance of the incident. (KNO)

FSSAI assures support

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.

The participants were also sensitized about the provisions related to foods high in fat, salt and sugar (HFSS) in and around school premises and encouraged to promote healthier food choices.

The CEO emphasized the importance of consumer awareness regarding food quality and responsible selection of food products. He advised the FBOs and trade associations to regularly follow the official digital platforms of FSSAI and FDA, J&K, for regulatory updates, advisories, guidelines and other information relating the food safety and compliance.

The CEO assured technical and financial support from FSSAI for strengthening the laboratory network and enhancing testing facilities in the Union Territory. He also appreciated the proposal to utilize the specialized facilities and technical expertise available at the institutions such as IUST and SKUAST to supplement the testing capacity of FDA laboratories.

Rajit Punhani called for sustained efforts to strengthen the food safety surveillance and enforcement, maintaining regulatory oversight and facilitating compliance among Food Business Operators. He reiterated FSSAI's commitment to extend necessary technical and financial assistance to Jammu & Kashmir for improving food safety governance.

Commissioner, FDA, J&K, informed that the process for upgrading the testing capacity of the existing food laboratories has been initiated and to cover wider range of food commodities and testing parameters. The Department has set a target of expanding the testing capacity to cover 3,500 NABL parameters by March 2027 and 5,000 parameters thereafter, enabling comprehensive testing. Further around 10,000 Food Business Operators will be trained during current financial year through 160 training and awareness sessions.

Trump cites India's voter cards to make case for SAVE America Act



Washington, Aug 18: Making a strong case for stricter electoral laws in the US, President Donald Trump praised the Indian election system and recalled Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar questioning lack of voter identification in American polls.

In a post on Truth Social on Monday, Trump said over 646 million people participated in the recent general elections in India, and yet less than one per cent voted

India's Chief Election Commissioner, Gyanesh Kumar, asked our Administration – How can you have Elections in the US without a valid Photo ID," Trump wrote.

"India's last Election had 646,000,000 Voters! Less than one per cent voted by mail, and every single Voter had to have a VALID Photo Identity Document."

"We need to pass THE SAVE AMERICA ACT, now," he asserted.

Trump has been insisting on passing the Safeguard American Voter Eligibility (SAVE) America Act, claiming the move would curb electoral fraud.

However, both Democrats and Republicans are divided over the issue, and the US Senate adjourned for a five-week recess earlier this month without any concrete steps for its passing.

A fact-sheet on the SAVE America Act on the White House website also noted that India and Brazil have already linked voter identity cards to a biometric database, while the US relies on self-attestation by electors.

The bill also seeks to permanently ban men from competing in women's sports, and ban transgender mutilation surgery for children.

Nadda undergoes angioplasty at AIIMS-Delhi, stable

New Delhi: Union Health Minister J P Nadda underwent angioplasty at AIIMS-Delhi and is stable, hospital authorities said on Tuesday. Nadda was admitted to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) on August 13 after experiencing uneasiness and underwent tests, including a coronary angiography, the same evening. "He underwent angioplasty on August 17, 2026. He is stable and under observation in the Department of Cardiology," an official statement said.

'India, US must address friction points, work on predictable taxation'

Mumbai: US Ambassador Sergio Gor on Tuesday said India and the US must address friction points as true partners and work on predictable taxation and regulatory frameworks to allow business to thrive.

Speaking at the Indo-American Chamber of Commerce here, Gor stressed the need for candid, trust-based engagements on export controls and rock-solid intellectual property protections to give innovators confidence to invest, create and scale without fear.

The Indo-American Chamber of Commerce (IACC) held its national convention, themed "Redefining the

India-US Comprehensive Strategic Partnership."

Gor said that the US embassy in India topped the list among US embassies worldwide in attracting over USD 20 billion in investment.

When Indian companies invest in America, it is a win-win situation. They get access to one of the world's most dynamic markets, he said.

"This relationship has unbelievable and incredible potential. To unleash the full power of the economic engine, we must address friction points together as true partners. We need predictable taxation and regulatory frameworks that allow business to thrive," he said.

Jharkhand: JSSC-CGL exam cancellation to end one protest triggers another as 2,000 fear job loss

Ranchi, Aug 18: "Tell us our crime. Don't throw us out." The plea of successful candidates outside the Jharkhand Secretariat on Tuesday captured the anguish of around 2,000 people who fear the state government's decision to cancel the JSSC-CGL exam would cost them their jobs.

In the face of sustained protests by job aspirants over alleged irregularities in exams, the Jharkhand government on Monday night announced cancelling the Jharkhand



Staff Selection Commission-Combined Graduate Level (JSSC-CGL) exam and all recruitment tests conducted by outsourced agency TSR Data Processing Pvt Ltd (TDPL) since 2014.

While the decision, which was among the

are now government employees, say they are not opposed to an investigation into the alleged irregularities but demand a fair opportunity to defend themselves. Both the protesting aspirants and successful candidates of JSSC-CGL exam now demand a CBI probe.

Higher and Technical Education Minister Sudivya Kumar said the successful candidates could seek legal recourse, and JMM spokesperson Manoj Pandey acknowledged their anguish, saying the party was sympathetic to them.

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR (U T)
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
Machinery Division Kashmir, Mechanical & Hospital Engineering Department, Kashmir.
| Fax No: 0194-2497093 | website: www.medkashmir.org |
Corrigendum 02 for Date Extension

Name of work: Rate contract for repairs to TATA LPTA 713 and TATA LPTA 715 Model Snow Clearance Machinery of Machinery Division Kashmir for the Snow Clearance season 2026-27. Reference: - This office e-NIT No.: - MDSK/TS /2026-27/16 Date:20-07-2026
(Tender ID: 2026 PWDJK 316911 1)
Due to no response, the critical dates of the above referred e-NIT is extended as under: -

S.No.	Description	Previous Dates	New Dates.
1	Last date of downloading/ submission of bids	18-08-2026 upto 09:30AM	27-08-2026 upto 09:30AM
2	Date of opening of bids online	18-08-2026 at 02:00 PM	27-08-2026 at 02:00 PM

All other terms, conditions and specifications as stipulated in the e-NIT shall remain unchanged.

No. MDSK/TS/2058-62

DIPK-4674/26
DATED: 18-08-2026

Sd/
Executive Engineer
Machinery Division, Kashmir.

'History-sheeters' infiltrated Jul 20 protest, 240 cops injured: Delhi Police tells SC

PTI

New Delhi, Aug 18: The Delhi Police has strongly defended the use of force during the "Chalo Sansad" protest here on July 20, telling the Supreme Court that the agitation was hijacked by "anti-social elements" and "history-sheeters", resulting in a breakdown of law and order that left more than 240 police personnel injured.



The Delhi Police affidavit, filed by Deputy Commissioner of Police Sachin Sharma of the New Delhi district in response to a batch of petitions alleging excessive use of force against protesters, said the force was willing to have its actions examined by a court-appointed panel.

"The use of force by police can be gone into by a Committee appointed by this Hon'ble Court and the Delhi police will fully cooperate with such Committee and provide all details necessary."

"At the cost of repetition, it is submitted that since a Committee may be appointed by this Hon'ble Court which will examine all the issues related to use of force by the police officials," it said.

On August 3, a bench headed by Chief Justice Surya Kant, while hearing petitions on the issue, had clarified that the expression "criminal antecedents" in its order on releasing student protesters referred only to those involved in grave and heinous offences. It had also said states could close or withdraw FIRs against the remaining students in accordance with law.

The affidavit said more than 30,000 people, including alleged miscreants and anti-social elements, had gathered in and around Jantar Mantar on July 20 during the protests, which later turned violent.

Police resorted to force only after repeated warnings

and attempts to prevent protesters from advancing towards Parliament were not heeded.

According to the affidavit, 2,873 people who attended the protest had particulars matched existing crime records in official police databases.

It said 92 of the people present at the site were involved in more than 10 criminal cases, of whom 47 were "history-sheeters".

"The right to protest peacefully is a fundamental right of every citizen, including young students/young individuals. This right is sacrosanct and must be preserved at any cost. The difficulty arises when an initial peaceful protest turns violent, resulting in bodily harm either to the other citizen as well as the police personnel along with destruction of public property," the affidavit said.

"Anti-social elements merging with the crowd, with criminal background infiltrating such protests either to give bad name to the protestors or to the police, is always a matter of concern and worry, not only in India but everywhere," it added.

Police said if the violence did not stop or appeared to be spreading rapidly, a graded response was adopted, beginning with minimal use of force, with decisions taken according to the situation on the ground, the affidavit said.

"More than 240 police officers have suffered

injuries; the investigation will take into consideration the grievances of the protestors as well as the grievances of those police officers who were deployed on duty and have suffered injuries.

"Both will have to be and should be investigated impartially. The facts narrated herein are the facts as appear and available as on date which would need an investigation," it said.

The affidavit said the permission granted for the protest had lapsed on July 20 itself, but the protesters did not vacate the venue or disperse after holding the dharna.

"The agitation thereafter witnessed the participation of a large number of students, political workers, political leaders, activists and others addressing the gatherings on different dates, thereby repeatedly appealing for continuation and expansion of the agitation, permission of which had already lapsed," it said.

"It is a matter of fact that during the course of events as they unfolded on July 20, the protest did not remain peaceful and instead pervasive lawlessness had crept in," it said.

Despite repeated requests and warnings by police, protestors breached multiple layers of barricades and refused to comply with lawful directions in their bid to reach and gather near Parliament, it said. "The

protest took an unprecedented turn when a call was given for a march towards Parliament on July 20, the opening day of the Monsoon Session of Parliament.

"It was this call and at this moment which saw rapidly increasing mobilisation and the crowd strength started increasing thereby necessitating heightened security and measures for maintaining law and order," it said.

Justifying the action, the affidavit said the police were duty-bound to maintain law and order, protect life and property from untoward incidents and restrict protesters to the designated protest site.

The affidavit said it was also their duty to prevent the protestors from causing any damage to vital installations, including Parliament, Rashtrapati Bhavan, Seva Teerth, Kartavya Bhavan, other central government offices, and residences of Union ministers.

"The officers were constrained to use force only and only after the protestors breached the multiple layers of the barricade and started resorting to violence.

"There is a digital record available that shows disturbing visuals of big groups of protestors targeting lone police officials with stones, sticks, beating them up without any provocation almost in a mob lynching fashion," it said.

SC dismisses plea seeking abolition of execution by hanging

PTI

New Delhi, Aug 18: The Supreme Court on Tuesday dismissed a petition seeking the abolition of the present practice of executing a death row convict by hanging and replacing it with less painful methods such as intravenous lethal injection.

A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta said its verdict would not preclude the Centre from undertaking

a comprehensive review of the existing method of execution through an expert body with a view to examining whether any alternative method of execution better serves the constitutional objective of minimising unnecessary pain while preserving the dignity of the condemned prisoner.

The bench delivered its verdict on a plea, filed in 2017 by senior advocate Rishi Malhotra, seeking removal of the present mode of execution of death row convicts by hanging from the statute.

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR
OFFICE OF THE CHILD DEVELOPMENT
PROJECT OFFICER CHADOORA
CORRIGENDUM
Subject: Provisional Merit List of Sahayikas (Anganwadi Helpers) under Poshan Project Chadoora (Phase-V). Please read the Tentative/Provisional Selection List of candidates who have applied for engagement as Sahayikas (Anganwadi Helpers/AWHs), instead of Sanginis (Anganwadi Workers/AWWs), as mentioned in Annexure-A of the Public Notice issued by this office under endorsement No. CDPO/Poshan/Chad/2026/1213-26 dated 13-08-2026. The candidates figuring in the said Annexure-A shall accordingly be considered for engagement as Sahayikas (AWHs) under Poshan Project Chadoora (Phase-V), subject to fulfillment of the prescribed eligibility criteria and other applicable rules and guidelines. All other terms and conditions contained in the original Public Notice shall remain unchanged. This corrigendum is issued for information of all concerned and the general public.

Child Development Project Officer
Chadoora
(Member Secretary, Selection Committee)

No.: CDPO/Poshan/Chad/2026/1232-46
Dated: 17-08-2026
DIPK-4676/26
DATED: 18-08-2026

Government of Jammu & Kashmir
OFFICE OF THE GENERAL MANAGER DISTRICT
INDUSTRIES CENTRE, SRINAGAR
Near Petrol Pump Baghi Ali Mardan Khan Srinagar 190011
Public Notice
M/s Umer Enterprises, I/E Zainakote, Srinagar stands registered with District Industries Centre, Srinagar under No. 07/09/06003/PMT/Tiny dated 07.11.2021 for the activity of "Steel Tubular Poles, Roof Trusses, Fabrication of MS Pipes, Steel Bridges and Fixing of Flanges/Collars" as proprietorship concern of Mr. Rifat Farooq W/o Farooq Ahmad Reshi r/o Iqbal Colony Zainakote, Srinagar. Now, the promoter /Attorney holder of the unit has approached this office change of constitution by way of induction of three partners namely Mrs. Jawahira S/o Javeed Ahmad Khan R/o Iqbal Colony Zainakote, Srinagar 2). Mr. Mohammad Ayoub Tramboo S/o Ghulam Rasool Tramboo R/o Shala Pora, Allochi Bagh Srinagar and 3) Mrs. Asifa Yaseen Khan C/o Mohammad Rasool Tramboo Rio Naik Bagh, Srinagar. Any person having any objection with regard to the above proposed change shall report to the Office of General Manager, District Industries Centre, Srinagar within a period of 07 days from the date of Publication of this notice, failing which no objection shall be entertained.

DIPK-4675/26
DATED: 18-08-2026

General Manager
District Industries Centre Srinagar

Trump envoy Kushner says Hamas disarmament could begin within 30 days

AFP

Jerusalem, Aug 18: US President Donald Trump's envoy Jared Kushner said Monday that progress toward disarming Hamas and moving forward with a Gaza peace plan could begin within a month, after meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

"We could be seeing progress ... in as little as 30 days, hopefully starting to take some of the weapons out, and hopefully, you know, filling in some of the tunnels as well," Kushner told Fox News while in Tel Aviv.

The comments came as Kushner and Netanyahu agreed that an American general would verify Hamas's disarmament, an Israeli official said, as the premier insisted there would be no Israeli pullout from Gaza until then.

The understanding marks a new attempt by President Donald Trump's administration to satisfy Israel after Netanyahu, facing a tough re-election fight, publicly rejected the latest part of a US plan aimed at ending the devastating Gaza war.

Kushner, Trump's son-in-law and a longtime family friend of Netanyahu, met the Israeli leader in Jerusalem a



day after holding rare direct talks in Egypt with Hamas, which has publicly committed itself to the plan.

The two sides "agreed that no redeployment or reconstruction would take place in the Gaza Strip before Hamas is disarmed throughout Gaza," a senior Israeli official told AFP. "It was also agreed that the first step toward the demilitarization of the Strip would be to require Hamas to hand over its weapons for decommissioning under the supervision of an American general," the official said.

A roadmap agreed by Hamas on July 30 said that the

decommissioning of weapons would be supervised by the International Stabilization Force, the nascent unit that aims to deploy to Gaza if the situation calms. It is led by US Major General Jasper Jeffers.

Hamas had pledged to hand over its weapons to a new Palestinian governing body, an arrangement that brought skepticism from Netanyahu but which Trump hailed as a breakthrough.

An official with Trump's "Board of Peace" implementing the deal said that "every weapon collected will be fully decommissioned so it cannot

be used again" and said that Israel "retains its full right of self-defense."

"If Hamas resorts to terror, violence or attempts to rearm, Israel will retain the right to act accordingly," the official said.

Other Board of Peace members joining Kushner in the talks included former British prime minister Tony Blair.

Kushner in the talks in Egypt had demanded that Hamas agree it is giving up its weapons and that the group — whose unprecedented October 7, 2023 attack against Israel launched the Gaza war — renounce any future role in governing the Palestinian territory, according to sources in the negotiation.

A Hamas official said the group, represented by its new leader Khalil Al-Hayya, told Kushner it was committed to the Gaza plan and wanted pressure on Netanyahu.

Hard-line rhetoric Netanyahu, Israel's longest-serving prime minister whose job is on the line in October 27 elections, has increasingly been willing to defy Trump, whose support he once highlighted in his campaign.

The prime minister has also made clear his unhappiness with Trump's

decision to halt the US-Israeli war on Iran launched in late February and instead pursue a settlement with Tehran's clerical leaders.

In an interview that generated wide attention in the Arab world, Itamar Ben Gvir, the far-right national security minister in Netanyahu's cabinet, said that Israel should kill 30 to 40 people every night in Gaza.

"Not only those who endanger you right now. These are people who shouldn't be alive," he told a podcast of a former Gaza hostage. "I'm paying them a compliment by calling them humans."

President Isaac Herzog, who plays a largely ceremonial role, offered more upbeat words as he met Kushner, praising the Board of Peace's "efforts to ensure a brighter and more secure future" for Israel, Gaza and the region.

Israeli operations have killed at least 1,265 Palestinians since the ceasefire came into effect on October 10, according to figures by Gaza's health ministry, which is under Hamas. Its figures are considered reliable by the United Nations.

The Israeli army has reported five deaths in its ranks during Gaza operations over the same period.

Donald Trump approval falls to 33%, lowest of his presidency



REUTERS

Washington, Aug 18: President Donald Trump's approval rating fell to the lowest level of his presidency, with an overwhelming majority of Americans concerned the US war with Iran will last a long time, according to a Reuters/Ipsos poll that concluded on Monday.

Just 33% of respondents in the four-day survey said they approved of Trump's performance in the White House, while 64% disapproved. Trump's approval rating, down from 35% in a poll that closed earlier this month and lower than at any point in his current term, has now tied the lowest level of his prior term reached in December 2017.

After returning to the White House in 2025 with just under half the country approving of his presidency, Trump's popularity this year took a hit after he ordered strikes on Iran alongside US ally Israel.

The ensuing conflict paralysed a fifth of the global oil trade, triggering a surge in the price of gasoline that is weighing on U.S. households - and on Trump's Republican allies defending congressional majorities in November midterm elections.

Trump, who campaigned on promises to keep inflation in check and avoid long-lasting wars, initially pledged the conflict with Iran would take a few weeks. But Iran has proved resilient and has kept the oil trade

through the Strait of Hormuz largely bottled up even as the conflict has cooled.

Some 80% of Americans - including 87% of Democrats and 71% of Republicans - think US involvement in Iran "will go on for an extended period of time," the Reuters/Ipsos poll found. Just 16% said the conflict would likely end in a few weeks.

Trump justifies high gas prices

Trump told a political rally in Garden City, New York, on Friday that paying "a tiny little bit more for your gasoline" is worth the cost of ensuring "a very evil country" could not have a nuclear weapon, one of his stated rationales for the war.

Throughout the conflict, the president has alternated between threats of escalation and assertions that a peace deal is imminent.

Only one in five Americans - and just half of Republicans - think the war has been worth it, the latest Reuters/Ipsos poll found. Concerns about the war and gasoline prices have Republicans nervous about their hopes of defending their slim majority in the US House of Representatives in the November 3 elections, and Democrats increasingly see the US Senate also within their grasp.

Reuters/Ipsos polling this month has shown voters prefer Democrats over Republicans as better stewards of the economy for the first time in about a decade.

White House attacks CNN reporter for question on Trump aide



AFP

Washington: The White House lashed out at a CNN reporter after she asked a question about President Donald Trump's relationship with an aide, in the latest in a series of attacks on female journalists.

During an event in the Oval Office, reporter Kristen Holmes asked Trump, 80, to respond to comments by a Democratic lawmaker about the president's executive assistant Natalie Harp, 35.

"Someday, your children will come across your disgusting and inhumane question,"

the White House's "Rapid Response" team said in an X post directed at Holmes and linking to a video of Trump's response.

The Republican leader later berated Holmes as "very disrespectful" as she asked a question on North Korea.

The event was to honor a teenage lifeguard who saved a child from swells, but the president opened the floor to questions on unrelated issues, as he regularly does. "You're a loud, boisterous person, you're fake news, be quiet," Trump said to Holmes.

CNN said the attacks on

Holmes were "beneath the office."

"We stand firmly behind Kristen and reject these attacks in the strongest possible terms," it said in a statement.

Natalie Harp has been the subject of recent Internet commentary after it emerged she was one of the few aides with Trump during a secret Air Force One swap in July.

Jon Ossoff, a Democratic senator and possible 2028 presidential contender, accused Trump in a campaign speech on Sunday of wanting to "build his ballroom and travel with Natalie" instead of doing his job.

Trump dismissed Ossoff as a "Pee-wee Herman lookalike" and defended his construction of a \$400 million ballroom at the White House, but did not mention his aide.

The White House criticized Holmes for asking about Harp during an event with the lifeguard.

"@POTUS hosts a hero lifeguard in the Oval Office and she uses it as an opportunity to take a cheap shot about one of President Trump's staffers," the Rapid Response account said.

Moscow warns of 'consequences' after reports UK-made drones hit Russia



AFP

London, Aug 18: Russia has warned Britain it would pay a "price" after reports that UK-made drones supplied to Ukraine had been used in strikes deep inside Russia.

The warning came after the Sunday Times newspaper reported that drones produced by two British companies had been used by Kyiv to hit military and industrial targets inside Russian territory.

In a statement, Russia's embassy in London accused Britain of becoming "an accomplice and co-perpetrator" of the attacks and of "deliberately opting for an escalation" in the conflict. "The deeper its involvement in the

conflict and the greater its support for Kiev's terrorist machinery, the higher the price it will pay," it said.

According to the Sunday Times, one of the companies involved is a subsidiary of defense giant BAE Systems.

The newspaper did not identify the second company, citing security reasons.

Britain's defense ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The UK has been one of Ukraine's strongest backers since Russia launched its full-scale invasion in February 2022, committing around 25 billion pounds in support, including 16 billion pounds in military aid.

When Manjrekar criticised me, I found something to learn from it: Ashwin



PTI

Mumbai, Aug 18: The natural reaction to any criticism is anger, but Ravichandran Ashwin found Sanjay Manjrekar's harsh observations about his bowling to be constructive and worked harder in the following years to change his perception. The former India and Mumbai batter-turned-pundit, known for his brusque takes on all things cricket, had criticised Ashwin's performance in his column after the off-spinner took only nine wickets in three Tests Down Under at a very poor average of 62 runs per scalp during the 2011-12 series. India lost that series 0-4.

"After my first Australia tour, Sanjay Manjrekar wrote a long article. When I was returning, I read the whole thing, and after reading it, I

got really angry. I actually felt bad. Anger was just a reaction, but I felt really bad. But after that, I slept on the flight and let it go. Back then, I didn't talk to Sanjay much," Ashwin said on 'Jio Hotstar'.

However, he realised that Manjrekar's analysis should be taken in the right spirit and that he could work on certain areas of his bowling and fitness.

"...after coming back home, I worked really hard for the next four years. I wasn't a gifted athlete. I worked very hard, and in 2015, he wrote another article saying that I was bowling so well now and that he wanted me to keep performing like that," Ashwin, in fact, got hold of Manjrekar's number and messaged him about how he felt.

"Then I asked for his number

and messaged him that I had felt bad back then, but his article came to me like a guru and changed my life. Because there was substance in what he said. So, if I ever get criticised, I just think about whether there's something to learn from it. If I feel there's something to learn, I take it."

Ashwin was an opener during his days in junior cricket but took to off-spin in later years of age-group cricket after watching Harbhajan Singh perform brilliantly in Border-Gavaskar Trophy back in 2001.

"Under Dinesh Karthik's captaincy, I played Under-19 cricket for the first time. Back then, I used to bat a bit, and didn't bowl as much. So, whenever I bowled, I used to bowl with Bhajju Pa's bowling action because I was genuinely a fan.

"When Bhajju Pa came onto the scene, every day I used to copy his action while playing gully cricket. And actually, his dismissal of Ricky Ponting, and the dismissal of Matthew Hayden while bowling from over the stumps, during the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, I watched all those matches very closely.

"But I never thought I'd become an off-spinner. In my mind, it was always batting. But when he (Harbhajan) used to bowl, there was something about him, his character, his ability to stand up to everyone and take the fight. So, I really liked that generation. I was genuinely a fan of him, and from there, I never imagined I would come this far."

INOX

SRINAGAR

Movies

SCHEDULE

WEDNESDAY, 19TH AUGUST

BATWARA 1947

(HINDI) (A)

11:05 AM

AWAARAPAN 2

(HINDI) (U/A 16+)

10:35 AM 01:00 PM 02:00 PM 03:50 PM 04:50 PM 06:40 PM 07:40 PM

SPIDER-MAN: BRAND NEW DAY

(3D ENGLISH) (U/A 13+)

01:25 PM 04:20 PM 07:15 PM

THE END OF OAK STREET

(ENGLISH) (A)

10:00 AM

ENJOY THE MOVIE MAGIC

BATWARA 1947

THE END OF OAK STREET

SPIDER-MAN: BRAND NEW DAY

AWAARAPAN 2

INOX SRINAGAR

Your Escape. Our Screen.