



US ambassador Sergio Gor hints at downgrading travel warning for J&K

Calls Jammu & Kashmir important part of India | Says Centre, UT govt have taken incredible steps to make region safer

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Aug 19: Describing Jammu and Kashmir as an important part of India, United States Ambassador to India, Sergio Gor on Wednesday said Washington would reassess its advisory cautioning citizens against travelling to the region. Speaking to reporters after meeting Chief Minister Omar Abdullah at his residence in Gupkar, Gor said the U.S. periodically reviews its travel warnings and that the advisory for J&K would also be examined. "The United States issues



travel warnings, and every so often we re-evaluate them. I cannot make any big announcements here today, but

it is something we are going to look at," Gor said, as per news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO).

He said that the Centre and the J&K government had taken "incredible steps" towards making the region safer. "New Delhi, the Chief Minister here, the government here, have made some incredible steps to make this area safer. So we will look at whether the travel warning imposed and recommended by the U.S. should be downgraded. Because it is a beautiful area, and many Americans would like to come here and see its beauty," he added.

Gor, who also serves as US Envoy for South and Central Asia, called Jammu and Kashmir an | [More on P6](#)

MSMEs true builders of India's economic resilience: LG Sinha

Outlines 4 priorities: affordable credit, tech upgradation, supply-chain integration, cutting red tape

KT News Desk

Jammu, Aug 19: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday highlighted the crucial role of MSMEs in India's economic growth and resilience, saying these are the backbone of the nation's economy, contributing over 31% to GDP, nearly half of India's exports, and providing the second-largest employment after agriculture.

Inaugurating the 2nd Edition of the ICC MSME Conclave 2026 in Jammu, the LG, in his keynote address, highlighted the transformative role of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), the rise of Nano Global Capability Centres (GCCs), and the centrality of technology-led growth in shaping India's economic future.

The Lieutenant Governor underscored that India's economy stands at a defining crossroads where agility, innovation, and technology are rewriting the



rules of enterprise. He said the theme of the conclave, "Shaping the Future of MSMEs, Nano GCCs & Technology-led Growth" - is timely and visionary.

The Lieutenant Governor reaffirmed that MSMEs are powering employment, driving exports, and nurturing entrepreneurship across the nation. "MSMEs are contributing 31.3% to GDP and nearly half of India's exports. They are also

the second-largest provider of employment after agriculture. MSMEs are the heartbeat of our economy and the true builders of India's resilience and self-reliance," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor highlighted the emergence of Nano Global Capability Centres (GCCs), where small, specialized teams deliver high-value capabilities once reserved for large corporations. "I strongly believe that this is | [More on P6](#)

Flash floods hit J&K parts after intense rainfall

Ganderbal, Shopian among affected districts

MeT predicts scattered showers till Aug 27

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Aug 19: Flash floods were witnessed in parts of Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday following intense spells of rainfall, officials said.

According to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), a flash flood occurred in the Wangath area of Ganderbal district, while minor flash floods were also reported from Haknar and Gund areas of the district following an intense spell of rainfall between 1 pm and 3 pm, according to initial reports.

There were no reports of any loss of life or damage to property in the affected areas, officials said.

A flash flood was also

reported from the Shadab Karewa area of Shopian district, while an extremely heavy spell of rain accompanied by gusty winds lashed parts of the district.

The Meteorological Centre, Srinagar, said rain was being reported from several parts of north, central and south Kashmir, besides Reasi, Rajouri, Poonch, Banihal-Ramban, Kishtwar and adjoining areas.

It said the current spell of rain and thundershowers was continuing over many places, with brief intense heavy showers reported over Tral and adjoining areas, parts of Ganderbal including Kangan, hilly areas of Budgam, Shopian and Kulgam, and parts of Poonch, Rajouri, Reasi, Ramban | [More on P6](#)

University not built by buildings but by ideas, dreams: LG Sinha

Addresses 23rd Foundation Day celebrations of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University

Asks higher edu institutions to transform students into creators of opportunities

KT News Desk

Jammu, Aug 19: Asking varieties to transform students into creators of opportunities rather than mere job seekers, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday said that a university is not built by its buildings but by ideas, dreams, and possibilities.

Addressing the 23rd Foundation Day celebrations of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University (SMVDU) here, LG Sinha, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) highlighted the role of visionary leadership, dedicated faculty, and curious students in shaping institutions that nurture not only knowledge but also humility,



sensitivity, and responsibility towards society.

He felicitated the achievers and delivered a keynote address that outlined a vision for the University's future and its role in nation-building.

Extending warm greetings to the University | [More on P6](#)

37th Executive Council Meeting of SMVDU

LG calls for mental health counselling, value-based progs

KT News Desk

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday chaired the 37th meeting of the Executive Council of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University, at SMVDU, Kakryal, Katra. The meeting was attended by Prof. Pragati Kumar, Vice Chancellor, SMVDU; Prof. Umesh Rai, Vice Chancellor, University of Jammu; Prof. Nilofer Khan, Vice Chancellor, University of Kashmir; | [More on P6](#)

CENTRE-LADAKH TALKS

LG must act on aid, advice of Assembly: Ladakh groups to Centre
Seek substantial control over Home Affairs, full control over finances

KNO Special Correspondent

Srinagar, Aug 19: A team from the Union Home Ministry on Wednesday met the leadership of the Leh Apex Body (LAB) and the Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) in Leh, during which the two groups presented a list of "non-negotiable" demands.

As per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), among them was the demand that the Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh should act on the aid and advice of an elected Assembly to prevent conflicts witnessed in some other Union Territories.

According to the list of demands, the new setup must

include a directly elected Ladakh Legislative Assembly headed by a Chief Minister and supported by a Council of Ministers. The groups stressed that the legislature must be elected through properly delimited constituencies, with its legislative, executive, and financial powers expressly defined in the Constitution, drawing safeguards similar to Articles 371A, 371F, and 371G in force in other states.

They also demanded that the Lt. Governor of UT Ladakh should act on the aid and advice of the Assembly to pre-empt conflicts seen in some other UTs.

The LAB and | [More on P6](#)

CM Omar takes early-morning tour of Srinagar's all 8 Assembly constituencies

Calls for decongesting city, addressing parking woes, says waterlogging legacy issue, assures focus on both capitals, inspects road, bridge, healthcare, heritage, judicial, sports projects

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Aug 19: At first light of morning on Wednesday, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah took the pulse of Srinagar's development, undertaking an extensive early-morning tour of the city and reviewing a dozen major ongoing and proposed projects, while stressing the need to address traffic congestion, waterlogging, parking woes and gaps in public infrastructure.

Beginning the tour around 6:30 am, the Chief Minister visited project sites across all

eight Assembly constituencies and reviewed the progress of road and traffic infrastructure, healthcare facilities, heritage conservation, judicial infrastructure and sports projects.

Speaking during the tour, Omar, as reported by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said waterlogging in parts of Srinagar was a legacy issue and not a problem created during the last two or five years.

"Waterlogging in parts of Srinagar is a legacy issue. It's not the creation of the last two years, not even the last five



years. Neither you nor I know who gave permission to build colonies without providing

drainage. Now, retrospectively, we are creating drainage in these colonies," he said.

The Chief Minister said vulnerable areas had been identified and additional pumping

arrangements were made whenever warnings were received from the Meteorological Department.

"When we receive warnings from the Met Department, we arrange additional pumpage," he said.

At Barbar Shah in Habba Kadal, Omar inspected the site of the proposed multi-span bridge over Choont Khul, being executed by the PW(R&B) Department, Srinagar Core Division, at an estimated cost of Rs 32.50 crore.

The bridge, designed as per IRC codal standards and MoRTH specifications and

taking into account the requirements of Seismic Zone-V, is aimed at improving connectivity to Shehar-e-Khaas, easing congestion, improving road safety and strengthening urban mobility in the historic core.

He also inspected the newly constructed building of the Urban Primary Health Centre at Maharaj Gunj. The facility, being executed by the Public Works Department under UT CAPEX at a cost of Rs 2.62 crore, is scheduled for completion by November 20, 2026.

At Mirza Kamil Sahib Chowk, Hawal, | [More on P6](#)

Div Com Kashmir reviews preparations for Eid Milad-un-Nabi, Friday Following

Directs DCs to ensure availability of essential commodities, services to public

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, AUGUST 19: In view of Eid Milad-un-Nabi (S.A.W.) and the following Friday, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir Anshul Garg convened a high-level meeting on Wednesday to assess and strengthen arrangements at major mosques and shrines across the Kashmir Division.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by Deputy Commissioners, Commissioner SMC, SSPs, VC LCMA, senior officials from various departments, including KPDCL, PHE, FCS&CA, PWD, Food Safety, Legal Metrology, LCMA, Wakf Board, Health, Police and Traffic departments, along with religious representatives from prominent shrines.

The Divisional Commissioner conducted a detailed assessment of essential facilities at major religious sites, including Hazratbal Shrine, Jenab Sahib Soura, Assar-i-Sharief Kalashpora, Aham-i-Sharief Bandipora, Kabamarg Anantnag and Pethmakhama Budgam, besides other mosques and shrines expected to witness significant gatherings for night prayers.

He gave special emphasis on arrangements at Hazratbal Shrine, where more than one lakh devotees are anticipated to participate in congregational



and night prayers. Garg instructed the concerned departments to ensure that all arrangements remain fully functional throughout the occasion. The

Chief Engineer, KPDCL was directed to maintain an uninterrupted power supply at Hazratbal, along with a reliable backup arrangement through

DG sets. The PHE department was asked to establish sufficient drinking-water points and keep water tankers available as an emergency measure.

To ensure convenient movement of devotees, SSCL, SRTC and ARTO were instructed to deploy adequate buses and e-autos, including services extending into the late hours. Traffic Police Srinagar was asked to prepare a comprehensive route plan for visitors arriving from different districts to prevent congestion and facilitate smooth traffic flow.

Emphasising the need for adequate shelter and crowd-management facilities, the Divisional Commissioner directed Wakf authorities to make advance arrangements for tents at designated religious locations.

The Commissioner of SMC was instructed to undertake an extensive sanitation and cleanliness campaign at Hazratbal Shrine and its surrounding areas.

To safeguard public health, joint market-inspection teams were ordered to monitor food quality, hygiene standards and pricing around markets and religious sites. Garg stressed strict action against traders found violating prescribed quality standards or resorting to overcharging.

Fair Prices for Growers

Spring Silk Cocoon auction begins in Srinagar

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, AUGUST 19: The Spring Silk Cocoon Auction Market for Kashmir commenced Wednesday at the Sericulture Complex, Srinagar. The market, as per an official statement, was inaugurated by Ajaz Ahmad Bhat, Director Sericulture, in the presence of departmental officers, cocoon growers from various districts of Kashmir Division and buyers from within and outside the Union Territory.

The Cocoon Auction Market has been organized with the objective of ensuring fair and remunerative prices to cocoon growers through a transparent and competitive bidding process. The initiative is part of the Department's continued efforts to strengthen the sericulture sector and improve the economic well-being of silk-worm rearers.

Speaking on the occasion, the Director reiterated the Department's commitment to providing adequate market facilities to cocoon growers and ensuring better returns for their produce. He also highlighted the focus on expanding the infrastructure base by establishing more



Silkworm Reeling Units across Jammu & Kashmir to promote local silk production.

"Our aim is to ensure that the cocoon produce generated in Jammu & Kashmir is largely consumed within the Union Territory itself. This will not only boost the local silk industry but also help our farmers realize better returns for their produce," Bhat said.

The auction market is expected to contribute significantly towards enhancing the income of cocoon growers by facilitating direct interaction between sellers and buyers, promoting competitive bidding and ensuring transparent price discovery. The Department has put in

place arrangements for the smooth conduct of the auction, including proper space allocation, weighing and quality assessment facilities.

Cocoon growers and buyers actively participated in the auction process. The growers appreciated the arrangements and transparent mechanism adopted by the Department, expressing hope for better returns in view of the improved quality and quantity of cocoons produced across Kashmir Division.

The buyers also appreciated the quality of cocoons available at the market, noting improvement in both quality and quantum compared to previous years.

JKEDI Pulwama concludes Management Development Programme under RAMP at Abhama



Interacting with the participants, M Nafia Nazir reviewed the progress of the program and highly appreciated the efforts of JKEDI Pulwama in organising impactful capacity-building programmes in the far-flung areas of Pulwama district. She commended the enthusiasm and active participation of the women entrepreneurs and encouraged them to apply the knowledge and skills gained to establish sustainable and growth-oriented enterprises.

KT News Desk

PULWAMA, AUGUST 19: The Jammu and Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI), Pulwama, in collaboration with the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM), successfully concluded two Management Development Programmes (MDP-11 and MDP-12) under the Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP) initiative at Abhama, Pulwama.

The programmes trained 49 entrepreneurs, equipping them with structured, high-quality training designed to enhance their entrepreneurial skills and strengthen business capabilities.

The valedictory ceremony was attended by Nafia Nazir, Senior Manager P&A/Range Officer South (K); Raiyees Manzoor, District Nodal Officer, JKEDI Pulwama; Iftikhar Bashir Lone, Assistant Faculty; Mohd Yasir, Assistant Faculty and S. Imran, Program Co-facilitator.

Interacting with the participants, M Nafia Nazir reviewed the progress of the program and highly appreciated the efforts of JKEDI Pulwama in organising impactful capacity-building programmes in the far-flung areas of Pulwama district. She commended the enthusiasm and active participation of the women entrepreneurs and encouraged them to apply the knowledge and skills gained to establish sustainable and growth-oriented enterprises.

Furthermore, Raiyees Manzoor emphasised the importance of such initiatives in promoting entrepreneurship and empowering women at the grassroots level, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas.

Participants expressed heartfelt gratitude to the course team and JKEDI for their dedicated guidance and support in successfully organising the program.

Prof. Anurag Misra assumes charge as Director, NIT Srinagar



KT News Desk

Srinagar, August 19: Prof. Anurag Misra on Wednesday assumed charge as Director of the National Institute of Technology (NIT) Srinagar, succeeding Prof. Binod Kumar Kanaujia, in accordance with the orders of the Ministry of Education. Prof. Misra, as per a PIB statement, was warmly received by Dean R&C, along with outgoing Director Prof. Binod Kumar Kanaujia. After assuming charge, Prof. Misra held a meeting with the Deans and Heads of Departments.

He sought inputs from the academic leadership and assured that genuine concerns would be examined and addressed on priority. Addressing the Deans and HoDs, Prof. Misra said the institute's students, faculty and staff must remain at the centre of all institutional efforts.

"Our collective priority should be to strengthen NIT Srinagar as an institution of excellence. Every decision and initiative must ultimately contribute to better opportunities for our students, stronger academic and research outcomes, and a more efficient and responsive institutional system," he said. Prof. Misra assured the institute community of his full support and called for collective efforts to achieve institutional goals.

"An institution can progress only when its faculty, officers, staff and students work together with a shared sense of purpose. I look forward to working with the entire NIT Srinagar community to take the institute to greater heights," he said. Outgoing Director Prof. Binod Kumar Kanaujia, who joined NIT Srinagar in 2024, while interacting with the new Director and the institute leadership, highlighted the importance of continuity in institutional development.

THE JAMMU & KASHMIR BOARD OF SCHOOL EDUCATION SUB OFFICE BARAMULLA PUBLIC NOTICE



I haave passed/appeared in SSE (Class 10th) under Roll No. 612456 Session/Year:BI-ANNUAL-2006 through the Jammu & Kashmir Board of School Education.The error has been committed by the Parents/Institution against my Father Name as ABRAHIEM NAJAR Instead of AB RAHIEM NAJAR and my Mother,s Name as BAHAIQT Instead of BAKHTI BEGUM. Now, I have applied for correction at The Jammu & Kashmir Board of School Education, New Campus, Bemina, Srinagar. If any person has any objection in this regard may file the same in the office of the Assistant Secretary, Certificates Kashmir Division withen Seven (7) days from the date of publication of this notice, after the expiry of said period, no objection will be entertained. This is published for the information of the general public. The correct particulers are mentioned as under:-
Name: Manzoor Ahmad Najar
Father,s Name: Ab Rahiem Najar
Mother,s Name: Bakhti Begum
Date of Birth: 01-06-1987
Residence: Pahlipora,Boniya District: Baramulla
Mobile No:7006974354

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT SOCIAL WELFARE OFFICER KULGAM

dswokulgamA2mail.com

Subject: Provisional Selection List of the post of Para legal Personnel/ Lawyer and Security Guard of One Stop Centre and Data Entry Operator (PMMVY) of SANKALP Hub for Empowerment of Women Kulgam under Mission Shakti Scheme

Notification No 01 of DSWOK of 2026
Dated 19/ 08/2026

Whereas advertisement Notification on Temporary /Contractual basis for the post of paralegal Personnel/Lawyer and Security Guard of One Stop Centre and Data Entry Operator (PMMVY) of SANKALP Hub for Empowerment of Women Kulgam under Mission Shakti Scheme was issued vide Advertisement Notice No 01 of DSWO Kulgam 2026 Dated 18/ 06/2026 with opening and closing dates of receipt of applications was 20.06.2026 and 03. 07.2026 respectively and same was published in newspapers Kashmir Monitor, Kashmir Despatch and Uqaab on 20/ 06/2026 besides uploaded in District website Kulgam for wide publicity; and

Whereas in response to the aforesaid advertisement, number of applications received for paralegal personnel/ lawyer is 05 (five) and for Security guard is 08 (Eight) of one stop center and in case of Data Entry Operator (PMMVY) of SANKALP Hub for Empowerment of Women Kulgam, number of applications received are 50 (fifty); and

Whereas regarding authentication/verification of experience certificates submitted by candidates for the posts of Security Guard and Data Entry Operator, this issued a Public Notice vide No. DSWO/ADV/2026-27/MS/851-59 dated 22-07-2026 wherein concerned candidates were informed to submit supporting documentary evidence (Bank Statements) for verification/authentication of the experience certificates furnished by them and same was published in Newspapers Srinagar times and Inside Kashmir on 23/ 07/2026 In response, certain candidates submitted supporting documents- bank statements and other relevant records, wherever applicable. The documents submitted by the candidates were duly scrutinized by the District Level Selection Committee . During scrutiny, it was observed that, in the case of certain candidates, the supporting documents, including bank statements reflecting salary credits, were complete and the salary credits corresponded with the period of experience mentioned in the respective experience certificates issued by their organizations. However, in the case of some candidates, the bank statements furnished by them reflected salary credits for only a limited period, such as one year, two years, six months, etc., and did not fully substantiate the entire period of experience claimed in their respective experience certificates. The Committee carefully examined the documentary evidence available on record and considered the eligibility of each candidate in accordance with the prescribed criteria and the terms and conditions of the advertisement.

Whereas Committee undertook a detailed scrutiny of all 63 applications received against the advertised posts. The scrutiny included examination of: prescribed educational qualifications, age and domicile requirements, relevant work experience, experience certificates and supporting documentary evidence

Whereas Committee specifically observed that the eligibility of a candidate claiming experience shall be determined on the basis of the documents furnished and the experience which could be satisfactorily substantiated/authenticated in terms of the prescribed criteria. Mere mention of experience in an experience certificate, where the same is not adequately supported by the required documentary evidence, shall not by itself confer eligibility where verification/authentication has been specifically required. However Candidates possessing experience from Government Departments, Government Institutions, Autonomous Bodies, or Government-sponsored organizations shall be treated as eligible on the basis of the experience certificates issued by the competent authority.

Whereas Committee further finalized the Selection List and Waiting List for the posts of: Para-Legal Personnel/Lawyer under OSC; Security Guard under OSC; and Data Entry Operator under DHEW/SANKALP Hub for Empowerment of Women on the basis of the prescribed selection criteria and the merit/eligibility determined after scrutiny. The detailed Selection List and Waiting List is hereby appended to this notification as Annexure-A. The candidate-wise details of applicants who were found ineligible/rejected/eligible, along with the specific reasons thereof, wherever applicable have been incorporated as Annexure-B

The provisional Selection List shall remain subject to the terms and conditions recorded herein. The following terms and conditions shall govern the engagement of the selected candidates:

- The selected candidates shall join before the District Social Welfare Officer, Kulgam, within seven days from the date of publication of the provisional Selection List.
- In the event a selected candidate fails to join within the stipulated period of seven days, the next candidate in the waiting list shall be considered for engagement, subject to the applicable rules and terms and conditions.
- At the time of joining, the selected candidates shall produce the following original documents for verification:
 - Domicile Certificate;
 - Academic Qualification Certificates;
 - Date of Birth Certificate;
 - Experience Certificate in the relevant field;
 - Medical Fitness Certificate; and
 - Character Certificate issued by the concerned Police Station.
- The selected candidates shall furnish an affidavit in the prescribed format, duly attested by a First Class Judicial Magistrate, stating that:
 - they shall have no claim/right for permanent absorption or regularization under the Scheme; and
 - they are not working in any Government/Semi-Government Department/Agency.
- The engagement shall be purely temporary/contractual in nature with monthly consolidated remuneration as mentioned in the advertisement notice/as per guidelines and is initially for a period of one year, and shall be extendable subject to satisfactory Annual Appraisal Reports, approval of the competent authority and availability of budget/funds,
- The Selection List shall be provisional and subject to verification/authentication of all documents submitted by the selected candidates and subject to the CID Clearance
- In case any document submitted by a selected candidate is subsequently found to be false, fabricated, invalid or otherwise not genuine, the engagement shall be liable to be terminated ab initio, in accordance with the applicable rules and terms and conditions.
- The engagement shall be liable to termination if the performance of the selected candidate is found to be unsatisfactory by the District Level Committee headed by the Deputy Commissioner/District Magistrate, Kulgam.
- The selection/engagement shall remain subject to the outcome of any writ petition, court case or other proceedings pending before any competent court of law, if applicable.
- The engagement shall further be governed by the applicable Mission Sh • kti Scheme guidelines, Government instructions, terms and conditions of the adv cement and orders issued by the competent authority from time to time.

DIPK-4763/26 District Social Welfare Officer Kulgam
DATED: 19-08-2026
No: DSWOK/Estt/2026-27/1222-34
Dated: 19/08/2026

Chief Secy reviews progress of CITaG's

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Aug 19: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo on Wednesday chaired a high-level review meeting to assess the progress, strategic interventions and future roadmap of the Centre for Innovation and Transformation in Governance (CITaG), J&K, with particular focus on policy formulation, knowledge outputs, public-private partnership (PPP) projects and initiatives aimed at accelerating socio-economic development across the Union Territory.

The meeting was attended by Principal Secretary, Culture; Commissioner Secretary, Planning; Chairman, Bureau of Public Enterprises; Commissioner Secretary, Science & Technology; Secretary, Transport; Managing Director, J&K Power Development Corporation (PDC); Managing Director, J&K Tourism Development Corporation (JKTDC); Managing Director, J&K Housing Board; Director, Skill Development Department; Director, Employment; CEO, CITaG and representatives of other concerned departments.

During the meeting, the Chief Secretary emphasized the need for establishing a dedicated Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) to comprehensively oversee PPP projects, including their conceptualisation, development, progress, execution and outcomes on the ground.

He further directed that a dedicated digital portal for PPP projects in the pipeline be developed to facilitate real-time monitoring and enable senior officers to maintain close oversight over their progress. He observed that such a mechanism would ensure effective follow-up, identify bottlenecks at an early stage and facilitate timely execution of projects.

The Chief Secretary called upon departments, particularly the Housing & Urban Development Department (H&UDD), Tourism, Science & Technology and Power, to undertake regular review and follow-up of their projects and



policy initiatives so that these are translated into tangible outcomes and grounded expeditiously.

Highlighting the potential of Jammu and Kashmir's abundant water resources, he underscored the importance of small hydropower projects and called for making optimum use of this potential as part of the UT's broader energy development strategy.

The Chief Secretary also advised CITaG to explore an innovative education framework focused on identifying and addressing individual learning gaps among students. He suggested that well-researched and evidence-based interventions may be developed to strengthen students' motivation, confidence and capabilities, particularly in areas where they face learning or communication challenges, drawing upon successful practices followed in developed States and countries across the world.

Giving a detailed presentation, CEO, CITaG, Dr Sandeep apprised the meeting of the progress achieved under its institutional partnership with different government Departments of J&K. It

was highlighted that against the original Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) target of 28 deliverables by August 2026, CITaG has tracked 100 knowledge-output projects, reflecting a significant expansion in the scope of policy research, strategic advisory and institutional support being provided to the UT administration. The milestone MoU between the Planning, Development & Monitoring Department and IIM Jammu has also been extended for a further two years, providing a longer-term institutional framework for continued policy innovation and governance transformation.

The current knowledge-output portfolio includes 21 completed deliverables, covering major interventions such as the J&K Road Safety Plan 2026, J&K Electric Vehicle Policy 2026, J&K Circular Economy Policy 2026, Compressed Bio-Gas Policy, Urban and Rural Mobility Plans and the PPP Project Lifecycle Tracker, which have been submitted and adopted by the concerned departments.

Moreover another 20 strategic frameworks have been submitted

and are under review, covering areas such as attracting FDI, J&K GCC Policy 2026, Agri-Startup Policy, Tourist Safety Policy Framework and sector-specific viability analyses. Seven further deliverables, including the J&K Youth Policy 2026, HR Management & Manpower Auditing, Capital Adequacy and Leveraging of Assets for J&K Bank and blueprints for Model Industrial Estates, are scheduled for submission during August 2026.

It was also revealed that sixteen initiatives are presently under active development, including the roadmap for doubling the GSDP economy, Ease of Doing Business benchmarking and Business Process Re-engineering of the J&K Single Window System. Another 36 future deliverables have been structured for implementation through 2027, focusing on emerging areas such as blockchain and artificial intelligence in governance, digitisation of data and models for Panchayat-level self-sustainability.

The meeting was also apprised of CITaG's project development and transactional support for a portfolio

of 76 PPP projects spanning tourism, real estate, renewable energy, infrastructure and industrial development. Of these, 27 projects are currently active, including Operations & Maintenance of Jammu Haat, a Solar Park at IUST Awantipora, mass housing townships at Chowadhi and Birpur, commercial redevelopment of Karan Nagar and Pantha Chowk, and eco-tourism initiatives at Katra, Youismarg, Kokernag and Doodhpathri.

Another 10 projects are at the development stage, with site finalisation and preparatory work underway for Skill Development Centres, Residential Coaching Academies, a Skill University and biotech-based Aroma Valley clusters across Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting also reviewed several major initiatives being pursued to accelerate investment, employment and economic growth in Jammu and Kashmir. It was divulged that the J&K GCC Summit 2026 is proposed to be held on October 9-10, 2026, bringing together global stakeholders with the objective of attracting investment and creating new employment opportunities for the youth of Jammu and Kashmir. Funding for the 'Urja Sambhav' Energy Summit has also been approved, with the flagship clean-energy investor summit tentatively scheduled for December 2026. The Housing & Urban Development Department, in coordination with CITaG, is also working towards organising a Real Estate Conclave to facilitate private investment and accelerate the monetisation and development of identified premium real-estate assets and opportunities in Jammu and Kashmir.

The Chief Secretary directed all concerned departments and agencies to maintain close coordination with CITaG and ensure that policy recommendations and project proposals move swiftly from the stage of conceptualisation to implementation, with measurable outcomes and clear accountability at every stage.

JU delegation calls on LG Sinha



KT News Desk

Srinagar, Aug 19: A delegation of Head of Departments, faculty and Office-bearers of University of Jammu, headed by its Vice Chancellor Prof. Umesh Rai, called on Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday and discussed important matters pertaining to the growth, development and future academic expansion of the institution.

During the interaction, the University delegation expressed deep gratitude to the Lieutenant Governor, who is also the Chancellor of the University, for his decisive intervention in securing the transfer of 147 kanals and 11 marlas of land from Defence authorities to the University campus.

Terming the land transfer a watershed moment, the University fraternity acknowledged that resolving this decades-old issue fulfills

a long-cherished dream. The additional land acquisition will enhance the campus footprint, paving the way for academic expansion, research and innovation infrastructure development and other institutional requirements, thereby contributing to the University's long-term growth and academic excellence, benefiting future generations of scholars and faculty.

The delegation also commended the Lieutenant Governor's vision to elevate the University of Jammu into a globally competitive institution aligned with national educational goals.

The Lieutenant Governor emphasized the need to continuously raise benchmarks in teaching and research, foster innovation, and ensure that the University continues to make meaningful contributions to society and the nation.

Man killed, pillion rider injured in Hajin road accident

KNO

Bandipora, Aug 19: A 30-year-old man was killed while his pillion rider was injured after the motorcycle they were travelling on was hit by an unknown vehicle at Main Market Hajin in north Kashmir's Bandipora district on Wednesday, officials said.

An official said that the duo were travelling on a motorcycle when an unknown vehicle hit them at Main Market Hajin.

He said both sustained injuries and were initially shifted to SDH Sumbal, from where they were referred to SKIMS Soura for specialised treatment.

The official said that upon arrival at SKIMS Soura, doctors declared one of them brought dead, while the other is undergoing treatment.

The deceased was later identified as Yawar Ahmad Mir (30), son of Mohammad Altaf Mir, a resident of Sumbanora, Bandipora, while his injured pillion rider was identified as Abdul Rashid Makroo (45), son of Abdul Rehman Makroo, a resident of Sudnara, Bandipora.

Meanwhile, an investigation has been taken up—(KNO)

Ladakh pioneers 4% reservation for outstanding sports persons

Administration duty bound to support talented youth: LG Saxena

Raja Syed Rather

Ladakh, Aug 19: Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh Vinai Kumar Saxena has accorded approval for 4% horizontal reservation for "Outstanding Sportspersons" in direct recruitment to Group 'C' (Non-Gazetted) posts under the Administration of the Union Territory of Ladakh.

An official said that the decision has been taken with a clear focus on securing the future of young sportspersons and encouraging more youth in Ladakh to take up sports as a career.

He said Ladakh has become the first and the only UT in the country to provide a fixed 4% reservation for sportspersons in government jobs. While other states/UTs do provide reservation/incentives under sports quota; they do not provide any statutory/specified reservation for the same.

Pursuant to the approval, the Administration has notified the Union Territory of Ladakh Outstanding Sportspersons (Horizontal Reservation in Direct Recruitment to Group 'C' non-gazetted Posts) Rules, 2026, providing a structured framework for extending the benefit of



reservation to meritorious sportspersons, upon fulfilling all eligibility criteria including recruitment examination.

Pertinently, outstanding sportspersons" includes those who have represented a State or the Country in recognised National or International competitions, medal winners in Senior or Junior National Championships, medal winners in Khelo India Youth Games above 18 years, Khelo India Winter Games, Khelo India Para Games and Khelo India University Games, as well as eligible sportspersons who have represented

their universities in recognised Inter-University competitions. Eligible chess achievers have also been included in accordance with the prescribed DoPT provisions.

4% RESERVATION WILL OPERATE AS A HORIZONTAL RESERVATION

While giving the details an official said that the rules have been framed in pursuance of Clause 5.6 of the landmark Ladakh Sports Policy, 2026, approved by LG Saxena, on August 1, with the aim to nurture sporting excellence through assured financial support and incentives. "The

4% reservation will operate as a horizontal reservation across all vertical categories of reservation. Horizontal reservation refers to the equal opportunity provided to all categories of beneficiaries such as women, SC/ST/the transgender community, individuals with disabilities, etc., cutting through the vertical categories.

This implies that a candidate selected against the sports reservation will be adjusted against the vertical social category to which he or she belongs. The reservation will apply to direct recruitment to all Group 'C' posts under the Administration of UT Ladakh, except posts that may be specifically excluded by the Administration through notification.

INITIATIVE AIMED AT ENCOURAGING YOUTH IN LADAKH

Meanwhile Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena said, "The initiative is aimed at ensuring that no talented youth in Ladakh is forced to give up sporting aspirations, because of the concerns about financial support or future employment, and that excellence in sports becomes a pathway to both pride and a secure career."

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JERC equalizes power tariff, grants industrial rates to Ladakh's hospitality sector

Raja Syed Rather

Srinagar, Aug 19: The Joint Electricity Regulatory Commission (JERC) has mandated that hotels, guest houses, resorts, and homestays registered with the Ladakh Tourism Department will be reclassified for electricity billing.

The Commission said that these establishments shall be charged tariffs at par with industrial consumers—a move that may alter operational costs for the region's hospitality sector.

In a statement, Ladakh Power Development Department (LPDD), said that JERC for the UTs of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh has issued the tariff order for LPDD, determining the

electricity tariff applicable to consumers in the Union Territory of Ladakh.

"Following the approval of the Lieutenant Governor, UT Ladakh, LPDD had submitted a proposal to the JERC for reclassification of Hotels, Guest Houses, Resorts and Homestays from the Non-Commercial (Hotel/Resort) category to the Industrial category," it reads.

"The Commission has accordingly approved that Hotels, Guest Houses, Resorts and Homestays registered with the Tourism Department, UT Administration of Ladakh, shall be charged electricity tariff at

Continued on
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RPL returns to Pulwama amid sporting enthusiasm

Jahangeer Ganaie

Pulwama, Aug 19: The second edition of the Royal Premier League (RPL), the day-and-night cricket tournament that created considerable excitement among sports enthusiasts in south Kashmir last year, began in Pulwama on Wednesday evening with renewed enthusiasm and participation from teams across the Valley.

The tournament is being hosted at the Sports Stadium Pulwama, where matches are being played under floodlights, providing local players and spectators with an opportunity to experience competitive night cricket closer to home.

The first edition marked a significant moment for the district's sporting landscape, becoming the first major day-and-night cricket tournament of its kind in the area and attracting thousands of spectators to the stadium. Its

success encouraged the organisers to return with a second edition, this time with ten teams representing different parts of the Valley.

The participating teams include Sultan Warriors Baramulla, The Real Sultan Sumerbugh, Al Noor Kings, Bhat Lions Kupwara, Valley Star Ganderbal, Murad Cricket Club, Al Fallah Cricket Club, United Imports Srinagar, Valley Fresh Cold Chain and Royal Goodwill Cricket Club.

The tournament is providing a competitive platform for emerging cricketers to showcase their skills while also encouraging young people to take up sports and remain engaged in healthy and constructive activities.

MLA Pulwama Waheed-ur-Rehman Para underlined the importance of creating more opportunities for young athletes and said that such tournaments would continue to be encouraged to



nourish sporting talent in the district. "These events provide our young athletes with an opportunity to showcase their talent and also give them a positive platform to channel their energy. Pulwama has immense sporting

potential, and we will continue to support initiatives aimed at nurturing our budding athletes," Para said.

With the second edition now underway, the enthusiasm among players and spectators appears to have grown

further. For many local youngsters, the tournament is not merely a series of cricket matches but an opportunity to witness organised competitive cricket in a professional atmosphere.

Residents and cricket enthusiasts have welcomed the continuation of the tournament, saying that sporting events of this scale can help identify and promote talent from different parts of the Valley.

However, alongside the excitement, residents have urged the district administration and traffic authorities to make adequate arrangements for traffic regulation and public convenience during the matches.

A Pulwama resident said people fully support sporting activities but stressed that the convenience and safety of commuters should not be overlooked.

"We fully support sports and such initiatives, but the convenience and

safety of the general public should also be taken into consideration. Proper arrangements should be made so that people can enjoy the tournament without creating difficulties for those who are travelling through the area," he said.

Residents recalled that the day-and-night matches during the previous edition had led to considerable traffic congestion, particularly on the stretch between Murran Chowk and the Sports Stadium.

"Last year, there was considerable chaos and traffic congestion. Many people returning from work struggled to reach their homes because of the rush around the stadium and adjoining roads," said Zahid Ahmad, a local resident.

They have now appealed to the district administration and traffic

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EDITORIAL

Transparency On The Plate

The Food and Drugs Administration's (FDA) directive requiring eateries to disclose the type of meat used in food preparations is a long-overdue and welcome step. For years, consumers have been left guessing whether the "meat curry" or "meat biryani" on the menu contains mutton, beef, chicken, or fish. This ambiguity violates the consumer's right to know. The advisory is a

significant move towards transparency and consumer protection. When a person orders a meal, they have the right to know exactly what they are being served. This is particularly important in a diverse society like India, where dietary choices are often guided by religious, cultural, or health considerations. Misleading or vague descriptions can lead to unintentional violations of

personal beliefs or dietary restrictions, causing distress and eroding trust. Equally commendable is the directive to display Food Safety Information Boards containing the FSSAI licence number and customer care number. This empowers consumers to verify the authenticity and compliance of establishments, fostering a culture of accountability and quality. However, the

success of this initiative depends on its implementation. The FDA must ensure that the directive is strictly enforced and that non-compliant establishments face appropriate action. Regular inspections, surprise checks, and a robust grievance redressal mechanism are essential to translate this policy into tangible change on the ground. The dialogue between the FSSAI, FDA, and industry

stakeholders is also encouraging. The assurance of technical and financial support for strengthening food testing laboratories in Jammu and Kashmir will enhance the capacity to enforce safety standards effectively. The PHD Chamber of Commerce's call for training businesses on standards and scientific evidence before imposing punitive measures reflects a pragmatic approach.

A balance between enforcement and capacity-building is crucial for sustainable compliance. Ultimately, this initiative marks a shift towards a more informed and empowered consumer base. When we know what is on our plate, we can make choices that align with our values and health. This is not just about food safety; it is about dignity and trust in the system.

The Next Phase Of Reforms To Strengthen MSMEs: A New Amendment Bill For A Stronger Ecosystem

Today, more than 9 crore MSMEs are registered on the 'Udyam Registration Portal', providing employment to 40 crore people. MSMEs contribute 31% to our economy and 50% to exports. The MSME sector has a major role to play in realising the vision of 'Viksit Bharat' envisioned by the Prime Minister.



Shobha Karandlaje

The Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) Development Amendment Bill, 2026, recently passed by both Houses of Parliament, is a very significant reform and an important step in strengthening the MSME ecosystem. MSMEs make a significant contribution to the development of the nation. Over the past few years, the MSME sector has established new dimensions of growth and development. Today, more than 9 crore MSMEs are registered on the 'Udyam Registration Portal', providing employment to 40 crore people. MSMEs contribute 31% to our economy and 50% to exports. The MSME sector has a major role to play in realising the vision of 'Viksit Bharat' envisioned by Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, particularly by contributing to economic growth, employment and exports. MSMEs are the driving force of India's development and are central to the country's economic progress. The remarkable progress made by the MSME sector in recent years is clearly reflected in the steady rise in the number of enterprises registered on 'Udyam', which has increased from 1 crore 65 lakh on April 1, 2023, to more than 9 crore, marking a substantial expansion in the formal registration of MSMEs.

In 2020, the classification of micro, small and medium enterprises was made more comprehensive and inclusive by eliminating the distinction between the manufacturing and services sectors. Under this framework, a composite criterion based on both turnover and investment was developed. Subsequently, in 2025, the investment limits for micro, small and medium enterprises were increased two-and-a-half times to 2.5 crore, 25 crore and 125 crore,

respectively, while the turnover limits were doubled to 10 crore, 100 crore and 500 crore, respectively. These changes have encouraged these enterprises to increase capital investment, expand their businesses, strengthen their operations and adopt technology, thereby supporting their growth.

Availability of finance is the most important component of the growth of the MSME sector. The Ministry has continuously worked to increase the availability of bank credit to the MSME sector and to strengthen the flow of institutional finance, and significant and encouraging results are now visible. Outstanding credit extended to MSMEs, which stood at 10 lakh crore in 2014-15, has now increased to more than 38 lakh 35 thousand crore. The Credit Guarantee Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE) provides guarantees on loans extended to micro and small enterprises. Through this mechanism, credit guarantees provided to micro and small enterprises amounted to 3 lakh 14 thousand crore between 2000 and 2022, which increased to more than 10 lakh 43 thousand crore during the last four years, from 2022-23 to 2025-26, demonstrating the substantial expansion of credit support available to these enterprises. Under the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP), margin money subsidy amounting to 24,903 crore has been provided to approximately 8 lakh 34 thousand micro enterprises from financial year 2014-15 till now, creating estimated employment opportunities for 75 lakh people and providing further support to employment generation at the grassroots level.

Under the MSME Ministry's Public Procurement Policy for Micro and Small Enterprises, 2012, it is mandatory for Central Ministries/Departments and Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) to procure 25% annually from micro and small enterprises. This includes 3% procurement from micro and small enterprises owned by women entrepreneurs and 4% from those owned by SC/ST entrepreneurs, thereby ensuring dedicated opportunities for these categories within public procurement. Public procurement from micro and small enterprises has increased consistently over the

years, reflecting their growing participation in government procurement. The value of public procurement from micro and small enterprises, which stood at 40,717 crore in financial year 2020-21, increased substantially to 1,15,801 crore in financial year 2025-26, which is more than 49% against the 25% procurement target set for CPSEs. Of this, procurement worth 3,984 crore was made from enterprises owned by SC/ST entrepreneurs, while procurement worth 9,059 crore was made from enterprises owned by women entrepreneurs.

To ensure timely payments to MSMEs, the Ministry has undertaken several meaningful initiatives to address this issue, one of which is TReDS (Trade Receivables Discounting System). It is a digital platform regulated by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), launched in 2017 with the objective of addressing the liquidity challenges and working capital requirements of MSMEs in India. Through the TReDS platform, the MSME sector has received timely payments through invoice discounting worth 8,71,000 crore as of March 2026. The number of MSMEs connected to the TReDS platform, indicating wider participation in the mechanism, increased from 34,430 in April 2022 to more than 2,55,000 by March 2026. At the same time, the value of invoice discounting by MSMEs increased from 40,000 crore in 2021-22 to more than 3,47,000 crore in the financial year 2025-26. The growing trend of invoice discounting on TReDS reflects the Government of India's commitment to timely payments to MSMEs and to addressing their liquidity and working capital needs.

In the same direction, 161 Micro and Small Enterprises Facilitation Councils (MSEFCs) have been established across the country for the settlement of delayed payments and related disputes. The amendment introduces provisions to enable states to determine the composition of MSEFCs, so that such councils can be constituted as required and the institutional mechanism for resolving disputes can be strengthened. Adequate mechanisms for dispute resolution have also been provided through mutual agreement among the concerned parties. The Amendment Bill also enables and strengthens Online Dispute

Resolution (ODR), so that disputes between the concerned parties can be resolved in a timely and cost-effective manner.

The Ministry of MSME is fully committed to promoting the development of women entrepreneurs. Several schemes of the Ministry contain special provisions for women. Today, more than 39% of MSMEs on the Udyam Portal are owned by women, which means that nearly 3.38 crore MSMEs are under women's ownership, and their number continues to grow steadily, reflecting the increasing participation of women in entrepreneurship. Under the Credit Guarantee Scheme, guarantee coverage of up to 90% is available for women, while a concession of up to 10% is provided in the annual guarantee fee. Under the Procurement and Marketing Support Scheme, 100% subsidy is provided for the participation of women entrepreneurs in trade fairs, compared with 80% for other entrepreneurs. Under PMEGP, there is a provision for providing a subsidy of 35% to women in rural areas and 25% to women in urban areas.

The development of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe communities is a priority for the Ministry. Today, more than 1.24 crore MSMEs on Udyam are owned by entrepreneurs belonging to the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe communities. The National SC-ST Hub Scheme is a Central Sector Scheme of the Ministry of MSME, which was launched by the Hon'ble Prime Minister in 2016. The objective of this scheme is to enhance the capabilities of SC/ST entrepreneurs and promote an 'entrepreneurship culture' among them and enable greater participation of SC/ST entrepreneurs in the MSME sector.

To further strengthen these continuous initiatives and efforts of the Ministry, the MSME Development Amendment Bill, 2026, has been passed. Its objective is to address the existing challenges faced by the MSME sector, improve the administrative framework, promote ease of doing business and encourage compliance with regulations while reducing unnecessary difficulties for enterprises. Its main components are:

i. Provision for notifying a national digital platform for free and voluntary registration

of micro, small and medium enterprises. It also gives statutory recognition to the classification of MSMEs based on turnover and investment.

ii. Addressing liquidity-related problems faced by MSMEs. It has been made mandatory for all Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) to settle invoices for purchases from MSMEs through TReDS. State governments have also been empowered to adopt similar provisions for their public sector undertakings.

iii. Enabling state governments to rationalise the composition of Micro and Small Enterprises Facilitation Councils (MSEFCs) and facilitate the establishment of additional MSEFCs.

iv. Prescribing a time limit for the speedy resolution of disputes related to delayed payments to micro and small enterprises.

v. Providing for the recovery of settlements arrived at through mediation or arbitral awards as arrears of land revenue.

vi. Empowering courts to order payment of at least 50% of the amount awarded to micro and small enterprise suppliers if an application seeking to set aside a decree, award or order has remained pending for more than six months.

vii. Decriminalising certain violations of provisions and replacing conviction-based penalties with graded penalties, including a warning for a first-time violation.

The amendment has been made after extensive consultations with stakeholders and careful examination of the issues concerned. A strong MSME sector is essential for achieving inclusive, sustainable and employment-oriented economic growth. These amendments are in line with the Government's commitment to the vision of 'Viksit Bharat 2047' and its objective of building a stronger, more inclusive and sustainable economy. They will promote the formalisation of enterprises, pave the way for their expansion and enable them to emerge as 'champions' of growth.

The author is the Minister of State in the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises and the Ministry of Labour and Employment

When Ambition And Independence Become Someone Else's Business!

Judging someone's choices doesn't make your life better; it just makes society worse. When the reality of someone's life finally comes in front of them, they suddenly become speechless. Perhaps we should all mind our own business—and stop others from treating someone else's life like their personal group chat.



Kamiya Binti Farooq

Society can be blissful on one side and cruel on the other, but ladies and gentlemen, this is the 21st century, and here we are expecting to see the blissful side of society? No way! You need to lower your expectations, because apparently, judging, criticising, and making fun of people for the most ridiculous reasons have become society's favourite hobbies. We often believe that the people who know us best are the ones who understand us the most. But the truth, based on my own experiences, is that they are often the ones who think the most narrowly about us. I am not trying to create grudges or misunderstandings in any relationship within society; rather, I am simply presenting my point of view and sharing

what I believe to be the reality of today's world.

So, starting with the most important thing—something that some of you might hate, but which is honestly a reality check—is how people today find ways to tease and criticise others for the silliest reasons.

"Agar kisi ne galti se keh diya, 'Hotel management ka course karunga/karungi', toh mohalle ke log boleenge, 'Areyyyy yaaarr, waiter banne wala/wali hai!'"

And this is exactly where the problem begins. Why do we feel the need to turn someone's career choice, ambition, or interest into a joke? Why can't we simply respect the fact that everyone has different dreams and different definitions of success? And guys, grow up and broaden your mindsets. Do you even know how much time and effort it takes to complete a diploma, then a bachelor's degree, and all the other qualifications? It's not as simple as just becoming a "waiter." There is so much more to hotel management than what you assume.

And now, with even more "respect" for today's society—because apparently, we still need to discuss whether women should

be employed. Yes, ladies and gentlemen, in the 21st century, there are still people who believe that a woman being independent is somehow a problem.

For example, if there is an independent woman in the neighbourhood, the legendary "mohalle wali aunty/uncle" might say, "Areyyyy, iska toh ghar isko hi chalna padta hoga!"

Like, excuse me, aunty/uncle? Let's clear something up. Being an independent woman does not necessarily mean that she alone has to run the entire household. It simply means that she is capable of standing on her own feet and does not have to depend on a man for everything. She can earn, make her own choices, and at the very least, pay for her own expenses.

And honestly, shouldn't you, as a woman yourself, be proud of another woman for becoming independent instead of finding a reason to criticise her? But of course, why appreciate someone when we can make assumptions about her life instead?

And now, if we talk more deeply about women, why is the first question always, "Why was she out so late?" Why is a woman

questioned for being outside at 12 a.m., while a man can walk around at the same time without anyone questioning his character or safety? Why are women still expected to change their routines, clothes, choices, and freedom because society cannot guarantee their safety?

And when harassment cases continue to be reported, the conversation should not immediately become about what the woman did wrong. Yes, harmful behaviour and harassment are the responsibility of the people who commit them, but there is another side of society that deserves to be questioned too—the mindset that constantly tells women, "Don't go there alone," "Don't come home late," "Don't walk independently," or "What will people say?"

And yes, I'm talking about that one toxic, narrow-minded "mohalle wali aunty/uncle" who somehow has a PhD in judging everyone's life but still hasn't graduated from the mindset that women need permission to live independently. Instead of teaching women how to shrink their freedom, shouldn't society be teaching everyone how to respect boundaries, behave responsibly, and make

women feel safe?

Not adding more sarcasm to this part, because the aunts and all the narrow-minded people might actually get offended!

So here we are, back to where we started: a society that can be blissful on one side and cruel on the other, except now you know exactly which side keeps winning.

And honestly? It's exhausting. Exhausting for the boy or girl who wants to study hotel management, for the woman who just wants to walk home without a curfew imposed by other people's opinions.

Maybe it's time we stopped letting that one toxic aunty or uncle poke their nose into our lives. Maybe respect shouldn't be this complicated. Because at the end of the day, judging someone's choices doesn't make your life better; it just makes society worse. And when the reality of someone's life finally comes in front of them, they suddenly become speechless.

Perhaps we should all mind our own business—and stop others from treating someone else's life like their personal group chat.

The author is a Class 9 student

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CS Atal Dulloo reviews UNDP strategy for SDG-linked budgeting in J&K

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, AUGUST 19: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo on Wednesday chaired a meeting to assess the strategy proposed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for aligning the annual budget of Jammu & Kashmir with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with emphasis on outcome-based planning, convergence of schemes and evidence-based allocation of public resources.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by Additional Chief Secretary, Finance; Commissioner Secretary, Information Technology; Commissioner Secretary, Social Welfare; Secretary, Agriculture; Director Planning, besides senior officers and representatives of various departments.

The UNDP team made a detailed presentation to provide a preliminary roadmap for aligning public expenditure with the Sustainable Development Goals, outlining a structured approach for integrating SDGs into the budgeting and public financial management architecture of the Union Territory.

Taking note of the strategy presented by UNDP, the Chief Secretary directed the Planning Department to constitute a dedicated team to work in close coordination with the UNDP team and formulate a comprehensive roadmap identifying the interventions required under each SDG for achieving the desired targets over the coming years.

He emphasised the need to undertake a comprehensive mapping of Centrally Sponsored Schemes and UT Government schemes against the respective SDGs so that the contribution of each scheme towards individual goals and targets is clearly established. He further called for identifying the additional interventions and resource requirements that may be necessary



to bridge existing gaps and accelerate progress towards the identified targets.

The Chief Secretary stressed that achievement of the SDGs cannot be confined to individual departments or isolated schemes, as several goals require cross-cutting interventions and coordinated action across multiple sectors. He called for leveraging existing schemes and programmes while simultaneously assessing the requirement for additional funding under appropriate budgetary provisions.

He further directed that the exercise should identify the targeted population and beneficiaries for various interventions so as to facilitate focused implementation and measurable outcomes. He laid emphasis on convergence of schemes, coordinated implementation and outcome-based monitoring over a defined period of time.

The Chief Secretary's directions are aimed at moving the exercise beyond a simple tagging of budgetary allocations and towards preparation of a practical, time-bound and results-oriented action plan for achieving SDG targets in Jammu & Kashmir.

On this occasion the Additional Chief Secretary, Finance, Shailendra Kumar, emphasised the need for assigning a clear role to every scheme in achieving the respective SDG targets.

He called for mapping each scheme against the relevant SDG and assessing its contribution

towards the concerned goal, including the extent of contribution that can reasonably be achieved on the ground. Such an exercise, he observed, would provide greater clarity on what needs to be done, where the intervention is required and within what timeframe.

He also stressed the importance of capacity building of officers and departmental functionaries alongside preparation of the SDG-aligned budgeting framework to ensure that the proposed system is implemented effectively at the operational level.

The ACS Finance further called for initiating the exercise immediately so that its early benefits could be realised and the necessary framework incorporated into the next year's budgetary exercise by the concerned departments.

The UNDP proposal envisages a three-year programme aimed at integrating SDGs into the budgeting and public financial management systems of Jammu & Kashmir. The proposed framework seeks to establish a direct linkage between budgetary inputs, departmental outputs, measurable outcomes and SDG targets, thereby enabling more informed decisions on allocation and utilisation of public resources.

The strategy involves three principal components including SDG Budget Tagging Framework; an integrated digital platform linked with IFMIS; and institutional capacity building through an

Output–Outcome Monitoring Framework (OOMF).

Under the proposed SDG Budget Tagging Framework, departmental schemes and expenditure heads would be mapped against specific SDG goals and targets, with expenditure proposed to be classified as Directly Contributing, Indirectly Contributing or Neutral. The framework envisages coverage of all 20 departments as well as district budgets.

A web-based SDG-IFMIS portal has also been proposed for tracking, analysing and visualising budgetary allocations and expenditure against SDGs. The portal would be integrated with the existing IFMIS architecture and SDG dashboard and would provide a department-, goal- and district-wise view of SDG expenditure.

The proposed framework would also facilitate quarterly reporting of SDG expenditure vis-à-vis outcomes, enabling departments to assess the effectiveness of spending and helping policymakers redirect resources towards areas where development gaps are more pronounced.

The UNDP team also highlighted the progress made by Jammu & Kashmir in its SDG journey. As per the NITI Aayog SDG India Index 2023-24, it was revealed that J&K's composite SDG score improved from 53 in 2018 to 74 in 2023-24, a gain of 21 points, making J&K the second fastest-improving Union Territory nationally and ranking it second among all Union

Territories.

The presentation noted that J&K has already established important institutional foundations for SDG localisation. The SDG Coordination Centre (SDGCC) was established with technical support from NITI Aayog and UNDP, while State and District Indicator Frameworks have been finalised and progress reports prepared for all 20 districts with a live monitoring dashboard also operational here.

The proposed intervention is expected to strengthen the shift from input-based to outcome-based governance, enabling departments to assess the actual contribution of public expenditure towards development goals.

The framework would also help identify underfunded SDG areas, improve convergence among schemes, avoid duplication and support evidence-based rationalisation of schemes and allocations. District-level SDG budget tracking is expected to provide greater visibility of regional disparities and help ensure that development priorities of remote and underserved areas receive appropriate attention.

The Chief Secretary's directions are expected to provide the next step towards developing a J&K-specific, department-wise and outcome-oriented roadmap for SDG achievement, with budgetary resources, existing schemes, additional interventions and measurable outcomes brought together within a common planning framework.

The exercise, once developed and operationalised, would seek to strengthen the linkage between public expenditure and development outcomes, enabling Jammu & Kashmir to move towards a more integrated, evidence-based and results-oriented system of planning, budgeting and SDG implementation.

Intensify lake cleaning operations: VC JKLCMA



KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, AUGUST 19: The Vice Chairman, JKLCMA, Khurshid Ahmad Shah, Wednesday undertook an extensive on-site assessment of Dal Lake to take stock of the ongoing cleaning and conservation activities being carried out by the Authority.

During the inspection, the Vice Chairman, as per an official statement, visited various locations of Dal Lake, particularly the Gagribal Basin, and took stock of the progress of the ongoing cleaning activities on site. He reviewed the deployment of manpower and machinery, including Watermasters, harvesters, and grabbers, and assessed the effectiveness of the measures being undertaken for the removal of weeds, aquatic vegetation, accumulated waste, and other floating material from different sections of the lake.

During the field inspection, the Vice Chairman identified specific locations for the deployment of the hired lake cleaning machinery. He directed the concerned officers to ensure that the machinery is deployed at the identified spots in a planned and effective manner to intensify the ongoing lake cleaning operations.

Khurshid Ahmad Shah emphasised the need for a systematic and area-specific approach to lake cleaning, with priority being given to locations experiencing heavy weed infestation and excessive accumulation of aquatic vegetation. He particularly directed that focused cleaning measures be undertaken in the area around SKICC and Lalit Ghat where the 1st International Film Festival is scheduled to be held from September 07 to September 10, 2026, ensuring that the designated area is adequately cleaned and maintained in advance of the event.

He directed the field staff and concerned officers to maintain close monitoring of the cleaning operations and ensure that the machinery remains operational and is utilized to its optimum capacity. He also called for regular assessment of the cleaned areas to prevent re-accumulation of weeds and waste.

The Vice Chairman reiterated the Authority's commitment towards the conservation, restoration and sustainable management of Dal Lake and stressed that all ongoing interventions should be carried out with due regard to the ecological character of the lake.

DC Anantnag inaugurates Aadhaar Seva Kendra in Batengoo

KT News Desk

ANANTNAG, AUGUST 19: Deputy Commissioner (DC), Anantnag, Dr. Bilal Mohiuddin Bhat, Wednesday inaugurated the UIDAI-approved Aadhaar Seva Kendra (ASK) located at Batengoo.

The inaugural ceremony, as per an official statement, was attended by the Assistant Commissioner Revenue (ACR), Tariq Ahmad Malik,

Project Manager, Cluster Manager, and Operational Manager along with staff and the local public.

Following the inauguration, the Project Manager UIDAI briefed the Deputy Commissioner on the operational features of the facility and the full range of citizen-centric

services related to Aadhaar available at the centre.

Speaking on the occasion, the DC stressed the importance of smooth, efficient, and hassle-free service delivery to the public. He urged the management and staff to ensure high standards of operational quality so that local residents can access Aadhaar enrolment and update services seamlessly.

Notably, services like fresh Aadhaar enrolment, mandatory biometric updates for children, Cross Limit DOB, demographic updates (name, address, mobile number), and document verification services under UIDAI standards are available at the Aadhaar Seva Kendra Centre located at Ground Floor, Near Whiz Kidz STEM School Batengoo.

ADC Kulgam reviews arrangements for Eid Milad-un-Nabi (SAW) celebrations



KT News Desk

KULGAM, AUGUST 19: A meeting of officers and members of local auqaf management committees was Wednesday held under the chairmanship of Additional Deputy Commissioner Kulgam, Vikar Ahmad Giri, at Mini Secretariat Kulgam to review the arrangements for the upcoming celebrations of Eid Milad-un-Nabi (SAW).

Deliberations were held on provision of all requisite facilities including drinking water, sanitation, medical care, uninterrupted power supply, adequate transport services, and parking facilities for devotees.

Fire & Emergency Department was instructed to station fire tenders at shrines where large congregations are expected. Municipal authorities were directed to put in place proper sanitation measures well in advance at shrines and Khankahas,

particularly at Ziyarat Shareef Kulgam, Qaimoh, Gulbal, Yaroo Hazratbal, Chimmer, Kund, and other prominent locations.

Traffic and MV Departments were directed to ensure smooth transport facilities and proper route management across the district, while the CMO was instructed to make available adequate medical facilities and ambulances at key places.

The ADC instructed all departments to put in place elaborated arrangements across the district to ensure smooth celebrations of Eid Eid Milad-un-Nabi (SAW) across the district. He also stressed on intensifying market checking to oversee fair market practices and ensure availability of essential commodities.

The meeting was attended by ACD, Bilal Ahmad Kamgar, Dy.SP HQ Nisar Ahmad, Dy.SP Traffic Mohd Aslam, Exen Jal Shakti, CMO, EO, MC and other officers and officials.

CBC's 2-day outreach programme on VB-G RAM G Act begins in Kargil

KT News Desk

Kargil, August 19: A two-day Integrated and Communication and Outreach Programme (ICOP) on the Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G) began at the Syed Mehdi Memorial Auditorium Hall in Kargil Wednesday. The programme was inaugurated by Er. Punchok Tashi, Executive Councillor (Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Power Development Department, FCS&CA, Information and ZDA) LAHDC Kargil Er Punchok Tashi.

The programme, which aims to create awareness about the recently introduced AB-G RAM G Act, is being conducted by the Leh Field Office of the Central Bureau of Communication, (CBC) a media unit Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India. The first day of the programme saw enthusiastic participation from students of various schools of Kargil district.

Speaking on the occasion, Er Tashi, as per a PIB statement, congratulated CBC for bringing



the schemes of the government to the doorsteps of the citizens. He said that the main objective of programmes like these is to make people aware about how they can benefit from the various steps taken by the government for their benefit and upliftment.

Er Tashi said that people should come forward and take benefit from schemes like VB-G RAM G as they are the ultimate beneficiaries and no scheme can be successful unless there is whole-hearted

participation of the citizens.

Speaking about the salient features of the VB-G RAM G Act, he said this scheme has increased the number of work-days from 100 to 125 and has been designed in such a way that maximum people can benefit from it. He said that every single citizen who lives in a rural area is a stakeholder in this and that they should all put forward their demands through their respective village panchayats so that development can be seen on the ground.

Holy Mace of annual Shree Machail Mata Ji Yatra 2026 leaves for Paddar

KT News Desk

KISHTWAR, AUGUST 19: The sacred Pavitra Charri (Holy Mace) of the Shree Machail Mata Ji Yatra 2026, accompanied by thousands of devotees, continued its spiritual journey towards Machail Village this morning here from Shree Gori Shankar Mandir.

Earlier, the Holy Mace arrived in Kishtwar yesterday evening for the Annual Shree Machail Mata Ji Yatra 2026.

The district administration Kishtwar, under the supervision of Deputy Commissioner Pankaj Kumar Sharma has ensured all necessary arrangements for the smooth conduct of the Shree Machail Mata Ji Yatra 2026, including security,



transportation, drinking water facilities, medical aid and other arrangements en route from Kishtwar to Machail.

The Additional District Development Commissioner Vinod Kumar Behal and Additional Deputy Commissioner Pawan Kotwal, along with senior

officers from the Civil and Police Administration and a large number of locals, warmly welcomed the Pavitra Charri in Kishtwar town, offering their reverence and seeking blessings.

Thereafter, the procession proceeded through the main market amid devotional

fervour, where local devotees had darshan of the Pavitra Charri and sought blessings.

The Pavitra Charri was ceremoniously received at Shree Gori Shankar Mandir, Sarkoot, where it rested for the night. The procession resumed its journey towards Machail, Paddar, Wednesday amid adequate security arrangements.

The pilgrimage with the Holy Mace continues with unwavering devotion, following its traditional route and making scheduled halts at Atholi, Gulabgarh and Chashoti.

The Pavitra Charri will reach the sacred Shri Machail Ji Shrine on August 22, 2026 and will begin its return journey on August 24, 2026.

DC Udhampur inspects condition of NH-44, directs speedy debris clearance

KT News Desk

UDHAMPUR, AUGUST 19: Deputy Commissioner Udhampur, Minga Sherpa Wednesday conducted an extensive inspection of National Highway-44 from Udhampur to Chenani to assess the status of debris clearance and ongoing works.

During the visit, the Deputy Commissioner reviewed the ongoing debris-clearance and road-repair works undertaken to ensure smooth and safe traffic movement. He directed the NHAI authorities to expedite the removal of debris and ensure timely clearance of affected stretches to minimize inconvenience to commuters and



the general public.

Emphasising the need for seamless traffic management, the DC directed the Traffic Police and NHAI to work in close coordination to maintain smooth and uninterrupted

traffic flow on NH-44. He further instructed the concerned agencies to promptly remove debris and clear all landslide-affected areas, while ensuring the safety and convenience of commuters.

Javed Rana calls for strengthening rural road connectivity in Mendhar

Directs expediting works under PMGSY

KT News Desk

Jammu, Aug 19: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana on Wednesday emphasised the need to further strengthen the rural road connectivity in Mendhar constituency under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak

Yojana (PMGSY), particularly in remote and hilly areas, to ensure better access to essential services and socio-economic opportunities.

He made these remarks while reviewing the progress of PMGSY works in Mendhar constituency at a meeting convened at the Civil Secretariat, Jammu, which was attended by senior officers of the concerned departments.

Reviewing the status of PMGSY works in Mendhar, the Minister enquired about the progress of ongoing works and



the status of the tendering process. He directed the concerned officers to maintain close monitoring of all ongoing projects and ensure their timely completion

while adhering strictly to prescribed quality standards.

Rana underscored that reliable road connectivity is particularly important for Mendhar,

given its hilly terrain and geographically difficult areas. He said that PMGSY roads play a vital role in connecting the remote habitations with administrative centres and facilitating access to education, healthcare, markets and other essential services.

Taking note of the roads and road infrastructure damaged due to recent rains, flash floods and landslides in Mendhar, the Minister directed the officers to expedite the tendering process for eligible damaged roads proposed for inclusion under PMGSY so that restoration

works can be taken up on priority and connectivity restored at the earliest.

He exhorted the officers to complete all necessary procedural formalities without delay and ensure that eligible damaged road stretches are processed for inclusion under the PMGSY framework expeditiously. He also stressed effective coordination among the concerned departments to address bottlenecks and accelerate the execution of restoration works.

The Minister emphasised that

restoration of damaged road connectivity must remain a priority, particularly in remote areas of Mendhar. He called for a proactive and result-oriented approach to minimise the inconvenience being faced by the people.

Rana reiterated the government's commitment to ensure equitable development and last-mile connectivity, stating that robust rural infrastructure is essential for improving the quality of life and creating better socio-economic opportunities for the people.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

US ambassador Sergio

important part of India.

"As everybody here knows, I am the U.S. Ambassador to India. And this is an important part of India. I am here visiting for the first time," he said.

The envoy described J&K as "incredibly beautiful" and said he was "thrilled" to be in the Valley.

On his meeting with Omar Abdullah, Gor termed it "very good" and "very cordial."

"We have some follow-ups that we hope to take back to Washington, back to Delhi. It was very warm, very cordial, and we look forward to building this relationship further," he said.

In a post on X, Gor said they discussed ways to deepen economic collaboration and create opportunities that would mutually benefit both nations.

"Appreciated the opportunity to meet with Jammu & Kashmir Chief Minister @ Omarabduallah and to learn more about his priorities. We discussed ways to deepen economic collaboration and create opportunities that would mutually benefit both of our nations," he wrote.

In another post, Gor said he very much enjoyed meeting the Chief Minister.

Later, the U.S. envoy took a Shikara ride in Dal Lake. (KNO)

US-J&K engagement

Ambassador Gor has said, a very good meeting. We had an opportunity to discuss the relations between our two countries, but with specific focus on what the U.S. can do with Jammu and Kashmir," Omar said, as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO).

He said there were certain "legacy issues" that would be addressed over time, while expressing willingness to continue the conversation.

"There are obviously certain legacy issues that over time we will be working to resolve, but we look forward to taking this conversation further," he said.

Omar said the engagement would involve discussions between the US envoy and Washington, as well as between him and the Government of India in New Delhi.

"This is a conversation that will take place both between Ambassador Gor and Washington and between me and the Government of India in New Delhi," he said.

"We are very hopeful and optimistic that the engagement between the United States of America and Jammu and Kashmir will both widen and deepen in the years ahead," Omar added. (KNO)

MSMEs true

democratization in its truest sense. It really means that a mid-sized enterprise in a tier-two city can now build, own, and scale world-class technology capability on its own terms. And behind all of this is technology as the very engine of growth. Artificial intelligence, automation and digital infrastructure are compressing timelines, lowering barriers, and opening doors that were once closed to all but the largest players. This gives cities like Jammu, Srinagar a new sense of confidence and I believe today's conclave is more than just fire-side chat. It is a call to action. A call to reimagine what our MSMEs can become and to embrace the nano GCC model as a genuine pathway to global relevance. It is a call to place technology at the very heart of India's next chapter of inclusive growth," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor said the Union Territory of Jammu Kashmir is a vibrant example of all-round transformation in the country. Since 2021, investments worth Rs. 5,824 crore in FY 2025–26 alone marked a 13-fold increase compared to pre-2021 averages. Over four years, investments exceeded those made in the preceding 70 years. Start-ups rose from 69 in 2020 to 1,305 in FY 2025–26, while Udyam registrations surged from 24,000 in 2021 to 6.16 lakh this year.

The LG also outlined four pressing challenges for MSMEs including affordable credit, technology upgradation, and supply-chain integration to ensure market access and brand-building for small entrepreneurs. He also called for administrative reforms, wherever required to eliminate the red tape to create an enabling environment.

He called for a forward-looking roadmap with sustainable trade that will encourage MSMEs to adopt green technologies and renewable energy. He also stressed on formalisation of micro industries to Expand institutional credit access. The Lieutenant Governor asked the participants to focus on education-industry partnerships and establishment of incubation centres and design studios within industrial clusters.

"The fourth objective is to strengthen export competitiveness, and I believe that this opportunity is especially significant for Jammu Kashmir. Our climate and distinctive cultural and traditional production chains provide us

with an exceptional position in the export sector. Therefore, initiatives such as "One District, One Export Hub" need to be promoted on a large scale," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor emphasized that India's economic progress cannot be complete without acknowledging the perseverance and entrepreneurial spirit of MSMEs.

"Our bright future rests upon the aspirations of small and medium businesses. Let us build an ecosystem that is robust, globally competitive, environmentally conscious, and inclusive. On the strong foundation of MSMEs, we must develop an economy, in which every region, every section, and every talent in Jammu Kashmir finds opportunities to advance, and where young people do not merely seek jobs but create employment," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor also spoke on the challenges that the country is facing today. He called upon the industry leaders and all the key stakeholders to make their significant contribution in building a terror-free, corruption-free, merit based and prosperous society.

"There is a lot of discussion in the country regarding temple offerings. A respected member of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board suggested in a meeting that the manual counting process should be stopped. So, two Cash Recycler Machines (CRM) have been installed there, and the remaining CRMs will be installed in 15 days. The human interface itself has been eliminated. No employee of the Shrine Board or the bank will have any direct involvement in it," he said.

Vikramjit Singh, Commissioner Secretary, Industries and Commerce Department J&K; Rahul Sahai, Chairman, ICC Jammu Chapter; Vikramaditya Singh, Trustee, Dharmarth Trust; Rakesh Sinha, CEO, Quintes Global; Dr Arun Kumar Manhas, Director, Industries & Commerce Department Jammu, senior officials, members of Indian Chamber of Commerce, Industry Leaders and Experts, Investors and representatives of various trade and business organisations attended the conclave.

Devyani Rana, Member of Legislative Assembly from Nagrota, Dr Rakesh Minhas, Deputy Commissioner Jammu, Devansh Yadav, Municipal Commissioner Jammu, Harvinder Singh, CEO Mission Yuva, Joginder Singh, SSP Jammu, senior officers of civil and Police administration, were also present.

Flash floods

and Kishtwar.

The weather department warned that intense heavy showers could trigger localised flash floods, mudslides and landslides, particularly in hilly areas. It also cautioned about the possibility of shooting stones and landslides at vulnerable locations.

Jammu recorded 88.7 mm of rainfall in the 24 hours ending at 8:30 am, while Samba received 85 mm and Kathua 76.6 mm, according to rainfall data compiled by Kashmir Weather.

Katra recorded 48.2 mm, Reasi 39 mm, Udhampur 32.2 mm, Batote 28.8 mm, Banihal 20.7 mm, Doda 9 mm, Ramban 6.5 mm, Jammu Airport 33 mm and Bhaderwah 1.8 mm during the period.

Poonch recorded 1.5 mm, while no rainfall was recorded in Rajouri and Kishtwar during the same period.

The Meteorological Centre has forecast generally hot and humid conditions in J&K from August 20 to 22, with one or two spells of light to moderate rain or thundershowers at scattered to many places and brief intense heavy showers in a few districts during early morning and afternoon hours.

From August 23 to 27, generally hot and humid weather is expected, with brief spells of rain or thundershowers at scattered places during the early morning and afternoon hours.

The weather department advised people, particularly those in vulnerable and hilly areas, to remain cautious during intense rainfall spells.

It also said farmers could continue harvesting and other agricultural operations, subject to local weather conditions. (KNO)

University not

family, the Lieutenant Governor described the day as a celebration of foresight, resolve, and sustained efforts that has transformed SMVDU into a centre of knowledge, innovation, and social responsibility. He emphasised that the University, blessed by Mata Vaishno Devi, carries in its name the tradition of devotion, strength, and faith, inspiring millions across India and the world.

Reflecting on SMVDU's journey, the Lieutenant Governor lauded its achievements in education and research. He noted that faculty members have secured around 140 research projects, including international collaborations, and established a state-of-the-art AI and Deep Learning Lab. The University has received 14 patents, incubated 30 start-ups, and launched innovative programmes such as peer-learning. He urged the institution to

strengthen industry-academia relations by organising open-house meetings to commercialise patents and innovations.

TRUE MEASURE OF UNIVERSITY'S SUCCESS LIES IN ITS STUDENTS, ALUMNI

The Lieutenant Governor stressed that the true measure of a university's success lies in its students and alumni, who carry forward its reputation through their contributions to society and the nation.

He encouraged SMVDU to leverage government initiatives such as the Rs. One lakh crore research fund announced by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 15th August 2026 and the PM Research Chairs scheme launched earlier this year, to ensure maximum participation in national innovation efforts.

"In the contemporary world, research and innovation becomes meaningful when it finds solutions to real problems, improves the quality of life in society and brings positive change to the lives of ordinary citizens through its contributions across different fields.

On 15 August, PM Modi, made a historic announcement from the ramparts of the Red Fort and allocated Rs.1 lakh crore. He called upon the youth of the country to focus on research and innovation, saying that they should come forward with ambitious dreams. The Government of India had created a robust system of financial support, and that no young person would now face lack of resources.

I would like the Vice-Chancellor to constitute a team comprising faculty members and selected students so that the maximum possible number of applications may be submitted from this University," the Lieutenant Governor said.

EDUCATION IS THE MOST POWERFUL INVESTMENT

The Lieutenant Governor underscored that education is the most powerful investment for universities, society, and the nation. He cited foreign university's success in generating revenue through innovation and research as an example, urging Indian universities to aspire to similar heights by focusing on research, innovation, leadership, and entrepreneurship.

The Lieutenant Governor identified key challenges facing Indian universities, including limited research, shortage of faculty, lack of accountability and weak industry linkages. He called for a change in mindset, urging institutions to ask not "What should we teach?" but "What problems must we solve?"

He emphasised that India's youthful population, creativity, and risk-taking ability are its greatest assets, and universities must transform students into creators of opportunities rather than mere job seekers.

Highlighting India's strengths, the Lieutenant Governor pointed to the nation's ability to innovate at low cost, its cultural and linguistic diversity, and its vast diaspora. He urged SMVDU to connect these strengths with its research ecosystem and create solutions for real-world challenges in healthcare, rural economy, urbanisation, and digital innovation.

The Lieutenant Governor also emphasised the importance of holistic education, calling for the promotion of sports, arts, literature, debates, and cultural activities alongside science and technology. He encouraged the University to engage with rural communities, promote sustainable development, and adopt best practices from global education models such as emphasis on fieldwork, industry partnerships, and a strong vocational training system.

Looking ahead, the Lieutenant Governor presented a comprehensive vision for SMVDU by 2040. He urged the University to become a leading global knowledge centre, establish advanced research facilities in AI, robotics, biotechnology, and climate science, and develop digital learning networks across rural Jammu Kashmir. He also called for international student-exchange programmes to strengthen global collaboration.

ULTIMATE PURPOSE OF EDUCATION GOES BEYOND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

He said the ultimate purpose of education is not limited to economic development but also the creation of creative human beings who understand themselves, respect nature, and recognise their responsibility towards humanity. He urged SMVDU to harmonise modernity with human values and to resolve to become a pilgrimage centre of knowledge, a laboratory of innovation, and a beacon guiding society towards progress.

"On this Foundation Day, I urge all of you to move beyond established paths and work courageously on the important issues. As efforts are undertaken in this direction, we should ask ourselves: What do we possess that other countries do not? Our nation's greatest wealth and strength is the passion, ingenuity and daring spirit of our youth. We must remember, the light of education becomes complete only when it moves beyond the walls of the University and reaches the last person in society," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor invited suggestions

from various stakeholders for the establishment of the state-of-the-art International Museum of Goddess at Katra.

On the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor also inaugurated the Self-Help Group's Bakery unit at SMVDU.

Dr Ashok Bhan, Suresh Kumar Sharma and Gunjan Rana- Members of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board; Dr Mandeep K. Bhandari, Principal Secretary to Lieutenant Governor; Prof. Pragati Kumar, Vice-Chancellor, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University; Bhim Sen Tuti, IGP Jammu; Ramesh Kumar, Divisional Commissioner Jammu; Sachin Kumar Vaishya, CEO, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board; Shri Shiv Kumar Sharma, DIG, Udhampur-Reasi Range; Kumar Abhishek, Deputy Commissioner Reasi; Members of University's Executive Council; Heads of various educational institutions; senior officials, faculty members, staff, and students of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University attended the foundation day celebrations. (KNO)

LG calls for mental

Prof. Pankaj Chandra, Vice Chancellor and Chairman, Board of Management, Ahmedabad University; Prof. A.S.K. Sinha, Former Director, Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Petroleum Technology, Amethi; Prof. Manoj Singh Gaur, Director, IIT Jammu; Dr Mandeep K. Bhandari, Principal Secretary to Lieutenant Governor; Shri Sachin Kumar Vaishya, CEO, SMVDSB; Shri Ajay Kumar Sharma, Registrar, SMVDU and other members of the Executive Council.

The Council accorded in-principle approval for a 200-bed boys' hostel, to be funded by SMVDSB, along with preparation of a detailed project report. It also granted in-principle approval for two new academic programmes — B.A. LL.B. (Hons.) and B.Tech in Food Technology — and suggested exploring the possibility of offering LL.B. in conjunction with the science and commerce streams. The budget proposals for FY 2026–27 and the final audit report for FY 2024–25 were adopted, along with a proposal for enhanced financial assistance to students attending national and international conferences, workshops, and events.

The Council further approved the completion and development of the sports complex at the SMVDU campus, in collaboration with SMVDSB, to provide sports facilities for students and employees, and decided to finalise a five-year roadmap for the University, based on a viable operating model, in consultation with the Academic Council and Finance Committee. The Executive Council also adopted the University's proposed Kulgeet (institutional anthem).

The Council reviewed the University's academic, administrative, and financial progress and also approved several initiatives for the forthcoming academic sessions. It also ratified the nomination of external members to the Executive Council and to the Academic Council of SMVDU, and reviewed the status of ongoing and completed major construction projects, calling for their timely completion.

Appreciating the University's initiatives on wellness, sports, and youth engagement, the Lieutenant Governor directed the administration to conduct counselling, mental health, and value-based awareness programmes for students, and to subscribe to online counselling platforms for student support.

The Lieutenant Governor, who is also the Chancellor of the University, suggested academic relaxation for NSS and NCC students selected to represent the University at events of national importance, along with additional credits in recognition of their achievements. He further recommended introducing industry-linked vocational courses, delivered through internal faculty and external experts, and open to all students regardless of minimum eligibility criteria.

Prof. Pragati Kumar, Vice Chancellor, SMVDU briefed the Executive Council on key developments relating to admissions, recruitment, faculty career advancement, ongoing construction projects, and new academic programmes proposed for the upcoming academic year.

LG must act

KDA further demanded that the Assembly have constitutionally protected control over taxation, budget, appropriation, expenditure, borrowing, and public funds, including a Consolidated Fund and a Contingency Fund.

They also sought that Home Affairs be placed "substantially under the democratic control" of the elected government and the Ladakh Legislative Assembly, citing Articles 162, 163, and 166(3), and pointing to models such as Puducherry and the erstwhile Union Territory of Mizoram.

The groups also demanded the creation of a separate Public Service Commission along with distinct Ladakh Administrative and Police Services and Ladakh-specific cadres. (KNO)

CM Omar takes

the CM laid the foundation stone for a Rs

1.32-crore beautification, upgradation and junction improvement project aimed at improving traffic management, pedestrian movement and road safety.

At SDH Habak, Hazratbal, he inspected the ongoing construction of the new hospital building and reviewed the progress of the long-pending project. The project, which had remained stalled for a considerable period, was revived after the present Council of Ministers granted the required norm relaxations. It has a revised cost of Rs 54.49 crore and envisages a two-basement, four-storey, 50-bed hospital.

Omar also inspected the conservation and restoration of the historic Aali Masjid at Eidgah and directed the authorities to ensure meticulous conservation while maintaining the monument's historical, architectural and heritage character.

The Chief Minister then reviewed the road-safety project involving flyovers at Parimpora and Shalteng Junctions on the Srinagar Bypass along NH-44. The project, being executed under Road Safety Works on EPC mode, has an approximate total length of 2,000 metres, with elevated portions of 105 metres at Parimpora and 92 metres at Shalteng. The six-lane facility includes approaches, service roads, drainage and utility corridors and has an estimated cost of Rs 85 crore.

At SKIMS Medical College and Hospital, Bemina, Omar reviewed the progress of the 250-bedded IPD Block and College/Laboratory Block.

He also inspected the site of the proposed High Court Complex at Rakh-i-Aksha, Bemina, a project with an approved cost of Rs 908.20 crore.

The Chief Minister subsequently inspected the proposed Mominabad Vehicle Underpass, aimed at reducing congestion and facilitating smoother movement along the National Highway.

The proposed four-lane RCC T-Beam Slab underpass will have a 22.50-metre main carriageway, service roads on both sides, approaches, drainage and utility corridors and a vertical clearance of 5.5 metres.

He also reviewed proposals for the underpass at Nowgam Railway Station and a Foot Over Bridge at Children Hospital, Bemina. The Nowgam underpass will have a 25-metre main carriageway, service roads and 5.5-metre vertical clearance, while the proposed FOB will be 48.5 metres long and 3.19 metres wide, with lifts for persons with disabilities, senior citizens and women.

At Gindun Sports Complex, Rajbagh, the CM inspected the recently completed main swimming pool, which was developed at a cost of Rs 20.60 crore. He also reviewed the Training-cum-Toddler/All-Weather Heated Pool facility and inspected the newly completed Gymnastic Hall at Gindun.

The gymnastic hall, measuring 110 feet by 70 feet and covering around 8,700 square feet, was initiated in June 2023 at an advertised cost of Rs 3.28 crore and completed in July 2026.

Speaking after the tour, CM Abdullah said field visits allowed the government to compare the information presented at the Secretariat with the actual ground situation.

"The benefit of these tours is that we get a chance to compare what is told in the Secretariat and the ground reality. I assure the people of Srinagar that similar projects will be taken up. The big bottlenecks will be corrected," he said.

He stressed the need to decongest Srinagar and address the shortage of parking in Shehar-e-Khaas. "We need to decongest Srinagar from traffic jams, for which some important steps have to be taken. In Shehar-e-Khaas, there is a huge problem of parking, and we will address and resolve that issue also," he said.

Omar said both Srinagar and Jammu, the two capital cities of Jammu and Kashmir, required focused attention. "We are the only area in this country where there are two capitals—Srinagar in the summer and Jammu in the winter. It is obvious that both cities need to be given special attention," he said.

The Chief Minister was accompanied by Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary, Minister for Health and Medical Education Sakina Itoo, Minister for Sports Satish Sharma

'Will boost connectivity, tourism': PM Modi hails Cabinet's decisions on railway, highway projects



PTI

New Delhi, Aug 19: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday hailed the Union Cabinet's approvals of four railway projects and a four-lane highway in Bihar and said these initiatives will improve connectivity, commerce and tourism.

Modi said a major boost has been given to railway infrastructure and connectivity across Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal.

"The Cabinet has approved four multi-tracking projects,

adding important capacity to the Indian Railways network and benefiting lakhs of people. These projects will have many benefits like strengthening passenger and freight movement. Reducing congestion. Greater logistics efficiency. Better connectivity, commerce and tourism," he said in a post on 'X'.

The prime minister also said that connectivity's rapid expansion is absolutely essential in the efforts for all-round development of Bihar.

"In this direction, today our government has approved the

construction of a 4-lane section on the Muzaffarpur-Sitamarhi-Sonbarsa section of NH-22. This project, which will prove to be a lifeline for the entire state, is set to usher in a new chapter of progress. It will not only save time in travel but also boost economic activities and tourism," he said.

Earlier, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on Wednesday approved four projects of the Railway Ministry with a total cost of approximately Rs 9,450 crore.

The projects include the construction of a fourth line between Kharagpur in West Bengal and Bhadrak (Ranital) in Odisha covering 173 km, and a fourth line between Bhadrak and Haridaspur in Odisha covering 75 km.

The Cabinet also approved upgradation of the Muzaffarpur-Sitamarhi-Sonbarsa section of NH-22 in Bihar to four-lane standard, at an estimated cost of Rs 3,590.73 crore.

The Muzaffarpur-Sitamarhi-Sonbarsa stretch holds significant strategic and economic relevance, ensuring seamless linkage to the national freight grid.

RDI Fund's conflict-of-interest policy protected by stringent safeguards: Jitendra



PTI

New Delhi, Aug 19: The Research, Development and Innovation (RDI) Fund's conflict-of-interest policy was protected by stringent safeguards to ensure the protection of taxpayers' money and private capital, Union Minister Jitendra Singh said on Wednesday.

Suggestions from stakeholders are, however, most welcome and more safeguards could be considered wherever feasible, the minister added. The RDI fund,

with a corpus of Rs 1 lakh crore, was created by the government in 2025 to provide low-cost, long-term loans to private companies involved in advanced research and innovation in deep-tech sectors such as artificial intelligence, quantum technology, and space science.

Singh's statement followed recent reports alleging a conflict of interest in the disbursement of funds to companies, as many of the firms chosen to get the loan had ties to several members of

the selection panel.

The minister said that the RDI Fund carries a shared responsibility, as 50 per cent of the investment is expected to come from private equity sources.

He emphasised that while due diligence and verification processes must remain uncompromised, the timely release of funds is equally important to enable firms to move forward.

Singh made the comments during a monthly joint meeting of science secretaries.

Germany, France condemn far-right Israeli minister's 'inhumane' Gaza remarks



AFP

Berlin, Aug 19: Germany and France on Wednesday condemned remarks by Israel's far-right national security minister, who declared that Israel should kill "30 or 40" people every night in the Palestinian territory of Gaza.

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz "strongly condemns the inhumane appeals made by Minister (Itamar)

Ben Gvir, which violate international law," German government spokesman Sebastian Hille said. "They are unacceptable."

French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot also slammed the remarks, calling them "intolerable and inhumane" in an interview with the La Montagne regional newspaper.

Israel launched a military campaign on Hamas-ruled Gaza after the October 7, 2023 attack by the

Palestinian militant group Hamas against Israel.

Ben Gvir, who is already facing calls from several European countries for bloc-wide sanctions, made the call for mass killings during a podcast with a former Gaza hostage who had been held by Hamas.

"I think targeted eliminations should be carried out in Gaza every night. Take out 30 or 40," he said.

"Not only those who endanger you right now. These are people who shouldn't be alive," Ben Gvir said. "I'm paying them a compliment by calling them humans."

Lars Klingbeil, German vice chancellor and finance minister, said in a TV interview Tuesday that Ben Gvir's comments "must have consequences," adding that sanctions were being discussed at the European level.

Several European countries have called for EU-wide sanctions against the far-right minister, but the proposal has failed to win the required unanimity.

Calls to blacklist Ben Gvir grew after he published a video in May of himself mocking bound activists seized by Israeli soldiers on a Gaza-bound aid flotilla.

Congress to stick to 1937 resolution on Vande Mataram

PTI

ZNew Delhi, Aug 19: The Congress Working Committee on Wednesday decided to abide by the 1937 resolution of its highest decision-making body on Vande Mataram, saying only two stanzas of the National Song would be sung at all party events henceforth.

Addressing a press conference after the over-four-hour meeting of the CWC, Congress general secretary K C Venugopal said the party's stand is very clear, and it stands behind the decision of its top leadership in 1937.

"There is no confusion on that. Congress president categorically said so yesterday in Goa. Today we also discussed the issue in the meeting of the CWC. Our stand is very clear that the 1937 resolution decided in which Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Rabindranath Tagore, Subhas Chandra Bose and Sardar Patel - the top-most leadership of the party at that point of time were present.

"Whatever the decision they took, we have decided that. We are very clear that our Congress party workers will do that only. This is our decision," he told reporters.

Asked whether only two stanzas of Vande Mataram will be sung at party events, he said, "Yes, first two stanzas."

Venugopal said singing of Vande Mataram and the National Anthem is an emotional issue for the Congress, but for the BJP, it is a political matter.

He also said that the BJP's criticism of Congress leader Sonia Gandhi's objection to the singing of the full National Song was merely a distraction tactic. "This is the version of the BJP to distract from national issues of paper leak and 'chanda chori'," he said.

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said that on October 28, 1937, a resolution was passed on Vande Mataram at a CWC meeting in the presence of Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel, Netaji Subas Chandra Bose, and Maulana Azad at the suggestion of Rabindranath Tagore.

"There was a discussion on that resolution in today's meeting of CWC... Congress president also read out a part of the earlier resolution. There is no controversy on this issue. This issue is being made out deliberately as today's issue is youth, examinations, 'chanda chori' and failure of foreign policy," he said.

"Our stand has been clear from day one that the October 28, 1937, and our first president Rajendra Prasad said that the National Anthem will be 'Jana gana man...' and Vande Mataram will be our National Song," Ramesh said.

A day after the BJP accused him of singing "incomplete" Vande Mataram, on Tuesday, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge hit back at the party, saying he sang the same version that was sung by Mahatma Gandhi, Patel, Nehru, and Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

Hyundai Motor India to hike vehicle prices by up to 1% from Sep

PTI

New Delhi, Aug 19: Hyundai Motor India Ltd on Wednesday said it plans to increase prices of its vehicles by up to 1 per cent across its portfolio, from September 2026, to partially offset cost pressures.

The quantum of increase will vary depending on the model and variant, Hyundai Motor India Ltd (HML) said in a regulatory filing.

The price revision has been necessitated by a combination of rising input and commodity costs, higher operational expenses and continuing geopolitical and macroeconomic uncertainties, among other factors, it added.

HML said it continues to "make every endeavour to optimise costs and absorb cost escalations to minimise the impact on customers".

Jharkhand job exam stir: Govt cancels, orders probe into 45 tests



PTI

Ranchi, Aug 19: Amid a 26-day students' protest over alleged irregularities in Jharkhand recruitment exams, the JMM-led government cancelled 22 tests and ordered a probe into 23 others conducted by the state public service commission and an outsourced agency since 2014.

The government's move triggered panic among candidates who successfully cleared these examinations and joined various government departments.

Among the cancelled exams is the Jharkhand Staff Selection Commission - Combined Graduate Level (JSSC-CGL) examination, prompting successful candidates to hit the streets.

The decision, announced after a cabinet meeting on Monday and followed by eight notifications issued late Tuesday night, covers recruitment examinations for several key administrative, technical and judicial posts.

The JPSC-JSSC Reforms Manch, which has led the students' agitation at Jaipal Singh Munda Stadium here, said it would decide its next course of action soon.

Spokesperson Piyush Kumar Singh said the group was awaiting clarity on the scope of implementation of the government decisions.

"Our meeting is underway," he said.

JKM leader Devendra Mahto, who ended a 16-day hunger strike following the government's announcement, has said that he would soon launch a second phase of agitation.

Mahto has demanded guarantees that future JPSC and JSSC examinations will be "free from paper leaks and other irregularities", besides seeking a monitoring committee and a comprehensive audit of the recruitment process.

The cancelled examinations include recruitment for drug

inspectors, assistant professors in government engineering and medical colleges, lecturers in government polytechnics, senior scientific officers, assistant conservators of forests and forest range officers.

The list of cancelled tests or examinations being probed also includes various editions of the Jharkhand Combined Civil Services Examination, and tests for recruitment to food safety officers, child development project officers, food analysts, deputy director (prosecution), project managers, inspectors of factories and boilers, agriculture officers, geologists and chemists and other administrative and technical posts.

The government said the action was necessary to restore confidence in the recruitment system amid allegations of malpractice and irregularities.

The move, however, triggered protests from around 2,000 candidates who were appointed to various state government departments after clearing the JSSC-CGL examination. They marched from the state Secretariat to Birs Chowk in Ranchi on Tuesday, a day after Chief Minister Hemant Soren announced the cancellation.

The appointed candidates said they were not opposed to an investigation but objected to the cancellation of the entire examination, arguing that action should be taken against those found guilty rather than candidates who secured appointments through a legitimate selection process.

"Tell us our crime. Don't throw us out," said Assistant Section Officer Kaushal Kumar, demanding a CBI probe or an independent investigation into the alleged irregularities instead of cancellation of the JSSC-CGL exam.

The protesters said several of them had already joined departments including finance, home, road transport, labour and information and public relations.

GOVERNMENT OF UNION TERRITORY JAMMU & KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER MECHANICAL IRRIGATION CONSTRUCTION DIVISION SRINAGAR

Email ID:- exenmicdsrinagar@ifckashmir.com

NIT No: MICD/25 of 2026-27

Dated: 18.08.2026

Short term tender notice

For and on behalf of Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir, e-tenders are invited in two cover system (Technical and financial) on item rate basis from eligible contractors registered with J&K Govt. CPWD, Railway/State/Central Government organization and having experience for the below mentioned works:

S.No	Name of Work	Ceiling Cost (Rs. in Lacs)	Cost of T/ Doc. (In Rs)	Completion time/Period of contract	- AA Accorded Vide No:	TS Accorded vide No.	Earnest Money (in of Rs)	Position of Funds	Tender opening Authority
01	Drilling of 125mm diameter exploratory test bore hole to ascertain aquifer prior to drilling of production well at Shutloo Rafiabad.	582000/-	500	01 Month	Superintending Engineer Mechanical Circle I & F.C Department Srinagar's order No:- 30-MCO of 2026-27 Dated:- 14.08.2026.	TS Accorded vide this office No:- 20 Dated:- 18.08.2026.	11700/-	Available with the Department	Executive Engineer Mechanical Irrigation Construction Division Srinagar

The bidding document consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the Govt. website www.jktenders.gov.in as per schedule of dates given below:-

01	Publish date	18.08.2026 (18.00 hrs)
02	Period of downloading of bidding document	18.08.2026 (18.10 hrs)
03	Bid submission start date	18.08.2026 (18.15 hrs)
04	Bid submission end date	31.08.2026(11.00 hrs)
05	Date and time of opening of bids (online)	31.08.2026(16.00 hrs)

No. MICD/1654-57
Dated:18.08.2026

DIPK-4749/26
DATED: 19-08-2026

Sd/-
Executive Engineer,
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