

CM reviews telecom, digital communications infrastructure projects in J&K

Stresses universal access to reliable mobile and internet services

GY CORRESPONDENT

SRINAGAR, SEP 16

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today chaired a review meeting on strengthening telecom and digital communications infrastructure across Jammu and Kashmir, with a particular focus on extending services to far-flung villages, dark zones and railway tunnels. The meeting, attended by Minister for Information Technology Satish Sharma, Advisor to the CM Nasir Aslam Wani, Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary to the CM Dheera Gupta, several Administrative Secretaries and officials of BSNL, discussed the status of ongoing projects and the challenges delaying their execution. Underlining the significance of internet



connectivity as a bridge to progress, the Chief Minister said robust mobile and internet services are essential for effective governance, quality education, accessible healthcare, vibrant tourism and overall public welfare. From BSNL, he briefed the meeting on the progress of the Amended BharatNet Project (ABP) Phase-III, which aims to deliver high-speed internet to Gram

Panchayats and rural areas. The Chief Minister directed that strict guidelines be issued by departments such as R&B, PMGSY, BRO, and Forests for the laying of optical fibre cables. The need for uninterrupted services was also emphasized, with a focus on providing electricity connections to all Gram Panchayats to operationalize BharatNet, implementing

towers and equipment, and the expeditious grant of Right of Way permissions by departments such as R&B, PMGSY, BRO, and Forests for the laying of optical fibre cables. The Chief Minister directed BSNL and concerned government departments to work in close coordination, resolve bottlenecks swiftly, and ensure timely delivery of connectivity projects across Jammu and Kashmir.

centralized billing and smart metering systems, and ensuring the availability and functionality of Panchayat or alternate government buildings where digital services are to be hosted. Assuring full support from the government, the Chief Minister said: "Digital empowerment of our villages and towns is a cornerstone of inclusive growth. We are committed to ensuring that no part of Jammu and Kashmir remains disconnected—whether it is a remote hamlet, a dark zone, or a railway tunnel." The Chief Minister directed BSNL and concerned government departments to work in close coordination, resolve bottlenecks swiftly, and ensure timely delivery of connectivity projects across Jammu and Kashmir.

DC Jammu reviews functioning of RDD

Stresses on regular monitoring of works to ensure quality construction



GY CORRESPONDENT

JAMMU, SEP 16

Deputy Commissioner Jammu Dr Rakesh Minhas today convened a meeting to review the functioning of the Rural Development Department with special focus on implementation of flagship schemes including Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-G, MGNREGA and Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin). While reviewing the progress under PMAY(G) and MGNREGA, the Deputy Commissioner directed the Block Development Officers to take lead in expediting execution of works and ensure that block-wise plans are effectively implemented. He stressed on timely disbursement of payments under MGNREGA and called for increasing the number of workdays generated so as

to provide maximum benefit to the rural population. The Deputy Commissioner also took a detailed review of block-wise targets and achievements under SBM(G). He assessed the progress of various components including Individual Household Latrines, Community Sanitary Complexes, Solid Waste Management plants, community compost pits and waste management sheds. He emphasised that the ultimate aim under SBM(G) is to ensure proper collection, segregation and scientific disposal of waste and directed the officers to intensify efforts for achieving this objective. The DC directed the officers to undertake regular inspections of civil works to ensure quality

and timely completion. He further instructed the Revenue officials to proactively resolve land disputes hampering developmental works. The DC reviewed the physical and financial progress under the District Capex Budget 2025-26 and stressed on the need for review of panchayat ghar infrastructure within their respective jurisdictions. Appreciating the efforts of the Rural Development Department during the recent floods, Dr Minhas lauded the dedication of the officers and urged them to continue contributing meaningfully to the development of the district.

The meeting was attended by ADDC Sher Singh, CFO Ajaypal Singh, ACP Shahzada Noor ul Ain, ACD Danish Rasool Mir besides Block Development Officers.

Delhi CM launches multilingual song for PM Modi's 75th birthday, Opposition calls it 'Political PR'

NEW DELHI, SEP 16

A day ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 75th birthday, Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta unveiled a special musical tribute sung in 21 languages, showcasing India's cultural and linguistic diversity. The song, produced under the Delhi Education Department, was launched at a function in the national capital with students, teachers, and officials in attendance. The composition, titled "Namo Pragati Dilli – Baal Swar Se Rashtra Swar Tak", was performed by school children, symbolising the collective voice of India's young generation. Greeting cards handmade by students were also displayed during the event, with Gupta promising to deliver them personally to the Prime Minister so he receives them on his birthday.

Speaking on the occasion, CM Gupta hailed Modi as "Delhi's lifeline" and credited him for guiding the national capital during challenging times. She said that where earlier governments only criticised, Modi had given Delhi a new vision, and described the song as a token of gratitude from

every child of the city. The launch was accompanied by the announcement of a 15-day "Seva Pakhwada" during which the Delhi government plans to roll out new education initiatives. These include fresh curriculum frameworks, a new policy module called Rashtra Neeti, a foundational learning programme named Neev, and a skill development drive under the banner of Nipun, all aimed at improving student outcomes and nurturing holistic development. The celebrations will continue on September 17 with a symbolic morning walk at Kartavya Path, reflecting Modi's emphasis on fitness and discipline. While the Delhi government highlighted the event as a cultural and educational gesture, opposition leaders were quick to criticise it. Congress spokespersons dismissed the initiative as political sycophancy using schoolchildren. They argued that education resources should not be diverted to glorify political leaders, especially in a city grappling with issues like pollution, rising costs of living, and public transport challenges. Aam Aadmi Party leaders, still

reeling from recent setbacks in the capital, questioned the timing of the tributes. They said songs and cards would not solve Delhi's pressing issues and called the initiative public relations disguised as cultural programmes. Left-leaning student groups also raised objections, accusing the state government of turning classrooms into campaign stages. Observers note that the multilingual song carries symbolism beyond birthday celebrations. Modi turning 75 marks a milestone that his supporters are keen to showcase as part of his enduring popularity. By highlighting linguistic inclusivity, the Delhi government sought to mirror the Prime Minister's own pitch for unity in diversity. At the same time, critics argue that the move underscores how state governments increasingly use cultural and educational platforms to consolidate political loyalty towards the Prime Minister. For the BJP, the optics of children singing in multiple languages reinforces Modi's pan-Indian appeal, cutting across regions and dialects.

LG Kavinder pays courtesy visit to Rajasthan Governor



JAIPUR, SEP 16

Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Shri Kavinder Gupta, today paid a courtesy visit to Hon'ble Governor of Rajasthan, Shri Haribhau Kisanrao Bagade, at Raj Bhawan, Jaipur. During the meeting, the LG Governor apprised the Governor about the ongoing developmental initiatives, infrastructure expansion, and welfare schemes being implemented in Ladakh under the vision of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. He also highlighted the administration's focused efforts towards promoting tourism, empowering youth, and strengthening border villages to ensure inclusive growth in the

Union Territory. The LG Governor further said that Ladakh is witnessing a new era of opportunities where connectivity, education, health, and livelihood sectors are being prioritized for the welfare of its people. He emphasised the UT government's commitment to preserving Ladakh's rich cultural heritage while simultaneously opening new avenues for economic progress. Shri Kavinder Gupta extended his best wishes to Shri Haribhau Kisanrao Bagade for his continued service to the nation and expressed hope for deeper cooperation and goodwill between the two regions.

Sessions Judge Refuses Bail to Youth

Accused in Jammu Th Road Rage Incident

GY CORRESPONDENT

JAMMU, SEP 16

The Principal Sessions Judge Jammu, Y.P. Bourney, has dismissed the bail application of 19-year-old engineering student Mannan Anand, accused in the sensational Th road rage case, observing that the seriousness of allegations and ongoing investigation do not warrant his release. The case relates to FIR No. 163/2025, registered at Gandhi Nagar Police Station. According to the prosecution, on July 27, 2025, Anand was allegedly driving a Mahindra Th rashly when it collided with a Scooty near Green Belt Park. He then allegedly reversed the vehicle at high speed, hitting the victim—an elderly man—with the intention to run him over. After abusing the victim, the accused reportedly fled the spot. The severely injured victim was first shifted to GMC Jammu and later referred to Fortis Hospital Chandigarh for advanced treatment owing to his critical condition. Counsel appearing for the accused that Anand, a young engineering student, had already been in custody since July 30

and that his prolonged detention amounted to "pre-trial punishment." The defense also accused the police of adding Section 109 BNS later to nullify. Public Prosecutor Anil Mangotra strongly opposed bail, maintaining that the accused's conduct—rash driving, reversing the vehicle to hit the victim, and fleeing after hurling abuses—showed clear intent and seriousness. He argued that releasing the accused at this stage would jeopardize the investigation. Dismissing the bail plea, the Principal Sessions Judge noted that despite more than six weeks since registration of the case, the probe was still at an early stage and required professional handling. The court emphasised that considering the gravity of allegations, the manner of commission, and the stage of investigation, the accused did not deserve bail at present. The Judge further observed that "no amount of change in laws would suffice unless there is a perceptible change in the mindset of those responsible for implementation," urging police to conclude the probe with urgency. (JNF)

ED summons ex-cricketers Robin Uthappa and Yuvraj Singh, actor Sonu Sood in betting app case

NEW DELHI, SEP 16

Widening its probe into an alleged illegal online betting linking money laundering case, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) has summoned cricketers Robin Uthappa and Yuvraj Singh, and actor Sonu Sood for questioning, officials said Tuesday.

Uthappa (39), Singh (43) and Sood (52) have been asked to depose beginning next week at the agency's headquarters investigation unit in Delhi and get their statements recorded under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) in a case linked to a platform named 1xBet, the officials said. While Uthappa has been asked to depose on September 22, Singh has been called on September 23 followed by Sood on September 24, they said. The federal probe agency has questioned former cricketers Suresh Raina and Shikhar Dhawan apart from former TMC MP and actor Mimi Chakraborty over the last few weeks as part of this investigation.

Bengali actor Ankush Hazra (36) appeared before the ED on Tuesday on his scheduled summons in the case, while actor Urvashi



Rautela (31), the India brand ambassador of 1xBet yet to appear on her given date for Tuesday, the sources said. The probe pertains to the operations of the 1xBet betting app as part of ED's wider probe against such platforms on allegations of duping numerous people and investors worth crores of rupees and reportedly evading a huge amount of direct and indirect taxes. According to the Curacao registered company, 1xBet is a globally recognised bookmaker with 18 years in the betting industry. The brand's customers can place bets on thousands of sporting events, with the company's website and app available in 70 languages, according to the company. An email sent by PTI seeking a response from 1xBet on the ED probe

remained unanswered till the filing of this report. More sports persons, movie actors, online influencers and celebrities are expected to be questioned by the agency in the coming days as part of this probe. The ED's line of investigation, according to the sources, is to know from the celebrities as to how they were contacted by the said betting company seeking their endorsement, the nodal person(s) for contact in India, the mode of payment (cash through hawala or banking channel) and place of the payment (in India or abroad) etc. The agency, while recording the statements of the cricketers and actors, is understood to be asking them if they knew that online betting and gaming was illegal in India.

Commissioner JMC Visits Flood-Hit Areas of Ward No. 56, Gangyal-Bablana.



GY CORRESPONDENT

JAMMU, SEP 16

In view of the hardships faced by people due to the recent floods, Dr. Devansh Yadav, Commissioner, Municipal Corporation Jammu, today conducted an extensive tour of Ward No. 56, Gangyal-Bablana and its surrounding areas. The visit was aimed at assessing the condition of the major nallah passing through the ward, which has been identified as one of the major causes of recurring waterlogging in the locality.

During the inspection, Dr. Yadav personally examined the drain alignment, interacted with officials on-site, and listened to grievances raised by local residents. People informed the Commissioner that every year, during the rainy season, the drain overflows and water enters more than 200 houses, leading to extensive damage to household property and creating severe inconvenience for families. They explained that the low height of the drain wall and unauthorised encroachments along its banks are the primary reasons for flooding. Residents said that, during heavy rains, several feet of water enters residential areas

through the narrow streets, forcing families to evacuate their homes and bringing normal life to a complete halt. Elderly citizens and school-going children, in particular, face immense hardship during such situations. After listening to the concerns of the people, Dr. Yadav assured them that the Jammu Municipal Corporation is committed to finding a permanent solution to this long-pending issue. He instructed the concerned engineering staff to expedite the demarcation of the drain so that its boundaries can be clearly defined and work on widening and strengthening the walls shall begin at the earliest. He stressed that this task must be carried out without delay so that residents face no further damage and distress in the next monsoon season. The Commissioner also made a strong appeal to local residents to extend full cooperation to the Jammu Municipal Corporation. He urged them to voluntarily remove encroachments along the drain, reminding them that such structures not only obstruct cleaning operations but also directly contribute to flooding. He said that drainage problems cannot be solved by the Corporation alone and

that people's cooperation is equally important. Wherever there are encroachments, residents should come forward to remove them so that widening and cleaning work can be carried out smoothly. In addition to engineering measures, Dr. Yadav directed officials from the Health and Sanitation wings to intensify cleanliness and anti-water logging activities in the affected localities. He emphasised that a proper drainage solution will significantly improve the standard of living in Gangyal-Bablana and adjoining areas. He stressed that the Corporation will continue to prioritize the welfare of residents through sustainable infrastructure development.

The Commissioner was accompanied during the visit by former Deputy Mayor, Baldev Singh Billawara, who also assured full support to the people in addressing their issues. Senior officials present on the occasion included Joint Commissioner (Works) Firdous Ahmed Qazi, Health Officer Dr. Vinod Sharma, Executive Engineer (UEED) Ashwani Khajuria, Executive Engineer Div. 5 Vastav Basir Kichloo, Chief Transport Officer Dharamveer Singh and others.

Iltija Mufti writes to LG Manoj Sinha over plight of horticulture sector

GY CORRESPONDENT

SRINAGAR, SEP 16

The Peoples Democratic Party has sounded alarm over the deepening crisis faced by apple growers in Jammu and Kashmir following highway disruptions, with party leader Iltija Mufti writing to Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha urging urgent intervention.

In a letter addressed to the Lieutenant Governor, Iltija Mufti highlighted that horticulture forms the backbone of the Union Territory's economy, contributing nearly 7 percent to the GDP and providing livelihood to over 25 lakh people. She said recent floods, landslides and consequent road closures

have brought the apple trade to a standstill. "The Srinagar-Jammu National Highway has been closed for the past two weeks, causing interminable delays for trucks carrying apples," Heartbreaking visuals of growers dumping their rotten produce have already made grim headlines," she wrote.