

AUTUMN SESSION 2026: QUESTION HOUR

Schools with higher PTR being addressed through ongoing rationalisation process: Sakeena Itoo

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, SEP 24

Minister for Education, Sakeena Itoo today informed the J&K Legislative Assembly that the issue of maintaining the Pupil-Teacher Ratio is being addressed by providing additional staff to understaffed schools through rationalisation across J&K, including those in Uri constituency.

Replying to a question raised by MLA Uri Sajjad Shafi during Question Hour of the ongoing Autumn Session of the Legislative Assembly, the Minister said the staffing requirements of schools with relatively higher PTR are being addressed through the ongoing rationalisation process.

She said that only 10 out of 375 government schools in Uri constituency have a



Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR) of more than 40, while steps are underway to address staffing requirements in these schools through rationalisation and judicious deployment of available teaching resources.

Sakeena Itoo said applications from eligible teachers

have already been invited under the Annual Transfer Drive (ATD)-2026, and these applications will be considered with due regard to the staffing requirements of schools having relatively higher pupil-teacher loads, wherever warranted.

The Minister further in-

formed the House that 22 Laboratory Assistants have recently been promoted as Teachers, of whom eight have been adjusted in Uri constituency. In addition, five Masters have been transferred to Uri constituency to supplement the existing teaching arrangements, particularly in schools where the pupil-teacher load is relatively higher.

Sakeena Itoo added that the rationalisation exercise for the current academic year has already been initiated and the staffing requirements of individual schools will be duly considered as part of the exercise to ensure a more balanced distribution of teaching personnel.

12.89 lakh farmers covered under PMFBY; 3.72 lakh claims amounting to ₹221.71 crore registered

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Minister for Agriculture Production, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Cooperative and Election Department, Javid Ahmad Dar, today informed the Legislative Assembly that the horticulture sector remains one of the key pillars of Jammu & Kashmir's economy, supporting the livelihoods and employment of a large section of the population.

The Minister was responding to a clubbed question raised by MLAs Pirzada Farooq Ahmed Shah, Ghulam Mohi-ud-din Mir and Irfan Hafiz Lone, along with the supplementary raised by MLA Shabir Ahmad Kullay.

Javid Dar said that approximately 35 lakh people, comprising nearly 7.5 lakh families, are directly or indirectly associated with the horticulture sector. The sector contributes approximately 10 per cent to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the Union Territory and generates an estimated annual income of around ₹12,000 crore.

He further stated that horticulture has considerable employment potential, with one hectare of orchard area generating approximately 400 man-days of employment annually, thereby making a significant contribution to rural livelihoods and the broader economy of J&K.

On crop insurance, the Minister said that the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) is presently being implemented across all 20 districts of Jammu & Kashmir.

He informed the House that the scheme is demand-driven and there is no cap on the number of farmers



who can avail its benefits, subject to prescribed guidelines and eligibility criteria. He said that approximately 13.985 lakh Farmer Families (FoFs) in the UT are eligible to avail the benefits of the scheme.

As per the available data, 6,86,741.37 hectares of area has been covered, benefiting 12,89,917 farmers, while 3,72,134 claims have been registered involving an amount of approximately ₹s 221.71 crore.

The Minister acknowledged that farmers and orchardists in various areas have suffered losses due to natural calamities, including hailstorms, floods and heavy rains.

He said that the Department undertakes assessment of crop losses through its field functionaries and extends assistance and relief, wherever admissible, under the provisions of applicable schemes and guidelines.

Javid Dar stated that PMFBY provides insurance coverage against notified natural risks, including hailstorms, for notified crops. The basic cover provides area-based insurance against yield losses in standing crops from sowing to harvesting arising from non-preventable risks such

as drought, dry spells, floods, inundation, widespread pest and disease attacks, landslides, natural fire due to lightning, storms, hailstorms and cyclones, subject to notified crops, areas and applicable guidelines.

Addressing the issue of pending claims, the Minister said that the major reasons for pendency of genuine claims include Aadhaar non-verification, closure of bank accounts, non-seeding of Aadhaar with the NPCI mapper by banks, and bank accounts being blocked or frozen.

He said that the Government has launched a special campaign to resolve failed payment transactions and facilitate settlement of eligible pending claims.

"Approximately 60 per cent of the affected farmers have already been contacted, and the requisite documents are being collected from them on a daily basis for verification and further necessary action," the Minister said.

He assured the House that concerted efforts are being made to address the genuine difficulties being faced by farmers and ensure that eligible beneficiaries receive the benefits due to them under the scheme.

On the transportation of horticultural produce during the peak fruit season, Javid Dar said that the Government has strengthened traffic and logistics management through coordinated measures to ensure smooth, timely and uninterrupted movement of fruit and other horticultural produce.

He informed that a dedicated Control Room has been established at Qazigund for real-time traffic monitoring, coordination with concerned agencies and dissemination of timely advisories to growers, traders and transporters.

The Minister said that the Mughal Road is also being utilized as an alternative route, wherever feasible, to ease congestion and reduce pressure on NH-44.

He further stated that railway parcel, goods and freight services from Anantnag and Budgam to Delhi have been facilitated and promoted for transportation of horticultural produce.

"These coordinated measures are aimed at diversifying the transportation network, reducing dependence on NH-44 and minimizing the possibility of prolonged stranding of fruit-laden vehicles during the peak harvest season," Javid Dar said.

The Minister reiterated the Government's commitment to protecting the interests of farmers and orchardists, strengthening crop insurance mechanisms, expediting settlement of genuine claims and improving transportation, logistics and market connectivity for horticultural produce across Jammu & Kashmir. He further stated that various schemes under HADP the farmers get benefits and avail more than 60 percent subsidies in the projects.

Assembly passes Resolution seeking TET exemption for pre-2019 teachers

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, SEP 24

The Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly today passed by voice vote a Resolution moved by Minister for School Education, Sakeena Itoo, seeking exemption of teachers appointed before October 31, 2019 from appearing in the TET.

The Resolution was passed after a two-day debate during which members deliberated upon various aspects of the issue and highlighted the concerns of teachers appointed prior to the cut-off date.

The Resolution states: "This House unanimously urges the Union Govern-

ment to make necessary statutory amendment to Section 23 of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009, to exempt all teachers appointed before October 31, 2019 from appearing in the TET."

It further urges the Union Government to take all necessary legal steps and issue the requisite notification through the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) for granting exemption from the TET requirement.

Sakeena Itoo thanked all the legislators for expressing their concerns and for coming together to unanimously support the Resolution. She said that the Resolution was being moved in the House with the inten-

tion of addressing the concerns of teachers who have been serving the education sector for years.

She said that the issue should not be viewed merely from the perspective of whether teachers can pass another examination, as many of them have already appeared in and cleared various tests during their careers. "These teachers have made immense sacrifices, devoted their time and energy and worked tirelessly to prepare our students for various professions, including doctors and engineers, while helping secure their future. The credit for their achievements goes to their teachers," she said.

The Minister emphasised that the contribution and

years of service of these teachers need to be duly recognised while considering the matter.

On the first day of the debate, legislators Balwant Singh Mankotia, Ranbir Singh Pathania, Waheed Ur Rehman Para and Khurshed Ahmad Sheikh participated in the discussion and expressed their views on various aspects of the Resolution.

The debate continued today, with legislators Pirzada Farooq Ahmad Shah, Nazir Ahmad Khan (Gurezi), Dr. Bashir Ahmad Shah (Veer) also participating in the discussion and putting forth their views on the issue.

Following the detailed two-day discussion, the House passed the Resolution by voice vote.

JJM, AMRUT projects to strengthen water supply infrastructure in Sopore: Rana

SRINAGAR, SEPTEMBER 24: Minister for Jal Shakti, Javed Ahmed Rana, today stated that the Jal Shakti Department is implementing various water supply schemes under the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) and AMRUT to ensure adequate and potable drinking water supply to rural and urban habitations of Sopore Constituency.

The Minister stated this while replying to a Calling Attention Motion moved by Legislator Irshad Rasool Kar in the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly today.

Rana informed the House that 16 water supply schemes have been taken up under JJM at an estimated cost of ₹85.55 crore to provide Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTCs) to households across the rural areas of Sopore Constituency. He also said that nine of these schemes have been completed and made functional.

Regarding Sopore Town, the Minister said that its water supply infrastructure is being augmented under



ment is providing drinking water to the affected habitations through water tankers as an interim arrangement pending completion and commissioning of the ongoing schemes. He added the tanker service would continue to bridge the gap in water supply until the JJM and AMRUT 2.0 projects are completed and made fully operational.

It was further informed that PHE Division Sopore has, presently, six functional water tankers deployed in areas covered under incomplete JJM schemes, including Dangerpora, Saidpora, Warpora, Adipora, Aminabad, Tarzoo, Watlab-Sangritop and adjoining areas besides various water-deficient areas of Sopore Town.

The Minister informed the House that the Department is pursuing release of funds with the UT and Central Governments to clear pending workdone claims under JJM schemes on a first-charge basis, so that work on these schemes can be resumed and completed at the earliest.

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SRINAGAR, SEPTEMBER 24: MLA Nazir Ahmad Khan (Gurezi) asked for swift forest clearance of the road projects to ensure their timely completion. The Minister In-Charge PWD clarified that the matter would be taken on priority with the forest department and the connectivity Projects completed on time.

MLA Nizam-ud-din Bhat raised the issue about the refusal of Environmental Clearance to the New Ganderbal Hyderabad Power Project.

MLA Shamim Firdous raised the issue of Water Scarcity in her area and demanded the construction of reservoir to tide over this issue.

MLA Mohammad Yousuf Rather (Tarigami) Requested the Government to hike the Honorarium of consolidated employees like Asha, Anganwadi and Mid Day Meal workers on the lines of Sikkim and Pondicherry.

MLA Muzaffar Iqbal Khan asked the Minister In charge to consider the Cooks and other similar staff in schools

to be paid as per the Minimum Wages Act as their Honorarium is very Less. He also demanded fair compensation in favour of the farmers whose land has been acquired for the construction of schools or Water supply schemes in his areas. MLA Mir Mohammad Fayaz raised the issue of dearth of doctors and medical supplies in his constituency. MLA Mian Mehar Ali demanded Degree College, horticulture office for Gund tehsil, Night stay Permission for tourists at Naranag and large scale winter events at Sonamarg. MLA Surjeet Singh Salathia raised the issue about release of the money of the Account Holders of cooperative Bank, pending salaries of its staff and asked for the time frame to make the payments. MLA Daleep Singh Parihar raised the issue of Sexual Assault of a young Girl in his area and demanded stern punishment to the culprits.

MLA Rameshwar Singh raised the issue of maintenance and restoration of Road infrastructure damaged due to

rainfall in his constituency and rollback of new UGC rule.

MLA Pirzada Farooq Ahmad Shah raised the issue of Poonch- Tangmarg road and called for taking up the work on this pivotal project aiming to connect two regions of Jammu and Kashmir. He also called for taking stringent measure for ensuring ban on Polythene in Gulmurg and catchment areas.

MLA Shakti Raj Parihar raised the issue of delay in execution of connectivity works due to delay of forest clearance and dearth of manpower in his constituency.

MLA Justice (Retd) Hasnain Masoodi raised the issue of absorption of daily wagers of JK Cements and the pending dues of Handloom Development Corporation Employees. He also raised the issue of Customary Quarry Mining of the area. MLA Sajad Gani Lone raised the issue of privileges entitled to the Members of Legislative Assembly and called for ensuring the same.

Govt strengthening trauma, critical care services in remote and hilly areas: Sakina Itoo

SRINAGAR, SEP 24: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Sakina Itoo, today informed the Legislative Assembly that the Government is taking a series of measures to strengthen healthcare delivery, emergency response, trauma care and critical-care services in remote, hilly and difficult-to-access areas of Jammu Division, including the Padder-Nagseni Assembly Constituency.

The Minister was responding to a question raised by Sunil Kumar Sharma regarding the availability of doctors, specialists, nurses and paramedical staff, besides infrastructure, diagnostic facilities and emergency healthcare services in remote areas.

The Minister said that the Government is progressively augmenting Emergency, Trauma and Critical Care Services in remote and difficult areas through strengthening of critical-care infrastructure, emergency and trauma services, ambulance and medical evacuation facilities, human resources and telemedicine support.

She said the focus is on ensuring

timely stabilization and management of critically ill and trauma patients at the nearest available health facility, followed by referral to higher centres wherever specialized treatment is required.

Highlighting the initiatives being undertaken under PM-ABHIM, the Minister informed that 17 Critical Care Blocks are being established across the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, comprising 15 blocks of 50 beds each and two blocks of 100 beds each.

These facilities, she said, are aimed at substantially augmenting critical-care capacity and decentralizing specialized services, thereby reducing the need for patients from remote and far-flung areas to undertake long journeys for critical medical care.

The Minister further informed that emergency response and patient transportation facilities have also been strengthened with the addition of 44 Advanced Life Support (ALS) ambulances, including 22 each for Jammu and Kashmir divisions, taking



the total fleet under 102/108 ambulance services to 530.

She said that another 100 ambulances are being added to the fleet,

comprising 75 critical-care ambulances and 25 4x4 All-Terrain Ambulances, which will further enhance emergency transportation and evacu-

ation capabilities, particularly in mountainous, remote and difficult-to-access areas. "An effective ambulance network plays a crucial role in ensuring timely emergency response, initial stabilization and safe transportation of patients, particularly from remote, hilly and geographically challenging areas," the Minister said.

She added that the Department is undertaking need-based augmentation of manpower and emergency-care infrastructure in health institutions, keeping in view patient load, geographical accessibility, institutional requirements and identified service gaps.

Emphasizing the role of technology in bridging geographical barriers, Sakina Itoo said that telemedicine and specialist outreach services are also being utilized wherever feasible to facilitate specialist consultations and provide clinical support to patients and healthcare institutions in remote areas. The Minister informed that Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) have been signed between the

Principals of GMC Jammu, GMC Kathua, GMC Udhampur and GMC Rajouri and the Medical Superintendents of District Hospitals Reasi, Samba, Ramban and Poonch respectively for conducting specialist outreach camps and providing teleconsultation services.

She further informed that the draft MoU between GMC Doda and District Hospital Kishtwar has already been prepared and will be finalized shortly, which will further strengthen specialist support and referral linkages for patients in the region.

Regarding healthcare services in Padder-Nagseni, the Minister said that the First Referral Unit (FRU) at SDH Atholi, Paddar, provides referral services to District Hospital Kishtwar or higher health institutions, depending upon the clinical requirements of patients. She said that timely referral and evacuation of critically ill and injured patients is facilitated through 108/102 ambulance services available at SDH Atholi and in the Padder-Nagseni area.