

## People continue to suffer due to no internet since August 5

**SRINAGAR:** People, including professionals, Doctors and media persons besides students continued to suffer due to suspension of internet service since August 5, when centre scrapped Article 370 and 35 A and dividing the state into two Union Territory (UT).

Meanwhile, there was still no relief for three former Chief Ministers other leaders who remained under detention in the valley since August 5.

However, over two dozen former legislators and ministers besides other leaders were released after they gave undertaking that they will not raise the issue of special status of the state. Several leaders of different political parties, including National Conference (NC) and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and Democratic Party Nationalist (DPN) after their release met Lt Governor G C Murmu and foreign delegations who visited the valley recently. PDP expelled a number of leaders for their meeting with Murmu and foreign delegations.

The internet service of all Cellular companies, including Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL), remained suspended since August 5 in the Kashmir valley, badly hitting professionals, Doctors, Media persons and students. Even though government restored broadband service in hospitals early this month, but only administrators of these hospitals have access to the service. Doctors too have no access the broadband service in the hospitals.

However, pre-paid mobile service has also been restored in the valley recently. Government also restored 2G service on postpaid internet service in frontier district of Kupwara and another north Kashmir district of Bandipora. Restoration of pre paid mobile in Kashmir and 2G internet service in Kupwara and Ganderbal followed direction by Supreme Court to review ban on internet and prepaid service in Kashmir. Media persons continued to file their stories from Information Department where a facilitation centre has been set up for them. However, they had to wait for hours to finally get their turn to file stories. Meanwhile, three ex-CMs Dr Farooq Abdullah, his son Omar Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti remained under detention since August 5. Dr Abdullah, who is MP from Srinagar constituency, has been booked under Public Safety Act (PSA). The number of other leaders, including chairman of Peoples Conference (PC) Sajjad Gani Lone and former IAS officer turned politician Dr Shah Faesal also remained under detention.

## Over 680 Government Schools To Get Solar Panels To Receive 24\*7 Electricity Facility



**SRINAGAR:** The Government schools in rural areas are likely to receive electricity facility throughout the day as the school education department is mulling to install solar panels in the educational institutions.

According to wire service—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the solar panels will be installed in those institutions which have been deprived of the electricity facility over the years by the department.

As per the official document, the Ministry of human Resource Development (MHRD) has estimated an amount of Rs 44.40 crore for installation of solar panel in

more than 680 high schools as well as higher secondary schools in Jammu and Kashmir.

An official said the issue about non-availability of electricity in government schools was taken up with MHRD in 2019 following which the union ministry agreed to provide financial grants for installation of solar panels in those schools which have not been covered by the power development department.

"Actually these schools are located on foot hills in far off areas of frontier districts of Jammu and Kashmir. In these areas, the power development department has not in-

stalled its electric wires due to which the schools have also remained un-electrified," the official said.

As per the official document with the KNO, the MHRD had released some funds for installation of these solar panels in schools during 2017-18 but the funds were surrendered by the education department after it could not start the process.

"The funds were surrendered in 2018 and MHRD agreed to approve the project on revised cost. Later in 2019, the MHRD approved funds for installation of solar panels in 783 government schools," the official said.

Last year the school edu-

cation department started electrification process of all schools but some schools were left un-electrified as the areas where these schools are located were not covered by PDD department.

"But now, we are hopeful that the work for installation of these solar panels will start soon after schools reopen after winter vacations," the official said. He said the department had set target for complete electrification of schools by 2019 but the department faced some hurdles due to which some schools were left for several reasons. "But in 2020, we are hopeful to cover all the schools," he said. (KNO)

## Engineers in Ladakh UT on pen down strike

**SRINAGAR:** The engineers in Union Territory (UT) of Ladakh are on one-day pen down strike on Monday in protest against the administration decision to call application from candidates from all over India for different engineering posts in the region.

The strike was also supported by several other organizations. The UT administration in an advertisement recently has asked candidates to apply for different vacant engineering posts in Ladakh. The notice said candidates from outside the UT of Ladakh can also apply for

these posts. Reacting sharply to the advertisement, the local engineering association announced one day strike today. "How can candidates from outside the UT of Ladakh apply for these posts when we were assured that there will be no compromise with our land and

employment," the engineering associations said.

We will oppose any such move, they said, adding the people of Ladakh will fight for their rights.

The engineering association of Kargil has also supported the call.

### SHORT TAKES

#### No relief in near future for people living in border areas in north Kashmir

**SRINAGAR:** There is no relief in near future for people living in cutoff border towns of Keran, Machil and dozens of far flung and remote villages, including those near the Line of Control (LoC), as the snow clearance operations to clear several feet of snow would take more than a week.

Meanwhile, traffic on road leading to border town Gurez, which is surrounded by Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK) from three sides, remained suspended for the past 19 days on Monday due to slippery road conditions and accumulation of several feet of snow.

However, traffic was plying normally on roads to several far flung and remote villages, adjoining to border town of Karnah after reopening on Sunday. "Snow clearing operation is going on war-footing on Kupwara-Keran and Kupwara-Machil roads," an official of Police Control Room (PCR), Kupwara, told UNI over the phone.

But, he said it will take about a week to clear about 7 to 8 feet of snow at some places on these roads. Border towns of Keran, Machil and dozens of far flung and remote villages were cut off from the district headquarter on Monday due heavy snowfall. He said vehicular movement was plying normally for the second successive day to some other remote and far flung areas which are adjacent to Karnah. Traffic was restored to these areas on Sunday after remaining suspended for seven days due to slippery road conditions and accumulation of several feet of snow.

Razdan pass, connecting Gurez, Neeru and dozens of other areas near LoC with district headquarters Bandipora, remained closed due to accumulation of snow and fresh snowfall. A police official told UNI that about 5 feet of snow was accumulated at some places on the road. "About 80 per cent of the road has been damaged and it is highly unlikely that these areas will be reconnected to district headquarter before March," he added. The government has approved a tunnel at Razdan pass to make it an all weather road. UNI ABS

#### Internet Clampdown: laborers face problems to submit online labour registration forms

**KUPWARA:** In absence of the internet services the labours at Labour office Kupwara face problems to submit their Labour registration forms.

The locals laborers of the area told KNS that they have to wait for several days to get their turn as there remains huge rush at office.

They said that only few internet Kiosks has been installed at the office which are not enough to cater huge rush.

A labour form Lolab Kupwara told KNS that he is visiting the office from last three days to fill form in the office but due to huge rush at the office I have failed to submit my form. An official of the labour Department Arshid Ahmad Bhat told KNS that due to internet absence the labours are getting late to fulfill their forms. However he assured that all the forms will be collected. (KNS).

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