

## Will make statement on Aug 31, says SG SC wants Centre to tell when electoral democracy will be restored in J&K

### Reorganisation of State can be done in national security

NEW DELHI, Aug 29:

The five-Judge Constitution bench of the Supreme Court, hearing a clutch of petitions challenging the abrogation of Article 370, asked the Centre for the first time today to specify a time frame for restoration of electoral democracy in the erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir, saying the present arrangement "has to come to an end".

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the Centre, told the bench the Union Territory status of Jammu and Kashmir is not a "permanent thing" and that the government will make an elaborate statement on the vexatious political issue in the court on August 31.

The bench, headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud, which was hearing Mehta's submissions defending the Centre's decision to do away with the special status of the former state and its reorganisation, said, "Democracy is important, although we agree that in view of

the national security scenario, reorganisation of the state can be done."

The court said lack of electoral democracy cannot be allowed to go on indefinitely.

"This has to come to an end... Give us the specific time frame as to when will you restore actual democracy. We want to record this," the bench said, and asked Mehta and Attorney General R Venkataramani to seek instructions from the political executive and get back to the court.

"I have taken instructions and the instructions are that the UT status for Jammu and Kashmir is not a permanent thing. It will remain for Ladakh. However, I will make an elaborate statement on August 31," Mehta told the bench, also comprising Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul, Sanjay Khanna, BR Gavai and Surya Kant.

He read out from the statement Home Minister Amit Shah had made while tabling the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Bill in 2019 saying J&K's statehood will be

restored in due course of time.

As the hearing on the hugely contentious issue continued for the 12th day, the apex court wanted to know from the government's law officers was the abrogation of Article 370 "really a logical step" to achieve J-K's complete integration with India.

"The wide chasm between absolute autonomy, as it existed on January 26, 1950, and complete integration, as it was brought on August 5, 2019... That chasm has been substantially bridged by what was happening in between. So, really, in the sense it was not a complete migration from absolute autonomy to absolute integration."

"It is obvious that a substantial degree of integration has already taken place in the last 69 years. Therefore, what was done in 2019 was it really a logical step forward to achieve that integration?" the bench asked Attorney General R Venkataramani.

The top court also questioned

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## 'Constant endeavour to strengthen good governance' Efficient handling of grievances instrument of social change, economic growth: LG

Excelsior Correspondent

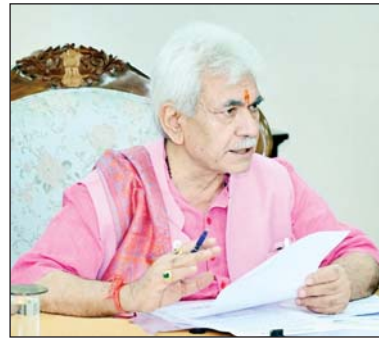
SRINAGAR, Aug 29: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha interacted with citizens, through video conferencing during "LG's Mulaqaat"- Live Public Grievance Hearing programme, at the Civil Secretariat.

He sought the action taken report from Deputy Commissioners, Head of Departments on the pending grievances of LG's Mulaqaat programme. He was informed that 355 cases have been redressed.

The Lt Governor said the constant endeavour of the UT Administration is to strengthen good governance, to ensure benefits of welfare measures reach the poorest of the poor and immediate disposal of their grievances.

"Efficient handling of grievances and needs of people is an instrument of social change and economic growth. Integrated approach by stakeholders is yielding significant result and collective efforts have encouraged effective public participation in planning and implementation of projects," Sinha said.

Responding to a complaint of



LG Manoj Sinha interacting with citizens on Tuesday.

Bashir Ahmad Wani from Dooru, Bandipora pertaining to encroachment of Nallah in his locality, he directed the district and police administration to remove the illegal encroachment and take legal action against the encroacher.

Siraj Salam from Baramulla drew the attention of the Lt Governor on the issue of unauthorised charging of hefty admission fees for the admission of his daughter by private school. The Lt Governor sought details on the issue and instructed the Director School Education to ensure admission of the child and take necessary action against the school in this matter.

On the grievances of complainants namely Ishfaq Ahmad of Dar Mohalla Budgam and Prem Singh from Jammu regarding water supply in their localities, Deputy Commissioner Budgam and ADC Jammu briefed the LG that the upcoming schemes under Jal Jeevan Mission will address the need for the water supply in the respective areas.

Responding to the complaint of Sant Ram, a resident of Banjar Korara of Doda related to sanctioning of Old-age pension, Sinha directed the officials to ensure the benefits

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Happy Raksha Bandhan To All Our Readers

## 'Toll Plazas are run under national policy' Working on technological solution for Tarnah bridge: NHA officer

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, Aug 29: A high-level team of the National Highways Authority of India (NHA) reached Jammu today on a four-day visit of the Union Territory and undertook a tour of Tarnah bridge in Kathua district which was damaged in flash floods leading to disruption of traffic on Jammu-Pathankot National Highway and causing inconvenience to the people.

The team led by a senior officer

\*Watch video on [www.excelsiornews.com](http://www.excelsiornews.com)

cer visited Tarnah bridge for on spot inspection of the damage caused to it.

To questions by the media persons, the NHA officer didn't

respond on whether the responsibility for washing away of a part of Tarnah bridge in Kathua dis-



A senior NHA officer speaks to media persons at Tarnah bridge in Kathua on Tuesday.

— Excelsior/Pardeep

tribut will be fixed.

On Sarore Toll Plaza in Samba district, the NHA officer said Toll Plazas are under a national policy and refused to comment on whether toll will be exempted.

There have been protests by various political parties and organization for suspension of Sarore Toll Plaza till Tarnah bridge is made fully functional.

On restoration of traffic in Tarnah, the NHA officers said they are trying to look into technological solutions and that's why their team has come here.

"We are looking at solutions to see how quickly can we do, we are already trying a lot and we will try more," the NHA officer said, adding the problem (of damages caused to bridge) has

(Contd on page 4 Col 3)

## IAS officer's charges warrant inquiry: Omar

SRINAGAR, Aug 29:

National Conference leader Omar Abdullah today said the allegations of harassment and irregularities levelled by a Dalit IAS officer against Jammu and Kashmir Chief Secretary A K Mehta were serious enough to warrant an investigation.

However, such an investigation will never happen and the

(Contd on page 4 Col 5)

## AEE's body recovered, Sikhs for CBI probe

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, Aug 29: After several days of being reported missing, the body of Assistant Executive Engineer (AEE) Gurmeet Singh has been discovered in the barrage of the Lower Jhelum Hydel Project (LJHP) in the Gantmulla area of north Kashmir's Baramulla district, with the Sikh community

(Contd on page 4 Col 5)

## SIU seizes 2 cars, bike during raids

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, Aug 29: Special Investigation Unit (SIU) of Jammu and Kashmir Police today carried out searches in Rawalpura area of South Kashmir's Shopian district in connection with case of attacks on non-local labourers.

"Continuing its crackdown on terror elements, SIU Shopian today in continuation of investi-

(Contd on page 4 Col 7)

## Court grants bail to conman

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, Aug 29: A Srinagar Court today granted bail to a Gujarati conman Kiran Patel who posed as PMO official.

The court of Chief Judicial Magistrate (CJM) Srinagar today granted bail to conman Kiran Bhai Patel.

The court directed the counsel of the accused to furnish a

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## India lodges protest with China over map

NEW DELHI, Aug 29:

India today lodged a strong protest with China over its so called "standard map" laying claim over Arunachal Pradesh and the Aksai Chin, and asserted that such steps only complicate the resolution of the boundary question. The External Affairs Ministry also rejected these claims as having "no basis".

"Just making absurd claims

(Contd on page 4 Col 1)

## SEC to order revision for Panchayat voters soon Ahead of elections, ULB final electoral rolls published

Sanjeev Pargal

JAMMU, Aug 29: In a major step forward for conduct of Municipal and Panchayat elections in Jammu and Kashmir, final electoral rolls for the ULBs whose revision was ordered last month, were published today while the State Election Commission (SEC) will shortly order Special Revision for the Panchayat polls.

While final figures are yet to be released by the office of Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), today was the last date for publication of final electoral rolls.

As per the sources, the final electoral rolls have been published as entire exercise for addition, deletion of voters etc for upcoming Urban Local Bodies

Act, Sharma said, January 1 has to be taken as qualifying date for registration of new electoral rolls.

"However, we will undertake the exercise very soon to ensure that no eligible voter is left out from exercising franchise in the Panchayat polls. Besides enrolment of new voters, people can also delete the names," the State Election Commissioner said.

In Jammu and Kashmir, CEO PK Pole has to conduct the Urban Local Bodies polls while SEC BR Sharma is the Authority for holding the Panchayat elections.

An exercise for rotation of seats reserved for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Women too has to be undertaken.

Women enjoy 33 percent

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quashing of order passed by J&K Special Tribunal, Jammu whereby the violations in respect of residential construction were

'Intervention only in case of violation of principles of natural justice'

compounded.

After hearing Advocate Rajnish Raina for Building Operation Controlling Authority and Senior Advocate R K Jain with Advocate Pranav Jain for Nageen Ara, Justice Wasim Sadiq Nargal observed, "the sole function of the Writ Court is to correct the persons or Tribunals

or Tribunals exercising judicial or quasi-judicial functions when they do not possess, or when they refuse to exercise jurisdiction which is vested in them by law, or when in the exercise of their jurisdiction they violate principles of natural justice", adding "this court while exercising the writ jurisdiction cannot go into the disputed question of fact as all the questions of facts have been dealt in detail by the Tribunal by adducing the evidence by passing a reasoned order".

He further observed, "the issue whether this court while exercising the power as a Writ Court can go into the questions of fact is no more res integra and

(Contd on page 4 Col 3)

## Govt cuts LPG price by Rs 200

NEW DELHI, Aug 29:

The Government today announced a Rs 200 per cylinder cut in prices of domestic cooking gas as it looked to counter the promise of cheaper LPG made by the Congress party in upcoming Assembly elections in States like Madhya Pradesh.

At present, a 14.2-kg LPG cylinder in the national capital costs Rs 1,103 - more than double the rate it came for in May 2020.

It will cost Rs 903 when the decision is implemented from Wednesday.

For Ujjwala beneficiaries, the price will be Rs 703 after considering the continuing Rs 200 per cylinder subsidy.

Announcing the decision, Information and Broadcasting

(Contd on page 4 Col 3)

**Amul Milk. Always Fresh.**

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Announcing the decision, Information and Broadcasting

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