

**JAMMU AND KASHMIR LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY SECRETARIAT**

**JAMMU**

**1<sup>ST</sup> LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE  
UNION TERRITORY OF JAMMU & KASHMIR**

**(5<sup>th</sup> SESSION)**

**BULLETIN**

**Wednesday, April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026**

The House met today on 1<sup>st</sup> of April, 2026 at 10:00 A.M. in the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly Hall, Jammu.


**Advocate Abdul Rahim Rather, Hon'ble Speaker in the Chair.**

As soon as Hon'ble Speaker took the Chair, Hon'ble Member, Mr. Sham Lal Sharma (BJP) raised the issue of paramedical staff currently on strike following the deduction of their two-and-a-half-day salary (risk allowance). The Hon'ble Member requested a statement from the concerned Minister in this behalf. In response, Hon'ble Minister, Ms. Sakina Masood Itoo informed the House that the Government has constituted a committee to look into the matter. She assured the House that the matter would be resolved promptly, once the committee submits its report.

*lgk*

*fyf*

Meanwhile, Hon'ble Member, Mr. Nizam-ud-Din Bhat (INC) requested the Chair that he has moved an Adjournment Motion under Rule 56 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly. He urged the Chair to allow the motion, citing it as a matter of urgent public importance. In response, Hon'ble Minister, Ms. Sakina Masood Itoo stated that one of the doctors in District Hospital, Bandipora had only retired two days ago and assured the House that vacancy would be filled shortly. However, the Hon'ble Speaker rejected the motion, stating it lacked sufficient merit to proceed. Dissatisfied with the Chair's ruling, the Hon'ble Member insisted on a detailed discussion through his Adjournment Motion and tried to enter the well of the House, disrupting the proceedings. Consequently, the Hon'ble Speaker directed that "nothing be recorded."

 **Note 1:** At this stage, Hon'ble Member, Mr. Nizam-ud-Din Bhat (INC) staged a walkout in protest.

**Starred Questions:** 33 Starred Questions set down in the Question list were answered in writing, out of which, seven (07) questions were called and answered orally as well. Fourteen (14) Supplementary Questions were also raised and answers given.



**Un-starred Questions:** Written replies to 35 un-starred questions set down in the Question List were distributed among the concerned Hon'ble Members.

**Note 2:** At this stage, Hon'ble Member, Mr. Nazir Ahmad Khan (NC) raised a point of order. Pointing towards the empty chairs in the officer's gallery he remarked that as a Member of this House since 22 years, he had never seen Administrative Secretaries and Head of the Departments (HoDs) absent during the Question Hour. He noted that the Chief Secretary and Commissioner Secretary previously attended the House proceedings regularly and they are now avoiding this august House. He urged Hon'ble Chief Minister to hold them accountable and take necessary action. Meanwhile, Hon'ble Member, Mr. Sham Lal Sharma (BJP), citing the rule book stated that presence of the concerned Administrative Secretary is mandatory, when questions related to their department are discussed. He emphasized that business for any department whose officers are absent from the gallery should be deferred or dropped entirely. He further requested the Chair to issue a formal notice to the Chief Secretary seeking an explanation, asserting that the current practice of bureaucrats skipping sessions undermines the dignity of the House. Hon'ble Member, Mr. Pawan Kumar Gupta (BJP) supported this view stating that the Executive is responsible to the Legislature and their absence undermines this

responsibility. In response, the Hon'ble Speaker stressed upon that the presence of high ranking officers is essential for effectiveness of their respective departments and directed the Government that the officers should remain present in order to note down the concerns raised by representatives.

**Note 3:** At this stage, Hon'ble Member, Mr. Reyaz Ahmad Khan (NC) urged the Government to facilitate the immediate and safe return of students from Jammu & Kashmir stranded in Azerbaijan due to Israil-Iran conflict. He emphasized the need for co-ordinate efforts to ensure their well-being and early evacuation.

**Note 4:** At this stage, Hon'ble Member, Mr. Shabir Ahmad Kullay (Ind.) called for constitution of a committee to examine the discrepancies between officially claimed sports infrastructure and the actual facilities available on the ground across various constituencies.

**Note 5:** At this stage, Hon'ble Member, Mr. Balwant Singh Mankotia (BJP) drew the Chair's attention to the CAG Reports recently tabled in the House. He alleged that the reports highlight significant financial irregularities. In response, Hon'ble Speaker clarified the established parliamentary procedure for handling CAG Reports. He noted that once CAG reports are laid on the table of the House the audit observations automatically stands referred to the Financial Committees and it is the

mandate of these Committees to examine the audit findings, summon the concerned departments for explanation and then submit its own report and recommendations back to the House. The detailed point-by-point debate on the floor of the House is typically deferred until the Committees scrutinize the records.

**Note 6:** At this stage, Hon'ble Member, Mr. Balwant Singh Mankotia (BJP) drew the attention of the Chair towards the misinformation currently in circulation, concerning a purported salary increase for Members of this House, as no such hike has been made, it is imperative that the House holds a formal deliberation to clarify the record and address the source of these reports.

**Note 7:** At this stage, Hon'ble Member, Mr. Irfan Hafiz Lone (INC) requested the Chair to recall the Hon'ble Member, Mr. Nizam-ud-Din Bhat (INC) in the House as he has staged a walk-out following the rejection of his adjournment motion by the Chair.

**Note 8:** At this stage, Hon'ble Minister, Ms. Sakina Masood Itoo, informed the House that, following the retirement of the doctor two days ago, Dr. Manzoor Ahmad Lone (Incharge Consultant Surgeon) was officially ordered by the Deputy Director, Health Services, Kashmir yesterday to be deployed to DH Bandipora for further duties.

**Note 9:** At this stage, Hon'ble Speaker stated that Hon'ble Member, Mr. Nizam-ud-din Bhat (INC) was demanding that business of the House be adjourned to discuss his motion. Adjourning the House is not a simple matter; it is an extreme step reserved for extraordinary circumstances. Further, asserting that he informed him that his demand has been conveyed to the Hon'ble Minister, who will look into the matter. Besides, never asked him to leave the House. Secondly, on the issue raised by Hon'ble Member, Mr. Balwant Singh Mankotia (BJP), the Hon'ble Speaker responded that no increase has been made to the Legislators' salaries. When this issue was previously raised, the Hon'ble Chief Minister asked for constituting a Committee to examine the matter and consider all legitimate concerns. Subsequently, House Committee was constituted and the said Committee submitted its report to the Government, no related bill has been introduced. It will be handled transparently and in full view of media, there is nothing to conceal. Consequently, the rumours suggesting that Legislator's salaries have been increased are entirely false.

**Note 10:** At this stage, Hon'ble Member, Dr. Narinder Singh Raina (BJP) advocated the structured and periodic revision of Legislators' salaries aligned with the pattern followed for Government Employees.

Meanwhile, Hon'ble Member, Mr. Javaid Hassan Baig (NC) clarified that, despite media reports and social media "narratives," there has been no recent increase in MLA salaries. He noted that the public perception of high pay has led to personal costs for lawmakers, including online abuse. He argued that current allowances are insufficient for Legislators to acquire land or manage the rising expenditures associated with their public responsibilities.

This stance was supported by Hon'ble Member, Mr. Ranbir Singh Pathania (BJP), who advocated for an institutionalized salary mechanism. While referring to the principle articulated by former Lok Sabha Speaker, Mr. Somnath Chatterjee, he noted that such matters should be addressed through an independent and credible frame work to safeguard dignity and sovereignty of the House.

Hon'ble Member, Mr. Sajad Gani Lone (PC) said that decision on recommendations of the House Committee is not a salary of the Legislators but authority of the House.


Hon'ble Member, Mr. Nizam-ud-Din Bhat (INC) also stated that their recommendations are thrown into dustbin in the offices and it is humiliation for the entire House and stressed on the importance of dignity of the House.

Hon'ble Member, Mr. Muzafar Iqbal Khan (Ind.) also observed that proposed increase in salary was relatively modest and larger enhancement should be suggested to meet the growing expenditure.

Hon'ble Member, Mr. Shabir Ahmad Kullay (Ind.) also stressed on the importance of the dignity of the House.

➤ **CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTERS OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE**

- (i) **Peerzada Mohammad Syed** called the attention of Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister (Incharge Public Works) towards a matter of urgent public importance namely; the situation arising out of critical and imminent collapse of Brakpora Kanganhall-Chattergul Road near Karewa Kanganhall bridge, Achabal Anantnag;

 **Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister, Mr. Surinder Kumar Choudhary** read out a reply.

- (ii) **Mr. Nazir Ahmad Khan (Gurezi)** called the attention of Hon'ble Minister (Incharge Jal Shakti) towards a matter of urgent public importance namely; the situation arising out of scarcity of drinking water as well as supply of polluted water in Wanpora, Khaudyal and Badwan areas of Gurez Constituency;

**Hon'ble Minister (Incharge Jal Shakti), Mr. Javed Ahmed Rana** read out a reply.

- (iii) **Mr. Tanvir Sadiq** called the attention of Hon'ble Minister (Incharge Jal Shakti) towards a matter of urgent public importance namely; the situation arising out of emerging water scarcity




concerns in Kashmir valley due to prolonged dry conditions, reduced snowfall and increasing climate variability; and

**Hon'ble Minister (Incharge Jal Shakti), Mr. Javed Ahmed Rana read out a reply.**

- (iv) **Mr. Darshan Kumar** called the attention of Hon'ble Chief Minister (Incharge Disaster Management, Relief, Rehabilitation & Reconstruction) towards a matter of urgent public importance namely; the distressing situation arisen due to landslides in Village Kund, Tikri and Padunaal of Basohli Constituency.

**Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister, Mr. Surinder Kumar Choudhary read out a reply.**


➤ **PRESENTATION OF REPORT**

 **Justice Hasnain Masoodi**, Hon'ble Chairman, Committee on Subordinate Legislation presented the Report of the Committee for the year 2025-26;

➤ **MOTION FOR EXTENSION OF TENURE OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JAL JEEVAN MISSION**

**Justice Hasnain Masoodi**, Hon'ble Chairman moved the following Motion:-

“That this House do extend the tenure of the House Committee on Jal Jeevan Mission for a further period of three (03) months to enable it to complete its assigned task and submit report”.

 **Hon'ble Member, Justice Hasnain Masoodi** spoke in support of his Motion.

**Hon'ble Minister (Incharge Jal Shakti), Mr. Javed Ahmed Rana replied on the Motion.**

The following Hon'ble Members spoke on the Motion:-

1. Mr. Ajaz Ahmad Jan (NC)
2. Mr. Sham Lal Sharma (BJP)
3. Mr. Sajad Gani Lone (PC)
4. Mir Saifullah (NC)
5. Mr. Nazir Ahmad Khan (NC)
6. Mr. Saif-ud-Din Bhat (NC)
7. Mr. M. Y. Tarigami (CPIM)
8. Mr. Farooq Ahmad Shah (NC)

**Note 11:** At this stage, the House extended the tenure of the House Committee on Jal Jeevan Mission for a further period of two (02) months instead of three (03) months to enable it to complete its assigned task and submit report.

➤ **PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILLS FOR INTRODUCTION**

- (1) **Discussion on "A Bill to provide compassionate appointments to the next of kin of deceased government employees, security personnel and civilians affected by militancy or enemy action (L.A. Private Members' Bill No. 27 of 2025)" already moved for leave to introduce by Mr. Pawan Kumar Gupta on 30<sup>th</sup> March, 2026.**

**Hon'ble Chief Minister, Mr. Omar Abdullah** opposed the motion.

**Hon'ble Member, Mr. Pawan Kumar Gupta** spoke in support of his motion.

Hon'ble Chief Minister, Mr. Omar Abdullah replied the points raised by the Hon'ble Member and requested the Hon'ble Member to withdraw the Bill.

The Bill was withdrawn by the mover with the leave of the House.

- (2) **MR. AJAZ AHMED JAN** moved for leave to introduce " A Bill to amend the Public Men and Public Servants Declaration of Assets and Other Provisions Act, 1983 (**L.A. Private Members' Bill No. 30 of 2025**)".

Hon'ble Chief Minister, Mr. Omar Abdullah opposed the motion.

Hon'ble Member, Mr. Ajaz Ahmad Jan spoke in support of his motion.

Hon'ble Chief Minister, Mr. Omar Abdullah replied the points raised by the Hon'ble Member and requested the Hon'ble Member to withdraw the Bill.

The Bill was withdrawn by the mover with the leave of the House.

- (3) **MR. RANBIR SINGH PATHANIA** moved for leave to introduce " A Bill further to amend the Jammu and Kashmir Public Services Guarantee Act, 2011 (**L.A. Private Members' Bill No. 32 of 2025**)".

Hon'ble Chief Minister, Mr. Omar Abdullah opposed the motion.

Hon'ble Member, Mr. Ranbir Singh Pathania spoke in support of his motion.

Hon'ble Chief Minister, Mr. Omar Abdullah replied the points raised by the Hon'ble Member and requested the Hon'ble Member to withdraw the Bill.

The Bill was withdrawn by the mover with the leave of the House.

- (4) **MR. TANVIR SADIQ** moved for leave to introduce "A Bill to restore the Jammu and Kashmir Land Grants Act, 1960 and the Rules framed there under to their original form as it existed prior to the Jammu and Kashmir Land Grant Rules, 2022; to protect the rights of existing leases and occupants; and to ensure that public land serves the interests of the people of Jammu and Kashmir (L.A. Private Members' Bill No.35 of 2025)".

Hon'ble Chief Minister, Mr. Omar Abdullah did not oppose the motion.

 Hon'ble Member, Mr. Tanvir Sadiq moved for leave to introduce the Bill.

The Motion was carried and the Bill was introduced.

- (5) **DR. RAMESHWAR SINGH** moved for leave to introduce "A Bill to amend the Jammu and Kashmir Civil Services (Decentralization and Recruitment) Act, 2010 (L.A. Private Members' Bill No.38 of 2025)".

Hon'ble Chief Minister, Mr. Omar Abdullah opposed the motion.

 Hon'ble Member, Dr. Rameshwar Singh spoke in support of his motion.


Hon'ble Chief Minister, Mr. Omar Abdullah replied the points raised by the Hon'ble Member and requested the Hon'ble Member to withdraw the Bill.

The Bill was withdrawn by the mover with the leave of the House.

- (6) **SHRI ARJUN SINGH RAJU** moved for leave to introduce "A bill to provide for the better Management, protection, administration and governance of Kashmiri Hindu Shrines and Religious places in the Union Territory and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto (**L.A.Private Members' Bill No.39 of 2025**)".

Hon'ble Chief Minister, Mr. Omar Abdullah opposed the motion.

Hon'ble Member, Mr. Arjun Singh Raju spoke in support of his motion.

 Hon'ble Chief Minister, Mr. Omar Abdullah replied the points raised by the Hon'ble Member and requested the Hon'ble Member to withdraw the Bill.

The Bill was withdrawn by the mover with the leave of the House.

- (7) **SHRI ABDUL MAJEED BHAT(LARMI)** moved for leave to introduce "A Bill to provide for prohibition of private practice by Government doctors in order to strengthen the public health delivery system, ensure fulltime availability of medical professionals in Government institutions, and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto (**L.A. Private Members' Bill No.40 of 2025**)".



Hon'ble Minister (Incharge Health & Medical Education), Mtr. Sakina Masood Itoo opposed the motion.

Hon'ble Member, Mr. Abdul Majeed Bhat spoke in support of his motion.

Hon'ble Minister (Incharge Health & Medical Education), replied the points raised by the Hon'ble Member and requested the Hon'ble Member to withdraw the Bill.

The Bill was withdrawn by the mover with the leave of the House.

- (8) **PIRZADA FAROOQ AHMAD SHAH** moved for leave to introduce "A Bill to impose a complete ban on the import of frozen/chilled food items from outside the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir in order to protect the local food industry and safeguard public health (L.A.Private Members' Bill No.43 of 2025)".

The House adjourned at 1:30 P.M. to meet again after one hour.

The House re-assembled at 2:49 P.M.

Advocate, Abdul Rahim Rather, Hon'ble Speaker in the Chair.

Hon'ble Minister (Incharge Health & Medical Education), Mtr. Sakina Masood Itoo opposed the motion.

Hon'ble Member, Pirezada Farooq Ahmad Shah spoke in support of his motion.


**Hon'ble Minister (Incharge Health & Medical Education)**, replied the points raised by the Hon'ble Member and requested the Hon'ble Member to withdraw the Bill.


The Bill was withdrawn by the mover with the leave of the House.

- (9) **MR. MOHAMMAD YOUSUF TARIGAMI** moved for leave to introduce "A Bill to provide for the regularization of services of casual and other workers working in various Departments of the Government of Jammu and Kashmir and for the matters incidental thereto (**L.A. Private Members' Bill No.45 of 2025**)"

**Hon'ble Chief Minister, Mr. Omar Abdullah** opposed the motion.

**Hon'ble Member, Mr. M. Y. Tarigami** spoke in support of his motion.


 **Note 12:** At this stage, Hon'ble Chief Minister, Mr. Omar Abdullah while replying on the Bill stated that he does not oppose the intent behind the proposed legislation on regularization, but expressed reservation regarding the timing of its introduction. He said that the Government has already made a commitment that the process of regularization will be initiated in a phased manner during the current financial year (2026-27) and we stand by that commitment. He emphasized that the opposition was not to the sentiment of the bill, but to its introduction at this stage, primarily when Government has recently made an announcement on the



matter. The matter is currently under examination by the Committee and requested the Hon'ble Member, Mr. M. Y. Tarigami (CPIM) to withdraw the bill in view of Government assurance and ongoing process.

Following the Hon'ble Chief Minister's explicit assurance on the floor of the House, Hon'ble Member, Mr. M.Y.Tarigami (CPIM), withdrew his Bill, stating that he was satisfied with the Government's time bound commitment.


The Bill was withdrawn by the mover with the leave of the House.

 (10) **MR. SAJAD SHAHEEN** moved for leave to introduce "A Bill to provide for the establishment of a University campus at Banihal in District Ramban to promote higher education, research, and socio-economic development in the region and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto (L.A. Private Members' Bill No.46 of 2025)"

**Hon'ble Minister (Incharge Health & Medical Education), Mtr. Sakina Masood Itoo** did not oppose the motion.

**Hon'ble Member, Mr. Sajad Shaheen** moved for leave to introduce the Bill.

**The Motion was carried and the Bill was introduced.**

 (11) **MIR SAIFULLAH** moved for leave to introduce "A Bill to provide for creation of gainful employment opportunities and for payment

of unemployment allowance/stipend to unemployed youth and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto (**L.A. Private Members' Bill No. 5 of 2025**)"

**Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister, Mr. Surinder Kumar Choudhary** opposed the motion.

**Hon'ble Member, Mir Saifullah** spoke in support of his motion.

Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister, Mr. Surinder Kumar Choudhary replied the points raised by the Hon'ble Member and requested the Hon'ble Member to withdraw the Bill.

The Bill was withdrawn by the mover with the leave of the House.


(12) **MR. WAHEED UR REHMAN PARA** moved for leave to introduce "A Bill to provide for regularization of adhoc, Daily wagers, need based and other Temporary workers (**L.A. Private Members' Bill No. 8 of 2025**)".

 **Hon'ble Chief Minister, Mr. Omar Abdullah** opposed the motion.

**Hon'ble Member, Mr. Waheed-Ur-Rehman Parra** spoke in support of his motion.

Hon'ble Chief Minister, Mr. Omar Abdullah replied the points raised by the Hon'ble Member and requested the Hon'ble Member to withdraw the Bill.

**Note 13:** At this stage, Hon'ble Member, Mr. Waheed-ur-Rehman Parra (PDP) impressed that the Bill may be introduced and while shouting tried to come into well of the House alongwith



all the PDP Legislators. However, the Hon'ble Speaker requested the Hon'ble Member to resume his seat but he did not pay any attention towards the request and continued his agitation in support of his Bill. Meanwhile, Hon'ble Speaker directed that nothing will be recorded and reported. Thereafter, all the Hon'ble Members of PDP staged a walk-out in protest. The Hon'ble Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah reiterated that the Government is firmly committed to begin the regularization process for daily wagers, casual laborers and need-based workers with the current financial year. He emphasized that the process would be carried out in a phased manner, rather than all at once, to ensure it is handled systematically.

 **The Bill was rejected by the House with voice vote and the leave to introduce the Bill was not granted.**

(13) **MR. BALWANT SINGH MANKOTIA** moved for leave to introduce "A Bill to provide vesting of ownership rights of evacuee property to the occupants (**L.A. Private Members' Bill No. 15 of 2025**)".

**Hon'ble Chief Minister, Mr. Omar Abdullah** opposed the motion.

**Hon'ble Member, Mr. Balwant Singh Mankotia** spoke in support of his motion.



Hon'ble Chief Minister, Mr. Omar Abdullah replied the points raised by the Hon'ble Member and requested the Hon'ble Member to withdraw the Bill.

The Bill was rejected by the House with voice vote and the leave to introduce the Bill was not granted.

- (14) **MR. MUBARIK GUL** moved for leave to introduce "A Bill to provide social security to unemployed technocrats/professionals in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir (L.A. Private Members' Bill No. 18 of 2025)".

Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister, Mr. Surinder Kumar Choudhary opposed the motion.

Hon'ble Member, Mr. Mubarik Gul spoke in support of his motion.

Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister, Mr. Surinder Kumar Choudhary replied the points raised by the Hon'ble Member and requested the Hon'ble Member to withdraw the Bill.

The Bill was withdrawn by the mover with the leave of the House.


- (15) **DR. SYED BASHIR AHMAD VEERI** moved for leave to Introduce "A Bill to amend the Jammu and Kashmir Reservation Act, 2004 (L.A. Private Members' Bill No. 24 of 2025)".

Hon'ble Minister (Incharge Health & Medical Education), Mtr. Sakina Masood Itoo opposed the motion.


**Hon'ble Member, Dr. Syed Bashir Ahmad Shah Veeri** spoke in support of his motion.

**Hon'ble Minister (Incharge Health & Medical Education)**, replied the points raised by the Hon'ble Member and requested the Hon'ble Member to withdraw the Bill.

**Note 14:** At this stage, Hon'ble Member, Dr. Bashir Ahmad Veeri (NC) broke down while pleading for his Bill's introduction. He called for rationalization, suggesting a 65% cap for open merit candidates to align with the Hon'ble Supreme Court's judgment in the Indra Sawhney case. Alternatively, he requested that the bill be referred to a Select Committee, arguing that the current system is "unscientific and betrays merit."

 Hon'ble Minister, Ms. Sakina Masood urged the Hon'ble Member to withdraw the bill, explaining that a cabinet sub-committee had already finalized a report on reservation rationalization. Hon'ble Minister noted that the report is currently with Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor for approval.

Hon'ble Chief Minister, Mr. Omar Abdullah intervened and made it clear that while the Government understands the gravity of the issue, they would oppose the private Bill, if Hon'ble



Member refused to withdraw it, as the official government-led process was already underway.

The Bill was rejected by the House with voice vote and the leave to introduce the Bill was not granted.

- (16) **MR. RANBIR SINGH PATHANIA** moved for leave to introduce "A Bill to amend the Jammu and Kashmir Panchayati Raj Act, 1989 (L.A. Private Members' Bill No. 33 of 2025)".

**Hon'ble Minister (Incharge Co-operative), Mr. Javed Ahmad Dar** opposed the motion.

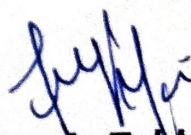
**Hon'ble Member, Mr. Ranbir Singh Pathania** spoke in support of his motion.

**Hon'ble Minister (Incharge Co-operative)** replied the points raised by the Hon'ble Member and requested the Hon'ble Member to withdraw the Bill.

The Bill was withdrawn by the mover with the leave of the House.

The House adjourned at 5:08 P.M., to meet again at 10:00 A.M. on Thursday, the 2<sup>nd</sup> of April, 2026 in the Jammu & Kashmir Assembly Hall, Jammu.

Jammu  
April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026

  
(Fouzia Tabbassum)  
Deputy Secretary