

Maximum : 27°C  
Minimum : 10°C  
Humidity : 34%  
SUNSET  
Today 06:05 PM  
SUNRISE  
Tomorrow 06:31 AM

## OBSERVER

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## News Digest

## Sopore Woman Dies Of Burns

Srinagar: A week after setting herself ablaze, a woman from Sopore area of Baramulla district on Wednesday succumbed to her injuries at Srinagar's SMHS hospital. The 32-year-old woman had sustained severe burn injuries after she set herself ablaze at her in-law's house in Sidqi Colony area of Sopore in north Kashmir's Baramulla district on Thursday last week. Officials said that the woman (name withheld) set herself ablaze after pouring Kerosene oil over her body following which she was rushed to Sub **● P-02**

## Woman Killed In Hit And Run Accident

Srinagar: An elderly woman on Wednesday was killed in a hit and run accident in Achabal area of south Kashmir's Anantnag district. 68-year-old Saja Begum was critically injured when a motorcyclist hit her invillage Brariangan in Achabal on Wednesday morning, a police official said. While the biker managed to flee from the spot, the injured woman was rushed to SKIMS Soura here for treatment. However, the doctors there declared her brought **● P-02**

## Man Dies After Falling From Tree

Srinagar: An elderly man died on Wednesday after falling from a tree in Kanganarea of central Kashmir's Ganderbal district. 60-year-old Abdul Rehman Thekrey of Hariganiwan Kangan suffered critical injuries on Wednesday after falling from a tree in Thune area of the district, reports said. The injured man succumbed before he could be taken to the hospital for treatment. An unnamed police official told news agency KDC that police have taken the cognizance of the incident and the matter was being investigated.

## Ladakh Records 79 New Covid-19 Cases

Leh: The Union Territory of Ladakh reported 79 new coronavirus cases, taking the cumulative figure to 4720, an official bulletin said on Wednesday. With 50 more patients cured of the disease, the number of active cases in the region stands at 1195 904 in Leh district and 291 in Kargil district, the bulletin released by the directorate of health services said.

It said 72 people tested positive for COVID-19 in Leh and another seven in Kargil district during the past 24 hours. Ladakh had reported 61 COVID-related deaths, while 3,464 **● P-02**

## Govt Sets Up 18 Paddy Procurement Centres

Jammu: Jammu and Kashmir administration has established 18 centres in the current Kharif marketing season for procurement of paddy at the minimum support price across Jammu region, according to a senior official. Principal Secretary Agriculture Production and Farmers Welfare Department Navin Kumar Choudhary said the centres were set up in Jammu (9), Kathua (8) and Samba (1). "Timely operationalisation of procurement centres will ensure that the farmers are not compelled to sell their **● P-02**

## 3 Militants Killed In Shopian Encounter

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Three local militants of Hizbul Mujahideen and Al-Badr were killed on Wednesday in a fierce overnight encounter with government forces in Zainapora area of south Kashmir's Shopian district.

Hizbul Mujahideen militant Sajad Ahmad Malla of Shopian and Al-Badr's Junaid Rashid Wani and Waseem Ahmad Magray, both residents of Pulwama were killed after army's 44 RR, special operations group (SOG) of police and the personnel of CRPF 178 battalion resumed anti-militancy operation in Sujan village of Shopian in the wee hours on Wednesday, a police spokesperson said.

The search operation, he said was launched around 7:00pm Tuesday by the state forces on the basis of specific input about the presence of militants in the village. During the operation, he said militants turned down surrender offer and instead fired on the joint



File Photo

## Naikoo's Aide Attacked BJP Leader: DGP

Hizbul Mujahideen had deputed a close aide of slain militant commander Riyaz Naikoo from south Kashmir to carry out the attack on a BJP leader in Ganderbal district in which a police constable was killed, the top police official of Jammu and Kashmir said on Wednesday. **● P-02**

team to break the cordon.

"Due to darkness the operation was suspended and the whole

area was put under strict cordon.

Militants trapped inside made certain attempts to break **►PAGE 02**

**► DUE TO DARKNESS THE OPERATION WAS SUSPENDED** and the whole area was put under strict cordon. Militants trapped inside made certain attempts to break the cordon and escape from the spot," the police spokesperson said.

## Panel For Fixing School Fees Gets Statutory Powers

Agencies

SRINAGAR: The Government of India has carried out amendments in the Jammu & Kashmir School Education Act-2002 to grant statutory powers to committee for determining and regulating fee of students in private schools in the newly carved out Union Territory.

The amendments are part of "The Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir Re-Organization (Adaptation of State Laws) order- 2020" issued by the Union Home Ministry on Monday.

According to the amendments, the committee shall be headed by a chairperson who has been a Judge of a High Court or a gov-

ernment officer who has been a financial commissioner of the Union territory or above.

"The members of the committee shall be such as may be prescribed by the government," reads the order.

According to these amendments, the panel shall exercise such powers and perform such functions as may be prescribed by the government to ensure that the private schools are not indulging in commercialisation of education and undue profiteering.

"Orders passed by the committee for fixation and regulation of fee of private Schools shall be deemed to have been duly passed by a public servant **►PAGE 02**

## BJP Leader Opposes J&amp;K Govt's Rehabilitation Offer To Militants

Observer Monitoring Desk

SRINAGAR: Days after Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha urged local militants to give up arms and promised to help them with jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities, the Jammu and Kashmir BJP president Ravinder Raina on Wednesday opposed the move saying in Modi government, there can never be any rehabilitation for militants, Hindustan Times Reported

"There can never be any rehabilitation policy for terrorists and they will be paid back in the same coin," Raina said.

Speaking after launching the third-phase of the 'Back to Village' programme in Shopian dis-



trict in south Kashmir on Friday, Sinha had said that the people of J-K, especially the youth, want to tread on the path of progress and development and appealed to the misguided youth to shun violence and return to the mainstream.

"The government is ready to

help with jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities," he had said.

However, opposing the move strongly, Raina, according to the report said that Pak-sponsored militancy has bled Jammu and Kashmir for the past 30 years.

They (militants) go to Pakistan for arms training, come back with arms and ammunition and kill innocent people and security forces personnel. They can never be given jobs," he said.

"Our army, police and paramilitary forces are combating them 24x7. In Modi government, there can never be any rehabilitation for terrorists," he added.

Raina, according to the report has also alleged many **►PAGE 02**

## Eye On LAHDC Polls

## BJP Promises More Than 6th Schedule Benefits To Leh

Press Trust Of India

LEH: Allaying Ladakhis' fear of losing jobs and land, Union minister Anurag Thakur on Wednesday asserted that the Centre would provide more than what was there in the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution, a demand which had gained momentum after the region was declared a separate Union territory last year.

The Minister of State for Finance was in Leh to kick-start the official campaign of the BJP for the upcoming polls to the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council



File Photo

(LAHDC) Leh - the first democratic exercise in the Union territory.

The 26 seats of LAHDC Leh are going to polls on October 22 and is likely to witness a keen battle between the BJP, Congress and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) which is trying its luck for the first time in the region. None of the regional **►PAGE 02**

## HC Imposes Rs 10000 Costs On Mission Director

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Observing that judicial time has been "unwarrantedly wasted", Jammu and Kashmir High Court has imposed Rs 10000 costs to Mission Director State Rural Livelihood who had filed an appeal against the court's single bench order way back in 2017.

The Mission Director had assailed the order dated 4 August 2017 whereby the court had allowed a plea by one Tariq Ahmad Bhat who had challenged an order dated 30 August 2016 issued by the Additional Mission Director SRLM Kashmir, terminating the cancellation of the hiring of an Innova vehicle along-with Driver with effect from 25th of March 2016 in the State Rural Liveli-

hoods Mission Kashmir. This hiring had been sanctioned by order dated 31.03.2016 for one year strictly as per the approved rates of Transport Commissioner, Jammu & Kashmir subject to the terms and conditions incorporated in the order.

"The learned Single Judge noted that the engagement of hiring of the vehicle was for a period of one year which period has expired on 31st of March, 2017. As such, the order dated 31.08.2016 terminating the hiring of the vehicle had lost its efficacy," a division bench of Chief Justice Gita Mittal and Justice Puneet Gupta.

Subsequently, the division bench said that Tariq's plea was disposed of with a direction to the Mission Director to adhere to the **►PAGE 02**



WAILING FAMILY members bid adieu to the slain policeman Altaf Hussain of Eidgah, Srinagar. Altaf died while protecting a BJP leader from a militant attack in Ganderbal on Tuesday. Photo Abid Bhat

## 12 More Coronavirus Deaths In J&amp;K, Toll 1284

Observer Monitoring Desk

SRINAGAR: At least twelve people died of coronavirus in Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday, raising the number of fatalities due to the deadly infection across the Union Territory to 1284.

While seven more people succumbed to Covid-19 in Jammu division, the remaining five lost battle with the virus in Kashmir valley, officials said.

Among the victims in Jammu division, three were residents of Jammu district, two from

## 621 New Cases Include 37 Travelers

Jammu and Kashmir reported on Wednesday 621 fresh cases of coronavirus, including thirty seven travelers, taking the total number of people infected by the virus to 81097. Among the fresh cases, 260 were from Jammu Division and 361 from Kashmir **● P-02**

Rajouri and one each from Doda and Samba, they said. The victims included a 52-year-old from Jeewan Nagar, a 67-year-old from Kotli Shah Doula and a 62-year-old from **►PAGE 02**

## Chhibber's Term As JK Bank CMD Extended For 6 Months

NEW DELHI: Jammu & Kashmir Bank on Wednesday said the RBI has extended the term of RK Chhibber as the Chairman and Managing Director for a period of six months.

"We wish to intimate that the Reserve Bank of India has extended the term of R K Chhibber, Chairman and Managing Director of the bank by a further period of six months with effect from 10th October, 2020 or till the appointment of MD & CEO, whichever is earlier," Jammu & Kashmir Bank said in a regulatory filing.

In June 2019, the Reserve Bank had approved the appointment of R K Chhibber as interim **● P-02**

## JK Govt To Recruit 1,700 Doctors: LG

UDHAMPUR: The Jammu and Kashmir government is all set to recruit 1,700 doctors to strengthen the healthcare system, Lieutenant governor Manoj Sinha said on Wednesday.

"There is a shortage of paramedics and doctors in J-K. There are vacancies. We are going to start the recruitment of 1,700 doctors soon," Sinha told an event organised as part of the "Back-to-Village-3" campaign in Udhampur district's Kud area.

"Since we are facing a pandemic and new lifestyle diseases, we have ensured universal life and health cover for all **● P-02**

## In FOCUS Promise To Make J&amp;K A Hub Of Solar Power Remains A Hoax

Mrinal Pathak

In the last few years, Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI) has proposed many mega solar power projects in few districts of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), but the completion of these projects is far from reality.

Concerns over the safety and viability of these projects in J&K are raised from time to time.

Experts suggest that such projects may help in boosting job opportunities and electricity production that ultimately will benefit the local population.

While it is a challenging task for

engineers to set up power grids on tough terrains of the region but, many say, the innovative solutions may help in yielding promising results.

Interestingly, the successive central and state governments over the past few years promised to make J&K a hub of solar energy production but the study conducted by the Centre for Science and Environment has placed J&K at bottom of the list.

J&K was placed even below Bihar which has managed to install 20 MW Solar Roof Top (SRT) power.

Notably, ever since Union Ministry of New and Renewable Energy launched the Jawaharlal Nehru So-



Image for representation

lar Mission in 2010, J&K has been lagging behind.

According to the official figures

released by Jammu Kashmir Energy Development Agency (JAKEDA), SRT panels of 8 MWs were installed

in different parts of J&amp;K.

The primary reason for the lack of growth in the solar sector in J&K is the shortage of resources.

According to the agreement between the centre and the states, J&K was bound to pay 40 percent of the total funds but a majority of the projects were scrapped, subjecting to J&K's inability to pay its share of funds.

As per an estimate, a 70 percent subsidy is provided by JAKEDA to any household installing SRT panels on rooftops of their homes.

It's believed that since the cost of electricity is very less in J&K, majority of households hesitate in

investing in solar panels.

The lack of cooperation from the various authorities concerned is equally proving to be a major stumble in developing solar power infrastructure in J&K. The red-tapism is also being blamed for not helping the cause.

In past, a 200 KW plant was installed by JAKEDA at Sher-E-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences, but no progress had been made on it so far.

The only department that has been utilising the benefits of renewable energy is the J&K Police department.

A good number of SRT panels are installed on the rooftops of many police stations over the past few years.

Many environmental experts advocate the use of unconventional or renewable sources of energy such as solar energy as a means to combat the impact of climate change.

Experts suggest that the process of generating solar power is way cheaper than building a hydropower plant of similar capacity.

The time taken to build a solar power plant is also very less than building a hydropower plant.

At the beginning of 2019, an Economic Times report says, the total installed power capacity in the J&K was 3393.74 MW.

The same report states that though J&K is the second largest state in terms of having the potential for solar power generation, yet solar power has very little contribution in this region.



# Development Of Rural Areas, Creation Of Employment Opportunities; Govt’s Prime Concern: Advisor

**BARAMULLA:** Advisor to Lieutenant Governor Baseer Ahmad Khan today affirmed that various initiatives are afoot to develop rural areas adding that administration is committed to ensure holistic and equitable development of all regions.

“Present dispensation led by Lieutenant Governor is keen to create employment opportunities for all with special focus on remote and far flung areas”, Advisor maintained.

Advisor was speaking at a mega function organized in border village Garkote of Uri area in connection with the 3rd phase of ambitious ‘Back to Village’ programme.

Appreciating huge public participation in the event, Advisor said that present administration has initiated renewed measures to achieve saturation in individual beneficiary schemes. He reiterated that the ambitious campaign has been launched with an aim to reach at the people’s doorsteps to resolve their issues adding that LG himself conducted several outreach programmes and visited several remote areas of J&K to monitor all these endeavors of the government.

Highlighting the objectives of B2V, Advisor said that such



an initiative provides an appropriate platform to evaluate government schemes and urged upon various stakeholders to come forward and avail benefits of schemes and programmes launched by the government. He maintained that bridging gap between people and administration has been our top most priority adding that strengthening democracy at grass root level is the best way forward to percolate the fruits of development at ground level.

Various demands were put forth by people which included initiation of Mini-bus service, development of

playfield, conducting of special recruitment drive among other minor works.

Meanwhile, Advisor inaugurated several development assets worth Rs 53.08 lakh in Uri block that have been completed under 14th FC, MGNREGA and other flagship programmes.

Advisor also distributed several equipments/kits/certificates sponsored by horticulture, agriculture, education, revenue, youth services and sports departments besides presenting cheques worth Rs 10.42 lakh as financial assistance to registered labour beneficiaries.

BDC Chairperson Uri Mohammad Rafiq Balot highlighted some issues and demands meant for overall development of the area including upgradation of infrastructure in power sector, development of border tourism in the area, establishment of community as well as individual bunkers, conducting of special recruitment drive in the area among some other demands.

Advisor assured that all the genuine demands and grievances raised during the event shall be fulfilled as early as possible

## Delhi Govt Allows Restaurants To Operate Round-The-Clock

**NEW DELHI:** In a major relief to city restaurants during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Delhi government on Wednesday said that these establishments will be allowed to operate round-the-clock and requirement of tourism licences will also be removed.

The government also announced other measures such as initiating a process to abolish police licences and health trade licenses from local bodies for restaurants to end ‘permit raj’ in the industry, according to a statement.

The decisions were taken at a

meeting chaired by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and it was attended by restaurant owners.

The Delhi government said such steps will help the industry generate more employment through higher demand. This will set an example of the ‘Delhi Model’ of ease of doing business, it said.

“On the request of restaurateurs to allow 24x7 business, it was agreed that restaurants will be allowed to operate at all hours subject to the condition that they submit an undertaking that they will take care of the health and security of their

## China Increasingly Assessing India Through Prism Of Its Worsening Ties With US: Ex-FS Saran

**NEW DELHI:** Negative Chinese perceptions of India took hold during the British colonial period and currently China is increasingly assessing India through the prism of its worsening relations with the US, former foreign secretary Shyam Saran said on Wednesday.

The negative attitudes towards India and Indians persist and surface whenever relations start to worsen, Saran said delivering the VP Dutt Memorial Lecture on “India as Teacher by Negative Example: Chinese Perceptions of India During the British Colonial Period and

Their Impact on Contemporary India-China Relations”.

“During the more positive phases, these attitudes are masked and the rhetoric harks back to the ancient period of civilisational engagement between the two countries. Though even in this case, the spread of Buddhism in China from India was regarded at least by some intellectuals as a baneful external influence which must be thoroughly exorcised to allow the true Chinese spirit to emerge,” Saran said.

“We see that a line runs through the negative and de-

## 3 Militants Killed In Shopian...

the cordon and escape from the spot,” the police spokesperson said. He said that the bodies of all three militants have been retrieved from the encounter site along with incriminating materials, including arms and ammunition.

“All the recovered materials have been taken into case records for further investigation and to probe their complicity in other crimes,” the police spokesperson said.

He said that the killed militants were part of groups involved in planning & executing several attacks on security establishments. The police spokesperson said that in view of Covid-19 pandemic, the bodies shall be sent to Handwara for burial after completion of all medico-legal formalities. The nearest family members of the killed militants shall be allowed to participate in the last rites.

“In this connection a case under relevant sections of law has been registered and investigation has been initiated. People are requested to cooperate with police till the area is completely sanitized and cleared of all the explosive materials, if any,” the police spokesperson added.

Meanwhile, the killing of militants set off violent protests in the village leaving at least three youth injured, two of them brothers with pellets.

Ehsan Maqbool and Basit Maqbool were injured when government forces fired pellets to disperse a group of people who were protesting against the killing of the three local militants by the government forces, reports said. The two brothers were removed to the district hospital for treatment. However, the doctors there referred them to Srinagar’s SMHS hospital for advanced treatment.

Besides them, another youth was also injured during the clashes. He was locally treated, reports said.

## Naikoo’s Aide Attacked BJP...

“The militant killed in Ganderbal – Shabir Ahmad of Awantipora – was deputed specifically to carry out the attack,” DGP Dilbag Singh told reporters at the wreath laying ceremony for constable Altaf Hussain. Hussain was injured while protecting BJP leader Ghulam Qadir during an attack on Tuesday night. The police constable managed to kill one of the assailants before he succumbed to his injuries.

The DGP said there was another blood trail at the scene of the attack which was being followed by the investigators.

He said the slain militant was a close aide and underground worker of Hizbul Mujahideen commander Riyaz Naikoo who was killed in an encounter earlier this year. Shabir had joined militancy recently, the DGP said.

He said target killings were being carried out in the Union territory on instructions from Pakistan “through its militant mouthpiece TRF (The Resistance Front)”.

Singh also said it was “not a big deal” for militants to move from one district to another.

The top police officer also referred to TRP which he called as “mouth-piece of Pakistan and ISI”.

“Recently 39 journalists were threatened by the TRF. They are the people who are doing their job honestly,” he said as per local news agency GNS.

Asked about recent highway attack in which two CRPF men were killed and three others were injured, he said that there are clues on which the police was working. “Very soon we will payback.”

He said that deployments made on highway are calibrated and one cannot rule out attacks along it.

“Amid militancy, one cannot rule out such attacks. You see whenever there is attack on highway, we kill them in counterattack. This is continuous process,” Singh said.

## Shelling, Firing Along LOC...

was the fourth soldier to die in ceasefire violations by Pakistan in five days. Last week, three soldiers were killed and five others were injured in separate incidents of Cross-LoC firing in Jammu and Kashmir.

## Former CBI Chief Ends Life...

The university is currently facing charges of issuing fake degrees. A senior police officer told IANS that a suicide note was found from the crime spot.

He along with his wife was seen strolling in the evening in the city, a neighbour told the police.

A 1973 batch IPS officer, Kumar is survived by his wife and son. Kumar served as DGP for the state between 2006 and 2008 before being appointed director of the CBI for two years.

He served as Governor of Nagaland from 2013 to 2014. During this period, he was briefly also the Governor of Manipur.

## 12 More Coronavirus Deaths...

Roop Nagar Jammu.

Among others who died in Valley include a 45-year-old man from

Pulwama and a 70-year-old from Meeraq Shah Abad Shalimar.

Regarding the man from Pulwama, they said that he was admitted on October 6 at hospital here and died today.

The septuagenarian, they said, died at SMHS hospital, five days after he was admitted with bilateral community acquired pneumonia, a doctor at the hospital said.

With these deaths, officials said, 1884 people have succumbed to the virus in Jammu and Kashmir so far—884 from the Valley and 402 from Jammu division.

Srinagar district with 310 deaths tops the list followed by Jammu (209), Baramulla (126), Budgam (88), Pulwama (73), Kupwara (71), Anantnag (69), Kulgam (43), Bandipora (40), Shopian (32), Rajouri (32), Ganderbal (30), Doda (37), Kathua (28), Samba (23), Udhampur (21), Poonch (17), Ramban (11), Kishtwar (11) and Reasi (6). (With GNS inputs)

## 621 New Cases Include 37...

Valley even as 2188 patients recovered and were discharged from various hospitals.

Giving district wise breakup of the cases, they said, Srinagar reported 143 of them, Budgam 51, Baramulla 50, Pulwama 25, Kupwara 18, Anantnag 20, Bandipora 15, Ganderbal 22, Kulgam 5 and Shopian 12, Jammu 83, Rajouri 36, Udhampur 10, Doda 24, Kathua 10, Poonch 14, Samba 22, Ramban 10, Kishtwar 21 and Reasi 30.

Moreover, they said, 2188 more Covid-19 patients have recovered and discharged from various hospitals— 1629 from Jammu Division and 559 from Kashmir Valley.

## Panel For Fixing School Fees...

and its violation or non-compliance shall amount to disobedience under the provisions of section 188 of Indian Penal Code,” the order reads.

According to the order, the private schools shall not charge any fee from the students or guardians, except tuition fee, annual fee, transport fee and voluntary special purpose fee such as the picnic, tour and excursions, etc. completely voluntary in nature or any other fee as may be approved by the committee.

The law further states that the committee for the purposes of making any inquiry or initiating any proceedings under this Act, have the same powers as are vested in a Civil Court, under the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908.

The law imposes penalty on those found violating the orders of the fee committee. “Any person or private school which contravenes the directions of the Committee for Fixation and Regulation of Fee of Private Schools shall be liable to a fine of not less than fifty thousand rupees for first offence and one lakh rupees for every subsequent offence including recommendation for disaffiliation of such private school by the said committee,” it reads—(KNO)

## BJP Promises More Than 6th...

parties, including the National Conference and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), has jumped into the fray.

You need not have even one per cent concern (about protection of land and jobs) you will get more than what is there in the sixth schedule under the leadership of Modi. Your land, culture, ethnic values and traditions will all get protected under our government, Thakur told reporters here.

The sixth schedule seeks to safeguard the rights of tribal population through the formation of Autonomous District Councils (ADC). Responding to a question on protection of Ladakhis’ land from outsiders, he said a deliberate campaign was launched to mislead the public and divert their attention from the Centre’s wholehearted measures to develop Ladakh on the modern lines with special focus on its economy.

I am a fourth term MP from Himachal Pradesh and my father was a three-time MP and two-time chief minister. We are living in the land for generations, but we cannot buy land in tribal areas. The non-agriculturists cannot buy agricultural land in Himachal Pradesh because of Section 118 (of Himachal Pradesh Tenancy and Land Reforms Act, 1972) which protects the land holding for the locals and we do not have a sixth schedule in force there, he said.

The recently floated Peoples Movement for Sixth Schedule for Ladakh, a powerful platform having representatives from various political, religious and social organisations, had last month withdrawn its poll boycott call after meeting Union Home Minister Amit Shah, and highlighted its various demands including protection of land and jobs.

Today is a great day for Indian history as our prime minister completed 20 years of public service which is full of achievements and commitment to take India to the new heights of progress PM Modi has fulfilled your long cherished dream of getting Union territory (UT) status and opening the gates for massive development of the region, Thakur underlined.

Seeking votes for the party candidates, he said it was now the turn of the people of Leh to elect BJP representatives so that Modi at the Centre and the party’s local representatives join hands to achieve all-round development of the region.

when you vote BJP leaders to power in LAHDC, no power on the earth can stop the development of Ladakh because there will be better co-ordination and understanding between New Delhi and Ladakh, he added.

On asked about certain party workers leaving BJP ahead of the elections, Ladakh BJP MP Jamyang Tsering Namgyal, who was also present at the press conference, said there was no rebellion but some people have left because they were denied the mandate by the party.

This house belongs to them and after election they will return to the party fold, he said, adding that the mandate was on the basis of inputs from the ground level.

On LAHDC, Leh chairman reportedly staging a dharna in front of Lt Governor R K Mathur inside the Raj Bhavan, the MP said it was heartening to note that he took the step for the people of Ladakh.

The council Act remained unchanged even after the UT status as not a single word was deleted. He (LAHDC, Leh chairman) staged a sit-in because our people, including students, were stranded outside Ladakh due to COVID-19 and he wanted them back as soon as possible, Namgyal said.

## 94 Candidates In Poll Fray...

The 26 seats of the LAHDC Leh are likely to witness a triangular contest between the BJP, the Congress and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) which is trying its luck for the first time in the region.

None of the regional parties, including the National Conference and the Peoples Democratic Party, are participating in the polls.

On the last day for the withdrawal of the candidature on Wednesday, 67 of the 161 candidates withdrew their nomination papers for the sixth general election to the LAHDC Leh, leaving 26 members each of the BJP and the Congress and 19 members of the AAP besides 23 independents in the fray, the officials said.

A total of 164 candidates had filed their nomination for the 26 seats and later the candidature of three of them was rejected during scrutiny of papers on October 5, they said.

The counting of votes will take place on October 26 and the poll process is expected to be completed by October 30.

A shadow of uncertainty hung over the polls after the recently floated ‘Peoples Movement for Sixth Schedule for Ladakh’, a powerful platform having representatives from various political, religious and social organisations, announced a poll boycott last month.

However, it withdrew its poll boycott call within days after a delegation of the Ladakhi leaders met Union Home Minister Amit Shah, and highlighted its various demands including protection of land and jobs.

The officials said all arrangements are in place to ensure smooth polling which is being held at a time when the country is grappling with COVID-19 pandemic.

Ladakh has recorded 61 COVID-related deaths with a total caseload of 4,720. While 3,464 patients have recovered till Tuesday evening, the number of active cases in the UT stands at 1,195 -- 904 in Leh district and 291 in Kargil district. In the wake of the pandemic, the officials said social distancing and wearing of masks would be ensured during the polling between 8 am to 4pm.

They said Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) have reached Leh for the polling, while postal ballot arrangements have been made for those who are above the age of 65 years, COVID-19 patients and differently-abled persons.

There are 3,500 postal ballots, out of them 350 are service personnel, the official said.

Kargil district has a separate hill council which was elected in 2018 for a five-year term.

## Chhibber's Term As JK Bank...

Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of Jammu and Kashmir Bank, following the removal of Parvez Ahmed from the post by the state government.

Chhibber got a few extensions as the interim CMD of the bank before being appointed as the full-time CMD with effect from October 10, 2019, for a period of six months. Thereafter, he has been approved by the RBI to continue as the CMD of Jammu & Kashmir Bank for various tenures.

Shares of Jammu & Kashmir Bank closed at Rs 15.09 a piece on BSE, down 0.13 per cent from the previous close

## JK Govt To Recruit 1,700...

people in our villages... we will deliver on this,” he added.

The Lt Governor appreciated the progress achieved by the district in the health sector and stressed on expediting the work on recently approved new medical colleges.

Summarising achievements of the ‘Back-to-Village’ programme, the Lt Governor announced that 1.79 lakh beneficiaries have been linked with the Jammu & Kashmir Health Insurance Scheme, 65,000 farmers have been provided Kisan Credit Card, 1.55 lakh ration cards have been seeded with Aadhaar and more than 55,000 farmers have benefited under PM KISAN initiative.

“It is heartening to know that school enrolment in the district has increased over the past years; three new colleges are coming up while four others are already operational. It should be our collective responsibility to reduce the school dropout rate in the district,” said the Lt Governor.

He complimented the district administration for the ‘Back to School’ initiative which has led to resumption of studies for school dropouts.

## HC Imposes Rs 10000 Costs...

terms and conditions of the order dated 31.03.2016 with further direction to work out the hiring and fuel charges as was payable to the owner of the vehicle for the period beginning from 01.04.2016 till 31.03.2017.

“The order which was passed by the learned Single Judge was in accordance with law and warranted in the facts of the case. This Letters Patent Appeal which has been filed by the appellants (having 275 days delay is totally misconceived,” the court said, adding, “In our view, judicial time has been unwarrantedly wasted by filing an appeal which is completely without merit.”

While dismissing the appeal as well as application seeking condonation of delay, the court imposed Rs.10,000 costs upon the appellants (Mission Director) within two weeks in the Advocates Welfare Fund. Proof of deposit shall be placed before the Registrar Judicial.

“....in case they fail to deposit the costs imposed on them within the aforesaid time period, in that eventuality, the Registrar Judicial shall place this matter before the Court for appropriate orders.” (GNS)

## BJP Leader Opposes J&K...

irregularities in the selection list of the fire and emergency services department.

“I brought the matter to the notice of L-G Sinha and have urged him to scrap this list and conduct recruitments afresh. Graduates and postgraduates have been excluded while Class 8 and 10 pass candidates have been selected in the current list. It is a big scam and probe should be ordered,” he said.

Raina added that if the list was not revoked then BJP will move court for an interim stay on it.

## Sopore Woman Dies Of Burns...

District Hospital (SDH) Sopore by family members and neighbours where doctors referred her to SMHS Srinagar in critically condition for advanced treatment where she succumbed to her burn injuries.

Meanwhile, Station House Officer (SHO) Sopore, Azim Khan told news agency KNO that the reason behind committing suicide was being ascertained.

He said a case under FIR number 272/2020 under section 309 has been registered and further investigation is going on in this regard—(KNO)

## Woman Killed In Hit And...

dead, the official said

“A case has been registered under FIR number 78/2020 under relevant sections of law and further investigations taken up to crack the case,” he added.

## Ladakh Records 79 New...

patients have recovered till Tuesday evening.

The bulletin said 27 COVID patients were discharged in Kargil and 23 others in Leh on Tuesday after their successful treatment.

## Govt Sets Up 18 Paddy...

produce below the minimum support price fixed during the current season,” Choudhary said at a meeting here.

Assuring full support to Food Corporation of India, he asked FCI officials to make sure that payments are released immediately after procurement of paddy from the farmers, preferably within 72 hours through Direct Bank Transfer (DBT) mode.



یہ خبر انتہائی دکھ اور غم کے ساتھ دی جاتی ہے کہ منظور احمد ڈارسا نے ہمدانیہ کالونی بمبے میں سیکرٹری ممبر 06 اکتوبر ۲۰۲۰ء بروز منگل کو اس دار فانی سے رحلت کر گئے۔

اللہ تعالیٰ مرحوم کو جنت الفردوس عطا فرمائے۔ اس سلسلے میں مرحوم کی اجتماعی فاتحہ خوانی 09 اکتوبر ۲۰۲۰ء بروز جمعہ المبارک کے 06.30 بجے آن کے آبائی مقبرہ واقع بمبے نزدیک بمبے مکمل انجام دی جائے گی۔ بعد میں تعزیتی مجلس عزائے میں انجام دی جائے گی۔ انشاء اللہ

سید گلزار علی نقی صاحب مدظلہ العالی، دلاور بھٹن وراثتدار احسان



# Back to Village a Revolution for Maximum Governance: LG

UDHAMPUR, OCTOBER 7: Continuing his consistent outreach programmes as part of the ongoing Back to Village-3, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha visited Kud in Udhampur district today.

‘Back to Village is a revolution for implementation of maximum governance on ground. In Back to Village, the public is planner and executor while the government and officers are only facilitators’, remarked the Lt Governor while addressing the public.

He called upon the public to wholeheartedly participate in the Back to Village programme and ‘be a part in the development and restructuring of J&K’.

Taking cognizance of long pending demand of Chenani-Patangarh bridge over Tawi, the Lt Governor assured that a double-lane modern steel superstructure bridge would be completed by July, next year benefiting about 15 Panchayats. ‘The 5 km approach road to the bridge would also be completed along with the project’, he added.

‘Back to Village and Jan Abhiyan is a step towards more transparent and accountable governance. Funds, Functions and Functionaries are now available at your doorstep. At the same time, awareness also needs to be created in the public about people’s rights and welfare schemes that centre and UT administration has already approved for them’, he continued.

‘Each district has been provided funds of Rs 2.5 crore and additional Rs 10 lakh for Back to Village works. There is a need to work with honesty and dedication for utilization of these funds and execution of works’, said the Lt Governor.

Discussing the agriculture sector, the Lt Governor observed the

need to modernize, industrialize and diversify it to strengthen village economies and providing ample sources of livelihood to young generation.

‘Jammu & Kashmir needs a different kind of green revolution focusing on livelihoods diversification through allied activities. I’m working on many farmer friendly initiatives to ensure a more rapid, holistic agricultural development in Jammu Kashmir’, the Lt Governor maintained. He made a special mention of project Jeevika which has led to a new approach of integrated and remunerative farming in the clusters where the project is being implemented.

The Lt Governor spoke on Hon’ble Prime Minister’s visionary Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana and how it is going to benefit the district through implementa-

tion of measures like micro-irrigation. He also called for creation of 300 clusters of organic farming in the district and for revival of water resources and revamping water supply for agriculture and horticulture sectors.

The Lt Governor highlighted the need to deliver benefits of social security schemes to large rural population of the district. ‘More than 32 thousand people from 236 panchayats of Udhampur have benefitted from Integrated Social Security schemes’, the Lt Governor noted. He also expressed the need to speed up Aadhaar seeding with pension beneficiaries, the existing figures being 70% only.

The Lt Governor appreciated the huge number of scholarships given during Jan Abhiyaan and said that 14908 Pre-Matric while 566 Post-Matric scholarships have been provided in the district during the period.

Appreciating the progress achieved by the district in health sector, the Lt Governor also stressed on the need to expedite work on recently approved new medical college within set deadlines.

Summarizing achievements of ongoing Back to Village programme, the Lt Governor announced that 1.79 lakh beneficiaries have been linked with Jammu & Kashmir Health Insurance Scheme, 65 thousand farmers have been provided Kisan Credit Card, 1.55 lakh ration cards have been seeded with Aadhar and more than 55 thousand farmers have benefitted under PM KISAN initiative.

He also asked the elected PRI members to generate awareness for the benefit of the local population. Every Wednesday is dedicated to public grievance redressal at Sub-Division level on rotation basis, he added.

## People Are No Cattle, Dark Times Will Pass: Soz

Srinagar: Senior Congress leader and former UNION Minister, Prof Saifuddin Soz Wednesday said that Kashmir based politicians should never compromise on the issue of internal autonomy of Jammu and Kashmir. He said it is time for all politicians including Syed Altaf Bukhari and Sajad Lone to join hands and fight for the peoples’ rights and aspirations.

Soz said that the Government of India is suppressing people of Kashmir but that too shall pass. “People should remember that the darkest part of the night is just before dawn. I believe people of Kashmir will emerge victorious.”

In an interview, Soz said there is deep alienation and people are very angry over the abrogation of Article 370. “This resentment will prevail till internal autonomy is not restored. The Government of India can’t treat us as cattle. New Delhi has to listen and respect our sentiments.”

In response to a question, Soz said that by abrogating special status, New Delhi not only ditched mainstream leaders of Jammu and Kashmir but it ditched itself. “New Delhi doesn’t know the repercussions of this stupid act. So what if we fail in our struggle but our next generation will come to know about it and they will fight.”

Soz said there is no democracy in Kashmir and it is a prison. “Even though I am free right now, where will I go. It is a prison here. Kashmir is run by ‘insolent’ bureaucrats who are disconnected with people. 90% bureaucrats are insolent who treat Kashmir as a colony. Muslims are being sidelined in bureaucracy. This has never happened in our history. All the top posts are held by non-Muslims,” he said.

He said election is an immaterial subject for the people of Kashmir. “If elections happen, there will be

very less participation and these elections will be a formality only. People are disinterested. They have lost everything but they don’t see it as a loss but as an investment as they knew they will succeed one day in their struggle. People know losses are inevitable in a struggle. The coming generation will take a cue and will continue with the struggle till they get justice.”

While responding to a question on Hurriyat Conference, Soz said that Syed Ali Geelani is the otherwise name of Hurriyat. “Since he (Geelani) is very old now, Mirwaiz should speak up. Despite being vibrant and young he is silent. Despite being in house detention, Mirwaiz can speak and he should speak up. I was also under house arrest but was vocal. I am pro-Indian but always with people of Kashmir. I am pro-Indian till Congress fights for the common people.” KNT

## Bid to Manhandle Jail Superintendent

Kupwara: Two inmates allegedly tried to manhandle Jail Superintendent Kupwara after an argument over the facilities in Jail barracks.

Sources said that Jail Superintendent Kupwara Shahbaz Ahmed was inspecting jail barracks when there was an argument between him and two inmates. The inmates alleged lack of facilities in the jail.

KNT reported that the argument led to scuffle and the two inmates tried to manhandle the Jail Superintendent, however, the timely intervention of some senior officers brought the situation under control.

An official feigned ignorance about the

incident, however, sources identified the two inmates involved in the incident as Shafqat Ali Tagoo of Sopore are of Baramulla and Junaid Ahmed Dar of Wathoor Budgam.

Both the inmates had been arrested and shifted to Kupwara Jail on militancy charges.

An FIR vide number 50/2020 under section 7/25 Arms Act, 18 B, 20, 23,38,39 ULAP Act stands registered against Shafqat Ali at police station Sopore while Janaid Ahmad Dar is involved in case FIR number 79/2019 under section 307,325 RPC 7/27 Arms Act 16,18,20 38 39 ULAP Act at Police Station Sadar Srinagar. (KNT)

## JKRTC clarifies on recruitment

JAMMU OCTOBER 07: Jammu and Kashmir Road Transport Corporation (JKRTC), while contesting a news report appearing in a section of press regarding the delay in job recruitment advertised by the corporation, has said that the government has recalled the selection process for reasons of lack of transparency.

The JKRTC faced huge dearth of employees of different categories and the sharp decline in number of employees was a result of introduction of VRS/GHS retirement scheme in the Year-2008 together with natural retire-

ment of employees in proceeding years. To fill the gap of available vacancies, the issue was ratified by Board of Directors of JKRTC and after threadbare discussion, the members allowed to complete the exercise of employment in 74th meeting of Board of Directors held on 11.08.2016 and vide Agenda item No. 74.11, it was resolved that:

“It was resolved that Managing Director JKRTC shall fill up the vacant posts on need basis after proper advertisement & by following due procedure required under rules.”

(Government of India)  
UNION TERRITORY OF JAMMU & KASHMIR  
**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER  
PWD (R&B) CITY ROADS DIVISION SRINAGAR.**  
**FRESH SHORT TERM NOTICE INVITING TENDERS.**  
**NIT No: - E-NIT/62/CRD OF 2020-21 R&B/ e-tendering, DATED: 06-10-2020.**

For and on behalf of the Lieutenant Governor of Union Territory of J&K, e-tenders (in Single cover System) are invited on Percentage basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with Union Territory of J&K, CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for below mentioned work:-

S.No	Name of Work	Est. Cost (Rs. In Lacs)	Cost of T/Doc. (In Rs.)	E/M (In Rs.)	Time of Opening of Bid	Time & Date of Opening of Bid	Class of Contractor	MH of Account
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
(1)	Improvement/ Upgradation of Bohri Kadal, Naidkadal, Khankahi Mulla via Kalashpora including Baba Nund Ganel link by way of providing and laying of WBM Grade 3rd, 50mm thick compacted bituminous macadam, 25mm thick compacted semidense with 6mm thick seal coat	Rs.13.59 lacs	Rs. 600/-	Rs. 27180/-	7 Days	13-10-2020 at 11:00 AM	AAY with HMP & HMPO	C&T
(2)	Improvement/Upgradation of roads with links from Nowpora Chowk to Victory Crossing/ Rainawari Chowk, Baghe Roop Singh, Syedpora Khwajapora, Friends Colony, Peer-wari Link road 1st by way of providing and laying of 50mm thick compacted bituminous macadam, 25mm thick compacted semidense with 6mm thick seal coat in patches and stretches.	Rs.31.60 lacs	Rs.1100/-	Rs. 63200/-	7 Days	13-10-2020 at 11:00 AM	AAY with HMP & HMPO	C&T
(3)	Improvement/ Upgradation of road with links from Budobagh (Govt.Hr.Sec.Institute) Koolipora to (EFS) Eastern Foreshore road (BDKB) with Kaw Mohalla, Sheshgari Mohalla, Gousia road in patches and stretches by way of providing and laying of 50mm thick compacted bituminous macadam, 25mm thick compacted semidense with 6mm thick seal coat.	Rs.7.67 lacs	Rs.300/-	Rs. 15340/-	7 Days	13-10-2020 at 11:00 AM	AAY with HMP & HMPO	C&T
(4)	Improvement/ Upgradation of premises of Sultan ul Arifeen School at Makhdoom Sahib (RA) Srinagar by way of providing and laying of 75mm thick compacted Wet mix, 50mm thick compacted bituminous macadam, 25mm thick compacted semidense with 6mm thick seal coat.	Rs.3.65 lacs	Rs.200/-	Rs. 7300/-	7 Days	13-10-2020 at 11:00 AM	AAY with HMP & HMPO	C&T

Position of AAA/ TS Accorded.  
Position of funds Committed.

1.	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	06-10-2020.
2.	Period of downloading of bidding documents	FROM 07-10-2020 10:00 A.M TO 12-10-2020
3.	Bid submission Start Date	07-10-2020 FROM 10:00 A.M
4.	Bid Submission End Date	12-10-2020 UPTO 4:00 P.M
5.	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	13-10-2020 at 11:00 A.M in the Office of the Executive Engineer PWD (R&B), City Roads Division Srinagar.

1. The Bidding documents Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Drawings, bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental website [www.jktenders.gov.in](http://www.jktenders.gov.in) as per schedule of dates given below:-

2. Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in shape of Treasury Challan in favour of Executive Engineer R&B City Roads Division Srinagar (tender inviting authority) and Earnest money / Bid security in shape of CDR / FDR pledged to Executive Engineer R&B City Roads Division Srinagar (tender receiving authority).

3. The date and time of opening of Bids shall be notified on Web Site [www.jktenders.gov.in](http://www.jktenders.gov.in) and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The bids of Responsive bidders shall be opened online on same Web Site in the Office of Executive Engineer R&B City Roads Division Srinagar. (tender receiving authority).

4. The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of Technical bids


5. All other terms conditions are as per PWD Form 25 (Double agreement Form).

NOTE: The Contractor is directed to visit the site before participating in tendering process.

Executive Engineer,  
R&B City Roads Division Srinagar.

DIPK-6931/20  
No:-  
Dated:-


DIAL-EMMA



- TRAFFIC POLICE : 9419993745, 01998-266686
- PCR: 0194-2452092,2455883
- PDD: 0194-2450213
- FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES : 2479488,2452222,2452155
- CAPD: 18001807011
- SMC HEALTH OFFICER: 9469409081


AIRPORTS

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311




RAILWAYS


- SRINAGAR: 0194-2103259
- ANANTNAG: 01932-228243
- BARAMULLA: 0194-102029
- BUBHERA: 01932-228243
- PAMPORE: 01933-294132
- PATTAN: 01954-293507
- QAZIGUND: 01951-296153



HIGHWAY STATUS

- Sgr-Jammu highway - ( Open )
- Mughal Road - ( Open )
- Srinagar- Leh- ( Open )





PRAYERS

FAJR

5: 06

ZUHR

12: 19

ASR

4: 29

Magrib

6: 12

ISHA

7: 31

## This Day In History

- 1929 - Mohammed Nadir Khan occupies Kabul Afghanistan and drives out Habibullah Ghazi
- 1932 - The Indian Air Force is established.
- 1940 - German troops occupies Romania
- 1945 - US President Harry Truman announced atomic bomb secret shared with Britain and Canada
- 1945 - Microwave oven patented
- 1946 - Military plane crashes at Christian HBS, 24 die
- 1952 - Chinese offensive in Korea
- 1957 - Turkish & Syrian border guards exchange fire
- 1963 - Sultan of Zanzibar cedes his mainland possessions to Kenya
- 1967 - Guerrilla leader Che Guevara and his men are captured in Bolivia.
- 1970 - Soviet author Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn wins the Nobel Prize for Literature
- 1970 - The Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) propose that a system of Proportional Representation (PR) should be used in elections in Northern Ireland
- 1973 - OPEC meets with oil companies to discuss revision of 1971 Tehran agreement and oil prices; negotiations fail.
- 1993 - UN lifts remaining economic sanctions against South Africa
- 1998 - US House of Representatives votes to begin impeachment hearings against President Bill Clinton on charges of lying about his affair with Monica Lewinsky
- 1998 - José Saramago is the first person from Portugal to be awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature
- 2003 - Peter Agre and Roderick MacKinnon win the 2003 Nobel Prize in Chemistry for discoveries concerning channels in cell membranes
- 2008 - Nobel Prize for Medicine or Physiology awarded jointly to Harald zur Hausen (cause of cervical cancer) and Françoise Barré-Sinoussi, Luc Montagnier (discovery of HIV)
- 2012 - Hugo Chávez is re-elected as president of Venezuela for a fourth term
- 2016 - 140 people are killed in an air strike during a wake in Sanaa, Yemen

## From KO Archives

## Beerwah police, CRPF taste RR ire

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR- In an unprecedented operation, army carried out a cordon and search operation at a police station in the central Kashmir district of Budgam yesterday. Administration and police authorities have taken a strong exception to the incident which left the police and central reserve police force (CRPF) personnel shell shocked and gripped in fear.

Quoting police, agency reports said troops of 34 Rash-triya Rifles (RR) led by Col T Shaahidharan laid siege to the police station at Beerwah at about 6 p.m. yesterday and called out all the policemen and the CRPF

personnel from its 197 battalion deployed in a portion there. Six persons lodged in the police lock up at the moment were also brought out.

Accusing the police of harbouring militants in the police station, the army officer told the officials a suspect had entered the premises shortly before. That was why the operation was started, he said. The surprised policemen produced one Ghulam Rasool before him saying he had come to report the theft at his home earlier.

Denying that he was the person who had entered the premises earlier, the army officer allegedly threatened the personnel in the event of any untoward incident there. The entire premises including the police station and the family quarters were thoroughly searched. The operation last one and a half hours.

On learning about the incident, the deputy commissioner, Budgam, accompanied by the superintendent or police, visited the police station this morning, primarily to mollify the visibly agitated police officials. They assured them of investigation into the matter and ‘appropriate action’ against those responsible.

Reports said the RR action has generated fear not only among the police and security forces, but among the local people as poll Residents told AP the RR personnel had allegedly made their life miserable. Viewed in light of the action against the police and CRPF, they said, one could easily guess what could be the extent of harassment they caused to the common people.

(Kashmir Observer, October 08,2000)



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### K O V I E W

## Getting Back To Work

**F**ourteen months after the revocation of Article 370 that granted J&K semi-autonomous status under India's constitution, Kashmir economy is in dire straits. According to an estimate by the Valley's business bodies, the local economy has suffered a loss of more than Rs 40,000 crore. In response, the administration has belatedly announced a revival package of just Rs 1350 crore that would hardly help ameliorate the lot of the wrecked economy.

It is true, the economy of whole of the country is in pretty bad shape. India's economic growth plunged dramatically by 22.8% in the April-June quarter of this year compared with the corresponding quarter of last year. This has crippled the economy rendering lakhs of people unemployed. And this is what just three months of lockdown has done to the country's economy.

Now imagine the situation in Kashmir which has been in a state of siege for the past fourteen months. To make matters worse, the administration in Kashmir was a bit more exuberant about enforcing lockdown. It was much more strict with it than was warranted. Its rationale was that the lockdown is critical to bring down the number of infections and flatten the curve. And its reasoning appeared plausible under the circumstances. But as the example around the world would have one believe, lockdown has only reduced the infections not controlled them. And there is little chance that an extended lockdown will eliminate the infection.

At the same time, lockdown crushed the Valley's economy, leaving thousands of people unemployed. It stopped the circulation of money and hit the marginalized sections very hard. The fallout of the lockdown has thus been far worse than that of the Covid-19 and on a much bigger scale. What was billed as a cure turned out to be worse than the disease.

As things stand, we have moved past the stage where recourse to a lockdown is even an option. What the government can focus on instead is to strictly enforce the social distancing norms in public. And it can do so, considering the smaller population of Kashmir makes the infections more manageable than the densely populated states across India.

Kashmir economy is looking forward to a post-Coronavirus period and hopes it remains peaceful. The region has been through a long period of disruption. We can only hope that the world is able to get a handle on this deadly virus and get back to a normal life. But meanwhile it is time for us to cautiously get back to work.

### O T H E R O P I N O N

## Spirit of mutuality

**T**he impasse in the GST Council on the issue of compensating states for the shortfall in their protected revenues remained unresolved at its 42nd meeting on Monday. The divisions between the Centre and the states seem to be drawn along political lines, with states ruled by the BJP and its allies opting for one of the options proposed by the Centre, while Opposition-ruled states continue to oppose the Centre's formulation. This is unfortunate. The GST Council has long been held up as an example of the spirit of cooperative federalism the NDA government professes commitment to. Yet the manner in which this issue has been dealt with suggests that the consensual decision-making process that has largely guided the Council's deliberations so far is being given the go-by.

The two options presented by the Centre place the burden of the shortfall in GST revenues squarely on the states. Opting for either of them absolves the Centre of any obligation of having to protect the states' revenues — in direct contravention of the grand bargain struck between the Centre and the states in order to shift to this new indirect tax architecture. Moreover, the complications arising out of the shortfall are unlikely to be limited to this year. It is likely that collections through the compensation cess will not be enough to bridge the shortfall next year as well. Thus, the Council will also have to deliberate on whether the same formulation will be adopted next year. This will also have a bearing on the extent to which the GST compensation cess is levied beyond the five-year period.

If by the next Council meeting, scheduled for October 12, an acceptable resolution is not found, it could well mean that the Council is headed for voting on the issue. Votes cast along political lines will only deepen the chasm between the Centre and states and make such negotiations in the future, needed in a federal polity, increasingly difficult. It is still not too late for the Centre to adopt a more conciliatory approach. The solution has to be both political and economic: In a federal polity, decision-making should be consensual in nature, rather than being driven by the force of brute majority, and at the same time, the Centre should assure states, who are at the forefront of fighting the COVID pandemic, of adequate resources.

*The Indian Express*



# China's Diplomatic Outreach-I Israel-China Relations on an Upswing

ASAD MIRZA

**China views Israel as an important link in its larger design to extend its hegemonic influence through its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) to control trade from the Far East to Europe.**

**E**conomic ties between China and Israel have increased considerably in recent years. In addition, Israel has also been working hard to strengthen political and cultural interaction between the two nations.

In its 72 years of existence, Israel has been a nation with few friends except for the US. Thus, its diplomatic outreach with different countries have been considered one of Israel's greatest political triumphs.

This diplomatic outreach has befriended nations like India; which is now Israel's largest defence customer, Gulf nations like the UAE and Bahrain are the recent addition. But their most important ally that they've found is China.

**China views Israel as a conduit for increasing regional influence**

China views Israel as an important link in its larger design to extend its hegemonic influence through its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) to control trade from the Far East to Europe. The BRI is a multi-billion-dollar strategy to bring nations in Asia, the Middle East, and Africa under the Chinese influence through economic development by gaining leverage by gifting these nations with non-repayable debt. Beijing's goal is to use that leverage to manipulate other nations' foreign policy in its favor while gaining access to intelligence where there are military relations with the US.

The overtures between the two are not just confined to economic or defence relations but extends even to people-to-people or societal links, which ultimately culminates in political intimacy.

Avid China-watcher, James M. Dorsey, senior fellow at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies at Singapore's Nanyang Technological University, is of the view that China's international ventures are aimed at China dominating the Eastern Mediterranean with six ports in four countries: Israel, Greece, Lebanon, and Syria that would create an alternative to the Suez Canal. All that is missing are Turkish, Cypriot and Egyptian ports. Additionally, the Chinese military build-up threatens to complicate US and NATO's ability to manoeuvre in the region. The Trump administration has already warned Israel that Chinese involvement in Haifa could jeopardise continued use of the port by the US fifth fleet.

China covets improving relations with Israel due to its political interests. Israel is a top priority in China's Middle Eastern policy.

China, which has established good relations with Arab countries and Iran for many years, has diversified its Middle Eastern policies by making Israel an important station of the Maritime Silk Road Project. This high level of interaction has brought cultural and academic partnerships. Israel has also increased its investments in China, which it rarely does.

China's strategic interest is based on the fact that Israel is one of the world's foremost commercial, food and security technology powerhouses and it enjoys significant grassroots support in the United States.

The bilateral trade between the two has increased fourfold in the last ten years, and China has become Israel's third largest trade partner with \$14 billion bilateral trade per year.

**US view of Sino-Israeli relations**

The US views these ties as a potential threat as it feels that this proximity will allow China to spy through Israel on US interests.

The importance America places on Israeli-Chinese ties was highlighted by a trip by US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to Israel during the pandemic for the express purpose of directly sharing the administration's profound concern for Chinese entanglement in Israel's infrastructure, research and development across many cutting-edge fields, coupled with a warning to Israel that America might need to rethink its security relationship if Israel doesn't disengage from some of this activity.

American concerns with Israel include the Chinese operational control of the Haifa seaport by the Shanghai International Port Group for 25 years, where the US Mediterranean Sixth Fleet docks that some view as a direct threat to American security and intelligence gathering. America is worried that this port can become one of the stepping stones of China's new "Silk Road" (One Belt One Road, or Belt and Road) program linking over 60 nations.

The most recent Israeli-Chinese commercial transaction under the microscope is the possible deal with a Hong Kong-based Chinese controlled company to build the world's largest desalination plant (Sorek 2) at an Israeli kibbutz. Another bone of contention is China's Railway Tunnel Group that is close to finalizing a deal for Tel Aviv's light rail transportation system; this too may be seen to have major security implications. China's first infrastructure project in Israel was

the Carmel Tunnels, also an American concern. The American fear is that China could gain unprecedented intelligence with the help of intelligence operatives implanted within Chinese companies, undermining both Israeli and American security interests.

If there is one thing Israel cannot afford, it is a rupture in its bonds to the United States. That is no truer than at a time in which the United States is the only power supportive of Israeli annexation plans on the West Bank.

It's time for Israel to step back from the economically tempting involvements with China. Washington also needs Israel for its deep-water port in Haifa, its unrivalled intelligence, Israel's R&D that advance American weapons systems and cyber capabilities, and joint operations and training of US troops in Israel. It's not permissible for these activities to be spoiled by Chinese entrenchment into Israel's infrastructure.

America is also worried about joint research and Chinese investment with Israeli technology companies that use cyber security, AI (Artificial Intelligence), and satellite telecommunications that could be used by Chinese companies like ZTE and Huawei. The question is whether Israel can develop a formula that convinces the United States that US interests will delineate Israeli dealings with China and reassure China that it can still benefit from Israeli assets within those boundaries.

"Right now, without taking the right steps, we are looking at being put in the situation in which the US is telling us we need to cut or limit our relations with China. The problem is that Israel wants freedom of relations with China but is not showing it really understands US concerns. Sorek-2 was a good result. It shows the Americans we get it," said Carice Witte, executive director of Sino-Israeli Global Network and Academic Leadership (SIGNAL) that seeks to advance Israeli-Chinese relations.

Although the effects of the pandemic have battered Israel economically, it must heed Washington's warning, even if there is short-term financial loss. Israel must prioritize its long-term security relationship with the US.

*Asad Mirza is a commentator based in New Delhi. He was also associated with BBC Urdu Service and Khaleej Times of Dubai.*



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## Is Poverty only Lack of Money?

**S**ocio-economic biases are prevalent by large in our society. Not only do the poor fall short of resources that directly depend on money but also empathy and respect. The biases that stem from downward classism are more often than not explicitly functional in our everyday lives.

The troubles associated with poverty stretch far beyond the realm of unaffordability on account of figures. In workplaces, or other social institutions, individuals belonging to the economically weaker sections of society are often not held in the same esteem as their relatively affluent counterparts. This is an undeniable dark truth of our society. The unfortunate fact that the lack of health care and

hygienic living conditions breed several physical diseases is known and well established.

Besides physical ailments, the statistics unequivocally suggest that the poor are far more vulnerable to develop psychosocial disabilities in comparison to the economically privileged. A study conducted by the centre of social justice revealed that in Britain, children and adults coming from families that fall within the lowest 20% of the income spectrum are twice or thrice more likely to develop a mental health issue compared to those whose income fall within the highest end of the spectrum. A similar revelation was made by the Millennium Cohort Study in 2012 that declared the children with household incomes falling in the low-

est quintile are 4.5 times more likely to develop acute mental health problems compared to the highest.

Child labour is one of the most brutal repercussions of poverty. The children from these

families not only have to go through the tribulations of living a life with inadequate means but also the onus of making endeavours in order to find means of alleviation from this situation.

This deprives them of an education and the opportunities that come along. Hence, creates a vicious cycle because a lack of awareness further pushes them deeper into the porthole of misery. However, it must be articulated that poverty is not an exhaustive means of hindrance.

Racism, sexism, caste system, homophobia etc are all impediments to one's growth.

In all ages and times, the world has witnessed people who were averse to the idea of poor ascent. The ones who make class denying claims regarding our society need to abandon their heavily rose-tinted glasses of oblivion. Charles Dickens in his second novel, Oliver Twist, depicted a society that treated poverty as a crime and this did not sit well with some of his contemporaries who found this portrayal as problematic and far from truth. This still holds true for the present world full of elitists and class apologists.

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# Unlearnt Lessons: On 8th October 2005 Earthquake

On the 15th anniversary of the devastating earthquake of 2005, we need to acknowledge our under awareness and facilitate plans to stay alert, aware and prepared to avoid future loss of life and property in a place like Kashmir which is prone to earthquakes

DR AFROZ AHMAD SHAH

“The occurrence of small magnitude earthquakes is a wakeup call to check on our ground preparedness to tackle a major hazard that may come anytime. So, the current tremors are helpers and informers to alert us to get ready for any eventuality. We must respond to it with an action oriented strategy, if we wish to avert the ugly memories of the 2005 devastation.”

The recent cycle of earthquake occurrences in certain parts of Kashmir and Ladakh regions should seriously worry us: not only because it may be a precursor to a major earthquake but more on what would be the ground reality if a medium to large magnitude earthquake occurs tomorrow. Think about it. We are not prepared to handle any major earthquake hazard in the region, which is reflected by the ground realities where neither earthquake science education nor preparations are up to the mark. We have to take responsibility and worry about changing it for good.

The vast scale of devastation during the 2005 earthquake that struck Muzaffarabad Kashmir is still fresh in our memory. We lost more than 80000 people and billions worth of property. This was avoidable to a large extent, and that is reflected by the scale of devastation caused by the similar magnitude earthquake in some of the world's well prepared nations. For example when the moment magnitude 7.0 earthquake occurred in Haiti in 2020 it devastated the country and resulted in an unfortunate loss of more than 85000 people (some estimates suggest the number could be 300,000). Contrary to this, when New Zealand, a relatively well equipped nation to deal with earthquake hazards, was also hit by the similar magnitude event (moment magnitude 7.1) there was no loss of life.

The stark difference in the scale of destruction caused by the similar magnitude earthquakes in two different geographic locations clearly suggests that poorly prepared nations will always suffer the most. Haiti is one of the poorest countries in the world and it is also marred by high corruption rates and an unstable political landscape, and that has directly contributed to the noticeable and contrasting difference in devastation caused by a similar sized earthquake in New Zealand in 2010.

Haiti is comparable with the Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh regions because we too are enmeshed in our own political and social mess, which has penetrated in almost all spheres of life. The ground preparations to tackle earthquakes hazards are next to nil, and our political landscape only postpones every possibility of preparation.

Therefore, our current setting is a perfect setup to turn a hazard into a major disaster. This is not just about earthquake related hazards but floods, landslides and so on. It should worry us a lot, and we must not wait until we have no option than to mourn the incoming devastations. We have to learn from the past, and reflect on how to improve our ground realities.

The lessons from what went wrong during the 2005 devastation in our neighbourhood, clearly demonstrates that we have to work day and night in building the infrastructure, and in particular, the mind-set to win the battle with earthquakes.

We are awaiting major earthquakes in the region, and these can occur anytime, so we have no



choice than to live with earthquake hazards.

The scientific reasoning behind the occurrence of earthquakes is simple and if people understand this simple reasoning they will start loving faults and earthquakes. We are part of the tectonic plates because we live on land that belongs to lithospheric plates.

Kashmir is sitting in the north of the major Himalayan faults, and the present day mega thrust plate boundary fault between India and Eurasian tectonic plates. The plate convergence between these lithospheric plates has to be compensated by the building of strain in rocks, and that is what has been going on over the entire developmental history of the Himalayas.

The mountains and valleys that surround us are a direct outcome of the tectonic interaction between the plates, and this ought to continue in the future. Faults have developed our land, otherwise, it was an ocean in the geological past where ocean life was abundant. The limestone deposits that we have in Anantnag (Islamabad), Bandipora, and many other places in Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh regions are evidence of oceanic conditions in the past. The faults later uplifted the oceans and created the wonderful landscape that we call: the paradise on the earth.

Therefore, faults, folds and other geological structures are there for our comfort because it has created our land that we call home, otherwise, it

would have been just an ocean. Therefore, tectonic plate movements are central to our existence on the planet Earth, and we must learn how to live with faults.

There is no way we can get rid of earthquakes, and we must not, because it is one of the smartest ways to release the energy from the Earth. Faults are efficient in doing it systematically. We therefore have to educate ourselves about the goodness of faulting and how faults are part of our life, and it is imperative to work on ground to make living with earthquakes a reality. This is achievable if we work on extensive education and outreach activities network and talk earthquake sciences with people at large. We also need to build earthquake resistant buildings and help other people in building such structures.

I think the occurrence of small magnitude earthquakes is a wakeup call to check on our ground preparedness to tackle a major hazard that may come anytime. So, the current tremors are helpers and informers to alert us to get ready for any eventuality. We must respond to it with an action oriented strategy if we wish to avert the ugly memories of the 2005 devastation that I have mentioned above.

*The Author is an Assistant Professor of Structural Geology, Physical and & Geological Sciences at the Universiti Brunei Darussalam*

## Rise of Mediocrity in the Age of Populism

MOHAMMED ALMEZEL

The Chinese say: “Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.” This old saying was meant, most probably, to motivate people to learn a skill rather than count on handouts and to highlight the importance of education.

But does that great proverb apply to cultures and our modern public discourse? I believe it does. We live in an age where more and more people have become dependent on packaged contexts – many of us have stopped thinking and analysing. Instead, we wait for that analyst or that social media influencer to tell us X is good and Y is bad.

In his book, *Mediocracy: The Politics of the Extreme Centre*, Canadian academic Alain Deneault argues that the mediocre have taken over the world.

These are the people without a vision or the ability or the desire to excel. We became content with the middle. We no longer want to disturb the sweeping conformism. “There was no Reichstag fire. No storming of the Bastille. No mutiny on the Aurora. Instead, the mediocre have seized power without firing a single shot.

They rose to power on the tide of an economy where workers produce assembly-line meals without knowing how to cook at home, give customers instructions over the phone that they themselves don't understand, or sell books and newspapers that they never read,” he says in the introduction of the book.

### The rise of populism

If we look at today's political spectrum, we will surely understand Deneault's point. Moreover, we will be able to understand the rise of populism, although Deneault didn't address this in his book.

Populists thrive on the inability of some to make their own independent opinions. They target the mediocre because they are easy to win over.

Their buttons are easy to press. Natives are faced with the danger of overwhelming immigration. Religious extremists are threatened by secularists and liberals. Followers of this sect don't want to live with the followers of the other sect.

In the United States, President Donald Trump



represents a clear example of a populist as he uses preconceived prejudices and ‘street’ language to fight his way back into the White House.

His strength in this regard stems from his use of a language that is often incendiary, not fit for a president, and one that doesn't need a highly or even moderately educated person to understand. There is no depth in his sentences.

They target those who can be described as Trump's support base — many of them used to admire him when he was a reality TV celebrity.

### Counting on the mediocres

Those who liked “You're fired” will surely like “Lock her up”, “Sleepy Joe”, “China Virus”, “Thugs, outlaws and anarchists”, “Democratic hoax”. It worked for him well in 2016. He counts on the mediocres to carry him again to the White

House in November.

Italian economists, Ruben Durante, Paolo Pinotti and Andrea Tesei argued in a study published in July 2019 by the American Economic Association that “trash TV” helped Silvio Berlusconi, one of Europe's best known populists, win the premiership four times, between 1994 and 2011.

Italians were exposed to entertainment TV while children were “less cognitively sophisticated and civic-minded as adults, and ultimately more vulnerable to Berlusconi's populist rhetoric,” the study noted. Needless to say one of the biggest Italian TV networks, Mediaset, is infamous for its provocative reality programmes.

### Reign of superficiality

In the Arab world, the situation can get even worse. It might not be reality TV oriented but surely

similar in outcome. The rise of Daesh and Al Qaida is squarely populist. Audio tapes of Osama Bin Laden and later Al Baghdadi videotaped sermons appealed to the mediocre.

They were told over and over again that their religion was under threat. Most investigations into the recruitment methods of these terror networks found out that most recruits were either school dropouts or with low education. Mediocrity again. And it keeps getting worse.

Historians argue that the rise of superficiality began in the 1980s which coincided with the rise of the Right in the US and UK, with the elections of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher.

Oliver Stones did a great job in chronicling this period in his classic film, *Wall Street*. “Greed is good,” Gordon Gecko kept repeating in the movie.

### Postmodern movement

The Arab world is not far from this shift. I think the impact has been even bigger in this region. The Arab world was hit by two vicious currents: the ultra-religious movement and the postmodern movement (this one was unfortunately not a natural evolution of modernity, in which we did not enter at all by that time, but was more of a jump into the void).

These two currents were not interested in building on the prevailing societal values but sought to completely break with those foundations. The roles of a sensible leader, the intellectual and the creative artist were replaced by religious extremists and petty artists.

Even our food outlets were replaced overnight by the likes of McDonald's and Pizza Hut. Consumerism, dependent on imports, replaced national manufacturing – especially in traditional manufacturing states such as Egypt and Lebanon.

The imports culture extended beyond consumer goods and food. We imported pre-packaged culture too. And with the recent social media surge in the region, we began importing our collective awareness from the mediocre, the so-called ‘fashionistas’ or ‘influencers’.

Now influencers have the power to define the social standards and draw the boundaries of our culture. Replacing the Bin Ladens and Al Baghdadis, the influencers are our new populists. This is mediocrity at its best.

*The Gulf News*





“AS PEOPLE ADJUSTED TO REMOTE WORKING, after hours chats, or chats between 5 pm and midnight, have also increased,” the report said. Further, for remote workers in Asia, no commute is hurting and not helping productivity,

# EMPLOYEES IN INDIA FACE INCREASED Burnout At Work During CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC: REPORT

**Press Trust Of India**  
Employees in India are facing increased burnout due to lack of separation between work and personal life as well as concerns of contracting Covid-19, a report said on Wednesday. According to Microsoft's latest Work Trend Index, that surveyed over 6,000 information and first-line workers across eight countries globally, India had the second

highest percentage of workers facing increased burnout in Asia at 29 per cent. Moreover, India came out top with over 41 per cent of workers citing the lack of separation between work and personal life as negatively impacting their wellbeing, resulting in increased stress levels, the report said. "In the last six months, we have seen how Covid-19 has created an era of remote anywhere. It has led to the evolution of a new work-

place – from a physical space to one residing in a virtual world," said Samik Roy, Country Head, Modern Work, Microsoft India. Roy further noted that "as businesses adapt to a new way of working, it is important to examine the multifaceted impact that the new working conditions are having on employees. This is helping us provide relevant and timely solutions to all our customers and users". The pandemic increased burnout at

work, in some countries more than others. In India, 29 per cent of workers are experiencing increased burnout at work, owing to its increase in workday span by 1 hour. While, workers in Germany saw very little change to workday span or feelings of burnout, the report said. Data showed that, globally, even six months past the first work-from-home orders, people are in significantly more meetings, taking more ad hoc calls and man-

aging more incoming chats than they did before the pandemic. "As people adjusted to remote working, after hours chats, or chats between 5 pm and midnight, have also increased," the report said. Further, for remote workers in Asia, no commute is hurting and not helping productivity, the report said adding that for years, Microsoft's research group has been studying how commute has helped maintain work-life boundaries – and worker's productivity

and wellbeing. Microsoft said a series of updates have been launched within Microsoft Teams to support employee wellbeing. These include a virtual commute experience that helps users prepare for the day and mindfully disconnect in the evening. Microsoft has also partnered with Headspace to bring a curated set of mindfulness and meditation experiences into the Teams platform and launched new Teams expe-

riences for first-line workers to support them with the tools they need to work more safely. This Work Trend Index report looks at how the pandemic has impacted wellbeing at work globally. It studied how productivity patterns in Microsoft Teams have shifted since early this year and surveyed over 6,000 information and first-line workers in eight countries including Australia, Brazil, Germany, Japan, India, Singapore, the UK, and the US.

## Study Notes Factors That Increase Or Decrease Suicidal Behaviour Risk In Adolescents

**Agencies**  
An analysis of relevant studies published to date have identified certain risk factors associated with suicidal behaviour in adolescents. The analysis also revealed certain protective factors that may reduce the likelihood of suicidal behaviour. The analysis, which is published in the Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Nursing, included 66 studies. Internal



risk factors included poor individual coping, smartphone abuse, nutritional imbalance, menstrual problems, poor lifestyle and disturbed sleep patterns. External risk factors

for adolescent suicide behaviour included mental health history in parents, poor interactions in the family and social problems. Reframing to have a meaningful life, adequate nutrition, parent-child interactions, reading books and watching movies and faith or religiosity are protective factors that may reduce the risk of suicidal behaviour in adolescents. "Loving others is imperative, loving yourself is courage. Don't be afraid to love yourself—you have to fight for yourself before fighting for others," said senior author Heni D. Windarwati, of the Universitas Brawijaya, in Indonesia.

## ‘Gut Microbiome May Influence Cancer Patients Response To Oral Therapies’

**Agencies**  
The way gut microbiome interacts with oral medication in prostate cancer patients has been illustrated in a new study from Lawson Health Research Institute and Western University. The study also suggests that the bacteria in the gut play a role in treatment outcomes. The findings, published in Nature Communications, highlight how the drug abiraterone acetate is metabolized by bacteria in the gut to reduce harmful organisms while promoting those that fight cancer. The team suspects this is one of many examples of how the microbiome influences our response to medications.



"Research is beginning to uncover the ways in which the human microbiome influences cancer development, progression and treatment," said Brendan Daisley, a PhD candidate at Western's Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry who is conducting research at Lawson. "Our study highlights a key interaction between a cancer drug and the gut microbiome that results in beneficial organisms with anti-cancer properties," added Daisley. Traditional prostate cancer therapies are designed to deprive the body of hormones called androgens, which are

responsible for prostate cancer growth. "Unfortunately, traditional androgen deprivation therapies are not always effective. In those cases, alternative therapies are explored," said Dr Joseph Chin, Lawson Associate Scientist, Professor at Schulich Medicine & Dentistry and Urologist at London Health Sciences Centre (LHSC). Abiraterone acetate is a highly effective therapy used in the treatment of prostate cancer that has been resistant to other treatments. While abiraterone acetate also works to reduce androgens

in the body, it does so through a different mechanism and, unlike traditional therapies, it is taken orally. "When drugs are taken orally, they make their way through the intestinal tract where they come into contact with billions of microorganisms," said Dr Jeremy Burton, Lawson Scientist, Associate Professor at Schulich Medicine & Dentistry and lead researcher on the study. "While it's long been a mystery why abiraterone acetate is so effective, our team wondered if the gut microbiome plays a role," added Burton.

Government of Jammu & Kashmir (UT)  
**Office Of The Executive Engineer Mechanical Division,  
Mechanical Engineering Department, Kashmir, Srinagar**  
Fax No: 0194-2497093 email: xenmds@gmail.com website: www.medkashmir.org  
GIST of Short Term e-Tender

NIT No:	MDS/TS /2020-21/ 95 /e-tendering
Date	06 .10.2020

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, J&K UT e-tenders are invited on item rate basis from registered /experienced firms for the below mentioned work in two (02) cover system:-

Name of the Work	Cost of Tender Doc. (In rupees)	Earnest Money (In Rs)	Estimated Cost (In Lakhs)	Time of completion (in days)	Position of Funds
1	2	3	4	5	6
Supply, Installation, Testing and commissioning of spares for Unimog-400 and Unimog-423 of Mechanical Engineering Department, Kashmir.	500/-	20,000/-	10.00	45 Days	Approved under head SC-3054

1. Downloading of Bids: The Tender document Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the Govt. website [www.jktenders.gov](http://www.jktenders.gov). in from 06-10-2020 (1800 Hrs)

2. Submission of Bids: The bidders shall deposit their bids in electronic format on the above website from 06-10-2020 (1800 Hrs) to 11-10-2020 (1855 Hrs) in two covers.

3. Opening of Bids: The bid uploaded on the Web Site up to due date and time will be opened on 12-10-2020 (1400 Hrs) in the Office of the Executive Engineer, Mechanical Engineering Department Kashmir.

DIPK-6962/20

No. MDS/ TS/466/ 3678-82      Dated: 06 -10-2020

Sd/-  
(Er. Abdul Rashid Bhat)  
Executive Engineer,  
Mechanical Division, Srinagar

## ‘Poor Cognitive Performance Predicts Impairment In Activities Of Daily Living Years Later’

**Agencies**  
Subtle differences in cognition may help identify individuals at risk for becoming dependent years later upon others to complete daily activities, such as managing medications or finances and other essential activities. The study was published in the online issue of the Journal of Alzheimer's Disease. In the study, researchers



paired daily life activities nearly a decade later. The study involved a diverse but understudied cohort of Latinos living in the United States. Outcomes were most severe for individuals 70 years and older, but gender and ethnic backgrounds, such as Mexican or Puerto Rican, were not significant differentiators. The authors said the findings in sum highlight the need for early preventive care

across Latinos and Latinas of various backgrounds. Family members often provide unpaid care for individuals with impairments in daily activities; Latinos are no exception. Among the more than 16 million unpaid caregivers of persons with dementia, Latinos spend an average of 10 more hours per week in caregiving duties than their non-Latino, white counterparts, according to the Alzheimer's Association.



## China's Experimental COVID-19 Vaccine Appears Safe In Early Trials: Study

Agencies

Beijing: A Chinese experimental coronavirus vaccine being developed by the Institute of Medical Biology under the Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences was shown to be safe in an early stage clinical trial, researchers said.

In a Phase 1 trial of 191 healthy participants aged between 18 and 59, vaccination



with the group's experimental shot showed no severe adverse reactions, its researchers said

on Tuesday in a paper posted on medRxiv preprint server ahead of peer review.

The most common adverse reactions reported by the trial participants were mild pain, slight fatigue and redness, itching and swelling at the injection site.

The candidate also induced immune response.

"All the data obtained in this trial support the safety and immunogenicity of this inactivated vaccine and are encouraging with regard to further studies of its efficacy in the future," the paper said.

China has inoculated hundreds of thousands of essential workers and other groups considered at high risk with other vaccines, even as clinical trials had not been fully completed, raising safety concerns among experts. China has at least four experimental vaccines in the final stage of clinical trials.



## By 2021, 150 Million People May Be In Extreme Poverty Due To Covid: World Bank

Press Trust Of India

Washington: The World Bank today warned that by 2021, as many as 150 million people are likely to be in extreme poverty because of the coronavirus pandemic and countries will have to prepare for a "different economy" post-COVID by allowing capital, labour, skills and innovation to move into new businesses and sectors.

The COVID-19 pandemic is estimated to push an additional 88 million to 115 million people into extreme poverty this year, with the total rising to as many as 150 million by 2021, depending on the severity of the economic contraction, according to the Washington-based global lender.

This would represent a regression to the rate of 9.2 per cent in 2017, according to the biennial Poverty and Shared Prosperity Report.

Had the pandemic not convulsed the globe, the poverty rate would have been expected to drop to 7.9 per cent in 2020, it said.

The pandemic and global recession may cause over 1.4 per cent of the world's population to fall into extreme poverty, World Bank Group President David

Malpass said.

In order to reverse this serious setback to development progress and poverty reduction, countries will need to prepare for a different economy post-COVID, by allowing capital, labour, skills and innovation to move into new businesses and sectors, he said.

Noting that the new poor will be in countries that already have high poverty rates, the report said that a number of middle-income countries will see significant numbers of people slip below the extreme poverty line.

About 82 per cent of the total will be in middle-income countries, the report estimates.

The convergence of the COVID-19 pandemic with the pressures of conflict and climate change will put the goal of ending poverty by 2030 beyond reach without swift, significant and substantial policy action, the World Bank said, adding that by 2030, the global poverty rate could be about seven per cent.

In its report, the World Bank noted that the lack of recent data for India severely hinders the ability to monitor global poverty.

Absence of recent data on

India, one of the economies with the largest population of extreme poor, creates substantial uncertainty around the current estimates of global poverty, the Bank said.

Observing that effective approaches have tapped the skills and dedication of community members, the World Bank said that in Mumbai, city officials were able to stem the rapid spread of the coronavirus in Dharavi, one of the city's largest urban settlements, by mobilising community members and staff from private medical clinics for a strategy based on mass screening for fever and oxygen levels.

In the space of three months, by July 2020, reported cases in the area had been cut to 20 per cent of their peak in May. To help poor families during the lockdown, foundations, nongovernmental organisations and volunteers provided thousands of households with ration kits.

Dharavi's success stemmed from a combination of customised solutions, community involvement and perseverance, it added.

According to Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center, the contagion has infected over 35 million people and killed more than 1 million across the world.

## Iran fears regional war as fighting rages around Nagorno-Karabakh

Agencies

Tehran: Iran's president warned on Wednesday that fighting between Azeri and ethnic Armenian forces in the South Caucasus could trigger a regional war as the death toll rose on the 11th day of hostilities.

More than 300 have now died in the renewed fighting in and around the mountain enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh, which under international law belongs to Azerbaijan but is populated and governed by ethnic Armenians.

Azerbaijan says Azeri cit-

ies outside the conflict zone have also been attacked in the deadliest fighting in more than 25 years, taking the fighting closer to territory from which pipelines carry Azeri gas and oil to Europe.

Iran, which borders both Armenia and Azerbaijan, has been talking to both the former Soviet republics as concern mounts that Turkey, a close ally of Azerbaijan, and Russia, which has a defence pact with Armenia, could be sucked into the conflict. "We must be attentive that the war between

Armenia and Azerbaijan does not become a regional war," Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said in televised remarks.

"Peace is the basis of our work and we hope to restore stability to the region in a peaceful way," He said Iran would not allow "states to send terrorists to our borders under various pretexts".

In a new call for a ceasefire, Russian President Vladimir Putin said in a television interview that the events were a tragedy and Moscow was deeply concerned.

## '14 Million Tonnes Of Microplastics On Sea Floor'

Agencies

Sydney: The world's sea floor is littered with an estimated 14 million tonnes of microplastics, broken down from the masses of rubbish entering the oceans every year, according to Australia's national science agency.

The quantity of the tiny pollutants was 25 times greater than previous localised studies had shown, the agency said, calling it the first global estimate of sea-floor microplastics.

Researchers at the agency, known as CSIRO, used a robotic submarine to collect samples from sites up to 3,000 metres (9,850 feet) deep, off the South Australian coast.

"Our research found that the deep ocean is a sink for microplastics," principal research scientist Denise Hardesty said.

"We were surprised to ob-

serve high microplastic loads in such a remote location."

The scientists, who published their findings in peer-reviewed journal Frontiers in Marine Science, said areas with more floating rubbish generally had more microplastic fragments on the sea floor.

"Plastic pollution that ends up in the ocean deteriorates and breaks down, ending up as microplastics," study lead Justine Barrett said.

"The results show microplastics are indeed sinking to the ocean floor."

Hardesty called for urgent action to find solutions to marine plastic pollution, which affects ecosystems, wildlife and human health.

"Government, industry and the community need to work together to significantly reduce the amount of litter we see along our beaches and in our oceans," she said.

## 2020 Saw Hottest September On Record Globally, Shows Data

Agencies

Paris: Earth's surface was warmer last month than during any September on record, with temperatures since January tracking those of the hottest ever calendar year in 2016, the European Union's Earth Observation Programme said Wednesday.

This year has now seen three months of record warmth - January, May and September - with June and April virtually tied for first, the Copernicus Climate Change Service reported.

"There is currently little difference between 2020 and 2016 for the year-to-date," Copernicus senior scientist Freja Vambourg told AFP.

For the 12-month period through September, the planet was nearly 1.3 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

That is alarmingly close to the 1.5C threshold for severe impacts detailed in a major 2018 report by the UN's climate science advisory panel, the IPCC.

The Paris Agreement has enjoined nations to cap global warming at "well below" 2C, and 1.5C if feasible.

So far, Earth has warmed on average by one degree,



enough to boost the intensity of deadly heatwaves, droughts and tropical storms made more destructive by rising seas.

Climate change driven by greenhouse gas emissions from burning fossil fuels has picked up pace in recent decades.

Nineteen of the 20 last years are the warmest since accurate readings began in the late 19th century.

Since the late 1970s, the global thermometer has crept up 0.2C every decade, according to EU data.

Temperatures in September were "exceptionally high" over northern Siberia, which - along with much of the Arctic Circle - has seen freakishly warm weather for months.

September was brutal in the Middle East, with new high temperatures reported in Turkey, Israel and Jordan.

Fire and ice arts of North Africa and Tibet were also scorching hot, while maximum daytime values reached 49C in Los Angeles County early in the month.

Across California, five of the state's six biggest wildfires in history were still burning at the end of the month.

"September was warmer by 0.05C than September 2019, the previous warmest September," the Copernicus report said.

## NEWS MAKERS

### PM For A Day: Teenager Fills Finland's Top Job

Helsinki, Finland: Finnish Prime Minister Sanna Marin faced a quieter day than usual on Wednesday after handing power to a 16-year-old as part of a campaign to promote girls' rights.

Aava Murto, from Vaasky in southern Finland, said she was having an "exciting day" as she faced media on the steps of parliament after meeting with the chancellor of justice.

Murto added that she had "learnt some new things about legislation."

In the afternoon, the student who actively campaigns on climate and human rights issues was to speak with MPs and the minister for development and foreign trade.

Her message to decision-makers has been that girls "need to realise more how important they are, and how they are just as good at technology as boys," she told AFP.

"I think young people could teach adults to be more innovative and think more about the



future," she added.

The swap is part of a global "Girls Takeover" campaign by children's rights charity Plan International, which aims to raise awareness of girls' digital skills and opportunities in technological industries and highlight the problem of online harassment against women.

Although Finland scores highly in international gender equality comparisons, women are still heavily under-represented in technology firms and boardrooms,

while the country's share of females starting technology-related studies is the lowest in the OECD.

The global campaign coincides with the UN's International Day of the Girl Child on Sunday, and will also allow girls take on the jobs of ministers in Kenya, Peru, Sudan and Vietnam.

Elsewhere, senior jobs at Microsoft, Samsung, Facebook and Twitter will go to teenage girls in countries including El Salvador, Guatemala, the Netherlands and the Philippines.

### Nobel Prize In Chemistry Awarded To Emmanuelle Charpentier, Jennifer Doudna

Stockholm: Emmanuelle Charpentier of France and Jennifer Doudna of the US on Wednesday won the Nobel Chemistry Prize for the gene-editing technique known as the CRISPR-Cas9 DNA snipping "scissors", the first time a Nobel science prize has gone to a women-only team.

"Using these, researchers can change the DNA of animals, plants and microorganisms with extremely high precision," the Nobel jury said.

"This technology has had a revolutionary impact on the life sciences, is contributing to new cancer therapies and may make the dream of curing inherited diseases come true." The technique has been tipped for a Nobel nod several times in the past, but speaking to reporters in Stockholm via telephone link Charpentier said the call was still a surprise.

"Strangely enough I was told a number of times (it might happen) but when it happens you are very surprised and you feel that it's not real," she said.

"But obviously it is real so I have to get used to it now," she added.

Charpentier, 51, and Doudna, 56, are just the sixth and seventh women to receive the Nobel Prize in Chemistry, and



this is the first time a Nobel science prize goes to a women-only team.

Charpentier told reporters she considered herself "a scientist" first, but hoped the prize would provide "a really strong message for young girls".

**Rewriting 'the code of life'**

While researching a common harmful bacteria, Charpentier discovered a previously unknown molecule - part of the bacteria's ancient immune system that disarms viruses by snipping off parts of their DNA.

After publishing her research in 2011, Charpentier worked with Doudna to recreate the bacteria's genetic scissors, simplifying the tool so it was easier to use and apply to other genetic material.

### Trump scoffs at Covid-19, signs of election defeat

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump doubled down on Tuesday on the macho image his fans adore after declaring himself cured of Covid-19 and scoffing at disastrous opinion polls only four weeks before election day against Democrat Joe Biden.

"FEELING GREAT!" he tweeted, also insisting that he is "looking forward" to holding a second scheduled debate against Biden in Miami on October 15.

There had been speculation, even among some Republicans, that Trump might emerge from hospital chastened or at least with a new tone of empathy for the roughly 210,000 Americans who have died from the virus.

Instead the Republican has returned to the White House boasting he vanquished the disease that upended the country this year - and, by extension, that he is still capable of vanquishing his grim odds on election day of Nov 3.



# High Court Rejects Plea For Charging Only Tuition Fees By Universities During Covid-19



**NEW DELHI:** The Delhi High Court today declined to entertain a PIL seeking guidelines to universities and such institutions to charge only the tuition fee, that too in installments, in view of the prevailing COVID-19 pandemic, and said "concessions are not a matter of right".

A bench of Chief Justice DN Patel and Justice Prateek Jalan instead asked the concerned authorities to treat the plea as a representation and take a decision in accordance with law, rules, regulations and government policy applicable to the facts of the case.

With the direction the petition, by a fourth year law student, was disposed of.

During the brief hearing, the bench said that universities have to pay their professors and also set up the infrastructure for online classes and therefore, they cannot be directed to grant fee concessions.

It disapproved of the several reliefs, like providing gadgets and 4G internet packs to students by the varsities, sought in the PIL and said "what is the harm in asking for it".

"Maangne mein kya jaata hai (what is the harm in asking for it). You can ask for the heaven and the sky. Why not ask for cycles and cars also as they (students) have to go to the college/university. What is the harm in asking."

"Such petition deserve to be dismissed with costs, but we are not doing it now," the bench said while disposing of the plea filed through advocate Kush Sharma.

The law student, in his plea, had sought directions from the Ministry of Education to the various universities and such institutions to

give a break up of the fees being charged by them and to also grant concessions to parents on a case-to-case basis in the form of extension of time period to deposit the fees.

The petition had also sought framing of guidelines to ensure the varsities provide gadgets and fast internet connections, to those who cannot afford the same, so that all students have access to the online education or classes being held during the pandemic.

It had claimed that while the University Grants Commission and Bar Council of India has issued advisories to the varsities to grant concessions with regard to fees, these were only requests and the universities were not adhering to the same.

The petition had contended that due to the pandemic not only the country's GDP has shrunk but people employed in various sectors have lost their jobs or have faced reduction in salaries.

"Consequently, household income across all income groups has reduced considerably and people are facing severe cash crunch and financial burden. Owing to these circumstances, the parents of students pursuing undergraduate and post-graduate courses are finding it exceedingly difficult to pay the fees of their wards."

"This situation is more alarming in the case of parents of those students who are pursuing their education in educational institutions which are set up under private universities and deemed universities which charge fees at a huge premium," the petition had said.

It had further alleged that some educational institutions are taking coercive steps, like repeatedly calling, messaging or emailing parents threatening to strike-off names of their wards or deny them access to online classes over non-payment of fees.

# "Would Have Thrown Out China In Less Than 15 Minutes If...": Rahul Gandhi

**KURUKSHETRA:** Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday attacked Prime Minister Narendra Modi over India's border standoff with China, saying that if Congress been in power, it would have thrown out China from the country in less than 15 minutes.

The former Congress president while addressing a public gathering late last evening, as part of his "Kheti Bachao Yatra", said Prime Minister Narendra Modi is a "coward".

"The coward PM says that no one has taken our land. Today, there is only one country in the world whose land has been taken by another country. India is the only country where another country came in and took away 1200 square km. And PM calls himself a "deshbhakt" and the whole



country knows that China's forces are inside our territory, what kind of patriot he is? If we were in power we would have thrown out China in less than 15 minutes," Mr Gandhi said.

"I guarantee you when our government was there, China did not have enough power to put even one step in our country. There is only one nation in the entire world whose land has been usurped and that is India and they call themselves patriots," he added.

Earlier on Tuesday, Rahul Gandhi offered prayers at Geeta Sthali in Kurukshetra.



**HERD WALK:** Flock of sheep and goats being shepherded on a picturesque stretch in South Kashmir's Pahalgam on Wednesday.KO Photo Abid Bhat

# Iraq's PMU Vows To Ensure Security Of Arbaeen Processions

**TEHRAN (TASNIM)** – The chairman of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), also known as Hashd al-Sha'abi, said the anti-terror resistance group will oversee the security of Arbaeen processions underway in the Arab country.

Speaking at a press conference on Tuesday, Fali al-Fayyadh stressed that despite all challenges caused by the coronavirus pandemic, Hashd al-Sha'abi has managed to provide security for Arbaeen processions.

Hashd al-Shaabi forces are involved in many security and support programs to safeguard the rituals, al-Forat news agency quoted Fayyadh as saying, according to Press TV.

Arbaeen marks the 40th day after the anniversary of the martyrdom of Imam Hussein (AS), the third Shiite imam, along with 72 of his companions in the Battle of Karbala, in southern Iraq, in 680 AD after fighting courageously for justice against the much larger army of the Umayyad caliph, Yazid I.

Each year, Millions of Muslim mourners set off on a symbolic 80-kilometer walk that begins from Najaf, where Imam Hossein's father Imam Ali (AS) is buried, to the holy city of Karbala, where Imam Hussein's shrine is located.

Accommodating the pilgrims along the road, as well as in both Najaf and



Karbala, are thousands of make-shift tents, also known as mawkibs, that provide a wide range of services from votive food to medical care.

This year, however, foreign pilgrims have been barred from visiting Iraq due to the coronavirus outbreak and the Arbaeen march will be held with the participation of local Iraqis only.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Fayyadh said the Arbaeen pilgrimage has united the Iraqi people and Hashd al-Shaabi, adding that the pro-government group will help the nation solve its problems.

"We promise Iraq's religious authority and people that Hashd al-Shaabi will remain the guardian of Iraqi sovereignty and beyond all disputes," he noted.

Hashd al-Shaabi is a government-sponsored umbrella organization

composed of around 40 factions of volunteer counter-terrorism forces, including mostly Shiite Muslims besides Sunni Muslims, Christians and Kurds.

Its formation goes back to the summer of 2014, shortly after Daesh, the world's most notorious terror group, showed its face and managed to occupy swathes of territory in Iraq.

Hashd al-Shaabi's efficient role in Daesh's defeat turned the force into a permanent and broadly-popular feature of Iraq's social, political and security landscapes, despite attempts by the US and its allies to depict the group's mission as sectarian in nature.

In November 2016, the Iraqi parliament recognized Hashd al-Shaabi as an official force with similar rights as those of the regular army, therefore legally establishing it as part of the National Armed Forces.

# UGC Declares 24 Universities As Fake; Maximum From UP Followed By Delhi

The University Grants Commission (UGC) on Wednesday announced a list of 24 "self-styled, unrecognised institutions" in the country, terming them as "fake" with the maximum of them operating from Uttar Pradesh followed by Delhi.

"Students and public are informed that currently 24 self-styled, unrecognised institutions are functioning in contravention of the UGC Act, which have been declared as fake universities and these are not empowered to confer any degree," UGC Secretary Rajnish Jain said.

The majority of eight of these universities are from Uttar Pradesh -- Varanaseya Sanskrit Vishwavidyalaya, Varanasi; Mahila Gram Vidyapith, Allahabad; Gandhi Hindi Vidyapith, Allahabad; National University of Electro Complex Homeopathy, Kanpur; Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Open University, Aligarh; Uttar Pradesh Vishwavidyalaya, Mathura;



Maharana Pratap Shiksha Niketan Vishwavidyalaya, Pratapgarh and Indraprastha Shiksha Parishad, Noida.

"Regarding Bharitya Shiksha Parishad, Lucknow, the matter is sub-judice before district judge in Lucknow," Jain said.

Delhi has seven fake universities -- Commercial University Ltd, United Nations University, Vocational University, ADR Centric Juridical University, Indian Institution of Science and Engineering, Vishwakarma Open University for Self Employment and Adhyatmik Vishwavidyalaya (Spiritual University).

# NSCN-IM Wants Naga Peace Talks In 3Rd Country Involving PM

The NSCN-IM, which has been negotiating with the government to resolve its long pending issues, has demanded the involvement of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the talks for faster determination of their demands, insisting that the negotiations be held in a "third country".

"In order to save the political dialogue, the talks should resume at the Prime Minister's level, without pre-condition and outside India in a third country," NSCN-IM led by its chief negotiator Thuingaleng Muivah said in a letter to the Prime Minister.

"If our stay in India is no more welcome, all necessary arrangements must be made for us to leave India and the political talks be resumed in a third country," said the letter, written to Modi on February 25.

The National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Isak-Muivah (NSCN-IM) in a separate statement on Tuesday said that they deliberately withheld the letter for seven months before releasing it to the media for public consumption as it waited with all confidence that the Prime Minister would respond positively.

"NSCN-IM being accountable to the Naga people hereby released the letter to inform of the delay and the lack of response from the office of the Prime Minister to our people," the statement said.

Muivah, who is the Ato Kilonser (Prime Minister) of the self-styled Naga government, referred to the circumstances in which he and the then chairman of the outfit, Isak Chishi Swu, first arrived in India in 2002 and "patiently" stayed here since 2010 to conclude an "acceptable and honourable political settlement".

The letter, which is available with IANS, said that the NSCN-IM started talks with the government only after the latter recognised the Naga problem as a "political issue" and stopped calling it India's



internal law and order matter. Muivah said: "We mentioned in our proposal that Nagaland shall use its national flag, anthem, emblem and insignia, and have a separate Constitution called 'Yehzabo'."

In the eight-page letter, Muivah also highlighted what he called the "obnoxious" conduct of the union Home Ministry while dealing with the Naga question.

"We are totally shocked and surprised that even after more than two decades of political negotiation, the MHA and its agencies have become obnoxious.

"It has come as a total shock and surprise that the Indian government has started branding and accusing the members of the NSCN-IM who are in political negotiation as terrorists and with impunity they are arresting the members of the organisation," the letter said.

Muivah was also critical about the role of Nagaland Governor R.N. Ravi, who, before taking up the new assignment, was the Government of India's chief negotiator for the Naga talks.

"Ravi was interfering with the law and order issues in 'deliberate deviation' from his appointment as the Centre's representative for the peace talks.

"The activities of the representative of the government is polarising the Naga society instead of uniting the Nagas for an honourable political solution," the NSCN-IM leader said.

According to officials in Nagaland, a nine-member team of NSCN-IM led by Muivah has been holding informal talks with the Centre since the second week of August in New Delhi as a prelude to the formal parleys which are expected to begin soon.

# Kerala Journalist On Way To Hathras, 3 Others Booked For Sedition Two Days After Being Held By UP Police



Uttar Pradesh police on Wednesday booked four persons including Kerala journalist Siddique Kappan on sedition and other charges at Maant police station in Mathura, two days after they were held while on their way to Hathras.

According to the FIR, charges under the stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and the IT Act have also been filed against the four, who were accused by the state police of having links with the alleged radical group Popular Front of India and its affiliates.

The four were identified as Kappan, a journalist of Malapuram in Kerala, Atiq-ur-Rehman of Muzaffarnagar, Masood Ahmad of Bahraich

and Alam of Rampur.

They were on Wednesday booked under various sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) including 124A (sedition), 153A (Promoting enmity between different groups on ground of religion, race, place of birth, residence, language, etc., and doing acts prejudicial to maintenance of harmony) and 295A (Deliberate and malicious acts, intended to outrage religious feelings of any class by insulting its religion or religious beliefs), according to the FIR.

The PFI has been accused of funding protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act across the country earlier this year and the UP police had sought a ban on the outfit.

The four were held when, according to the police, they were on their way to Hathras were a Dalit woman had died after allegedly being gang-raped.

## NEWS MAKER

### Chief Justice Bobde: Will Smoke From Stubble Burning Kill Coronavirus?

The Supreme Court on Tuesday wanted to know whether the smoke produced from stubble burning could kill the novel Coronavirus as cases in India inched closer to 67 lakh while 1,03,569 lost the battle against the pandemic.

Chief Justice S.A. Bobde asked the question during a hearing of a PIL against the seasonal stubble burning exercise in Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh.

"Will the smoke kill the Coronavirus?" Chief Justice Bobde said.

The smoke would not kill the coronavirus, but it would certainly worsen the situation and contribute towards its spread, said senior advocate Vikas Singh, representing the petitioners citing scientific study. The PIL has been moved in the Supreme Court seeking directions to the Punjab and Haryana governments to ban



stubble burning, which usually takes place between September and December every year, in the backdrop of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

Singh, represented a law student Aman Banka and a Class 12 student Aditya Dubey. Amicus Curiae senior advocate Aparajita Singh submitted before the court that states have failed to act as per their assurances to take measures to contain stubble burning.

The Chief Justice asked Singh to give the court the name of the experts on the stubble burning matter. "Need some impartial people," noted the bench.

he top court also asked Singh why the court was moved when the stubble burning issue is around the corner, instead he should have moved the apex court much earlier.

Singh submitted that his clients have come across NASA images, which show stubble burn-

ing fires at many places.

The PIL said it is on record that stubble burning contributes almost 40 per cent of air pollution in Delhi and cited the Harvard University study that air pollution may now be an important factor that aggravates a mild Covid infection into an acute one.

The petitioners also cited another study at Louisiana State University, which found that increased air pollution can offer a direct pathway for airborne transmission of COVID-19.

"Thus, any increase in the air pollution levels of Delhi-NCR this year while the Covid-19 pandemic is spiralling out of control, will exponentially increase the mortality rates due to Covid-19, comprising the respiratory system of the citizens, more so in case of senior citizens and children," said the plea.

### Delhi HC Notice On Interfaith Couple's Plea Against 30-Day Notice Period

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday issued a notice on a petition filed by an interfaith couple challenging the procedure of issuance of public notice inviting objections to the registration of the marriage for a period of 30 days under the Special Marriage Act

A division bench of the high court presided by Chief Justice D. N. Patel and Justice Prateek Jalan directed the Centre and the Delhi government to file its response over the petition filed by the couple and listed the matter for further hearing on November 27.

The petition, filed through advocates Utkarsh Singh, Mohd. Tauheed and Mohd. Humaid, sought the setting aside of the impugned procedure of



issuance of public notice for 30 days inviting objections to the marriage solemnization and registration under the Special Marriage Act, 1954.

"The petitioners, being directly affected and aggrieved by the impugned procedure for applying for registration of marriages under Sections 6 and 7 of the Special Marriage Act, 1954 wherein public notice is issued inviting objections mentioned in section 4 of the SMA, 1954 to the marriage for next

30 days. They are praying for declaration of said impugned procedure for applying for registration of marriages under the Special Marriage Act, 1954 as Null and Void and ultra vires to the constitution of India as the same are grossly illegal, arbitrary and ultra vires to the Constitution of India," the plea said.

It stated that objections mentioned in section 4(b)(c) of the SMA, 1954 can be ascertained on the basis of certificates issued from a government hospital or any prescribed authority, the objection under section 4(d) of the SMA, 1954 is inapplicable to inter-religious marriages, therefore the 30 days' notice period directly impinges upon the fundamental rights of the petitioners.