

Maximum : 19°C
Minimum : 03°C
Humidity : 46%
SUNSET
Today 05:35 PM
SUNRISE
Tomorrow 06:53 AM

News Digest

4 J&K Cadre IPS Officers Promoted As ADGPs

Srinagar- The Jammu & Kashmir administration has ordered promotion of four IPS officers of J&K cadre as additional director generals of police (ADGPs). According to an order, Dr. S.D. Singh, Satish Khandare, Rajesh Kumar and T. Namgyal have been promoted as ADGPs with effect from 01.01.2020. The government has also ordered promotion of Amit Kumar to the grade of super time scale (DIG) with effect from 01.01.2020. It has also ordered grade promotion of Sunil Gupta, Sujit Kumar, Vivek Gupta and Mohd Suleman Choudhary to the selection grade of IPS. ● P-02

IGI Starts Covid Testing For Flyers

New Delhi: The Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) has now started Covid-19 testing for all domestic passengers. The facility was on a pilot run since October 28 and received a go ahead from the authorities on Tuesday after its successful trial. The airport already tests international passengers, and now the facility has been extended to the domestic passengers as well who would board from or arrive at the airport. However, the testing would be done only on demand from the passengers. The officials at Delhi International Airport Ltd (DIAL), ● P-02

Headmaster Involved In Rice Scam Held

Srinagar: A Government School Headmaster, one of the accused in a rice scandal who was evading arrest has been arrested by police in Sumbal area of North Kashmir's Bandipora district. Pertinently, 61 bags of rice meant for mid-day meals at Middle School Sumbal were recovered from a Tata-Mobile vehicle by Sumbal police in the premises of Middle School. The rice meant for mid-day meals "was transferred from school illegally and the attempt was thwarted by police". Police had arrested three. ● P-02

6 Held For 'Cattle Smuggling' In Jammu

Jammu: Six suspected cattle smugglers have been arrested and 61 bovines recovered in Kathua and Udhampur districts of Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday, officials said. Based on a tip-off, a police party during checking on a highway in Tikri, Chenani and Salora in Udhampur district intercepted four vehicles on their way to Kashmir, they said. Twenty-one bovine animals were found loaded into the vehicles and being smuggled to the valley, the officials said. ● P-02

Forest Fire Rages In Lolab

Srinagar: Massive fire broke out at multiple locations in Lolab forest area of north Kashmir's Kupwara district on Tuesday. According to the reports, the locals from WarnowAffan hamlet were alerted this afternoon, after they saw smoke billowing from the nearby forests. On visiting the location, locals, as per reports, witnessed a major part of the forest area including vegetation razed to ashes. The fire is gradually spreading to other parts of the forest area. ● P-02

'New Land Laws Aimed To Change J&K Demography'

Gupkar Alliance Rejects Govt Claims, Say 'Facts Distorted, Lies Being Weaved'

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) on Tuesday rejected the Jammu and Kashmir government's assertion that the bulk of the agricultural land will not be transferred to people from outside the Union Territory.

The PAGD termed the earlier land laws of Jammu and Kashmir the most progressive, pro-people and pro-farmer in the entire Indian subcontinent.

"PAGD rejects the statement of official spokesman on 26th October MHA order as bizarre attempt to distort facts, weave lies and mislead people," the seven-party alliance said in a statement.

It said the real object of the repeal of the basic land laws and the massive amendments to the other laws is to push in and implement the agenda of effecting "demographic change" ● PAGE 02

Congress Demands Rollback Of New Land Laws



No File Photo: Arif Butt

Delhi Will One Day Follow Mufti Sahab's Dream: Mehbooba

SRINAGAR: Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) president Mehbooba Mufti on Tuesday said she would go to any extent to safeguard the future of the youth of Jammu and Kashmir by striving for the restoration of the erstwhile state's special status.

"We have lived our lives... Now we have to think about

the youth and their children. We can go to any extent to safeguard the future of our youth," Mehbooba told reporters after a convention organised by the PDP's youth wing here.

The former chief minister said while her party had battled against excesses committed by the "Task" ● PAGE 02

The Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) on Tuesday said the government statement on new land laws in the union territory was an attempt to mislead the people and called for ● P-02

6 Months On, RBI Yet To Clear Name Of JK Bank MD

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Clouds of uncertainty continue to loom large over the appointment of J&K Bank's new Managing Director, even as the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) recently extended the term of incumbent Chairman R K Chibber by another six months.

Zubair Iqbal, who was appointed as new Managing Director (MD) of the bank by the Jammu and Kashmir government on May 16, is waiting for the clearance from RBI while the "current dispensation" is not showing any interest to fill up the post, insiders said. After his appointment, Iqbal was asked to wait till the clear-



File Photo

ance from the RBI is received. However, since then, the much awaited clearance nod has not been received by the bank.

Insiders maintain that getting clearance is not a big deal but the present dispensation was resorting to dilly dally tactics for the reasons better known to them.

"Usually RBI issues clearance within a period of 90" ● PAGE 02

Rename Srinagar Airport After Major Somnath: BJP

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir BJP vice president and former minister Sham Lal Sharma on Tuesday demanded renaming the Srinagar airport in the name of Major Somnath Sharma, the first Param Vir Chakra awardee who died fighting Pakistani tribesmen in 1947.

Some years ago the coalition government led by PDP had mooted the proposal of re-

christening the Srinagar airport after Sheikh Noor-ud-din Wali, the patron saint of Kashmir also known as Sheikh-ul-Alam. However central government has so far refused to accept the decision.

"Due to the martyrdom of Major Somnath Sharma, Kashmir is with India today. We appeal to the Lieutenant Governor to name Kashmir Airport after his name," the BJP leader said while paying tributes to the Major on ● PAGE 02

SOME YEARS AGO THE COALITION government led by PDP had mooted the proposal of re-christening the Srinagar airport after Sheikh Noor-ud-din Wali, the patron saint of Kashmir also known as Sheikh-ul-Alam. However central government has so far refused to accept the decision.

4 Youth Go Missing From South Kashmir

SRINAGAR: At least four youth from twin districts of Shopian and Pulwama in south Kashmir have gone missing from last two weeks, reports said Tuesday.

22-year-old Amir Ahmed Malik, son of Abdul Gaffar Malik of Zainapora and Umer Malik resident of Sugan in Shopian district left their home two weeks ago and have not returned since then, news agency KDC reported Tuesday. Similarly, in neighboring Pulwama district, Shahnaz Ahmad of Sambora and Umer Khanday of Pampore have reported gone missing in similar circumstances.

Quoting sources, the report says that Amir had left his ● P-02

Pak Rejects India's Statement On Baltistan

ISLAMABAD: As Pakistan is heading towards making the official announcement of declaring Gilgit Baltistan (GB) as its fifth province, heated exchange of statements has flared up between New Delhi and Islamabad.

In a latest, Pakistan has "categorically rejected" the Indian Ministry of External Affairs' (MEA) statement regarding GB, stating that New Delhi has no locus standi whatsoever on the issue. ● P-02

Covid Toll Crosses 1500 Mark With 12 More Deaths

Observer Monitoring Desk

SRINAGAR: As many as twelve more people succumbed to coronavirus in Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday, taking the numbers of deaths in the Union Territory due to the virus past 1500 mark.

Kashmir valley reported eight more deaths while four more people succumbed to the deadly infection in Jammu division, officials said. In Valley, six of the victims were residents of Srinagar city and one each from Anantnag and Kulgam districts of south Kashmir.

The victims from Srinagar include a 45-year-old male from Makhdoom Sahib, a 63-year-old from Shaheed Gunj, an 80-year-old woman from Lasjan, an 80-year-old man from Soura, a 50-year-old man from Rawalpore and a 72-year-old man from

Mehjoor Nagar, officials said.

The victim from Anantnag was a 47-year-old woman from Khanabal area, who died at SKIMS Soura, eight days after being admitted to the tertiary care hospital.

Regarding the victims from Jammu, officials said one each belonged to the winter capital of J&K, Rajouri, Doda and Ramban.

With these deaths, the fatality count has reached 1505 in J&K—1001 in Valley and 504 in the Jammu region.

Srinagar district with 366 deaths tops the list followed by Jammu (260), Baramulla (146), Budgam (94), Pulwama (83), Kupwara (73), Anantnag (75), Rajouri (48), Kulgam (48), Bandipora (47), Doda (47), Shopian (35), Ganderbal (34), Udhampur (32), Kathua (31), Samba (25), Poonch (23), Kishtwar (15), Ramban (15), and Reasi (8). (With GNS inputs)

Cases Cross 96K Mark As 478 More Test Positive

Jammu and Kashmir reported on Tuesday 478 new cases of novel coronavirus, including 28 travelers, taking the total number of people infected by the virus across the Union Territory past 96000. While 283 new cases were detected on Tuesday from Kashmir valley, the remaining 195 were reported ● P-02

25 Percent Educated Youth In J&K Jobless

Agencies

SRINAGAR: In what could be a worrying sign for the educated and jobless youth in Jammu and Kashmir, the unemployment rate in the Union Territory has reached to 25 percent, double than the national average.

Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory, which was stripped off semi-autonomous states by the BJP-led government, last year, has 65 percent population under the age of 35 years. If the official figures are to be believed, 25 percent youth in the Union Territory remain unemployed, despite tall claims of recruitment drives by the successive governments.

"We are facing many challenges. Unemployment is a major concern in J&K. For a single post, thousands of aspirants are applying," an official said.



File Photo

To curb unemployment, the official said, the J&K administration has set up year 2025 as its target to create job opportunities.

"The J&K government has sought support of the national-level investors and industry experts in creating robust infrastructure and employment avenues for the youth of J&K," the official added.

Pertinently, after taking over reigns of Jammu and Kashmir administration, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha has repeatedly made assurances to end unemployment in the Union Territory.

"I believe in concrete plans and immediate execution. My idea of Institutional Mechanism under Mission Youth is to ensure" ● PAGE 02

Woman's Abduction Sparks Protest In Kulgam, 2 Held

Observer Monitoring Desk

SRINAGAR: Scores of people held a protest in Poniwah village of south Kashmir's Kulgam district on Tuesday against the alleged abduction and sexual assault on a young woman by two youth.

According to witnesses, scores of people in Poniwah village hit the streets and staged a demonstration demanding punishment for the youth who abducted and sexually assaulted a young girl in Akhal village of the district last week. The protesters blocked Kulgam-Yaripora road for some time to seek action against the guilty.

The protesters said the victim was abducted and allegedly sexually assaulted by two youth

in an orchard during a wedding ceremony in Akhal village of the district on October 31.

"The girl was found in semi-unconscious state and was shifted to hospital where from she was referred to Srinagar hospital for treatment," the protesters said. They identified the accused as Adil Dar and Wasim Dar. The accused had arrived in the village as guests.

The protesters said that the girl was battling for life and demanded stern punishment for the accused.

Police assured them of action and informed them that the accused have already been taken into custody.

Meanwhile, a police spokesperson on Tuesday warned action against rumour mongers for spreading fake news about the girl's ● PAGE 02

Bid To Hoist Tricolour On PDP Office Foiled

JAMMU: A Sikh activist, who tried to hoist tricolour atop the PDP office here during a protest against remarks by its chief Mehbooba Mufti on the tricolour, was detained by police on Tuesday, officials said.

On October 24, Amandeep Singh had hoisted the tricolour on the boundary wall near the main entrance of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) office and a day later, he along with some youths attempted to hoist it on the party's headquarters, but were stopped by police.

Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP), Jammu, Sridhar Patil confirmed Singh's detention.

He has been detained under some other case and not for disturbance to law and order, the officer said. ● P-02

Elderly Dies Of Cardiac Arrest During Scuffle

SRINAGAR: An elderly man died of cardiac arrest in south Kashmir's Shopian district on Tuesday during a clash triggered by the land acquisition drive by the district authorities.

Some residents of Hermain village, including women resorted to stone pelting when a team of officials led by Tehsildar Hermain, Block Development Officer (BDO) reached the village on Tuesday to take possession of a piece of land that was supposed to be converted into a sports ground, news agency KNT reported quoted witnesses.

Due to the stone pelting, an elderly man suffered cardiac arrest and died on the spot ● P-02

In FOCUS

Tracing Missing History In Kashmir's Abridged Archives

Zaid Bin Shabir

Fuelled by his grandfather's homeland history lessons, Tawqeer recently decided to visit some renowned libraries to unravel the valley's remorseless past. The 22-year-old journalist was told that the archival data about Kashmir's chequered history calibrates itself among the richest in the world.

It was the crispy cold morning of October 19 and the first stop for the millennial was the Allama Iqbal Library located in the foothills of the Zabarwan Mountains surrounded by the still surfaced

beauty of the Dal-Lake.

With the end of the Chak dynasty's "generous" reign in Kashmir and with the dawn of the Mughal rule in the valley, the chroniclers write, the history of Kashmir transformed into a decades-long conflict and carnage. Kashmir never witnessed a "peaceful reign" after the imprisonment of Yusuf Shah Chak-the last Kashmiri Badshah of Shah Chak dynasty-by Akbar in 1586 AD.

As Tawqeer stepped into the library, the smell of books and outdoor placed archived photos were enough to coerce the young boy to hasten towards the capcitated premises of the library. The millen-

nial's eyes were all set to dig up the historical documentation on Dogra reign in Kashmir. He found only four books in the sea of paper.

After perusing the index of all the four, the only information Tawqeer could perceive was the commerce sector under the Dogra rule.

Notably, the archives on Laws, treatment of Kashmiris, and punishments for crimes were still unfound. Once again the impassioned boy's hasten search for archives flared up.

Except for four books nothing else was available.

Fervent Tawqeer searched every "nook and corner" of the most presti-

gious library in Srinagar, but the only archive of the Dogra rule were these books with a very limited amount of information engraved in them.

The budding journo was in disdain, but the desire to read about Kashmir's persecuted past and its vicious laws wouldn't let him relinquish. After reaching the library help desk, the salty faced receptionist asked him

to see another official of the library who in return asked him to meet the Librarian-who in return had asked him to meet the Head of the Histories department.

The boy soon realized that the majority of archives on Kash-



Image for representation

mir's history had no sign of visibility in the Library or anywhere in the histories department and the officials of the library had no answer to the queries of this young book reader.

"No nation can move forward while destroying their own history," says Tawqeer while reading the "Hindu Rulers and Muslim Subjects", a book based on the persecution of Kashmir's local population by the Dogra rulers.

Disappointed Tawqeer had to leave the library premises in a hysterical manner. While his eagerness had no end, the only place Tawqeer could think of was the SPS Library located on the brink of swarmed M.A. road

Srinagar, a road that once catered to a number of Sheikh Abdullah's child militia-who drilled with the wooden rifles towards the famous Ghanta Ghar during the Pathan Tribesmen invasion period in the fall of 1947.

As Tawqeer accelerated towards the main entrance of the library, the newly constructed interiors of the building were astonishing for him. After a long disappointing day for the young book lover, there was finally something to cherish his mood up. The receptionist insisted him to have Nun-Chai (Salt tea), that he had brought from his home while the young enthusiast was waiting for the library official who could have briefed him on his prerequisites.

A young female library official invited Tawqeer to the library office where he learned a dismaying truth. The libraries' archival data ● PAGE 02

'The Butterfly Of Paradise' Authored By 10Th Std Student Released

SRINAGAR: 'The Butterfly of Paradise' a novel authored by debutant Sadiah Nisar Shah, a 10th class Student of DPS Srinagar, was released at a function here on Tuesday.

The book was released by Director Information, Dr Sehrish Asgar, in presence of Additional Secretary to Govt, Dr Abid Rashid, renowned poet Zarief Ahmad Zarief and Vice Chairman DPS Srinagar, Vijay Dhar.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Sehrish said that the girls are talented to create their own niche in the society and prove their capabilities.

While congratulating the young student author, Dr Sehrish said that Sadiah has capitalized her talent, in spite of the peer pressure, competition and Covid lockdown. She said that the author has focused on the positive side of the lockdown to pen her imagination and thoughts.

The Director elaborated the role of teachers in building confidence and faith among students to exhibit their talents.

Dr Abid Rashid said that book launch is the statement on the success of the school for providing quality education to students and development of human capital by recognizing the talent of students. He stressed upon students to respect their teachers



for the success in life and career.

Zarief Ahmad Zarief while appreciating the budding author said that the author has got a God gifted talent and prayed for her success in future endeavors. He said that talent hunt is the responsibility of teachers to identify

such capacities of students and groom them.

At the launch of her debut book, 'The Butterfly of Paradise' Sadiah Nisar Shah, 16, said that she got inspired by reading the books authored by Moulana Rumi (RA) during the lockdown.

The author said that with the help of her parents, teachers and friends, she was able to precipitate her thoughts and imagination in the form of a book. She said hard work is necessary to achieve success in the pursuit a person takes up.

Ladakh Standoff: 8Th Round Of Sino-India Corps Commander-Level Talks Likely On Nov 6

NEW DELHI: The eighth round of Corps Commander-level talks between India and China is likely to take place on Friday with an aim to carry forward negotiations on the disengagement process in eastern Ladakh as their troops brace for a harsh winter, official sources said.

There was no breakthrough on the disengagement of troops from the friction points in eastern Ladakh during the seventh round of military talks on October 12.

"The eighth round of military talks is likely to take place on Friday," said a source on Tuesday.

The standoff between the two sides erupted in early May.

Temperatures drop to minus 25 degrees Celsius during winter months in the high altitude areas.

Last week, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said the ties between India and China have come under "severe stress" and that the agreements inked by both sides on management of the border must be respected "scrupulously" in their "entirety" to restore normalcy in relations.

The Indian delegation at the eighth round of military talks will be led by Lt Gen PGK Menon, the newly-appointed Commander of the Leh-based 14 Corps.

A joint press statement by the two armies after the last round of talks said both sides agreed to maintain dialogue and communication through military and diplomatic channels to arrive at a mutually acceptable solution for disengagement "as early as possible".

India has all along been maintaining that the onus is on China to carry forward the process of disengagement and de-escalation at the friction points in the mountainous region.

Following the sixth round of military talks, the two sides announced a slew of decisions including not to send more troops to the frontline, refrain from unilaterally changing the situation on the ground and avoid taking any actions that may further complicate matters.

The sixth round was held with a specific agenda of exploring ways to implement a

five-point agreement reached between Jaishankar and his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi at a meeting in Moscow on September 10 on the sidelines of a Shanghai Cooperation Organisation(SCO) conclave.

The pact included measures like quick disengagement of troops, avoiding action that could escalate tensions, adherence to all agreements and protocols on border management and steps to restore peace along the Line of Actual Control(LAC).

The situation in eastern Ladakh deteriorated following at least three attempts by Chinese soldiers to "intimidate" Indian troops along the northern and southern bank of Pangong lake area between August 29 and September 8 where even shots were fired in the air for the first time at the LAC in 45 years.

As tensions escalated further, the foreign ministers of India and China held talks in Moscow on September 10 where they reached the five-point agreement to defuse the situation in eastern Ladakh.

VP's Office, UGC Write To DU To Take Action Over Misuse' Of Funds On Discontinued Courses

NEW DELHI: The Vice President's office and the University Grants Commission have written to the Delhi University (DU) to take appropriate action over allegations of misuse of funds up to Rs 29 lakh on two courses which were completely discontinued in 2017.

According to the expenditure details from the finance branch, the DU spent Rs 29 lakh between 2017-18 and 2019-20 for the

MTech programmes in nanoscience and nanotechnology, two courses that were discontinued in 2014 with the last batch graduating in 2017.

The Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) has lodged four complaints in this connection and the same were forwarded to the chief vigilance officer of Delhi University to take action.

Following fresh complaint by

RTI activist Anil Kumar, the Vice President's Secretariat has written to varsity's Pro Vice Chancellor.

"A representation has been received from Anil Kumar regarding misusing of financial budget of MTech courses by Professor Ramesh Chandra and Tarun Kumar Das. Action taken may be communicated to the petitioner under intimation to this secretariat," the letter said.

‘New Land Laws Aimed...

and disempowering" the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

"Jammu and Kashmir was the first in the country to implement the concept of land to tiller by enacting Big Landed Estates Abolition Act, 1952, followed by Agrarian Reforms Act, 1976, restricting the land holding to twelve and half acres and ending the exploitative practice of absentee landlordism, and whosoever calls it archaic, would be guilty of ignorance of the history of Jammu and Kashmir.

"It is because of the timely land reforms that no starvation deaths occur in Jammu and Kashmir, no farmer suicides have been ever reported from Jammu and Kashmir and everyone in Jammu and Kashmir has available three fundamental necessities food, clothing and shelter, the position that is now sought to be reversed by making massive assault on the land law regime," the statement added.

The PADG asked how the Alienation of Land Act could be termed archaic when it prohibited transfer of land to a non-state subject thus protecting the interests of the permanent residents of Jammu and Kashmir and at the same time, made a provision for transfer of land by mortgage to organisations like Industrial Development Bank of India, Industrial Credit and Investment Corporation of India to keep pace with industrial development.

"The repeal of the Act now allows the land to be transferred to non-state subjects, denuding the residents of Jammu and Kashmir of their most precious rights. The claimed protection of rights in agricultural land, it is stated, is mere eyewash as the amendment introduced in Land Revenue Act provides for permission to sell the agricultural land almost at mere asking without difficulty.

"The abolition of Big Landed Estates Abolition Act, 1952 and amendments in Agrarian Reforms Act, 1976 is against farmers and to remove the ceiling on acquisition. The changes in Development Act and creation of 'security zones' to avoid adherence to the rules and regulations as regards construction activities in such zones and exclusion of oversight by expert bodies, environmental activists and civil society groups is bound to put at peril ecosystem in fragile environmental areas like Gulmarg, Pahalgam and Sonamarg already under pressure beyond their carrying capacity," the PADG statement said.

The laws now introduced through amendments are not only "against people of Jammu and Kashmir" but "undemocratic, unconstitutional and backward looking with only aim to disempower people and change the demography," it added.

The PADG comprises the National Conference, the PDP, CPI(M), CPI, People's Conference, Awami National Conference and the People's Movement.

Delhi Will One Day Follow...

Force' of police and surrendered militants in the past, it would now focus on the restoration of special status of Jammu and Kashmir.

"We have fought battles against (excesses of) special task force (of Police) and surrendered militants. Our present battle is for the restoration of Jammu and Kashmir's special position and resolution of the Kashmir issue. The youth are with me in this battle. Their support has encouraged me," she said.

Mehbooba said it has been her party's stand that Jammu and Kashmir should not be a cause of confrontation but a bridge between India and its neighbours.

"It was dream of Mufti Mohammad Sayeed that Jammu and Kashmir should be a bridge between India and its neighbours. The Centre will finally have to follow this principle," she added.

Asked if the atmosphere was conducive for holding elections in Jammu and Kashmir, Mehbooba said, "Election is not a priority for me."

In August last year, the Centre revoked Jammu and Kashmir's special status under Article 370 of the Constitution and bifurcated it into two union territories

Congress Demands Rollback ...

rollback of these laws.

It questioned the official statement mentioning that bulk of agriculture land will not be transferred to people from outside the union territory. "The statement is an attempt to mislead people on new land laws," the party said.

The JKPCC said the new laws now allow land to be transferred to non-state subjects, depriving the people of Jammu and Kashmir of their rights.

"The amendments introduced in the Land Revenue Act is unacceptable to people of JK and Ladakh," the party said.

"The laws now introduced were aimed at disempowering people, which is not only unfortunate but a serious matter and must be nullified in order to put an end to the fear and chaos that has struck the people in shape of new land law," it added.

4 Youth Go Missing From...

home in Shopian to play cricket with his friend two weeks ago and has

not returned home since then. Another missing youth, the report says is a class 11th student, and went missing in the last week of October. The report quoted an unnamed police officer as saying that the cases were being investigated from all dimensions.

"It is too early to comment if they have joined militant ranks," the officer said.

The mysterious disappearance of the youths comes at a time when police have been declaring that south Kashmir will be soon freed of militancy and the focus will be shifted towards north Kashmir.

Pak Rejects India’s Statement...

In a press release, Foreign Office spokesperson Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri said: "India has no locus standi whatsoever on the issue – legal, moral or historical.

"For more than 73 years, India has been in illegal and forcible occupation of parts of Jammu and Kashmir.

"Regurgitation of false and fabricated claims by India can neither change the fact nor divert attention from India's illegal actions and continuing humanitarian crisis resulting from the perpetration of the worst human rights violations in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK)."

Pakistan's statement came in response to MEA spokesperson Anurag Srivastava remarks, who has said that India opposed any material changes in GB claiming it to be part of Indian territory.

However, Pakistan maintains that the decision is part of what it called longstanding demand of the people of GB.

"Administrative, political and economic reforms were a longstanding demand of the people of GB. Envisaged provincial reforms reflected the aspirations of the indigenous populace of the region," Chaudhri.

"Pakistan calls upon India to immediately end its illegal and forcible occupation of pans of Jammu and Kashmir and comply with its international obligations by allowing the Kashmiris to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination through a free and impartial plebiscite under the auspices of the UN as enshrined in the relevant UN Security Council resolutions," he added.

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan has announced that his government will grant provincial status to Gilgit Baltistan, a population of at least two million people.

"We have made a decision to grant provisional provincial status to Gilgit-Baltistan, which has long been the demand here," said Khan.

On the other hand, India has rejected Islamabad's decision.

Cases Cross 96K Mark As 478...

from Jammu division, officials said.

Giving the details, they said, Srinagar reported 111 cases, Budgam 32, Baramulla 66, Pulwama 14, Kupwara 6, Anantnag 11, Bandipora 16, Ganderbal 21, Kulgam 3, Shopian 3, Jammu 106, Rajouri 10, Udhampur 13, Doda 7, Kathua 11, Poonch 6, Samba 8, Kishtwar 23, Ramban 3 and Reasi 8.

Moreover, they said, 578 more Covid-19 patients have recovered and were discharged from various hospitals— 275 from Jammu Division and 303 from Kashmir Valley.

6 Months On, RBI Yet To Clear...

days but this time the wait has been long and we are really surprised," said a top JK Bank official on condition of anonymity.

Pertinently after inviting applications for the position of Managing Director in April this year, the former Vice President of HDFC Bank, Zubair Iqbal was appointed for the post by a search committee constituted by the government.

"I am directed to convey that the Government of Jammu and Kashmir has, in exercise of the powers under Article 69 (i) of the Articles of Association of J&K Bank Ltd, decided to appoint Mr Zubair Iqbal, senior vice-president of HDFC Bank as a government nominee director on the Board of J&K Bank Ltd, for a period of three years or till further orders, whichever is earlier. Consequent to the above, the Board of the J&K Bank Ltd, may appoint/elect him as the managing Director of the J&K Bank Ltd," the Finance department had said in a communiqué to J&K Bank in May this year.

After resigning from HDFC Bank, Iqbal joined J&K Bank on May 18 but on May 27 was advised not to join, till the RBI clearance is received. Since May 18, JK Bank is without any MD. RBI did extend the term of incumbent Chairman after the nod from the government, but hasn't taken any decision on the clearance issue of Zubair Iqbal.

When contacted, Zubair Iqbal declined to comment on the issue saying government was the best judge (KNT)

25 Percent Educated Youth...

that we have a concrete framework and a definite time-line to execute it on the fertile ground that we have prepared," he recently said.

The LG also beckoned the industrial leaders to partner J&K in formulating and implementing the programme successfully on ground as he assumed that best designs are not what looks good on paper but what

works best when implemented on ground.

In the domestic Ease of Doing Business ranking and State Reform Action Plan he said, "We are moving up. By minimizing regulatory burdens, J&K have scored over states like Kerala and Odisha in September's ranking by the central government."

He has urged that ways and means should be searched for providing the sustained support to youth as the piecemeal approach has not done any good in the past. Our youth has struggled due to many reasons as lack of avenues regarding job prospects, skill up gradation, recreation abetted by poor educational standards, skill sets are taking toll on them, he added. (KINS)

Rename Srinagar Airport After...

his 73rd death anniversary in a programme organised by Shri Kailash Jyotish Avim Vedic Sansthan Trust.

Major Somnath was awarded Param Vir Chakra, the highest military honour in India, in 1950.

Sham Lal also demanded that January 31, which is the birth anniversary date of Major Somnath, be declared as a state holiday and installation of his statue in the Jammu city.

Major Somnath was born on January 31, 1923, in Himachal Pradesh. He was the Company Commander of the Delta Company of the 4th Battalion of Kumaon Regiment of the Indian Army.

Woman’s Abduction Sparks...

death at SKIMS here. The police spokesperson also said that the accused kidnappers have been arrested.

"Action has been taken against kidnappers who tried to assault her sexually and outrage her modesty. They both were arrested and put behind bars within three hours after complaint was received by District Police Kulgam," the police spokesperson said.

He said that a case FIR No.116/2020 U/S 341, 366, 376/511, 354, 323 IPC stands registered and charge sheet of the case will be produced before honourable court within stipulated time.

"Unfortunately, on social media platforms some miscreants are spreading sensitive updates regarding the matter that could emerge as great threat to peace and order," the police spokesperson said.

He warned "mischievous" people of strict action for instigating the public by spreading baseless rumours and fake news having potential to disturb peace.

Bid To Hoist Tricolour On PDP...

Police, however, did not give details of the charges against the Sikh activist. Singh has been either booked for violation of COVID-19 protocols and the Disaster Management Act or for trespass, sources said.

While the activist was being shifted in a vehicle, he told reporters that he is being "arrested" by police under pressure from the PDP.

Led by the station house officer of Gandhinagar, a police team raided Singh's house at Sanjay Nagar and took him in the presence of journalists. Singh's father, who rushed to the Gandhinagar police station following the police action, told reporters that he was not being allowed to meet his son.

"They are not allowing me to meet my son. I have the right to know under which case they have booked my son. This is the worst state of rule in which patriots and nationalists unfurling the tricolour are being sent to jail," his father said.

Protests were staged outside the PDP officer last month after Mehbooba, a former chief minister, said she is not interested in contesting elections or holding the tricolour till the constitutional changes enforced on August 5 last year are rolled back.

She had said she would hold the tricolour only when the separate flag of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir is restored.

The Centre on August 5 last year had abrogated the erstwhile state's special status and bifurcated it into union territories of Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh. Following the PDP chief's statements, the BJP had accused her of making "seditious remarks" and had demanded her arrest.

Elderly Dies Of Cardiac Arrest...

. The report identified him as 75 year old Abdul Salam Thokar, a resident of Padderpora Shopian.

An official feigned ignorance about the incident, however, he confirmed that locals expressed resentment when authorities had gone to village to possess the land for sports ground.

Tracing Missing History In...

was just 2 decades old and the content available was already known to the young lad.

The youthful enthusiast was in shock as the only two libraries where the availability of Kashmir's archival data was the highest had nothing but disappointment to offer for the zealous history lover.

"Our valley isn't just known for its nature but also for the historical

events that our ancestors witnessed and engraved but unfortunately we've already concealed the path for our future generations to know about our Kashmiri history," says Tawqeer with a sigh of distress and agony.

Tawqeer's extensive "To get" list of archival data once again remains hushed on the side shelf of his bedroom with no form of archival data available that could have enhanced his knowledge about his roots and their life during the diabolical Dogra and the Mughal reign.

Many officials in the Directorate of Archives are continuously in denial, asserting that archives on Kashmir are still available in bulk in many of the valley's prominent official libraries but archive fanatics like Tawqeer have still not been able to find any trace of these precious specifics.

4 J&K Cadre IPS Officers...

(level 13 of pay matrix) with effect from 01.01.2020.

The government has also ordered promoted Sheema Nabi Qasba and P.D. Nitya to the senior time scale of IPS with effect from 01.01.2020.

IGI Starts Covid Testing For...

which handles operations of IGIA, informed that passengers can avail test results within six hours of submitting samples. The price of the test has been fixed at Rs 2,400.

DIAL CEO Videh Kumar Jaipuria said that the facility would help those passengers who need to travel and produce a Covid negative certificate for their personal or business affairs.

"We have launched the RT-PCR testing facility for outbound domestic/ international travellers at Delhi Airport. The unique facility will help those passengers who have to travel and need a Covid negative certificate with them due to some reasons. The Covid-19 testing laboratory at Delhi Airport is adequately equipped for testing and sample collection that will be conducted in compliance with the protocols established by ICMR and NABL. Delhi Airport is working continuously to ensure safe travel for passengers," he added.

Jaipuria said that the airport authority has roped in a private laboratory, Genestrings Diagnostic Centre Pvt Ltd, for the facility. The laboratory is already empanelled by the Delhi government for Covid testing in the national capital.

DrRajatArora, director, Genestrings, informed that the laboratory will be starting off with one functional set-up including a provision to start the second one immediately, if the demand arises.

"Each manned counter can conduct upto 50 registrations per hour, including billing & registration. The capacity can be increased by adding a number of billing & registration desks," he said.

"Sample collection booths can collect approximately 120-130 samples per hour. The lab will be getting a disclaimer signed from each passenger at the time of testing, wherein the passenger agrees to take full responsibility to follow all government mandated laws including quarantine, if they are found positive," Arora added.

In September, DIAL had launched the first-of-its-kind on-site Covid-19 testing facility for arriving international passengers. The facility came up in a 3,500 square feet area facility at multi-level car parking (MLCP) of Terminal 3.

Headmaster Involved In Rice...

accused while the school headmaster was evading arrest since then.

A police official told news agency KNT that the headmaster who was evading arrest has been arrested. "A case stands already registered and investigation is underway," he said.

Besides the Headmaster Syed Sajad, a resident of InderkootSumbal the other three accused who had been arrested with regard to his scandal are Muhammad YousofHajam, Firdous Mir and JafarHajam. (KNT)

6 Held For'Cattle Smuggling' ...

The accused -- MohammadSardar, Pervez Ahmed and MohammadJunaaid -- were arrested on the spot, they said.

Four cases were registered in this connection and further investigation is on, the officials said.

In Kathua district, police intercepted three trucks on a highway at Lakhampur and rescued 40 bovine animals from three suspected smugglers on Tuesday, they said.

The animals were being smuggled to Kashmir from Punjab, they said. A case has been registered and the investigation initiated, the officials added

Forest Fire Rages In Lolab...

In a separate incident, blaze has broken out in Compartment numbers 36 and 37 falling in upper reaches of Trumakhan forest area in the frontier district, reports said.

Meanwhile, local residents of the area told news agency GNS, that there have been frequent fire incidents happening in the forests for quite a while now, which according to them, has damaged the green gold to a great extent.

Omar Abdullah's Matrimonial Woes

HC Dismisses Plea Challenging Order On Final Hearing

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi : The Delhi High Court Tuesday dismissed former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Omar Abdullah's plea challenging its circular of April mandating that both parties in a case have to agree for the final hearing to be taken up early via video conferencing mode.

Omar had contended that his matrimonial appeal against a 2016 trial court order, which dismissed his divorce petition, has been listed for final hearing since February 2017.

It was not taken up during the restricted functioning of the courts in view of COVID-19 pandemic as his estranged wife, Payal Abdullah, did not give consent

to virtual proceedings.

Due to the lack of cooperation by his estranged wife the matter was getting delayed, Abdullah contended.

A bench of Justices Hima Kohli and Subramonium Prasad, however, declined to grant any relief saying lack of cooperation of his estranged wife was not a ground for challenging the high court's April 26 office order.

"Simply because the respondent 2 herein (Payal Abdullah) was not consenting to an early hearing, can hardly be a ground to assail the office order. The petition is dismissed as meritless," the bench said.

Omar had moved an application seeking early hearing of his appeal in July.

The high court had declined to entertain it saying that its Registrar General has already issued a circular stating that during the restricted functioning of courts due to COVID-19, a request for final hearing of pending matters will be entertained only if both the parties agree.

"In view of the fact that this application is not accompanied by any consent from the other side (Payal) and nor is the counsel for the respondent present in the hearing, though we are informed that an advance copy of the application was served on him, we are not in a position to accede to the prayer made in the application," the high court had said and dismissed the application.

On August 30, 2016, the trial

court had dismissed Omar's plea seeking divorce from Payal saying he had failed to prove irretrievable breakdown of the marriage.

The trial court had said that Omar could not prove his claims of "cruelty" or "desertion" which were the grounds alleged by him for grant of decree of divorce.

"The petitioner (Omar) has not been able to explain a single circumstance to show that the supervening circumstances have erupted which has made it impossible for him to continue his relationship with the respondent (Payal).

"Rather, evidence shows that they were in continuous contact till the filing of the divorce petition," the trial court had said in its order, adding that "there is

not an iota of evidence in regard to the circumstances which have prevailed to prompt the petitioner to file the divorce plea".

It had further held that Omar "failed to prove his case for divorce on ground of cruelty".

In his plea seeking divorce, Omar had claimed before the trial court that his marriage had broken down irretrievably and he has not enjoyed a conjugal relationship since 2007 and that the couple, married on September 1, 1994, were living separately since 2009. The couple have two sons who are staying with their mother.

The petition before the trial court had also alleged that Omar was subject to "unreasonable conduct" of Payal, causing pain and harassment to the politician.

IUST to Offer B.Arch Course from 2020-21

Awantipora: Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST) is all set to offer a five year full time Bachelor of Architecture (B.Arch) programme from the Academic Session 2020-21.

"The Department of Architecture has already been instituted at IUST which envisions to achieve the highest standards in Architectural Education, in order to enhance, consolidate & revitalize the process of architectural design, thus evolving a strong base that is progressive, dynamic

and more relevant to the evolving socio-economic and geographical context", IUST said in a statement on Tuesday.

The Executive Committee of Council of Architecture (COA) has accorded approval for introduction of B.Arch Course at IUST with an intake capacity of 40 students from the Academic Session 2020-21.

Meanwhile IUST has initiated the admission process for admitting the students to B. Arch programme for which admission notification will be issued soon.

Unusual symptoms delay Covid-19 diagnosis: DAK

Srinagar: Doctors Association Kashmir (DAK) on Tuesday said patients with Covid-19 infection come to Kashmir hospitals with unusual symptoms.

"Atypical symptoms delay testing, diagnosis and isolation of Covid-19 patients," said DAK President and influenza expert Dr Nisar ul Hassan.

"Patients with Covid-19 infection typically present with respiratory symptoms. However, patients come to hospitals with non-respiratory symptoms," he said.

"Covid-19 patients present with strokes, nerve issues or altered mental status with no respiratory symptoms or radiological features of lung involvement."

DAK President said while elderly

people have the highest rates for hospitalization and death, they don't develop typical symptoms. They come with confusion which turns out to be the only sign of having Covid-19 infection in them.

"We see patients coming with heart attacks, heart failure and rhythm disturbances as the only presenting feature of Covid-19 infection," he said.

"Patients drop in with nausea, vomiting and diarrhea as their sole complaint."

Dr Nisar said eye manifestations or skin rashes are seen in some Covid-19 patients as the only presenting feature.

"Patients getting admitted with acute renal failure or liver failure with no reason turn out to be positive for Covid," he said.

Government of Jammu and Kashmir
Civil Secretariat—Housing & Urban
development Department

Notice for Publication:

The Buildings Bye-laws of Jammu Municipal Corporation (JMC), Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) and other Municipal Bodies were notified in the year 2011. Since then, large scale developments have taken place in the fields of sustainability, Energy Conservation Building Code (ECBC), rain water harvesting, Green Buildings etc. Meanwhile, Bureau of Indian Standards has issued the National Building Code 2016 (NBC) and the Ministry of Urban Development, GoI has issued the Model Building Byelaws 2016. Further, the Bye-laws of 2011 did not provide an elaborate mechanism for building permit process. This has necessitated to revisit the existing Bye-laws to make them more comprehensive and consistent with the state of practice.

Preparation of a uniform building and building bye-laws code ab-initio is an arduous task. The draft "JAMMU and KASHMIR MODEL BUILDING BYE-LAWS AND BUILDING CODE-2020" have been prepared with the assistance of experts / professionals from the relevant fields after taking into account the National Building Code 2016 and Model Building Bye-laws 2016. The new Bye-laws and Building Code are expected to serve twin objectives (i) simplify the procedure for building permits and streamline the entire process and (ii) ease of doing business.

The draft "JAMMU & KASHMIR MODEL BUILDING BYE-LAWS AND BUILDING CODE-2020" are accordingly notified for inviting suggestions / objections from all stakeholders—citizens, developers, builders, government departments, housing cooperatives and other agencies—to enable incorporation of useful suggestions to make the new Bye-laws/ Building Code comprehensive, progressive and relevant to the state of practice. The Draft "JAMMU and KASHMIR MODEL BUILDING BYE-LAWS AND BUILDING CODE-2020" are available on the official website of Housing & Urban Development Department (jkhudd.gov.in).

The suggestions / objections can be sent by post to the Housing & Urban Development Department or through e-mail (mbbc.jk@gmail.com) within a period of 30 days from the publication of this notice.

Sd/-

Principal Secretary to the Government
Housing & Urban Development Department

No. HUD/54/2020/JDA Part file
Dated 29.10.2020

DIPK-8377/20

Govt of Higher Secondary School
Gund Hassi Bhat, Srinagar
Lawaypora, Srinagar- Baramulla National Highway Pin 190017

Ref No GHSS/ GHB/ 1397
Dated: 29/10/2020

Sub: - Tender Form for printing of school Annual Magazine Prospectus for the year 2020-2021 and a laptop for office use.

Sealed tenders are invited from agencies manufacturing units of reuted / registered printing presses/ laptop dealers affixed with revenue stamps worth rupees 6/- are hereby invited by the u/s , for supply of Printinhg of school Annual Magazine / Prospectus the tender should reach this office within seven days from the date of publication of this notice. The quotation will be opened in presence of the u/s and committee constituted for this purpose & Bidders.

- The rates should be quoted exclusive of all taxes (if any) and should be for Principal govt - Hr- Secondary Sdchool Gund Hassi Bhat Sgr.
- The rates should be quoted on letter head only in words as well as figures inclusive of all charges if any
- The u/s reserves the right to accept or reject any quotation without assigning any reason.

Principal

DIPK-8337/20

Government of Jammu & Kashmir
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
R&B ELECTRIC DIVISION SGR
NOTICE INVITING TENDERS
FRESH NIT No: 65/e-tendering of 2020-21/R&B DATED: - 31.10.2020

For and on behalf of the LT Governor of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, e-tenders (In Single cover system) are invited on item rate basis from approved and eligible Electrical Contractors registered with J&K State Govt. CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for the following works:-

S. No	Name of Work	Est. Cost (In Rupees)	Cost of T/ Doc. (In Rupees)	Earnest Money (In Rupees)	Time of completion	Time & Date of Opening of Bid	Class of Contractor
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	Providing of power supply to Lighting fixtures etc by way of Supply and installation of 100 KVA Distribution Transformer with allied accessories at Nil Nag Chadoora.	7.00 lacs	300	14000/-	15 days	09.11.2020	"A" Electrical

1.	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	31-10-2020
2.	Period of downloading of bidding documents	02/11/2020 10.00 A.M
3.	Bid submission Start Date	02/11/2020 from 10.00 A.M
4.	Bid Submission End Date	07/11/2020 up to 4.00 P.M
5.	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	09/11/2020 at 6.00 A.M in the Office of the Executive Engineer R&B Electric Division Srinagar

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 as per schedule of dates given below:-

- Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in shape of E-Challan in favor of Executive Engineer (R&B) Electric Division Srinagar. (Tender inviting authority) and Earnest money / Bid security in shape of CDR / FDR pledged to Executive Engineer R&B Electric Division Srinagar. (Tender receiving authority).
- Bidder must read term/condition in tender document carefully.

AAA/ Accorded
Position of funds :- available

Sd/
Executive Engineer,
(R&B) Electric Division
Srinagar

DIPK-8389/20

No. 65/e-tendering/ERB/2411-18

DIAL-EMMA

- TRAFFIC POLICE : 9419993745, 01998-266686
- PCR: 0194-2452092,2455883
- PDD: 0194-2450213
- FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES : 2479488,245222,2452155
- CAPD: 18001807011
- SMC HEALTH OFFICER: 9469409081

AIRPORTS

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311

RAILWAYS

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

HIGHWAY STATUS

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

HIJRI
CALENDAR
17 Rabi-ul-Awwal
1442

PRAYERS

FAJR

5: 28

ZUHR

12: 14

ASR

3: 58

Magrib

5: 39

ISHA

7: 00

This Day In History

- 1968 - Battles between Jordanian army & Al Fatah-arm forces
- 1970 - Russian nuclear physicist Sacharov forms Human Rights Committee
- 1972 - Bangladesh adopts constitution
- 1993 - Bolivia becomes a member of the Berne Convention copyright treaty
- 2002 Chinese authorities arrest cyber-dissident He Depu for signing pro-democracy letter to the 16th Communist Party Congress
- 2003 - The most powerful solar flare as observed by satellite instrumentation is recorded.
- 2008 - Barack Obama becomes the first African-American to be elected President of the United States
- 2015 - Justin Trudeau sworn in as Canadian Prime Minister with a cabinet split equally between men and women
- 2015 - Plane crashes after take-off from Juba international airport, South Sudan, killing 37, 1 year old survives in father's arms
- 2016 - Paris Agreement on climate change becomes effective

From KO Archives

Landmine Blast At Magam: Agha Mahdi Among 6 Killed

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: A former Congress leader and son of a prominent Shia Muslim cleric was killed with five other people in a landmine blast at Mazhama in the central district of Budgam Friday afternoon, a police spokesman said.

Agha Syed Mahdi (44) was travelling with five others including his security guards and his domestic servant when his bullet-proof jypsy was blown apart by the landmine at Mazhama near Magam on Srinagar-Gulmarg road at around 14:30 hrs.

Mahdi was the son of the prominent religious leader of Kashmir's Shia community, Agha Syed Mustafa al-Mosawi-al-Safawi. He was the younger brother of senior Hurriyat leader, Agha Syed Hasan, and cousin of minister of state for education, Agha Syed Mehmood.

A caller identifying himself as a spokesman of Lashkar-e Karbala rang up CNS news agency claiming responsibility for the blast. According to BBC, Hizbul Moomineen had owned the explosion.

Meanwhile, a late night KPS report said Hizbul Moomineen had denied its involvement in the explosion.

Quoting its chief, Shuja Abbas, who called the agency from Pakistan, the report also denied the existence of Lashkar-e Karbala.

Those killed in the blast apart from Agha Mahdi were identified as PSO Ghulam Mohi-ud-din, and constables Fa-rooq Ahmad Kuttay, Showkat Hussain and Muhammad Ja-far, and his domestic servant, Sajjad Hussain Mir.

Reports said Agha Mahdi was on his way to Sofi mohalla, Magam, to attend the Walima function of one of his disciples, Ghulam Ahmad Sofi. When his vehicle reached a point near a flour mill between Mazhama and Kawoosa villages, 5 km from the destination, it stumbled on the landmine. In the ensuing blast, Mahdi and others with him were blown, along with the vehicle.

Soon after the news reached nearby Magam, life in the township came to a standstill with shopkeepers pulling down their shutters and people converging on the streets to stage demonstrations. Tension also gripped in Budgam, the district headquarter, and thousands of abated people gathered outside the residence of slain leaders father, Aga Mustafa.

Reports of angry people taking to the streets have come from various places on Srinagar Baramulla highway. According to CNS, irate mobs at Harthrath Singhpora beat to death one Meraj-ud-din Dar and set ablaze six residential houses. Vehicular traffic on the highway was disrupted for several hours. Reports of stone pelting have also come from Saidakadal and Nigeen areas of the city.

Mahdi shot into prominence in 1997 when he, though a big crowd-puller because of his father's clout, unsuccessfully contested on Congress ticket against the National Conference candidate and chief minister's son, Omar Abdullah. Earlier, he had contested against the Muslim United Front (MUF) candidate as an independent from Budgam constituency in the rigged 1987 assembly poll. He also fought assembly elections in 1996 as 'Congress candidate but resigned before he contested parliamentary elections in 1998 as an independent candidate.

Another prominent pro-India Kashmiri Shiite leader, Maulvi Iftikar Hussain Ansari survived two attempts on his life this year. While Maulvi was slightly injured and three police personnel were killed in a powerful landmine explosion at Matipora village in September in an earlier attack 16 of Maulvi's followers were killed when a mine exploded in midst of a Majlis Hussayni at Gund Khwaja Qasim in June this year.

(Kashmir Observer, November 04, 2000)

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Eyes on the US

The US has voted for the election of its next president. And it is not an easy election. Its outcome will not be only about who won or lost but also about the ideological direction America will be taking in the next four years. Though Joe Biden is expected to win he doesn't enjoy any clear lead over the incumbent. Trump and his allies have already made it known that they will challenge the results of the election if he loses. So, unless Biden wins with a clear majority, Trump seems unlikely to go away quietly.

Import of shift in power in the US can't be over-emphasised for the world. Under president Trump American democracy has undergone a drastic turn to the right and an extreme fringe in the US politics has become the mainstream, something that once was thought to be unthinkable. The change has been even more drastic than it was in India. Here the Prime Minister Narendra Modi was a very popular candidate. He had won BJP three successive terms in Gujarat. And his hardline Hindutva politics had already won him a significant number of admirers from across the country.

Trump earned this spurs by pandering to the basest prejudices of the white Americans. This made much of the world including a significant population of America apoplectic. To get a sense of what Trump as US president meant for US and the world can be gauged from his abusive campaign then and now.

In his just concluded first term Trump has uninhibitedly aired views that even the radical right in America has traditionally refrained from uttering. His hate against Muslims and non-whites has been in-your-face and unreserved. In power he went a long way to translate his campaign promises into action to stay true to his voters. And it is here that the problem started as it put on line the very idea of America conceived by its founders.

There's now hope that Biden, in case he wins, will make a redeeming difference. He has already been the US Vice President during presidency of Barack Obama. He is expected to bring back Obama's policies. More importantly, his presidency will go a long way to discourage what is called the "pandemic of authoritarianism" in the world. The US under him will again be expected to lead on human rights. And under Trump, on the other hand, it will be more of the same. But until the results are announced we can only keep our fingers crossed.

OTHER OPINION

Guarded optimism

Seen against the depths to which economic activity had plummeted in the initial phase of the national lockdown, the sequential improvement in economic indicators over the past few months suggests that the process of normalisation of economic activities is well underway.

On the production side, signalling a continuing pickup in the supply side, the Nikkei's manufacturing purchasing managers index, released on Monday, rose to 58.9 in October — indicating the fastest expansion in factory output in over a decade. Similarly, the index of eight core industries in September was almost at the same level as last year, with coal, electricity, and steel swinging into positive territory. On the consumption side, indicating a pickup in demand, the goods and services tax collections for the month of October rose to an eight-month high of Rs 1.05 lakh crore — 10 per cent higher than collections over the same period last year. This sequential improvement in economic activity is also reflected in preliminary results of corporates for the second quarter of the current financial year, which indicate a turnaround in performance after the collapse in the first quarter.

Yet, this optimism needs to be tempered. For one, part of the recovery in economic activities can be traced to the ongoing festive season. Whether this momentum sustains, or the extent to which it sustains, beyond the months of October and November remains to be seen. Then, there is the possibility of a surge in COVID-19 infections during the festive season, which could heighten risk aversion. This coupled with continuing income uncertainty could adversely impact the growth trajectory going forward, though its impact will be visible with a lag.

The Hindu



Many shades of Kashmir Normalcy

Fifteen months after Article 370 move, as businesses tentatively re-open and public transport is back on roads, it doesn't mean there's calm

Riyaz Wani

‘Fifteen months later, as Kashmir anxiously looks forward to future, businesses are tentatively re-opening and public transport is returning to roads following eleven months of siege, five months of them spent under Covid lockdown. Does it mean normalcy? Far from it.

Ever since abrogation of Article 370 that granted J&K semi-autonomous status within India, there has been this huge debate about the lack of public protests in the wake of the extraordinary move. A general opinion goes that there were no mass scale protests as were otherwise expected. Over the last year this opinion has not only gained wide currency but is also accepted without any objection. In fact, the Kashmiri politicians who now make up the People's Union for Gupkar Declaration struggle to answer this question. They either unconvincedly talk about the heightened security during the period following the revocation of Article 370 as is contended by Dr Farooq Abdullah or in case of Sajad Gani Lone, the people might choose to come out at the time of their own choosing. Omar Abdullah, on the other hand, has almost blamed people for not protesting at all.

Now, 15 months after the Article 370 move, Commander of the Army's Chinara Corps Lieutenant General B S Raju has said that the Valley is "past the stage of uneasy calm," meaning the region is perfectly normal.

But are things really so? Or were they so last year? The reality, however, is largely contrary to general perception, much of which has been shaped by the hearsay reinforced by propaganda. When in the wake of the withdrawal of the autonomy, the CPI(M) leader M Y Tarigami was asked why Kashmir hadn't protested against scrapping of Article 370 on the scale it had against the killing of popular militant commander Burhan Wani in 2016, the Valley's major communist party leader answered with a counter question: "Have you ever heard of protests taking place in Tihar jail?"

As is obvious, Kashmir, Tarigami meant, was turned into one of India's largest jails and this had made mass scale protests impossible in the newly created union territory. This has certainly been the case: Kashmir had been put under a sweeping security lockdown and a communication blockade that not only barred people from hitting the road but also invisibilized

the protests that took place after all.

But this isn't entirely how an anticipated revolt in Kashmir following revocation of Article 370 was pre-empted: the lockdown and communication clampdown, even though unprecedented in nature, were just the manifest security tactics to deal with a potential eruption. The real work to forestall protests comprised a complex set of actions sequentially performed on many fronts.

As the clock struck midnight hour on August 4, 2019, the day before Article 370 was withdrawn, Kashmir found itself snapped from the world: Kashmiris woke up to no phones and no internet. Not even landlines worked. Almost all major leaders across the mainstream-separatist divide — including the three former Chief Ministers Dr Farooq Abdullah, his son Omar Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti — had been arrested. The arrestees included political activists, youth, among them 956 former alleged stone-throwers and even business leaders. Many of them were shifted to major jails across India and a significant number of them continue to languish there.

When on August 5 at around 11 am the home minister Amit Shah announced the repeal of Article 370 in parliament, Kashmiris, disconnected from one another, could only react to it in disbelief individually. Their ability to organize had been broken. There was no leader still active on the scene, no functional political or social organization which could do this. And even if there were, they wouldn't be able to communicate: for example, the militant leaders who would use social media to convey their programs.

Though newspapers started publishing after a gap of few days, they did so by downloading content at a government run facility for media. And being already disciplined, they published little that concerned the ongoing situation. Chary of having to take a position on the situation, they went without editorials. Their opinion pieces talked of health, environment and international issues.

This razing of Kashmir's political and social organizational

structure hardly ruled out spontaneous public mobilizations. So, to pre-empt it, security personnel in significant numbers were stationed along streets and at the entry and exit points of Srinagar and the major towns, within localities too.

But this still didn't entirely prevent protests. Without anyone calling for it, Kashmir observed complete shutdown for 105 days. Public transport remained off the roads. By government's own admission, there were more than 300 instances of 'law and order issues'. One of the biggest protests was taken out by people at Anchar in the outskirts of Srinagar and was participated by around 10,000 people. But it was stopped before it could enter the barricaded densely settled parts of the main city. Subsequent attempts by people at Anchar were similarly thwarted, and so were those from the other areas.

Fifteen months later, as Kashmir anxiously looks forward to future, businesses are tentatively re-opening and public transport is returning to roads following eleven months of siege, five months of them spent under Covid lockdown. Does it mean normalcy? Far from it. Kashmir remains without high-speed mobile internet. All kinds of protests are strictly barred including a peaceful silent march. Last year in October around two dozen women who had tried to hold one such protest were quickly hauled off to a lock-up and released only after signing a bond that they won't do so again.

Kashmir has now something resembling a working political organization in the form of PAGD. It is in a position now to articulate the sentiment of the people or formulate a response to the current crisis. But given New Delhi's nervousness about an organized mass resistance to its Article 370 move at a time when the world's attention hasn't veered off from Kashmir, it looks unlikely that the erstwhile state will be allowed to have a normal political and civil society activity anytime soon.

The author is the Political Editor of Kashmir Observer



OBSERVER
MAIL

All letters intended for publication must include the writer's name and address, even if a pseudonym is used. Letters are edited as clarity, space and accuracy of expression require. Our publishing a letter does not mean we agree with everything or even anything in it. -EDITOR

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P.O. Box # 337, GPO, Srinagar-190 001
email: editpage.ko@gmail.com

A response to "Accept Stammering"

I am a stammerer.

The guest column, "Accept Stammering" by Amit Singh Kushwaha, published on Kashmir Observer to mark the International Stammering Awareness day, evoked both cold hard facts and compassion. It is time that the stammers in the world be treated with nothing more than the

same dignity and respect offered to other citizens. The author rightly pointed, "The need of the hour is that people should accept stammering as human diversity and accept it extensively".

One thing I myself would have added to the column was that the movie industry — both Hollywood and Bollywood — over the last 75 years have

not treated stammers well because of the roles that portray them with negativity and mockery. The author of the article had rightly pointed that, "Stammers are isolated and many times judged incapable of jobs and marriage".

I do wish to mention a great source of help that is used by stammers the world over. There is much help and

free resources offered by the website of the non-profit organisation Stuttering Foundation (www.stuttering-help.org) with things like downloadable books and streaming videos and a lot of other helpful info.

Andrew Singh
New York, NY

Qasidat Al-Burda of Imam al-Busiri

We’ve all grown up reciting these popular verses of Qasidat al-Burda, “Maula Ya Sali wa sallim”. It is a thirteenth-century ode of praise for the Islamic prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) composed by the eminent Sufi mystic Imam al-Busiri of Egypt

Iyad Ammar

Among many of the Sufi orders, The Burdah has been adopted as one of the awr d (litanies) recited in the mornings and in the evenings with utmost reverence and with the deepest solemnity. To this day its verses are recited for protection and as an appeal to the divine for the restoration of health, as well as during the lowering of bodies into their final abodes.

The Burdah of al-B r is from among the most famous poems composed in honor of the Prophet Mu ammad . It has been adored by Sufis who have written commentaries upon it, abridged and augmented it, and composed poems imitating its distinctive rhythmic patterns. Scores of commentaries and books about the Burdah have been composed not only in Arabic but in the diverse languages of the Muslim world.

Among many of the Sufi orders, The Burdah has been adopted as one of the awr d (litanies) recited in the mornings and in the evenings with utmost reverence and with the deepest solemnity. To this day its verses are recited for protection and as an appeal to the divine for the restoration of health, as well as during the lowering of bodies into their final abodes. Meticulous rules have been devised for its proper recitation, such as having wu (ritual ablution), orienting oneself towards the qiblah (i.e. the Ka ba in Mecca), and so forth.

Im m Ibn ajar al-Haytam (d. 974/1567)1, a mere couple of generations removed from al-B r , wrote of the Burdah that, “its popularity has grown to the degree that people study it in their homes and mosques as they do the Qur n”. For this reason famous gatherings were convened to recite The Burdah in the Levant, in Egypt, and in the Maghreb, especially on Thursday nights. During such gatherings, one person would be designated to recite the poem either meter by meter or verse by verse, punctuated by the entire gathering’s synchronized recitation, in one voice, of the famous chorus:

“Mawl ya alli wa-salim d im n abad n/ al ab bika khayr al-khalqi kullihimi”

“Our Master, send Your Everlasting, Eternal prayers and salutations/upon Your Beloved, the Best of Creation in all of its entirety”

Indeed, Muslims over the centuries have continued to teach their children the blessed Burdah alongside the noble Qur n in the mak tib (neighborhood schools devoted primarily to the teaching of Arabic and to the memorization of the Qur n). In this way, they sought to fuse in the youngest of minds and in the tenderest of hearts the noble Qur n – which is the fount of all knowledge – with The Burdah, which articulates the purest, most intense feelings of affection towards the Prophet . It was in this fashion that traditional Muslim societies sought to establish the foundations of a firm, unshakeable faith in the hearts and minds of their young – a faith which they well knew could not be established except upon the basis of deep, profound love.

Al-B r studied Sufism with his Shaykh, al-Im m Ab al-Abb s al-Murs , who was the disciple of al-Im m al-Sh dhil , and received instruction alongside none other than Ibn A ill h al-Iskandar (d. 709/1309), who authored the ikam. There was between Ab al-Abb s al-Murs and al-B r a relationship of deep love. Al-B r became famous on account of his broad knowledge of the scriptures of the People of the Book, as he would read extensively from the works of the Chris-



tians and the Jews. This knowledge compelled him to debate their beliefs and doctrines, which he did with great depth and understanding.

Im m al-B r lived through difficult times and endured tremendous tribulations. He was an ascetic from among the people of spiritual aspiration (himma) and worldly contentment (qan ah). He was simultaneously afflicted with severe poverty, a great many dependents, and an ill-mannered and hostile spouse. Nonetheless, he never became exasperated or disheartened because the teachings of the Sufis blocked the windows of despair in his soul and instead opened the doors of hope and of loftier ambitions that transcended worldly motivations and concerns.

Al-B r began his literary life as all poets then did, by endearing himself to those in power and to the affluent, seeking their patronage and benefaction, covetous above all of their attention and support. Once al-B r embarked upon the path of Sufism, however, his soul came to detest this lifestyle, and he instead devoted himself to praise of the Prophet Mu ammad , to praise of the family of the Prophet Mu ammad , and to praise of the Sufis from among his contemporaries and teachers, such as Ab al-Abb s al-Murs and Ab al-asan al-Sh dhil , may God have mercy upon them all.

Al-B r was particularly absorbed by the S rah of the Prophet , reading all available literature on him

– from the short, individual reports conveying the finest of details about the Prophet to the larger compilations aggregating his blessed biography . He committed his energies, and devoted his poetry and artistic mastery, to praising the Prophet . Among his most famous poems is al-Kaw kib al-Durriyyah f Mad Khayr al-Bariyyah (“Celestial Lights in Praise of the Best of Creation”), better known simply as al-Burdah, which is from among the jewels of Arabic poetry and from among the most exquisite poems exalting the Prophet . It is the crown jewel of the vast genre of poetry composed over the centuries in praise of the Prophet Muhammad , bestowing inspiration upon countless poets over the ages. It is a long poem which spans 160 verses, and its prelude is from among the most striking opening lines of any Arabic poem. It is said that al-B r suffered a stroke which debilitated him, so he composed the Burdah as an appeal to the Divine for the restoration of his health. After composing the poem, al-B r lay down to rest, only to see the Prophet in a dream. After reciting his poem to the Prophet , the Prophet wiped his honorable hand upon al-B r’s afflicted body. Al-B r awoke and arose from his sleep to find himself, with the permission of God, completely healed.

Imam al-Busiri passed away in Alexandria in 695 AH/1295 AD at the age of 87. Ra imahu All hu Ta ala.

Al Madina Institute

Remembering Robert Fisk: A mentor

The veteran reporter taught me an important lesson: ‘Tell the story, whatever the consequences.’

Katya Bohdan

The only book Robert Fisk ever recommended I read was the satirical journalism novel – Scoop – by Evelyn Waugh – a story about hapless nature writer William Boot who, due to an unexpected turn of events, is sent to the fictional African country of Ishmaelia to report on the conflict there as a foreign correspondent.

When I received the news that he had passed away, scenes of my interactions with him replayed in my mind. Somehow the day he recommended Scoop was one of the brightest memories among them – it has since become one of my favourite books.

The novel is a pure satire that takes aim at the newspaper industry and the journalistic profession. It is a rather interesting read to recommend to an aspiring young journalist. But that in itself is emblematic of how he was as a person, or at least of how I knew him: Kind-hearted with a great, and oftentimes sarcastic, sense of humour; an empathetic, radiant and intelligent man.

I first met Fisk in Beirut in April 2017 when I was in my second year of college and had just completed a journalism internship in Tehran, Iran. I had switched majors to journalism after reading his book, The Great War for Civilisation, and know that I am not the only one to have been inspired to enter the profession by his extensive, award-winning reporting.

In my first year of studying journalism, I knew two things: That I wanted to work in the Middle East and that I wanted to meet Fisk. So when, during my internship in Iran, I managed to find his personal email, I messaged him. I would soon be in Beirut for a week, I wrote; would he be willing to meet?

To my greatest surprise, he replied. He would be happy to, he said, and asked me to call when I arrived.

They say, “never meet your heroes”. But that is a sentiment I have never subscribed to. As a journalism student and an aspiring journalist, I have reached out to several of mine – asking for advice, a potential interview or just trying to expand my professional network. Most of them quickly set about crushing the idealised image I had constructed of them in my mind.

But Fisk was the very opposite of that – and not just to me. He would often speak highly of junior colleagues he had worked with or met while reporting. And for such an acclaimed veteran reporter, he was surprisingly approachable. No matter how busy he was – reporting, lecturing, writing books – he always made time for me whenever I reached out.

The first time I met him, he invited me along for a coffee with him and a Beirut-based artist he was interviewing for a piece for The Independent at a restaurant on the Corniche in Beirut.

A few days later, when, with very little notice, I asked if I could interview him about US President Donald Trump’s policies in the Middle East for a Belgian publication I was freelancing for at the time, he immediately obliged.

Later that year, when he came to Belgium to give a lecture on the refugee crisis, he invited me along and kindly offered his afternoon that day to any questions I had for him. I had four hours’ worth of them. And now I realise how many more I have left that I wish I could ask.

When I was trying to find a way to go to Yemen to report on the humanitarian crisis there for my final year thesis, he never invalidated my ambitions. Instead, he advised me on how best to proceed, who to contact and how to stay safe.

He gave me decades’ worth of advice that I have taken to heart and always try to apply to the way I work.

Back in 2017, when I had interviewed him for the Belgian news outlet, in an



Robert Fisk on the corniche in Beirut in April 2017 [Katya Bohdan/Al Jazeera]

Italian restaurant located above the water on the Corniche – which has now unfortunately closed – I had weaved into my article his choice of drink. His response: “I am also grateful that, even if I do drink ‘gin-tonic’ at the restaurant, I am also ‘energetic, alert and sharp’ – which is true!” But despite his energy, alertness and humour, there was a cynicism and weariness about him. “I hardly have time to go to Yemen, I’m exhausted,” he told me. “I’m still tired from Syria, you know. We all are, it doesn’t matter how old we are, we don’t have enough reporters.”

Fisk thought it was important that journalists should burn with a “rigorous determination to tell the truth” and he was a supportive and understanding mentor.

When I struggled to find an outlet for my reporting from Yemen, with some news organisations turning it down cit-

ing “security reasons”, he wrote in an email: “I’m very sorry to hear of the outrageously poor response to your report on Yemen and can well imagine your disgust with journalism. I need hardly add that everyone feels that way, especially at the start.” Although he was from a very different generation of reporters, he understood the difficulties faced by freelance journalists across the world today.

I persevered and the report turned my home nation’s attention to the disaster taking place in Yemen. I thanked him for his support in an SMS, to which he did not respond.

When I was doing my internship with Al Jazeera in 2018, he called me a couple of times to ask how it was going. Even though we did not talk often, I tried to stay in touch and write regularly. I would update him on life events – getting a job, being accepted for my master’s degree –

and every response from him meant a lot.

“Have not forgotten, Katya – just snowed under with work. Your request is in my diary entries (hand-written of course),” he replied after I had asked him if he would write me a letter of recommendation for law school a few months ago.

He wrote a beautiful letter; a paragraph of which I often reflect on when considering the criticism he faced during the last decade of his life by critics who accused him of siding with the government of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad in his reporting on the war in Syria.

This is what he wrote:

“Especially now – and especially in the Middle East region – journalists experience ever greater pressure to adopt a ‘safe’ perspective in order to avoid criticism from governments, pressure groups and lobbyists. Ms Bohdan’s reporting from Yemen, which required courage as well as great resourcefulness, was proof of her desire to ‘tell the story’ whatever the consequences.”

I cannot be sure, but I suspect this encapsulates what he may have thought of the criticism of him. And although there are points on which he and I openly disagreed, I always found him to be a proponent of healthy dialogue and discussion. He was attentive and I never witnessed him undermine an opposing opinion. I have always thought that the way a senior professional treats a junior colleague is a sign of one’s integrity or lack thereof. For me, his was never in doubt.

He was respectful, responsive, understanding and encouraging. He always gave advice when asked for it, but never offered it unsolicited. He was, in short, a true mentor, although I never told him that – fearing it sounded like too much of a cliché. I really hope he would not mind if I told him now.

Al Jazeera

Starting Kindergarten On Right Foot May Lead To Better Achievement Over Long-Term

Agencies

A new study led by researchers at Canada's Universite de Montreal and Universite Sainte-Anne advocate that a good start at kindergarten can lead to better achievement over long-term, for a child.

The study was published today in Pediatrics.

"We've known for years that getting off to a good start in kindergarten leads to better achievement over the long-term," said lead author Caroline Fitzpatrick, an assistant professor of psychology at the USA, in Nova Scotia. "But now with our study, we can really lock in the idea that early childhood skills help you achieve success and adopt a healthier lifestyle in emerging adulthood. And that's promising for society as a whole."

"Many children begin kindergarten inadequately prepared to benefit from classroom instruction," said senior author Linda Pagani, a professor at UdeM's School of Psycho-Education. "Those who go in unprepared risk struggling throughout their academic journey. They arrive without the necessary tools in terms of cognitive skills, social skills and motor skills from physical activity", added Pagani, who is also Senior researcher at CHU Sainte-Justine pediatric hospital in Montreal.

Math skills important

Fitzpatrick and Pagani examined associations between kindergarten readiness and academic, psychological and health risks that manifested themselves when a child reached the end of high school.

"Kindergarten math skills contributed to better end-of high-school achievement and a lower dropout risk, and that was supported by ob-



servations from teachers, who also noted a reduced risk of substance abuse, later on, said Fitzpatrick.

"Kindergarten classroom engagement also predicted involvement in physical activity and a 65-per-cent drop in the risk of a child being overweight by age 17," added Pagani, who worked on the study with UdeM post-doctoral researcher Elroy Boers.

The authors came to their conclusions after examining Institut de la Statistique du Quebec data from a cohort of 2,000 children born in 1997 or 1998 who were part of the Quebec Longitudinal Study of Child Development.

At age 5, trained examiners assessed each child's knowledge of numbers and their receptive vocabulary. Each spring, teachers reported kindergarten classroom engagement, such as how a child did tasks, followed directions and worked with others. At age 17, participants reported on their academic grades, their feelings of connectedness, whether they abused drugs or alcohol, their involvement in physical activity, and their height and weight. The dropout risk was also estimated for each

participant based on their grades retention and engagement at school.

Confounding factors discarded

The researchers then analyzed the data to identify any significant link between kindergarten readiness and academic, psychological and health risks by the end of high school. They attempted to discard possible confounding factors by adjusting their analyses for key indicators in the children (their sex, weight per gestational age, non-verbal IQ and internalizing and externalizing behaviours) and in their families (parental involvement, maternal depression, immigration status, family configuration and socioeconomic status).

"Early childhood readiness forecasts a later protective edge in emerging adulthood and suggests that youngsters who begin school with the right preparedness gain a lifestyle advantage," said Fitzpatrick. "Our findings show a way to eliminate the established link between underachievement and disease by providing children with the conditions that will promote kindergarten readiness."

AI Teachers Must Be Effective And Communicate Well To Be Accepted, New Study Finds

Agencies

The increase in online education has allowed a new kind of teacher to emerge -- an artificial one. But just how accepting students are of an artificial instructor remains to be seen. Researchers, in a novel study about AI teachers, indicate that for students to accept an AI teaching assistant, it needs to be effective and easy to talk to.

Researchers at the University of Central Florida's Nicholson School of Communication and Media are working to examine student perceptions of artificial intelligence-based teachers.

Some of their findings were published recently in the International Journal of Human-Computer Interaction.

The hope is that by understanding how students relate to the AI teachers, engineers and computer scientists can design them to easily integrate

into the education experience, says Jihyun Kim, an associate professor in the school and lead author of the study.

"To use machine teachers effectively, we need to understand students' perceptions toward them, their learning experiences with them, and more," Kim says. "This line of research is needed to find out design-effective machine teachers that can actually facilitate positive learning experiences."

The AI teaching assistants can help ease a teacher's workload, such as by responding to commonly asked questions by the students. These questions, which often appear each semester and become numerous in online classes with hundreds of students, can become a large task for a teacher. The quick delivery of answers also helps students.

An example of an AI teaching assistant is one named Jill

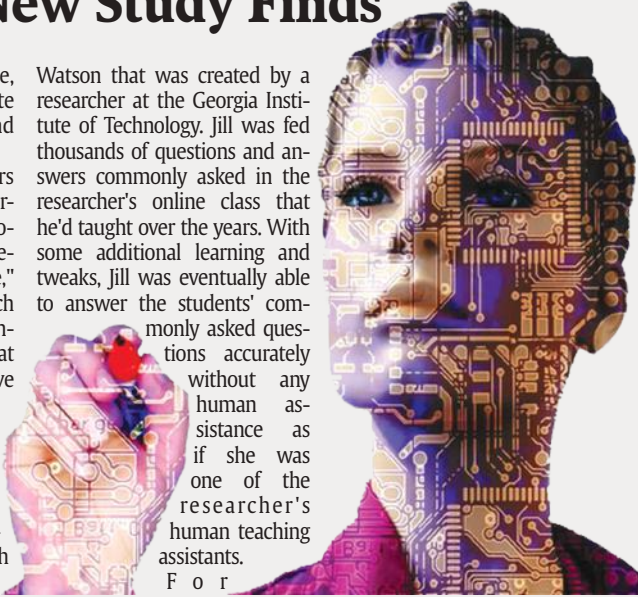
Watson that was created by a researcher at the Georgia Institute of Technology. Jill was fed thousands of questions and answers commonly asked in the researcher's online class that he'd taught over the years. With some additional learning and tweaks, Jill was eventually able to answer the students' commonly asked questions accurately

without any human assistance as if she was one of the researcher's human teaching assistants.

For the UCF

study, the researchers asked respondents to read a news article about an AI teaching assistant used in higher education, and then they surveyed the students' perceptions of the technology.

The finding that an AI-based teaching assistant that students were most likely to accept was one that was useful and was easy to communicate with points to the importance of having an effective AI system, Kim says.



Department of Urban Local Bodies Kashmir Office of the Executive Officer, Municipal Council Budgam

eomcbudgam@gmail.com; eomc-budgam@jk.gov.in

Tel:- 01951-255992 Fax:-09151-255992

AUCTION NOTICE

For and on behalf of Municipal Council Budgam Sealed Bids/ offers affixed with revenue stamp of Rs. 5/= are invited from interested Persons/ Parties/agencies for collection of Parking Fee at Municipal Parking near Old Police Station Budgam for the year 2020-2021 w.e.f 15.11.2020 to 14.11.2021 as per the following terms & conditions:

Terms & Conditions:-

- The contract for collection of parking Fee shall be for the period of one year w.e.f 15.11.2020 to 14.11.2021 and no claim for any kind of extension/relief thereof.
- The bid offered by the bidder/offeree shall be inclusive of all applicable Taxes/GST which is required to be deposited by the contractor/allottee as per the norms well in time
- The bid forms will be issued from the office of the undersigned upto 08.11.2020 during office time against the cash payment of Rs. 1000/- (Non-refundable).
- The intending offerer/bidder should be bound to accompany CDR from any nationalized bank amounting to Rs.6000/= pledge to Accounts Officer Municipal Council Budgam.
- The bids/offers should reach to this office by or before 11/11/2020 upto 2 Pm and will be opened on the same day or any other subsequent day convenient to opening authority in presence of the bidders who wish to be present.
- The minimum official bid for collection of parking Fee for the above mentioned period is fixed of Rs.230000/- (Rupees Two Lakh & Thirty Thousand Only) and the intending bidder/agencies has to offer his bid over and above the fixed bid.
- The successful bidder has to charge parking fee as per approved schedule of this council and same shall remain attached with the auction form.
- The successful bidder has to deposit full amount of bid in one go at the time of allotment/before taking over parking place.
- The successful bidder shall be responsible to maintain parking place with Special care to sanitation/ hygiene of the environment and surroundings.
- The undersigned reserve the right to accept or reject any or all offers/bids without assigning any reason thereof.
- That incase of any dispute between the allotted and Municipal Council Budgam during the construct period. The case shall be referred to worthy Director Urban Local Bodies Kashmir whose decision shall be final and binding upon both parties.
- Further details can be taken from the office at undersigned on all working days during the office hours till 10.11.2020 upto 02pm.

NO-MC/BUD/ESTT/2020/3933-39
DATED:- 02/11/2020

DIPK-NB-3477/20

Sd/-
Executive Officer
Municipal Council
Budgam

Government of Jammu & Kashmir Mechanical Hospital & Central Heating Division Srinagar Corrigendum for Extension

Subject: - 1. Construction of Multi Storey Building for Housing of Oxygen Plant at Govt. Medical College , Anantnag
2. Construction of Multi Storey Building for Housing of Oxygen Plant at Govt. Medical College , Baramulla

References: 1. This office e- NIT no: MHCHD/TS /2020-21/160/e-tendering Dated12.10.2020.

1.In view of no response to the above referred tender, the critical dates are extended as follows :

S.No	Description	Date and Time
1.	Last Date of Bid Submission	09.11.2020 (15.00 hours)
2.	Date of Bid Opening	10.11.2020 (15.00 hours)

All the other terms and conditions will remain the same.

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
MHCH Division Srinagar.

DIPK-8403/20
No: MHCHD/TS/5269-74

Dated: 02.11.2020

Government of Jammu & Kashmir OFFICE OF THE DY. GENERAL MANAGER, J&KPCC LTD., UNIT-12th, Pulwama NOTICE INVITING TENDERS

e-NIT No: 34/DGM/12TH/PUL of 2020-21 Dated:- 02.11.2020

For and on behalf of the Managing director JKPC, J&K union territory e-tenders are invited on item rate basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with J&K union territory Govt. CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for each of the following works:-

S. No	Name of Work	Est. Cost (Rs. In Lacs)	Cost of T/Doc. In Rs.	Earnest Money/ Bid Security (Rs. In Lacs)	Time of completion	Class of Contractor
1.	2 Construction of Officers/ Doctors Residential Quarter at District Hospital Shopian	3 130.00 lacs	4 5000	5 2.60 Lacs	6 365 days	7 Registered "A" Class Govt. Contractor / CPWD

Position of AAA = ACCORDED
Position of funds = AVAILABLE

The Bidding documents Consisting of critical dates, 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 website www.jktenders.gov.in under PWD/MDJKPCC/Kashmir circle

DIPK-NB-3439/20

-sd-
Deputy General Manager
JKPCC Ltd., Unit-12th,
Pulwama

J&K Projects Construction Corporation LTD (A J&K State Govt. Undertaking)

OFFICE OF DEPUTY GENERAL MANAGER, UNIT-3rd, Srinagar

SHORT TERM FRESH TENDER NOTICE

For and on behalf of Managing Director J&KPCC Ltd. E- tenders are invited from approved and eligible Contractors registered with J&K Govt. (U.T) . CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for the following work.

NIT No: 33/E-Tendering/DGM/3rd/Sgr /JKPCC/2020-21Dated:31/10/2020

S No	Name of work	Approx. cost (Rs. in lacs)	Earnest money Amount in Rs.)	Cost of Bid document (Amount in Rs.)	Time of completion	Class of contract	Remarks
1	Sanitary and Plumbing works of Reception centre at PSC solinasgr	0.99	1980	200	1 Months	"D "Class	Call1"

Position of funds : Available with Project Authority

The NIT Consisting of qualifying information eligibility criteria, technical specification bill of quantity set of terms and condition and other details can be seen/down loaded from the J&K Govt.(UT)official web site www.jktenders.gov.in

1	No of covers	2 Cover
2	Date of issue of tenders notice	31/10/2020
3	Date and time of publication of NIT online	02/11/2020 from 12:30 PM
4	Date and time for downloading the NIT on line	From 02/11/2020 to 07/11/2020
5	Date and time for submission of Bid on line	From 02/11/2020
6	End date and time for submission of bids on line	07/11/2020 upto 4:00 PM
7	Date time and place for opening of bids online	9/11/2020 office of Deputy General Manager JKPC Ltd., Unit 3 rd Srinagar At 3:00 PM
8	Check list of documents required for bidder to be uploaded on line	DOCUMENT FEE RECEIPT NIT No recorded in NIT E.M.D (CDR/FDR) REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE DULY RENEWED FOR THE CURRENT FINANCIAL YEAR VALID PAN NO & GST CERTIFICATE. MOBILE NO, E-MAIL- ID, ADDRESS.

No:
Dated

DIPK-NB-3470/20

Deputy General Manager,
JKPCC Limited Unit 3rd, Srinagar

Tel No. 0194-2455114 (Fax) 0194-2455366
Email. ccfkashmir@gmail.com
(Gen Correspondence file September 2019 onwards)

OFFICE OF THE, CHIEF CONSERVATOR OF FORESTS, KASHMIR.

Subject: Circulation of fake appointment / engagement orders by the miscreants.

PRESS RELEASE.

It has come to the notice of this office that some miscreants are issuing fake appointment / engagement orders under the seal and signatures of the authorities which do not exist in the department. For instance, the Station House Officer, Police Station Shaheed Gunj in investigation of Case FIR No. 70/ 2020 U/S 170, 420, 467, 468 – IPC had seized some fake engagement orders whereby the concerned person(s) was shown engaged as Plantation Watcher and the said order was bearing seal and signature as "Chief Conservator of Forests UFD Srinagar". Accordingly the SHO Shaheed Gunj was informed that (i). appointment orders were fake (ii). there was no post of Plantation Watcher existing in the department & (iii). there is no authority of the rank of Chief Conservator of Forests UFD Srinagar existing in the hierarchy of the Department. Further, the matter was also referred to the Senior Superintendent of Police Crime Branch Kashmir for further investigation.

The instructions have already been issued to the subordinate offices that even the appointment orders issued on the basis of selection by the SSB or appointments in terms of SRO- 43 need not to be entertained until genuity of the order(s) is got ascertained from this Office or from the office of PCCF J&K.

For information of the general public and all the concerned, it is to state that there is no process of any appointment / engagement (whether permanent, Daily Wage, Consolidated, Casual, need based etc) in vogue in this office and any such order coming to fore anywhere, need not to be acted upon. In case any such appointment / engagement orders comes to your notice, necessary action as provided under law be initiated against the concerned person producing such order and the action interalia should follow lodging of FIR in the Police Station and above all referring the matter to Crime Branch for further investigation. That the only mode of appointment in vogue in the department is based on the selection made by the Services Selection Board and appointment of NOKs of the deceased officials in terms of SRO- 43 of 1994 by the competent authority.

(Bilal Ahmad Mir), KAS
Administrative Officer,
O/o Chief Conservator of Forests
Kashmir.

No:CCF(K)/Admn/2020/

Dated: ____ - ____ -2020

:DIPK-8430/20

Chomsky: 'Trump's Victory Could Destroy The Planet'

Agencies

Washington: Leading American political analyst and philosopher Noam Chomsky has said that US President Donald Trump's denial of climate change represents worse threat to humanity than Adolf Hitler.

In an exclusive interview with The Independent pub-



lished on Sunday, the celebrated linguist and media critic said he believes Trump's victory in the November 3 election could send the planet hurtling further towards environmental catastrophe.

He said the Republican Party is the world's only large conservative political grouping to deny the existence of climate change, adding that he has identified several patterns over the course of the Trump presidency.

"One is to tear up any deals in which he played no part in creating, such as the 2015 Paris Accord to try and limit the planet's warming, which Barack Obama helped to bro-

ker, and from which Trump has withdrawn the United States," the newspaper reported.

"He didn't create it, destroy it, OK," Chomsky was quoted saying.

Chomsky also made a comparison between Trump and Adolf Hitler, adding that the threat represented by the heating planet is unprecedented.

"The facts are pretty straight; there is almost universal consensus among serious scientists that we are racing towards the cataclysm, if current tendencies persist," the 91-year-old said.

"By the end of this century, you might have reached the level three, maybe four degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. And every analysis concludes that's a total cataclysm. Organized human societies – nothing survives," he said.

"We are moving towards cataclysm. There is one country in the world, the United States, that wants to put its foot on the accelerator," he continued.

The public intellectual and activist, whose many celebrated works include Manufacturing Consent, said the issue of the global coronavirus pandemic can be resolved, but not with "malignant cancer in charge of the policies – someone who moves to destroy anything that doesn't improve his electoral chances".

Iran's supreme leader, quoting Trump, mocks US election

Press Trust Of India

Tehran: Ayatollah Ali Khamenei reiterated a long-standing Iranian position that it didn't matter whether Trump or Joe Biden wins the vote, but the stakes couldn't be higher for the Islamic Republic.

Iran Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali KhameneiIran Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei

Tehran: Iran's supreme leader mocked America's presidential election Tuesday in a televised address, quoting President Donald Trump's own baseless claims about voter fraud to criticise the vote as Tehran marked the 1979 US Embassy hostage crisis.

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei reiterated a long-standing Iranian position that it didn't matter whether Trump or Joe Biden wins the vote, but the stakes couldn't be higher for the Islamic Republic.

Another four years could see Trump's maximum-pressure campaigns further expand as it crushes the Iranian economy and stops Tehran from openly selling its crude oil abroad. Biden meanwhile has said he would consider re-entering Tehran's 2015 nuclear deal with world powers, providing possible relief to the beleaguered Iranian rial.

"If you look at their own

situation, it's lovely to watch. The incumbent president, who is supposed to hold the elections, says this is the most-rigged US election throughout history," Khamenei said, not acknowledging that individual US states run the vote.

"Who says this? The sitting president who is arranging the elections himself. His opponent says Trump intends to widely cheat. This is American democracy," Khamenei added that the result of the vote "is none of our business, meaning it won't influence our policy at all. Our policy is clear and well-calculated and people coming and going will have no impact on it," Khamenei, 81, as supreme leader has final say on all matters of state in Iran. He approved the efforts at reaching the nuclear deal, which saw Iran agree to limit its enrichment of uranium in exchange for the lifting of economic sanctions.



ISIS Claims Kabul Varsity Attack, 22 Students

Agencies

KABUL: At least 22 people were killed when attackers stormed one of Afghanistan's main universities on Monday, detonating a suicide bomb and spraying classrooms with bullets in a brazen hours-long assault claimed by militant Islamic State group.

The attack on Kabul University, which came as violence surges across Afghanistan, marked the second time in less than two weeks that an educational institution was targeted in the capital by IS extremists. Survivors described horrific scenes following the incident that unfolded around 11:00am when a suicide bomber blew himself up inside the campus.

Two gunmen then started shooting, officials said, sending hundreds of students fleeing and scrambling over perimeter walls.

Assault marks second time in less than two weeks that an educational institution is targeted in Afghan capital

Fraidoun Ahmadi, a 23-year-old student, told AFP he was in class when gunfire

broke out at the university.

"We were very scared and we thought it could be the last day of our lives... boys and girls were shouting, praying and crying for help," Ahmadi said.

He said he and other students were besieged for more than two hours before being rescued.

Distressing images posted online showed what appeared to be the bodies of slain students lying by desks and chairs.

"They opened fire ... all my classmates were lying in blood, either dead or wounded," one student told a local television channel, adding that he escaped by climbing out a window.

IS said two of its fighters carried out the brazen daylight attack.

"Two Islamic State fighters managed to attack a gathering set up by the Afghan government at the Kabul University for the graduation of judges and investigators after completing a course at the university," the group's propaganda arm Amaq said.

"The two fighters targeted the graduates with automatic weapons... then clashed with security forces." The Ministry

of Public Health said at least 22 people were killed and 22 more wounded. Officials said most of the casualties were students.

It was not immediately clear how the attackers got their weapons into the university, which has security checks.

Officials said an investigation was under way.

It took Afghan security forces, supported by US troops, several hours to clear the campus and declare the attack over.

The Taliban said they were not involved, but Vice President Amrullah Saleh blamed the insurgent group and their supporters in Pakistan, even as he acknowledged an intelligence failure.

"We will correct our intelligence failures. But the Taliban, their like minded satanic allies in the next door won't be ever able to wash their Conscience of this stinking & non justifiable attack on Kbul uni," Saleh wrote on Twitter.

Afghan authorities routinely accuse Islamabad of backing the Taliban, charges Pakistan denies.

Shocked students say Kabul University attack blow to peace

Ali M Latifi | Fatima Hossaini
Al Jazeera

Kabul, Afghanistan – Rahimullah Sahi was in class at Kabul University's Islamic Studies department on Monday when he heard the sounds of gunfire from the distance.

He and the other students assumed the sound was echoing from an incident near the university's sprawling campus, but the soon realised the elite institution itself was under attack.

"Suddenly we saw people running and screaming," says the 22-year-old, who narrowly escaped the deadliest attack on the university, which left at least 22 people dead and dozens

more injured.

But fleeing the chaotic scene was not easy as the gunmen rampaged through the campus, firing indiscriminately at their targets. For 20 minutes, Sahi and hundreds of other students sought cover from the sounds of gunfire, which they described coming in a steady stream from every direction.

"All I remember is masses of people running, screaming. People looking for somewhere to hide. It was absolute madness," Sahi told Al Jazeera.

All I remember is masses of people running, screaming. People looking for somewhere to hide. It was absolute madness.

Sahi knows he was lucky,

as it took Afghan and international forces more than six hours to clear the nation's largest university campus of the three assailants armed with assault rifles, pistols and grenades.

Even worse, Sahi and other students speaking to Al Jazeera said dozens of trapped students and faculty were held hostage during the hours-long assault on the university.

Surge in violence

The Taliban, whose representatives are currently in Doha for peace talks with an Afghan government delegation, were quick to disavow and denounce the attack.

Gunman on the run after Vienna 'terror attack' leaves 5 dead

Agencies

Vienna : Hundreds of police fanned out across Vienna on Tuesday, searching for perpetrators of attacks that left five people dead in the city's centre, after what a government minister said was an "Islamist terrorist" incident.

In an early morning televised news conference, Austrian Interior Minister Karl Nehammer repeated calls for the public to stay off the streets.

Nehammer said police had shot to death one attacker, a man wearing an explosives belt that turned out to be fake, whom authorities have identified as an Islamic State sympathiser.

The attacks, in six locations including near a synagogue in the centre of town, were carried out by "several suspects armed with rifles", police said.

Police said three people had died, with public broadcaster ORF stating one of them was a passer-by.

Vienna mayor Michael Ludwig told ORF that 15 people had been taken to hospital, seven of them seriously wounded.

Broadcaster ORF later said a fourth civilian, a woman, had died.

Police stated earlier that an officer had also been hurt during the assaults.

The shooting began just hours before Austria was to re-impose a coronavirus lockdown, with people out in bars and restaurants enjoying a final night of relative freedom.

The attacks started at around 8pm when the first gunshots were heard in the city's centrally located first district.

In a press conference earlier, Nehammer said: "According to what we currently know, there is at least one attacker who is still on the run."

Speaking to ORF, Austrian leader Kurz had said that the attackers were "were very well equipped with automatic weapons" and had "prepared professionally".

Earlier, he tweeted: "Our police will act decisively against the perpetrators of this repulsive terror attack," adding that "we will never be intimidated by terrorism and we will fight this attack with all means".

Kurz said that while police were concentrating on the anti-terror operation, the army would take over the security of major buildings in Vienna.

Nehammer urged Vienna residents to remain in their homes and keep away from all public places or public transport. He said that children would not be expected at school on Tuesday in Vienna.

Sirens and helicopters could be heard in the city centre as emergency services responded to the attack.

An AFP photographer said that large numbers of police were guarding an area near the city's world-famous opera house.

The location of the initial shooting was close to a major synagogue.

Armenia calls for probe into 'foreign mercenaries' in Karabakh

Press Trust Of India

Yerevan/Baku: Armenia's prime minister called on Monday for an international investigation into the presence of "foreign mercenaries" in Nagorno-Karabakh after ethnic Armenian forces said they had captured two mercenaries from Syria.

Azerbaijani has repeatedly denied the presence of foreign combatants in the conflict zone. Its ministry of defence was not immediately available for comment.

Fierce battles continued near the front line of the conflict over the mountain enclave and seven surrounding regions in which more than 1,000 people, and possibly many more, have been killed since fighting erupted more than a month ago.

Nagorno-Karabakh is internationally recognised as part of Azerbaijan but is populated and controlled by ethnic Armenians.

The conflict has brought into sharp focus the increased influence of Turkey, an ally of Azerbaijan, in a formerly Soviet region considered by Russia to be in its sphere of influence.

Russia has a defence pact with Armenia.

Armenia's foreign ministry said on Monday the Artsakh Defence Army, its name

for the ethnic Armenian forces in Nagorno-Karabakh, had captured a second Syrian combatant over the weekend.

It said the fighter was from Syria's Idlib province. Another fighter, from the city of Hama, was captured on Friday, it said.

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, in a Facebook post, said the involvement of "foreign mercenaries" was "a threat not only to the security of Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia but also to international security, and this issue should become a subject of international investigation".

The ethnic Armenian-controlled, Nagorno-Karabakh defence ministry said battles took place overnight along the northwestern part of the front line. It said it had repelled a platoon of Azeri troops in fierce fighting.

Azerbaijan's defence ministry said it had repelled an attack on its positions in the high ground of the Zangilan district, between the enclave and the Iranian border, while army units in the Gazakh, Tovuz and Dashkesan regions also came under fire.

Azeri President Ilham Aliyev wrote on Twitter that Azerbaijan had retaken a further eight settlements in Zangilan, Gubadli and Jabrayil regions.

US Judge Blocks Republican Bid To Void 1,27,000 Votes

A federal judge in Texas on Monday denied an attempt by Republicans to throw out about 1.27 million votes already cast in the US presidential election at drive-through voting sites in Houston, a Democratic-leaning area.

The plaintiffs had accused Harris County Clerk Chris Hollins, a Democrat, of acting illegally when he allowed drive-through voting as an alternative during the coronavirus pandemic.

US District Judge Andrew Hanen said the plaintiffs lacked standing to bring the case. "I find that when you balance the harms you've got to weigh in favor of counting the votes," he added.

The judge also faulted the plaintiffs for waiting until Oct. 28 to file their case in his court even though drive-through voting was used without challenge in July primary runoffs.

"Didn't we test this in the primaries this summer?," Hanen



said during a three-hour hearing, adding: "Why am I just getting this case?"

Jared Woodfill, a lawyer for the plaintiffs, told reporters they will appeal to the U.S. 5th Circuit Court of Appeals. They will also appeal a similar loss in state court on Sunday to the U.S. Supreme Court, Woodfill said.

Hollins told reporters that drive-through voting sites in Harris County, which includes

Houston, would be open on Election Day as scheduled. "This is a huge win for democracy, especially at a time when it appears that democracy itself is on the ballot," Hollins said.

Harris County, home to about 4.7 million people, is the third-most populous county in the United States. It currently has 10 drive-through polling sites available to all voters among 800 total voting places.

"Miracle In 91st Hour" As 3-Year-Old Girl Pulled From Turkey Quake Rubble

Bayrakli, Turkey: A three-year-old girl was pulled from the rubble 91 hours after a powerful earthquake hit western Turkey, killing more than 100 people, officials and AFP reporters at the scene said.

"We have witnessed a miracle in the 91st hour," Izmir mayor Tunc Soyter tweeted. "Rescue teams pulled Ayda out alive. Along with the great pain we have experienced, we have this joy as well."

The mayor initially said she was four years old, but Turkish Health Minister Fahrettin Koca later clarified she was three.

Ayda was rescued from a collapsed building in the Turkish town of Bayrakli, the worst affected by the 7.0 magnitude quake which struck Turkey and Greece on Friday afternoon.

she was taken to safety and wrapped in a foil blan-



ket, she called for her mother, an AFP correspondent said, as the anxious crowd broke into rapturous applause, with some hugging each other and others crying.

There were also joyous shouts of "Allahu Akbar", or "God is Greater". The TRT state broadcaster gave her name as Ayda Gezzin.

The news channel NTV said she immediately asked

for water and ayran, a salty drink made from yoghurt.

Rescuers said they became aware there was still someone alive at the site on Monday night, before painstakingly working to reach her.

She told them before she was saved: "I'm here," Milliyet daily reported, which said her mother still remained trapped underneath the rubble.

The rescue came a day

after a four-year-old and a 14-year-old were found alive in the rubble of collapsed buildings in Bayrakli, providing hope that more people could still be rescued.

The deaths from the quake rose to 102 in Turkey on Tuesday, AFAD reported, with 1,026 people injured of which 143 remain in hospital.

Two teenagers on their way home from school were also killed in Greece.

Turkey has reported over 1,475 aftershocks following the quake, including 44 that were above four in magnitude.

With dozens of buildings damaged and the risk of repeated tremors, thousands of residents were forced to spend a fourth night in tents in Izmir.

The quake is the deadliest in Turkey this year after over 40 people were killed in the eastern provinces of Elazig and Malatya in January.

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