



Maximum : 13°  
Minum : -1°  
Humidity : 82%

SUNSET  
Today 05:25 PM  
SUNRISE  
Tomorrow 07:07 AM



## NEWS DIGEST

### Mughal Road Reopens After 3 Day Closure

**POONCH:** Mughal road was on Tuesday thrown open for load carriers three days after the thoroughfare, connecting Shopian with Poonch, was closed after snowfall in the region.

DySP Traffic Rajouri-Poonch Zahir Mirza said that the load carriers were allowed to ply after the thoroughfare was cleared off the snowfall.

He said that subject to fair weather and good road conditions, only downward traffic (load carriers) loaded with fresh fruit shall be allowed from Herpora in Shopian from 1100 hours to 1600 hours towards Poonch. He said no vehicle shall be allowed after cut off timing. Moreover, he said, no passenger vehicle or pedestrian shall be allowed on the road. (GNS)

### Sopore Youth Found Dead

**SRINAGAR:** A 24-year-old youth was found dead in Sopore town of north Kashmir's Baramulla on Tuesday.

A resident of Badam Bagh locality of Sopore, the youth was found lying unconscious inside his home on Tuesday morning, news agency KDC reported. He was taken to the Sub-district Hospital Sopore by his family. However, the doctors there declared him dead on arrival.

### 2 Women Killed In Akhnoor Accident

**JAMMU:** Two women were killed and four others, including two minors injured when a vehicle they were travelling in met with an accident in Akhnoor area here on Tuesday.

An Alto car (JK02AE-6774) rolled down at Tungi Morh under the jurisdiction of Police Station Akhnoor, resulting into on the spot death of two women and injuries to four persons, officials said.

The deceased have been identified as Sarbar Bibi and Zamoor Bibi. The injured including the driver identified as Mukhtiar Ahmed, Parveen Akhter, Ansh Mukhtiar and Alisha Naseer, all residents of Mendhar Poonch were injured and were hospitalized, they said. (GNS)

### 2 Held While Trying To Secure Loan Fraudulently

**SRINAGAR:** Two persons from north Kashmir's Handwara area were arrested in a case related to producing fake documents to the court for the withdrawal of the loan from a bank in Sopore town of Baramulla.

The persons had approached the Court to get these documents certified, consequently, the Hon'ble Court of CJM Handwara doubting the genuineness of these documents ordered Crime Branch Kashmir to register FIR in the case.

These documents were created using forged seals, signatures etc. During the course of investigation three persons were found involved in the forgery, two persons namely, Ghulam Nabi Paray, son of Mohammad Sultan, a resident of Mandigam Handwara and Sajad Ahmad Dar, son of Ghulam Mohammad Dar, a resident of Kherwara Hajin Handwara stand arrested and remanded to judicial custody. While as third accused Javid Ahmad Najjar, son of Ghulam Ahmad Najjar, a resident of Renan Kherwara Handwara is absconding.

Officials said that Crime Branch Kashmir has produced the challan in case FIR number 13/2015 U/S 420,511,467,468,471,201,120-B RPC of P/S Crime Branch Kashmir, related to forged documents provided by accused to Axis Bank Sopore for withdrawal of loan. (KNT)

## Amit Shah Calls Peoples Alliance 'Gupkar Gang'

Omar Abdullah, Mehbooba Mufti Hit Back

Observer Monitoring Desk

**SRINAGAR:** As the maiden District Development Council (DDC) polls in Jammu and Kashmir draw closer, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday took pot shots at the People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) calling it a 'gang' and evoking sharp response from Omar Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti.

In a series of tweets, Shah also described the PAGD, a newly formed conglomerate of political parties, as the "Gupkar Gang" that is going global and wants foreign forces to intervene in Jammu and Kashmir.

“BJP Using ‘Gupkar Gang’ Euphemism to Project Us Anti-Nationals”

“Congress and the Gupkar Gang want to take JK back to the era of terror and turmoil. They want to take away rights of Dalits, women and tribals that we have ensured by removing Article 370. This is why they're being rejected by the people everywhere,” he said.

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### Not Part Of Gupkar Alliance: Congress

**NEW DELHI:** The Congress on Tuesday asserted that it was not a part of the Gupkar alliance and was contesting the district development council elections in Jammu and Kashmir to "expose" the BJP through democratic means.

Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said in a statement that the party was against any foreign intervention in the internal affairs of India, including in Jammu and Kashmir.

“The Congress party is not part of the ‘Gupkar Alliance’ or the ‘People’s Association for Gupkar Declaration,’” he said in a statement. Surjewala attacked Home

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### Covid Fear Drive Dr Farooq, Omar Into Self Isolation

**SRINAGAR:** Member Parliament and National Conference (NC) Patron Dr Farooq Abdullah and his son Omar on Tuesday went into self-quarantine after coming into contact with a person who was putting up with a relative of a coronavirus infected person.

The announcement about self-isolation was made by the former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah on his personal Twitter account.

“My father & I have been in contact with a person who was in turn staying with a relative who tested COVID positive. Based on medical advice, we will be self-isolating for a week before getting a precautionary COVID test,” Omar Tweeted.

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## 6 More Covid Deaths Push J&K Toll Past 1600 Mark

Observer Monitoring Desk

**SRINAGAR:** At least six more people died of coronavirus in Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday, taking the total number of fatalities since the outbreak of pandemic in the Union Territory past 1600 mark.

In Kashmir valley three people lost the battle with the deadly infection while three others succumbed to virus in Jammu division, taking the total fatality count to 1604, officials said. The three victims from the Valley, they said, included a 75-year-old woman from Noorbagh Baramulla, a 70-year-old from Kokernag Anantnag and a 62-year-old woman from Sumbar Bandipora.

Regarding the deaths from Jammu division, they said, the one victim each belonged to Udhampur, Kathua and Samba. With these deaths, the total fatality count in the Valley has reached 1063 and 541 in the Jammu region.

Srinagar district with 399 deaths tops the list followed by Jammu (283), Baramulla (158), Budgam (97), Pulwama (85), Kupwara (78), Anantnag (76), Doda (50), Rajouri (48), Kulgam (48), Bandipora(49), Shopian (36), Ganderbal (37), Udhampur (36), Kathua (34), Samba (26), Poonch (22), Ramban (18), Kishtwar(16), and Reasi (8).

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## 2 Kashmiris Held In Delhi For 'Militancy Links'

Families Refute Charges, Urge

J&K LG, DGP To Intervene

Observer Monitoring Desk

**NEW DELHI:** Two Kashmiri youth have been arrested by the special cell of Delhi Police on charges of being Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM) militants, a charge strongly contested by their families back home.

Abdul Latif of Dooru village in Baramulla district and Mohammad Ashraf of Hatmulla village in Kupwara district were arrested by the sleuths of special from Sarai Kale Khan area in southeast Delhi, officials said on Tuesday.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Special Cell) Sanjeev Kumar Yadav said, "On the basis of the information received, a trap was laid near Millennium Park, Sarai Kale Khan, and two suspected [militants] who are residents of Jammu and Kashmir, were apprehended around 10.15 pm."

Two semi-automatic pistols along with 10 live cartridges have been recovered from them, the DCP claimed.

However, the families of the arrested youth strongly contested the police claim's saying their sons were not even remotely connected with militancy.

Ashraf's father Bashir Ahmad Khatana told a local news gathering agency KNO that his son left for New

Delhi on November 4 to buy clothing and other personal material for his marriage that was scheduled to take place November 11 and 12.

"He contacted me for the last time on November 5 from an unknown number and stated that he will reach the next day. His arrest is a shocker for the entire family and his in-laws as well," he said.

He said he spoke to the local DySP and other officials and pleaded innocence of his son, after learning that his son has been picked up by Delhi police on charges of militancy.

The family of another arrested youth also rubbished the claims of special cell.

Latif's father Sanaullah Mir said that he lost contact with his son, barely two days after he left for New Delhi on November 4.

"My son is Hafiz-e-Quran. I came to know about the arrest of my son through a news channel. I was shocked to see my son being arrested on the pretext of being a militant associate," Mir said.

Meanwhile, the family members of both the detained Kashmiri youth have urged Jammu and Kashmir LG, Manoj Sinha, and Director General of Police, Dilbagh Singh to intervene and seek the early release of their innocent sons.

“My son is Hafiz-e-Quran. I came to know about the arrest of my son through a news channel. I was shocked to see my son being arrested on the pretext of being a militant associate”

## ROSHNI SCAM

## Jammu Admin Directs DCs To Cancel Land Mutations

Press Trust Of India

**JAMMU:** The Jammu divisional commissioner in a third advisory has directed deputy commissioners to cancel all mutations of land transferred under the Roshni scheme and submit details, an official spokesman said on Tuesday.

The Jammu and Kashmir administration on November 4 had directed deputy commissioners of Jammu division to cancel all mutations of illegally encroached land, including those under the Roshni scheme, from revenue records and upload details of encroachers on websites.

Jammu Divisional Commissioner Sanjeev Verma had issued directives to DCs of 10 districts of Jammu region in this regard on November 6 and 12.

During a video conference, the DCs informed Verma about the progress made in the process of cancellation of mutations and assured early completion and furnishing of the details of the same. The divisional commissioner also asked the DCs to share details of other state land encroached in their respective districts, the spokesman said.

He also reviewed the progress on finalisation of stamp duty rates of immovable property in the districts.

In some districts, the stamp duty rates have been finalised, while the process is on to finalise the revised stamp duty rates in other districts, the spokesman said.

The scheme initially envisaged conferment of proprietary rights of around 20.55 lakh kanals of land (1,2,50 hectares) to occupants of which 15.85 per cent of land was approved for vesting of ownership rights.

But against the expected revenue from such occupants, the revenue actually generated was meagre, thereby failing to realise the objective of the scheme that was finally repealed by Satya Pal Malik, the former governor of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir, on November 28, 2018.

On October 9, a division bench of Chief Justice Gita Mittal and Justice Rajesh Bindal ordered the CBI probe into irregularities in the scheme and directed the agency to file a status report every eight weeks.



## Nomads Being 'Harassed': Mehbooba

**SRINAGAR:** PDP president Mehbooba Mufti on Tuesday said it was disconcerting to see nomads being "harassed and displaced" across Jammu and Kashmir and sought Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha's intervention to ensure that this stops.

On Monday, Mehbooba visited the upper reaches of Pahalgam in south Kashmir's Anantnag district and met people whose 'Dhoks' (temporary shelters) were demolished by authorities as part of an anti-encroachment drive.

During her visit, she warned the government against evicting the members of Gujjar-Bakerwal community from forest areas in Jammu and Kashmir, saying the consequences will be dangerous if they are harassed.

In a tweet on Tuesday, Mehbooba said, "Disconcerting to see nomads across J&K being harassed & displaced. They've been the rightful inhabitants & are now being evicted on discriminatory grounds. Kindly intervene @manojsinha\_ & ensure that this stops."

On Monday, Mehbooba had also alleged that the Centre has failed to implement the Forest Act which could have protected the nomad community. (PTI)

## Non-Muslim Youth Tops Islamic Studies Entrance List

Says Important To Study Each Other's Religion

Press Trust Of India

**JAIPUR:** In a break from the past, a non-Muslim candidate from Rajasthan has topped the all-India entrance exam for a master's course in Islamic studies at the Central University of Kashmir.

Islam is portrayed as a radical religion and there is lot of misconception about it. The division in the society is growing today and it is really very important to understand each other's religion, said Shubham Yadav, who would join the course in Kashmir for two years.

The result of the common entrance test, held on September 20, was declared on October 29.

The university, which had set up the religious studies department, which oversees the course, in 2015, confirmed that Yadav is the first non-Muslim candidate to top the exam.

"This is the first time a non-Muslim has topped the entrance exam. We've had non-Muslim scholars in the past," Professor Hamid Naseem Rafiabad told PTI.



Yadav (21) has done BA honours in philosophy from the Delhi University and hails from Alwar where two lynching cases of Pehlu Khan in 2017 and Akbar alias Rakbar Khan in 2018 took place.

Such kind of incidents also made me think and gave motivation to read about the religion (Islam). I convinced my parents to pursue Islamic studies by making them understand that it will be about Islamic history and culture and they agreed, he said.

Yadav said that he developed an interest in Islamic studies during his college days and has informally studied about the Arab spring, Iran issues, early days of Islam and Prophet Muhammad and is looking forward to learn more about it in the formal course.

Some of my friends who are from Muslim community are studying global Islamic politics, said Yadav, who is also preparing for the civil services exam.

Yadav has a younger brother studying in class 11 while his father runs a general store in Alwar.

## KPDCL Refutes Tariff Revision Reports

Says Electricity Tariff Remains Unchanged From Last 4 Years

Observer news Service



**SRINAGAR:** Kashmir Power Distribution Corporation Limited (KPDCL) on Tuesday con-

tested reports appearing in a section of media about revision in the electricity tariff in Jammu and Kashmir saying that no revision of tariff, whatsoever, has been carried out in the Union Territory.

In a statement issued to the media here, a KPDCL spokesperson said that no revision in electricity tariff has taken place in Jammu and Kashmir during the last four years. He further clarified that the DISCOM on its own is not authorized to revise the tariff and the only authority vested with the powers to revise consumer tariff is the Joint Electricity Regulatory Commission (JERC) of Jammu, Kashmir & Ladakh.

"It further clarified that even the JERC has neither revised tariffs nor has it notified any new tariff slabs," the KPDCL spokesperson added.

## Rs 223 Crore Bank Fraud

## ACB Charges Ex-Registrar Cooperatives, Deputy

Observer news Service

**SRINAGAR:** The Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) on Tuesday filed a supplementary charge sheet against two people, including former Registrar of Cooperative Societies in a whopping Rs 223 Crore loan fraud unearthed in J&K State Cooperative Bank Srinagar in March this year.

The ACB filed a supplementary charge sheet against the then Registrar of Cooperative Societies J&K Mohd Mujib-Ur-Rehman and his deputy Ashiq Hussain in the Rs 223 Crore J&K State Cooperative Bank loan Scam, an ACB spokesperson said

Tuesday. He said both the accused were produced in the court when the charge sheet was filed.

"Both accused were remanded to judicial custody by the Court," he said.

According to the Bureau spokesperson, the 223 crore scam was unearthed by the Bureau in March this year, involving many bank officials, including the ex-chairman Mohammad Shafi Dar and Hilal Ahmad Mir, the chairman of non-existent Cooperative Society named River Jhelum Cooperative house Colony at Shivpora Srinagar, who was arrested on May 18. The ACB has already filed a charge

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## Sajood Sailani No More, His Plays Will Go On

Counted among the legendary drama writers of Kashmir,

like Akhter Mohi Ud Din, Som Nath Sadhu and Pushkar Bhan, Sajood Sailani believed in the silent workmanship and enthralled his captive audience during the golden theatre movement in the valley.



He wrote over 150 radio plays, 27 full length stage dramas and 40 comedies in Urdu and Kashmiri languages.

Sadaf Mushtaq

**B**efore becoming Kashmir's legendary dramatist who used his pen as means of social reform, Sajood Sailani (1936-2020) had worn many caps in his colourful career spanning over decades.

His peers in State Garage still recall how the famous play-writer would pen dramas in his 'hideout'. As artist and cartoonist, his famous theatre movement of yore ended the cultural academy's monopoly in the valley. The defiant dramatist had also taken theatre to grassroots in a bid to engage masses.

He went on to write more than

150 radio plays, 27 full length stage dramas and 40 comedies in Urdu and Kashmiri languages.

But after surviving a stroke and remaining unwell for many years, Sailani finally breathed his last on Tuesday at his ancestral residence, Srinagar. He was 85.

“His style of writing plays for stage gave a new direction to theatre in Kashmir”

Back in the day, Sailani as a fresh-faced boy—fond of famed Hawa Mahal programme

➔ More On P2

# 3 Charged For Trying To Secure Loan Fraudulently

Srinagar: The Crime Branch of police on Tuesday filed a charge sheet against three persons, one of them still at large, for obtaining a bank loan by providing forged documents in Sopore area of Baramulla district in 2015.

Ghulam Nabi Paray of Handwara and Sajad Ahmad Dar son of Ghulam Mohammad Dar of Kherwara Hajin Handwara stand already arrested and remanded to judicial custody.

According to the Crime Branch, the case (FIR No. 13/2015) under section 420,511,467,468,471,201,120-B RPC of police station Crime Branch Kashmir related to forged documents provided by the accused to Axis Bank Sopore for withdrawal of loan. These persons had approached the Court to get these documents certified. However the Court

of CJM Handwara while doubting the genuineness of these documents ordered Crime Branch Kashmir to register FIR in the case. "These documents were created using forged seals, signatures etc," a crime branch official said.

During the course of investigation, the official said three persons were found involved in the forgery and two of them –Ghulam Nabi Paray son of Mohammad Sultan of Mandigam Handwara and Sajad Ahmad Dar son of Ghulam Mohammad Dar of Kherwara Hajin Handwara stand already arrested and remanded to judicial custody.

"The third accused Javid Ahmad Najar son of Ghulam Ahmad Najar of Renan Kherwara Handwara is absconding," the official added. (GNS)

FROM FRONT PAGE

## 6 More Covid ...

### 5 Soldiers Among 572 New Cases

Jammu and Kashmir reported on Tuesday 572 new cases of coronavirus, including five soldiers and thirty-two travelers, taking the total number of people infected by the virus in the Union Territory to 103581.

Among the fresh cases, 191 were confirmed from Jammu and 381 from Kashmir Valley, officials said.

They said Srinagar reported 147, Baramulla 35, Budgam 25, Pulwama 17, Kupwara 106, Anantnag 6, Bandipora 10, Ganderbal 30, Kulgam 4, Shopian 1, Jammu 95, Rajouri 6, Udhampur 28, Doda 15, Kathua 12, Poonch 3, Samba 10, Kishtwar 13, Ramban 1 and Reasi 8.

Moreover, they said, 568 more patients have recovered and were discharged from various hospital— 216 from Jammu Division and 352 from Kashmir Valley.

## Not Part Of Gupkar ...

Minister Amit Shah and accused him and other ministers of the Modi government of making "mischievous" statements and trying to push a "fake narrative" by making baseless assertions on Jammu and Kashmir.

His reaction came after the BJP targeted the Congress, saying it should make clear if it agrees with the "anti-national" views of the NC and the PDP.

Shah on Tuesday said the People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) is an "unholy global alliance" that along with the Congress wants to return to the era of "terror and turmoil".

The PAGD which has several Jammu and Kashmir parties as its constituents is pressing for restoration of J-K's special status and statehood.

In the statement, Surjewala said, "The Congress favors democratic elections in Jammu and Kashmir and for this purpose the Congress Party is contesting the District Development Council (DDC) polls to expose the anti-people face of the BJP in a democratic manner."

Local Congress leaders in J-K have maintained that they are not part of the Gupkar Alliance and are only going for a seat-sharing arrangement for the DDC polls.

Surjewala also said that the Congress leadership has written the tradition of sacrifice for the country with its blood and it does not need lessons on nationalism or sacrifice from the BJP.

"The Congress party will never accept that the identity, integrity or tricolor of the nation will be put to any harm. Nor has the Congress accepted nor will it accept any foreign interference in the internal affairs of India including Jammu and Kashmir. The glorious history of India for 70 years is a witness to this resolve of the Congress," he said.

Surjewala said the Congress was committed to India's identity, integrity and sovereignty, and that of the tricolor.

"Maybe Amit Shah and the Modi government need a new lesson on nationalism because their parental organisation, RSS, did not hoist the tricolor for 52 years after independence at its headquarters," he alleged.

Surjewala said the BJP is criticising the Mehbooba Mufti-led PDP without realising that they had shared power with them in Jammu and Kashmir.

The Congress leader also asked Shah who was responsible for the release of Jaish-e-Mohammed founder Masood Azhar, released along with two others in exchange for the passengers of hijacked Indian Airlines plane IC-814 in Kandahar in December 1999.

"The BJP is trying to spread lies and create illusions and this has become the face and character of the Modi government," Surjewala alleged.

Congress leader Ajay Malik also asked why the BJP was attacking the PDP after it shared power with it in Jammu and Kashmir.

He said the PDP was good for the BJP as long as it allied with it and became its enemy and "anti-national" the moment they broke the alliance.

"What moral authority does the BJP have to ask the Congress when they themselves have formed a government with the PDP in Jammu and

Kashmir," Maken said.

Surjewala said instead of resorting to fake rhetoric, the BJP government should chase out China from Indian land and take responsibility of giving a befitting reply to Pakistan.

## Amit Shah ...

Shah's comments came ahead of the first phase of District Development Council elections on November 28, the first political exercise since the Centre revoked Jammu and Kashmir's special status under Article 370 on August 5 last year and bifurcated the state into the union territories of Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh. The Congress and the PAGD have a seat sharing arrangement in some places.

The minister said Jammu and Kashmir was, is and will always be an integral part of India and the people of the country will no longer tolerate an "unholy global gathbandhan" against India's national interest.

"Either the Gupkar Gang swims along with the national mood or else the people will sink it," he said.

The home minister also questioned Congress leaders Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi on whether they support the PAGD.

"The Gupkar Gang also insults India's tricolour. Do Sonia Ji and Rahul Ji support such moves of the Gupkar Gang? They should make their stand crystal clear to the people of India," he said.

Former Jammu and Kashmir chief ministers Omar Abdullah and Mehbooba also issued strongly worded tweets alleging that the home minister's "frustration" stems from the political amalgam deciding to contest the forthcoming local body elections and not giving the BJP and its allies a free run.

"We are not a gang Amit Shah Ji, we are a legitimate political alliance having fought and continuing to fight election, much to your disappointment," Abdullah, who is also vice president of the National Conference, said on Twitter.

In a veiled dig at the newly formed Apni Party, he said, "I can understand the frustration behind this attack by the Hon'ble Home Minister. He had been briefed that the People's Alliance was preparing to boycott elections. This would have allowed the BJP and newly formed King's party a free run in JK. We didn't oblige them."

Only leaders in Jammu and Kashmir can be detained and called anti-national for participating in elections and supporting the democratic process, Abdullah said. "The truth is all those who oppose the ideology of the BJP are labelled 'corrupt and anti-national'," he tweeted.

Mehbooba said the "BJP's stale tactic of dividing India by projecting themselves as saviours and political opponents as internal and imagined enemies is far too predictable now".

"Love jihad, tukde tukde and now Gupkar Gang dominates the political discourse instead of (issues) like rising unemployment and inflation," she said.

The PDP chief also wondered whether fighting elections in an alliance is also anti-national now. "BJP can stitch as many alliances in its hunger for power but somehow we are undermining national interest by putting up a united front," she said. "...Irony died a million deaths since its BJP itself that violates the constitution day in and day out," she tweeted.

Adding to the chorus of outrage PAGD leaders, CPM leader M Y Tarigami said participating in democratic process "maybe a job of 'gangs' for the BJP but is sacred for us".

"The consensus and unity of political parties in JK has unnerved the BJP. We will fight for the restoration of constitutional rights irrespective of what authoritarian regime calls us," he tweeted.

On August 4, 2019, a day before the central government announced the abrogation of Article 370, political parties in Kashmir, except the BJP, met at the residence of National Conference president Farooq Abdullah at Gupkar Road in Srinagar and adopted a declaration to defend Article 370.

Besides the PDP and the NC, the alliance also comprises the CPI-M, People's Conference, Awami National

Conference, the CPI and the People's Movement, which was formed by IAS officer Shah Faesal, who has since resigned from the party.

More than a year later, in October, the political leaders who had been detained for several months met again and resolved to fight legally and democratically for restoration of Jammu and Kashmir's special status.

In November, the seven-party amalgam announced they would contest the local body elections together. The Congress also expressed its willingness for seat sharing arrangement in some districts.

National Conference's Farooq Abdullah is PAGD president and Mehbooba is vice president. Veteran CPI-M leader M Y Tarigami is the convener while People's Conference leader Sajjad Gani Lone is spokesperson.

## Sajood Sailani ...

on All India Radio—had visited radio Kashmir to record 'Nohakhwaani' programs.

Later, he would produce some of the powerful 'nowhah' writing depicting scenes of Karbala.

A relative of late Ghulam Rasool Santosh and brother of prominent (late) painter Gayoor Hassan, Sailani eventually became a reckoning name of Kashmir's drama world.

Born as Ghulam Mohammed Wani in a humble family in Dalgate Srinagar in 1936, Sailani's dramas including won accolades and admirers throughout his active-writing career.

Instrumental in forming the Wani Art Gallery frequented by the famous artists of the time, Sailani played an important role in popularising the modern Kashmiri theatre throughout 70s and 80s.

He revived the Theatre Federation, which gave tough competition to Jammu Kashmir Academy of Art Culture and Languages.

"Sailani was counted among the most compelling drama writers of his time," said Sofi Parvez, a Srinagar-based artist. "Anybody who listened to his dramas back in the day would become his fan and follower. His demise is an end of an era."

Patron Adbee Markaz Kamraz, Dr Aziz Hajini, said Sailani will be always remembered for his outstanding contribution.

"His style of writing plays for stage gave a new direction to theatre in Kashmir," Hajini said.

Based on three plays, Sailani's book 'Kaej Raath' won him the prestigious Sahitya Academy award in 1994. He also remained a member advisory board of Sahitya Academy for four years (1973 to 1977) and in 1990.

"He used his drama to comment on the critical social issues," said writer Arshid Khan. "His memorable works including 'Fundbaz' and 'Vutribunyl' will remain the hallmark of his genius mind."

## ACB Charges ...

sheet against Dar, Mir and other accused on November 08.

He said that the lone to the tune of Rs. 250 Crores was sanctioned in favour of a non-existent society for the purposes of construction of a satellite Township at Shiwpora Srinagar by-passing the credit policy of the bank and on the basis of false and fabricated documents

The ACB spokesperson further said that the investigation has further revealed that the then Registrar Co-operative Societies and his deputy had issued a letter to J&K State Co-operative Bank under the signature of the Registrar despite knowing fully well that such a society did not exist after checking all the relevant office records.

"On the receipt of said letter, loan to the tune of Rs. 223 crore was sanctioned in favour of the non-existent society by bank Chairman. Investigation has further established that the agenda items of non-existent society were also created on 23.01.2019 before the sanction and disbursement of loan to the tune of Rs. 223 Crores. The Bye Laws of the said society were created on 21.11.2019 fictitiously by the ex-Chairman of the bank," the Bureau spokesperson said.

He added that the court has fixed November 23 as the next date of hearing the case.

# BJP Put Cong On Defensive About Being Part Of PAGD: Mehbooba

**Srinagar, Nov 17 (PTI):** Stating that the BJP has put the Congress on the defensive about its participation in the People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) through false propaganda, PDP president Mehbooba Mufti on Tuesday said in today's times, demanding constitutional rights is deemed anti-national.

Her remarks came after the Congress on Tuesday said it is not a part of the PAGD, an alliance of several parties in Jammu and Kashmir that is seeking the restoration of the erstwhile state's special status, which was revoked by the Centre in August last year.

In a statement, Congress's chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said the party is not a part of the PAGD and will contest the upcoming maiden District Development Council (DDC) polls in Jammu and Kashmir to "expose" the Bharatiya

Janata Party (BJP) through democratic means.

The statement came after the BJP targeted the Congress, saying it should make it clear if it agrees with the "anti-national" views of the National Conference (NC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP).

Referring to Surjewala's statement, Mufti said the country lacks a robust opposition as the BJP propagates falsehoods and sets the agenda, thereby forcing the Congress to toe the same line.

"Today yet again through false propaganda, BJP has put Congress on defensive about its participation in PAGD. The pattern where BJP propagates falsehoods & sets the agenda thereby forcing Congress to toe the same line is why this country lacks a robust opposition," she wrote on Twitter.

The PDP president said no national party will admit it publicly that the abrogation of Article

370 of the Constitution, which gave a special status to the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir, was "illegal" due to the "lies" spread by the BJP.

"Its a fact that abrogation of Article 370 was illegal & was a constitutional guarantee given to J&K. Yet no national party inc Congress will admit it publicly due to the lies spread by BJP. We are living in times where demanding constitutional rights itself is deemed anti national (sic)," she said in another tweet.

The former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister said some "pliable" television news channels are helping the BJP in peddling its propaganda.

"BJP's propaganda is peddled day & night by pliable channels that dedicate their prime time debates to issues such as 'love jihad, tukde tukde gang & now Gupkar alliance (sic),' she wrote on the microblogging website.

# HC Takes Note Of Constructions Along Jhelum Banks

## Says It's Inconceivable How Permission Granted, Seeks Explanation From Authorities

**SRINAGAR:** Jammu and Kashmir High Court has sought an explanation from authorities over the construction of a multi-storeyed commercial building at Rajbagh area of Srinagar which is barely 10 to 15 feet from the banks of the River Jhelum.



"This Court is Custodia Legis and in seisen of the subject matter including the River Jhelum, it is not conceivable as to how the permissions have been granted by authorities without even intimation to this Court," a bench of Chief Justice Gita Mittal and Justice Puneet Gupta said in an order.

"In this view of the matter, all the authorities including the owner of the building in question owe an explanation to this Court under what circumstances the permissions have been granted," the court said and directed the Divisional Commissioner Kashmir to file an affidavit, detailing therein the ownership of the land on which the construction is coming

"In case the Divisional Commissioner Kashmir requires any assistance or information from any other authority, he shall seek the same from the concerned departments who shall cooperate with him and forthwith make available relevant information," the court said and asked him to "positively" file the affidavit before November 18.

The Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, the court directed shall also conduct an inquiry and place before it the permission sought to Inland Waterway Authority of India.

The court also directed the J&K State Pollution Control Board to file an affidavit with regard to the permission granted by it to

owner of the structure in question regarding discharge of sewage, treated effluents from any STP into the River Jhelum.

"The Inspector General of Police, Traffic, shall inform this Court as to the permission granted by it to raise a commercial structure at the spot in question and the plan in place for management of the burden on the traffic which will result due to coming up and operationalisation of this commercial structure at the site in question."

The division bench also directed the Srinagar Municipal Corporation, the Revenue Department and the Irrigation and Flood Control Department to file affidavits before the Court with regard to the permission(s) granted to it for construction of a multi-storeyed commercial building "which is barely about between 10 to 15 feet from the banks of the River Jhelum."

The court also directed that no construction, renovation or completion etc. at all of any kind shall be carried out on the building in question till it passes an appropriate order. "We direct Mr. B. A. Dar, learned Sr. AAG, to visit the spot in question and inform this Court as to how the pressure on the infrastructure / sewage, garbage, solid waste shall be managed by the authorities, if the commercial activity on the spot in question is permitted," the court added. (GNS)

## 180 Govt Schools Being Converted Into 'Smart Schools'

**SRINAGAR:** The Srinagar district administration has embarked on an ambitious project to upgrade 180 government-run schools as "smart schools" by equipping them with modern amenities and learning tools, officials said.

The overall objective of the project is to improve the learning outcome of public schools and bring them at par with private schools, they said.

A dedicated team has been constituted for the planning, implementation and monitoring of the project, to be completed within six months at a cost of Rs 6 crore, they said.

Under the project, a part of the Jammu and Kashmir government's 'Back to Village' programme, the administration will upgrade infrastructure of these schools and improve learning outcome through a range of interventions, including capacity building of teachers. Some of interventions being made are refurbishing of buildings where required, upgrading of furniture and equipment, round-the-clock power and water supplies, and establishment of libraries, science laboratories, IT labs and smart classes, the officials said.

They said other highlights of the project are HR management, capacity building and training of teachers, continuous evaluation and society involvement, sporting infrastructure and games, skills labs, and innovation grant.

Before embarking on upgrade of the 180 schools -- 120 in urban areas and 60 in rural areas of the district -- the administration conducted a pilot project and modernised 25 schools during the last fiscal.

At a review meeting here, Srinagar Deputy Commissioner Shahid Iqbal Choudhary said the project was close to his heart and added that everything necessary would be done for modernising the schools.

"The district administration is keen on equipping these schools with the latest facilities and transforming them on modern lines...the aim being to improve the learning outcome in the public school domain," Choudhary said.

The work has been started in around 100 of these schools located in both urban and rural areas of the district, he said.

The meeting was informed that funds have been released in favour of 25 schools located in urban Srinagar.

Another 70 schools, which have already been partly equipped with modern facilities under the centrally sponsored Samagra Shiksha scheme, will receive the required funding in due course, the officials said. Headmasters of 25 schools that were upgraded under the pilot project attended the meeting and shared their experiences and feedback, the officials said.

These 25 smart schools will be provided additional facilities for further upgrade, they said. In each rural block of the district, 15 schools have been identified for upgrade through the respective gram sabha, they said.

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K O V I E W

A Covid winter

J&K has recorded seven more Covid-19 related deaths in last 24 hours, taking the toll due to the virus to 1598. Among them four were residents of Kashmir Valley and three were from Jammu. On the other hand, the total infection tally in the union territory has crossed one lakh. This is a huge number in a place with just thirteen million population. Incidentally Srinagar and Jammu, are the first and second highest infected districts. On a positive note, there are now over 5,688 active cases in the UT, while 95,342 patients have recovered so far. But the challenge of reigning in the epidemic still remains. More so, with the winter setting in and the cases of infections expected to go up in the cold. The winter also witnesses the outbreak of flu which will be a source of panic for the people.

At the same time, the situation on the ground is one of growing indifference towards the contagion. The initial caution and care that people took to avoid contracting the disease is no longer the case. Nor is the government as serious in implementing the Standard Operating Procedures as it did earlier. The people are going about their business as a matter of course. And which is good if only they took the necessary precautionary measures. But they are not doing that nor is the government enforcing it.

Though there has been some talk of the re-enforcing the lockdown but that should be the last thing on government's mind as the Valley's economy can hardly afford it. Kashmir has been in a state of siege for the past fifteen months. To make matters worse, the administration in Kashmir was a bit more exuberant about enforcing lockdown. It was much more strict with it than was warranted. Its rationale was that the lockdown is critical to bring down the number of infections and flatten the curve. And its reasoning appeared plausible under the circumstances. But as the example around the world would have one believe, lockdown has only reduced the infections not controlled them. And there is little chance that an extended lockdown will eliminate the infection. But in the process, the Valley's economy has been wrecked. Lakhs have lost jobs. It stopped the circulation of money and hit the marginalized sections very hard. The fallout of the lockdown has thus been far worse than that of the Covid-19 and on a much bigger scale.

What government can do is to strictly enforce the SOPs in public rather than shut the economy up. As the past eight have proved that is the only plausible way to go about this.

O T H E R O P I N O N

India in recession

India is in the midst of a serious health crisis not only in society but also in the economy. The widespread pandemic has aggravated the decline of the economy, which was already discernible before the arrival of Covid-19. Now the Reserve Bank of India has announced that India is in the midst of a technical recession, experienced for the first time ever in the country. A technical recession is said to occur when there is a contraction of the gross domestic product for two consecutive quarters. In the first quarter of this financial year, the GDP fell by a massive 23.9 per cent. The quick estimate by the RBI for the second quarter indicates a further fall of 8.6 per cent. On top of this, retail inflation hit a 77-month high of 7.61 per cent in October 2020, even higher than the September rate of 7.27 per cent. This inflation is sustained by a marked rise in the prices of food items. The consumer food price inflation was 11.07 per cent in October this year. Meat and fish prices rose by 18.70 per cent, eggs by 21.81 per cent, and vegetables by 22.51 per cent. The RBI has the target of keeping the retail inflation range bound between 2 per cent and 6 per cent. This means that the economy is in a phase of stagflation, and this will make an accommodative monetary policy more difficult in the near future. Hence interest rates may be on pause for some time to come. With monetary policy kept in check to curb inflationary expectations, the policy-based stimulus has to come from the ministry of finance. The Centre's approach has been to continue to depend on credit availability to drive recovery and growth. However, credit off-take from the banking system was poor last year and this has dropped further in the first half of the current year to 5.1 per cent compared to 8.6 per cent in the first half of 2019-20. Fresh credit was mainly allocated for personal loans and agriculture. Non-food credit growth was alarmingly low. The government has to understand that demand creates additional output and employment. It is not the other way round.

Telegraph India

Changing perceptions of  
Young Arab Muslims

A recent survey of Arabs has brought out some revealing changes and ideas endorsed by the young Arab population.

ASAD MIRZA

A recent 2019-2020 Arab Opinion survey conducted by Doha-based Arab Centre for Research and Policy Studies has brought out some revealing perceptions of the Arab citizens. The survey in its seventh year collated responses from 28,288 individual respondents based on 95 questions in 13 Arab countries.

The survey findings besides being a reflection of the common Arab insights were also able to bring out public perceptions of two Arab leaders, whom people feel will be able to lead the Arab region in a new direction. According to respondents Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and his UAE counterpart, Mohammed bin Zayed, have gotten some things right, so far.

Most importantly, both men have to varying degrees replaced religion with nationalism as the ideology legitimising their rule and sought to ensure that countries in the region broadly adhere to their worldview.

The new Arab view

Arabs worldview rejects any political expression of Islam, propagates a religious duty to obey the ruler with no exception, represses freedom of expression and dissent, and leaves unchallenged religious concepts such as notions of infidels and slavery that are viewed by Muslim reformers as well as significant segments of Arab youth as obsolete or out-dated.

However, the Arab youth is sceptic of religious clerics and scholars who parrots the regimes and moves them away from religious establishments and leaders. Besides they are also disillusioned by zero efforts to recontextualise Muslim concepts that no longer apply in a modern and changing world or present them in a new paradigm. The researchers also found that youth favoured a reduced role of religious leaders in political life.

The changing youth's attitude towards religiosity is evident in various public opinion polls and also expressed in mass anti-government protests in countries like Lebanon and Iraq recently. And this young view has also impacted on the two crown princes' similar worldview.

In a commentary on the latest survey, scholar Eman Alhussein said, "Youth have...witnessed how religious figures, which still remain influential in many Arab societies, can sometimes give in to change even if they have resisted it initially. This not only feeds into Arab youth's scepticism towards religious institutions but also further highlights the inconsistency of the religious discourse and its inability to provide timely explanation or justifications to the changing reality of today".

Both young rulers have initiated changes like relaxing of social restrictions in Saudi Arabia, including the emasculation of the kingdom's religious police, lifting the ban on women's driving, relaxed implementation of gender segregation laws, and greater professional opportunities for women, and a degree of genuine religious pluralism in the UAE, in response to youth aspirations. But they also face criticism on establish-

ing ties with Israel.

Survey findings

The survey found that, despite 40 percent of those polled defining religion as the most important constituent element of their identity, 66 percent saw a need for religious institutions to be reformed. Similarly, 70 percent of those surveyed rejected the notion that democracy was incompatible with Islam while 76 per-



Taken together, the various polls suggest that at a time of economic downturn and inevitable transition that puts a premium on good governance, Arab and Muslim leaders could find changing attitudes towards religiosity to be a double-edged sword.

cent viewed it as the most appropriate system of governance.

Arab public opinion appears split down the middle when it comes to issues like separation of religion and politics or the right to protest. Saudis, like most Gulf Arabs, are likely less inclined to take grievances to the streets. Nonetheless, polls by The Washington Institute of Near East Policy indicate that they may prove to be more empathetic to protests should they occur.

Taken together, the various polls suggest that at a time of economic downturn and inevitable transition that puts a premium on good governance, Arab and Muslim leaders could find changing attitudes towards religiosity to be a double-edged sword. Added to this is the challenge to boost the national economies in the time of a pandemic besides improving the image of the countries.

Changes in Saudi Arabia and the UAE

In the case of Saudi Arabia, its chairmanship of the G20 is proving to be a mixed blessing. The country and Crown Prince, Mohammed bin Salman saw the chairmanship as an opportunity to showcase the kingdom's leadership and to be seen as a visionary global player.

economic diversification.

Pushing ahead with big-ticket projects, including Neom, a US\$500 billion futuristic smart city on the Red Sea; Qiddiya, billed as the world's largest entertainment city; and a massive luxury tourism drive. All of which have raised questions about his priorities at a time when the kingdom needs to focus on structural economic and financial reforms and further social changes.

Though the G20 chairmanship gave a badly needed opportunity to Saudi Arabia, and to Prince Mohammed to better his image both at home and abroad, but it has thus far been a missed opportunity. A candid analysis of the forum's recommendations reveals the crucial role played by Prince Mohammed for endorsing some of these recommendations. But he might have taken this stand due to the questions being posed by younger Saudis questioning both the role of the political leadership and why they should accept everything endorsed by the faith leadership at its face value. The results of his new initiatives may start showing in a year or two and will also have a bearing on his own future.

Similarly, for UAE, which has been ahead of Saudi in terms of eco-

nomics and trade development, much depends on the future actions of Prince Mohammed and his counterpart Sheikh Mohammed, the ruler of Dubai. Though the emirate has normalised relations with Israel, keeping in view the economic and scientific cooperation with the Jewish state, yet how the young population takes to it is yet to be seen.

However, the strong grip with which both these nations are gov-

erned may not give much leeway to the young aspirations until and unless they are in consonance with the leadership's views and this may increase societal tensions there.

The dilemma which these two young leaders face as per the demands of real politics and also keeping close to the western world, besides maintaining an independent Islamic posture are evident by the recent statement given by a prominent UAE minister calling on Muslims to accept the stance of French President Emmanuel Macron on his claims about the need for "integration" in Western societies. Obviously statements like these will not be taken kindly by the young Arabs, just like the manner in which the two young princes may not like the findings of the survey as it has been carried out by an organisation based in Qatar, their current sworn enemy.

The views expressed in this article are author's own and do not necessarily reflect that of Kashmir Observer

Asad Mirza is a political commentator based in New Delhi.

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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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NISHTHA through DIKSHA

During the turbulent times of COVID 19, when students are missing out on studies, the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) in association with National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) have launched an initiative in the domain of digital learning, named, DIKSHA. The aim of this initiative is to help teachers and the students to continue their studies as usual, however, through different mode.

DIKSHA portal is an advanced platform that is available on Google play store. The mobile app is available for not just the teachers but also

for students and parents. The app is loaded with engaging learning material that fits the needs of prescribed school curriculum. It is full of lesson plans, worksheets and activities to create an enjoyable classroom experience. Students having access to DIKSHA app can understand concepts in an easy and interactive manner. There are features through which lessons can be revised. The app also facilitates the students to test his/her learning through self-assessment practice exercises.

With the outbreak of pandemic, the school education department of J&K, without wasting a day issued frequent orders directing teaching officials of

all cadres to download the app and gear up for online teaching through it. Resource persons were first trained about the features and settings of the app who later on held the zoom meetings to teach fellow teachers about the app. The app is filled with information besides books, notes, audio/video teaching aids and what not. Recently, the J&K government also initiated NISHTHA training through this app. All the teaching officials were directed to register for training on the DIKSHA app. This NISHTHA( National Initiative For School Heads And Teachers Holistic Advancement) training comprises of a chain of training modules. It

commenced from 10th of November for first three modules which are required to be completed by 25th of this month. Most of the teachers have completed a couple of modules and some have completed even all the three. Up till 14th of November, 68000 teachers had successfully completed all three modules.

In the pandemic, Teachers in Kashmir are making use of such ITC tools to cope up with the challenges of online teaching and complete teaching targets.

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# Receding Reading Public

ABID HUSSAIN RATHER

Increasingly, the reading public in Kashmir has declined especially because of the youth. It seems that nowadays people have lost the literary taste and are detouring from books

When we start searching for quotations and write-ups regarding the necessity and importance of studying books, we find thousands of quotations and articles penned down by various intellectuals and philosophers in the course of history. Speeches are given in various conferences and seminars organized at different occasions regarding the imperativeness of erudition in our lives. Still, studying books has become an abandoned habit in our society.

Increasingly, the reading public in Kashmir has declined especially because of the youth. It seems that nowadays people have lost the literary taste and are detouring from books. We constantly see that with every passing day, kids are losing interest in studying and it is observed that they mostly remain busy with social media, television and a plethora of options offered by World Wide Web. Another reason for detachment from exploring the literary world is tight schedule of schools, home work, tuitions etc. After all these things our children find little or no time for studying other books and literature beyond their prescribed syllabus.

There is a broad and vast world of literature beyond the prescribed books in our educational institutions. Nowadays, the trend of getting maximum marks in examination has restricted our children to tuitions, tests and short notes only. The students have even lost the habit of reading their curriculum books. The system of mechanical teaching and learning process in schools has also kept the students away from the world of books.

When we have a glance at the developed countries of the world, we find that people in such countries still poses a good literary taste and are fond of studying books. It has been found that even in the present digital technology world, 64% people in America read paper books while as 28% read digital books. During 2017, almost 80% of readers in America were people in the age group of 18 to 29 years. 30% people in America read books daily while as 25% people read a book once in a week. In India, 32% children read 24 books yearly. It is difficult to present the data regarding the trend of studying among Muslims but from observations it has been found that the results are not very satisfactory. One of the major reasons for the decline of the Muslim ummah is



Showkat Shafi

that we have lost the fervor of learning.

The dream of a majestic and elegant future of a nation depends on its passion and enthusiasm for knowledge and knowledge is correlated to the love for learning as knowledge comes from studying. When we talk about a bright and prosperous future of a nation, it is unavoidable to think about its children and how to develop the habit of studying among them. Let's ruminate some ways and methods in which we can develop the literary taste among our children:

It is the duty of parents to create a conducive environment for learning in their homes for bright career of their kids. There should be small libraries in every houses with variety of books and a particular time for studying should be formulated by replacing the watching of some futile programs on our TV sets.

It has been found that people leave studying books if they find any difficulty in understanding a book. So it is advisable to help such people in studying a book. We should help them in knowing new words, idioms and phrases.

It is necessary to make book pur-

chasing a routine habit to create a conducive atmosphere for studying in our houses. We should spare some money in every month for purchasing some books. Most of us spend some money on wasteful activities which are rather harmful for us in the longer run. We should divert that amount for buying books. Parents should develop a sense in their children for saving some amount from their pocket money for purchasing books. Giving books as gifts to people on special occasions can be a step forward in this direction. Different social and religious organization should create a system of reading rooms and libraries in far flung areas where, otherwise, people are unable to access the books of their choice for studying.

Persuasion and encouragement acts as a catalyst in every work. So it is desirable to persuade people towards studying by organizing seminars, competitions etc. Children should be awarded suitably for reading a book and qualifying quiz competitions regarding studying various books. Target reading and prize awarding culture should be created in our educational

institutions.

It is necessary to visit libraries with our families to introduce our children to the world of books, but unfortunately there are no libraries in our villages. We should take our children to different libraries during holidays so that they may develop an interest towards books.

There has been a custom of organizing book fairs in big cities by different publishers. Besides helping us in purchasing variety of books, such fairs develop an interest towards studying books in us. Government should help the publishers and other stakeholders to organize such book fairs in rural areas also to help people in developing a literary taste.

Besides above there can be many more practical ways and inkings to motivate people specially our youngsters towards studying books as it has been said where there is a will there is a way.

*The author is a columnist and teaches Geography at GDC, Kulgam. He can be reached at rather1294@gmail.com*

Bookshelves are having a moment. Not long ago, their epitaph was being written. IKEA's redesign of its Billy unit to accommodate objects other than books was cited as evidence that we had turned the page on possessing print.

Now, that story has a sequel. Self-isolation has people rediscovering the value of having hardcovers at home. In addition, television networks' shift to interviews via Skype, rather than in a studio, is revealing the bookcase backdrops of pundits, news anchors and celebrities at home. That domestic exposure sparked a social media conversation about literary decor.

Room Rater on Twitter, for example, offers regular, and often snarky, critiques of shelves in the rooms visible behind various talking heads.

Room Rater dishes compliments, too. "Just enough clutter," one tweet reads. "Looks real."

Domestic libraries are first and foremost about books. But the displays also lend an inviting graphic element to decor. Just please, designers say, don't arrange books page-side out. That affectation makes no sense. However, please do pair books with objects, art, photographs and ephemera.

The book "Bibliostyle: How We Live at Home with Books" by Nina Freudenberg showcases enviable bookshelves around the world. Photos of collections and the rooms they inhabit are accompanied by interviews with their well-read and often notable owners.

The hardcovers pictured here make you want to read — and display — more books.

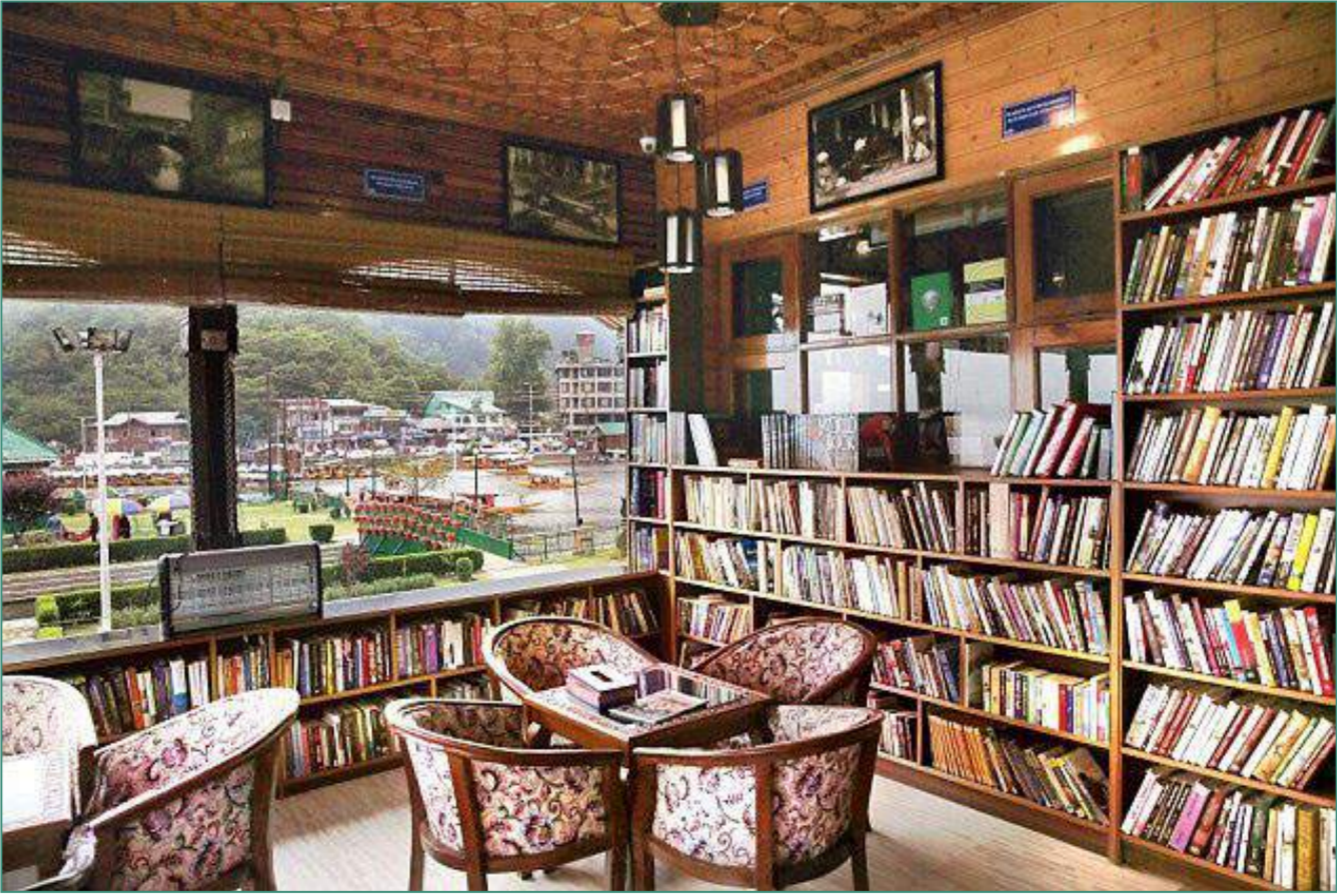
#### Books lining our walls

"Bibliostyle" features homes of writers, illustrators, designers, editors and collectors — readers all. Highlighted rooms range from clean contemporary to overstuffed classic. Shelves showcase rare editions, fairy tales, gardening volumes, coffee-table tomes and even vintage comic books. There are books in closets and bedside stacks, books on landings and books lining dining room walls. They're arranged by colour, by author, by language by genre or not organised at all.

"People live in different ways," says Freudenberg, a Los Angeles-based interior designer. "I think to not have books, it's a red flag. It makes me a little nervous. Books have something incredible. The

## The Spectacular Comeback Of The Bookshelf

SHADE DEGGS



smell. They're an object. There's a legacy."

She suggests using bookends for visual breaks and is fond of natural wood shelving, which, she says, is warm and accentuates the books.

Books can be a tricky item to visually conquer. Trust me, there is no better feeling than the warmth of being surrounded by books. However, if not properly allocated, they can become visually overwhelming and very busy to the eye. A crazy quilt of paperbacks and book jackets visually jarring. Some will remove paper jackets

or cover books with paper or custom bindings for a more calming uniformity.

Custom built-in bookcases are ideal and are especially appealing when they surround windows.

Whatever the display, a well-used bookcase offers heft, stability, backbone, character and a sense of life lived.

The libraries featured in "Bibliostyle" are stunning examples of the substance that books lend — intellectually, aesthetically and emotionally.

#### Pleasure of the collection

Concern for an orderly display is often less important than the pleasure of the collection itself. Still, the collectors' homes in "Bibliostyle" make up an inspiring portfolio of interior and architectural design. There are high-ceilinged European apartments, a poured-concrete modern in Mexico City and a wonderfully layered 19th-century New York farmhouse with windows framing Hudson Valley views like colour plates in a vintage book.

The Paris dining room of textile designer Carolina Irving has custom book-

shelves crammed with global titles. The result, Freudenberg observes, is "a colourful cacophony on the shelves, a warm, natural wallpaper with snapshots of Irving's family, bits of pottery and sculpture."

More minimalist homes also are depicted. Emmanuel de Bayser, a proprietor of concept stores in Paris and Berlin who says he doesn't understand people who don't have books, has a collection tailored to fit the mid-century modern decor of his Berlin apartment.

Many of the featured book lovers have arranged their furnishings to accommodate reading.

I'm attached to the idea that different spaces, whether physical or interpersonal, will create different thoughts and experiences. Having a comfortable chair, good light — these things do put you into a state of mind to better absorb ideas.

Washington Post

Self-isolation has people rediscovering the value of having hardcovers at home. In addition, television networks' shift to interviews via Skype, rather than in a studio, is revealing the bookcase backdrops of pundits, news anchors and celebrities at home.

# Exercised Over Nothing: Masks Don't Impair Lung Function During Physical Activity

Agencies

**W**earing a face-mask helps limit the spread of Covid-19 by reducing respiratory droplets and aerosols

spewed into the air when people breathe, talk, laugh, sneeze, or cough, a new study suggests. But the physical barrier created by masks has prompted concerns that they might impair the

cardiopulmonary system by making it harder to breathe, by altering the flow of inhaled oxygen and exhaled carbon dioxide, and by increasing dyspnea -- a medical term that describes shortness of breath

or difficulty breathing, especially during physical activity. In a new study, published in the Annals of the American Thoracic Society, a team of American and Canadian researchers

concluded that while sensations of dyspnea might increase, there is little empirical evidence that wearing a facemask significantly diminishes lung function, even when worn during heavy exercise.

## Academics, Video Game Makers Team Up In Rare Collaboration



Agencies

**A** study by Oxford University researchers on how playing video games affects mental health used data from video game makers, marking what the authors say is a rare collaboration between academics and the game industry.

Lack of transparency from game makers has long been an issue for scientists hoping to better understand player behaviours.

The paper released Monday by the Oxford Internet Institute comes as video game sales this year have boomed as more people are stuck at home because of the pandemic and many countries have once again imposed limits on public life.

The findings are based on survey responses from people over 18 who played two games, Plants vs Zombies: Battle for Neighbourville and Animal Crossing: New Horizons.

The study used data provided by the game makers, Electronic Arts and Nintendo of America, on how much time the respondents spent playing, unlike previous research that relied on imprecise estimates from the players.

The video game industry has previously been reluctant to work with independent scientists, the paper noted. Such partnerships might be needed for future research on the booming video game industry.

Academics "need broader and deeper collaborations with industry to study how games impact a wider, and more diverse, sample of players over time," said Andrew Przybylski, the institute's director of research. "We'll need more and better data to get to heart of the effects

of games, for good or ill, on mental health."

The research was funded by the Huo Family Foundation, a London-based foundation, and the Economic and Social Research Council, a U.K.-government funded public body.

The researchers said they found the actual amount of time spent playing was a small but significant positive factor in people's well-being. The paper said the level of enjoyment that players get from a game could be a more important factor for their well-being than mere playing time.

Some 2,756 players of Animal Crossing: New Horizons and 518 players of Plants vs Zombies: Battle for Neighbourville responded to a survey, out of 250,000 invitations. They were asked to fill out a survey on their experiences that was matched up against playing time logged by the game companies.

While the paper has yet to be peer reviewed, academics who weren't involved in the research said it showed some strengths, such as accurately measuring game playing time.

"The fact that it's the electronic data collected from the device is very good, it's very objective," said Paul Croarkin, a psychiatrist at the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota who has studied video gaming and children. He said he had "lingering questions" about the study and said the self-reporting nature of the survey was a weakness, but said the researchers presented their findings in a balanced way.

Joseph Hilgard, an assistant professor of social psychology at Illinois State University, also noted some limitations.

## Office Of The Principal Sham-E-Hidayat Public School Raithan Budgam Kashmir

GOVT. RECOGNISED (ENGLISH MEDIUM)

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MISS NAYEEMA	GHULAM AHMAD DAR	B.A.	ACCOUNTANT
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MCB

Union Territory Jammu & Kashmir

## Office Of The Execuve Engineer R&B Division Sumbal

NOTICE INVITING TENDERS  
NIT37/ET/R&B/SUMBAL of 11/2020.  
(Single Cover System)

For and on behalf of the President of India, e-tenders (In single cover system) are invited on Percentage basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with J&K State Govt., CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for the following work:-

S. No	Name of Work	Est. Cost (Rs. in Lacs)	Cost of T/Doc. (In Rs)	Earnest Money (In Rs)	Time of Completion In (Days)	Date & time of Opening of Bid	Class of Contract	M.H of Account
1	Development of Road berm/shoulders by way of P/L of Khak Baj-jree Filling on Shilvath Ganasthan Road	0.89	200	1780/-	20- Days	24-11-2020 at 4.00 P.M	DEE	Cities and Towns

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


1	Date of issue of Tender Notice	16-11-2020
2	Period of downloading of bidding documents.	From 16-11-2020 to 23-11-2020 4.00 P.M
3	Bid submission Start Date	16-11-2020
4	Bid submission End Date	23-11-2020 upto 4.00 P.M
5	Date & Time of opening of Bids (Online)	24-11-2020 at 4.00 P.M in the Office of the Executive Engineer R&B Division Sumbal.

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

- The date and time of opening of Bids shall be notified on Web-site [www.jktenders.gov.in](http://www.jktenders.gov.in) and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The bids of Responsive bidders shall be opened online on same Web Site in the Office of the Executive Engineer (R&B) Division, Sumbal (tender receiving authority).
- The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of financial bids.
- Bids must be accompanied with earnest money/ bid security in shape of CDR/FDR pledge to Executive Engineer R&B Division Sumbal / and cost of tender document in shape of Treasury Challan/Receipt (Debitd to MH: 0059 PWD) in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Division Sumbal showing clearly the name of work along with NIT NO. Advertised Cost & S.No of the work, failing which the tender will be rejected outrightly).
- Further if any correction or pencil written found on e-challan shall be rejected outrightly
- The earnest money shall be forfeited, if:-
  - Any bidder/ tenderer withdraw his bid/ tender during the period of bid validity or make any Modifications in the terms and conditions of the bid.
  - Failure of Successful bidder to furnish the required performance security within the specified time limit.
  - Failure of Successful bidder to execute the agreement within 28 days after fixation of contract.

DIPK-9100/20  
No. R&B/SB/20/1563-73.  
Dated:- 16-11-2020

Sd./  
Executive Engineer,  
(R&B) Division Sumbal  
/R.MIR/



ڈسٹرکٹر پولیس ضلع بارہ مولہ

**DISTRICT POLICE HEADQUARTERS BARAMULLA**

SOCT Ashiq Hussain Sheikh NO.14002/H BKK-061521  
S/O Nazir Ahmed Sheikh R/O Mir Deantar Anantnag.

**Subject:- SNOW CAUSE NOTICE 2nd**

01. Whereas, you, Sgt Asif Hussain No.1402/H BKK-061521 S/O Nazir Ahmed Sheikh R/O Mir Deantar Anantnag have been appointed as constable in Police Department vide DPO Anantnag order No. 40 of 1996 dated 05-04-1996 and you have joined the department physically on 06-04-1996.

02. Whereas on your transfer from District Anantnag to BKK Baramulla you were further appointed in District Baramulla vide DPO order No.294 of 2016 dated 05-11-2016 Bt No.1402/B was allotted to you and you were further posted in DPL Baramulla.

03. Whereas while posted in DPL Baramulla you presented on 03-11-2019 report No. 17 of 2019 and were supposed to report back for duties on 14-09-2019, which you failed to do accordingly you were marked absent vide DD report No. 39 dated 19-04-2019 of DPL Baramulla. Later on your report back on 06-12-2019 and were given back to regular duties vide this office order Under No. Bt/DE/17/29919/22 dated 06-12-2019 by this way you remained absent for a period of 1701 days a formal departmental enquiry was also ordered to be conducted and entrusted to TPO Gauri Baramulla (enquiry transferred to Dy SP BKK Baramulla).

04. Whereas, while posted in PP Baramulla you again absented unauthorisedly from duties a report to this effect was reflected vide DD report No. 09 dated 05-01-2019 of PP Baramulla after remaining absent for a period of (13) days you reported back and resumed your duties vide DD report No. 12 dated 11-01-2019, after seeking proper permission from Dy SP BKK Baramulla. On this a formal departmental enquiry was order to be conducted against you by TPO Gauri Baramulla vide this office order Under No. Bt/DE/17/30004 dated 30-01-2019 (enquiry transferred to Dy SP BKK Baramulla).

05. Whereas, while posted in DPL Baramulla you were again found absent during off call a report to this effect was reflected in Daily Diary of DPL Baramulla on 03-05-2019. After remaining absent for period of (111) days you reported back and resumed duties after seeking proper permission from under signed. On this a departmental enquiry was also ordered to be conducted against you by Dy SP BKK Baramulla vide this office order Under No. Bt/DE/17/30004 dated 30-01-2019 and was entrusted to Dy SP BKK Baramulla.

06. Whereas, while posted in DPL Baramulla you presented on (2-11) days absent vide DD report No. 41 dated 07-10-2019 and you were supposed to report back on 14-10-2019 which you failed to do. Later on you reported back and resumed your duties vide DD report No. 41 dated 13-11-2019 after absence/resume of (33) days. On this a formal departmental enquiry initiated against you vide this office order Under No. Bt/DE/17/30004 dated 30-01-2019 and was entrusted to Dy SP BKK Baramulla.

07. Whereas you were directed to undergo 40 weeks Lower Class Training Course at SRP Doodhpathri (02 times) but in view of your prolonged and continuous absence you were returned back. Later on you were again directed for the same course scheduled to be held at Doodhpathri and you again absented unauthorisedly and due to continuous absence you were again reverted back.

08. Whereas, Lastly vide PIR BKK Baramulla signed by Dy SP Baramulla (Muzung) 19/11/2019 dated 13-12-2019 among others, you were directed to undergo 06 weeks condensed Lower Class Course scheduled to be held at PPS Mangarwa. 11-12-2019 and were accordingly released from this district vide DD report No. 04 dated 13-12-2019 with the direction to report PPS Mangarwa for said course, instead of reporting PPS Mangarwa you have absented unauthorisedly at your own, as intimated by Principal PPS Mangarwa vide his signal No. PTSM/1/LGC/199570 dated 14-12-2019. On this you have been marked absent vide DD report No. 12 dated 28-01-2020 and 11-12-2019.

09. Whereas, in view of prolonged /continuous unauthorized absence from duties you have been placed under suspension vide this office order issued under Under No. Bt/DE/17/2020/9338-41 dated 16-01-2020 and a formal departmental enquiry was also ordered to be conducted against you by Dy SP BKK Baramulla.

10. Whereas, Enquiry Officer informed you through concerned Police Station to report back vide different signals but you did not bother to report back and enquiry officer has also issued a notice on you vide his office communication No. Bt/DE/17/2020/9338-41 dated 06-02-2020, but you have not yet reported back and you have been informed and directed to report back for duties vide this office signal No. Bt/DE/17/2020/9338-41 dated 17-03-2020. Bt/DE/17/2020/9338-41 dated 03-07-2020 and Bt/DE/17/2020/9338-41 dated 08-10-2020, but you have not reported back for duties as yet.

11. Whereas, your unauthorized absence from duties involves loss of your appointment in terms of Article 124 of J&K CSR volume 1st, even your such behaviour or inaction and absence from duties will create an indelible and bad impression among the lawns.

12. Whereas, Snow Cause Notice served upon you vide this office letter No. Bt/DE/17/2020/9338-41 dated 13-10-2020 in terms of rule 154 part 11 clause (b) of Police Rules, through SSP Anantnag as well as through print media, to show the cause of absence from legitimate duties, which you did not respond despite of clear instructions and directions.

Therefore in the light of above facts, before proceeding further and the matter, I Abdul Qasim J&KSP vs. Superintendent of Police District Baramulla through the medium of this Snow Cause Notice 2nd do hereby again call upon you, Sgt Ashiq Hussain No.1402/H BKK-061521 S/O Nazir Ahmed Sheikh R/O Mir Deantar Anantnag to resume your duties within 07 days after receipt of this 2nd Snow Cause Notice. In case of failure to do so it will be presumed that you are not interested to serve the department anymore and appropriate action as warrants under rules will be taken against you.

DIPK-9118/20

No. Bt/DE/17/2020/33607-12  
Dated:- 16-11-2020

(Abdul Qasim) J&KSP  
Sd. Superintendent of Police,  
DISTRICT BARAMULLA



**انتقال پرمالال**

**محمد اصغر موتی رحلت کر گئے**

انتہائی دکھ اور افسوس کے ساتھ یہ خبر پیش کرتے ہیں کہ محمد اصغر موتی ابن غلام احمد موتی ساکن میرٹھ موتی قلعہ خور و طویل علالت کے بعد صبح 17 نومبر 2020 بروز منگل وارح کے 7 بجے اس دارالافتائی سے دارالبقائ کی جانب رحلت کر گئے۔ مرحوم انتہائی پارسا، پندار، شریف، انشیں اور محنت کی لہجہ تھے۔ اللہ تعالیٰ تعالیٰ عظیم جہاں محمد آل محمد رحمہ کو جنت الفردوس عطا فرمائے۔ مرحوم کے انصاف ثواب کے لئے اجتماعی فاتحہ خوانی موعزہ 20 اکتوبر 2020 بروز جمعہ المبارک علی آج ان کے آبائی مقبرہ واقع حسن آباد میں انجام دی جائے گی۔ بعد از اس آئینہ مجلس امتیاعی تدابیر کے ساتھ جنہوں نے جہولت خانہ پر جاری ہوگی۔

**سوگواران**

جملہ عزیز واقارب

**Office Of The Assistant Regional Transport Officer Budgam Kashmir**

**NOTICE**

Whereas an application has been received from one, Shri : Abdul Razak Wagay S/o: Ghulam Mohammad Wagay R/o: Kachwari Budgam owner of vehicle bearing Registration No: JK04D-1442 for cancellation of hire purchase agreement with M/S J & K Bank Ltd B/U Patwara.

Now therefore it is notified for the information of the general public that objections if any to the proposed cancellation of hire purchase Agreement shall be filed in writing in the office of the Assistant Regional Transport officer ARTO Budgam within a period of 12 days from the date of publication of this notice in the daily newspaper.

No. ARTO/ BUDGAM.1870  
Dated 17-11-2020



Assistant Regional Transport officer  
Budgam Kashmir

**Office Of The Assistant Regional Transport Officer Budgam Kashmir**

**NOTICE**

Whereas an application has been received from one, Shri : Bilal Ahmad Bhat S/o: Mohammad Hussain Bhat R/o: Abadpora Paris Abadpora Budgam owner of vehicle bearing Registration No: JK04E-7570 for cancellation of hire purchase agreement with M/S State Bank of India B/U Srinagar.

Now therefore it is notified for the information of the general public that objections if any to the proposed cancellation of hire purchase Agreement shall be filed in writing in the office of the Assistant Regional Transport officer ARTO Budgam within a period of 12 days from the date of publication of this notice in the daily newspaper.

No. ARTO/ BUDGAM.1862  
Dated 17-11-2020



Assistant Regional Transport officer  
Budgam Kashmir

**Office Of The Assistant Regional Transport Officer Budgam Kashmir**

**NOTICE**

Whereas an application has been received from one, Shri : Mohammad Iqbal Dar S/o: Ghulam Hussain Dar R/o: Patwara Budgam owner of vehicle bearing Registration No: JK04D-1155 for cancellation of hire purchase agreement with M/S J & K Bank Ltd B/U Budgam.

Now therefore it is notified for the information of the general public that objections if any to the proposed cancellation of hire purchase Agreement shall be filed in writing in the office of the Assistant Regional Transport officer ARTO Budgam within a period of 12 days from the date of publication of this notice in the daily newspaper.

No. ARTO/ BUDGAM.1873  
Dated 17-11-2020



Assistant Regional Transport officer  
Budgam Kashmir

**Office Of The Assistant Regional Transport Officer Budgam Kashmir**

**NOTICE**

Where an application for transfer of ownership has been received from one, Shri : Waseem Raja Rather S/o: Abdul Ahad Rather R/o: Nowbough Chadoora Budgam (Transferor) of Vehicle bearing registration number JK04F-4566, Chassis number 48379 Engine no. 09334 Model 2020, in favour of Shri. Gh Mohiud din Yatoo S/o. Ali Mohammad Yatoo R/o Nagam Chadoora Budgam (Transferee).

Now therefore it is notified for the information of the general public that objections if any to the proposed transfer of ownership shall be filed in writing in the office of the Assistant Regional Transport officer ARTO Budgam within a period of 07 days from the date of publication of this notice in the daily newspaper.

No. ARTO/ BUDGAM.1874  
Dated 17/11/2020



Assistant Regional Transport officer  
Budgam Kashmir

**Office Of The Assistant Regional Transport Officer Budgam Kashmir**

**NOTICE**

Where an application for transfer of ownership has been received from one, Shri : Bilal Ahmad Rather S/o: Mohammad Sidiq Rather R/o: Kul-treh Chadoora Budgam (Transferor) of LMV Wagon R, Vehicle bearing registration number JK04D-4999, Chassis number 88510 Engine no. 7744604 Model 2016, in favour of Shri. Ashiq Hussain Dar S/o, Mohammad Shaban Dar R/o S.K. Colony Anchoori Anantnag (Transferee) as well as HPA cancellation with M/S J & K Bank B/U Gownhapora.

Now therefore it is notified for the information of the general public that objections if any to the proposed transfer of ownership shall be filed in writing in the office of the Assistant Regional Transport officer ARTO Budgam within a period of 12 days from the date of publication of this notice in the daily newspaper.

No. ARTO/ BUDGAM.1864  
Dated 17/11/2020



Assistant Regional Transport officer  
Budgam Kashmir

**Office Of The Assistant Regional Transport Officer Budgam Kashmir**

**NOTICE**

Whereas an application has been received from one, Shri : Mohammad Ibrahim S/o: Qasim Ali Dar R/o: Harjok Budgam owner of vehicle bearing Registration No: JK04E-8538 for cancellation of hire purchase agreement with M/S Mahindra & Mahindra B/U Srinagar.

Now therefore it is notified for the information of the general public that objections if any to the proposed cancellation of hire purchase Agreement shall be filed in writing in the office of the Assistant Regional Transport officer ARTO Budgam within a period of 12 days from the date of publication of this notice in the daily newspaper.

No. ARTO/ BUDGAM.1872  
Dated 17-11-2020



Assistant Regional Transport officer  
Budgam Kashmir

**Office Of The Assistant Regional Transport Officer Budgam Kashmir**

**NOTICE**

Whereas an application has been received from one, Shri : Ashiq Hussain Malik S/o: Mohammad Qasim Malik R/o: Sehpora Magam Budgam owner of vehicle bearing Registration No: JK04F-2233 for cancellation of hire purchase agreement with M/S J & K Bank Ltd B/U Magam.

Now therefore it is notified for the information of the general public that objections if any to the proposed cancellation of hire purchase Agreement shall be filed in writing in the office of the Assistant Regional Transport officer ARTO Budgam within a period of 12 days from the date of publication of this notice in the daily newspaper.

No. ARTO/ BUDGAM.1866  
Dated 17-11-2020



Assistant Regional Transport officer  
Budgam Kashmir

## US military buys location data of popular Muslim apps: Report

Agencies

Washington: The US military is purchasing private information gathered from apps around the world, including several used by Muslims that have been downloaded nearly 100 billion times, a report says.

An investigation by the on-line magazine Motherboard published on Monday found the US Special Operations Command was procuring location data from several companies.

The most popular app among those targeted was a Muslim prayer and Quran app called Muslim Pro, with more than 98 million downloads worldwide. Others included a Muslim dating app.

Based on public records, interviews with developers, and technical analysis, the Motherboard investigation noted some companies obtain app location

quirements overseas," Navy Commander Tim Hawkins was quoted as saying. "We strictly adhere to established procedures and policies for protecting the privacy, civil liberties, constitutional and legal rights of American citizens."

### 'US military customers'

One of the companies involved in selling the location data, X-Mode, has said it tracks 25 million devices inside the United States every month and 40 million elsewhere – including in the European Union, Latin America, and the Asia-Pacific region.

Motherboard installed the Muslim Mingle dating app onto an Android phone and watched as it repeatedly sent exact geolocation coordinates along with the WiFi network name to X-Mode.

The investigation found other apps relaying location



data when advertisers pay to insert their ads into peoples' browsing sessions.

The US military confirmed the news report.

"Our access to the software is used to support Special Operations Forces mission re-

data include a step-counter app called Accupedo, the weather app Global Storms, and CPlus for Craigslist.

US Senator Ron Wyden told Motherboard that X-Mode also admitted selling data it collected to other "US military customers".

## China positions rocket ahead of ambitious lunar mission

Agencies

Beijing: China on Tuesday moved a massive rocket into place in preparation for launching a mission to bring back materials from the moon for the first time in four decades.

The Long March-5 was transported by tractor from its hangar to the nearby launch site at the space base in Wenchang along the coast of the southern island province of Hainan.

The Chang'e 5 mission it will carry is scheduled to launch early next week, placing a lander on the moon that will drill 2 meters (almost 7 feet) beneath the surface and scoop up rocks and other debris to be brought to earth. That would allow scientists to study newly obtained lunar materials for the first time since the American and Russian missions of the 1960s and 1970s.

The mission, named for the Chinese moon goddess, is among China's most ambitious as its space programme continues to build steam since it first put a man in space in 2003, becoming only the third nation to do so after the US and Russia.

China currently has a mission on the way to Mars, along

**The mission, named for the Chinese moon goddess, is among China's most ambitious as its space programme continues to build steam since it first put a man in space in 2003, becoming only the third nation to do so after the US and Russia**

with a rover on the moon's far side that is providing the first full measurements of radiation exposure from the lunar surface, information vital for any country that plans to send astronauts to the moon.

China has increasingly engaged with foreign countries on missions, although US law still prevents collaboration with NASA, excluding China from partnering with the International Space Station.

That has prompted China to work on its own space station and launch its own programmes that have put it in steady competition with Japan and India among Asian nations seeking to notch new achievements in space.



## Second Vaccine Lifts Global Hopes Of Overcoming Deadly Pandemic

Agencies

**WASHINGTON:** Global hopes of overcoming the coronavirus pandemic were boosted on Monday after a second vaccine was found to be nearly 95 per cent effective, bringing much-needed optimism to a world facing surging infections and a raft of new restrictions.

The news from the US biotech firm Moderna comes after similar results were announced last week for a vaccine candidate developed by pharma giant Pfizer and its German partner BioNTech.

European stock markets surged on Monday on the hopeful news, building on a boom sparked by the Pfizer news one week ago.

Yet with neither vaccine likely to be widely available for months, governments around the world are still moving forward with unpopular but life-saving restrictions on free movement, gatherings and business. Globally, infections have soared past 54 million with more than 1.3 million deaths.

Moderna, whose results stem from a clinical trial of more than 30,000 participants, plans to apply for emergency approval of its vaccine and expects to have approximately 20 million doses ready to ship in the US by the end of the year.

Before Moderna, similar announcement came from Pfizer

"This positive interim analysis from our Phase 3 study has given us the first clinical validation that our vaccine can prevent Covid-19 disease, including severe disease," said Stephane Bancel, Moderna's CEO.

Like the Pfizer candidate, the vaccine involves injecting the body with strands of genetic instructions called "messenger RNA", which tell cells how to fight the coronavirus.

While the breakthrough opens a chink of light at the end of the tunnel, experts caution there are still difficult and dangerous months ahead.

"A vaccine on its own will not end the pandemic," warned World Health Organisation head Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

Supply will initially be limited to health care workers and other vulnerable populations, which could offer major help to hospital systems but will "still leave the virus with a lot of room to move," he said.

### British PM isolating

As scientists and pharma companies charge ahead on the vaccine front, governments are trying to slow the spread of the virus and protect strained hospital systems.

In hard-hit Europe, curbs have returned — often in the face of protests — from Greece to Britain, where PM and Covid-19 survivor Boris Johnson

was self-isolating out of precaution on Monday after coming into contact with an MP who later tested positive for the virus.

Johnson said he would lead the virus response from Downing Street despite the fact "that I've had the disease and I'm bursting with antibodies" after being hospitalised in April.

In Germany, which began a new round of shutdowns earlier in the month, Chancellor Angela Merkel is pushing for more measures, including masks in all schools and smaller class sizes.

Outside work or school, contact between people should also be "restricted to those from another fixed household", under a proposal from Merkel's office due to be put to regional leaders.

While new cases are plateauing in Germany, daily numbers, officials say, are still too high.

In France, which has been under partial lockdown for more than two weeks, health minister Olivier Veran warned the strict measures had slowed the disease but "we have not won against the virus yet".

### US reeling

Infections in the United States, the world's worst-hit nation, show no sign of slowing after one million new cases in less than a week pushed the total number past 11 million.

## Trump supporters head to the streets as he pushes false election claims

Agencies

Washington: Who will be the first to get COVID-19 vaccines?

No decision has been made, but the consensus among many experts in the US and globally is that health care workers should be first, said Sema Sgaier of the Surgo Foundation, a nonprofit group working on vaccine allocation issues.

An expert panel advising the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is also considering giving high

priority to workers in essential industries, people with certain medical conditions and people age 65 and older.

Once a vaccine gets a green light from the Food and Drug Administration, the panel will look at clinical trial data on side effects and how people of various ages, ethnicities and health statuses responded. That will determine the panel's recommendations to the CDC on how to prioritise shots.

State officials are expect-

ed to follow the CDC's guidance as they distribute the first vaccines.

Vaccine supplies will be limited at first. There won't be enough to protect everyone, yet getting the shots to the right people could change the course of the pandemic.

Many other questions about distribution remain unanswered, Sgaier noted, such as whether to distribute shots equally across the country, or to focus on areas that are hot spots. — AP

## Iran vows 'crushing' response after NYT says Trump mulled attack

Agencies

Tehran: Any attack by the United States against Iran would face a "crushing" response, an Iranian government spokesman has said, following a report that President Donald Trump last week asked for options for attacking Iran's main nuclear site.

"Any action against the Iranian nation would certainly face a crushing response," Ali Rabiei said on Tuesday in remarks streamed on an official government website, according to the Reuters news agency.

On Monday, the New York Times reported that Trump had asked his close aides what "options were available" to take action against Iran's key nuclear site in a meeting last week.

But his advisers warned such a move during his last weeks in office could escalate into a bigger conflict, the Times reported.

The meeting on Thursday took place shortly after inspectors reported a significant increase in Iran's stockpile of nuclear material, the report said, citing four current and former US officials.

"Mr Trump asked his top national security aides what options were available and how to respond," the newspaper reported, citing officials.

The report said the attack would have likely targeted Natanz, the centrepiece of Iran's enrichment programme, which Tehran says is only for peaceful purposes.

"Any action against the Iranian nation would certainly face a crushing response," Iranian government spokesman Ali Rabiei said on Tuesday, according to Reuters news agency.

Last week, the United Nations International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said Iran had stockpiled low-enriched uranium 12 times more than the limit set by a nuclear accord.

As of November 2, the nuclear watchdog said Iran had a stockpile of 2,442.9 kilogrammes (5,385.7 pounds) of low-enriched uranium, up from 2,105.4kg (4,641.6 pounds) reported on August 25.

The nuclear deal Iran signed in 2015 with world powers allowed it only to keep a stockpile of 202.8kg (447 pounds).

### 'Maximum pressure campaign'

The landmark nuclear agreement, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), was signed to curb Iran's nuclear activities in exchange for sanctions relief.

The goal was to prevent the country from building a nuclear weapon, something Iran has insisted it does not intend to do.

However, the Iranian government began scaling back a number of its JCPOA commitments following Trump's decision to unilaterally withdraw the US from the accord in 2018, and the subsequent failure by its European signatories – France, the UK and Germany – to secure Iran the economic benefits it was promised under the deal.

## Saudi Minister says nuclear armament against Iran 'an option'

Agencies

Riyadh: Saudi Arabia reserves the right to arm itself with nuclear weapons if regional rival Iran cannot be stopped from making one, the kingdom's minister of state for foreign affairs has said.

"It's definitely an option," Adel al-Jubeir told the DPA news agency in a recent interview. If Iran becomes a nuclear power, he said, more countries would follow suit.

"And Saudi Arabia has made it very clear, that it will do everything it can to protect its people and to protect its territories."

Tehran has been working on the use of nuclear power for decades. In 2015, it signed a landmark nuclear deal with world powers to stop the development of a bomb in exchange for lifting sanctions.

But US President Donald Trump in 2018 unilaterally withdrew his country from the deal and brought it to the brink of failure.

Trump's administration wants a more far-reaching programme and an end to Iran's regional interference – a position supported by Saudi Arabia.

"We believe the Iranians have only responded to pressure," said al-Jubeir.

Asked what changes he anticipates could come once President-elect Joe Biden takes charge in January, he said: "We will have to see."

Biden has promised to return to the nuclear deal but has said he will seek to put pressure on Iran's regional activities and missile programmes, among other things.



## SpaceX capsule, carrying 4 astronauts, docks with Intl' Space Station

Washington: Four astronauts riding a newly designed spacecraft from Elon Musk's SpaceX docked with the International Space Station Monday night, in the first crewed mission on a privately built space capsule purchased by NASA.

SpaceX's Crew Dragon capsule, dubbed Resilience by its crew of three Americans and one Japanese astronaut, docked at 11:01 pm EST (7:01 GMT), 27 hours after launching atop a Falcon 9 rocket from Cape Canaveral, Florida.

The space station, an orbital laboratory about 250 miles (400 km) above Earth, will be their home for the next six months. After that, another set of astronauts on a Crew Dragon capsule will replace them. That rotation will continue until Boeing joins the program with its own spacecraft late next year.

The Resilience crew includes Crew Dragon commander Mike Hopkins and two fellow NASA astronauts — mission pilot Victor Glover and physicist Shannon Walker. They are joined by Japanese astronaut Soichi Noguchi, making



his third trip to space after previously flying on the US shuttle in 2005 and Soyuz in 2009.

Another US astronaut and two Russian cosmonauts are aboard the space station from a previous mission.

"Welcome to the ISS. We can't wait to have you onboard," said Kate Rubins, a US astronaut already on the space station.

Before receiving its flight certification from NASA last week, SpaceX's Crew Dragon had been under development for roughly a decade under a public-private NASA program started in 2011 to revive the agency's human spaceflight capability.

## "Looks Like Biden Has Won Election": Trump National Security Advisor

Washington: U.S. President Donald Trump's national security adviser, Robert O'Brien, said on Monday he will ensure a professional transition to the team led by Democrat Joe Biden if Biden is deemed the winner of the 2020 presidential election and "obviously things look like that now."

The Republican Trump has insisted the Nov. 3 election was "rigged" and that he will be declared the winner after a series of legal challenges in several states.

Speaking to the Global Security Forum, O'Brien said that while he hoped Trump would turn out to have won a second four-year term, he would work with a new administration headed by Biden and his vice presidential running mate, Kamala Harris.

"If there is a new administration, look, they deserve some time to come in and implement their policies," O'Brien said. "If the Biden-



Harris ticket is determined to be the winner, and obviously things look like that now, we'll have a very professional transition from the National Security Council, there's no question about it."

Trump has so far failed to produce evidence that could overturn Biden's 306-232 victory over Trump in the state-by-state Electoral College vote. States face a Dec. 8 "safe harbor" deadline to

certify their elections and choose electors who will officially select the new president on Dec. 14.

O'Brien said it appeared Biden was prepared to bring in a professional national security team.

"The great thing is this is the United States of America," the national security adviser said. "We passed the baton and have had peaceful, successful transitions even in the most contentious periods."

## Peru names centrist lawmaker as 3rd president in a week

Peru's Congress on Monday chose legislator Francisco Sagasti as the Andean country's caretaker president, in an attempt to defuse a sharp political crisis after angry protests and the departure of two presidents in the past week.

Sagasti, 76, from the centrist Morado Party, won enough votes to head Congress, which means he will constitutionally assume the presidency of Peru ahead of national elections called for April.

Sagasti will be Peru's third president in a week, after interim leader Manuel Merino resigned on Sunday, five days after being sworn in following the ousting of centrist Martin Vizcarra.

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Ayurvedic / Homeopathic Hospitalization Expenses

**Bajaj Allianz General Insurance Co. Ltd.** | Bajaj Allianz House, Airport Road, Yerwada, Pune – 411006. Reg.: 113 | CIN: U66010PN2000PLC015329 | UIN: IRDAI/HLT/BAGI/P-H/V.I/65/2016-17 | For more details, log on to : [www.bajajallianz.com](http://www.bajajallianz.com) or call at : Sales - 1800 209 0144 / Service - 1800 209 5858 (Toll Free No.) | For more details on risk factors and Terms and Conditions, please read the sales brochure before concluding a sale.

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