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CHILDREN LEARN MORE EFFECTIVELY FROM STORYTELLING THAN DEMONSTRATIVE ACTIVITIES, STUDY REVEALS

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WHY YOUNG PEOPLE STILL WANT TO GO TO UNIVERSITY, EVEN THOUGH IT'LL BE VERY DIFFERENT TO USUAL

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NEWS



FARMERS REJECT GOVT PROPOSAL, TO INTENSIFY AGITATION WITH NATIONWIDE PROTEST

Wisdom

Quote!

"The journey is what brings us happiness not the destination."
—Dan Millman

news

DIGEST

KU Organises Webinar On Domestic Violence
SRINAGAR: Kashmir University's Centre for Women's Studies and Research (CWSR) on Wednesday organised a webinar on domestic violence.
Registrar Dr Nisar Ahmad Mir inaugurated the day-long webinar "Domestic Violence: Chronicling the Ordeal and the Way Out", organised in collaboration with the University Grants Commission (UGC).
In his presidential remarks, Mir as per a statement, referred to recent news [▶▶ More On P2](#)

Two 'Drug Peddlers' Held In Rajouri
JAMMU: Two drug peddlers were arrested with heroin in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district on Wednesday, officials said.
A police team on routine highway patrolling in Tandwal Thandikassi area of Rajouri spotted the two pedestrians moving suspiciously, they said.
During frisking, 385 grams of heroin was recovered from their possession after which they were arrested on the spot, they said.
The accused were identified as Mohammad Arif, resident of Dabbi Balakote in Poonch, and Mohammad Asif, resident of Samattee Challas in Doongl area of Rajouri, police added.

Bear Kills 10 Sheep In Handwara
SRINAGAR: At least ten sheep were mauled to death by a black bear in Drangsoo Mawar area of Handwara in Kupwara district, reports said Wednesday.
The ferocious beast barged into cowsheds belonging to Mohammed Maqbool Chopan, Abdul Ahad Chopan and Nazir Ahmad Pir last night killing at least ten sheep before being chased away to nearby forests, locals said Wednesday.
Blaming the Wildlife Department of lackadaisical approach, the affected families alleged that despite all attempts made to reach the department concerned, "no official or even any employee has so far bothered to visit us to assess the damage."
The inhabitants have in the meantime demanded the authorities concerned to act swiftly and catch the roaming beast to avert any future tragedy. (GNS)

2 Held With Narcotics In Uri
SRINAGAR: Police on Wednesday arrested two people and claimed to have recovered contraband drugs from them in Uri area of Baramulla district.
In a statement issued today, a police spokesperson said that acting on inputs, a naka was established by police in Gingal Uri during which two persons were apprehended from a vehicle.
He said that the driver of the intercepted vehicle tried to flee the spot, however was caught and during interrogation deposed himself as Mohammed Hanief Quershi of Parapilla besides another on-board associate as Jahangir Ahmad Khan (alais Pappu) son of Mohammad Hussain Khan residence Mohura.
"During search of vehicle a packet containing Heroine like substance about 1 Kg was recovered," the police spokesperson said.

PULWAMA ENCOUNTER

3 Militants Killed, Civilian Injured

OBSERVER NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR: Three local militants were killed and a civilian injured in an encounter in south Kashmir's Pulwama district, police said Wednesday.
Acting on a specific input about presence of militants, special operations group (SOG) of police, army's 55 and 182 RR and the personnel of CRPF 183 battalion laid a siege around Tiken area of the district on Wednesday morning and launched a search operation, a police spokesperson said. The militants hiding in a residential house, he said, turned down surrender offer and opened fire upon the joint team.
"In the ensuing encounter, three militants were killed and their bodies were retrieved from the site of the encounter. As per police records, the killed militants were part of groups involved in many cases including planning & executing several major attacks [▶▶ More On P2](#)




KO File Photo: Abid Bhat


4 Civilians Injured In Pattan Grenade Blast
SRINAGAR: Four civilians on Wednesday were injured in a grenade blast in Singhpora area of Baramulla district.
Around 9:55 am Wednesday, unknown militants hurled a grenade towards the vehicle of paramilitary Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) personnel in [▶▶ More On P2](#)

Car Used In HMT Attack Found: Police
SRINAGAR: Police on Wednesday recovered the car used by militants in last month's attack in the HMT area of the city outskirts that left two soldiers dead.
Army's 2 RR and police recovered the Maruti 800 car (JK04A-6535) during a cordon and search operation in Mustafa- [▶▶ More On P2](#)

Fresh Snow Spell From Friday: MeT Dept



SRINAGAR: The meteorological department on Wednesday predicted fresh snow spell across Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh from Friday evening, even as the weather conditions improved across the Valley while Drass and Sonamarg continued to receive snow-fall for the second consecutive day today.
MeT Deputy Director, Mukhtar Ahmad said Wednesday that the weather would remain mainly dry on December 10-December 11 evening across J&K and Ladakh. He said that there were less chances of wet spell during this period in the higher reaches.
"From December 11 evening to December 12 afternoon, there is a possibility of light to moderate rains, snowfall across J&K and Ladakh," he said.
He further said that the night temperature across Kashmir has increased due to the fresh snowfall and rains while the day temperature has gone down. [▶▶ More On P2](#)

Fifth Round Today, 299 Candidates In Fray

Voting Also On 58 Vacant Sarpanch, 218 Panch Seats: SEC
OBSERVER NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU: The fifth phase of District Development Council (DDC) elections in 37 constituencies and by-polls to 58 Panchayat and 218 Panch vacancies across Jammu and Kashmir will be held on Thursday, State Election Commissioner, KK Sharma said Wednesday.
Addressing a press conference here, Sharma said that of 37 DDC constituencies, voting will be conducted on 17 from Kashmir division and 20 from Jammu division. In the fifth phase, he said, out of the total 280 DDC constituencies in J&K, 37 are going to poll tomorrow.
"In the 17 DDC constituencies of Kashmir division, there are 155 candidates in fray including 30 females. In Jammu division, there are 144 candidates in fray for the 20 DDC constituencies in this phase, including 40 females," Sharma said.
He further said that there are 125 Sarpanch vacancies which have been notified in the 5th phase and out of these, 30 have been elected unopposed. There shall be contest in 58 constituencies and 175 candidates including 51 females are in fray.
Similarly, he said that out of the

total 1412 Panch vacancies notified in this phase, 218 constituencies will go for elections with 527 candidates including 137 female candidates.
"2104 polling stations have been setup across the UT for this phase, of which, 914 are in Jammu division and 1190 are in Kashmir division. Of 2104 polling stations, 1193 are Hyper sensitive, 472 are sensitive and 439 have been categorized as normal," Sharma said
SEC said that out of these 2104 polling stations, there shall be a poll for Sarpanch vacancies on 271 polling stations and Panch vacancies on 229 polling stations, along with the DDC polls.
"Polling for this phase shall be conducted on 10th December, 2020 from 7am to 2 pm," he added.
SEC further said that all the requisite arrangements for this phase are in place including manpower, election material and security arrangements in all poll going areas.
"In view of Covid-19 pandemic, adequate arrangements have been put in place to ensure safety of all stake holders including the voters. Sanitizers, thermal scanners and face masks have been arranged at the polling stations to ensure that SOPs issued by the concerned authorities, including wearing face masks and maintaining social distancing are strictly followed at the polling stations," Sharma added.

'Illegally Detained' For Third Time: Mehbooba



KO File Photo: Abid Bhat

“If my movements are curbed due to ‘security concerns’ then why are BJP ministers allowed to campaign freely”

SRINAGAR: PDP president Mehbooba Mufti on Wednesday claimed that authorities detained her at Gupkar Road residence here for the third time in a fortnight.
"Illegally detained today for the third time in less than a fortnight. Too much democracy indeed. If my movements are curbed due to 'security concerns' then why are BJP ministers allowed to campaign freely in Kashmir while I've been asked to wait until the culmination of DDC elections?" Mehbooba tweeted.
Officials, however, did not comment on the claim.
Mehbooba had claimed on Tuesday that she was not allowed to leave her residence as she wanted to visit Budgam district to meet the families who have been evicted from a forest land by the authorities. The

former chief minister also uploaded an image of a letter purportedly written by the Budgam district authorities to the Special Security Group (SSG) that protects her.
"In view of the prevailing security scenario and recent inputs received from intelligence agencies regarding movement of terrorist groups in the subject area, it is requested that the tour programme of the VIP may be deferred till the culmination of the (DDC) elections," the letter sent on Tuesday to the SSG Director reads.
The letter suggests that the SSG had informed the district administration about Mehbooba wanting to visit Budgam district on Wednesday. The election to the District Development Councils (DDC) is underway in Jammu and Kashmir. —PTI

6 More Corona Deaths In J&K, 369 New Cases

SRINAGAR: Six more people succumbed to coronavirus in Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday while 369 fresh cases of Covid-19, including eight soldiers and as many travelers were detected in the Union Territory in the last 24 hours.
In Kashmir Valley, three more people lost the battle with the deadly disease while three others died of Covid-19 in Jammu division, taking the number of virus related deaths in J&K to 1767, officials said.
Among the three victims from Valley, the officials said, included a 70-year-old woman from Kupwara, a 60-year-old man from Bandipora and a 61-year-old woman from Saffa Kadal Srinagar.
Regarding Jammu region, they said, one death each was reported from Kathua, Samba and Reasi districts.
With these deaths, the total fatality count in the Valley has reached 1136 and 631 in the Jammu region. Srinagar district with 428 deaths tops the list followed by Jammu (318), Baramulla (165), Budgam (104), Pulwama (86), Kupwara (87), Anantnag (81), Doda (58), Bandipora (56), Kulgam (52), Udhampur (52), Rajouri (50), Kathua (44), Ganderbal (40), Shopian (37), Samba (34), Poonch (22), Ramban (21), Kishtwar (20), and Reasi (11).
Meanwhile, 369 more people, including eight soldiers and as many travelers were among 369 people, who tested Covid-19 positive in J&K in the last 24 hours, officials said. [▶▶ More On P2](#)

India-China Ties In Most Difficult Phase In Last 40 Years: Jaishankar

NEW DELHI: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Wednesday China has given India "five differing explanations" for deploying large forces at the LAC, adding this violation of bilateral pacts has "very significantly damaged" their relationship that is now at its "most difficult phase" in the last 30-40 years.
The comments by Jaishankar during an online interactive session organised by Australian think tank Lowy Institute came against the backdrop of the over seven-month-long military standoff between India and China at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh.
"We are today probably at the most difficult phase of our relationship with China, certainly in the last 30 to 40 years or you could argue even more," 
Jaishankar said highlighting various aspects of the bilateral ties in the last three decades.
"The relationship this year has been very significantly damaged."
"We are very clear that maintaining peace and tranquillity along the LAC is the basis for the

rest of the relationship to progress. You can't have the kind of situation you have on the border and say let's carry on with life in all other sectors of activity. It's just unrealistic," he said.
Jaishankar further said, "We have this problem because from 1988, our relationship had its hiccups, we had our issues and differences but the direction of the ties broadly were positive."
The external affairs minister said the relationship progressed in trade, travel and various other domains as both sides inked several pacts to maintain peace and tranquillity along the LAC.
"All of this was posited on the fact that while we were trying to solve the boundary [▶▶ More On P2](#)

We'll Make Election Hat-Trick In J&K: BJP

SRINAGAR: Senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader and Union Minister of State for Finance and Corporate Affairs, Anurag Singh Thakur said on Wednesday that his party will claim election hat-trick in Jammu and Kashmir also, following its success in Hyderabad and Rajasthan.
Thakur, who is also in-charge of Jammu and Kashmir DDC elections, said that the BJP has emerged [▶▶ More On P2](#) as the

Sopore Youth Completes LLB In Jail

SRINAGAR: A 26-year-old youth, who is languishing in jail for seven years, has completed his LLB degree from the department of Law in the University of Kashmir.
Feroz Ahamd Dar, a resident of Alsafa Colony Sopore, was arrested on 18 April 2013 and is currently languishing in Central Jail Srinagar. However, despite all odds, Feroz didn't give up on his studies. [▶▶ More On P2](#)

Sibling Sendoff Invokes 'Farewell To Arms' Plea In Poonch

KAMRAN ALI
After their frontier wrong turn, when two teenage sisters received a grand repatriation in Poonch's Chankan Da Bagh, Rashid Khan's eyes turned moist over his long-departed clan progeny's safe passage to home.
This battered border resident who lost some of his tribe members to divisive frontlines and combative guns over the years termed the "homecoming" of the two girls as a sign of hope amid growing hostility.
"The human treatment towards the two girls has become one of the rare heartwarming gestures in our seven-decade-long unending trauma here," Khan said.
"Their sendoff makes you believe that humanity still exists in these terrible times. We've seen enough lives getting wasted here due to the constant border shelling. May those little angels now become the beginning of the end of our long torment!"
Khan's village falls in the firing range of PirPanjal, where belligerent borders are known to explode and



“All of us are happy for the girls, but at the same time, those shells should stop rain and ravage our lives now. We want to live in peace. Let these guns fall silent now”



bleed civilian lives for decades now.
But the blazing guns at the international border in Poonch have only intensified since last year when New Delhi claimed countering the Pulwama bombing with the Balakot strike.
"Guns are still blazing here," Khan lamented. "And we continue to cower in fear."
Amid this terrifying situation, two teenage sisters lately landed in Poonch as the cross-border "intruders".
After taken into custody, the siblings voiced their human tragedy which often gets sidelined under [▶▶ More On P2](#)

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FROM FRONT PAGE

3 Militants Killed ...

on security forces,” the police spokesperson said. He identified the trio as Mehraj-ud-Din Lone of Arigam Pulwama, Umar Farooq of Sigan Shopian and Umer Ali of Dadsara Tral, all affiliated with militant outfit Al-Badr.

According to the reports, Ali’s brother Shahnawaz was also a militant, who was killed by state forces in a gunfight in July 2013 in Mandoor village of Tral.

The police spokesperson further said that Zamir Sadiq Lone, in whose house the militants were hiding, also received gunshot injuries.

“He was evacuated to hospital for the treatment of his injuries where his condition is stated to be stable,” he said.

“Incriminating materials including arms & ammunition were recovered from the site of encounter. All the recovered materials have been taken into case records for further investigation and to probe their complicity in other crimes,” he added.

The police spokesperson said that in view of pandemic, the bodies of militants shall be sent to Baramulla for their burial and last rites after completion of medico-legal formalities.

“The nearest family members of the killed militants shall be allowed to participate in the last rites at Baramulla. In this connection a case under relevant sections of law has been registered and investigation has been initiated,” he said. He also urged people to cooperate with police till the area is completely sanitized and cleared of all the explosive materials, if any.

Sibling Sendoff ...

the heightened vigil of watch towers and frontline sharpshooters. Border residents say that any wrong move can prove fatal for them.

Lamenting over the loss of their father—“the butcher who died due to heart attack some fortnight ago”—the two siblings had abandoned their home apparently to “get some moments of respite and solace” from the escalating tempers and tensions in their bereaved family.

But on the sundown of December 5, when Laiba and her younger sister Sana Zubair didn’t show up, their brother filed a missing report in Abbaspur Police Station, falling in Rawalkot area of other Poonch.

On the heels of that report, government forces posted in Poonch leaked the capture of two uncanny “infiltrators” at border.

“From the word go itself, it was clear that the two girls were running from their distressed home situation,” said a police officer posted in Poonch. “Our army men hosted and treated them well. And later they were sendoff with gifts.”

Even girls made no bones about their hosts’ “good gesture”.

Back home, the other administration is presently trying to ensure a friendly family atmosphere to avert such wrong turns at the blazing borders.

“But this fresh humanistic display should not be confined to a single instance only,” Khan said.

“All of us are happy for the girls, but at the same time, those shells should stop rain and ravage our lives now. We want to live in peace. Let these guns fall silent now.”

4 Civilians Injured ...

Singhpora area of Pattan along the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad highway, a police spokesperson said. However, the grenade, he said, missed the intended target and exploded on the roadside. “In this incident, four civilians received splinter injuries and were evacuated to nearby hospital for treatment,” the police spokesperson said.

However, a local news agency KDC reported injuries to six people in the grenade blast. The injured civilians have been identified as Ghulam Mohammad Parry, Gulzar Ahmad Khan, Manzoor Ahmad Bhat, Zubair Ahmad Dar—all residents of Singhpora, Tabasum of Doodipora Handwara and Farman Ali, a resident of Uttar Pradesh..

According to the reports, soon after the grenade attack, government forces cordoned off to area to nab the attackers

“Police has registered a case in this regard under relevant sections of law. Investigation is in progress and officers continue to work to establish the full circumstances of this crime,” the police spokesperson said

Car Used In ...

Abad area of HMT on the outskirts of this capital city, news agency KDC reported Wednesday. However, no reports of any arrests were received during the search operation.

India-China Ties ...

question, we would maintain peace and tranquillity along the border areas,” he said, adding there were incidents of arguments between patrols along the border “but you never had a major breach of understanding”.

He said multiple agreements between the two sides were inked from 1993 with a commitment that both parties will not bring large forces to the border areas.

“Now for some reason, for which the Chinese have to date given us five differing explanations, the Chinese have violated it. The Chinese have literally brought tens of thousands of soldiers in full military preparation mode right to the LAC in Ladakh. Naturally the relationship would be profoundly disturbed by this,” he said.

Referring to the Galwan Valley clashes in eastern Ladakh in which 20 Indian soldiers were killed, Jaishankar said the incident “completely changed national sentiment”.

The external affairs minister also said the “very big issue” is how to get the relationship back on track.

He also mentioned various diplomatic and military engagements between the two sides in the last few months including his meeting with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi in Moscow as well as talks between the two defence ministers.

“We have multiple layers of communication. Communication is not the issue, the issue is the fact that we have agreements and those agreements are not being observed.”

Asked about his stint in China as India’s ambassador and his views on Chinese President Xi Jinping, Jaishankar referred to his observation made in his book “The India Way: Strategies for an Uncertain World”.

“I think there has been an evolution in China, my book basically makes the case that 2008-09 was the tipping point for that change. And you have today a China whose engagement with the world is very different from the way it used to be conducted 20 years ago,” he said.

“Now you could argue that it is natural as (when) a country goes up the power hierarchy that its behavioural pattern would change, I reserve comment on it, but clearly no question that you have a very much more nationalistic China and that is expressed sort of down the line in variety of ways and often in policies as well,” Jaishankar said.

Asked how India’s ties with the US will be under Joe Biden’s administration, Jaishankar said the US president-elect has good-will for India and made positive contributions in growth of the ties between the two countries. He said the structural and objective part of the relations brought the countries together. PTI

Fresh Snow Spell ...

In Valley, the weather remained cloudy throughout the day in plains as well as higher reaches, officials said. However, Drass, Sonamarg, Gumat and other areas received snowfall today as well.

Reports said major roads and highways in the Valley continued to remain closed for the second straight day. The Srinagar-Leh highway as per the officials continued to remain closed today for the vehicular movement.

Official statement issued by the traffic department stated that in view of inclement weather prediction issued by Met department (rain and snowfall) in J&K for next few days, there are chances of blockade of highway, thus the people are advised to avoid journey on Jammu-Srinagar highway.

However, subject to fair weather and better road condition, Light Motor Vehicles (passenger) shall be allowed from Jammu towards Srinagar tomorrow while commuters are advised to follow the SOP issued by the government to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

The statement urged security forces not to ply against the traffic advisory in view of traffic congestion on Jammu-Srinagar highway. “They may ply from Jammu towards Srinagar,” the statement said.

Pertinently, there shall be no traffic movement on Jammu-Srinagar highway on Friday from either side in view of maintenance, repairing of the road.

Meanwhile, officials said that the Mughal road also remained closed today for the vehicular movement due to snow accumulation.

Meanwhile, the Disaster Management Authority has issued a high danger (Orange Alert) avalanche warning for higher reaches of Bandipora District particularly Gurez Tehsil.

“Medium Danger (Yellow Alert) avalanche warning for higher reaches of Poonch, Kishtwar, Kupwara, Ganderbal and Kargil Districts and Low Level (Yellow Alert) Avalanche warning for upper reaches of Ramban, Anantnag, Kulgam, Baramulla and Leh,” officials said, adding that the people living in these areas have been cautioned not to venture in the Avalanche prone areas for the next 24 hours.

We’ll Make ...

region amongst the most developed and world class in India,” he said.

“The people of J&K and India are with the BJP, they believe in the reformist and development oriented agenda of PM Narendra Modi. Whether its state elections or Municipal elections or Panchayat elections, time and again people have reposed their faith in the leadership provided by BJP,” he added.

Thakur said that in the recently concluded Hyderabad Municipal polls, his party won 48 seats in comparison to 4 in 2016. In the state of Rajasthan, he said, the BJP won 1989 seats out of 4371 Panchayat Samiti seats.

“The incumbent Congress received 1852 seats; this shows a clear lack of trust for the party at its activities. In fact in the Zila Parishad elections, the BJP won 353 seats in comparison to the Congress 252 seats. In the by-elections of UP, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh as well we saw how people reposed their faith in BJP,” he said.

“This clearly shows a strong wave of support in favour of the BJP at all levels of the democratic system. BJP fights elections with all the energy of its karyakartas and supporters. We win because we serve the interest of people not like the selfish interests of Gupkar Gang leaders,” he added.

Launching a scathing attack on J&K mainstream parties, the senior BJP leader said that it was a fact that the “Gupkar Gang” not only “looted” the state of its resources, but also neglected basic healthcare, education, infrastructure, employment needs of J&K.

There is dejection amongst the karyakartas of PDP, INC and NC as they know the people will reject them once and for all on 22nd Dec. The people of J&K are ready to vote for a development oriented vision under PM Narendra Modi and J&K will be the hat-trick in the victory”, he added. (KDC)

6 More Corona ...

While the Kashmir division reported 179 new cases of coronavirus, the remaining 190 were confirmed by officials from the Jammu division.

Giving district-wise details, officials said, Srinagar reported 86 cases, Baramulla 19, Budgam 19, Kupwara 12, Pulwama 13, Anantnag 8, Bandipora 4, Ganderbal 10, Kulgam 4, Shopian 4, Jammu 89, Udhampur 27, Rajouri 12, Doda 12, Kathua 24, Kishtwar 5, Samba 8, Poonch 1, Ramban 7 and Reasi 5.

Moreover, they said, 342 more COVID-19 patients recovered and were discharged from various hospitals— 156 from Jammu Division and 186 from the Valley. (With GNS inputs)

Sopore Youth ...

He initially passed his B.Sc from central jail Baramulla in 2016 and simultaneously completed his Diploma in Human Rights from IGNOU. Dar’s father, Bashir Ahmad said that his son was arrested in 2013 in a militant related case and the family tried their best to get him out on bail.

“I was a class IV employee. After my retirement, I spend all my savings in his case to get him released, but to no avail,” Ahmad said. “But we are happy that he completed his LLB, though inside we are broken.”

Ahmad said that Feroz’s mother is a heart patient and belonging to a middle-class family, they are facing many severe financial crunch from the last seven years.

Meanwhile, the family members of Feroz Ahmad have appealed the LG, Manoj Sinha, and police department to show some mercy on their son and release him keeping in view his good behaviour—(KNO)

KU Organises ...

reports which suggested that within just four months of Covid-19 pandemic, women in the country filed more domestic violence complaints than recorded in the same span of time in the last 10 years.

“One such report said that about 86% women who experienced violence never sought help while 77% of the victims did not even mention the incidents to anyone,” he said, adding that the report also highlighted that of 14.3% of victims who sought help, only 7% reached out to relevant authorities or social service organisations, even as over 90% of victims sought help only from their immediate family.

Mir said it is important to change attitudes of people through mass awareness to put an end to domestic violence. “Alongside, we need to put in place a robust counselling system and a serious community-level engagement-cum-communication strategy to address the concerns related to domestic violence,” he said.

Keynote speaker Rashmi Anand, a noted author and social activist, talked at length about the dynamics of domestic violence and its larger impact on the victims as well as the society at large.

Sharing what she called her “personal ordeal” with domestic violence, Rashmi referred to ways of addressing domestic violence with a positive bent of mind within homes and in the vicinity.

“It is important to understand where the roots of domestic violence exactly lie in our social and economic structures and devise effective ways and means to uproot the same from such structures,” she said.

Coordinator CWSR Prof Tabasum Firdous underscored the importance of highlighting the issues relating to domestic violence and its perils in our day-to-day lives. She also highlighted the CWSR’s regular interventions in trying to offer plausible solutions to address such problems by means of generating awareness and holding counseling programmes.

The webinar was, among others, attended by several students and scholars, who also joined an ensuing question-answer session with the expert speaker.

Panic grips Budgam villagers after forest dept issues eviction notices

BUDGAM: Several villagers in Budgam district are living in fear of losing their homes after they were served with eviction notices from the Forest department.

Locals alleged that two weeks ago the forest department issued eviction notices to people citing that their orchards fall under “encroached” forestland, news agency KNO reported Wednesday

The villages, where notices have been issued in Budgam district, include, Kanidajan, Batiwudar, Jabbad, Branwar, Nagbal, Yusmarg, and Darwan.

Jabbad villagers said they were scared that they would be rendered homeless after receiving the eviction notices from the Forest department.

Mohammad Shafi, a resident of

Branwar said that panic has gripped their village after receiving the notices.

“We are all scared. We feel like we are foreigners on our own land,” he said.

A 105-year old woman from the village of Branwar said that she would not leave her home, come what may. “I have been living here since ages, I am not leaving from my home,” she said.

Similar scenes were witnessed in Kanidajan villagers also.

“The authorities have axed hundreds of apple trees and dismantled our mud ‘dokas,” the villagers said. “It is true that we are living in the forest area but we are residing here for centuries now, Where shall we go.”

RTI movement chairman Raja Muzaffar said that they are trying their

Fear of losing polls has forced BJP to send central ministers for campaigning in J-K: Cong

JAMMU, DEC 9 (PTI) Senior Congress leader Rajni Patil on Wednesday said the fear of losing elections in Jammu and Kashmir lurks in the hearts of the BJP high command, forcing it to dispatch several central ministers and celebrities to campaign for the party in the Union territory.

She said if people are happy with the performance of its government, why does the BJP need the help of a battery of national leaders and other star campaigners, including film celebrities, to go to every nook and corner of the UT to seek votes in the polls to the panchayat development councils.

“Fear of losing these polls lurks in the hearts of BJP high command, forcing it to dispatch several central ministers and film celebrities to campaign for the party, the senior AICC leader and in-charge J&K affairs said at a workers’ meeting in Bishnah.

She alleged common people are highly annoyed with “multiple failures” of the BJP and its arbitrary actions in Jammu and Kashmir.

“Each and every section of the society, especially the youth and farmers, are feeling cheated due to BJP’s false promises and its anti-farmer and anti-poor programmes, Patil said.

PM to lay foundation of new Parliament building on Thursday

NEW DELHI, DEC 9 (PTI): Prime Minister Narendra Modi will lay the foundation stone of a new Parliament building on Thursday at an event that will be attended by leaders from various political parties, cabinet ministers and ambassadors of different countries. Modi will also perform the ground-breaking ceremony for the building, which is expected to be completed by 2022 at an estimated cost of Rs 971 crore.

Some chief ministers and governors will also attend the event virtually.

The event will begin at 12:55 pm and the foundation stone will be laid at 1 pm, officials said, adding that a ‘sarva dharma prarthana’ (inter-faith prayer) will be held at 1.30 pm. The prime minister will deliver his address on the occasion at 2.15 pm, they said.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla had earlier said, “The existing temple of democracy is completing 100 years... It is a matter of pride for our countrymen that the new one will be built by our own people as a prime example of Aatmanirbhar Bharat.”

“The new building will showcase the

cultural diversity of the country. Hopefully, in the 75th year of Independence (2022), Parliament session will be held in the new building,” he said.

The existing Parliament building will be conserved as it is an archaeological asset of the country, Birla said.

The existing building is a British-era structure, designed by Edwin Lutyns and Herbert Baker who were responsible for planning and construction of New Delhi.

The foundation stone of the existing Parliament House was laid on February 12, 1921 and the construction took six years and cost Rs 83 lakh at that time. The opening ceremony was performed on January 18, 1927 by the then Governor-General of India, Lord Irwin.

The new building will have an area of 64,500 square metres.

The new building will also have a grand Constitution Hall to showcase India’s democratic heritage, a lounge for members of Parliament, a library, multiple committee rooms, dining areas and ample parking space.

In the new building, the Lok Sabha chamber will have a seating capacity

best to create awareness on FRA in remote areas.

“People are protesting but no government official is ready to listen to them. I recently met 108-year-old Zooni Begum in Zilsidara Branwar in Budgam district. She was in tears after getting eviction notices from Forest Department,” Muzaffar said.

“If the Supreme Court has stayed all eviction proceedings across India, how can the government ask people to surrender the land in Jammu & Kashmir,” he said.

An official said they are only retrieving the forest land which has been illegally occupied.

“We have not dismantled any dokas, the allegation are baseless,” an official said—(KNO)

Addressing the meeting, J&K Congress chief G A Mir said the BJP has indulged in politics of divide and deceit for political interests, and has been running away from holding early assembly elections even more than two-and-half-years of governor rule.

“Post August 5 last year, the historical state has been reduced to a UT which is no better than a municipal corporation people want to know the reasons behind punishing the people, especially of Jammu region, who gave a huge mandate to the BJP and brought it to power in Jammu and Kashmir, he said.

for 888 members, while Rajya Sabha will have 384 seats for members. The Lok Sabha chamber will have an option to increase its sitting capacity to 1,224 members during joint sessions.

This has been done keeping in mind the future increase in the number of members for the two houses.

At present, Lok Sabha has a sanctioned strength of 543 members and Rajya Sabha 245.

In September this year, Tata Projects Limited won the bid to construct the new Parliament building. The new building will be constructed close to the existing one under the Central Vista redevelopment project.

The existing Parliament House building will be suitably retro-fitted to provide more functional spaces for parliamentary events, to ensure its usage along with the new building.

The existing building is a massive circular edifice of 560 feet in diameter. The Parliament House Estate is enclosed by an ornamental red sandstone wall or iron grills with iron gates that can be closed when occasions demand. The building has twelve gates.

India’s Weapons Procurement From The US Jumps To USD 3.4 Billion In 2020

WASHINGTON: India’s weapons procurement from the United States jumped from a meagre USD 6.2 million to a whopping USD 3.4 billion in the final year of the Donald Trump’s administration, according to official data.

As per the data released by the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA), the jump in the sale of American weapons to India comes at a time when sale of weapons from the US to other countries has dipped to USD 50.8 billion in 2020 from USD 55.7 billion in 2019.

In 2019, the sale of US weapons to foreign countries was USD 55.7 billion. In 2017, it was USD 41.9 billion, it said.

Major buyers of American weapons in 2020 were India (USD 3.4 billion up from USD 6.2 million in fiscal year 2019), Morocco (USD 4.5 billion up from USD 12.4 million), Poland (USD 4.7 billion up from USD 673 million), Singapore (USD 1.3 billion up from USD 137 million), Taiwan (USD 11.8 billion up from USD 876 million), and the United Arab Emirates (USD 3.6 billion up from USD 1.1 billion), the data showed.

Several countries reported a drop in purchase of weapons from the US.

Prominent among them were Saudi Arabia which came down from USD 14.9 billion in 2019 to USD 1.2 billion in 2020, Afghanistan (USD 1.1 billion down from USD 1.6 billion), Belgium (USD 41.8 million down from USD 5.5 billion), Iraq (USD 368 million down from USD 1.4 billion), and South Korea (USD 2.1 billion down from USD 2.7 billion).

According to the 2020 edition of the Historical Sales Book, India purchased weapons worth USD 754.4 million in 2017

and USD 282 million in 2018. Between 1950 and 2020, US sale of weapons to India under Foreign Military Sales (FMS) category was USD 12.8 billion.

For Pakistan, the official figures reflected that sale of weapons under FMS did happen, even though there was a freeze in any military and security as-



sistance to Islamabad from the Trump administration.

In 2020, US sale of weapons to Pakistan was USD 146 million, in 2018 it was USD 65 million and in 2017 it was USD 22 million.

In 2019, there was no sale of US military weapons to Pakistan. In fact, the US refunded USD 10.8 million to Pakistan, taken for the purchase of weapons.

Between 1950 and 2020, Pakistan purchased weapons worth USD 10 billion from the US under FMS.

However, the total supply of American military weapons to Pakistan is much more, as a major chunk of weapons to Pakistan has gone from United States as military and security assistance.

According to the Assistant Secretary of State for Political Military Affairs Clarke Cooper, fiscal 2020 saw a total of USD 175.8 billion in US government-authorised arms exports. This is overall a 2.8

per cent increase since fiscal year 2019.

The overall value of State Department-authorised government-to-government FMS cases implemented by the Defense Security Cooperation Agency decreased 8.3 per cent from USD 55.39 billion in Fiscal Year 2019 to USD 50.78 billion in Fiscal Year 2020.

“The dollar value of potential FMS sales, formally notified to Congress, also rose by more than 50 per cent from USD 58.33 billion to USD 87.64 billion. This was driven by the July potential sale of USD 23.11 billion worth of F-35 aircraft to Japan, which was the second largest single FMS notification ever authorised by the Department of State, Cooper said.

The Direct Commercial Sales (DCS), which is the Department of State-authorised commercial export licenses, totalled USD 124.3 billion in fiscal year 2020, and this was up from USD 114.7 billion in fiscal year 2019, he said.

“This represented an 8.4 per cent increase. This total value covers authorisations of hardware, defense services, and technical data. The total number of licences issued decreased by 20-per cent from 36,111 in Fiscal Year 2019 to 28,800 in Fiscal Year 2020,” Cooper said.

The top commercial DCS notified to Congress in Fiscal Year 2020 included a USD 8.39 billion sale to Australia, Canada, Denmark, Italy, Japan, and the United Kingdom for F-35 components.

This also included a USD 3.2 billion sale to Australia for P-8 aircraft parts, and a USD 2.48 billion sale to United Kingdom and Australia for E-7 airborne early warning and control aircraft, Cooper said.—PTI

CUK's DCJ invites applications for admission

Ganderbal, Dec 9: Department of Convergent Journalism (DCJ), Central University of Kashmir (CUK) has invited applications from eligible and interested candidates for admission to M.A Convergent Journalism programme on the format available in the department and university website.

The candidates shall

submit the application form in the prescribed format at the DCJ, Tulmulla, along with attested copies of certificates. The last date for submission of forms is 15th of December, 2020. The candidates can get further details from the university website www.cukashmir.ac.in and can also contact the department on mobile number 7006061838.

Dwivedi Meets PHD Chamber, Lassipora Food Park Owners

SRINAGAR : A delegation of PHD Chamber of Industry and Commerce, Kashmir, today called on Commissioner Secretary, Industries and Commerce, Manoj Kumar Dwivedi, regarding various issues for promotion of industrial sector and development of related infrastructure.

The delegation led by its President, Baldev Singh Raina, discussed different issues with the Commissioner Secretary including revival of industrial sector, announcement of new industrial policy, extension of two years duration in implementation of SME projects, cluster financing scheme of J&K Department Financial Corporation and J&K Bank by opening SME branches in each industrial estate, land for warehouses, facilitation centers, diagnostic study of industrial units etc.

The delegation requested Commissioner Secretary to provide them land located near highway in the valley for establishment of warehouse zones so the effect of the closure of National Highway will be minimum on industries.

President PHD also requested for establishment of facilitation centers at industrial estates and units to help new entrepreneurs. Further, the delegation demanded to expedite announcement of new industrial policy and provision of soft loans from banks instead of SIDCO.

Commissioner Secre-

tary said that most of the issues will be resolved with the announcement of new industrial policy which will boost the industrial sector of entire J&K. Meanwhile, he appreciated the willingness of the members to invest in the education sector.

Earlier, Director NIFT, Dr Javid also called on Commissioner Secretary and apprised him of several issues including water supply to NIFT.

Manoj Kumar Dwivedi directed for formulating the estimates of water supply scheme for submission to administrative department for commencement of water supply to NIFT.

The proprietors of Lassipora Food Park also called on Commissioner Secretary and apprised him regarding the progress on RFK Green and Khizar Agro Lassipora. The commissioning of these units was discussed in threadbare and it was decided that issue of land allotment to the prospective food processing units will be resolved.

It was informed that RFK Green will come up with the timeframe of Commissioning of the unit while Khizar Agro will start production in the month of December.

Among others Director Industries and Commerce, Mehmood Ahmad, members of PHD Chamber of I&C including Bilal Ahmad Kawoosa, Himayu Wani, Jaan Muhammad Koul, Showket Mirani and Iqbal Fayaz Jan were present.

UAE-India Food Security Summit, 2020 Kashmir Traders Attend UAE Summit

DUBAI: The geographical indication (GI) tagged Saffron from Kashmir was launched in Al Maya Super Market, Dubai by Principal Secretary Agriculture Production and Farmers Welfare Department, J&K, Navin K. Choudhary on Wednesday.

A GI tag is a sign used on products that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin. Saffron from Kashmir stall will remain available in Al Maya Super Market, which is headed by Group Director Kamal Vachani.

Pertinent to mention that a delegation of traders and government officials from Jammu and Kashmir led by Navin Chaudhary is participating in UAE-India Food Security Summit, 2020.

Ajaz Ahmad Bhat, Director Horticulture Kashmir alongwith Jahan-gir Hashmi, Additional Secretary, Horticulture and K. K. Sharma of Agriculture Department are also accompanying Principal Secretary.

During the meeting with Consulate General of India, Dr. Aman Puri, he said India is on radar for import of best quality fruits and food products and formulation of trade agreements with UAE.

Puri remarked that UAE-India partnership in food trade can



strengthen food security in the entire Middle East and North Africa region.

The summit brings several key stakeholders from both the countries on one platform to share their experiences, deliberations on solutions and explore ways to further increase the collaboration in the food security.

Delegates comprising businessmen from J&K include Farooq Amin, Owais Altaf Bukhari, Umer Trambo, Manan Trambo, Sanjay Puri, Kulbhushan Khajuria, Shahid Kamili, Mushtaq Chaya, Khuram Mir, Ehsaan Javid, Maajid Waffai, Izhan Javeed and Shahjahan. They also attended the event and held several roundtable discussions with UAE business leaders.

Principal Secretary said during round table conference that Kashmi-

ri bakery is one of the best in quality in world besides apple, cherry, walnut, basmati rice and saffron. The delegation has completed a "fruitful" meeting with the Dubai Chamber of Commerce.

Al Maya Group, UAE agreed to visit Kashmir in the month of June 2021 to see more trade agreements. The UAE and India aim to increase the volume of trade in food products mani folds in the next five years.

The summit also saw discussions and presentations on food processing equipment's & technology, dairy product development and infrastructure including development of logistics and integrated cold chains, infrastructure development for fishing harbours, floriculture with multi-national companies of UAE.

Jammu And Kashmir Public Service Commission RESHAM GHAR Colony BAKSHI NAGAR, JAMMU - 180001

webiste: <http://jkpsc.nic.in>
Email: jkpscsecretary@gmail.com

Jammu: 0191-2566528 (f) 2566530
Srinagar: 0194-2312629 (F) 2312631

Sub:- Interview Notice for the post of Lecturer Physiology, Government Medical College Jammu, in Health & Medical Education Department, notified vide advertisement No. 01-PSC(DR-P) of 2019 dated 07.01.2019.

NOTICE
Dated:- 08.12.2020

In furtherance to the Notice dated 15.10.2020 and 04.12.2020, it is hereby notified that the interview of Ms. Shivwani Devi D/o Mansa Ram (RBA Category application form No. 19010100500001) for the post of Lecturer Physiology in Government Medical College, Jammu in Health and Medical Education Department, advertised vide Notification No.01-PSC(DR-P) of 2019 dated 7.01.2019 shall also be held on 17.12.2020 at 9:30 AM at J&K Public Service Commission Office Complex, Resham Garh Colony Jammu.

Note:

1. The Candidature of the candidate is purely provisional.
2. Only eligible candidate possessing requisite qualification prescribed under relevant Recruitment Rules shall be allowed to appear in the interview subject to the further condition that she is within the prescribed age limit on the cut-off date of notification.
3. The candidate shall produce her original certificates/testimonials on the date of interview. Any failure to adhere to present the documents, in the manner, as prescribed shall be entirely the responsibility of the candidate.
4. The candidate shall ensure that the publications/presentations/books/chapter which they intend to place before the interview board for evaluation shall be properly bound and indexed with cover page in following format:-

S.No.	Title of publication/ Presentation/Book	Journal conference/workshop	Impact factor, applicable	Date acceptance publication
DECLARATION: It is certified that all the above publications/presentations etc. are my original research publication/presentation/book. Signature of Candidate.				
No:- PSC/DR/Lect /Physiology/2019				
DIPK-10172/20				
dated : 8/12/2020				
Additional Secretary, J&K Public Service commission				

Government of Jammu & Kashmir

OFFICE OF THE EXECUIVE ENGINEER ANANTNAG PWD(R&B) DIVISION KHANABAL

PRESS NOTICE

FRESH NIT NO 93 OF R&B/Khanabal/2020-21 /E-TENDERING/7301-10 DATED 08-12-2020

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, Union Territory of J&Ke-tenders are invited on %age basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with J&K State Govt. CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for each of the following works:-

S. No	Name of Work	Estimated Cost (Rs in lacs)	Cost of T/Doc. (in Rs)	Earnest Money (in RS)	Time of completion	Major Head of Account	Class of Contractor
1	Sanitray works and other completion of Civil works of Multi Storeyed Academic Block at Govt Degree College Bijbehara	147.38	2600/-	294760/-	90 days	4202-Education	AAY Class only

Position of AAA = Accorded
Position of funds = AVAILABLE

1. The NIT 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 as per schedule of dates given below:

S. No.	Particulars	Dated
1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	08-12-2020
2	Period of Downloading of bidder documents	From 09-12-2020 (10:00AM) To 15-12-2020 (04:00PM)
3	Bid submission Start Date	From 09-12-2020 (10:00AM)
4	Bid Submission End Date	To 15-12-2020 (04:00PM)
6	Date and time of opening of bid (online)	15-12-2020 (04:05PM)
In the office of Executive Engineer PWD(R&B) Division Khanabal		

2. Bids must be accompanied Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in shape of treasury chalan / receipt in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Division Khanabal (tender inviting authority) (Name of Work to be mentioned on the Treasury Challan / Receipt) (Refer Govt. order no. O.M No. A/24 (2017)-651 Dt.07-06-2018 and Earnest money / Bid security in shape of CDR / FDRpledged to Executive Engineer R&B Division Khanabal (Tender receiving authority).
3. The date and time of opening of Bids shall be notified on Web Site www.jktenders.gov.in and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The bids of Responsive bidders shall be opened online on same Web Site in the Office of Executive Engineer R&B Division Khanabal
4. The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of Technical Bid

1. All other terms and conditions are as same as laid in PWD Form 25.

(Er Qazi Javeed Amin)
Executive Engineer,
R&B Division Khanabal//SK//

DIPK-10196/20

DIAL-EMMA



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

AIRPORTS

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311



RAILWAYS

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



HIGHWAY STATUS



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



**HIJRI
CALENDAR**
24 Rabi-us-Sani
1442

PRAYERS

FAJR	5: 54
ZUHR	12: 22
ASR	3:45
Magrib	5:25
ISHA	6:50

This Day In History

- 1510 - Muslim ruler of Goa, Yusuf Adil Shah and his Ottoman allies surrender to Portuguese forces led by Afonso de Albuquerque who puts the Muslim population to the sword
- 1684 - Isaac Newton's derivation of Kepler's laws from his theory of gravity, contained in the paper De motu corporum in gyrum, is read to the Royal Society by Edmond Halley
- 1899 - Battle at Storm Berge South Africa - Boers vs British army
- 1905 - Austrian pacifist and writer Bertha von Suttner becomes the 1st woman to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize
- 1906 - US President Theodore Roosevelt is the 1st American awarded the Nobel Peace Prize
- 1913 - Bengali poet Rabindranath Tagore becomes the first non-European to be presented with the Nobel Prize for Literature for "Gitanjali"
- 1914 - French government returns to Paris
- 1919 - Nobel Peace Prize awarded to US President Woodrow Wilson
- 1926 - 2nd part of Adolf Hitler's Mein Kampf published
- 1931 - Manuel Azafia becomes Prime Minister of Spain with Niceto Zamora as President
- 1940 - British anti-offensive in Libya (Sidi Barrani)
- 1941 - Japanese troops overrun Guam
- 1943 - British 8th Army (1st Canadian Infantry Division) occupies Orsogna/Ortona Italy
- 1948 - UN General Assembly adopts the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- 1961 - USSR & Albania break diplomatic relations
- 1964 - Nobel Peace Prize presented to Dr Martin Luther King Jr. in Oslo
- 1966 - Nobel for chemistry awarded to Robert S. Mulliken
- 1967 - Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine awarded to Ragnar Granit, Haldan Keffer Hartline and George Wald "for discoveries about the make-up of the eye"
- 1967 - Guatemalan author Miguel Ángel Asturias is awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in Stockholm
- 1968 - Japan's biggest heist, the still-unsolved "300 million yen robbery", occurs in Tokyo.
- 1976 - Samuel C. C. Ting is the first person to deliver a Nobel Prize lecture in Mandarin, during the ceremony to award him and Burton Richter the Nobel Prize for Physics for discovering the J/ particle
- 1977 - Soyuz 26 carries 2 cosmonauts to Salyut 6 space station
- 1978 - Menachem Begin and Anwar Sadat accept the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo
- 1980 - Soyuz T-3 returns to Earth
- 1980 - USSR performs underground nuclear test
- 1982 - Soyuz T-5 returns to Earth, 211 days after take-off
- 1982 - CDC report on a transfusion recipient who developed AIDS symptoms
- 1984 - 1st "planet" outside our solar system discovered
- 1984 - South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu is presented with his Nobel Peace Prize
- 1986 - Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel accepts 1986 Nobel Peace Prize
- 1989 - President Gustav Husak of Czechoslovakia, resigns
- 1990 - Hindu-Muslim rebellion in Hyderabad-Aligargh India, 140 die
- 1990 - Soyuz TM-10 lands
- 1990 - Space Shuttle STS 35 (Columbia 11) lands

From KO Archives

Rapist released, victims in lock-up

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: People of Darpora in Lolab area have expressed grave concern over the continued 'detention' of two women who had been raped by two counter-insurgents last month. The alleged rapists have been released to the chagrin of the indignant villagers who have demanded their immediate arrest.

According to the president of the Human Rights Front, Muhammad Ahsan Untoo, who led a team of his activists to the village today, two Ikhwanis, Manzoor Ahmad Lone alias Shalla s/o Abdul Jabbar and Nazir Ahmad Tantray s/o Gulam Rasool, residents of Darpora and working with army's 18 RR, forced their entry into the house of one Gulam Nabi Mir at the village on the night intervening November 18 and 19 last. Finding two women alone in the house, Untoo alleged, the two renegades picked them up at gun point, took them to a deserted place in the forests and raped them throughout the night. The two victims arrived in the village in the morning in a battered condition sparking a spontaneous protest by the people. The victims were identified as Shafiq w/o Gulam Nabi and Atiga w/o Fayaz Ahmad Mir. Reports said the villagers staged a demonstration disrupting traffic on the road. On receipt of the reports, the deputy commis-sioner and the superintendent of police visited the village and ordered immediate arrest of the counter-insurgents. Police registered a case and arrested the two next day.

Untoo said both the accused Ikhwanis were released on the next day following intervention by the security forces. Instead, their vic-tims were arrested. He said the two women have been in the police lock up for the past 12 days. When the HRF team I an audience with the deputy Commissioner Syed Haq Nawaz, and the superintendent of police, Singh, Untoo said, both avoided meeting them. The police station officials also did not make any comment on why the two women had been detained. (KASHMIR OBSERVER, 10 DECEMBER, 2000)

آری کی گمشدگی

دوران سفر میری موٹر سائیکل (Apachi) بر نمبر JK04C-4834 کی

آری کہیں پر گر گئیں ہے اب اس کی ڈپل کیٹ نکالنی مطلوب ہے اس بارے

میں اگر کسی کو کوئی اعتراض ہو تو وہ ایک تنفق کے اندر اندر اپنا اعتراض

ARTO بڈ گام میں پیش کریں۔ میعاد گزرنے کے بعد کوئی بھی اعتراض

قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔

فردوس احمد تیلی ولد اسد اللہ تیلی ساکن پتی باغ بڈ گام۔

MBC

KASHMIR OBSERVER

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K O V I E W

Bringing tourists back

With winter setting in and Kashmir starting to receive snowfall, the local administration is looking forward to revive the stalled tourism activity in the region. And to this end, it is bringing tour and travel operators from across the country. Recently, around 70 travel operators along with some writers and journalists from Mumbai visited Kashmir and travelled to many scenic spots.

Ever since the revocation of Article 370 on August 5 last year, the tourism sector in the Valley has been in a freefall. The tourists fled Kashmir on August 3 last year. The flight followed a government order calling upon tourists and the pilgrims to the annual Amarnath pilgrimage to cut down their visit and leave the Valley within 24 hours. The Government buses were pressed into service to ferry tourists and pilgrims from across the Valley and rush them to Srinagar airport and bus terminals to facilitate their exit. Within following two days, Kashmir was empty of all the outsiders.

This inflicted a crippling blow on the state's tourism industry during its peak season. Hotels which until then had enjoyed 80 percent occupancy turned into ghost houses, among them premium hotels in famous scenic resorts of Gulmarg and Pahalgam whose rooms go for as much as Rs 25000 a night in the peak season.

Tourism sector forms 6.8 percent of Kashmir's GDP and employs 2 million people. But the seven month siege following erasure of the region's autonomy followed by Covid-19 pandemic, the sector is in bad shape. A significant number of people associated with it have either been laid off or are in the process of losing their jobs.

Similarly, there are also around 25000-30000 vehicles engaged with tourism which have little work now. The number of tourists who visited Kashmir through August to December last year was just 43,000 and from January to September this year, it has been a meagre 19,000, with most of these arrivals before March. However the good news is that bookings and inquiries by the visitors have reportedly gradually increased over the past several weeks.

Covid-19 pandemic remains a dampener though. With the country bracing for a third wave of infection, the situation could go back to square one. International travel will take a long way to return to normal. This, in a sense, offers tourist places like Kashmir some hope. Indian tourists who can't visit abroad, can visit Kashmir within the country. Here's hoping for a bumper tourist season in winter.

OTHER OPINION

Flip flop in J&K

The government's petition before the Jammu & Kashmir High Court seeking a review of its October 9 ruling that the Roshni Act was "illegal, unconstitutional and unsustainable" reeks of hypocrisy. The legislation, formally titled the Jammu and Kashmir State Land (Vesting of Ownership to the Occupants) Act, 2001, was enacted by the National Conference government of the day, to regularise both encroached and leased government lands. The stated intent was to raise money for power projects. The original cut-off date of 1990 was extended by subsequent governments. In 2018, then Governor Satya Pal Malik halted the further implementation of the Act due to allegations of corruption. When the High Court struck down the Act, and ordered a CBI investigation against officials who had implemented it, the BJP jubilantly declared it to be a "surgical strike against land jihad".

From the start, the narrative on the Roshni Act sought to project that political and other elites in "Muslim" Kashmir were usurping government land, and were backing less privileged Muslims to do the same in "Hindu" Jammu. The government used the Court order asking it to publicise the names of beneficiaries to give out the names of Kashmiri political leaders and others who had benefited from the act just ahead of the District Development Council elections. If the timing of this "naming and shaming" was suspect, the list itself was selective. Now with the full lists showing that the main beneficiaries are not Muslims, but Jammu Hindus, who are furious about losing their property rights imminently, the "land jihad" narrative appears to be unravelling. Egregiously, the government, which had earlier said it would start retrieving state lands from the beneficiaries expeditiously, now wants the Court to do two things — one aimed at protecting a political constituency, and the other itself.

Indian Express



View from the Foyer

Prosaic In Power

R. RAJ RAO

A predictable tactic of governments is to allege that it is opposition parties that are behind any protests, always with a view to bringing down a duly elected government. In this case, however, the farmers have made it abundantly clear that the protests are entirely their own, and not the brainchild of any political party

Experts such as Yogendra Yadav of Swaraj India, and P. Sainath, author of the influential book Everyone Loves a Good Drought, have argued that the new farm laws, which snatch away the ground beneath the farmers' feet, so to speak, are detrimental to the farming community. Dispensing with the mandi system without guaranteeing the farmers of a minimum support price, the experts say, expose the vulnerable farmers to the gamble of market forces.

This accounts for the recent farmer protests in India which have generated support to the farmers and criticism for the Government bot, locally as well as internationally.

The government, though, has acted typically in character.

A predictable tactic of governments is to allege that it is opposition parties that are behind any protests, always with a view to bringing down a duly elected government. In this case, however, the farmers have made it abundantly clear that the protests are entirely their own, and not the brainchild of any political party. In fact, the farmers have gone to the extent of banning political parties from coming with their banners anywhere close to the protesters. On the contrary, the farmers allege that it is the government that has deviously planted some farmers from Haryana who claim that they support the three new farm laws, albeit with amendments.

Yet if protests serve as a catalyst to bring the opposition together, motivating 24 political parties to seek an appointment with the President, they safeguard a democracy in danger of turning into a dictatorship. This happened during the CAA and NRC protests, and it is happening once again, proved by the unanimous support given to Tuesday's Bharat Bandh, not just by political parties, but also by crusaders like Anna Hazare. Workers from other sectors too observed the Bharat Bandh in solidarity with their farmer brothers.

As always, the government has been quick to brand people who disagree with its policies as

people instigated by the enemy. If the anti-CAA and NRC opponents were called Pakistani agents, the Punjab farmers have been called Khalistanis. This was especially so after Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau took up the cudgels on behalf of the farmers, and expressed his displeasure over the police assaulting protestors with water cannons in the chilly winter weather.

Branding is a colonial act. The British branded various indigenous people when they ruled India. Some tribes were called thieves, as the

new farm laws repealed. It will be recalled that during the CAA and NRC protests, students, not just in Jamia Milia Islamia and JNU, but indeed in universities all over the country, including my university, the University of Pune, played a major role in opposing the new citizenship laws that discriminate against Muslims.

A democratically elected government needs to be humble, not arrogant. If it has erred, it must have the humility to accept its mistakes and surrender to the wishes of the people. Such humility, it seems

This was especially so after Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau took up the cudgels on behalf of the farmers, and expressed his displeasure over the police assaulting protestors with water cannons in the chilly winter weather.

Marathi writer Laxman Gaikwad, himself a victim, says in his autobiography. When a nation begins to brand its own people, it takes on the role of colonial oppressor. When Nirad Chaudhuri was described by his critics as pro-British and anti-Indian, he saw it as an act of abuse.

The protests by farmers in Delhi at the end of this year are an exact replica of the anti-CAA protests at the beginning of this year. To the extent that it was elderly women who braved the cold weather and stayed put at Shaheen Bagh through January and February, insisting that they would not end their agitation till the controversial CAA and NRC bills were withdrawn, here it is elderly grandmothers who are out in the open with a supply of rations to cook for their agitating farmer sons, refusing to budge till the government gives in to their demands.

Had it not been for corona, which has necessitated the closure of campuses; it is almost certain that college and university students too would have joined the farmers' protests to have the government's

to me, is singularly lacking in the current dispensation. Once they set their heart on something, they obstinately cling to it. On Tuesday evening, the day of the Bharat Bandh, Home Minister Amit Shah attempted to effect damage control by holding an emergency meeting with some farmers unions. But the farmers are unanimous in their demand that they will settle for nothing less than a complete abolition of the new farm reforms.

Whether the Modi government will win or be forced to backtrack; only time will tell.

Views expressed in this article are author's own and do not necessarily represent that of Kashmir Observer

Dr. R. Raj Rao is an internationally known Indian English novelist, poet and critic. He was Professor and Head of the Department of English at the University of Pune in Maharashtra. He has also been a Visiting Professor at universities in Canada and Germany



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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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Manels: Male only Panels in Kashmir

After the pandemic forced classes online, a very good trend of holding webinars started among the government degree colleges of the Kashmir region. Though these colleges might be holding seminars and other guest talks earlier, it was only after online platforms were used that such events became accessible to the larger public outside the colleges. One is thrilled to attend these events that cover a range of relevant themes, but one is disappointed to see that all these events are manels- male-only panels. After attending a few webinars organized by various colleges on different themes, it appears that men have a monopoly over speaking rights in academic circles across Kashmir. Looking at the posters that announce these events, one finds them full of men's pictures.

There may be one or two pictures of women also, but they are mostly labelled as organizers and coordinators; that is, they do not speak at the event but do invisible work in the background, behind the scenes.

For instance, GDC Sopore held a one-day webinar on Development of Islamic Culture in Kashmir on 15 September where 8 people in all were involved in the event as per the poster. There were 6 men in all including the speakers. Pictures of two women were also present there on the poster- one of them was labelled as coordinator and another as director of the webinar. There was no female speaker at the event. Similarly, GDC Hadipora Rafiabad held a one-day international webinar on "Religio-Behavioural Strategies during Pandemic Times" on 28 September 2020. There were 5 all-male

speakers from different parts of the world including USA and Malaysia and 3 organizers out of whom one was a woman. Similarly, GDC Pulwama held a webinar on 5 September 2020 on "A teacher in the digital age: Perspectives and challenges" but the way they had a manel of 7 speakers and organisers, it appeared they were concerned with the perspectives and challenges of male teachers only.

Epistemically speaking, manels are dangerous that not only seek men's hegemony over knowledge but ethically harm individual women and have larger social consequences as well. On an individual level, it prohibits women from exercising their full range of reasoning capabilities because their ideas are not heard and validated. On a social level, it deprives the society of di-

verse views and fewer ideas become available, narrowing the collective imagination of society.

It would be stooping too low if the question of competency of women and other genders is brought here. Therefore, without defending the manels by comparing the competencies of different genders, colleges and other academic institutions should regulate these events and make sure that there is an equal representation of all the genders, including LGBTQIA in all the panels. All the genders have the right to be heard and the society has the right to be exposed to different ideas and perspectives coming from different genders.

Ahmad Hussain
Ahmadh@rediffmail

Hired To Be Fired

MIR ABAS

This apartheid system emerges, not from the qualification and worth of the people, but from the nature of appointment, salary and status. The people, who have permanent appointment, get over a lakh monthly salary and have a prefix of a professor deem it necessary to maintain a gap against the un-equals who have been selected for an academic session, with one third of their salary, and banned from using 'Assistant Professor' tag despite doing the same job

He did not enter the staff room, he barged in; he did not speak with respect, he shouted at; he did not talk like a fellow teacher, he addressed a bonded labourer, because he was a permanent college Professor speaking to a Lecturer appointed on 'academic arrangement'.

Feeling humiliated and rebuked, the Lecturer felt silent and spoke no word. Few minutes later, he groaned and said, "Aah – my hard Luck – my research, my experience, my education - got me a job of Rs. 28,000 – and left me to vultures who know-me-not". In the sea of pain, he murmured, "At home, I am a Lecturer, to students I am contractual, for government I am an Academic Arrangement, permanent faculty members treat me like a bonded labourer, and non-teaching staff find writing Dr. as my title as abominable". As he sighed, I was reminded of Colleen Wilcox, an educator and administrator, who describes teaching as the greatest act of optimism, and I could see pessimism at its peak.

While, academic arrangement culture is a regressive system that works on a 'hired to be fired' policy, wherein Damocles' sword constantly hangs over their heads of the appointees, without any certainty of future due to lack of job security, it is also a segregationist system that matches the Apartheid, wherein 'Haves' (read permanent faculty members) prejudicially distinguish the 'Have-nots' (read non-permanent academic arrangement faculty members). This apartheid system emerges, not from the qualification and worth of the people, but from the nature of appointment, salary and status. The people, who have permanent appointment, get over a lakh monthly salary and have a prefix of a professor deem it necessary to maintain a gap against the un-equals who have been selected for an academic session, with one third of their salary, and banned from using 'Assistant Professor' tag despite doing the same job.

In this system, the salary of an academic arrangement faculty member is deducted for his late arrival to the duty, and the permanent faculty member is free to come and leave as per his own wishes and whims. In this culture, a professor avoids having more than one teaching session a day and an academic arrangement faculty member has to hold five classes for the same duration. Every act/duty that earns



The rulers of the day are happy that highly educated people are competing for peanuts, the society is happy that their wards are graduating, the permanent faculty members enjoy reign over the bonded labourers, and in the midst of this, the cream of the society – that harboured talent, was energetic and owned power to create a learned generation- is lost in hopelessness and humiliation.

good remuneration is to be done by the permanent folks; they are to take the credit of all good happening around, the academic arrangements will collect money for excursions from students and make lists of students who are to be penalized.

To this rule, the existence of a Staff Association/Council of an annual tenure for the permanents is a must, but no such permission shall be granted to those who actually need it the most. The humiliating and exploitative experience of teachers who do not receive the full salary, are temporary and face apartheid of a kind, nullifies the very objectives of the educational policy (NEP-2020) which supposedly seeks respect, dignity, and autonomy at all lev-

els for teaching professionals.

The rulers of the day are happy that highly educated people are competing for peanuts, the society is happy that their wards are graduating, the permanent faculty members enjoy reign over the bonded labourers, and in the midst of this, the cream of the society – that harboured talent, was energetic and owned power to create a learned generation- is lost in hopelessness and humiliation.

The conscience of rulers will not awaken as it has consistently been none of their concerns, the rich and established people will never intervene as their children do not enrol in these institutions; it is for the poor and middle class people to pon-

der because it is their children who are ruined in this hopeless education system.

My personal experience with the Academic Arrangement system and with the permanent faculty members has been horrific, and I would wish no young lad fall to this crisis of immense magnitude. Before we lose our youthful days in this temporary system that creates a permanent impairment in our thought and practice, it is better to revolt and rise.

The author is a Lecturer of English and can be reached at meerabas32@gmail.com

Applications to universities in the UK have increased during the COVID-19 lockdown. UCAS, the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service, has reported a 1.6% increase from last year, and over 40% of all UK 18-year-olds have now applied to university.

This rise may come as a surprise. The university experience for those starting in autumn 2020 will be very different. Some teaching will take place online. Freshers' week may turn into weeks or even months: universities may look to avoid crowding by spreading out events and reducing attendee numbers. Student unions will be planning events that are both in person and virtual.

However, there are a number of reasons why young people may be choosing to apply to university for next year, including an uncertain job market and a lack of other opportunities. Furthermore, my research shows that the things that really matter to new university students are feeling like they belong, the academic staff they work with, and how teaching is delivered. Even under changed circumstances, universities can still meet these needs.

Choosing education

In recent years, students have been increasingly likely to choose clearing – when applicants are matched to unfilled places – as their entry point to the application cycle. The reasons for this move towards later applications include concerns about tuition fees and uncertainty about making future choices before school studies are completed. Now, though, there may be additional reasons.

Experts have never been more important. Help us raise their voices.

There is evidence to suggest that during recessions, education becomes a choice for many school leavers who are facing unemployment. The economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic is a long way from being fully understood, but the daily news reports about large and trusted high-street retailers cutting jobs and closing stores send a strong message to school leavers that the job market may be difficult.

Similarly, dreams of travelling the world on a gap year to Australia, New Zealand and other destinations



Young People Still Want University Education

CATHERINE CARROLL-MEEHAN

are looking unlikely, with travel limited or discouraged and borders closed. The choice for many students will be to look for education options to improve future employment prospects, and hope they can ride out the recession with the safety net of a place in full time education.

There is also a risk that students who put off applying until 2021 will be competing for places with A-level students whose results are not impacted by the government decision to abandon exams and give predicted grades.

Rite of passage

Moving away from home for university is a rite of passage for many young people. Popular TV show Fresh Meat

shows students seeking not just education but the "full student experience". For many, this means living in student accommodation, face-to-face interactions with tutors and peers, and joining clubs and societies.

For students starting in 2020, the whole experience will be new. Most will never have been to university, so their experience will be shaped by the communication and perceptions they have before they arrive.

My own research on the transition from school to university shows that for students, they are more satisfied with their university experience when they feel like they belong and have developed a good sense of who they are within their social and academic contexts on their

journey to becoming a graduate.

"Being, belonging and becoming" are central ideas that make a difference to the student experience. The establishment of online communities to augment face-to-face interactions will be extremely important to students who are in transition from school to university. This enables them to form social connections with peers and tutors. These online communities can be a source of information and provide an opportunity for affiliation and belonging.

My research also found that students value working with academics and how teaching is delivered. Students reported that teaching from experts in their field both in practice and research made the teaching authentic, especially when as-

essment was tailored towards knowledge and skills required in employment.

In 2020, this will be achieved through the content created for students that will be delivered both in person and virtually. Students are likely to have access to more resources this year than ever before. They will be able to access these materials in their own time and at their own pace, giving greater flexibility to how they access their studies.

This rise in applications provides a glimmer of hope for universities at a time when their efforts are focused on ensuring that university campuses are COVID-safe. At the same time, they must reassure prospective students that their experience will still be valuable.

By Arrangements With The Conversation

There is evidence to suggest that during recessions, education becomes a choice for many school leavers who are facing unemployment. The economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic is a long way from being fully understood, but the daily news reports about large and trusted high-street retailers cutting jobs and closing stores send a strong message to school leavers that the job market may be difficult.

Children learn more effectively from storytelling than demonstrative activities, study reveals

A new study has revealed that children learn more effectively about evolution when they are engaged through stories that are read through a teacher, rather than them going through doing tasks to demonstrate the same concept.

In a randomized controlled trial conducted at the Milner Centre for Evolution at the University of Bath, the researchers concluded that storytelling, which is the oldest form of teaching, is also the most effective one for teaching primary school children about evolution.

During the study, the scientists investigated using various types of methods for teaching evolution in primary schools. They did so in order to test whether a teacher-centered approach (where the teacher read the story to pupils) or a pupil-centered approach (where pupils took part in the activity), led to better improvement in understanding the topic.

They compared results to determine which

method produced better outcomes in terms of the children's understanding of evolution. The researchers looked at whether using examples of evolution that were human-based, like comparing arm bones in humans with

those in animals or using abstract examples that were harder to engage emotionally with, like comparing the patterns of trilobites, was better.

Even though all the methods were helpful in improving the pupils' subject knowledge, the study which was published in the journal Science of Learning

revealed that the abstract examples of evolution along with the story-based approach were the most effective ones.

The aforesaid study goes completely against the educational orthodoxy which states that in order to produce the best results; a pupil-centered approach should be the best for learning, with examples that are human-based which children correlate to.

The study which was led by Professor Laurence Hurst, Director of the Milner Centre for Evolution at the University of Bath, recruited 2500 primary school students for understanding the evolutionary concepts.

Professor Laurence expressed his surprise and said "We were really

surprised by the results, we expected that pupils would be more engaged with an activity rather than listening to a story

and that children would identify more strongly with the human-based examples of evolution than the somewhat abstract example of trilobites, but in fact, the opposite was true."

He further explained, "This is the first large randomized controlled trial that is evaluating the effectiveness of different methods of teaching, using similar scientific methods to those used in drug interaction trials to test whether a new treatment works."

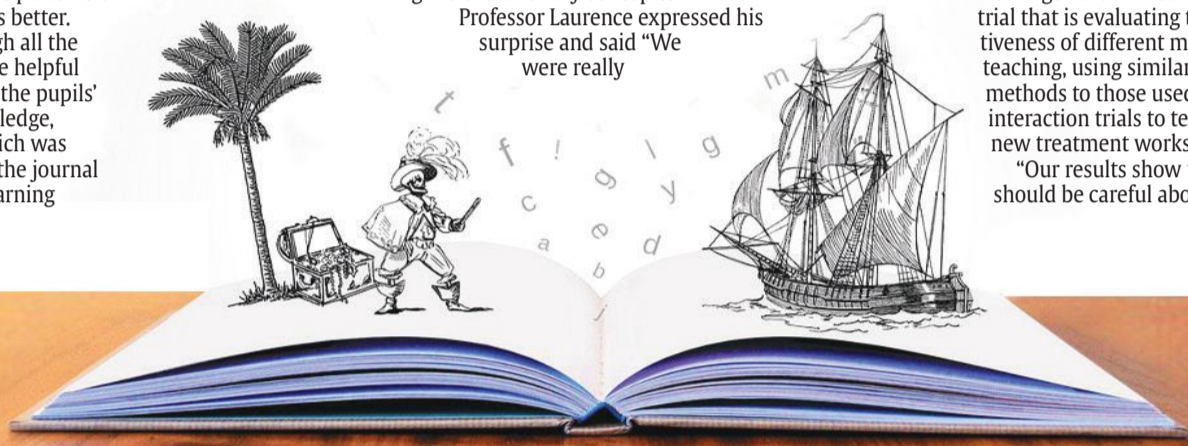
"Our results show that we should be careful about our

preconceptions of what works best." stated Laurence and concluded optimistically by saying "We only tested the teaching of evolution in this way - it would be interesting to see if these findings also applied to other subjects of the curriculum."

Professor Momna who is the Associate Dean of the University's Faculty of Science, and also helped to design the study and co-authored the paper, said: "Evolution was introduced to the national curriculum for primary schools in 2014".

She further explained its importance and said "It's a really important subject as it forms the foundation for many parts of biology."

—Agencies



Cambridge just added 'accha' to its dictionary and Twitter has no chill

Viewed as the benchmark for the English language, the Cambridge International Dictionary of English, by the Cambridge University Press has just become more inclusive, having added the word 'accha' formally to their list of over 140,000 words, phrases, and meanings.

Given the latest (and might we add, surprising) addition, many from the desi community have some thoughts on the update. Some are conflicted

While some find it amusing, the Hindi and Urdu language descendants are fighting for ownership. Here's how Twitter is responding in chaos.

Abhijit Rajkhowa

Reportedly the word "accha" has been added to the English dictionary of Oxford & Cambridge. Etymology finds it to be of Urdu origin.

Sundas Mahmood

Pakis be like; our Urdu word "Accha"

made it to The Cambridge Dictionary. Meanwhile The Cambridge Dictionary referring it as Hindi English.

While others aren't quite convinced.

Joe

Cambridge dictionary totally underestimated how we use accha.

the angry accha?

The derision accha

the ok cool, accha

It IS a little weird, isn't it?

Zorayt

The word "accha" has now been recognized as a real word and added into the Cambridge dictionary. Kinda weird

The students are truly grateful

Muazumair

accha is now in the Cambridge Dictionary, so it's a word acceptable by O/Alevels now, hehehe

But the keyboard mafia is straight-up annoyed can someone please tell cambridge it's accha and not accha yh jis nay Cambridge dictionary mein accha ka word add kia h tell them Its "achaa" wth is this "accha" ?

However, Urdu enthusiasts are raising their hands up to rejoice

Joun M Ali Raza

The " Acha " Word From Urdu Has been Added in English Dictionary. The word will be used as feeling of ok and Expression of surprise.

Urdu Being Universal .

The suggestions have started rolling in.... hmmm

Jawad Yousafzai

After the word "Acha" added into the Cambridge Dictionary, we are now looking for the word "Hmmm" to be added as well. The word could be define as "Hmmm" is the word which break two beautiful things - the silence & the Conversation.

Negative career thoughts in people with ADHD might be linked with quality of parental relationships: Study

A new study published in The Career Development Quarterly looked for potential links between negative or dysfunctional career thoughts and the quality of parental relationships in high school students with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

In the study of 102 adolescents (76 boys, 26 girls) with ADHD, male participants' dysfunctional career thoughts were related to their relationships with their mothers. Those who had positive relationships with their mothers exhibited less external conflict about their career choices.

The findings may be useful for career

My collaborators and I are very excited about the findings and the implications of this study. We hope they spur more research to understand how dysfunctional career thoughts develop in relational contexts and aid in evidence-based, contextually driven relational interventions"

counsellors as they consider the influence of family relationships on the career choices of adolescents with ADHD.

Future research should incorporate the influence of gender and race/ethnicity on such relationships and also focus on paternal relationships.

"My collaborators and I are very excited about the findings and the implications of this study. We hope they spur more research to understand how dysfunctional career thoughts develop in relational contexts and aid in evidence-based, contextually driven relational interventions," said lead author Abiola Dipeolu, PhD, of Texas A&M University, Kingsville. -Agencies

Pacman like game reveals origin of emotions in brain

After analysing the feelings, expressions and physiological responses of video gamers as they played an Pacman-like arcade game, scientists have decoded the origin of emotions in the human brain.

The video game was specially developed to arouse different emotions depending on the progress of the game.

The results, published in the journal PLOS Biology, confirm that emotions are the brain's synchronised response to events.

The findings showed that different emotional components recruit several neural networks in parallel distributed throughout the brain, and that their transient synchronisation generates an emotional state.

"The somatosensory and motor

pathways are two of the areas involved in this synchronisation, thereby validating the idea that emotion is grounded in action-oriented functions in order to allow an adapted response to events," according to the team from University of Geneva (UNIGE).

Emotions are complex phenomena that influence our minds, bodies and behaviour. A number of studies have sought to connect given emotions, such as fear or pleasure, to specific areas of the brain, but without success.

Most studies use passive stimulation to understand the emergence of emotions, showing the participants photos or videos, and record their brain activity. "The problem is that these regions overlap for different emotions, so they're not specific," said Joana Leitao, a post-doctoral

fellow in the Department of Fundamental Neurosciences (NEURO) in UNIGE.

"What's more, it's likely that, although these images represent emotions well, they don't evoke them." To dig deeper, the Geneva neuroscientists devised a video game similar to the famous Pacman. The aim is to evoke emotions that correspond to different forms of evaluation," said Leitao.

"Rather than viewing simple images, participants play a video game that puts them in situations they'll have to evaluate so they can advance." The results also indicated that a region deep in the brain called the basal ganglia is involved in this synchronisation.

This structure is known as a convergence point between multiple cortical regions, said the authors. -Agencies

SRINAGAR MUNICIPAL CORPORATION. Office Of The Executive Engineer Left River Works Division

TENDER NOTICE INVITING E- TENDERS

NIET NO: 28 e-Tendering/2020-21

Dated: 08-12-2020

For and on behalf of the Srinagar Municipal Corporation, e-tenders are invited on item rate basis from approved and eligible Contractors for the following work:-

	Name of work	Est. Cost (In acs)	Cost of Tender Document (Non-refundable)	Earnest money	Time of Completion in days/ Weeks	Class of Contract (Civil)	Head of Account
1.	Upgradation of surface drain from PHE Water Pump Stations via Public Park upto J&K Bank at Bagh-e-Mehtab W-74 (Part-A)	18.39	700/=		20 days strictly	CEE/DEE	14 th Finance Commission (2015-16)

1.	Publish date	08-12-2020 04:00 PM
2.	Document download	09-12-2020 10:00AM To 16-12-2020 04:00PM
3.	Bid submission/uploading date	09-12-2020 10:00AM To 16-12-2020 04:00PM
4.	Bid Opening date	17-12-2020 02:00 PM
5.	Submission of hardcopy for successful bidder	18-12-2020 upto 4.00 PM

1. Other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in as per schedule of dates given below:-
Note: The intended bidders have to deposit the tender fee in the Municipal Account No: 0216010200000007 payable at J&K Bank Brach Balgarden, before uploading of their bids and scanned copy of the same (with NIET No & Serial no. mentioned) to be uploaded along with all other documents prescribed in the NIET while uploading their bids and also upload the CDR, Bank Receipt.

TERMS & CONDITIONS:

1. In case bid of the tendered is found unbalanced, the bidder shall have to produce/deposit additional performance security in shape of FDR/CDR pledged to Executive Engineer LRWD SMC before issuance of allotments to protect the department against any financial loss in the event of default of the successful bidder/tenderer which the successful bidder should submit / deposit within 05 days from the date of formal intimation is issued in his favor from the corporation and failing which his Earnest Money in shape of CDR/FDR shall be forfeited and his tender shall not be considered and treated as invalid bid/tender and shall be rejected. This performance security shall be released when the concerned AEE shall recommend after the work stands completed. The performance Security is recommended (as per the order/circular issued by Chief Engineer PWD(R&B) Kashmir vide No: CE/R&B/HD/13271-73 dated: 03-08-2018 & duly Endorsed by Commissioner SMC vide No: SMC/PS/COM/5121-24 dated: 22-09-2018.

S.No	Percentage of unbalanced bid Viz. Advertised cost on account of low rates	Additional performance security to be deposited of the adv. Cost
01	Upto and including 15% below	Nil
02	Greater than 15% & upto 20% below	5.00%
03	Greater than 20% & upto 25% below	10.00%
04	Greater than 25% & upto 30% below	15.00%
05	Greater than 30%	20.00%

2. The successful bidders/tenderers should submit the hard copies of their documents like CDR/DD etc. after the opening of tenders.
3. In Case of Holidays/office happens to be closed on the date of opening of bids. Bids will be opened on the next working day at the same time and venue

3(a) the intending tenderer/bidder should attach sales tax clearance certificate with upto date validation without which no tenders/ bids will be entertained.

4. The bid shall be opened online in the Office of Executive Engineer LRWD, SMC at Old Funds Office Building Karan Nagar near National School Municipal Park on 17-12-2020 2:00 PM.

5. Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in shape of demand draft pledged in favor of Chief Account Officer SMC payable at Srinagar and Earnest money /Bid security in shape of CDR/FDR pledged to Executive Engineer LRWD SMC the bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of bids.

No: SMC/EELRWD/4219-4229

Dated: 08-12-2020

DIPK-NB-4489/20

Executive Engineer,
Left River Works Division,
Srinagar Municipal Corporation.

Imran defiant as opposition alliance threatens mass resignations by lawmakers

Agencies

Islamabad: The political crisis in Pakistan has deepened after an 11-party opposition alliance announced that its lawmakers will resign en masse by the end of this month from parliament to paralyse the government and force Prime Minister Imran Khan to call snap polls.

The decision was taken after the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM), an alliance of 11 opposition parties formed in September this year to overthrow Prime Minister Khan's government, held a marathon

The exact timing of stomping out of assemblies would be decided later, said Rehman.

Soon after the election in 2018, he had urged the opposition leaders not to take oath to join Parliament due to alleged rigging. But his idea was overruled by others, chiefly by the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and the The Pakistani Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N).

It is believed that en masse resignation is the only way to bring the government on its knees and force it to call early elections.

The PPP government in the Sindh province was con-



meeting in Islamabad.

PDM chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman announced on Tuesday night that a consensus was reached on resigning from parliament. "All lawmakers will submit their resignation letter to their party chiefs by 31st December," he said, flanked by PML-N leader Maryam Nawaz and PPP chief Bilawal Bhutto Zardari.

sidered as a hurdle as it was not sure whether it would sacrifice its government to help the opposition alliance.

The leaders also agreed to go ahead with a rally in Lahore on December 13 as a show of power to the government. It will be the sixth rally after similar gatherings held in Gujranwala, Karachi, Quetta, Peshawar and Multan.

Aliens exist? Donald Trump knows about them



A former security chief made an astonishing disclosure by claiming that the United States and Israel are in contact with extraterrestrials from a "galactic federation."

In a recent interview, Haim Eshed (87) stated that, "The Unidentified Flying Objects have asked not to publish that they are here, humanity is not ready yet."

The segment of that particular interview which went on air on Friday was published in the English daily Jerusalem Post on Tuesday.

The former Israeli space chief further claimed that the aliens were equally curious about humanity and were looking to understand "the fabric of the universe."

Furthermore, Eshed stated that the US President Donald

Trump is also aware of the fact. Eshed, who led Israel's space program for almost 30 years, stated that the Galactic Federation of aliens and their cooperation with the US includes a secret underground base on Mars.

"Trump was on the verge of revealing [aliens' existence], but the aliens in the Galactic Federation are saying, 'Wait, let people calm down first'. They don't want to start mass hysteria. They want to first make us sane and understanding."

The 87-year-old further claimed that aliens have come to an agreement to keep their moves under wraps.

"They have been waiting for humanity to evolve and reach a stage where we will generally understand what space and spaceships are," said Eshed.

Agencies



The MSF has urged pharmaceutical companies such as Pfizer and Moderna to scale up production of the vaccine doses and make it available to poor countries as soon as possible [File: Andres Martinez Casares/Reuters]

COVID-19: Poor Left Behind As Rich Nations 'Hoarding Vaccine'

AGENCIES

LONDON: A new report has found that as many as 90 percent of the population in dozens of poorer countries will miss out on the coronavirus vaccine next year because most of the supply has already been taken by rich nations.

The People's Vaccine Alliance says that rich countries have hoarded enough doses to vaccinate their entire populations nearly three times over.

That leaves at least 67 poor countries with only enough to vaccinate one out of 10 people, unless governments and the pharmaceutical industry take urgent action, the alliance, which includes Amnesty International and Oxfam, warned.

Five of the 67 – Kenya, Myanmar, Nigeria, Pakistan and Ukraine – have reported nearly 1.5 million coronavirus cases between them.

In contrast, rich nations and economies that are home to 14 percent of the global population had bought 53 percent

of the total stock of the most-promising vaccines as of last month.

That includes the European Union, United States, Britain, Canada, Japan, Switzerland, Australia, Hong Kong, Macau, New Zealand, Israel and Kuwait.

"The hoarding of vaccines actively undermines global efforts to ensure that everyone, everywhere can be protected from COVID-19," said Steve Cockburn, Amnesty International's head of economic and social justice.

"Rich countries have clear human rights obligations not only to refrain from actions that could harm access to vaccines elsewhere but also to co-operate and provide assistance to countries that need it."

'Dramatic action required'

According to Oxfam, Canada has bought enough doses to vaccinate its population five times over.

South Korea, another leading world economy, has bought sufficient vaccine for

88 percent of its population of more than 50 million people.

Meanwhile, the Philippines, considered a developing country, has so far secured only 2.6 million doses for delivery next year. That only covers 1.3 million people out of its total population of more than 100 million.

"No one should be blocked from getting a life-saving vaccine because of the country they live in, or the amount of money in their pocket," Anna Marriott, Oxfam's health policy chief, said.

"But unless something changes dramatically, billions of people around the world will not receive a safe and effective vaccine for COVID-19 for years to come."

The United Kingdom started rolling out its vaccine on Tuesday, becoming the first country in the world to administer the much-anticipated inoculation against a disease that has already infected millions of people around the world and killed about two million others.

US regulators post positive review of Pfizer vaccine data

Agencies

Washington: Documents released by US regulators on Tuesday confirmed that Pfizer and BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine was strongly protective against COVID-19 – offering the world's first detailed look at the evidence behind the shots.

The Food and Drug Administration posted its analysis online even as across the Atlantic, Britain on Tuesday began vaccinating its oldest citizens with the Pfizer-BioNTech shots.

But the U.S. judges experimental vaccines in a unique way: On Thursday, the FDA will convene what's essentially a science court that will debate—in public and live-streamed—just how strong the data backing the shots really is.

A panel of independent scientists will pick apart the FDA's first-pass review before recommending whether the vaccine appears safe and effective enough for millions of Americans. The FDA, which typically follows the committee's advice, is expected to issue a decision in the days following the review. If given the green light, the first recipients would be health care workers and nursing home residents according to plans laid out by each state.

Pfizer and its German partner BioNTech previously reported the shots appear 95 per cent effective at preventing mild to severe COVID-19 disease in a large, ongoing study. That's based on the first 170 infections detected. Only eight of the infections were among volunteers given the

real vaccine while the rest had received a dummy shot.

That was measured soon after study participants got their second dose. Still unknown is how long that protection lasts. "We're looking at the best possible data", Dr. Paul Offit of Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and an FDA adviser recently cautioned. People worry, reasonably, how about six months later?

The other critical issue: Safety. Pfizer has reported no serious side effects. Some recipients experience flu-like reactions—including fever, fatigue or muscle aches—especially after the required second dose. It's a sign the immune system is revving up, able to recognize and fight back if the real virus comes along.

Number of displaced people globally tops 80 million in 2020: UN

Agencies

United Nations: Despite calls for ceasefires and compassion amid the coronavirus pandemic, violence and persecution have continued to force people from their homes, with record numbers now displaced, says the United Nations.

By the end of 2019, 79.5 million people were living uprooted and displaced, including nearly 30 million refugees – more than one percent of the world's population.

The UN refugee agency (UNHCR) on Wednesday said preliminary figures showed more people had been forced to flee in 2020, pushing the number past 80 million.

"We are now surpassing another bleak milestone that will continue to grow unless world leaders stop wars," UNHCR, the UN's refugee agency chief Filippo Grandi said in a statement.

In March, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres had called for a global ceasefire while the world fights the pandemic, which has now killed more than 1.5 million people.

However, while some factions heeded the call, UNHCR

said preliminary figures through the first half of 2020 showed that violence in Syria, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mozambique, Somalia and Yemen drove fresh displacement.

Africa's central Sahel region also saw significant new displacement due to violence, including rape and executions, UNHCR said. "With forced displacement doubling in the last decade, the international community is failing to safeguard peace," Grandi said.

COVID-19 'disrupted human life'
The UN agency pointed out that instead of calming the conflicts, the coronavirus crisis has "disrupted every aspect of human life and severely worsened existing challenges for the forcibly displaced and stateless".

It said measures to curb the spread of COVID-19 had made it more difficult for refugees to reach safety.

At the peak of the first wave of transmission back in April, for instance, 168 countries fully or partially closed their borders, including 90 that made no exception for people seeking asylum.

China uses big data to select Muslims for arrest in Xinjiang: HRW

Agencies

Beijing: A big-data program in China's Xinjiang "arbitrarily selects" Muslims for detention, flagging behaviour such as wearing a veil, studying the Quran or going on the Hajj pilgrimage as reasons for arrest, according to Human Rights Watch (HRW).

In a new report on Wednesday, the rights group said it analysed

a leaked list of more than 2,000 detainees in Xinjiang's Aksu prefecture and found that the programme – known as the Integrated Joint Operations Platform (IJOP) – also flagged people for their relationships, their communications, their travel histories, or for being related to someone the authorities consider suspicious.

"The Aksu List provides further insights into how China's brutal repression of Xinjiang's Turkic Muslims is being turbocharged by technology," said Maya Wang, senior China researcher at HRW.

"The Chinese government owes answers to the families of those on the list: Why were they detained, and where are they now?"

The United Nations estimates that more than one million Turkic Muslims – most of them ethnic Uighurs – have been detained in camps in far-western Xinjiang. Activists say the purpose of the detention was to "erase the ethnic and religious identities of" Turkic Muslims and ensure their loyalty to the Chinese government.

Beijing denies the accusations, describing the camps as vocational training centres to help stamp out "religious extremism" in the troubled province.

HRW said the Aksu List – which dates from late 2018 – shows further evidence of the role big data and technology plays in helping officials select targets for "coerced thought transformation". Earlier this year, campaigners documented how officials in Xinjiang's Karakax used the IJOP to assess whether an individual should remain in detention. A Karakax official dismissed that report as a "fabrication".

'Pseudo-scientific fig leaf'

HRW said it obtained the Aksu list – a spreadsheet titled: List of IJOP trainees – from an anonymous source in Xinjiang and verified the list's authenticity by checking it against official records, social media records, and consulting Uighur diaspora communities and two experts who have extensively documented Beijing's crackdown in Xinjiang.



NEWSMAKERS

TIME declares 2020 to be the worst year in history

The TIME magazine has declared 2020 to be the worst year - and we can all relate.

"There have been worse years in US history, and certainly worse years in world history, but most of us alive today have seen nothing like this one," said the magazine on Instagram.

"You would need to be over 100 to remember the devastation of World War I and the 1918 flu pandemic; roughly 90 to have a sense of the economic deprivation wrought by the Great Depression; and in your 80s to retain any memory of World War II and its horrors."

"The rest of us have had no training wheels for this—

for the recurrence of natural disasters that confirm just how much we have betrayed nature; for an election con-



tested on the basis of fantasy; for a virus that originated, possibly, with a bat only to

upend the lives of virtually everyone on the planet and end the lives of roughly 1.5 million people around the world," it continued.

The United States is struggling with a resurgence of the virus, with record infections and a daily death toll that has exceeded 2,000 in recent days. More than 281,000 Americans have died from the COVID-19 disease.

At least 6,609,427 cases of the highly contagious novel coronavirus have been reported in the United States and its territories, according to a Reuters tally of state and local government sources.

The US diagnosed its first COVID-19 case in Washington state on January 20.

German woman gives away \$7.5 million to neighbours before her death

BERLIN: In the present world, when nobody wants to willingly part with even a single penny, to any other person, a woman in Germany shocked everyone by giving away property worth \$7.5 million to her neighbours before her death.

Renate Wedel, a woman from Berlin, died in December 2019 at a nursing home in Frankfurt at the age of 81.

For 40 years, she had lived with her husband Alfred, in a small village in the Waldsolms district.

Alfred, who died in 2014, was investing in stocks, said a statement from the district.

He left a substantial amount and other valuables, which were transferred to his wife Renate.

Renate's sister was her



only original heir, who had already died, and all the assets were passed along to her community Waldsolms.

However, this remained unknown to all and the district administration revealed a few months ago that Renate had stated in her will before her death that all her as-

sets, including cash at bank, shares, property and other valuables should be distributed among her neighbours.

The district administration informed the neighbours that the inheritance would be used for "community facilities and infrastructure."

"We will deal with it very

responsibly, develop our community for the benefit of all and keep an honorable memory of both," said the district's statement.

We will deal with it very responsibly, develop our community for the benefit of all and keep an honorable memory of both

Farmers reject govt proposal, to intensify agitation with nationwide protest

According to the union leaders, a new 'Delhi chalo' (march to Delhi) call is being given to all farmers in the north India for December 14

NEW DELHI: Farmer leaders Wednesday rejected a government proposal to amend the new agri laws, and announced they would intensify their agitation by blocking the Jaipur-Delhi and the Delhi-Agra expressways by Saturday, and escalating it to a nationwide protest on December 14.

Addressing a press conference here, farmer leader Shiv Kumar Kakka said there was nothing new in the government's proposal, and that it was "completely rejected" by the 'Sanyukta Kisan Committee' in its meeting on Wednesday.

Farmer union leaders termed the proposal an "insult" to the farmers of the country. They, however, said if the government sends a fresh proposal of talks, they may consider it.

The sixth round of talks between the government and farm union leaders, which was scheduled for Wednesday morning, has been cancelled.

According to the union leaders, a new 'Delhi chalo' (march to Delhi) call is being given to all farmers in the north India for December 14, while those in the South will be asked to protest at district headquarters.

They said all toll plazas across the country will be made toll-free on December 12.

The Centre's proposal was sent to the farmers on Wednesday, a day after Union Home Minister Amit Shah met their 13 representatives over the contentious legislations.

In the proposal, the government had offered to give a "written assurance" to the farmers that the existing Minimum Support Price (MSP) regime for crop procurement will continue.

Darshan Pal, another farmer leader, said the farmers rejected the proposed amendments in the laws as they wanted nothing less than a complete withdrawal of the legislations.



He said the new draft contained what had already been proposed to them by Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar in his previous meetings with farmer leaders.

He said the protesters will block all highways to the national capital on December 14, and gherao district headquarters, and also BJP district offices. If the three farm laws are not scrapped, the farmers will block all the roads leading to Delhi one by one, Kakka said.

Farmer leader Jangvir Singh said, "We will

boycott establishments and services owned by Adani and Ambani."

The farmer leaders also demanded that a law should be brought to give legal backing to the MSP mechanism.

In the draft proposal sent to the farmer unions, the government had also said it was ready to provide all necessary clarifications on their concerns about the new farm laws enacted in September.

It did not, however, mention anything about

the main demand of protesting farmers which is to repeal the laws.

The government had also proposed to make necessary amendments on at least seven issues, including one to allay fears about the weakening of the mandi system.

The Home Minister meeting had failed to break the ice with farm union leaders who are insisting for repealing these laws.

The sixth round of talks between the government and farm union leaders, which was scheduled for Wednesday morning, has also been canceled. In the proposal, sent by Agriculture Ministry Joint Secretary Vivek Aggarwal, the government said it is ready to consider with an open heart the objections which farmers have on the new farm laws.

"The government has tried to address the concerns of farmers with an open heart and with respect for the farming community

Ready to give written assurance on continuing MSP: Govt's proposal to agitating farmers

As thousands of farmers continue to protest at various borders of the national capital, demanding the repeal of three new farm laws, the government on Wednesday proposed to give a "written assurance" that the existing Minimum Support Price (MSP) regime for procurement will continue.

The government also proposed to make necessary amendments on at least seven issues, including one to allay fears about the weakening of the mandi system.

In a draft proposal sent to 13 agitating farmer unions, the government also said it is ready to provide all necessary clarifications on their concerns about the new farm laws enacted in September, but it did not mention anything about the main demand of protesting farmers for the repeal of the laws.

Home Minister Amit Shah in Tuesday night's meeting with 13 union leaders had said the government would send a draft proposal on key issues raised by the farmers regarding the three farm laws, even though the meeting had failed to break the ice with farm union leaders who are insisting for repealing these laws.

The sixth round of talks between the government and farm union leaders, which was scheduled for Wednesday morning, has also been canceled. In the proposal, sent by Agriculture Ministry Joint Secretary Vivek Aggarwal, the government said it is ready to consider with an open heart the objections which farmers have on the new farm laws.

"The government has tried to address the concerns of farmers with an open heart and with respect for the farming community

of the country. The government appeals the Kisan unions to end their agitation," it said.

On farmers' fears that mandis would weaken after the new laws, the government said an amendment can be made wherein state governments can register the traders operating outside mandis. States can also impose tax and cess as they used in APMC (Agricultural Produce Market Committee) mandis on them.

On concerns that farmers may be duped as anyone having just a pan card is allowed to trade outside APMC mandis, the government said to rule out such apprehensions, the state governments can be given the power to register such traders and make rules keeping in mind the local situation of farmers.

On the issue of farmers not getting the right to appeal in civil courts for dispute resolution, the government said it is open to making an amendment to provide for an appeal in civil courts. Currently, the dispute resolution is at SDM level.

On fears that big corporates will take over farmlands, the government said it has already been made clear in the laws, but still, for clarity's sake, it can be written that no buyer can take loans against farmland nor any such condition will be made to farmers.

On attaching farmland under contract farming, the government said the existing provision is clear but still it can be clarified further if required.

On fear about the scrapping of the MSP regime and shifting of trade to private players, the government said it is ready to give a written assurance that the existing MSP will continue. —PTI

NIA Charge-sheets 16 Khalistanis in Referendum 2020 Case

They are members of Sikhs for Justice, an organisation declared as 'Unlawful Association' under UAPA

NEW DELHI: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Wednesday filed a charge sheet against 16 people based in the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada under the anti-terror law, UAPA, for allegedly indulging in seditious activities and promoting enmity on the grounds of region and religion in the country.

The NIA charge sheet alleged that the seven accused from the US, six from the UK and three from Canada were involved in an organised conspiracy for launching a concerted secessionist campaign under the banner of 'Referendum 2020' for the creation of 'Khalistan'.

The charge sheet was filed under various sections of the Indian Penal Code and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) before the designated court here.

The accused included Gurbatwant Singh Pannun, Hardeep Singh Nijjar and Paramjit Singh who have been designated as terrorists by a home ministry notification under the anti-terror law. Pannun stays in the US, Nijjar is at present in Canada and Singh is in the UK.

The others named in the charge sheet are Avtar Singh Pannun, Harpreet Singh, Amardeep Singh Puralwal, Harjaap Singh, Sarabjit Singh and S Himmat Singh (all from the US); Gurpreet Singh Baagi,



These people, according to the NIA, are members of Sikhs for Justice (SFJ), an organisation declared as 'Unlawful Association' under the UAPA.

According to the NIA spokesperson, the probe in the case showed that Sikhs for Justice, a secessionist outfit floated in the garb of 'human rights advocacy group' with its offices in various foreign countries like the US, Canada, the UK, Australia, is a frontal organisation of Khalistan terrorist outfits operating from foreign soils including Pakistan.

Under this campaign numerous social media accounts on Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, YouTube Channels and a number of websites have been launched, which are

being used "to propagate sedition as well as enmity on the grounds of region and religion, to radicalise impressionable youth, to cause disturbance to peace and harmony and to raise funds for terrorist activities", the NIA said.

The SFJ has been attempting to undermine the security of the Indian State by instigating Sikh personnel in the Indian army to rise in mutiny against India besides trying to radicalise youths of Kashmir and openly extending support for the secession of Kashmir from India, it said.

The spokesperson said based on the dossiers provided by the NIA and other agencies, the chief patrons of SFJ namely Gurbatwant Singh Pannun, Hardeep Singh Nijjar and Paramjit Singh alias Pamma have already been designated as 'Terrorist' under UAPA.

During the course of the investigation, the spokesperson said, "the NIA identified immovable properties belonging to terrorist Pannun in Amritsar and terrorist Hardeep Singh Nijjar in Jalandhar.

"Based on the request of NIA, the Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, in exercise of powers conferred under Section 51-A of Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act 1967, has ordered attachment of these properties." — PTI

SC says posters should not be affixed outside homes of COVID patients

The Supreme Court on Wednesday took note of the Centre's guidelines and said that posters and signage should not be affixed by the authorities outside the homes of COVID-19 patients in the country.

The Supreme Court on Wednesday took note of the Centre's guidelines and said that posters and signage should not be affixed by the authorities outside the homes of COVID-19 patients in the country.

The apex court, however, added that such posters can be affixed only in specific cases when the competent authority issues specific directions under the Disaster Management Act.

A bench headed by Justice Ashok Bhushan said this in its verdict on a plea seeking directions to do away with the practice of pasting posters outside the homes of those infected by the coronavirus.

The bench, also comprising justices R S Reddy and M R Shah, disposed of the plea, saying the Centre has already issued guidelines, and therefore, states and union territories should not affix such posters.

The Centre had earlier told the top court that its guidelines do not contain any instructions regarding affixing posters and signage outside the homes of COVID-19 patients, and there cannot be any stigma attached to it.



Raj Kapoor's ancestral home, known as Kapoor Haveli, is situated in Qissa Khwani Bazar.

Pakistan Determines Price Of Dilip Kumar, Raj Kapoor's Ancestral Houses In Peshawar

Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has determined the price of the ancestral houses of legendary Bollywood actors Dilip Kumar and Raj Kapoor in the heart of this city at Rs 80,56,000 and Rs 1,50,00,000 respectively.

The provincial government in September decided to purchase their ancestral houses to conserve the historic buildings which are in dilapidated condition and facing demolition threat. The two buildings, located in the heart of this northern Pakistani city, have been declared as national heritage.

Deputy Commissioner of Peshawar Muhammad Ali Asghar, following a report of the Communication and Works Department, fixed the price of Dilip Kumar's four Marla house for Rs 80,56,000 (USD 50,259) while that of Raj Kapoor's six Marla house for Rs1,50,00,000 (USD 93,529).

Marla, a traditional unit of area used in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, is considered as equal

to 272.25 square feet or 25.2929 square metres. Veteran actor Dilip Kumar's over 100-year-old ancestral house is also located in the same locality. The house is in shambles and was declared as national heritage in 2014 by the then Nawaz Sharif government.

The owners of the two buildings made many attempts in the past to demolish them for constructing commercial plazas in view of their prime location but all such moves were stopped as the archaeology department wanted to preserve them, keeping in view their historic importance.

However, the owner of Kapoor Haveli, Ali Qadar, in the past said that he did not want to demolish the building and made many contacts with the archaeology department officials to protect and preserve this historic structure which is a national pride. The owner demanded Rs 200 crore from the provincial government to sell it out to the government.

In 2018, the Pakistan government decided to convert the Kapoor Haveli into a museum, heading to a request by Rishi Kapoor who died this year in Mumbai. However, the announcement to this effect did not materialise. There are around 1,800 historic structures in Peshawar, the capital of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, which are over 300 years old.

The archaeology department has sent a formal request to the provincial government for releasing over Rs 2 crore for purchasing both the historic buildings, where the two greats of the Indian cinema were born and raised in their early days before the Partition.

Raj Kapoor's ancestral home, known as Kapoor Haveli, is situated in the fabled Qissa Khwani Bazar. It was built between 1918 and 1922 by the legendary actor's grandfather Dewan Basheswarnath Kapoor. Raj Kapoor and his uncle Trilok Kapoor were born in the building. It has been declared national heritage by the provincial government.

TMC's Mahua Moitra faces backlash for 'two paisa worth' comment on media

The Press Club Kolkata decried Moitra's remarks and said she should apologise

The media fraternity in West Bengal has taken umbrage over comments by Trinamool Congress MP Mahua Moitra at a party meeting, where she purportedly described the press as "two paisa worth".

In videos widely circulated on social media, the Krishnanagar MP can be seen gesticulating to a person to leave the venue of the meeting in Nadia district on Sunday, after he had introduced himself as a reporter.

"Who has called 'du poisar' press (two paisa worth) here? Do remove these elements from the venue. Some of our party members invite such people to closed-door meetings to see their faces on TV. This is not done," she was heard saying in one of the videos.

The Press Club Kolkata, in a statement, decried Moitra's remarks and said she should withdraw her comments and apologise.

"Her statement is undoubtedly unwarranted and humiliating as in a democracy the importance of a journalist and respect for his/her profession is recognised universally.

"The fight and struggle by a journalist for his profession and his/her social responsibility is known to all. None has the right to insult a media person, we condemn the MP's comment and



express hope that she will withdraw it immediately and tender her apology," it said. Moitra took to Twitter to respond, asserting that her observation was accurate. "I apologise for the mean, hurtful, accurate things I said... My meme editing skills are improving," she said.

Expressing dismay over Moitra's counter, Press Club Kolkata president Snehasis Sur said on Tuesday that journalists are hurt at the way "she made light of her initial comments".

"Everyone can comprehend what she wanted to convey in the Twitter post," Sur said. The TMC MP could not be contacted for comments.

Several journalists and people from other professions have also slammed Moitra on social media for "belittling a noble profession" and judging its worth through monetary terms.

Meanwhile, senior Bengal minister and TMC leader Subrata Mukherjee told reporters, "We have to enquire as to what she had exactly said... but we believe in keeping cordial ties with the media, irrespective of what it reports about us". Moitra's comments were also condemned by several politicians, including members of her own party.

Forest Minister Rajib Banerjee, who had recently aired his grievance about dedicated, long-time loyalists being ignored by the TMC, said, "Such derogatory comments against any individual, more regarding the media, is unacceptable.

TMC MP and actor Nusrat Jahan said the media has been tirelessly focused on humane stories and the remarks are unfortunate.

"Not only political, from damages caused by Cyclone Amphan to the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on people, the media has been tirelessly focused on humane stories; we cannot run media down," Jahan said. Congress Parliamentary Party leader in Lok Sabha Adhir Chowdhury said "such comments by a MP against one of the pillars of democracy is unacceptable."

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Khalid Bashir Gilkar

Deals with all kinds of Mobile Phones

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