



**P4 WORLD**

**TALIBAN KILLS 13 POLICEMEN IN ATTACKS ON TWO CHECKPOINTS**

At least 13 Afghan policemen were killed when Taliban militants attacked two checkpoints overnight in the north of the ....

**P7 THINK**

**THE RISK OF NOT BEING VACCINATED**

At the turn of the nineteenth century, the typical gambler in America knew almost nothing of the mathematics of risk but did have a sense ...



**P10 LIFE & TIMES**

**HOPE CAN MAKE YOU HAPPIER WITH YOUR LOT, DISCOVER RESEARCHERS**

Harbouring hope for the future could protect people from risky behaviours...



**Wisdom Quote!**

"If a man could have half of his wishes, he would double his troubles."  
—Benjamin Franklin

news  
DIGEST

**Army Canteen Guttled In Blaze**

**SRINAGAR:** A two-storeyed wooden shopping complex, designated as 'CSD', was reduced to ashes in an overnight fire incident at an Army Infantry Brigade Camp at Lawoosa area of Nowgam Sector in north-Kashmir's Kupwara district

An official said that the fire broke out around 2300 Hours last night inside Army's 17 Infantry Brigade Camp premises which later spread to adjoining area, reported news agency GNS.

➔ [More On P8](#)

**Govt Employee Held With Pistol**

**JAMMU:** Police arrested an employee of Animal Husbandry department and recovered one pistol and six bullets from his possession after an accident on Wednesday night, police said Thursday

Senior Superintendent of Police Rajouri Chandan Kohli said that on Wednesday night, an accident took place when a car (JK11B-9271) driven by Jasvinder Singh of Nonial Nowsheera skidded off the road at Chatta Siot.

➔ [More On P8](#)

**Kashmiri Youth Arrested In Goa**

**PANAJI:** A 25-year-old man from Jammu and Kashmir working in Goa has been arrested on charges of drug possession, police said on Thursday.

Police Inspector Jivba Dalvi told reporters that a raid was conducted on Wednesday night on getting information about drugs being peddled at Arambol beach village in North Goa.

➔ [More On P8](#)

**Bear Caught In Kupwara**

**SRINAGAR:** The wildlife department officials on Thursday captured a bear, who had strayed into a residential area in Kupwara district of north Kashmir.

The bear was on the prowl in the Wasia area for the last few days and had attacked several cattle, news agency GNS reported Thursday. The presence of the beast, the report said, had created panic among the villagers, who informed the authorities.

"We received several complaints from locals about the presence of a bear. The wild animal had also attacked cattle," an official of the wildlife department said. "The bear was later trapped in a cage by our officials," he added. This was the sixth such catch in Kupwara district this year.



Tourists enjoying a sledge ride on a snow covered hill in Sonamarg Valley on Thursday. —Pic: Abid Bhat

# Kashmir Valley Hit By Intense Cold Wave

**Srinagar Records Season's Coldest Night At Minus 6.4 Degree Celsius**

**SRINAGAR:** The minimum temperature across Kashmir plummeted several degrees below the freezing point on Thursday owing to a clear sky as the valley reeled under cold conditions, with Srinagar experiencing the coldest night of the season so far at minus 6.4 degrees Celsius, MeT Department officials said.

The night temperature continued to drop across the valley owing to the clear sky and the minimum temperature settled several degrees below the normal for this part of the season, the officials said.

They said Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir,

recorded a low of minus 6.4 degrees Celsius down from the previous night's minus 4.8 degrees Celsius.

The minimum temperature was nearly five degrees below the normal for this part of the season.

This was the coldest night of the season so far in the city, resulting in the freezing of several stagnant water bodies, the officials added.

The mercury in Gulmarg, the famous ski-resort in north Kashmir, settled at a low of minus 11.0 degrees Celsius over six degrees below the normal for this time of the season, they said.

The resort was the coldest

recorded place in the UT.

Pahalgam tourist resort in south Kashmir recorded a low of minus 8.9 degrees Celsius, the officials said.

They said Qazigund the gateway town to the valley recorded a minimum temperature of minus 4.9 degrees Celsius, while Kupwara, in the north, registered a low of minus 5.8 degrees Celsius and Kokernag, in the south, minus 4.8 degrees Celsius, the officials said.

The MeT Office said while no major snowfall is expected till the end of this month in the UT, there is a possibility of light to moderate snowfall during December 21-22 at isolated places of Kashmir.

## ANANTNAG ENCOUNTER

# Militant Arrested In Injured Condition

**CRPF Man Injured In Bijbehara Grenade Attack**

**SRINAGAR:** Police on Thursday arrested a Hizbul Mujahideen militant after a brief encounter in south Kashmir's Anantnag district, nearly a week after his wife died of cardiac arrest.

Zahoor Abbas Lone of Inder Pulwama was arrested by a joint team of army and police in an injured condition after a brief exchange of fire in Naina area of Sangam in Anantnag district during the intervening night of December 16 and 17, a police spokesperson said. Lone, he said, was arrested and shifted to hospital for treatment. He has reportedly suffered bullet injuries in abdomen.

Divulging further details of the operation, the police spokesperson said that on a specific input, a checkpoint was laid during the intervening night near Gund Baba Khaleel along Sangam Naina road.

"During checking, two suspected persons riding a motorcycle were signalled to stop. However, the pillion rider fired upon the joint party in order to escape from the spot," he said.

"The fire was retaliated, leading to a brief encounter, in which an active (militant) got injured

### 2 Pak Intruders Killed Along Border: BSF

**AMRITSAR:** The Border Security Force (BSF) on Thursday claimed to have killed two Pakistani "armed intruders" along the International Border in Punjab.

➔ [More On P8](#)

the site of encounter.

"All the recovered materials have been taken into case records for further investigation and to probe their complicity in other. In this connection a case under relevant sections ➔ [More On P8](#)

**On Friday last, Lone's wife Rozy Jaan died after suffering a cardiac arrest. Lone's brother Nisar was also a militant and was killed in an encounter with government forces in 1999.**

## J&K Reports 9 More Corona Deaths, 385 New Cases

**SRINAGAR:** At least nine more people died of coronavirus in Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday, even as 385 fresh cases of Covid-19, including 25 security men, 2 minors were detected in the Union Territory during the last 24 hours.

According to the officials, five people lost the battle with the deadly disease in Jammu division while four others died of Covid-19 in Kashmir Valley. Among others, they said, the victims included a 65-year-old man from Kangan, a 38-year-oldman from Sopore, a 56-year-old woman from Safakadal and a 68-year-old man from Soura here and an 85-year-old man from K Mandi Jammu.

With these deaths, the total fatality count in J&K reached 1826—1161 in the Valley and 665 in the Jammu region.

Srinagar district with 439 deaths tops the list followed by Jammu (339), Baramulla (170), Budgam (105), Pulwama (88), Kupwara (88), Anantnag (82), Doda (60), Bandipora (57), Udhampur (54), Kulgam (53), Rajouri (54), Kathua (47), Ganderbal (42), Shopian (37), Samba (34), Poonch (22), Ramban (21), Kishtwar(21), and Reasi (13).

Meanwhile, twenty-five security personnel and two minors besides twelve travelers were among new covid-19 cases reported in J&K in the last 24 hours, taking the total tally to 117317.

➔ [More On P8](#)

## PANCHAYAT BY-POLLS

# 68% Voting For Panch Seats, 58% For Sarpanch In Phase-7



File Photo: Abid Bhat

**JAMMU:** The seventh phase of panch and sarpanch by-elections in Jammu and Kashmir recorded 68.43 per cent and 58.64 per cent voter turnout respectively, poll officials said on Thursday.

Udhampur district in the Jammu division had the highest poll percentage in the Union Territory at 81.38 in the sarpanch bypolls, while Bandipora district had the highest turnout at 68.82 per cent in the Kashmir division.

For panch by-elections, Jammu division's Rajouri district registered the highest voter turnout

in Jammu and Kashmir at 84.85 per cent, while Bandipora had the highest voting percentage at 75.66 in the Kashmir division.

"There was 68.43 per cent and 58.64 per cent polling recorded in the seventh phase of vacant panch and sarpanch bypolls, respectively, held the other day (Wednesday)," State Election Commissioner (SEC) K K Sharma told reporters here.

Bypolls were held for 438 vacant panch seats in the seventh phase and out of a total of 78,866 electors, including 39,727 men and 37,139 women, 52,599 ➔ [More On P8](#)

### Dr Farooq Seeks Repolling In DDC Constituency

**SRINAGAR:** NC president Farooq Abdullah on Thursday demanded repolling in Garoora District Development Council constituency in Jammu and Kashmir's Bandipora in view of allegations of booth capturing and other malpractices.

Polling for the sixth phase of the District Development Council (DDC) elections was held on December 13.

In a letter to state Election Commissioner K K Sharma, Abdullah expressed concern over an incident of booth capturing and subsequent bogus voting in the recently held DDC polls in Garoora Bandipora.

➔ [More On P8](#)

## J&K Open For Business, LG Tells CII



### Calls For Unlocking UT's Potential In A Multi-Dimensional Fashion

**JAMMU:** Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha on Thursday called for "unlocking" the potential of Jammu Kashmir in a multi-dimensional fashion, through systemic interventions at the individual and community level.

Addressing the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) Partnership Summit-2020 organized through

virtual mode, Sinha said that J&K possesses great growth potential having talented young English-speaking population, coupled with established supply chains, ease of doing business, single-window clearances, competitive regulatory and policy landscapes assured part insurance covers, and rich natural resources.

He called upon the CII and its members to partner with J&K and be the change that one truly wishes to see reflected on the ground, besides shaping up a magnificent

future and to invest in a truly greenfield project.

"We're open for business. And we're set for growth, which is sustainable and builds businesses with purpose. Come and partner with us! And enrich this partnership summit with your ideas and your inputs" the LG said.

"I want to see industry, jobs, skilled workforce, modern villages, and world-class infrastructure walk hand-in-hand together in Jammu Kashmir in 2021. We will therefore do our ➔ [More On P8](#)

## SC Suggests Putting On Hold Farm Laws, Centre Opposes

**NEW DELHI:** The Supreme Court on Thursday acknowledged the right of farmers to non-violent protests and mooted the idea of putting on hold the contentious farm laws to enable negotiations with agitating farmers which was opposed by the Centre saying agriculturists would then not come forward for the talks.

The apex court, which made it clear that the issue of farmers' protest and the right to move freely of others would be dealt on priority and not the validity of laws at the moment, also said it was thinking of setting up an "impartial and independent" panel of agriculture experts and farmer unions to resolve the impasse.

The top court said it was of the view that the farmers' right to protest

should not infringe the fundamental rights of others to move freely and in getting essential food and other supplies as right to protest cannot mean blockade of the entire city.

The apex court, which said it was worried with the way things are going on, was told by both the Centre and one of the farmers union that the negotiations are not happening at the moment.

It also said farmers cannot keep on protesting without talking to the government.

"You continue the protest. You have the right. But you have a purpose also and that purpose is served only if you talk, discuss and reach a conclusion," a bench headed by Chief Justice S A ➔ [More On P8](#)

## Amar Singh College Gets 2020 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Award

### OBSERVER NEWS DESK

Amar Singh College, Srinagar, has been recognized with the prestigious Award of Merit in the 2020 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation.

In its statement, the UNESCO said the 48 projects that were received collectively represent a significant achievement in the progress of conservation in the Asia-Pacific region.

"Project entries were diverse in scope and typology and were submitted from nine countries across the Asia-Pacific region,"



the statement reads. The jury, consisting of nine international conservation experts, was convened from 20-22 November 2020 to deliberate the project entries. This year the Jury awarded two Special Recognition for Sustainable Development, one Award of Excellence, one Award of Distinction, three Awards of Merit, and one Award for New Design in Heritage Contexts.

"The restoration of the Amar Singh College brought back one of the most prominent institutional buildings in Kashmir to its former glory," 2020 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Jury commented.

➔ [More On P8](#)

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2

# Antibodies Depleting Faster In Elderly Patients: Study

Lucknow, Dec 17 : A study conducted by the Transfusion Medicine department of King George's Medical University (KGMU) has found that the antibodies are depleting at a faster rate among the Covid-19 survivors above 50 years of age.

The study further found that survivors in all the age groups, who were symptomatic for just one day, had stronger and more lasting antibodies in comparison to those who were symptomatic for more than a day.

These are the two interesting results thrown up for further research on 800 Covid-19 survivors who came for plasma donation after recovering from the disease.

The results of the study also revealed that antibodies were not only in sufficient numbers, but also strong, when the plasma was donated within 12-53 days post recovery.

According to the head of the Transfusion Medicine, Prof Tulika

Chandra, the department conducted the study during the course of collecting plasma from Covid-19 patients, post recovery, for the blood and plasma bank.

Of 800 plasma donors, 400 were not found suitable for donation. While 50 of them were anaemic or underweight or HIV positive and had other complications, 70 had contact history but never tested positive through RT-PCR method. About 53 were found unfit because they had come after the lapse of three-month post-recovery period prescribed for donation.

However, the remaining 227 donors out of 400 'unfit' donors were such who fulfilled all the criteria -- they had confirmed positive, post-recovery period below three months and had no other disqualification but their plasma was not taken because antibodies were either not present or were in insufficient quantity.

"A majority of such donors, both

male and females, were above 50 years of age. "We do not know yet whether antibodies were not formed at all or only short acting antibodies were formed in these cases, but the result suggests that the threat of re-infection might be higher in people above 50 years," she said.

Further, the study revealed that the 'quality and quantity' of antibodies among the 400 fit donors was better in Covid-19 survivors who were symptomatic for a day in comparison to those who had symptoms for more days.

Prof. Chandra said these findings need further research to explain the phenomenon responsible for it and reach any conclusion.

Besides, the study also found that antibodies in the plasma were both 'efficient and sufficient' in the fit donors who had come for donation within 12 to 53 days after recovering from the disease.

## SAVE PRECIOUS LIFE

A person has been diagnosed with the failure of both the kidneys the financial condition of the person is worst and is not able to best the expense for her kidney treatment so it is requested to all those who have the means to donate for this noble cause so that the precious life could be saved Name **Shafiq Bano** W/o Imtiyaz Ahmad Dar R/o Buchpora Dar Mohalla Srinagar



**A/C No: 0173040150000537 J&K BANK**  
**Branch Anchar Buchpora IFSC CODE JAKAO ANCHAR**  
**CONTACT NO: 9797665000, 9419378547**



**ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**  
AWANTIPORA, KASHMIR.  
Tale: 01933-247954/247955. Website: www.islamiconiversity.edu.in.

**Extension in the Date of Submission of Tender for the Supply of Microsoft 0365-A3 Plan**

The last date for submission of tender for the Supply of Microsoft 0365-A3 Plan floated vide No. IUST/Reg\_P&S/Tender/M-0365-A3/20/492, Dated: 01-12-2020 is hereby extended up to **24-12-2020 (2.00 pm).**

No. IUST/Reg/P&S/Tender/20/531 Sd/-  
Dated: - 16-12-2020 Assistant Registrar (Procurement & Stores)

(GOVERNMENT OF INDIA)  
(UNION TERRITORY OF JAMMU & KASHMIR)

## OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PWD (R&B) CITY ROADS DIVISION SRINAGAR.

3rd FRESH SHORT TERM NOTICE INVITING TENDERS.

NIT No: - E-NIT/88/CRD OF 2020-21 R&B/ e-tendering, DATED: 17-12-2020.

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

S.No	Name of Work	Est. Cost (Rs. In Lacs)	Cost of T.Doc. (In Rs.)	Earnest Money (In Rs.)	Time of completion	Time & Date of Opening of Bid	Class	Major Head of Account
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	Repair/ Reconstruction of existing cement concrete drain (damaged) at Mohalla Ashraf Khan near house of Irshad Ahmad Dar at Kathi Darwaza Srinagar.	Rs.0.94 lacs	Rs.200/-	Rs.1880/-	10 Days	24-12-2020 at 11:00 AM	DEE Class Civil	3054 M&R (Addl)
2	Restoration of damaged road stretch at Jan Mohammad Wani, Gandram Singh Bagh, Jogiwan Rehmania Colony Androoni Kathi Darwaza Srinagar by way of stone pavement.	Rs.1.00 lacs	Rs.200/-	Rs.2000/-	10 Days	24-12-2020 at 11:00 AM	DEE Class Civil	3054 M&R (Addl)

Position of funds committed.

1. The Bidding documents consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specification, Drawings, bill of quantities, (B.O.Q.) , Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen / downloaded from the departmental website [www.jktenders.gov.in](http://www.jktenders.gov.in) as per the schedule of dates given below:  
2. A pre-bid meeting will be held to clarify issued and to answer questions on any matter that may be raised at that stage by the bidders.

1.	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	17-12-2020.
2.	Period of downloading of bidding documents	FROM 18-12-2020 10:00 A.M TO 23-12-2020
3.	Bid submission Start Date	18-12-2020 FROM 10:00 A.M
4.	Bid Submission End Date	23-12-2020 UPTO 4:00 P.M
5.	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	24-12-2020 at 11:00 A.M in the Office of the Executive Engineer PWD (R&B), City Roads Division Srinagar.

Bids must be accompanied with cost of tender document in shape of introducing Treasury Challan or simply uploading a copy of necessary Treasury challan receipt in favour of Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) City Roads Division Srinagar and Earnest money / Bid security in shape of CDR/ FDR/ pledged to Executive Engineer, PWD (R&B) City Roads Division Srinagar. (tender receiving authority).

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

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

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

6. The contractor shall have to submit the working design of Structure from accredited structural consultant for which no extra charges shall be admissible.

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

NIT/88/CRD OF 2020-21 R&B/ e-tendering.

DATED:- 17-12-2020.

Executive Engineer,  
R&B, City Roads division,  
Srinagar.

DIPK-10590/20

Government of Jammu & Kashmir

## Directorate of Tourism, Kashmir

Tel:0194-2315378, Fax 0194-2479548, e-mail: [ddtreg@jktourism.or](mailto:ddtreg@jktourism.or)

Sub: - Representations regarding inclusion of partners in the registration records of this Department in respect of Guest House De-Apple, Malteng, Dalgate, Srinagar.

### PUBLIC NOTICE

Whereas, Mr. Miya Mohammad Hussain Khan S/o Gh. Nabi Khan R/o Bonamsar, Sonwar, Srinagar has approached this office for inclusion of partners in the registration certificate for Guest House "De-Apple", Malteng, Dalgate, Srinagar and issuance of Registration Certificate bearing names of Mr. Miya Mohammad Hussain Khan S/o GhulamNabi Khan, Mr. Nazir Ahmad, GhulamNabi Khan and Mohammad Amin Khan Ss/o Late Ali Mohammad Khan R/o Bonamsar, Sonwar, Srinagar for the said Guest House;

Whereas, the Registration Certificate of the said Guest House stands issued in favour of "Mr. Miya Mohammad Hussain Khan S/o GhulamNabi Khan" vide registration No. Reg/ GH/767/283/DTK/L6/62 dated 04.06.2014 and is renewed upto 31.03.2018;

Whereas, the applicants has submitted following documents alongwith the application:-

- State Subjects.
  - Aadhar Cards
  - Character Certificates
  - Photocopy of RC.
  - Partnership Deed executed before Sub-Registrar, Srinagar, South showing inclusion of Mr. Nazir Ahmad, Mr. GhulamNabi Khan and Mr. Mohammad Amin Khan Ss/o Late Ali Mohammad Khan R/o Bonamsar, Sonwar, Srinagar.
- Now therefore, in exercise of powers conferred on me under section 39 of J&K Registration Tourist Trade Act 1978/82/2011/2012,( Notification of Changes) before issuance of registration certificate for guest house "De-Apple in the names of "Mr. Miya Mohammad Hussain Khan S/o GhulamNabi Khan, Mr. Nazir Ahmad, Mr. GhulamNabi Khan and Mr. Mohammad Amin Khan Ss/o Late Ali Mohammad Khan R/o Bonamsar, Sonwar, Srinagar", the matter is hereby notified for information of General Public/Financial Institutions/ Banks/ Development Authorities/ PHE Department/ Electric Department that in case of any objection, the same should reach the office of undersigned within a period of 07 days from the date of publication of this notice. No objection beyond a period of 07 days will be entertained and the request of the applicant will be considered under rules after submission of all requisite documents.

Sd/-  
Deputy Director Tourism,  
Registration

No.Reg./767/1395/DTK

Dated:17.12.2020

DIPK-10569/20

## TOURISM DEPARTMENT

[dda-budgam@jk.gov.in](mailto:dda-budgam@jk.gov.in)

### OFFICE OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER DODHPATHRI DEV. AUTHORITY

Notification under section 10 (1) of the Jammu and Kashmir Development Act-1970 read with Rule 6 of the Development Authority Rules.

Notice is hereby given that:

- Draft Master Plan of the proposed Local Area / Planning Area of Dodhpathri Development Authority has been prepared by the Town Planning Organization Kashmir;
- Objections and suggestions were called from General Public Vide Dodhpathri Development Authority Letter No. CEO/DDA/ 116-19 Dated : 19-03-2014 which was published in leading Newspapers of J&K;
- For giving further chance to General Public to raise objections / suggestions by use of print and electronic media, the committee constituted by Government Vide Order No: 63-TSM of 2014 Dated: 12-02-2014 has decided in the meeting held on 17-11-2020 to put this Draft Master Plan again in public domain for four ( 04 ) weeks.
- Soft copy of Draft Master Plan will be available for viewing on the web sites of Deputy Commissioner Budgam and Director Tourism Kashmir viz; 1. budgam.nic.in 2. jktourism.jk.gov.in from 19-12-2020 to 16-01-2021.
- Hard copy of Draft Master Plan will be available for viewing in the office of the Chief Executive Officer Dodhpathri Development Authority at Tangnar Khanshab Budgam during office hours from 19-12-2020 to 16-01-2021;
- Objections and suggestion are hereby invited from General Public with respect to this Draft Master Plan and the same can be sent in writing to Deputy Commissioner Budgam / Director Tourism Kashmir / Chief Town Planner Kashmir / Chief Executive Officer Dodhpathri Development Authority or on email addresses: [dda-budgam@Jk.gov.in](mailto:dda-budgam@Jk.gov.in) 2. [Dodhpathri05@gmail.com](mailto:Dodhpathri05@gmail.com) from 19-12-2020 (2.00pm) to 16-01-2021(3.00 pm).
- Any Person / Agency making objections / suggestions should give his / her name, address, mobile No., and email etc. among which name and address is mandatory for taking the same in consideration.

No: Est/46/644-49/DDA  
Date:10-12-2020

Sd/  
Chief Executive Officer  
Dodhpathri Development Authority

DIPK-NB-4638/20

## J&K RURAL ROADS DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (PMGSY)

Executive Engineer PMGSY DIVISION Ganderbal Near Nagbal Petrol Pump

NOTICE INVITING e-TENDERS

E-NIT NO: 37/EE/PMGSY-Ganderbal/e-tendering of 2020-21 dated 15/12/2020

Executive Engineer PMGSY Div. Ganderbal on behalf of Lt. Governor of Union Territory of J&K invites **Item rate basis** in electronic tendering system for construction of roads under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) for the below mentioned works including their maintenance for five years from the eligible and approved contractors registered with J&K Govt. CPWD, Railways and other State Governments.

S. No	Name of Work with Package No. and Name of Division	Tendered Cost Including GST (Rs. in lacs)			Cost of document (Rs in lacs)	Earnest Money (Bid Security) (in Rupees)	Time of completion	Tender Call	Time and Date of opening of tenders online (Technical Bid)	Class of contractor
		Construct ion Part	Maintena nce Part	Total cost of work						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1	Construction and maintenance of Road From L032 Kollan Botakolan (Stage 2nd) Phase XII, Package No. JK13-122, Length 2.30 Km PMGSY Division Ganderbal.	120.69	12.07	132.76	0.08	265520	270 days	4th	24-12-2020 At 11.00am	"A" Class in PWD or Equivalent in CPWD/ Railways and other state Governments
2	Construction and maintenance of Road From L073-L032 Kieltholla-II(Stage 2nd) Phase XII, Package No. JK13-123, Length 0.90 Km PMGSY Division Ganderbal.	48.83	4.88	53.71	0.06	107420	270 days	4th	24-12-2020 At 11.00am	"A" Class in PWD or Equivalent in CPWD/ Railways and other state Governments
3	Construction and maintenance of Road From Bonibagh To BonibaghBala (Balance Work) Phase V, Package No. JK13-14, Length 1.2 Km.Stage I&II, PMGSY Division Gander bal.	42.61	5.11	47.72	0.02	95440	270 Days	7th	24-12-2020 At 11.00am	"A" Class in PWD or Equivalent in CPWD/ Railways and other state Governments
4	Construction and Maintenance of Road from L070-NHW To Sarbal (Stage 2nd) Package No:-JK13-121Length:0.75 Kms PMGSY Div Ganderbal	44.55	4.45	49.00	0.06	98000	240 days	5th	24-12-2020 At 11.00am	"A" Class in PWD or Equivalent in CPWD/ Railways and other state Governments
5	Construction and Maintenance of Road from L061-NHW To UpperBasti (Stage2nd) Package No:-JK13-138 Length :1.50Kms PMGSY Div. Ganderbal	79.04	7.90	86.94	0.07	173880	240 days	5th	24-12-2020 At 11.00am	"A" Class in PWD or Equivalent in CPWD/ Railways and other state Governments
6	Construction and Maintenance of Road From L042-Gujjipati,Pkg No.JK13-140, Length :1.50 Kms., Stage-II,Phase- XII,PMGSY, Div. Ganderbal.	76.25	7.62	83.87	0.03	167740	240 days	3rd	24-12-2020 At 11.00 am	"A" Class in PWD or Equivalent in CPWD/ Railways and other state Governments
7	Construction and Maintenance of Road from Watlarshah Qalander Postoni Mohalla Stage-2 <sup>nd</sup> Phase VI,(Balance Work), Package No. JK13-70, Total Length of Project :3.35 Kms and Balance work length 1.85 Kms PMGSY Division Ganderbal.(Maintenance length for said package is:3.35 Km)	71.28	7.13	78.41	0.03	156820	240 days	4th	24-12-2020 At 11.00AM	"A" Class in PWD or Equivalent in CPWD/ Railways and other state Governments.

- The Bidding document can be downloaded from the website <http://nmpsvtendersik.gov.in> from **16-12-2020 (10:00 AM)** to
- The Bids shall be deposited in **electronic format** on the website <http://pmgsytendersik.gov.in> from **18-12-2020 (10:00 AM) to 23-12-2020 up to 4:00 PM**. The bids uploaded on the website up to due date and time shall be opened online on **24-12-2020 at 11.00AM** in presence of the bidders who wish to attend. If the office happens to be closed on the date of opening of the bids as specified, the bids shall be opened on the next working day at the same time and venue.
- The complete bidding process shall be online.
- The bidders are requested to quote their rates excluding GST. The GST @12% shall be added to the contract value by the allotting authority at the time of issue of allotment.
- A Pre-bid meeting shall be held on **17-12-2020 at 11:00 AM** in the Office of Executive Engineer PMGSY Div. Ganderbal, near Petrol Pump Nagbal, Ganderbal to clarify the issues and to answer questions on any matter that may be raised at that stage as stated in Clause 9 of instruction to bidders of the Bidding document. **The intending Bidders, before attending the Pre-bid meeting, are advised to visit the site of work and acquaint themselves with the site conditions. The bidders are advised to participate in the pre-bid meeting on the scheduled date and time.**
- Availability of Bid Document and mode of submission:** The bid document is available online and bid should be submitted online on website [www.pmgsytenders.gov.in](http://www.pmgsytenders.gov.in). The bidder is required to register on the website which is free of cost. For submission of bids, the bidder is required to have valid Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) from one of the authorized Certifying Authorities (CA). "Aspiring bidders who have not obtained the user ID and password for participating in e-tendering in PMGSY may obtain the same from the website: [www.pmgsytenders.gov.in](http://www.pmgsytenders.gov.in).
- Bids must be accompanied by **cost of document** as mentioned in column 6 of above table and should be in the form of **Demand Draft. The bid security should be in the form of CDR/FDR/BG from scheduled commercial Bank** as mentioned in Column 7 of above table and shall be **pledged to the Executive Engineer PMGSY Div. Ganderbal for the schemes** and shall be valid for at least **90 days** from the date of opening of Technical bid.
- The date and time of opening of Financial-Bids shall be notified on Website**<http://pmgsytendersik.gov.in>. This is conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address.

The Financial-bids shall be opened accordingly online on same website at the Office of Executive Engineer PMGSY Div. Ganderbal, near Petrol Pump Nagbal, Ganderbal.

9. Other details can be seen in the bidding documents.

**Note:- The intending bidders are advised to study the entire bidding document before preparation and submission of their bids. This includes clause 3 (Eligible Bidders), 4 (Qualification of Bidders) of ITB (Instruction to Bidders), Appendix to ITB, Section 3 (Qualification Information), Contract Data to G.C.C. & Section 7 of Bidding Document.**

DIPK-10562/20

No:-EE/PMGSY/Ganderbal/e-Tendering/ 3193-3223  
Dated: 15 -12-2020

Sd/-  
Executive Engineer  
PMGSY Div. Ganderbal

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تحریر الصدر نائب تحصیلدار ماہ کورہ



## Taliban kill 13 policemen in attacks on two checkpoints

Agencies

**KUNDUZ:** At least 13 Afghan policemen were killed when Taliban militants attacked two checkpoints overnight in the north of the country, officials said on Wednesday.

The militants stormed and briefly held the checkpoints on the outskirts of Pule Khumri, capital of northern Baghlan province, officials said.

The dead, and five

man Ahmad Jawed Basharat confirmed the attack.

The Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack, the latest in a wave of violence to rock the country in recent weeks.

In a separate incident on Wednesday, five security personnel and 17 Taliban militants were killed when government forces countered an offensive in southern Uruzgan province, another official said.

Violence has surged



wounded, had been taken to the provincial hospital, said Ainuddin Sayad, the director of the facility.

Provincial police spokes-

across several provinces of Afghanistan even as the Taliban and Afghan government engage in peace talks to end the war.

## Maldives COVID burial plan 'will marginalise Sri Lankan Muslims'

RATHINDRA KURUWITA AND  
ZAHEENA RASHEED

Colombo, Sri Lanka/Male, Maldives – A United Nations human rights expert has denounced Maldives's announcement it was considering burials for Sri Lankan Muslims who die of COVID-19, saying such a move "could end up en-

stepped into the fray on Monday, with Foreign Minister Abdullah Shahid announcing that authorities were considering a "special request" from Rajapaksa to facilitate "Islamic funeral rites in the Maldives for Sri Lankan Muslims succumbing to the COVID-19 pandemic".

In a Twitter post, Shahid said, "This assistance will offer



abling the further marginalisation of Muslim communities in Sri Lanka".

Wednesday's statement from Ahmed Shaheed, the UN's special rapporteur on freedom of belief, comes amid intensifying criticism of a government rule in Buddhist-majority Sri Lanka that mandated anyone who dies of COVID-19 must be cremated – a practice forbidden in Islam.

Muslims in Sri Lanka have criticised the policy by President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's government as "discriminatory" and have insisted that burials should take place in their country.

Neighbouring Maldives, a Sunni Muslim country,

solace to our Sri Lankan Muslim brothers and sisters grieving over burial of loved ones."

The UN rights expert, however, called Maldives's response to Rajapaksa's request "concerning".

"It looks like the request did not come from the Muslim community or with their consent, and could end up enabling the further marginalisation of Muslim communities in Sri Lanka," Shaheed said in a statement to Al Jazeera, noting that the World Health Organization's (WHO) guidelines permit both cremation and burials for people who die of COVID-19.

Al Jazeera



Angara A5 space rocket blasts off at the Plesetsk cosmodrome, Russia | REUTERS

## Iran's Leader Vows 'Definite' Revenge for US killing of Soleimani

Agencies

Tehran: Supreme Leader Ayatollah Sayed Ali Khamenei has promised to avenge the blood of Iran's iconic military commander, Maj. Gen. Qasem Soleimani, who was killed in a US airstrike outside Baghdad's international airport in January.

Ayatollah Khamenei said the revenge on those who ordered the assassination and executed it is "definite," but he did not specify any timeline.

The Soleimani killing, directly ordered by President Donald Trump, pushed Iran and the United States to the brink of war. Five days into the assassination, Iran targeted the Ain al-Asad airbase hosting US soldiers in neighboring Iraq with over a dozen missiles. The attack, which was reportedly launched apparently with a prior notice, killed no one but did cause US troops to suffer traumatic brain injuries.

During his speech Dec. 16, Ayatollah looked back at the strike as just a "slap," noting that part of the real revenge for "the national hero" will be exacted with the ouster of US forces from the region.

"Millions attending Martyrs Soleimani and Abu Mahdi's funerals in Iraq and Iran was the



first severe slap to the US. But the worse one is overcoming the hegemony of arrogance and expelling the US forces from the region."

That goal, he argued, will be gained with regional "resistance," a term Iran uses to describe a wide network of movements it has been nurturing across the Middle East to advance its agenda, including a struggle against the US military presence.

"Martyr Soleimani defeated the front of arrogance both during his life and with his martyrdom. The US president said they spent 7 billion dollars in the region without achieving anything. The US failed to achieve its goals in Syria and Iraq. The hero behind this major task is General Soleimani."

Iran's regional activities in recent years have been at the heart of Western worries, repeatedly raised during talks that culmi-

nated in the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Tehran, however, has persistently resisted negotiating the matter, claiming that such activities are conducted at the behest of sovereign governments.

The JCPOA itself has been hanging by a thread since the US withdrawal and a series of executive orders by Trump in and after May 2018, which led to a reintroduction of crippling economic sanctions on the Islamic Republic. Trump's departure from the White House in January and signals by President-elect Joe Biden about rejoining the accord have boosted hopes in the ending months of President Hassan Rouhani's administration for negotiating sanctions relief and salvaging the fragile deal.

Nonetheless, Ayatollah Khamenei noted in his speech that the Rouhani government's priority should be attempts to "neutralize" the impact of the sanctions rather than have them lifted: "Do not trust the enemy," he said, downplaying possible talks with the incoming American president two days after Rouhani had suggested readiness to negotiate the revival of the JCPOA if the United States acts toward the same goal.

## Iran nuclear deal members urge Tehran return to compliance

Agencies

VIENNA: The remaining parties to the faltering 2015 Iran nuclear accord met on Wednesday after Tehran announced plans for a new breach of the deal, and as uncertainty reigns ahead of US President-elect Joe Biden's January inauguration.

The meeting of the so-called "joint commission" included China, France, Russia, Iran, Germany and Britain and was chaired by senior EU foreign affairs official Helga Schmid.

The meeting, which lasted around two hours, was held virtually because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The 2015 deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), has unravelled

steadily since US President Donald Trump withdrew from it in 2018 and went on to impose crippling economic sanctions on Iran.

Tehran has retaliated by progressively abandoning limits on its nuclear activity laid down in the deal, most recently planning to install advanced centrifuges at Iran's main nuclear enrichment plant in Natanz.

Last week France, Germany and Britain — collectively known as the "E3" — condemned the plan as "deeply worrying". Meanwhile the assassination last month of prominent Iranian nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh has heightened tensions in the region, with Iran blaming the killing on Israel.

In the wake of Fakhrizadeh's death, Iranian MPs passed a bill call-

ing for further expansion to Iran's nuclear programme and an end to inspections of nuclear facilities by the UN watchdog International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

The Iranian foreign ministry said it did not agree with the bill and President Hassan Rouhani has suggested he will not sign it into law. Rouhani has defied criticism from Iran's ultra-conservatives to state his determination to seize the "opportunity" presented by the change of US president in January.

Rouhani has said Iran is ready to come back into compliance with the deal as soon as other parties fulfil their commitments. President-elect Biden has said he is willing to return to the deal but has revealed little else about forthcoming US strategy on the question.

## Palestinians left waiting as Israel set to deploy vaccine

Agencies

**Jerusalem:** Israel will begin rolling out a major coronavirus vaccination campaign next week after the prime minister reached out personally to the head of a major drug company. Millions of Palestinians living under Israeli control will have to wait much longer.

Worldwide, rich nations are snatching up scarce supplies of new vaccines as poor countries largely rely on a World Health Organisation program that has yet to get off the ground. There are few places where the competition is playing out in closer proximity than in Israel and the territories it has occupied for more than half a century.

Next year could bring a sharp divergence in the trajectory of the pandemic, which until now has blithely ignored the national boundaries and political enmities of the Middle East. Israelis could soon return to normal life and an economic revival, even as the virus continues to menace Palestinian towns and villages just a few

kilometres away.

Israel reached an agreement with the Pfizer pharmaceutical company to supply eight million doses of its newly approved vaccine — enough to cover nearly half of Israel's population of nine million since each person requires two doses. That came after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu personally reached out multiple times to Pfizer Chief Executive Albert Bourla, boasting that at one point he was able to reach the CEO at 2am.

Israel has mobile vaccination units with refrigerators that can keep the Pfizer shots at the required minus 70 degrees Celsius. It plans to begin vaccinations as soon as next week, with a capacity of more than 60,000 shots a day. Israel reached a separate agreement with Moderna earlier this month to purchase six million doses of its vaccine — enough for another three million Israelis.

Israel's vaccination campaign will include Jewish settlers living deep inside the West Bank, who are Israeli citizens, but not the territory's 2.5m Palestinians.

## EU policy 'worsening' mental health for refugees on Greek islands



Virginia Pietromarchi | Al Jazeera

Athens : A prominent humanitarian group has warned of a worsening mental health crisis among asylum-seekers trapped at refugee camps on three Greek islands, saying its research reveals severe symptoms among people of all ages and backgrounds, including depression, post-traumatic stress disorder and self-harm.

The International Rescue Committee (IRC), in a new report on Thursday, said nearly 15,000 people remain stranded at the European-Union funded Reception and Identification Centres, camps known as "hotspots" that were set up on Europe's borders almost five years ago to swiftly process applications for asylum.

Citing data collected from 904 asylum-seekers supported by its mental health programmes on the islands of Lesbos, Chios and Samos, the IRC said one in three of its clients reported suicidal thoughts, while one in five reported having made attempts to take their lives.

"I even tried to hang myself but my son saw me and called my husband," Fariba, a 32-year-old Afghan woman, was quoted as saying. The mother of two young children lives in the Vathy camp in the island of Samos.

"I think about death a lot here: that it would be a good thing for the whole family, that if I could add a medicine in our food and we all died it would be a deliverance. But then I look at my daughter and I think it is not her time yet," she said.

The hotspot centres were established up in 2015, when the Aegean islands, especially Lesbos, came under enormous pressure, with nearly a million refugees and migrants trying to reach Europe arriving on the Greek islands.

In January of this year, the five camps together hosted more than 38,600 asylum-seekers – a number six times higher than the hotspots' capacity. The number had reduced significantly by November, yet, asylum seekers still live under "inhumane" conditions and "in great distress, with limited access to food, water and sanitation," read the report.

## NEWSMAKERS

### Covid makes for strange bedfellows: How an arms dealer failed Poland in its attempt to source ventilators

When the coronavirus pandemic surged across Europe in April and hospitals were desperate for ventilators, Poland's government turned to an unlikely supplier — an arms dealer.

Andrzej Izdebski, 69, has helped smuggle rifles and ammunition across borders, worked for Poland's Communist secret services, and claims to have sold dietary supplements to North Korea.

Months later, as a second coronavirus wave strains Poland's hospitals and raises its Covid-19 death toll, Izdebski has provided less than a fifth of the 1,241 ventilators the government agreed to buy for about \$53 million, the government and Izdebski say.

Izdebski's struggle to deliver ventilators to Poland



opens a window into the extraordinary lengths countries have gone to obtain the devices in the pandemic. While wealthier countries raced to secure the breathing machines from big manufacturers in China, Europe and the United States, poorer countries like Poland had a choice when the pandemic swept the

globe — go on a waiting list that could delay shipments by months or turn to little-known third-party brokers.

Izdebski went with the brokers.

Under the deal, the Polish government expected Izdebski's company to deliver the first 321 ventilators in April and May. But with buyers

around the globe also scrambling for the devices, Izdebski struggled to secure them on time, he said in an interview. When they didn't arrive, Warsaw cancelled those orders.

Warsaw expected the remaining 920 ventilators ordered through Izdebski to come in June. But by early July, he had delivered just 200, according to the government official in charge of the deal.

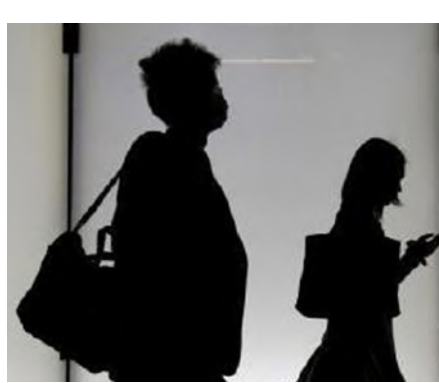
The official didn't blame Izdebski for failing to deliver the machines, which help patients breathe and can be the difference between life and death for those facing the most dire respiratory effects of the coronavirus. He said Izdebski produced documents showing that one of the manufacturers wasn't able to deliver the ventilators on time. Izdebski corroborated the official's account. Reuters was unable to view the documents.

### City of Paris sued \$110,000 for hiring more women than men in 2018

Three years since France voted in a record number of women into the country's parliament, the city of Paris is being fined for hiring too many.

After Mayor Anne Hidalgo appointed 11 women and five men to city hall roles in 2018, she has now been issued a \$110,000 fine for violating national guidelines against gender discrimination. As 69 per cent of positions went to women and just 31 per cent went to men, her hiring broke policies requiring at least 40 per cent of new positions to go to each gender. France's public service ministry has now fined the city of Paris for violating this rule.

Hidalgo criticised the fine, calling it "obviously absurd, unfair, irresponsible and dan-



gerous," while nonetheless sarcastically welcoming it. "I am happy to announce that we have been fined," she said, which former US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton went on to retweet. "The management of the city hall has, all of a sudden, become far too feminist," Hidalgo told a city council meeting.

"Yes, to one day achieve

parity, we must speed up the tempo and ensure that more women are appointed than men," she said.

A waiver, introduced in 2019, was intended to let such motions pass if they did not cause broader gender imbalance. However, since the act took place before the waiver, the fine still stands.

According to the Council on Foreign Relations' Women's Power Index, which measures representation of women in governments across the world, France ranked tenth, with the most percentage of women of any country in its Cabinet (53 per cent), and strong performance on other indicators. However, since 1946, there has been only one female head of state in France.



## India's 'Mystery Illness': Nickel Found In Milk Samples



**NEW DELHI:** Scientists have found nickel in milk samples taken from an area in India where hundreds of patients fell sick with a mysterious disease a week ago.

More than 600 people in Andhra Pradesh's Eluru town fell ill, reporting nausea, seizures and fainting. Excessive amounts of lead and nickel were found in the blood samples of the patients.

One person died on December 7. Two more patients admitted with symptoms of the disease died last week but local health officials said the deaths were not due to the "mystery illness" but other health complications.

A scientist at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) revealed that nickel was found in milk samples collected in Eluru town.

"Presence of nickel in the milk samples is something which is warning us. It should not be present in the milk samples. It's alarming," Avr Mohan, the medical superintendent of District Hospital Eluru, told Al Jazeera in a phone interview.

Mohan, who is also the district coordinator of health services, said scientists were yet to find out why metal was found

in milk samples but there was a chance it may have come from pesticides.

"It must be somewhere in the grass or something that the cattle are consuming," he said.

On Wednesday, Indian media reported that experts at AIIMS, Indian Institute of Chemical Technology (IICT) and other reputed institutions confirmed that residues of pesticides could be behind the outbreak of the mysterious disease.

Last week, health experts said they found excessive amounts of lead and nickel in patients' blood samples.

Authorities are yet to find the source of the lead.

"Lead is not found in other samples. It was found only in the blood samples of the patients," said Mohan. "The source needs to be identified."

Indian media reported that officials of the National Institute of Nutrition (NIN), who tested samples of food items including meat, chicken, fish, shrimp and vegetables, found pesticide components in some vegetables.

Authorities said the remaining patients have been discharged and no new cases have been reported since Sunday.



Farmers at the Singhu border. Tribune file

## Traffic Disrupted On Key Delhi Routes As Farmers Stay Put At Border Points On Day 22 Of Protest

**NEW DELHI:** The agitation against the Centre's new farm laws enters Week 4 with thousands of farmers camping at border points of Delhi adamant on their demands, and the Supreme Court saying it will form a committee to resolve the deadlock.

On Wednesday, the top court observed that the Centre's talk with the protesting farmers had "not worked apparently" and were bound to fail, and said it would form a committee having representatives of both the sides, but the agitating leaders dismissed it as no solution.

There was disruption of traffic movement on key routes in the national capital on Thursday, the 22nd day of the farmers' protest to demand for the repeal of the three new agri

marketing laws.

Farmers camping at Singhu, Tikri and Ghazipur border points have led to closure of several routes in Delhi.

According to the city police, Singhu, Auchandi, Piau Maniyari, Sabholi and Mangesh borders are closed. Commuters have been advised to take alternative routes via Lampur, Safiabad and Singhu school toll tax borders, while traffic has been diverted from Mukarba and GTK road, they said.

The Outer Ring Road, GTK road and NH-44 should be avoided, the police said.

Those travelling to Haryana can take Jharoda (only single carriage-way), Daurala, Kapashera, Badusarai, Rajokri NH 8, Bijwasan/Bajghera, Palam Vihar and Dun-

dahera Borders, the police said.

Gazipur border also remains closed for traffic coming from Ghaziabad to Delhi. Commuters have been advised to take alternative routes via Anand Vihar, DND, Chilla, Apsara and Bhopra borders, they added.

Enacted in September, the three farm laws have been projected by the government as major reforms in the agriculture sector that will remove the middlemen and allow farmers to sell anywhere in the country.

However, protesting farmers have expressed apprehension that the new laws would pave the way for eliminating the safety cushion of Minimum Support Price and do away with the mandis, leaving them at the mercy of big corporates. PTI

## SC To Decide Friday Whether To Initiate Contempt Proceedings Against Kunal Kamra



The Supreme Court on Thursday said it will pronounce its order on Friday on a batch of petitions seeking initiation of criminal contempt proceedings against stand-up comic artist Kunal Kamra for his alleged scandalous tweets against the apex court.

The pleas came up for hearing before a bench headed by Justice Ashok Bhushan which heard the submissions of advocate Nishant R Katneshwarkar, who appeared for one of the petitioners and claimed that Kamra had posted several tweets scandalous to the judiciary.

"All these tweets are scandalous and we had sought consent from the attorney general," Katneshwarkar told the bench, which also comprised justices R S Reddy and M R Shah.

He read out the letter of Attorney General K K Venugopal, who had granted consent for

initiation of criminal contempt proceedings against Kamra.

The bench asked the lawyer not to read the alleged contemptuous tweets of the comic artist in the open court, saying they have already gone through Venugopal's letter on the issue.

The consent of either the attorney general or the solicitor general is necessary under section 15 of the Contempt of Courts Act, 1971 for initiating contempt proceedings against a person.

One of the petitions have been filed by law student, Shrirang Katneshwarkar, who has claimed that Kamra had started publishing tweets on November 11, when the top court was hearing the appeal of journalist Arnab Goswami against the Bombay High Court's order rejecting his plea seeking interim bail in a 2018 abetment to suicide case.

**THERE WAS DISRUPTION OF TRAFFIC MOVEMENT ON KEY routes in the national capital on Thursday, the 22nd day of the farmers' protest to demand for the repeal of the three new agri marketing laws.**

## HC Declines Plea For Providing Aid, Security And Treatment To Protesting Farmers At Delhi Borders

**NEW DELHI:** The Delhi High Court on Thursday declined to entertain a plea seeking aid, security and treatment of the farmers protesting on the borders of the national capital, saying a similar issue was before the Supreme Court.

A bench of Chief Justice D N Patel and Justice Prateek Jalan also said that the high court's jurisdiction does not extend to areas outside the national capital territory and added that the same plea could have been filed in any of the high courts of Rajasthan, Punjab or Uttar Pradesh.

The bench also observed that the plea was filed without doing any research or preparation and dismissed it.

The court's order came after Delhi government additional standing counsel Sanjoy Ghose and advocate Rishabh Jetley told the bench that a similar was being heard by the apex court.

The petition by a lawyer, Ash-



ish, had sought directions to the Centre and Delhi government to take steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19 among the farmers protesting at the borders of the national capital.

The plea, filed through advocate Rohit Jha, had also sought directions to the authorities to ensure the protests do not turn violent and to remove the road blockages caused by the

agitation.

The farmers are protesting at several roads near Delhi borders against the three new farm laws -- Farmers Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020, Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020 and Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act 2020. PTI

## Foundation Stone For Ayodhya Mosque To Be Laid On Republic Day; Blueprint This Week

The blueprint of the mosque to replace the Babri Masjid will be unveiled this Saturday and its foundation laid on Republic Day on the five-acre land allotted for it here, members of the Trust formed for its construction said.

"The Trust chose January 26, 2021 for laying the foundation stone of the Ayodhya mosque as on this day our Constitution came into effect over seven decades ago. Our Constitution is based on pluralism, which is the leitmotif of our mosque project," said Athar Hussain, secretary of the Indo-Islamic Cultural Foundation (IICF).

The IICF was set up by the Sunni Waqf Board six months ago to build the mosque.

The blueprint of the mosque complex, which will include a multi-specialty hospital, a community kitchen and a library, will be unveiled by the IICF on December 19 as the plan for the project has been finalised by its chief architect, Professor S.M. Akhtar.

"The mosque will have a capacity to hold 2,000 namazis at a time, and the structure will be round-shaped," Akhtar told PTI.



The Supreme Court on November 9 last year had paved the way for the construction of a Ram Temple at the disputed Ram Janambhoomi-Babri Masjid site at Ayodhya, and directed the Centre to allot an alternative five-acre plot to the Sunni Waqf Board for building a new mosque at a "prominent" place in the town in Uttar Pradesh.

of nourishment of the poor people living nearby, he added. "We can establish a nursing and paramedic college to provide human resources to the hospital. We can manage doctors from local resources from Faizabad, and for specialised needs in terms of critical surgeries, we have a group of doctor friends in prominent government and private institutions who want to offer their services," he said.

## PM Modi To Attend Aligarh Muslim University's Centenary Celebrations

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be the chief guest at the centenary celebrations of the Aligarh Muslim University via video link on December 22, an official statement said. Modi will attend the online function along with Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank, it said.

Extending his gratitude to the PM, AMU Vice Chancellor Professor Tariq Mansoor said the Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) community is thankful for his acceptance to participate in the celebrations marking 100 years of the university.

"The outreach of the university during this historical year will also immensely help in its growth and development, and in the placement of our students in private and public sectors," he said.

Prof Mansoor appealed the university community to put in all efforts for the success of the forthcoming events, and the staff members, students, alumni and AMU well-wishers for ac-



tive participation.

He also appealed to all concerned to keep the centenary programme above politics like the Republic Day, Independence Day and Gandhi Jayanti.

Earlier this month, the university had announced that President Ram Nath Kovind was expected to be the chief guest at the centenary celebrations.

The change of chief guest appears to be a last minute move, according to AMU sources.

Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College became Aligarh Muslim University on December 1, 1920 following a gazette notification. AMU was formally inaugurated as a university on December 17 that year.

### NEWS MAKERS

## SC Refuses To Interfere With HC Order Quashing Detention Of Kafeel Khan Under NSA

The Supreme Court, on Thursday, dismissed a special leave petition (SLP) filed by the Uttar Pradesh government, challenging the release of Dr Kafeel Khan by the Allahabad High Court, which had quashed charges under the National Security Act.

In a hearing, which lasted for just under a minute as per Khan, Chief Justice of India S.A. Bobde, heading a three-judge bench, said he saw no need to interfere.

Khan, who was at the centre of the what is known as the oxygen gas tragedy of August 2017, in which more than 60 children had died, had been detained under the NSA and lodged in Mathura jail for delivering an 'allegedly provocative' speech at the Aligarh Muslim University on December 12, 2019,



against the backdrop of the protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act.

After almost seven months in jail, on

September 1, 2020, the Allahabad High Court had declared Khan's detention illegal. The court had observed that the arrest was "not sustainable in the eye of law." It had also observed that the speech had called for national integrity and unity.

On December 8, the Supreme Court verified the SLP filed by the state government and listed it for hearing.

For Khan it could not have come at an more inopportune time. His younger brother is to get married on Thursday.

"After four years of suffering, when there was finally some reason to celebrate in the family, the petition brought by the state government put us under strain yet again. This morning when I left home, I hugged my mother and chil-

dren and told my wife there was every possibility that I would not return and be sent to jail," he told THE WEEK.

Justice Bobde, however, took very little time to dispel these fears saying that the HC order was good.

Khan said neither his lawyer Indira Jaising nor the Solicitor General Tushar Mehta were allowed to argue.

The court, however, on Mehta's plea added that this order was limited just to the NSA charge and would have no bearing on the other ongoing investigations. There are three of these—one into the BRD tragedy, another a FIR in Bahraich (September 2018) that alleges that Khan forcibly entered a paediatric ICU and attempted to treat a patient, and the third relates to his speech at AMU.

## 'Assault' On Woman Cop: Arnab Withdraws Pre-Arrest Bail Plea

**MUMBAI:** Republic TV editor-in-chief Arnab Goswami on Thursday withdrew his pre-arrest bail plea in connection with a case registered against him by Mumbai Police for allegedly assaulting a woman police officer.

Goswami had moved the anticipatory bail application before a sessions court here in November.

He sought pre-arrest bail after an FIR was registered against him at NM Joshi Marg police station in central Mumbai for allegedly



assaulting a woman police officer when the police team went to his house to arrest him on November 4.

His lawyer Shayam Kalyanar said the anticipatory bail plea had been withdrawn as per Goswami's instructions.

Goswami has been booked under IPC Sections 353 (as-

sault to deter public servant from discharge of his duty), 504 (intentional insult to provoke breach of peace) and 506 (criminal intimidation), and under the Damage to Public Property Act in this case.

He was arrested from his residence in central Mumbai on November 4 in connection with a 2018 case of abetment to suicide of interior designer Anvay Naik and his mother Kumud.

The Supreme Court granted him interim bail in that case on November 11. PTI



KASHMIR  
OBSERVER

Printed & Published by Sajjad Haider on behalf of the  
Kashmir Observer LLP

Published from: # 5- Boulevard, Srinagar-190001

Printed at: KT Press Pvt. Ltd, Rangreth Ind Area, Srinagar.

RNI Registration No: 69503/98

Postal Registration No-L/159/KO/SK/2014-16

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K O V I E W

Frozen stand-off

Speaking at an interactive session at the FICCI’s annual general meeting on Saturday, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar acknowledged India was being tested in the seven-month-long border standoff with China in Ladakh. He, however, expressed confidence that India will meet the national security challenge. The foreign minister added that China’s action had impacted public sentiment in India and as such was not in the interest of the communist giant. “The goodwill which was so carefully developed will dissipate,” he said.

These remarks do not give much confidence as to the chances of improvement in the situation in near future. The two sides have so far held umpteen rounds of talks right from the level of their Army commanders to that of defence and foreign minister. But China has so far refused to go back to status quo ante. According to media reports, China has occupied over 1000 square kilometres of the territory claimed by India.

India’s position is that China is in “violation of the bilateral agreements and protocol on ensuring peace and tranquillity along the LAC in the India-China border areas”. The two sides, however, have continued to maintain communication through diplomatic and military channels to achieve the agreement. Meanwhile, the winter has set in and the temperature in Ladakh has plunged to sub zero. Latest satellite images from Sentinel have indicated that Pangong Tso has partially frozen and two more lakes have completely frozen. This is challenging for the two armies. But here India may have some advantage here over China. Indian Army has the long experience of manning Siachen glacier. But the large scale deployment along the Line of Actual Control through the winter will not only test the resilience of the two armies but also raise the costs disproportionately for the two nations.

India wants China to go back to position as it existed in April but Beijing is in no mood to do so. On the contrary, the People’s Liberation Army has enhanced its military profile on the border by deploying thousands of its soldiers and equipment. In recent years China has reportedly more than doubled its total number of air bases, air defence positions and heliports near the Indian border.

This has now become a high stakes war of nerves between the two countries. More so, for India that can hardly afford to be distracted at a time when the number of the Covid-19 positive cases is around one crore. Besides, the depleting economy hit hard by the badly implemented nationwide lockdown hardly affords the government any space for hostilities. China, on the other hand, has successfully tackled the pandemic, despite being the country of origin of the deadly contagion.

A pragmatic way out to resolve the lingering stand-off is through negotiations, even if it takes time. It will be in the interest of both the countries to reach an understanding that also holds on the ground. But this can only happen if Beijing also approaches the dialogue seriously.

OTHER OPINION

All The Same

The multiple connotations of the word ‘secularism’ sometimes contradict one another — in effect even if not semantically. The Assam government has decided to repeal the laws regarding state-run madrasas and Sanskrit tols and turn madrasas into regular high schools. Theological subjects will be withdrawn; only Arabic will continue to be taught as a language. Tols, however, will pass to the Kumar Bhaskar Varma Sanskrit and Ancient Studies University as research centres for Indian civilization, culture and nationalism. The reason announced for the decision is secularism. The Assam government cannot be faulted: in the S.R. Bommai versus Union of India case of 1994, the Supreme Court had pronounced that state-owned educational institutions were prohibited from imparting religious instruction. But it has to be asked why there were state laws permitting madrasas under the government’s auspices that must be repealed now. Were they constitutional? Or does the definition of secularism chosen by Asam’s Bharatiya Janata Party-led government now wish to ignore Articles 28, 29 and 30 of the Constitution that permit — however confusingly — government aid for minority education?

Since privately-run madrasas have so far escaped the state government’s passion for its favoured secularism, it may be a stretch to criticize its decision as communally biased. What cannot be denied is differential treatment. Even if it is possible to overlook the assumption that tols impart religious education — the BJP may be unaware of Sanskrit literature, aesthetics and philosophy — it seems strange that they should graduate into centres for Indian civilizational studies. Assam promises to be the first to have degrees on this subject. Sceptics may see in the government’s desire to appear even-handed a deeper purpose: propagating one-sided views of Indian culture and nationalism. The education minister clarified there would be no history. Naturally: history would overturn BJP-directed ideas of civilization. In the S.R. Bommai case, the Supreme Court had also said that politics and religion cannot be mixed. More pointedly, it said that when the Constitution requires the State to be secular in thought and action, it applies to political parties as well. Indian secularism is far from simple. That is indicated by the constitutional provisions for the education of religious and linguistic minorities. But it is no surprise that a BJP-led government would decide to be secular in its chosen way.

The Telegraph.

MOHSIN MANZOOR

Amid, and over, this ‘tamasha’ of sorts, Kashmiris are majorly responding with smirks and laughter. As most of us have become the living room cheerleaders, Kashmir’s farcical side is unabatedly being promoted as the new difference-makers.

Trivia in Town: Clowns and Cheerleaders

Perhaps trivia and a laughing stock were never so rampant as it is now when Kashmir is entering into the harshest season.

Such is an obsession for what many call “the veiled glamour” that even the sightseer with a “change of heart” makes certain prints behave like Page-3 stuff these days.

After all, a tripper from Mumbai—along with her Mufti—whose namesake once wooed the dream merchants for recreating the old romance in mountains—is in town, either showing up in some old city showroom, or taking a joyride on snowy slopes of Gulmarg where the discontent is already making the winter chilling.

Thanks to the growing tribe of dubious mike-wielders and Facebook pages, the honeymoon hangout is already a buzz in Kashmir’s virtual world. Certain reincarnations are truly blessing in disguise.

And the valley’s chronic and equally incorrigible devotion for domino effect is what is doing trick for the sightseer and her skullcap chaperone.

New entry of a singer and his appearance in Kashmir’s tea house has now become a new driving content for social media and webpages. The arrival is celebrated, albeit virtually, as if the wait for Godot has ended for some weary mountain mortals.

Not that entertainment isn’t any news, but one wonders about the shallow showmen at some kind of task forcing. But then, a bunch of optimists would argue that any departure from the situational news is welcome. It gives people, they assert, some hope.

This mindset on the face of it is problematic. Not only it gives people a false hope, but also promotes mediocrity. No wonder that the tribe of false-hope peddlers is growing with smugness.

But that is not all.

At a time when Budgam tribals are getting eviction notices and facing axes on their orchards, news is zooming on the clownish mike mannerism of DDC partakers.

As news feeds have become a laughing stock and mockery of everything Kashmir knew in its terrible past, the joke, it seems, is on the silent majority.

And yet, many tend to defend the indefensible by stating that the lockdown-battered Kashmiris needed humour and these DDC contestants are ensuring it.

It’s laughable when some of these



candidates seem oblivious of DDC full form or can’t tell how will they bring the so-called change on ground. And yet, keep on declaring: “You just wait and watch, I will ensure the much-needed change on ground.” How? She won’t tell. Another of her tribe member is already pitching a demand for big wagon and gunmen.

Add some plain-talking voters in this list adding some humour to the show.

But more than a laughing stock, these naïve men and women have become a telling comment on Kashmiris.

Imagine some of them ended up winning and holding the charge of districts!

Are we really mindful what tribe is being let loose on us? How will these naïve people tomorrow treat our educated unemployed youth?

But perhaps, as long as jesters are on the job—entertaining us—much of this concern hardly seem to matter.

Amid, and over, this ‘tamasha’ of sorts, Kashmiris are majorly responding with smirks and laughter. As most of us have become the living room cheerleaders, Kashmir’s farcical side is unabatedly being promoted as the new difference-makers.

This takes one back to the times when the Sheikh and Bakshi regime would promote their diehards—including street urchins, hotheads and musclemen—to further silence the already unruffled tribe of thinkers.

Later, those men would go on play an important part in Kashmir’s treacherous history. As a reward posting, some of them were accommodated in police, who ended up unleashing a

dreadful reign. Others were given rights over commercial buildings and forest leases. They became nouveau riche of the society and ended up inflicting a new lavish lifestyle otherwise being considered rogue and vulgar by Kashmir’s sane minds.

It’s the beginning of something which creates all the difference. Interestingly, when we were buckling under the hoodliganism of these men, the young country like Bangladesh was rising above the war-abuses and throwing its weight behind Muhammad Yunus and his class.

Years later, in 2006, Yunus and Grameen Bank were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for their work to “create economic and social development from below”.

While some of us are still wondering about our wrecked state and tastes gone poor, hardly anyone is ready for the course-correction. Making room for trivia, as is currently being witnessed, itself casts its long-term shadow on the society. And this is where, most of us remain oblivious.

It takes today’s preparation to bask in tomorrow’s glory. While our skilled forefathers understood and logged during their lifetimes to leave golden hands for us, we have just become smug captives of our make-believe world.

And therefore, it’s no wonder why we have become cheerleaders for clowns.

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Author is Sopore based Scholar in Political Science

OBSERVER  
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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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‘We’re Being Punished For None Of Our Fault’

With all humility, we the students of LL.B, 2nd Semester, Kashmir University want to draw attention of the Dean & Head, School of Law, KU, Srinagar, to the following:

We belong to the unfortunate batch of 2019 batch who till date have attended regular classes hardly for two months because of the two unforgettable developments viz abrogation of Article 370 and the Covid -19 pandemic.

The consequent lockdowns disrupted our studies very badly. We had no hand in either of the two developments, yet we are being punished for none of our fault.

This punishment comes in the form of conflicting circulars issued by the varsity every now and then. The university authorities have had no regard for its devastating impact on the students who are passing through a nightmare due to the year-long disruption in their lives and academic careers.

The student community is, in fact, a frustrated lot; some in such deep depression as may lead them to a harsh step like suicide. Should any such thing happen, the University authorities will have blood on their hands.

We are briefly putting some facts before your good self for your kind consideration:

1: That soon after the outbreak of covid 19 pandemic, the authorities closed the University in the month of March this year. Soon after, the university started online classes. The students attended these online classes inspite of the nightmarish difficulties due to suspension of high speed internet in the Valley which has not been restored till date. In fact, at times, even 2G internet was not available. So, the students of Kashmir were put to a huge disadvantage as compared to students outside the Valley.

2: That the University, vide notification No. F(PG-Exams)Acad/KU/ dated 30/05/20, shifted to online examination mode and conducted exams in the spring session online. The said notification has not been withdrawn and is, as such, still in force.

3: That on 23/09/20, the law deptt issued a circular whereby it informed the students that online exams would be conducted and that the pattern of examination would be MCQ type. The students started preparing for the exams as per this duly notified scheme.

4: That on 29 Sep.2020 examination forms was issued by the deptt which the students submitted online. However, there was an issue viz that the exam form listed only five papers instead of six and besides, the IT cell charged many students an excess fee of three hundred rupees. Both these grievances were brought to your notice through the CR and the department assured that these issues would be resolved. But, both the issues remain unresolved till date. And now the dept has issued another notice asking the students to visit the IT section to solve these issues individually. It is pertinent to mention here that we are regular students and the deptt and the university should have sorted out the issue instead asking every student to visit personally the IT cell. The dept has already issued the date sheet for exams and the students, instead of preparing for exams, are being forced to pursue other issues.

5: That vide circular dated 20/10/20 all the intermediate law students of KU and affiliated colleges were provisionally promoted to the next semester as per BCI guidelines and the end semester exams were deferred till the physical opening of university and return of normalcy while examination of intermedi-

ate semesters were put in abeyance.

6: That on 27 October 2020, a time table for new semesters was issued and online classes were started and up to 15 December students attended the classes of the semesters they were provisionally promoted to. The students thus cooperated with the deptt. in every manner.

7: That after learning about the deptt’s intention to conduct the exams, the students through CR & Dy. CR on 11th &13th December submitted two written representations , requesting for sufficient time for preparation as we were busy having online classes for the next semester and had not completed the second semester syllabus . We humbly submitted before the deptt to conduct our exams in February as it is very difficult to sit for exams in the severe cold of chilikaln which lasts till the last day of January. The deptt. assured that our representation would be taken into consideration before any decision about the exams.

8: That, going back on its solemn assurance, the deptt. has issued the date sheet for exams and has decided hastily and in a casual manner to hold the examination from the 1st of January, thus turning a blind eye to our difficulties and ignoring our submissions. This has only added to the frustration and stress of the students.

9: That there are unambiguous directions from the UGC that whenever the university to conduct exams, it must make a comprehensive assessment of the level of preparedness and residential status of the students besides the status of covid 19 pandemic. The UGC guidelines further said that to ensure the safety and health of students, the university may consider grading of students on internal evaluation and performance in previous semesters on 50- 50 %

age of marks. But our deptt. is throwing all these student friendly guidelines to the winds and is acting in a very reckless manner, thus putting its students to unnecessary hardship and stress.

10: That on 11/12/20 the University of Jammu issued a notification and date sheet for examination of BA LLB students. They are conducting an open book exam through the online mode but the KU is adamant to conduct the exams in offline mode that too in a hasty manner without giving proper preparation time to students and , instead, compelling them to take the exam in harsh winter cold.

We fail to understand why the KU cannot follow the same approach as the Jammu University and other universities across India have to mitigate the problems of students. The rest of India is enjoying 4G internet and other facilities and despite that the universities there are giving all possible benefits and relaxations to their students. In contrast, the KU is giving a step-motherly treatment to its students and they are being victimized and punished for the sins they never committed.

All the facts and circumstances are being placed before your good self for your sympathetic consideration. We do hope that your good self will revise the recently issued date sheet and give the students the adequate time for preparation and conduct the exams in month of February with sufficient relaxations.

We especially request for a topic-based examination which is warranted by the situation obtaining for the past one year and more.

Such a relaxation will be a huge relief to the students who are under stress and in great pain. We will be ever grateful to you for acceding to our genuine request.

Thank You.



# The Risk of Not Being Vaccinated

JOSEPH MAZUR

**“We are now living with a virus that has killed lakhs of people. Testing positive means your health situation could be okay or somewhere between “not good” and death; moreover, it means that you have a non-zero probability of long-term consequences or death. And still, so many believe that because many COVID patients beat the virus, they can too.”**

At the turn of the nineteenth century, the typical gambler in America knew almost nothing of the mathematics of risk but did have a sense of the rarity of poker hands—that drawing a full house is almost a hundred times more likely to happen than drawing a straight flush and that a straight is almost twice as likely as a flush. Such information was part of the culture, though it wouldn’t have taken much mathematics to figure it out.

We are now living with a virus that has killed lakhs of people. Testing positive means your health situation could be okay or somewhere between “not good” and death; moreover, it means that you have a non-zero probability of long-term consequences or death. And still, so many believe that because many COVID patients beat the virus, they can too.

In this early twenty-first-century, people have almost no sense of the mathematics of risk, even though their lives now depend on it.

Risks are the gambles, the games, the balance of expectation and fate. And luck rarely comes without risking the possibility of loss, injury, trouble, vulnerability, ruin or damage in a universe of opposing chances.

Soon, many of us will have the option of getting a COVID vaccine with a 95 percent chance of keeping us safe. But who are the “us” that will be safe? The latest Gallup Poll estimates that 42 percent of Americans have decided not to get the vaccine. Many of those people mistakenly believe that there is a strong chance that an illness far worse than that of the virus will follow vaccine inoculations.

It’s just a poll, of course, but well-designed polls do translate into rough numbers. In this case, almost 140 million Americans! That does worry me. Not for myself, but rather for those who are misunderstanding the odds of not accepting a gift to stay alive long enough to get to their natural end date.

So why are so many people willing to gamble with their lives in following crushingly debunked COVID conspiracy theories fabricated by trendy manifestos?

I suppose it is the belief of good fortune, a belief encouraged and reinforced by earlier gratifying escapes from failure and rewards of success. The gambler dealt a straight flush, believes it will soon happen again.

We could view the decision of not accepting the gift of a vaccine as a poker game based on a risk-reward evaluation. With poker, you may compute the probabilities of being dealt a favorable card. You have to weigh the risk of not getting a fortunate card against how badly it would be to lose the pot. You have to assess the odds of your hand overriding the one you are trying to beat. The same is true with a vaccine decision, where “losing the pot” translates to death or a near-death experience. The amount of risk you are willing to take should be less than the return you are likely to clear.

Much of gambling behavior rests on immediately prior gains or losses. For many, winning a hundred dollars at a slot machine is a strong incentive for risking those same hundred dollars on a game with wildly skewed odds. There is a feeling that you are playing with the house’s money and that it’s free money to lose. Gambling choices are rarely made by accounting for past losses; they come from the witnessing of former fortune outcomes. So what we find is that people feel that the longer they survive being COVID-free, the more hope they have to live through the crisis safely.

It may be the reason why some Americans con-



tinue to mingle with others, maskless. They have survived COVID, so far. That survival is equivalent to being given house money, extra time to live with or without a mask, a gift that brings with it the illusion of being invincible.

When it comes to human behavior and the management of risk, we find apparent contradictions. Behavior toward risk depends not only on how that risk is considered but too on risk-taker views of gains and losses, that is, whether the person is risk-averting or a risk-seeking.

Conspiracy theories travel from someone believable to someone gullible.

Within behavioral psychology, there is personality theory, which presumes that an individual behaves per his or her personality type. In this camp, the question remains whether or not a dominant personality is genetically determined or dependent on life’s experiences. For example, some psychoanalysts pointed to early childhood problems with parental approval and the unconscious perception of denied love, so the gambler turns to luck for love and acceptance. Personality theory attributes decisions to environmental influence, with consciously learned habitual responses to external stimuli that may appear at any stage of life.

What holds for personalities applies to communities. The view of a neighborhood is something that evolves by migration. For one hundred years, from 1860 to 1960, Vermont, the state I live in, voted Republican in every presidential election. Look at it now. For the last 24 years, it has never voted for a Republican president.

Fortunately, at any stage of life, it is possible to unlearn anything learned. Some behavioral psychologists believe that rewards reinforce repetitive behavior. For the decision to accept a Covid vaccine, the payment is the safety of immediate health. For the decision to turn down a Covid vaccine, an incentive is avoiding any complications that might arise from a hidden but dangerous side effect. Some considerations may come from social media conspiracy theories.

Immediate surroundings often reinforce behavior

and its consequences, and that reinforcement gets regularly repeated. A friend relays something you had already seen many times on Facebook and Twitter that falsely claims all Covid vaccines make people sterile.

The Centre for Countering Digital Hate (CCDH) reports that 31 million people follow anti-vaccine groups on Facebook, and 17 million people follow those same groups on YouTube. It warns: “The decision to continue hosting known misinformation content and actors left online anti-vaxxers ready to pounce on the opportunity presented by coronavirus.”

No one should underestimate the risk.

With the end of the pandemic near, Sarah Zhang, in the Atlantic, calls the next six months “vaccine purgatory.” It will be a period of suspicion of efficacy and side effects, bringing delays in getting back to a life that what we once thought of as normal.

Western vaccine manufacturers rely on experimental, little studied, and not proven in the long-term technologies, encountering obstacles in their clinical trials.

I’m not a psychologist. I am, however, a mathematician who has written extensively about odds and gambling. So take what you like from what a say. I can foresee what might happen when the bombardment of Covid vaccine disinformation builds a science-doubting fringe alliance from a growing number of credulous people who know nothing about the mathematics of risk.

We need more than just a majority vaccinated to protect themselves, their neighbors, and loved ones.

If, when given a chance, people decide not to be vaccinated, we shall still get to herd immunity; but, the consequential herd will include only those who have immunity, and we do not know how long those immunities will last.

One does not have to know anything about the mathematics of risk to understand that those who remain among not vaccinated will be outside the herd hoping to draw a flush to survive over a straight flush with death.

It’s not easy to calculate the mathematical odds, but seriously, no one needs to do the calculation to know what is risk-wise and proper to do.

## Reflections On 2020: The Path To Resilience

CARLA SHUMAN

Many of us feel hopeful at the start of a new year. On January 1st, I was excited about 2020. It was a new decade, and it seemed like it held a great deal of promise. I set goals, planned trips, and I looked forward to seeing family who lived far away. So the year started out like many others, until March arrived.

Then, as you know, COVID-19 became an official threat to our health and safety. The quarantines began. Businesses closed, our economy suffered, and millions of people lost their jobs or were furloughed indefinitely. And I haven’t even gotten to June yet.

So you may wonder what’s the point of reflecting on this? After all, we already know what happened. Reliving it conjures up bad memories, grief, and perhaps even a sense of hopelessness. However, there are reasons to reflect, and things we can learn that will help us bounce back and move forward so that 2021 has the potential to start off well.

Looking back at the struggles we experienced individually and the suffering that we endured collectively does serve a purpose. It allows us to grieve, and doing so acknowledges the suffering and loss in a meaningful way.

If you lost people that you love in 2020 grieving them means that they meant something to you and that their lives mattered.

Remembering them and the time you had together may initially bring tears to your eyes, but some of the memories will make you smile eventually.

If you lost a job this year, struggled through hard times financially, or suffered through other challenges and setbacks, you are not alone.

Reflecting on what has happened can remind us of our strength. We are survivors,



**“Looking back at the struggles we experienced individually and the suffering that we endured collectively does serve a purpose. It allows us to grieve, and doing so acknowledges the suffering and loss in a meaningful way.”**

and getting through this year merits a medal of honor. Be sure to give yourself credit for plodding through these dark times.

Recognizing the depth of the pain caused by these struggles is important, as is understanding that a present state of suffering doesn’t predict the future, nor does it prevent us from taking steps to improve

our situation.

Reflecting can be difficult, so here are some suggestions for how to get started with the process.

First, identify aspects of this year that were painful, ways that you suffered, or losses that you experienced. Then, compile the highlights of the year, the moments

that you appreciated. It’s likely that something good did happen this year among all of the bad things.

Choose a format that feels comfortable for you to sit with and share those reflections. It’s enough to meditate on your experiences, but you might write them in a journal if that’s a good practice for you.

The positive experiences can be posted to a bulletin board, so you remember them on tough days. Maybe you could share your reflection with someone you trust, or even commit to exchanging reflections.

When we have no control over certain situations, it can be hard to imagine what we can learn. We didn’t do anything that resulted in these circumstances. Suffering often happens without cause, and it’s incredibly unfair. We can still learn from it, however, which is helpful in our recovery and our work to become stronger and more resilient.

First, I think we have all learned that there are some things outside of our control, but we can manage the way that we respond to the stress, and we can develop some coping strategies. There isn’t one strategy that works for everyone, but finding ways to regain a calmer state of mind can help us think more clearly and engage in problem-solving. This increases our flexibility so that we can adjust to unexpected events.

We can also learn to be grateful. I realize this can become cliché, and it may seem trite amidst hard times. Sometimes, though, we don’t learn to appreciate things that we have until we are at risk of losing them.

In addition, expressing gratitude helps our brain to remember that not everything is lost. We still have some of the freedoms and experiences that we value. We have friends, partners, and family members, even if we didn’t get to see them this year or spend the holidays with them.

We can move forward, whether it’s actually a bounce or a slow, cautious stroll. We must remember that there are no guarantees about the future, but we can make plans, spend time with those we care about, and find hope by reflecting on what we have overcome.

.....  
*Psychology Today*



## FROM FRONT PAGE

**Militant Arrested ...**

of law has been registered and investigation has been initiated," he added.

Pertinently, on Friday last, Lone's wife Rozy Jaan died after suffering a cardiac arrest. Lone's brother Nisar was also a militant and was killed in an encounter with government forces in 1999.

Meanwhile, a Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) man was injured in a grenade attack in Bijbehara area of the district on Thursday, official sources said.

They said that militants lobbed grenade on joint forces near Bijbehara hospital leaving a CRPF man injured

"The injured trooper identified as Patil Padmamakar of 40BN CRPF was shifted to nearby hospital for treatment," they added.

Soon after the attack, government forces cordoned off the area to nab the attackers.

**Army Canteen ...**

After hectic efforts by fire department and civilians accompanied by personnel inside the Camp, the fire was brought under control at around 3 AM, the official said.

In the incident however, as per the official, a two-storeyed wooden complex designated as 'CSD' (Canteen) with at least twenty-four shops dealing in different items was completely damaged.

The fire also caused substantial damage to four other buildings including a TSI building, Training centre besides an HDFC ATM, Army Post Office (APO) and an Engineering Store, the official said adding "Luckily enough that the oil depot was somehow saved which otherwise could have led to a major catastrophe."

Damage in tune of around four crores rupees is being estimated as per the preliminary assessment, the official said.

Regarding cause of the fire, the official said:"It would be too early to comment as what actually caused it."

Some of the shops damaged in the fire belonged to Javid Ahmad War, Rukhsar Ahmad War, Ishfaq Ahmad Shiekh, Wasim Ahmad Shiekh, Mohammed Shafi War, Manzoor Ahmad Shiekh, Zahoor Ahmad Dar, Tariq Ahmad Shiekh, Mohammed Iqbal Khan, Khurshed Ahmad Shiekh, Tawseef Ahmad War, Imtiyaz Ahmad, Mushtaq Ahmad Khan and Ghulam Hassan Dar.

Meanwhile, there loud bangs which terrified the locals. It has been learnt that it was a result of explosion in inverter batteries and gas cylinders.

A police official said that they are assessing the situation and further details will be shared accordingly.

**Govt Employee ...**

"Soon after the accident, a team of police headed by SI Kamal Kumar under the supervision of SHO Dharamsal Rajinder Sharma rushed to the spot for legal formalities. However car driver started to escape from the spot," the SSP said.

He, however said that the police team chased the driver and managed to detain him. "One pistol and six bullets of 7.65 mm caliber were recovered from his possession," he said, adding, "Accused was arrested from the spot and a case under relevant sections of law for carrying an illegal weapon has been registered with further investigation into the matter is going on." (GNS)

**Kashmiri Youth ...**

During the raid, one Faizal Ahmed, originally from Baramulla in J&K and currently working in the coastal state, was found in possession of charas worth Rs 5,000, he said. Ahmed was arrested and booked under the Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, the police inspector added.

**J&K Reports ...**

Of these cases, 152 were from Jammu Division and 233 from Kashmir valley, officials said.

Giving district wise details, they said Srinagar reported 94 cases, Baramulla 20, Budgam 24, Kupwara 13, Pulwama 35, Anantnag 7, Bandipora 20, Ganderbal 9, Kulgam 3, Shopian 8, Jammu 98, Udhampur 10, Rajouri 9, Doda 8, Kathua 12, Kishtwar 2, Samba 5, Ramban 6 and Reasi 2

Meanwhile, 395 more patients have recovered and were discharged from various hospital— 216 from Jammu Division and 179 from Kashmir Valley, they added. (With GNS inputs)

**2 Pak Intruders ...**

In the first interception, two men in their 30s were killed near the Rajatal border post in Amritsar around 2:20 am after the troops on guard detected suspicious movement ahead of the border fence in Indian territory, a BSF spokesperson said.

"The Border Security Force (BSF) sentry on duty heard some

crawling sound near the fence. He challenged the approaching people in dense fog but he instead heard the sound of cocking the gun by the intruders.

"The BSF jawan fired in self defence and later we recovered two bodies of the armed intruders from the spot," BSF Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Bhupinder Singh told reporters in Amritsar.

An AK-56 rifle, semi-automatic rifle, pistol, 90 bullets, five magazines and two PVC pipes, usually used to push drug packets across the border, of about ten feet each, have been seized after a search was conducted near the incident site, the DIG said.

No drugs were found in this spot, he added.

The officer said the force is "lodging a protest" with the Pakistan Rangers to inform them that the intruders were using their territory to push narcotics on the Indian side.

He said two more attempts to smuggle drugs were thwarted in the same region, one being near its Ramkot border post, and over 5 kgs of heroin in total was recovered from two different spots along the Amritsar sector.

**68% Voting ...**

voted, he said, adding that there were 1,000 candidates in the fray.

Giving details of overall voter turnout percentage, Sharma said that it was 72.95 in the Jammu division and 68.22 in the Kashmir division for this phase of the panch by-elections.

On the sarpanch bypolls, he said that 58.64 per cent voting was registered in 69 vacant constituencies. In this phase, there were 1,12,856 electors, including 59,114 men and 53,742 women, out of which 66,175 exercised their franchise, Sharma said.

In the Jammu division, 74.92 per cent polling was recorded whereas it was 52.72 per cent in the Kashmir division in the sarpanch bypolls, he said.

The SEC said that in the Jammu division in the sarpanch bypolls, Udhampur district recorded the highest voter turnout at 81.38 per cent, followed by Reasi with 80.16 per cent and Rajouri by 77.68 per cent turnout. In the Kashmir division, Bandipora district topped with 68.82 per cent voter turnout followed by Budgam with 54.54 per cent and Baramulla with 53.02 per cent turnout, Sharma said.

On division-wise voter turnout break up for panch bypolls, he said in the Kashmir division, Bandipora district recorded the highest turnout at 75.66 per cent followed by Ganderbal with 75.06 per cent and Kupwara with 71.22 per cent turnout.

In the Jammu division, Rajouri district had the highest polling percentage at 84.85, followed by Reasi with 83.98 per cent turnout and Doda with 78.38 percent turnout, he said.

The SEC said that polling was peaceful and smooth at all polling stations. (PTI)

**Dr Farooq Seeks ...**

A very sad state of affairs has been brought to my notice. At a number of places, real voters and supporters of People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) candidates were disallowed to vote. Apart from wanton capturing of polling booths at Garoora, Bandipora A on December 13, incidents of unwarranted interference were reported from a number of areas which went to polls on December 16. In Chitragam Shopian, voters were forcefully stopped from casting their votes, he said in the letter.

Abdullah, who is also PAGD chief, sought repolling in these areas "in the interest of justice and fair play".

**J&K Open ...**

utmost to ensure prosperous development of this Union Territory with your support. In order to attain this goal, I promise to work with you on the necessary interventions. We're planning to host the J&K Global investor's Summit soon and CII is the partner organization for it as well", he added.

Highlighting major initiatives taken by the his government, Sinha said, that the present dispensation, supported by the best team of officers, has taken over 150 new initiatives and reforms in under 100 days.

"The UT Government has given 5% interest subvention; 50% reduced prices for electricity and water for a year; For ease of mobility a grant of Rs 5 lakh rupees for replacing old buses that ply; Reduced the registration fee by 50%; Undertaken a massive outreach program connecting with villages in Kashmir called "Back to the Village", where we have given a grant of upto Rs 10 lakh rupees for two youth per Panchayat reaching over 12,000 young men and women for entrepreneurship and local small and medium businesses," he said.

The LG expressed hope to see

expressions of interest from business on the themes of Livelihood generation, Education and Skill Development, Sports & Recreation, CSR, Social impact projects, Financial assistance / Fellowships/ Philanthropic giving, Media, Art & Culture, Agriculture, and allied industries.

He also suggested for investing more in rural infrastructures like connecting India's villages to the nearest towns, more infrastructure for crop storage, and access to quality public transport ensuring emission standard vehicles for a sustainable new business model. Each and every issue starting from jobs, clean energy to credit growth has to be tackled in-depth to mitigate problems threatening the current financial stability, he added.

On this occasion, the LG expressed delight and described faster re-engineering and re-processing of policies, which are happening across the country for the resilient and self-reliant India, as a key vehicle to achieve a strong growth trajectory and to have a robust balanced development.

He informed that despite sudden disruption for a few months, Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory has brought order in on the ground implementation of projects in several sectors and has achieved number one position in Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojna (PMGSY) and enhancing the storage capacity for both agriculture and horticulture produce.

"The manufacturing sector is witnessing re-engineering processes to boost productivity. In the last 6-7 years, the Hon'ble Prime Minister's vision of a simplified regulatory procedure is paying rich dividends and it is visible in India's current improved ranking in ease of doing business reports," he said.

The LG also called for enhancing marketing support to MSMEs, Industrial incentives, and promotion of village industries. He said that with new start-ups, unique innovations, new technology products, and by transforming India into a global manufacturing hub, we will be able to trigger a much-needed productivity spurt in 2021.

"In manufacturing, we need to give an additional push to the sectors which are based on competitiveness and have employment potential. In the new decade, we may have to create new quantifiable and measurable milestones for these sectors which should be monitored regularly," HE SAID.

The LG informed the summit that J&K has more than 07 lakh Micro and around 03 thousand Small Industries. "Like any other sector, this sector too has an important role in providing employment opportunities. We are addressing twin issues of investment and improving productivity levels. We have committed lot of resources and implemented 20-point reforms to ensure there is a permanent shoring up in productivity," he said.

Speaking on growth opportunities in major sectors, the LG observed that Industry and Services along with Agriculture are going to play a major role in achieving inclusive growth, enhancement of Financial Inclusion, and improvement in Social Equity without overstretching the available revenue sources. "Soon we are going to witness scaling up of investment in several sunrise sectors aligned with policies that will support global priorities by emphasizing the re-engineering and re-alignment of business policy for sustainable growth, enhanced production, and consumption," Sinha said.

"It is my aim to create a stable policy and regulatory ecosystem for businesses so that they can build for scale and create a thriving startup ecosystem in J&K UT," he added.

During his address, the LG also underscored the significance of the Summit and observed that the theme - 'Partnership for Lives, Livelihood & Growth' is very important for two reasons- First, we have to realize that a country cannot exist as an island, and, secondly, each and every sector of our economy is interwoven. "Since we are pulling ourselves together to restart the engine of economic growth that was partially disrupted due to the global pandemic, we cannot live and grow alone. We have to be together to multiply comprehensive development in every sector," he said.

He further called for joint efforts by the Government, Private Enterprises, and Civil Society Groups to overcome Social, Ecological, and Economic challenges for a post-COVID world. "To revive economic growth, we need to act innovatively and at a pace faster than pre-COVID era. Each and every sector of our economic wheel is interdependent on one another just like the countries in a globalized world are deeply connected for economic

cooperation and speeding up industrial growth while improving living conditions for their own people," Sinha added.

**SC Suggests ...**

Bobde said but added that in a democracy, police and authorities have to be given power to prevent the protestors from infringing the rights of others.

The bench said it would pass order on constituting a committee only after hearing all the parties including the protesting farmer unions and putting on hold the implementation of new agri laws by the Centre would enable negotiations with farmers.

However, Attorney General K K Venugopal opposed the suggestion and said if the implementation of the farm laws are put on hold then farmers would not come forward for negotiations.

The top court said it was not asking the Centre to stay the farm laws but only suggesting that its implementation be put on hold for the time being to enable the farmers to talk with the government. "We are worried about the plight of farmers. We are also Indian but we are worried with the way things are going on," the bench, also comprising Justices A S Bopanna and V Ramasubramanian, said and added "they (protesting farmers) are not a mob".

The top court said it will pass orders for serving notices to the protesting farmer unions and give them the liberty to approach the vacation bench during the winter break. "We are worried about the plight of farmers. We are also Indian but we are worried with the way things are going on," the bench, also comprising Justices A S Bopanna and V Ramasubramanian, said and added "they (protesting farmers) are not a mob".

During the hearing conducted through video-conferencing, the bench observed that it recognises the farmers' right to protest but this right should not infringe the fundamental rights of others to move freely and in getting essential food and other supplies.

Maintaining that in a democracy, police and authorities have to be given power to prevent the protestors from infringing the rights of others, the bench said "Who will take guarantee that if farmers are allowed to enter the city in such high numbers, they will not resort to violence?"

"Court cannot guarantee this. Court does not have the where-withal to prevent any such violence. It has to be the police and other authorities who will protect the right of others," the bench said, adding that right to protest cannot mean blockade of the entire city.

It said that even police and authorities should not incite the protesting farmers to indulge in any kind of violence.

The court referred to the 1988 Boat Club protest by farmers in Delhi and said the farmers' organisations had then brought the entire city to a stand-still.

The top court told Bharatiya Kisan Union (Bhanu) group, which was the only farmer organisation represented before the court today through lawyer A P Singh, that they cannot keep on protesting without talking to the government.

"You cannot sit in protest for years and years and don't talk to the government. We have already said that we recognise your right to protest but the protest has to have some motive. You need to talk to the government," the bench said.

During the hearing, the bench said it would set up the committee which may include experts like P Sainath and representatives of the government and farmers' bodies to look for the resolution of the deadlock over the statutes.

"We acknowledge the right of farmers to protest but it has to be non-violent," it said.

The top court said the purpose of staging protest can be achieved if the farmers and the government will hold talks and "we wish to facilitate that".

"We will not decide the validity of law today. The only thing which we will decide is the issue of protest and the right to move freely," the bench made clear at the outset of the hearing which is still going on.

It is hearing a clutch of petitions seeking removal of farmers protesting at several roads along Delhi's borders.

The apex court had Wednesday indicated that it may form a committee having representatives of the government and farmer unions across the country to resolve the deadlock over farmers protesting at several roads near Delhi borders against the three new farm laws, saying "it may become a national issue".

The top court had told the Centre that, "Your negotiations have not worked apparently."

Multiple pleas have been filed in the top court seeking a direction to the authorities to immediately remove the farmers, saying commuters are facing hardships due to the road blockades and the gatherings might lead to an increase in the number of COVID-19 cases. —PTI

**On Mehbooba's home turf, BJP leader reaches out to militants: 'Leave gun, hold pen'**

**BIJBEHARA:** Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) National Spokesman and former union minister, Shahnawaz Hussain Thursday reached to militants in Bijbehara area of South Kashmir's Anantnag district suggesting them to "leave guns and hold pens in their hands."

Shahnawaz also took a jibe at PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti stating that today's rally was an eye-opener for those who used to claim that no one would hold tri-colour in their hands, as not just him but "all the participants in the rally were holding national flag in their hands."

Talking to reporters after addressing a rally in Dara-Shikho Park, Bijbehara, Shahnawaz said he is holding tri-colour and all those present in the rally. "This is the home town of PDP chief Mehbooba

Mufti who used to say no one would hold tri-colour in their hands after Article 370 abrogation," he said.

Interestingly, BJP rally was held barely a few meters away from the mausoleum of PDP patron Late Mufti Muhammad Sayed.

He said that that whosoever gets killed whether it is policeman, CRPF man, army man or a militant, every killings gives pain. "I ask misguided youth to leave gun and hold pen in your hands," the former BJP minister said in an oblivious reference to the militants.

On the grenade attack on Bijbehara, he said that attacks won't dare them from meeting people of Jammu and Kashmir and taking the democracy to the grassroots level. "We are PM Narendra Modi's Army and I am here as Modi's soldier.

These grenades and bullets won't deter us from carrying out our political activities," he said. He said that they got a series of calls

Earlier, addressing the rally, the BJP spokesman said that J&K is very rich in every sector but need is to work on these sectors so that the UT will see development on ground. "Those who have ruled here for 70 years have done nothing for development of J&K but they have worked only on self- development and have formed "Gupkar gang" only to save their wealth.

Asked about farmers protest, he said that they are "our own people and it is good if they will talk to Government of India about their issues and there issues will be redressed. (KNO)

**DGP Hails Police, Central Forces For Ensuring Peaceful DDC Polls**

**SRINAGAR:** Director General of Police (DGP) Dilbag Singh on Thursday appreciated the Jammu and Kashmir Police and central forces for ensuring elaborate security arrangements so far the last phase of these elections is also conducted peacefully.

The DGP said that inimical elements after seeing the overwhelming participation of the people in the ongoing democratic process are attempting to create disturbance in the UT and added that security forces need to continue with the collective efforts to thwart their nefarious designs.

He directed the officers to maintain close surveillance of such elements trying to disrupt the fast returning peaceful atmosphere and take all necessary measures to neutralize such attempts. He stressed for augmenting the security grids to ensure a safe and secure environment for the citizens.

Singh said militants are making attempts to disrupt the situation in Jammu and Kashmir to please their "masters across the border". "Our forces are committed and capable enough to counter any anti-peace act," he said, adding that the fight against militancy will continue

On the very outset of these

meetings, the DGP directed the officers to make optimum use of available resources and strengthen the security arrangements so that the last phase of these elections is also conducted peacefully.

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**Amar Singh College Gets 2020 UNESCO ...**

"Undertaken with a high level of technical proficiency, the project reversed major deterioration resulting from years of inappropriate additions, poor maintenance, and catastrophic events such as the unprecedented flooding in 2014. The project team's meticulous attention to original building design and materials involved training a new generation of building artisans in brick and stone masonry."

Competently led by INTACH Kashmir Chapter with support from the local government and a group of community stakeholders, UNESCO observed, the project serves as a noteworthy model for safeguarding a unique 20th century architectural asset in the Victorian neighborhood of the old city of Srinagar.

The Amar Singh College is one of the most important institutional buildings in Kashmir and in essence a built heritage asset that invokes pride in much of the academic and intellectual community of Kashmir as many luminaries are alumni of this institution. The Amar Singh Technical Institute was established in 1913, and F. H. Andrews, formerly Headmaster of Battersea Polytechnic School, London was appointed as its first Principal.

The aim was to promote the local industry, to modernise technical education and to teach the pupils new techniques that could support them in their careers. The college after its initial operational issues went from strength to strength and became a major driver in imparting high-quality education to the Kashmiri society.

Amar Singh Technical Institute was progressively upgraded as Amar Singh College in June 1942 with many additional streams added to its curriculum.

Prior to restoration, the building had suffered extensive damage owing to a series of inappropriate interventions over the years, but essentially after the devastating floods of Kashmir in 2014.

"The objective of conserving the building was to restore the former glory of the building and to repair the damages caused by floods of 2014 and earthquake of 2005 and also those damages that were a result of lack of attention," said Saleem Beg, Convenor INTACH.

"The highly ornamental building is essentially an exposed brick building, stylistically influenced by the prevailing colonial trend in the region. The ornamental gauged bricks used in the building

are handmade 'rubber' bricks and therefore very soft and predisposed to erosion and defacement."

One of the challenges, Beg said, was to train the craftsmen to restore these ornamental bricks and to prepare new bricks to fill-in the missing ones in the walls.

"A sustainability issue to be addressed was the site's low-lying circumstance which made it vulnerable to water-logging and moisture ingress," he said. "The building was facing surface erosion, material degradation, vegetative growth and cracks in its towers."

In the mid-20th century, the site was filled with earth to address the issue of water-logging. The depth of the earth-filling was about 2ft, which led to the plinth, built in ashlar to be completely covered up leading to the plinth becoming 'un-breathable'. This further led to moisture-trapping within the fabric of the building and causing severe dampness and mold/fungal growth in the classrooms. Apart from the high-quality architecture, the building also boasts of some wall murals in two of its hallways.

"It appears that these murals, which are influenced by the Ladakhi art, formed a significant part of the building's interiors but had become obliterated over time," Beg said.

"Extant samples of these wall murals can be seen in the adjacent rooms to the foyer in the first floor. Much is not known about the origin and context of the wall murals but it is clear that they are from the same period as the building and created intricately using natural pigments. Currently, INTACH, Kashmir Chapter are restoring these wall murals."

The floods of 2014 rapidly transformed the WazirBagh neighbourhood. Large portions of this low-scale suburban 20th century neighbourhood laid out along the patterns of colonial style architecture were extensively damaged, taking a heavy toll on the mostly residential masonry buildings.

"The restoration of the Amar Singh College has contributed to showcasing that traditional builds are far more robust and resilient to disasters than perhaps contemporary builds can ever be," the convenor added. "It has proved that if restoration is carried out sensitively and prudently, there is never a need to bring a heritage building down for just because it has suffered from a calamity." The extremely verdant campus, with a great many magnificent Chinars abounding it, the

till lasting peace is established in Jammu and Kashmir. Emphasising upon the officers to make deployments as per requirements at all sensitive places, the DGP stressed for stringent action against the elements found involved in any militant activity.

The SSP Shopian, SP Kulgam and SSP Anantnag briefed the DGP about the measures put in place for conducting the remaining phase of elections, maintaining peace and order and ensuring the security of the people.

During his visit to Shopian, the DGP also inaugurated the SSP chamber at District Police office Shopian.

The meeting at Shopian was attended by SSP Shopian Amritpal Singh, ASP Shopian, Arif Amin Shah, DySP Hqrs Wajahat Hussain, DySP DAR Sheezan Bhat, DySP Ops Majid Ali and at Kulgam the meeting was attended by SP Kulgam Gurinderpal Singh, CO 18Bn CRPF Gaurav Singh, Addl. SP Kulgam Mohd Yousof. The meeting at Anantnag was attended by DIG, South Kashmir, Atul Kumar Goel, SSP Anantnag Sandeep Choudhury, SP Hqrs Perbeet Singh.

On the very outset of these

**8 JAKFED Employees Booked For Fraud**

**JAMMU:** Eight employees, including five officers, were booked by the crime branch of police on Thursday for allegedly misappropriating funds and manipulating records in J&K Cooperative Supply and Marketing Federation Ltd (JAKFED), officials said.

The criminal case has been registered against employees Sanjeev Bhagat, the then Senior Manager Transport, Sanjeev Sachdeva, the then Senior Manager Accounts, Sudesh Gupta, the then Senior Manager Accounts, Harbans Kour, Junior Assistant, Zubair Ahmed Tak, Junior Assistant, Sanjeev Mishra, Store Officer, Arvinder Singh, Potato Development Officer, Uttam Chand, Store Keeper and others, they said.

A primary probe was carried out on a written complaint received in the crime branch. The complainant, Uday Chand, had alleged embezzlement of freights by officials with respect to transportation of seeds. A preliminary verification of the complaint was conducted and relevant records from the concerned quarters were obtained.

The examination of the witnesses substantiated the allegations that the accused have done dishonest, intentional, deliberate, manipulations and falsification in the records of freights of transportation of seeds from agricultural department to various destinations of Jammu division thus have embezzled public money, the officials said. A formal case in this connection was registered at Crime Branch police station against the eight accused, they added.



## Sensex Surges 224 Pts To Finish At Record Peak; Nifty Tops 13,700



Rallying for the fifth consecutive session, equity benchmark Sensex jumped 224 points on Thursday to end at its fresh peak, tracking gains in index majors HDFC twins, TCS and Reliance Industries amid persistent foreign fund inflows and positive global cues.

After touching its lifetime intra-day high of 46,992.57, the 30-share BSE index settled 223.88 points or 0.48 per cent higher at 46,890.34.

Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty rose 58 points or 0.42 per cent to a new closing high of 13,740.70. It hit a lifetime peak of 13,773.25 during the day.

HDFC was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, rising around 3 per cent, followed by Bajaj Finance, HDFC Bank, IndusInd Bank, PowerGrid, UltraTech Cement, TCS,

Tech Mahindra and L&T. On the other hand, ONGC, Maruti, Tata Steel, HUL, Bajaj Auto and Sun Pharma were among the laggards.

Domestic equities remained upbeat and recorded fresh highs. A dovish tone of Federal Reserve along with the assurance of continuing asset purchase program until economy makes a substantial progress bolstered investors' sentiment, said Binod Modi, Head-Strategy at Reliance Securities. Better prospects of earnings recovery, dismal interest rate scenario and strong FPI participation led markets to see record highs, he noted.

Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) were net buyers in the capital market as they purchased shares worth Rs 1,981.77 crore on Wednesday, according to provisional exchange data.

"As underlying strengths of market remain intact, we expect market to remain buoyant in the near to medium term. Further, excess liquidity situation globally is expected to sustain for the medium term, which will continue to lend support to equities," he added.

## Bitcoin Breaks \$20,000 For First Time, Switzerland Named Currency Manipulator

Bitcoin smashed through \$20,000 for the first time on Wednesday while the Swiss franc gained after the U.S. Treasury labelled Switzerland a currency manipulator.

Bitcoin last jumped 6.9% to move as high as \$20,651.

The cryptocurrency has gained more than 170% this year, buoyed by demand from larger investors attracted to its potential for quick gains, purported inflation-resistant qualities, and expectations it will become a mainstream payment method.

"The latest run to \$20,000 hasn't been accompanied by nearly the amount of hype as



there was back in 2017," said Paul Hickey, co-founder of Bespoke Investment Group. Bitcoin then garnered more interest from retail investors, but some may now be leery after getting burned, Hickey said.

## J&K Bank Inaugurates BU At Laroo In Kulgam



**SRINAGAR:** Deepening its foot prints further to ease out the rush at other business touch points and to facilitate the local businessman, common people; J&K Bank today added one more Business Unit to its network in Kulgam at General Bus Stand Laroo.

While maintaining the social distancing norms, District Development Commissioner Kulgam, Showkat Aijaz Bhat inaugurated the Business Unit in presence of Bank's Zonal Head Kashmir South-II (Anantnag) Fayaz Ahmad Bhat, Cluster Head Kulgam Ifthikhar Abdullah Sofi and other senior Bank officials amid a good gathering of businessmen, traders and local residents.

On the occasion, DDC Kulgam,

who was also the Chief Guest at the function, hailed the efforts of J&K Bank in taking lead for reaching out to the people in unbanked and under-banked areas. He emphasized the need for further expansion of such facilities to ensure maximum coverage of the population in the district, especially those living in difficult and remote terrains.

Zonal Head while thanking the Customers and dignitaries for their valuable presence on the occasion despite the ongoing pandemic, reiterated the Bank's resolve of "ultimate outreach" to serve people irrespective of location and status.

"Customer convenience remains bank's policy focus. Therefore, world-class products and dedicated customer service will be available at the business-unit", he said and added that new business unit was part of a larger plan to expand the network to every nook and corner.

Notably, with the inauguration of this BU, the network of business units has reached to 94 in the bank's Kashmir Zone (South-II) and 28 in Cluster Kulgam.

# Measures Discussed For Promoting Trade And Commerce From J&K

**JAMMU:** The department of Industries and Commerce, Government of India on Thursday hosted a video conference with officers from Jammu and Kashmir to discuss measures for promoting Trade and Commerce from Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting was co-chaired by Union Commerce Secretary, Anup Wadhawan and Chief Secretary, J&K, BVR Subrahmanyam.

Principal Secretary, Agriculture Production Department Navin Kumar Choudhary; Principal Secretary to Lieutenant Governor J&K Nitishwar Kumar; Commissioner Secretary I&C Department Manoj Kumar Dwivedi, Commissioner Secretary Transport Department, Hirdesh Kumar; Secretary, Information Technology Department, Simrandeep Singh; MD JKTPD, Ankita Kar; Director Industries Jammu, Anoo Malhotra; Director Industries Kashmir, Mehmood Shah; Director Handicrafts and Handloom Kashmir; Masaratul Islam, Director, Handicrafts and Handloom Jammu, Vikas Gupta and other officers from the I&C Department, besides Additional Secretaries/joint Secretaries of the department of Commerce, DGFT and associated agencies like APEDA, DPIIT, IBEF, Plantation Board, Spices Board, NITI Aayog also attended the meeting.

Union Commerce Secretary, highlighted the importance of exports in raising economy of the UT and need to push exports from Jammu and Kashmir. He discussed various means by which JK Government and Central government can work together to boost exports from the UT. These measures included preparation of export strategy for the UT and to align UT plan with the national plan on exports to bring awareness about various export promotion schemes from DGFT, making

optimum use of Market Access Initiative (MIA) scheme, preparation of Agri Export Policy, Trade Infrastructure for Export Scheme (TIES) for improving export Infrastructure in the UT.

Wadhawan also stressed upon film tourism and IT enabled services as hugely explorable and development areas as far as J&K is concerned.

While addressing the meeting Chief Secretary, BVR Subrahmanyam said, "Post August 2019 lot of positive changes have taken place in JK and Government is committed to overall development of the UT. Apart from traditional products like walnut, apples, handicrafts, saffron, there is huge potential to boost exports from the UT in medical tourism and IT services. There are some logistic challenges in the UT which are being addressed exclusively, he said adding that J&K was supposed to host Investor Summit this year but due to COVID same has been deferred and would probably be organized sometime next year."

It was informed by GoI, that export promotion councils will be organising specific events for J&K in addition to 230+ events planned for the next one year. All EPCs have been directed to specially involve exporters from J&K and special pavilions will be reserved for exporters from Jammu and Kashmir.

Navin Kumar Choudhary, informed that department is working towards framing an Agri Export Policy which will be ready by end of December 2020. He also informed that through high density plantation J&K would increase its apple production from 22 lakh MT to 30 Lakh MT in next few years. He also requested Government of India to start Direct International Cargo flights to facilitate exporters and cater to markets in middle east.

Reacting to this, Civil Aviation officers said that they are coming up with a brand new Air cargo terminal at Srinagar which will be ready by April 2021. Besides, APEDA was requested to put a dedicated office staff for facilitation of the exporters to which they promptly agreed.

Commissioner Secretary I&C Department, Manoj Kumar Dwivedi speaking on the occasion highlighted the need for warehousing and storage facilities in J&K and also asked for increase in cargo offload capacity from J&K. He expressed need for quality and testing facility in J&K so that the exporters don't have to travel to different parts of India to get their products tested. He also informed that J&K is working towards district export plans for each district and district level meetings for 12 districts have already been conducted and products have been identified for export. J&K is also coming up with two IT towers with plug and play facilities which would boost IT exports from the UT, he added. Also, a training cum registration drive of exporters is scheduled to be conducted to create awareness among the traders/exports of J&K, identification of clusters with export potential through discussion with EPCs and FIEO.

Dwivedi said that the UT Government will be sending proposal to Central Government under TIES scheme for upgradation of Export Infrastructure in the UT.

Chief Secretary Jammu and Kashmir thanked the Commerce Secretary, Anup Wadhawan and others officers from Union Ministry of Commerce for the initiative.

Pertinently, S Kishore Additional Secretary Ministry of Commerce, Government of India, has been nominated as nodal officer for export related initiatives and queries for Jammu and Kashmir.

## 40% Indians Expect Jobs To Increase In 2021: LinkedIn Year-End Data

Indian professionals are cautiously optimistic heading into 2021 as two in five Indian professionals expect an increase in the number of new jobs, LinkedIn year-end data shows.

LinkedIn on Thursday released a key survey and platform data for 2020.

According to LinkedIn year-end data, India has remained cautiously optimistic and resilient in the face of uncertainty, and overall confidence scores remained steady between 50 and 57 from April to November.

According to the findings, two in five (40 per cent) Indian professionals expect an increase in the number of new jobs (up from 19 per cent in April), and one in two (53 per cent) expect their companies to do better in the next six months, going into 2021.

The workforce sentiment data and confidence scores are based on the online survey responses of 21,066 professionals from April to November 2020 as part of the LinkedIn Workforce Confidence Index, which is a fortnightly pulse on the confidence of the Indian workforce.



"The year 2020 was a disruptive year, and 2021 will help us tackle unforeseen challenges and prepare for new realities. Going forward, India will re-imagine the future of work across five areas, specifically the workplace, careers, recruiting, business, and leadership styles," said Ashutosh Gupta, India country manager, LinkedIn.

Gupta further noted that "in 2021, skills-first hiring will be a pivotal trend, the chief human resources officer (CHRO) will play a critical role, virtual collaboration will become stronger, and learning will be part of everyone's job. At LinkedIn, we will continue to help professionals navigate these changes and we will stay committed to helping members get closer to opportunities."

In 2020, online learning and digital skills took centre stage

and Indian professionals pivoted to upskill themselves and stay productive. LinkedIn data states that the average number of monthly learning hours on LinkedIn Learning increased 3X from April to December 2020, compared to pre-Covid months of January and February.

As per LinkedIn's year-end findings, three in five (57 per cent) professionals say they will increase their time spent in on-line learning going forward.

However, working in isolation and navigating a tough job market over the past few months has adversely affected India's emotional well-being and financial outlook. As of November 2020, four in five (78 per cent) unemployed professionals feel stressed, and only one in three (32 per cent) Indians expect their incomes to increase, heading into the New Year.

This holiday season, three in five (61 per cent) Indian professionals said they will take less time off, while about nine in ten (87 per cent) said they will spend equal or more time working at their primary jobs this year-end, it noted.

## Navin Reviews NABARD Sponsored NAFCC Project On Sustainable Agriculture

**JAMMU:** In a meeting held today under the chairmanship of Principal Secretary, Agriculture Production & Farmers Welfare Department, Navin Kumar Choudhary, the progress and implementation of 'Climate Resilient Sustainable Agriculture in Rain-Fed Farming (Kandi) Areas of Jammu and Kashmir' was discussed.

The meeting was attended by Chief General Manager, NABARD, R.K. Srivastava; Director Ecology, Environment & Remote Sensing, Neelu Gera; Special Secretary, Forest Department, Amit Sharma; Director Agriculture, Jammu, Indrajeet; Director Agriculture, Kashmir, Manzoor Ahmad Qadiri; Deputy General Manager, NABARD, Anamika and several other officers of Forest, Agriculture departments and NABARD.

The Principal Secretary asked the officers to accelerate the implementation of the scheme so that the benefits reach to target population. He advised them to look for the ways and means to associate other stakeholders like Animal Husbandry department to implement several components of the scheme.

Navin further directed them to take prior preparatory action for implementing the scheme within the deadline. He asked both the departments and NABARD to hold the meeting of stakeholders every month so that all the bottlenecks are removed conveniently.

He impressed upon them to constitute a team of senior officers from all the departments and conduct joint inspections to see for any shortcomings.

Navin appreciated the progress made so far under the project in terms of assessment of vulnerability of cropping system in the

UT, adoption of Integrated Farming System, enhancement of water security by bringing in water use efficiency in rain-fed farming conditions, capacity building of farmers on climate resilient sustainable agriculture practices, etc. He mentioned that there is a need to further strengthen the efforts in order to complete the remaining components of the project in time.

R K Srivastava, CGM NABARD emphasized the need to adopt climate resilient agricultural practices. He mentioned that fund allocated for the UT must be fully utilized in order to bring in the desired outcome of the project.

It was given in the meeting that the scheme is being implemented by the UT government in Budgam and Jammu districts. The project areas are Bhalwal block of Jammu district and Budgam block of Budgam district. The Department of Forest, Environment and Ecology J & K is the Nodal Agency for the project whereas the Department of Agriculture is the Executing Entity.

The National Adaptation Fund for Climate Change (NAFCC) was established in August, 2015 to meet the cost of adaptation to climate change for the State and Union Territories of India that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change.

Later on Navin also reviewed the financial health of J&K State Cooperative Bank and the three District Central Cooperative Banks. He advised the banks to improve their functioning so as to serve their clients in an effective manner. He also advised Cooperative Department officials to carry out a survey of PACS in the UT for identifying viable/ potentially viable PACS.

## National Hands-On Training On Machine Learning Commences At SKUAST-K

**SRINAGAR:** A three-week national hands-on training programme on Machine Learning Technology commenced at Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology, Kashmir with an aim to prepare human capital for the tech-driven job market and new-age agripreneurship.

The online training programme has been organised by World Bank-ICAR funded National Agricultural Higher Education Project (NAHEP) for institutional development of SKUAST-K in collaboration with varsity's Agromet Division. About 47 participants from across the country including students, scholars and faculty from various agricultural universities of the country are taking part in the three-week 'Hands-on Training on Machine Learning: A Practical Approach'.

Vice-Chancellor, SKUAST-K, Prof Mushtaq Ahmad; Director, Planning and PI NAHEP, Prof Nazir Ahmad Ganai; Nodal Officer Agromet Division and course director, Dr Sameera Qayoom, HRM Consultant Prof Fa Zaki and various heads, faculty members and students attended the inaugural session. The programme is being coordinated by the IDP-NAHEP team of the SKUAST-K.

While speaking at the inaugural function of the programme, Prof Ganai said SKUAST-K has paced up the activities for the

transformation of agri-education and linking education with future technologies, innovation, entrepreneurship and the new-age job market.

"In order to compete and be at par with the 4th Gen industrial revolution, SKUAST K under the ambit of NAHEP is working with top national, international institutes and tech companies to infuse the innovative and tech-driven startup culture among students," he said.

Sameera Qayoom, in her address said, Machine Learning techniques are playing a vital role in every sector, including agriculture these days. "The implementation of AI&ML enable agriculturists to access increasingly sophisticated data and provide analytics tools, which help them in efficient and effective decision making for better yield and quality crop production, she said.

Prof Zaki, at the occasion, said given the rising demand for food, automation of agriculture is the main concern as the traditional farming methods are not sufficient to fulfil the requirements, so there is an inherent and indispensable need for use of artificial intelligence in agriculture and allied sectors.

Various national and international experts on AI&ML are delivering the training which aims to teach students the fundamentals of AI&ML and its real-time applicability in agriculture including data processing and analytics.

### NEWS MAKERS

## UN Agency Names Indian Entrepreneur As One Of 'Young Champions Of The Earth' Winners



A 29-year-old Indian entrepreneur is among the seven winners of the prestigious 'Young Champions of the Earth' 2020 prize given by the UN environment agency to global change-makers using innovative ideas and ambitious action to help solve some of the world's most pressing environmental challenges.

Vidhut Mohan, an engineer, is the co-founder of 'Takachar', a social enterprise enabling farmers to prevent open burning of their waste farm residues and earn extra income by converting them into value-added chemicals like activated carbon on-site, UN Environment Programme (UNEP) said in a statement on Tuesday.

I've always been passionate about energy access and creating income opportunities for poor communities, Mohan was quoted as saying in the statement. (That) is at the heart of finding answers to the difficult question of balancing economic growth and climate change mitigation in developing countries, he said.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said in a message that in the middle of a global pandemic, with societies struggling, economies stretched to their limits and an escalating biodiversity and climate crisis, we need to act boldly and urgently to repair our relationship with nature and take the path of sustainable development.

He said that the Young Champions of the Earth inspire and mobilise. UNEP Executive Director Inger Andersen

said globally, young people are leading the way in calling for meaningful and immediate solutions to the triple planetary crises of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. We must listen. As we enter this decisive decade where we work to cut emissions and protect and restore ecosystems, UNEP Young Champions demonstrate that all of us can contribute, starting where we are with what we have. Every single act for nature counts, and we need the entire spectrum of humanity to share this global responsibility and this profound opportunity, Andersen said.

Takachar buys rice husks, straw and coconut shells from farmers and turns them into charcoal, saving the debris from the fires, which are also a driver of climate change. Since Takachar was launched in 2018, Mohan and its

co-founder Kevin Kung have worked with about 4,500 farmers and processed 3,000 tonnes of crops, UNEP said. Mark Radka, chief of the energy and climate branch at UNEP's Economy Division, said the open burning of agricultural residues is a big source of air pollution in many parts of the world and Takachar's innovative technology can help farmers turn what is currently thought of as waste into a valuable resource while helping clean up our environment. Slowly and gradually all funding streams available and support services are turning towards sustainability. Companies are going to lose if they don't become sustainable in the long run, Mohan, a 2019 Echoing Green Fellow and a 2020 Forbes 30 Under 30 awardee, said.

By deploying small-scale, low-cost

portable biomass upgrading equipment, Takachar enables rural farmers to earn 40 per cent more by converting their crop residues into fuels, fertilisers and value-added chemicals like activated carbon (AC) on-site. By choosing activated carbon (AC) as the starting market, Takachar brings this value chain to the doorstep of farmers and hence reduces air pollution associated with crop residue burning, while ensuring a stable, renewable, pollution free and financially lucrative raw material supply for the AC industry vs. Traditional fossil based sources.

By 2030, Takachar will impact 300 million farmers affected by this problem, create USD 4 billion/year equivalent in additional rural income and jobs, and mitigate one gigaton/year of CO2 equivalent, UNEP added. This year's Young Champions were selected

by a global jury of experts following a competitive public nomination. Each will receive \$10,000 in seed funding and tailored training to help scale up their ideas. The Young Champions of the Earth prize is awarded every year to seven entrepreneurs under the age of 30 with bold ideas for sustainable environmental change.

The other awardees are 29-year-old Nzambi Matee from Kenya, a materials engineer and head of Gjenge Makers, which produces sustainable low-cost construction materials made of recycled plastic waste and sand; 29-year-old Xiaoyuan Ren from China who leads MyH2O, a data platform that tests and records the quality of groundwater across a thousand villages in rural China into an app so residents know where to find clean water.



# Hope can make you happier with your lot, discover researchers



**Harbouring hope** for the future could protect people from risky behaviours – according to new research from the University of East Anglia. Researchers studied 'relative deprivation' – the feeling that other people have things better than you in life.

They wanted to discover why only certain people experience this turn to escapist and risky behaviours such as drinking alcohol, consuming drugs, over-eating or gambling, while others do not and they found that the answer lies in hope.

"I think most people have experienced relative deprivation at some point in their lives. It's that feeling of being unhappy with your lot, the belief that your situation is worse than others, that other people are doing better than you. Roosevelt famously said that 'comparison is the thief of joy'. It's that feeling you have when a friend buys a new car, or your sister gets married, or a colleague finds a better job or has a better income," Postgraduate researcher Shahriar Keshavarz, from UEA's School of Psychology, said.

"Relative deprivation can trigger negative emotions like anger and resentment, and it has been associated with poor coping strategies like risk taking, drinking, taking drugs or gambling," said Keshavarz.

"But not everyone scoring high on measures of relative

deprivation makes these poor life choices. We wanted to find out why some people seem to cope better, or even use the experience to their advantage to improve their own situation. There is a lot of evidence to show that remaining hopeful in the face of adversity can be advantageous, so we wanted to see if hope can help people feel happier with their lot and buffer against risky behaviours," added Keshavarz.

The research team carried out two lab-based experiments with 55 volunteers. The volunteers were quizzed to find out how much they feel relative deprivation and hope.

The researchers also induced feelings of relative deprivation in the volunteers, by telling them how deprived they were compared to their peers, based on a questionnaire about their family income, age and gender.

They then took part in specially designed gambling games that involved risk-taking and placing bets with a chance to win real money.

"The aim of this part of the study was to see whether

feeling relatively deprived – elicited by the knowledge that one has less income than similar others – causes greater risk-taking among low-hopers and decreased risk-taking among high-hopers," Dr Piers Fleming, also from UEA's School of Psychology, said.

"We looked at the people who scored high for relative deprivation, the ones that thought their situation in life was worse than those around them. And we looked at those who also scored high for hope. We found that the volunteers who scored high for hope, were much less likely to take risks in the game. Those who weren't too hopeful, were a lot more likely to take risks," added Fleming.

Another experiment looked at whether hope helped people in the real world. They worked with 122 volunteers who had gambled at least once in the last year. The volunteers took part in questionnaires to gauge how hopeful they are, whether they feel relatively deprived, and to measure problem gambling.

Of the participants, 33 had no gambling problems (27

**Relative deprivation** can trigger negative emotions like anger and resentment, and it has been associated with poor coping strategies like risk taking, drinking, taking drugs or gambling"

per cent), 32 had low level of problems (26 per cent), 46 had moderate level of problems leading to some negative consequences (38 per cent) and 11 were problem gamblers with a possible loss of control (9 per cent).

"When we looked at these scores compared to scores for hope and relative deprivation, we found that increased hope was associated with a decreased likelihood of losing control of gambling behaviour – even in those who experienced relative deprivation," said Mr Keshavarz.

"Interestingly, our study found no significant relation between hope and gambling severity among relatively privileged persons. We don't know why this is, but it could be that they are gambling recreationally or better able to stop when the fun stops," added Keshavarz.

The research team says that nurturing hope in people who are unhappy with their lot could protect against harmful behaviours like drinking and gambling. –Agencies

## Microsoft building new password manager for Edge, Chrome



The new password manager will sync credentials across its Edge browser, Google Chrome, and mobile iOS or Android devices. "A preview version of the password manager is now built into Microsoft Authenticator, a free mobile app that's used for multi-factor authentication," the report mentioned.

Autofill only works with consumer Microsoft Accounts and is disabled for enterprise users who are using the app for phone sign-in or multi-factor authentication.

"Passwords are synced from the Microsoft Edge browser, and can be shared across multiple devices using a Microsoft Account. You can also sync these passwords to Google Chrome, using a new Microsoft Autofill extension," the report mentioned.

The new feature has currently been spotted in beta A/B testing for iOS and Android apps. –Agencies

Microsoft is building a new password manager that will work across a slew of products like Edge, Chrome and mobile devices – Android and iOS. According to a report in The Verge, the tech giant is in the process of creating a full password manager for its Microsoft 365 consumer service.

## Low-intensity exercise during adolescence may prevent schizophrenia

Researchers from Japan have found that exercise during a specific postnatal period may prevent the development of behaviors associated with schizophrenia.

In a study published this month in Biochemical and Biophysical Research Communications, researchers from the University of Tsukuba have revealed that low-intensity exercise during adolescence, which is a critical developmental period, significantly reduced abnormal behaviors in a mouse model of schizophrenia.

An enriched environment during development has been found to have a number of positive effects on brain function, including the

prevention of neurodevelopmental disorders.

Although exercise appears to have a particularly important effect, the combination of variables present in enriched environments can make it difficult to isolate the mechanisms underlying the beneficial effects.

To address this, the researchers at the University of Tsukuba developed a new exercise model in which mice ran on a treadmill at a fixed speed. They then tested whether low-intensity treadmill running prevented abnormal behaviors in a mouse model of schizophrenia.

"Previous studies have shown that exercise can enhance neuronal transmission and have other beneficial effects," said lead author of the study Hikaru Koizumi.

"However, the intensity, duration, and frequency of exercise have varied among studies using wheel running, making it difficult

to determine how much exercise would be necessary to see these positive effects in humans," added Koizumi.

To address this, the researchers examined behavioral and neurological function in mice that had been exposed to phencyclidine (PCP) hydrochloride during perinatal development, which is a common model of schizophrenia. The mice were then exposed to 4 weeks of low-intensity exercise during adolescence, and tested to see whether they exhibited abnormal behaviors and associated neurological abnormalities.

"The results were surprising. Our finding that low-intensity exercise could prevent abnormal behaviors indicates that exercise may directly contribute to the prevention of schizophrenia," said senior author Professor Hideaki Soya.

This has important implications for the potential neuropathology

of schizophrenia, especially given that the low-intensity exercise recovered changes in neural signaling associated with the expected behavioral abnormalities.

"Our findings indicate that mild exercise habits during development could have a powerful preventative effect in individuals who are genetically predisposed to schizophrenia. As such, exercise could be a particularly important consideration for individuals who are at risk for developing the condition," said Professor Soya.

Mild exercise during development could prevent schizophrenia by masking or improving neurodevelopmental abnormalities present due to genetic inheritance.

Specialized exercise programs for individuals who are at risk may be successful in preventing the development of schizophrenia, with serious implications for the quality of life in these individuals. –Agencies



**The results were surprising.** Our finding that low-intensity exercise could prevent abnormal behaviors indicates that exercise may directly contribute to the prevention of schizophrenia"

## Beauty Oils: The Solution for Dry Winter Skin



SHAHNAZ HUSAIN

As the weather gets cooler and the pollution level rise, the wind-blown from reverse steals the natural oils present in the skin. The winter breeze may feel good and enjoyable for many ways but it can rob moisture off your skin and make it prone to dryness and damage making whitish patches appear on your face and limbs.

Showering in steaming hot water, using the electric heating equipment, Chilling atmosphere and less humidity make your skin dry, dull, flaky and unattractive. It also makes your facial skin and the skin of your lips appear rough. Whether you are looking to eliminate redness, stop irritation from acne or rosacea, plump skin, or simply moisturize, nature has gifted us with oils and ingredients that can help combat winter

dryness. Face oils are packed with ingredients such as polyphenols, fatty acids, and antioxidants which help reduce inflammation and give skin a dewy glow.

Face oils have become a beauty cabinet staple, thanks to their natural ability to hydrate and nourish a variety of skin types. Facial oil is the ultimate luxury treat for winter skin and will leave it both smoother and softer. But what makes facial oil so effective? Keep reading to find out some natural oils that will keep your hair and skin in the pink of their health even in the peak winter season.

Here we are referring to pressed oils, like olive oil, sesame seed (til) oil, mustard oil, coconut oil, almond oil, sunflower oil, castor oil, etc. They have been commonly used to nourish the skin and hair.

1. Sesame seed oil

According to Ayurveda, sesame seed (til) oil is said to be good during winters. Sesame seed oil is light, free of odour and is easily absorbed by the skin. It is rich in nutrients and has healing properties too. Research has revealed that sesame seed actually has natural sunscreen properties of SPF 6. Applied on the skin, it can soothe sunburn. It is also rich in Vitamin E, minerals, protein and lecithin. As far as the face is concerned, sesame seed oil can be massaged

on the face to relieve dryness.

2. Olive oil popularly called 'liquid gold' is the natural oil extracted from olives, the fruit of the olive tree.

Pure olive oil particularly extra-virgin olive oil is fairly nutritious and is popular for body massage, mainly to soften the skin and provide nourishment. Olive oil contains many vitamins and minerals,



is an all-around natural moisturizer and recommended by dermatologists for dehydrated skin particularly in winters. Olive oil can be used as Moisturisers during Winters to treat the troublesome areas of our body as they get very dry and flaky. Massage oil on partially damp skin to keep flakiness at bay. Add some lemon juice to the oil to get rid of itchy skin in

extremely dry conditions.

It is also an antioxidant, helps to prevent oxidation or free radical damage and degeneration, caused by exposure to the sun and chemical pollutants. Like sesame seed and sunflower oils, olive oil can provide protection from the sun's UV rays. Pure olive oil can be used to massage a baby's tender skin. For the hair too, olive oil is useful.

contains fatty acids which help your skin retain moisture and can heal chapped and irritated skin during winters. It can be added to face packs for dry skin. Or, it can be mixed with egg yolk and applied on the skin to nourish it and soften skin texture. It can also be massaged into the hard skin of elbows and knees. Almond oil is also very nourishing for extremely dry



hair. For the nails, heat almond oil and massage the nails and cuticles (skin around the nails).

4. Coconut oil, body-friendly foodstuff that is heart-healthy, great for oral health, and other health benefits is probably the most popular oil for the hair in India. It is said to strengthen the hair and make it thick and shiny. The application of oil with a light

massage helps to stimulate blood circulation to the follicles and also softens hair texture. The hair should not be rubbed vigorously. Only the fingertips should be used, to actually move the scalp with small rotary movements. Hot oil therapy with coconut oil is said to be very beneficial. Heat coconut oil and apply it on the scalp at night, leaving on overnight. It is said to restore health to damaged hair and prevent split ends. Coconut oil is also said to be beneficial for the skin, as it soothes sun-damage and has a healing effect. It softens the skin and gives it a smoother and more youthful appearance. Coconut is good for the skin, especially in the treatment of wounds, burns, and dermatitis. It also acts as a sunblock, and as a moisturizer for the skin.

5. Castor oil is used mainly for hair conditions such as dry, brittle and damaged hair. It is a thick and sticky oil, so after application of the oil, shampoo the hair and rinse well with water, so that only residues do not remain on the scalp.

In cases of excessive dryness, mix one part of castor oil with two parts coconut oil. Heat and apply. Remember to apply on the ends too. Massage the scalp gently, using only the fingertips. Move the scalp in small circular movements. This helps to stimulate blood

circulation to the follicles. Keep the oil on overnight and wash the hair the next day, using a mild herbal shampoo. Avoid very hot water.

6. Apricot kernel oil can be used for skin care during winters. It is rich in Vitamins A, C and E. It also contains fatty acids and is a source of unsaturated fats. As it is easily absorbed by the skin, it is used in many cosmetic products and also indirect external applications on the skin. It is gentle on the skin and is easily absorbed. It helps to nourish and moisturize the skin and thus relieve dryness. It also helps the skin to retain moisture. It contains antioxidants, which delay ageing signs and degeneration, keeping the skin soft, smooth and youthful.

7. Jojoba Oil contains vitamins B complex and E which help in skin repair and damage control, minerals as zinc and copper, which help to strengthen and keep skin calm and comfortable. Its chemical structure is very similar to skin's natural oil so it is very easily absorbed in the skin which helps to tame chaffing and chapping, reduce redness caused by drying, ease the effects of eczema and rosacea.

—The author is an international fame beauty expert and is called herbal queen of India





THE 29-YEAR-OLD CONFIRMED TO THE PCB CHIEF EXECUTIVE THAT HE HAS NO DESIRES or intentions of playing international cricket and as such, he should not be considered for future international matches," the statement said.

# Australia Restrict India To 233/6 After KOHLI RUN-OUT



**KOHLI, WHO LOOKED IN COMPLETE COMMAND,** was run out when his deputy Ajinkya Rahane backed out after calling for a single and it happened just before the second new ball was taken.

**ADELAIDE:** Virat Kohli's enduring love affair with Adelaide Oval resulted in a classy 74 but his untimely run-out triggered a batting collapse as India ended the opening day at 233 for 6 against Australia in the Day/Night Test here on Thursday. Kohli, who looked in complete command, was run out when his deputy Ajinkya Rahane backed out after calling for a single and it happened just before the second new ball was taken. From a comfortable 188 for 3, India slumped to 206 for 6 as Rahane (42) and Hanuma Vihari (16) found the pace and swing generated by the pink ball under lights too hot to handle. Ravichandran Ashwin (15 bat-

ting) and Wriddhiman Saha (9 batting) saw off the final few overs and also got a few runs towards the end of the play on Day 1. In conditions, which can't exactly be called batting friendly, Kohli blended the right amount of caution and aggression in his 180-ball innings, showing one and all that he is a few light-years ahead of his peers when it comes to batsmanship. If Cheteshwar Pujara (43 off 160 balls) let bowlers dictate terms with an ultra-defensive approach, his skipper gave opposition the respect it deserved but also from time to time played those shots to drive home a point. His 88-run partnership with Rahane during the final session

nearly put India on even keel but fortunes tilted once Kohli was back in the pavilion. Rahane was soon snapped with the second new ball by Mitchell Starc (2/49), easily the best bowler in action. The knock will certainly be among the Indian captain's favourites as he hit three kinds of pull-shots to the pacers – two off Starc and one off Josh Hazlewood. One of the pulls off Starc was a check shot for which Kohli just rolled his wrists to help the ball to the square leg boundary. Then there was one off Hazlewood where he again rolled his wrists but the ball went to the front of square. Another pull was where he

got under the ball and hit it to the mid-wicket fence. There was a classical cover-drive that brought his half-century. Earlier, Pujara's ultra-defensive approach became his undoing as India literally crawled during the first two sessions. So intent was Pujara on blocking anything and leaving everything for the better part of his innings that a 68-run stand for the third wicket with Kohli couldn't release pressure going into the second break of the evening. Not often does one find a batsman take 148 balls to score a boundary and it became a battle of attrition between Pujara and star spinner Nathan Lyon (1/68 in 21 overs) during

the post-dinner session. It made for a fascinating hour of Test cricket, a throwback to the good old days when batsmen would plonk their front-foot with a big stride forward and use their pads as the first line of defence. He did hit Lyon for a couple of boundaries trying to break the shackles but then came a classical off-break which had both turn and bounce and the bat-pad fielder Marnus Labuschagne, at leg-gully, lunged forward to take an easy catch. While the art of defensive batting was a fantastic advertisement of top quality Test cricket, it can't be denied that Pujara's dogged approach did make Kohli also go into his shell

before he and Rahane showed lot of intent in the final session. When Pujara used more pads against Lyon, Kohli played the copybook forward defence, presenting his bat first. When an opportunity came along, he punched over Lyon's head for a boundary. In the morning, Prithvi Shaw's (0) poor technique was once again exposed by Starc while Mayank Agarwal (17) got a beauty from Pat Cummins. The Australian pace troika of Starc (2/49 in 19 overs), Josh Hazlewood (1/47 in 20 overs) and Pat Cummins (1/42 in 19 overs) bowled a very steady line comprising mostly of fuller deliveries. At the start, it was another dis-

appointing mode of dismissal for Shaw, who according to many was a rather surprising selection over an in-form Shubman Gill. Starc kept a full delivery, which slightly shaped in, and the opener, having faced one delivery, went for an expansive drive, playing away from his body only to drag it back onto the stumps. Agarwal was a bit adventurous as he found India's first boundary with a cover drive off Hazlewood. An uppish square drive off Starc got him a second one. But Cummins produced one that was fast and moved off the track and Agarwal was beaten for pace as replays showed that he couldn't even complete landing on his front-foot. PTI

## Doha To Host 2030 Asian Games, Riyadh Get 2034 Edition



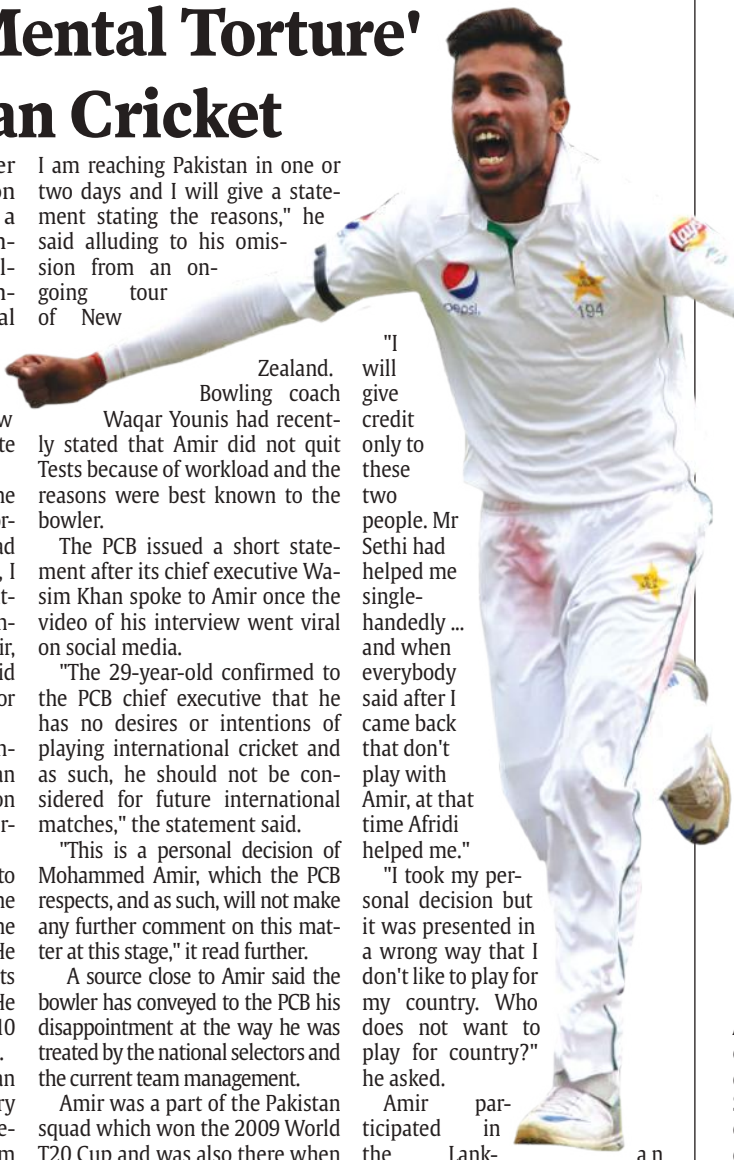
**MUSCAT:** Doha will host the 2030 Asian Games, the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) announced on Wednesday, while Riyadh was named as host of the 2034 edition under a compromise agreed between the rivals. An executive board meeting of the OCA unanimously approved the proposal to name the runner-up in the two-horse race for the 2030 games as 2034 hosts. "I can now announce... that the city who had the highest vote and will host 2030 is Doha," said OCA president Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Sabah. "The second hosting city, for 2034, is Riyadh." Voting was delayed by hours after technical problems with the on-line system, in place to allow some national Olympic committees to participate remotely because of the coronavirus pandemic. "I apologise for the technical problem we are facing during our voting," said Sheikh Ahmad. "Today the difficult things have been solved and the easy things have been problems. I will be glad to have two games in west Asia, to be honest." Saudi and Qatar are locked in a bitter dispute after an alliance of countries led by Riyadh cut diplomatic, economic and transport ties with Doha in 2017, accusing it of backing radical Islamists and Iran. Qatar denies the charges and there has been progress to reconcile the dispute in recent weeks with all sides praising Kuwaiti-led mediation. Ahead of the vote, the OCA's president said he was seeking a "win-

win" situation for Doha and Riyadh. Doha hosted the Asian Games in 2006 while Saudi Arabia has never organised an OCA multi-sport event. "Our goal is simple. We want to see more Asian athletes in the future, on future Olympic podiums," said Qatar Olympic Committee chief Joaan bin Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani ahead of the vote. "We want that to be part of your national sports history, not just ours. And we want to support you in the efforts to get there." Qatar is also participating in the bidding process for the 2032 summer Olympics. A video showcased Qatar's raft of sporting and transport infrastructure being prepared ahead of the 2022 football World Cup that would be repurposed for the 2030 games. The games will have a \$1.3 billion budget. The Doha bid team claimed that 90 percent of the infrastructure for the 2030 games was already in place. President of Saudi's Olympic Committee Prince Abdulaziz bin Turki Al-Faisal Al-Saud said: "When we say the games are a national priority, we mean it. It has unwavering political and public support. Sport has changed social life in the kingdom – especially for women." Prince Abdulaziz pointed to Saudi's hosting of major boxing clashes and planning for next year's Formula One as proof of the kingdom's readiness for Asian Games.

## Mohammed Amir Quits Cricket, Alleges 'Mental Torture' By Pakistan Cricket

Pakistan fast bowler Mohammad Amir on Thursday announced a dramatic end to his international cricket career, alleging that he has been "mentally tortured" by his national board's management. The 28-year-old left-arm pacer made the surprise announcement in a video interview released by Pakistani website 'Khel-Sheh'. "I am quitting cricket this time because I have been mentally tortured. I can't bear this torture. I had faced torture from 2010 to 2015. I remained outside cricket for whatever the reason. I served the punishment and did everything," Amir, who is currently in Sri Lanka, said referring to the ban he served for his involvement in spot-fixing. "But I feel tortured by this continuous talk that PCB (Pakistan Cricket Board) has invested (on me). I can't play under this current management." Amir had last year quit Tests to focus on white-ball cricket as he felt his body could not take the load of playing all the formats. He claimed 119 wickets from 36 Tests after making his debut in 2009. He served a five-year ban from 2010 to 2015 on charges of spot-fixing. "I can give my best for Pakistan in white ball cricket. But every month or two they say something about my bowling, or I am ditching this and that, there is no workload on me etc. "It means that I have been given wake-up call that I am not in the scheme of things and I should be on the sidelines. With all these thought I am doing this (quitting).

I am reaching Pakistan in one or two days and I will give a statement stating the reasons," he said alluding to his omission from an on-going tour of New Zealand. Bowling coach Waqar Younis had recently stated that Amir did not quit Tests because of workload and the reasons were best known to the bowler. The PCB issued a short statement after its chief executive Wasim Khan spoke to Amir once the video of his interview went viral on social media. "The 29-year-old confirmed to the PCB chief executive that he has no desires or intentions of playing international cricket and as such, he should not be considered for future international matches," the statement said. "This is a personal decision of Mohammed Amir, which the PCB respects, and as such, will not make any further comment on this matter at this stage," it read further. A source close to Amir said the bowler has conveyed to the PCB his disappointment at the way he was treated by the national selectors and the current team management. Amir was a part of the Pakistan squad which won the 2009 World T20 Cup and was also there when they won the Champions Trophy title in 2017. He said only two persons -- former PCB chief Najam Sethi and ex Pakistan all-rounder Shaheed Afridi -- had helped him after he came back after serving his ban.



## Pink Ball Should Replace 'Pathetic' Red-Ball In Tests: Shane Warne

**ADELAIDE:** Australia spin legend Shane Warne on Thursday made a strong pitch for the pink ball to be used in all Test matches in place of the "pathetic" red cherry that offers "nothing" to the bowler. The pink ball, as of now, is only used for Day/Night matches that became a part of the cricket in 2015. "I've been saying this for the last few years. I believe the pink ball should be used in all Test matches. Day games, not just day-night games," Warne said on 'Fox Cricket'. "The pink ball, you can actually see the ball easier, crowd can see the ball easier. It generally does more than the red ball and it looks fantastic on TV. So why not use a pink ball the whole time? "Maybe change it at 60 overs because it goes soft, but I'd be using the pink ball for every Test match so more of it I would

say," he added. The Australian said the red ball didn't swing much for the bowlers with the exception of the Dukes ball in England and gets soft very soon. "No more red ball, it doesn't swing, it doesn't do anything, goes soft after 25 overs. It has been pathetic for so long now. Except for the Dukes ball in England, it has been rubbish." "The pink ball can't be any worse than what the red ball has been for Test cricket. We haven't seen swing, we haven't seen seam. Absolutely nothing, so let's try the pink ball in Test cricket," he added. India and Australia are involved in a Day-Night encounter at the Adelaide Oval as the four-Test series began on Thursday. PTI



## How Ponting 'Exactly' Predicted Shaw's Dismissal

**ADELAIDE:** Former Australia captain Ricky Ponting on Thursday predicted the exact way Prithvi Shaw would be dismissed, just seconds before the Indian opener got out for a duck in the first session of the first Test against Australia at the Adelaide Oval. Ponting, who was in the commentary box for 7 cricket when play began in the pink-ball Test, explained how Shaw has a tendency to leave a gap between his bat and pad while playing in-coming deliveries. "If he (Shaw) does have a chink in his armour it's the ball which does come back into him," Ponting, who has been working with Shaw at Indian Premier League (IPL) franchise Delhi Capitals, said after Shaw defended

left-arm Mitchell Starc's first ball. "He's very comfortable playing the ball away from his body. He does get his head in line with the ball but he doesn't commit his front foot to the line of the ball and quite often leaves a big gap between bat and pad and that's where the Aussies will target. Starc will try and swing one back in the gate," he added as Starc started his run-up for the second ball. The left-arm quick bowled a full in-swinging delivery outside the off stump and Shaw went for a drive. The ball, however, got an inside edge and went on to hit the stumps, thus sending the Indian opener back to the dressing room for a golden duck. The 21-year-old has been in poor form in the recent times.

**I AM QUITTING CRICKET THIS TIME BECAUSE I HAVE BEEN mentally tortured. I can't bear this torture. I had faced torture from 2010 to 2015, I remained outside cricket for whatever the reason. I served the punishment and did everything," Amir, who is currently in Sri Lanka,**



## Centre Approves Acquisition Of Military Hardware Worth Rs 28,000 Crore

The procurement proposals were cleared at a time India and China are locked in a bitter border standoff in eastern Ladakh.



**NEW DELHI:** The defence ministry on Thursday approved procurement of weapons and military equipment worth Rs 28,000 crore for the three services, officials said.

The procurement proposals were cleared at a time India and China are locked in a bitter border standoff in eastern Ladakh.

The officials said almost all the weapons and military hardware approved for procurement will be acquired from domestic industry.

"The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) headed by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh approved

proposals to procure equipment worth Rs 27,000 crore from domestic industry," the defence ministry said in a statement.

Officials said a total of seven acquisition proposals were approved by the DAC, the defence ministry's highest decision-making body on procurement.

"Six of the seven proposals, that is, Rs 27,000 crore out of Rs 28,000 crore for which AoNs (Acceptance of Necessity) were granted will be sourced from the Indian industry to give a boost to the "Make in India" and Atmanirbhar Bharat" initiatives," the ministry said.

Acquisition proposals approved include procurement of the DRDO-designed and developed airborne early warning and control systems for the Indian Air Force, next generation offshore patrol vessels for the Indian Navy and modular bridges for the Indian Army. —PTI

## French Researchers Warn Of Virus Risk From Eating Out

**FRANCE:** Spending time in a bar or restaurant increases the risk of catching Covid-19, French researchers said Thursday, while having guests over for dinner also plays a key role in transmission.

The latest study adds to evidence that socialising and eating out are far more dangerous than other activities such as using public transport or shopping.

It comes as Europe and the United States in particular are grappling with surging infection rates and the start of a holiday season normally characterised by parties and family get-togethers. Researchers from France's Institut Pasteur sought to find out which factors -- like professions, mode of transport, places visited -- differentiated participants who had contracted the virus from people who had not.

"We saw an increased risk associated with frequenting bars and restaurants," said the lead author, Arnaud Fontanet, an epidemiologist and member of the scientific council guiding the government.

The study, called ComCor, has not been peer reviewed but has informed France's virus response.

It was carried out in October and November, during an initial

period of curfew and then even tighter restrictions that saw most establishments partially or completely closed.

Fontanet told AFP that because bars and restaurants are not functioning as normal, it was difficult to gauge their exact role in transmission, and acknowledged that closing these businesses was a "sensitive" move.

French cafes and restaurants have remained closed even after nationwide restrictions were eased earlier this week. ComCor researchers interviewed 3,400 people infected with Covid-19 and 1,700 others who did not have the virus.

They found that frequenting restaurants, bars or gyms was associated with an increased risk of infection, whereas using public transport and visiting shops were not.

**'Friendly dinners'**

Health authorities across the world have advised people to avoid crowded indoor spaces as scientists increasingly agree that the new coronavirus can travel in fine clouds of particles known as aerosols that can collect in poorly ventilated rooms.

A September survey by the US Centers for Disease Control and

Prevention found that adults with positive coronavirus test results were about twice as likely to report having eaten at a restaurant in the previous two weeks than those with negative results.

In November, a study in the journal Nature found that restaurants, gyms and cafes account for most Covid-19 infections in the United States. Using mobile phone data from 98 million people, researchers found about 10 percent of venues accounted for more than 80 percent of cases.

The ComCor research also tried to pinpoint different circumstances of infection, with surveys of 25,600 infected individuals using health insurance data. It showed that "meals play a central role in these contaminations", as people sat close to each other without masks.

"Private meetings - families, friends -- are the main source of infection," Fontanet said.

"If people have friendly dinners at their homes rather than going to a restaurant, it doesn't make a difference." The researchers stressed the importance of organising such gatherings in "the safest way possible" to protect vulnerable people over the holidays.

## "World's Ugliest Orchid" Among New Species Named In 2020

**Gastrodia agnicellus, one of 156 plants and fungal species named by Kew scientists and their partners around the world in 2020, has been crowned "the ugliest orchid in the world".**



**LONDON:** Orchids are not often called ugly, but that is how the Royal Botanic Gardens in Kew, London, described a new species of the normally vibrant and delicate flower discovered in the forests of Madagascar.

Gastrodia agnicellus, one of 156 plants and fungal species named by Kew scientists and their partners around the world in 2020, has been crowned "the ugliest orchid in the world".

"The 11 mm flowers of this orchid are small, brown and rather ugly," Kew said in its list of the top 10 discoveries of the year. The orchid depends on fungi for nutrition and has no leaves or any other photosynthetic tissue.

Although assessed as a threatened species, the plants have some protection because they are located in a national park.

Among the other discoveries officially named this year were six new species of webcap toadstool mushrooms in the United Kingdom and a strange shrub encountered in southern Namibia in 2010.

Botanist Wessel Swanepoel could not place the shrub in any known genus and neither could

anyone else, and so Swanepoel called Kew's molecular expert Felix Forest and his team for analysis.

The result was that it was not just a new species, but a new genus and a new family, called Tiganophyton karasense.

While around 2,000 plants are named new to science annually, new families are only published around once a year.

The shrub has bizarre scaly leaves and grows in extremely hot natural salt pans, hence its name Tiganophyton, derived from the Latin 'Tigani', or 'frying pan', and 'Phyton', or 'plant'.

Martin Cheek, senior research leader at Kew, welcomed the latest natural discoveries.

"Some could provide vital income to communities while others may have the potential to be developed into a future food or medicine," he said.

But he warned: "The bleak reality facing us cannot be underplayed. With two in five plants threatened with extinction, it is a race against time to find, identify, name, and conserve plants before they disappear."

## No Rape Case If Marriage Promise Not Kept After Sex: Delhi High Court

**NEW DELHI:** Ruling that a promise of marriage cannot be held out as an inducement for engaging in sex over a protracted and indefinite period of time, the Delhi High Court has dismissed an appeal filed by a woman challenging the acquittal of an accused in a rape case observing that her relationship with the accused was consensual.

A single-judge bench of Justice Vibhu Bakhru said inducement to have a physical relationship by promising marriage and the victim falling prey to such inducement may be understandable in the context of the moment.

"A promise of marriage cannot be held out as an inducement for engaging in sex over a protracted and indefinite period of time," the bench said in its order dated December 15.

Noting that it did not find any infirmity with the conclusion given by the trial court, the bench said a bare reading of the complaint

**"A promise of marriage cannot be held out as an inducement for engaging in sex over a protracted and indefinite period of time," the bench said in its order dated December 15**

made by the appellant as well as her testimony clearly indicates that even according to her, her relationship with the accused was consensual.

The bench also ruled the allegation that her consent has been vitiated on account of having been obtained by misrepresentation, is clearly, unsustainable.

"As noted by the trial court, according to her complaint, the appellant woman has stated that she had a physical relationship with the accused in 2008 and after three or four months, thereafter, he had promised to marry her and she had eloped with him," the bench noted.

"In view of the said statement, her allegation that her consent to engage in sexual

activity with the accused, is vitiated, as the same was secured on a promise to get married, is not sustainable," it said.

The complainant had also alleged that she had conceived on two occasions, however, the accused did not want any children and therefore, had brought medicines, which had led her to abort the pregnancy.

"However, in her cross-examination, she could not recollect the date or the time when such miscarriages had taken place. Concededly, there is no other evidence, which would establish that the appellant had miscarried on being administered any drugs," the bench said.

"The present appeal is also filed after an

inordinate delay of six hundred and forty days. There is no credible explanation for such delay. The only explanation provided is that the accused has once again starting interfering with the complainant's life and therefore, she seeks to revive her complaint. Clearly, the same presents no ground for condoning such delay," it added.

The woman had challenged a trial court order dated March 24, 2018, whereby the accused was acquitted of the offences punishable under Section 417 (cheating) and 376 (rape) of the Indian Penal Code, 1860 (IPC). She had in August 2015, filed a complaint in the Malviya Nagar police station in the matter.

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