



Maximum : 9°  
Minimum : -4°  
Humidity : 75%

SUNSET  
Today 05:28 PM  
SUNRISE  
Tomorrow 07:35 AM



## P7 LIFE &amp; TIMES

MASKS BLOCK 99.9% OF LARGE  
COVID-LINKED DROPLETS: STUDY

Face masks reduce the risk of spreading large Covidlinked droplets when speaking or coughing by up to 99.9 percent, according to a lab ...

## P4 STRAIGHT STROKES

DDC LESSONS  
FOR PAGD

The Ordinance law in the first place owes its existence to a hypothetical ...



## P8 OBSERVER OUTPOST

7 US LAWMAKERS WRITE TO MIKE  
POMPEO ON FARMERS' PROTEST IN INDIA

India has called the remarks by foreign leaders and politicians on protests by farmers as "ill-informed" and "unwarranted", asserting that the matter ...



## PAGE-1 ANCHOR

## 'Where Will We Go This Winter': Homelessness Haunts Shell-Shocked Uri

## AUQIB JAVEED

**HAIJPEER, Uri:** After a nightmarish fall that saw his townspeople abandoning everything to save themselves from the raining shells, Parveez Ahmad Sheikh is now getting worried about long and chilling winter ahead.

"We lost our homes to shells, and now we fear to lose our lives to this bone-chilling cold," Sheikh says, standing near the wreckage of his home in Balkote village of Uri's Hajpeer sector.

His family is living in a rented

accommodation, after government, he says, failed to reconstruct homes bombed in the November 13, 2020 LoC—Line of Control—flare up.



That day, the routine cross-LoC shelling between India and Pakistan became "unprecedented and bloody".

Bullets and shells rained all around in Kamakote, Hajpeer and Rampore sectors of Uri, claiming at least six lives including four civilians and two forces personnel.

Around two dozen residential houses got damaged.

A month later, as the harshest 40-day-long cold spell started in Kashmir, the shell-shocked Sheikh and his tribe are still living in an atmosphere of "terror".

"In the name of compensation, we were given a sum of Rs 10, 000," Sheikh



narrates his ordeal of homelessness. "What can be done with that meagre amount?"

Working in Central Reserve Police Forces (CRPF), Sheikh says his savings for his three children's education will be now consumed by his new house.

"And even if you construct a new house, who will give you the guarantee that another shell won't blast it again," Sheikh talks about the uncertainty of life on the LoC.

Sailing in the same boat is Abdul Gani whose house was blown

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Despite making rounds of the government offices for compensation, we are living a life of refugees in our own homeland. Where will we go this winter?"

Wisdom  
Quote!

"No one cares how much you know, until they know how much you care"

—Theodore Roosevelt

news  
DIGESTOne More Corona  
Death In J&K

**SRINAGAR:** Jammu and Kashmir reported one death due to coronavirus, while 284 new cases of virus, including 8 CRPF personnel were detected in the Union Territory during the last 24 hours. The victim, officials said was a 60-year-old man from Boniyar in Baramulla.

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Structure Collapses  
Kills 2 Soldiers

Jammu: Two Army men were killed while another was critically injured after portion of a structure collapsed in an army camp at Machedi area of Kathua district in Jammu on Friday. The incident took place on Friday late evening hours, news agency KNO reported.

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Muslims Help KP  
Man's Last Rites

**SRINAGAR:** In another example of communal harmony and brotherhood, the Muslims neighbours in central Kashmir's Ganderbal district helped cremation of a Kashmiri Pandit man, who passed away on Friday.

Pandit Nath Bhat, 92, breathed his last in his home at Wussan in the wee hours on Friday plunging the whole locality in mourning, eyewitnesses said. Soon after the news of his death spread, local Muslims made special arrangements in performing his last rites. They also ferried firewood for

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Cold Wave Grips  
Kashmir Ahead Of  
Weekend Snowfall

**SRINAGAR:** Cold conditions intensified in Kashmir as the minimum temperature dropped at most places in the valley on Friday.

The weather office has forecast the possibility of light rain and snow over a few days from Saturday.

The night temperature dropped across Kashmir, except in Gulmarg, MET officials said.

The weather has remained dry and cold across Kashmir since the snowfall on December 12, with the night temperature staying several degrees below the freezing point, they said.

The officials said Srinagar -- the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir -- recorded a low of minus 4.3 degrees Celsius, down from the previous night's minus 3.8 degrees Celsius.

They said the mercury in Pahalgam tourist resort in south Kashmir went down from the previous night's low of minus 5.2 degrees Celsius to settle at minus 5.9 degrees Celsius.

The resort was the coldest recorded place in the valley.

The famous ski-resort of Gulmarg, in north Kashmir, recorded a low of

minus 5.6 degrees Celsius, same as on Wednesday night, the officials said.

Qazigund -- the gateway town to the valley -- recorded a minimum of minus 3.8 degrees Celsius, while Kupwara, in the north, registered a low of minus 4.0 degrees Celsius and Kokernag, in the south, minus 3.3 degrees Celsius, the officials said.

Kashmir is currently under the grip of 'Chillai-Kalan' -- the 40-day harshest winter period when a cold wave grips the region and the temperature drops considerably leading to the freezing of water bodies including the famous Dal Lake here as well as the water supply lines in several parts of the valley.

The chances of snowfall are most frequent and maximum during this period and most areas, especially in the higher reaches, receive heavy snowfall, the officials said.

While 'Chillai-Kalan' which began on December 21 -- will end on January 31, the cold wave continues even after that in Kashmir with a 20-day-long 'Chillai-Khurd' (small cold) and a 10-day-long 'Chillai-Bachha' (baby cold).

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Govt Puts Speculations To  
Rest, Extends 4G Ban In J&K

## OBSERVER NEWS SERVICE

**SRINAGAR:** Putting all speculations over the resumption of high speed internet to rest, the Jammu and Kashmir government on Friday extended ban on 4G internet services, barring two districts of the Union Territory, citing that the high voter turnout in recently concluded district development council (DDC) and Panchayat polls has not "gone well with the elements inimical to peace".

In a fresh order issued on Friday, Principal Secretary Home Shaleen Kabra said that the successful conduct of the recently concluded Panchayat elections which witnessed participation by political parties across the spectrum and large scale turnout, has not "gone down well with elements inimical to public peace and tranquility", as apparent from the multiple incidents of hurling of grenades by the militants since the conclusion of the elections, targeting the civilians,

and government forces besides the encounters.

"Whereas, credible inputs have been received about the presence of a large number of militants 'who are try to infiltrate from across the border, as also evident from multiple instances of heavy firing shelling on the IB/ LOC to facilitate the same," the order reads.

It adds that the restrictions on high speed mobile internet connectivity have acted as an impediment to such attempts.

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## RACE FOR DDCs

Admin, Police Facilitating  
Horse-Trading: Omar

**SRINAGAR:** National Conference president Omar Abdullah on Friday accused the police and the administration in Jammu and Kashmir of facilitating horse-trading and defections following the announcement of DDC election results and alleged that some parties were using money, muscle and government coercion to make up the numbers.

Omar's remarks came after Jammu and Kashmir Apni Party led by former finance minister Altaf Bukhari announced that Yasmeena Jan -- the District Development Council (DDC) member from Imam Sahib-I, in south Kashmir's Shopian district -- has joined the party here earlier in the day.

Jan had contested the polls on the National Conference (NC) mandate.

This explains why our leaders in Shopian district are being put under preventive arrest by the police. J&K police & the administration are facilitating horse trading & defections. The woman shown here joining the BJP's B-team contested & won elections on an NC mandate,



Omar said on Twitter. The NC vice president said it was shameful for the administration to play partisan politics.

Shame on this administration for playing partisan politics to curry favour with the ruling party & their stooges. These parties couldn't win seats so now they are using money/muscle/threats & government coercion to make up the numbers. So much for democracy has won! He said in another tweet.

The results of the DDC elections were announced on Tuesday. (PTI)

## NC Condemns 'Arrest Spree'

**SRINAGAR:** The Jammu and Kashmir National Conference on Friday condemned the "arrest spree" of mainstream political leaders in Kashmir.

"The message from the results of DDC elections was loud and clear that it was the democracy that had triumphed, but far from doing justice with the people by respecting their decision, nasty

tactics are being employed to undermine the verdict of people by witch-hunting of political leaders," an NC spokesperson said here on Friday, while condemning the arrest of party leaders Hilal Akbar Lone and Shabir Ahmed Kullay.

He said that the arrest of Lone and Kullay was a case in point. Kullay, he said, was

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Two Soldiers Injured In  
Ongoing Shopian Encounter

## OBSERVER MONITORING DESK

**SRINAGAR:** Two soldiers were injured in an ongoing encounter between militants and government forces in Imam Sahab area of south Kashmir's Shopian district, reports said Friday.

A senior police officer told local news agency KNO that two soldiers received injuries after militants and the joint team of forces exchanged gunfire after hours of lull in Kanigam village of Imam Sahab. Both the injured soldiers, the police officer said, have been shifted to hospital for treatment

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Baramulla  
Encounter:  
House Owner  
Goes 'Missing'

The owner of the house in which two militants including a local young ace footballer were killed in an encounter on Thursday has gone missing, his family said on Friday. They said that the owner,

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2 Porters Injured  
In Pak Firing

## OBSERVER MONITORING DESK

**SRINAGAR:** At least two army porters were injured, as India and Pakistan troops traded gunfire for the second consecutive day Friday along the Line of Control (LoC) in Poonch district on Jammu and Kashmir.

Mohammad Giyas and Altaf Hussain (35), both residents of Noor Kote were injured when Pakistani troops opened fire towards Bandi Post manned by army's 5 Rajput, news agency GNS reported. Both the injured porters were removed to Army Hospital for treatment.

On Thursday, the two armies had exchanged gunfire along the LoC in Krishnagati sector of the district.

On December 1, Border Security Force Sub-Inspector Paoinsat Guite was killed in a ceasefire violation by the Pakistan army along the LoC in Poonch. Prior to that, two soldiers were killed in another ceasefire violation from across the border in Sunderbani sector of the district on November 27.

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PDP Leader  
'Beats' BJP  
Worker, Booked

**JAMMU:** Senior PDP leader and former legislator Surinder Choudhary has been booked for allegedly manhandling a BJP worker in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district, police said on Friday.

A video of PDP workers led by Choudhary barging into a shop and beating a BJP worker, Ripu Daman, in the Nowshera area has gone viral on social media, prompting the police to take action. A case has been registered against Choudhary and investigation started, police officials said. Daman has been as hospitalised following the attack, they said.

BJP leader Vibodh Gupta strongly condemned the assault on the party worker and said the PDP leadership has lost the mental balance out of frustration. Surinder Choudhary has crossed the limit and he will surely be punished as per the law of land, but at the same time his true

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Cultural Events Enthrall Tourists  
In Gulmarg On Christmas

## Tourism Dept Kick Starts Introductory Ski Courses



**SRINAGAR:** The department of tourism on Friday kick-started the first batch of ski courses and held colourful cultural events to enthrall tourists at the famous hill station of Gulmarg on Christmas. The Directorate of Tourism, Kashmir kick started the first batch of ski Courses at Gulmarg on Friday, an official spokesperson

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Soldiers 'Thrash' Journalists During  
'Jashn-e-Baramulla' Festival

**BARAMULLA:** At least three journalists were allegedly beaten up by army men during the festival of Jashn-e-Baramulla on Friday in which Bollywood Actress Amisha Patel was the chief guest.

As per the eyewitnesses, the function was going well until the scribes, while performing their professional duty asked to get a byte from Bollywood actress Amisha Patel.

However, as per the journalists, the army officials allegedly started beating them without any reason.

The three journalists that were

allegedly beaten include Suhail Khan, online editor Kashmir Despatch, Kashmir Crown reporter Ashiq Mir and a Mudaris Malla whose camera was also damaged in the incident.

Soon after the incident, journalists boycotted the event and staged a protest against the army.

Meanwhile, a senior army official in a statement assured that action will be taken against the soldier involved in the incident. "This is an unfortunate incident which should not have happened in the first place," the statement reads.

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## KPC Demands Action Against Guilty

**SRINAGAR:** Kashmir Press Club (KPC) on Friday demanded an inquiry into the alleged thrashing of three journalists by the Army during a function in Baramulla district and asked the force to take stern action against those found guilty.

Journalists covering the function, 'Jashn-e-Baramulla', organised by the Army in the north Kashmir district -- where

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J&K Farmers Granted Rs 1132 Cr  
Under PM-Kisan Scheme: LG

**JAMMU:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi Friday disbursed Rs 18000 Crore as next instalment under PM-Kisan Samman Nidhi, benefitting 9 crore farmer families, directly into their bank accounts at the click of a button.

"Ever since this scheme started, more than 1 lakh 10 thousand crore Rupees have reached the account of farmers", said the Prime Minister.

To mark the occasion, a programme was held simultaneously here at Kisan Kendra, Jammu where the Lieutenant Governor, Manoj

Sinha addressed the farmers, an official spokesperson said Friday.

He said that the LG observed that the farmers of Jammu and Kashmir have been provided with financial assistance worth around Rs 1132 crore under the scheme. He outlined that the welfare of the Farmers and betterment of their livelihood is the prime focus of the Union as well as UT Government.

"The UT Government has taken comprehensive measures for the development of the Agriculture and allied sectors in J&K.

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## Ai-Designed Serotonin Sensor May Help Scientists Study Sleep, Mental Health

In an article in Cell, National Institutes of Health-funded researchers described how they used advanced genetic engineering techniques to transform a bacterial protein into a new research tool that may help monitor serotonin transmission with greater fidelity than current methods.

Preclinical experiments, primarily in mice, showed that the sensor could detect subtle, real-time changes in brain serotonin levels during sleep, fear, and social interactions, as well as test the effectiveness of new psychoactive drugs.

The study was funded, in part, by the NIH's Brain Research through Advancing Innovative Neurotechnologies (BRAIN) Initiative which aims to revolutionize our understanding of the brain under healthy and disease conditions.

The study was led by researchers in the lab of Lin Tian, Ph.D, principal investigator at the University of California Davis School of Medicine. Current methods can only detect broad changes in serotonin signaling. In this study, the researchers transformed a nutrient-grabbing, Venus flytrap-shaped bacterial protein into a highly sensitive sensor that fluorescently lights up when it captures serotonin.

Previously, scientists in the lab of Loren L. Looger, Ph.D, How-



ard Hughes Medical Institute Janelia Research Campus, Ashburn, Virginia, used traditional genetic engineering techniques to convert the bacterial protein into a sensor of the neurotransmitter acetylcholine.

The protein, called OpuBC, normally snags the nutrient choline, which has a similar shape to acetylcholine. For this study, the Tian lab worked with Dr. Looger's team and the lab of Viviana Gradinaru, Ph.D, Caltech, Pasadena, California, to show that they needed the added help of artificial intelligence to completely redesign OpuBC as a serotonin catcher.

The researchers used machine

learning algorithms to help a computer "think up" 250,000 new designs. After three rounds of testing, the scientists settled on one. Initial experiments suggested that the new sensor reliably detected serotonin at different levels in the brain while having little or no reaction to other neurotransmitters or similarly shaped drugs.

Experiments in mouse brain slices showed that the sensor responded to serotonin signals sent between neurons at synaptic communications points. Meanwhile, experiments on cells in petri dishes suggested that the sensor could effectively monitor changes in these sig-

nals caused by drugs, including cocaine, MDMA (also known as ecstasy) and several commonly used antidepressants.

Finally, experiments in mice showed that the sensor could help scientists study serotonin neurotransmission under more natural conditions. For instance, the researchers witnessed an expected rise in serotonin levels when mice were awake and a fall as mice fell asleep.

They also spotted a greater drop when the mice eventually entered the deeper, R.E.M. sleep states. Traditional serotonin monitoring methods would have missed these changes. In addition, the scientists saw serotonin levels rise differently in two separate brain fear circuits when mice were warned of a foot shock by a ringing bell.

In one circuit - the medial prefrontal cortex - the bell triggered serotonin levels to rise fast and high whereas in the other - the basolateral amygdala - the transmitter crept up to slightly lower levels. In the spirit of the BRAIN Initiative, the researchers plan to make the sensor readily available to other scientists. They hope that it will help researchers gain a better understanding of the critical role serotonin plays in our daily lives and in many psychiatric conditions.

- Agencies

## New drug combination could improve glucose, weight control in diabetes

Scientists have shown that adding an experimental cancer drug to a widely used diabetes treatment improves blood glucose control and weight loss in mice, according to a study.

The study was published in the journal eLife. The results pave the way for clinical studies of the new drug combination as a more effective long-term treatment for millions of people with diabetes and obesity.

Glucagon-like peptide 1 agonists (GLP-1 analogs) are a relatively new class of drugs that reduce blood sugar levels and lower body weight. They partially function by binding to the glucagon-like peptide 1 receptor on pancreatic beta cells, which leads the cells to produce insulin. But not all patients achieve normalisation of blood glucose control with GLP-1 drugs, and very few achieve a full reversal of obesity.

"We have previously shown that prolonged association of the GLP-1 agonists with the glucagon-like peptide 1 receptor supports insulin secretion in pancreatic beta cells," explains project team leader Dr. Prasenjit Mitra of the Dr. Reddy's Institute of Life Sciences. "This led us to see whether we could enhance the effects of GLP-1 agonism on

regulating glucose levels with complementary therapy."

The team started with a library of potential drugs and tested them in pancreatic beta cells to see if they enhanced the effects of a GLP-1 drug on incretin receptor activity, by measuring a second messenger molecule called cAMP. They found four molecules that enhanced GLP-1 drug activity. The most effective one, MS-275 (also called entinostat), generated 3.5 times the cAMP levels than the GLP-1 drug alone. MS-275 is a member of a drug family called class 1 HDAC inhibitors that are being investigated as treatments for other diseases including cancer.

Given the synergistic effect of the drugs in pancreatic beta cells, the team tested whether their findings would hold true in obese mice, fed a high-fat diet. Shilpak Bele, the graduate student under Dr. Mitra's direction, and other team members found that mice treated with the combination of GLP-1 agonist and MS-275 had a much lower fasting glucose level than control mice that were sustained with repeat dosing. Where a high-fat diet increased fasting blood sugar in the untreated mice, the mice

on the combination treatment remained in control.

Given these effects on blood sugar, the team explored whether the combination treatment also minimised weight gain. Mice given the combination treatment had a significant and sustained reduction in their food intake, which resulted in weight loss. When treatment was interrupted, the mice regained weight. Once the treatment was resumed, only the mice receiving the combination treatment showed significant weight loss again.

"GLP-1 drugs have emerged in the last decade as unique medicines that provide substantial improvements in glycemic control and body weight; however, they seldom achieve full metabolic recovery or help treat associated comorbidities such as body weight," Dr. Mitra explains. "Our results suggest that the class 1 HDAC inhibitor MS-275 can significantly enhance the action of GLP-1 drugs, more effectively normalising blood glucose and reducing weight gain. This lays the foundation for clinical studies of combinations of GLP-1/HDAC inhibitors for the long-term management of diabetes and obesity in humans."

## Here's How to Choose The Right Alcon Contact Lenses

### Sponsored Feature

**Are you new to wearing contact lenses? It can feel overwhelming to start wearing contacts, whether you have just found out you need them or are making the transition from glasses. Contact lenses are extremely effective. Plus, they are easy to use and totally safe to wear! Also, there are many kinds to choose from, offering correction for a wide range of power defects and eye conditions such as astigmatism and even dry eyes. However, the tricky question is how to know which lenses are the best for you? While choosing contact lenses, the brand plays a crucial role. When it comes to eye care, you must only choose the best.**

Alcon lenses are one of the world's most popular eye care products brand. They operate in the broad, competitive, and rising ophthalmic surgical and vision care markets. Reputable platforms like Titan Eyeplus provide top brands, including the Alcon lens, to suit various vision requirements. First things first, though. You need to consider the different types of contact lenses in the market today to find the best match for your eyes.

**Here are some tips for choosing the best Alcon lenses according to your needs:**

### How much are you going to wear contacts?

How much you plan on wearing the chosen Alcon lenses is one of the most basic considerations. Are you going to wear them only on weekends, every day, or on special occasions only? Soft contact lenses would most probably be recommended by the optometrist for short wear time. In contrast, rigid Alcon lenses are advised in case of longer durations.

### How sharp do you want your vision to be?

A sharper view can be provided by hard contact lenses, referred to as rigid gas permeable contact lenses. They are ideal for individuals with astigmatism. Of course, they can also be worn by people who do not have this particular vision defect.

To see which Alcon lenses fit your require-



ments the best, consult an eye doctor and try out a range of soft and hard lenses.

### Do you want a disposable or overnight Alcon lens?

If you do not like the thought of having to remove your contact lenses every night, then extended contact lenses might be for you. Some popular products such as Alcon lenses have

been licensed by the FDA for overnight wear as they allow enhanced quantities of oxygen to pass through them.

However, it is important to consult your eye doctor first on whether your eyes can tolerate the use of contacts with prolonged wear.

### How well can you maintain the hygiene of your contact lenses?

Following the treatment instructions associated with your Alcon lens is crucial. This will allow you to prevent corneal ulcers and eye infections. The correct form of contact lens solution and cleaning schedule will be recommended by your doctor for you to follow.

Contact lenses that are disposable such as daily disposable contact lenses, present a lower chance of eye infections. Similarly, When the date of expiry rolls around, you must discard your contact lenses and use a fresh pair. Maintaining proper care is especially vital for individuals who use extended wear contact lenses.

### Take No Risks with Eye Health

First-time contact lens users need to look for guidance and suggestions about picking the right lenses that won't irritate your eyes. Your eye care professional will help direct you to the correct contacts based on your unique needs and lifestyle. It can take some trial and error, but with the aid of eye care experts, you can find what works best for you.

Another crucial factor is to always buy from reputable and reliable platforms like Titan Eyeplus. From daily disposable to colored monthly disposable Alcon lenses, you can easily choose your pick online. In case of any doubt or uncertainty, you can also contact their dedicated team of customer service, and they will be happy to help you.

## OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (R&B) CONSTRUCTION DIVISION NO.IIND, SRINAGAR

### SHORT TERM TENDER NOTICE

Serial NIT No.140/CDII/1906-16 of 2020-21

Dated: 24.12.2020.

For and on behalf of Governor Jammu and Kashmir State, sealed tenders affixed with Rs.5.00 (Revenue stamps) are invited from the approved PWD Contractor's for the below mentioned work/s. The tenders should be addressed to the Executive Engineer, Construction Division No.IInd, Srinagar which should reach to his office on or before 29.12.2020 till 2.30 P.M. The Tenders can also be cast in the office of Superintending Engineer, PWD (R&B) Circle Sgr/Budgam. The tenders will be opened on the same day or later in presence of the contractors who like to be present. In case the date of receipt of tenders is declared holiday, transport strike etc. the tenders will be received by the competent authority on the next working day.

S.No.	Name of work/s	Approx. cost incl. C/O depttl. Stores.	Earnest money Rs. In Rs.	Class of Contr.	Time of Compl.	Cost of T.D
1.	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.	Providing hot water connections with installation of Geysers (Water Heaters) to Toilet block adjacent to water storage tank in Security Complex at Raj Bhawan Srinagar.	Rs.0.98 Lakhs	1960/-	"DEE"	03 Days	Rs.200/-

#### TERMS AND CONDITIONS:-

Tender document can be purchased from Divisional office against Non-refundable Cash payment from 24.12.2020 during office hours upto 29.12.2020 till 12.00 P.M. Incase of tenderer is unable to purchase the tender documents for the work/works the tenderer can issue their rates as per the advertised quantity schedule in the tender form already issued to him in the form of a tender booklets. In such instance the tenderer shall be required to enclose a crossed postal order in favour of the Executive Engineer, Construction Division No.IInd, Srinagar for an amount to equal to the cost of tender document. This amount of postal order is non-refundable. The tender forms issued by the competent authority during the year 2020-21 can only be utilized for submission of tenders. The tenders received on lapsed tender forms shall be totally rejected.

The bidder shall be at liberty to send their bids either in person or through registered post but shall subscribe the following in front of the envelopes.

i) Name of work. ii) Cost of work iii) Full name of contractor

iv) Ref. to CDR No. & Date. v) Date of receipt of tenders vi) Ref. to NIT No.

3. The bidding documents shall be issued by this office against Non-refundable cash payment as mentioned above to eligible contractors on production of valid Registration Card on any working day.

4. Bids from Joint ventures are not being allowed.

5. In case the quoted amount of the lowest tenderer is unbalanced, the tenderer shall have to deposit additional performance security in shape of CDR/FDR separately in addition to earnest money as per the breakup given below which should be attached with the tender, failing which the tender shall be rejected, earnest money forfeited and other penalties initiated under rules. In case the lowest tenderer is found to be a defaulter under this condition for more than three instances, his registration shall be recommended for blacklisting from future participation in the tendering process.

FOR & ON BEHALF OF GOVERNOR J&K STATE

No.11906-16  
Dated: 24.12.2020

Sd/-  
EXECUTIVE ENGINEER  
R&B CONSTRUCTION DIVISION NO. IIND  
SRINAGAR.

DIPK-10910/20

Government of Jammu and Kashmir

Department of Wildlife Protection

Office of the Wildlife Warden Wetland

Division Hokersar, Srinagar.

SHORT TERM NOTICE INVITING QUOTATIONS

TENDER NOTICE No. 120F 2020-21Dated:21/12/2020

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, J&K e-tenders are invited on item rate basis from approved / registered dealers for supply of tranquilizing / other medicines used in Man Animal Conflict cas-esand allied items to this Division as per the following details:-

S. No	Name of Item	Concentration	Rate per Piece	Time to Supply	Supplier Class	Remarks if any
1	Xylazine	50 ml	One	10 days	Registered Under GST	
2	Ketamine	50 ml	One	10 days	Registered Under GST	
3	Dart	10 ml	One	10 days	Registered Under GST	
4	Dart	5 ml	One	10 days	Registered Under GST	
5	CO2 Cartridge	72 gm	One	10 days	Registered Under GST	
6	Veterinary Syringes	50 ml	One	10 days	Registered Under GST	
7	Veterinary Syringes	30 ml	One	10 days	Registered Under GST	
8	Needle Barbed Long	Per piece	One	10 days	Registered Under GST	
9	Needle Barbed Short	Per piece	One	10 days	Registered Under GST	
10	Needle Plain Long	Per piece	One	10 days	Registered Under GST	
11	Needle Plain Short	Per piece	One	10 days	Registered Under GST	
12	Medicine Box with Carry Bag	Per piece	One	10 days	Registered Under GST	
13	Protection Goggles	Per piece	One	10 days	Registered Under GST	

**AAA :Accorded..**  
Position of funds: Available.  
Major head of Account: CAMPA.  
VITAL DATES TO NOTE

1	Date of issue of Tender Notice	21/12/2020
2	Period of downloading of bidding documents	22/12/2020 to 30/12/2020
3	Bid submission start date	22/12/2020
4	Bid submission End date	30/12/2020 upto 06:00 PM
5	Date & time of opening of bids (online)	31/12/2020 at 02:30 PM

**TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

- Tender documents can be downloaded from the website www.jktenders.gov.in.
- The successful bidder / supplier / quotationer is bound to supply the items within the stipulated time at Divisional Stores after issuance of supply order and the items supplied should meet the standards for safety, efficacy and quality.
- Bids uploaded must accompany Earnest Money / CDR of Rs. 5,000/- (Rs Five thousand) pledged to Wildlife Warden Wetlands Division Srinagar and Treasury Challan / Receipt (Cost of tender documents) of Rs. 500/- (Rs. Five hundred) deposited in Govt. Treasury under Account Head 0406-Forest and Wildlife. The bids shall remain valid for a period of 30 days from the date of opening of bids.
- The Rate quoted should be inclusive of all taxes (GST / CGST) applicable presently as per the norms.
- No conditional tenders shall be accepted / incomplete tenders shall be out rightly rejected.
- The unit rate and price quoted by the suppliers should be in Indian Rupee (INR) and the rate quoted shall be deemed to include price escalation and all taxes upto end of the current financial year i.e.2020-21.
- The success full bidder shall have to supply the items within 20 days from the date of supply order, delay without any valid reason shallattract penalty of the allotted cost @ 2% per day.
- In case the supply is not found upto the required quality/mark, the suppliers shall have to make his own arrangement for replacing the material at his own risk, cost and responsibility otherwise the payment shall be withheld.
- The firm should be in possession of valid Drug Licenses (Schedule X)
- The undersigned reserves the right to accept or reject any quotation or a part therewithout assign-ing any reason thereof.
- In case the supply is not found upto the required quality/mark, the suppliers shall have to make his own arrangement for replacing the material at his own risk and cost, otherwise the payment shall be withheld.
- The payment will be made only after funds are available with the Department.
- The expiry date of the drugs should not be less than 24 Months at the time of supply.
- The brand of drugs supplied shall be approved by Veterinary Surgeon of Wildlife Protection Department.
- All other terms and conditions if any shall remain same as per the rules amended till date.

No.WLW(WL)/ESTT/2020-21/5393-95  
Date:21/12/2020

--Sd--  
Wildlife Warden  
Wetland Division, Srinagar

DIPK-10816/20



# Live Streaming Of PM-KISSAN Event Held Across Kashmir



**SRINAGAR:** The District Administrations across Kashmir today facilitated live streaming of e-release of seventh installment of Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) scheme by Prime Minister, Narendra Modi at respective district headquarters.

As a part of the government's outreach program, the Prime Minister today released the installment of Rs. 18,000 crore to more than 9 crores beneficiary farmer families via video conferencing. PM-KISAN is an initiative launched by the government

in 2019 for the welfare of the farmers. Under this initiative, the government provides a financial benefit of Rs 6,000 per year and the amount is directly transferred to the bank accounts of the beneficiaries in three equal four-monthly installments of Rs 2,000 each.

## Newly Elected DDC Member Joins Apni Party

**SRINAGAR:** Ms. Yasmeena Jan, the District Development Council (DDC) member from Imam Sahib-I district Shopian on Friday joined Apni Party at its office in Lal Chowk Srinagar.

The newly elected DDC member joined the Apni Party in presence of Party President Syed Altaf Bukhari and others. Speaking on the occasion, Apni Party President Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari welcomed Ms Jan into the Party-fold and stressed on her to work tirelessly for mitigation of sufferings of the people in her constituency.

He stressed on her to work tirelessly for the peoples welfare and fulfill the promises made by her to the people of her constituency.

Jan joined the Apni Party along with Manzoor Ahmad Thokar Sarpanch Sugan Block Chitragam Shopian and Mushtaq Ahmad Thokar Panch Sugan Block Chitragam Shopian.

The new entrants pledged their full support to the party leadership in fulfillment of Party's socio-economic and political agenda which encompasses restoration of Statehood to J&K, its equitable development besides safeguarding the people's rights on their land and jobs.

## LG Remembers Former PM Vajpayee

**JAMMU:** Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha paid tributes to former Prime Minister, Bharat Ratna Atal Bihari Vajpayee on his birth anniversary.

"Atal Ji was a distinguished statesman, cherished leader, prolific poet, and a social reformer who deeply enriched the Indian political space and contributed immensely to our Nation's progress. The country also remembers 25th December as Good Governance Day to honour Atal Ji. We

must pledge to devote ourselves to this cause", said the Lt Governor.

The Lt Governor observed that the former Prime Minister made a significant mark as a political figure in our nation's history with his incredible intellect, fairness, and modesty. "He was a stalwart, loved and respected across all sections of society. His great wisdom and faith in the power of democracy will continue to guide our future generations", the Lt Governor added.

### DIAL-EMMA

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

### AIRPORTS

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311 ✈

### RAILWAYS



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

### HIGHWAY STATUS

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

## This Day in History

- 268 - Saint Dionysius, Roman Pope (259-260), dies
- 795 - Leo III is elected to serve as Pope on the day his predecessor was buried and is consecrated the following day
- 1198 - French bishop Odo van Sully condemns Zottenfeest
- 1261 - John IV Lascaris of the restored Eastern Roman Empire is deposed and blinded by orders of his co-ruler Michael VIII Palaeologus.
- 1492 - Christopher Columbus' flagship the Santa Maria runs aground and sinks on the north coast of Hispaniola. The crew are left to found a colony as Columbus returns to Spain
- 1553 - Battle of Tucapel: Mapuche rebels under Lautaro defeats the Spanish conquistadors and exutes the governor of Chile Pedro de Valdivia.
- 1741 - Astronomer Anders Celsius introduces Centigrade temperature scale
- 1745 - Prussia and Austria sign Treaty of Dresden giving much of Silesia to the Prussians
- 1758 - Return of Halley's comet 1st sighted by Johann Georg Palitzsch
- 1925 - The Communist Party of India is founded
- 1928 - World record 10th wicket stand 307 (Kippax / Hooker) NSW v Vic
- 1941 - Winston Churchill becomes first British Prime Minister to address a joint meeting of the US Congress, warning that Axis would "stop at nothing"
- 1943 - Earl Claus von Stauffenberg vain with bomb to Hitler's headquarter
- 1944 - Battle of Bastogne: US General Patton's 3rd Army repulses Germans
- 1966 - Maulana Karenga establishes Kwanzaa (1st fruits of harvest) holiday
- 1973 - 2 Skylab 3 astronauts walk in space for a record 7 hours
- 1973 - Soyuz 13 returns to Earth
- 1975 - 1st supersonic transport service (USSR-Tupolev-144)
- 1978 - India's former Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi is released from jail
- 1979 - Soviet Special forces take over presidential palace in Kabul, Afghanistan.
- 1982 - TIME's Man of the Year is a computer
- 1986 - Captured Iraqi Airways Boeing-737 in Saudi Arabia, about 60 killed
- 1991 - Militant Sikhs kill 55 & wound 70 in India
- 1993 - Antonov-26 crashes at Gyumri, Armenia, 36 killed
- 1998 - Iraq announces its intention to fire upon U.S. and British warplanes that patrol the northern and southern no-fly zones
- 1999 - Severe weather in France kills over 100 people and causes extensive damage to property, trees and the French national power grid (see Lothar).
- 2004 - 9.3 magnitude earthquake creates a tsunami causing devastation in Sri Lanka, India, Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, the Maldives and edges of the Indian Ocean, killing 230,000 people
- 2012 - China opens the world's longest high speed rail route from Beijing to Guangzhou



HIJRI  
CALENDAR

10

JAMADI

-UL-

AWWAL

1442

## PRAYERS

FAJR

6: 05

ZUHR

12: 31

ASR

3:50

MAGRIB

5:32

ISHA

6:57

## BIG, BOLD & BEAUTIFUL

# HK Nissan Srinagar Launches Nissan Magnite

Aijaz Ali

**SRINAGAR-** HK Nissan (Authorized dealer of Nissan and Datsun) launched its all-new Nissan Magnite at Athwajan bypass showroom here on Friday. "The big, bold, beautiful and 'carismatic' SUV is available at a special introductory price of INR 4, 99, 000 (ex-showroom) until December 31, 2020", HK Nissan officials told Kashmir Observer.

"The all-new Nissan Magnite marks the beginning of a new chapter in the Nissan NEXT strategy for both the Indian and global market. Built on the philosophy of 'Make in India, Make for the World', the all-new Nissan Magnite comes with more than 20 first-in-class and best-in-segment features that provides consumers with a differentiated, innovative and accessible ownership experience," said Umar Yaqoob Mir, Director HK Nissan.

The SUV was formally launched by Haji Mohammad Sultan Mir, Managing Director of HK Group of Industries in presence of Mr. Mohammad Yaqoob



Mir, Mr. Ghulam Mohi Ud Din Mir, Mr. Zahoor Ahmad Mir, Mr. Feroz Ahmad Mir and Mr. Umar Yaqoob Mir. Valuable Customers and renowned personalities from various media groups, business personal and bankers joined the launch event and were impressed with the new launch.

Mr. Mohammad Ashraf Baba, General Manager said "In line with Nissan's philosophy of continuous innovation to deliver enriching experiences, Nissan's renowned technologies are provided across the model range, including X-TRONIC CVT, Cruise

Control, 360-degree Around View Monitor and Nissan Connect. Each grade walk of the all-new Nissan Magnite has been carefully curated to meet the aspirations of the discerning Indian customers. For the tech-savvy Indian customer, Nissan's optional 'Tech Pack' includes wireless charger, air purifier, ambient mood lighting, puddle lamps and high-end speakers.

Taking in view of COVID19 pandemic, Nissan India has also launched a first-in-industry virtual test drive feature that allows the customer to experience



the all-new Nissan Magnite on their personal device, wherever they may be by accessing the website <https://virtualshowroom.nissan.in/virtualtestdrive/>. This interactive drive experience gives Nissan customers a unique chance to drive the 'carismatic' SUV with a virtual sales consultant. Bookings are already open on Nissan website <https://book.nissan.in/> and customers can book offline at our dealership also, Nissan has crossed 15k bookings in just past 15 days, said Mr. Khalid Mustafa - Manager Operations and IT.

During the launch Mr. Irshad Ahmad Bhat, Sales Manager said "With the launch of the all-new Nissan Magnite, Nissan has reached a memorable milestone in its customer-centric journey for the Indian market. Specifically for our discerning Indian customers, we are offering the big, bold, beautiful and 'carismatic' SUV at a special introductory price.

According to HK Nissan interested parties can contact for any query on +91-8717-000-777 or visit: HK Nissan Srinagar, located at Athwajan Bypass Srinagar.

## SKUAST-K Holds Online Tree Talk

**SRINAGAR:** Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology, Kashmir organised an online tree talk on lesser-known plant species of North-Western Himalayas with particular reference to Kashmir.

The programme was organised by the SKUAST-K's Division of Silviculture and Agroforestry, Faculty of Forestry in collaboration with World Bank-ICAR funded National Agricultural Higher Education Project (NAHEP).

Dean, Faculty of Forestry, Professor Tariq Hussain Masoodi, in his inaugural comments, highlighted the importance of tree talks and the role of Faculty of Forestry. He also informed that faculty had already started research activities on wild fruit species and said different wild fruit species are presently grown at Benehama campus.

Vice-Chancellor SKUAST-K, Professor Mushtaq Ahmad in his message stressed upon the importance of wild edible plants and need of research activities for conservation and propagation of lesser-known wild fruits of

Kashmir Valley.

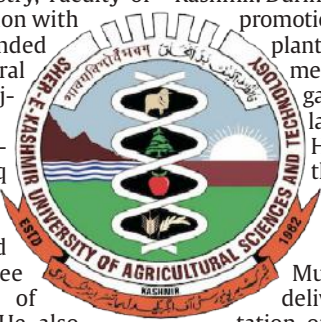
Director, Planning and Monitoring, SKUAST-K and PI NAHEP, Professor Nazir Ahmad Ganai stressed upon the role of the Forestry Faculty for large scale production of wild fruit species.

OP Sharma, Ex-PCCF, delivered his talk on lesser-known tree species of Kashmir. During his talk, he suggested promotion of different edible plant species like Prunus tomentosa, Crataegus son-garica, Elaeagnus umbellate, Rubus nivenus etc.

He further highlighted the importance of 25 trees which need special attention in J&K.

Dr Javeed Ahmad Mugloo, Senior Scientist, delivered a brief presentation on Under-utilized wild fruits of Kashmir. Dr Mugloo highlighted the importance, uses, distribution, chemical composition and yield of different wild fruits of Kashmir valley.

More than 30 scientists, students and faculty members participated in the tree talk. The programme was concluded by Professor KN Qaisar, Head Division of Silviculture and Agroforestry.



## J&K SERVICES SELECTION BOARD

Hema Complex, Sector -3, Channi Himmat, Jammu

[www.jkssb.nic.in](http://www.jkssb.nic.in)

**Subject: Result/Score Sheet of OMR based Objective type Written Test for the post of Accounts Assistant (Panchayat) conducted by J&K Services Selection Board on 10.11.2020.**

Whereas, the Department of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj vide communication No. RD&PR/Adm/41/2019 Dated:15.05.2020 forwarded the indent for making recruitment to the 1889 post of Accounts Assistant (Panchayat) Pay Level 5 (Rs 29200-92300) of 20 Districts of the UT of Jammu & Kashmir and;

Whereas, the J&K Services Selection Board vide Advertisement Notice No. 02 of 2020 dated 06.07.2020, issued advertisement for District Cadre posts of Accounts Assistant (Panchayat) in the Department of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj under the provisions of Jammu & Kashmir Civil Services – Decentralization and Recruitment Act, 2010 and;

Whereas, S.O. 180 of 2020 dated 28.05.2020 envisages that there shall be no oral test for posts up to and including Pay Level 5 (Rs 29200-92300) and the selection for all such posts shall be made on the basis of written test only and;

Whereas, the J&K Services Selection Board (JK SSB), conducted OMR based objective type written test for selection of candidates to the posts of Accounts Assistant (Panchayat) in the Department of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj on 10.11.2020 and;

Whereas, based on the individual performance of the candidates in the OMR based objective type written test conducted on 10.11.2020, the result/scoresheet has been prepared.

Now, therefore: -

(i) The result/scoresheet, based on the performance of candidates in the aforesaid written test for the post of Accounts Assistant (Panchayat) is hereby notified as Annexure-A to this notification.

(ii) However, mere figuring in the Annexure-A to this notification shall not entitle a candidate to be shortlisted for document verification or appear in the Select List/wait list and that he/she will be required to fulfil all eligibility conditions as have been laid down for the purpose.

(iii) The J&K Services Selection Board will utilise the result/score sheet as mentioned above to prepare a shortlist of candidates in accordance with the Rules governing the subject and accordingly call such number of candidates as considered appropriate for document verification. The schedule for documents verification of shortlisted candidates shall be notified separately.

(iv) It is further clarified that the J&K Services Selection Board shall make allocation of district in favour of successful candidates after the document verification on the basis of merit-cum-preference method, subject to fulfilment of all eligibility conditions.

**Note:**The Annexure "A" to this notification available on the official website of the JKSSB shall only be valid.

By order.

Sd/-  
(Sachin Jamwal) KAS,  
Secretary  
J&K Services Selection Board  
Jammu

DIPK-10914/20

No. SSB/Secy/Sel/2020/5145-55

Dated: 25.12.2020

**KASHMIR OBSERVER**  
IS AVAILABLE AT ALL LEADING  
NEWS AGENCIES

## From KO Archives

# Hizb Steps In As Huriyat Leaders Bicker

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Hizbul Mujahideen on Tuesday asked sepa-ratist alliance Huriyat Conference (APHC) to muffle the internal discord which has emerged since India declared a unilateral ceasefire in Kashmir.

Hizb urged leaders of the APHC, an alliance of social, political and religious groups, not to "sling mud" at each other.

Hizb statement came after several members of alliance criticised one of their leaders, Abdul Ghani Lone, for issuing a statement against non-Kashmiri militants. Lone, viewed by New Delhi as a key player in initiating possible peace talks over Kashmir, said that foreign militants fighting alongside Kashmiri militants against Indian rule in Jammu and Kashmir could not take part in any political dialogue.

"In present circumstances, the Hizbul Mujahideen does not doubt the sincerity of Hurriyat leaders and requests them that they should not sling mud at each other and doubt each other's intentions," Hizbul Mujahideen said.

"Hizbul Mujahideen urges leaders of Hurriyat to be cautious while issuing statements," it added. Cracks within Hurriyat surfaced during a seminar on human rights in Srinagar at the weekend. The meeting erupted in acrimony with supporters of foreign militants and Lone support-ers exchanging body blows. Many lower rung Hurriyat activists including former chairman, Syed Ali Shah Geelani, openly criticised Lone for issuing statements against "foreign militants" fighting Indian security forces in Kashmir.

Sowing division: Indian troops stopped offensive operations against separatist militants for the Islamic holy month of Ramadan from November 28. Most militant groups, which India says are supported by Pakistan, have rejected the temporary ceasefire.

However, Hizb which is dominated by local Kashmiri fighters rather than Muslim warriors from different countries gave a less strident response to the Indian initiative.

Analysts had said at the time of the ceasefire announcement that New Delhi could be trying to sow division within the ranks of Hurriyat to gain the upper hand. Latest developments show that if that was the strategy it may have worked.

While Geelani dubbed India's suspension of hostilities a sinister move to sabotage Kashmir's freedom struggle, other Hurriyat leaders have spoken more optimistically of a possible breakthrough in the decade-old insurgency.

(KASHMIR OBSERVER, 26 DECEMBER, 2000)



STRAIGHT STROKES

# DDC Lessons for PAGD

GOWHAR GEELANI

**The two key PAGD leaders must keep in mind that the section of the population that believes in making a political point by participating in the electoral process has given them another chance; a lifeline. This section has participated in the elections to make a political statement that it rejects the August 5, 2019 decisions**

The People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD), a regional conglomerate of political parties seeking restoration of statehood and semi-autonomy for Jammu and Kashmir, is well within its rights to claim resounding success in the recently-held District Development Council (DDC) elections. The alliance can also claim that the DDC election results were a "referendum" for the position that it has taken on the "unilateral and undemocratic" abrogation of Article 370 on August 5, 2019.

More than political conviction it was political compulsion for the PAGD to participate in the DDC elections. The aim, they said, was to not concede any leftover political space to the BJP and to make a symbolic statement that abrogation of Article 370 was unacceptable to the people. That objective has been achieved.

Indeed, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) employed all tricks of the trade to alter the restive region's political chessboard. The aim obviously was to create new political elite and new leadership. The election results clearly indicate that the saffron party failed in its Mission Kashmir. The Apni Party led by the PDP dissenter Altaf Bukhari has had to eat a humble pie.

The context in which the DDC elections were conducted in all the eight phases cannot be ignored by any stretch.

The elections were held in a choked and militarized atmosphere. Civil liberties continue to remain suspended. Media gag continues unabated. Journalism is criminalised. And censorship is normalised. Political detentions of ideological rivals have become a new normal. The high-speed internet service is unavailable for 16 months now. According to Access Now, J&K's internet shutdown is the world's longest. According to the Srinagar-based influential trade body Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industries (KCCI), the regional economy suffered losses worth \$5 billion with nearly 500,000 job losses.

This is the heavy cost that Kashmir has paid because of the unprecedented communications clampdown and political skulduggery.

The entire administration (and bureaucracy), as alleged by the PAGD leaders, was working against the amalgam at the behest of the BJP. The PAGD also alleged that their candidates were not provided the level playing field to campaign freely. They also said that many of their leaders were put under house arrest or arbitrary detention in the name of security. In their appreciation, had there been a level playing field for the PAGD candidates they could have won more than 110 DDC seats.

Let's face a simple fact: The devil lies in the details. The BJP got only three per cent votes in the DDC polls from ten districts of the Kashmir Val-



ley. Clearly, there is no BJP wave as is being claimed. The BJP won three seats in Kashmir. One of these was Kakpora, in south Kashmir's Pulwama district, which the saffron party won by a margin of just 14 votes.

This was made possible because of the unprecedented boycott of elections in the district. The twin districts of Shopian and Pulwama in south Kashmir witnessed low voter turnout during all eight phases, mostly in single-digits.

In its bastion, Jammu, the BJP managed to get 34 per cent vote share which is the lowest for the party in the last four elections. In simple words, of 140 DDC wards in the Kashmir Valley the BJP lost 137; and of 140 seats in the Jammu province it lost 68. Another way of putting this is that the BJP lost 14 districts out of 20 in entire Jammu and Kashmir.

The electoral arithmetic telegraphs a message that the BJP has not only lost in the Kashmir Valley, but it also lost significant ground in Jammu where the National Conference and the Congress Party have done reasonably well. The BJP has done well in the Hindu-dominated districts, most notably in Udhampur, Jammu, Samba, Reasi, Kathua and Samba.

This tells us that the BJP's narrative has no takers in secular belts.

What also needs to be factored in is the fact that the overall voter turnout in the Kashmir Valley remained low, only 34 per cent. In contrast, the voter turnout in the Jammu province was close to 70 per cent. Despite this disparity, the BJP has failed in its efforts to alter the political map and electoral arithmetic in J&K.

On the contrary, the PAGD has

won 13 districts. It has done well in the Kashmir Valley and also in parts of the Chenab Valley and Pir Panchal region. Overall, the PAGD won 110 DDC seats.

Among the seven parties that are part of the PAGD, the National Conference seems to have performed well in Kishtwar, Rajouri, Poonch and Ramban districts. That is apart from the Kashmir Valley districts. However, the NC lost three DDC wards in Beerwah, in Central Kashmir's Budgam district, because of the rebellion by one of its key leaders, Agha Ruhulla Mehdi. Mehdi who wields influence in the district is credited for ensuring Omar Abdullah's victory from Beerwah Assembly segment in the last elections.

Be that as it may, the independent candidates also won a significant number of seats in the maiden DDC polls.

**So far so good.**

What next? What are the lessons that the PAGD can learn from the DDC election results?

Omar Abdullah, former Chief Minister of J&K and Vice-President of the National Conference, is on record saying that he won't contest the Legislative Assembly elections unless Jammu and Kashmir's statehood was restored. Another former Chief Minister and President of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) Mehbooba Mufti in a recent interview with NDTV said that she won't hanker after power and that she won't participate in the Assembly elections until Article 370 was fully restored.

The two key PAGD leaders must keep in mind that the section of the population that believes in making a political point by participating in the electoral process has given them another

chance; a lifeline. This section has participated in the elections to make a political statement that it rejects the August 5, 2019 decisions.

The real litmus test for the PAGD has only begun. The alliance leaders must not forget that there is a huge section of the population which has stayed away from the electoral process. And there are ideological forces which do not believe in de-linking the electoral process from the political resolution of the Kashmir issue. The electoral win should not make the PAGD complacent and forget the multiple layers involved.

Can the political alliance stick to the promises that its leaders have made about the Gupkar Declaration or forget them? Will the DDC election result bring in the element of political greed in focus? Can the PAGD show maturity by involving the civil society coalitions and other ideological forces for a broader consensus on the peaceful resolution process?

All said and done, the DDC election results are only symbolic. Politically speaking, the DDC representatives cannot do anything significant to alter the new ground realities. But what they can do is to respect the mandate of those who have voted in their favour to reject the August 5 decisions. The PAGD leaders must not forget this under any circumstances. Because Kashmir is a graveyard of reputations!

*The views expressed in this article are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer*

*Gowhar Geelani is an author-journalist and a political commentator*

This past year was full of adversity and hopelessness for many around the world. But for we Palestinians, it was even harsher – we were forced to face a deadly pandemic in an apartheid state, amid a collapsing economy, and a general feeling of hopelessness and abandonment.

In the second half of the year, a series of Arab states added to our collective misery by announcing their decision to normalise their relations with Israel. By effectively abandoning their supposed commitment to supporting Palestinian self-determination for money, weapons and a few short-term political gains, they sent us a clear message that our suffering and struggle for the most basic human rights no longer matter to them.

While every normalisation deal Israel clenched with an Arab state undoubtedly hurt us, none of them was as painful for us as the one signed by the United Arab Emirates. After the deals, popular displeasure was evident on the streets of Morocco, Sudan and even Bahrain. We knew that the masses in these countries were overwhelmingly opposed to the decision made by their political leaders, and this was a consolation for us. But the situation was different in the UAE. The Emiratis, across every level of their society from political leaders to regular citizens, came out forcefully in favour of a warm and cozy relationship with Israel.

One of the most shocking and enraging developments in the fast-paced love affair between the UAE and Israel was the mutual visa waiver agreement – a first between Israel and an Arab country. After the signing of the agreement, Emirati and Israeli airlines were quick to announce direct flights between the two countries. This is it, we thought, the Emiratis are coming!

And they did come, with much fanfare and propaganda. The photos of Emirati tourists in their traditional outfits posing in historic Jerusalem next to Israelis were plastered across newspapers. The Israeli government started sharing on its official social media accounts testimonies of Emiratis explaining how "safe and secure" they feel in the country.

But almost no one wondered what we, the Palestinians, are feeling about all this.

## Colonial Tourism Emiratis in Jerusalem

JALAL ABUKHATER

The arrival of hundreds of Emiratis in Israel to enjoy the historic sites of Jerusalem and pray at the Al-Aqsa Mosque was a slap in the face for us. After all, millions of Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza, just two dozen kilometres away from Al-Aqsa, can only dream about stepping foot in the mosque that is the third holiest site in Islam.

Of course, we Palestinian Jerusalemites were already used to seeing Muslim pilgrims from Turkey, Malaysia, Indonesia or other non-Arab Muslim-majority countries at Al-Aqsa. Over the years, Palestinians rarely had any problem with these visitors, as they

see Emiratis and Bahrainis in Jerusalem, roaming freely under the protection of the Israeli police, taking pictures and buying souvenirs as if they are visiting just another tourist site.

For a start, it might sound unbelievable to those not familiar with our reality, but millions of Palestinians living in Palestine are denied access not only to Al-Aqsa but the entirety of Jerusalem by Israel's occupying regime. Over the past two decades, Israel has built a complex system of checkpoints, supported by the Apartheid Wall, to deny Palestinians freedom of movement within their own homeland. An entire

**The photos of Emirati tourists in their traditional outfits posing in historic Jerusalem next to Israelis were plastered across newspapers. The Israeli government started sharing on its official social media accounts testimonies of Emiratis explaining how "safe and secure" they feel in the country**

overwhelmingly believe this holiest of mosques should not be monopolised by any subset of Muslims, even under the devastating conditions of an occupation.

But the Palestinian Jerusalemites were not as accepting of Emirati tourists as others. While some still took the position that all Muslim tourists, whatever their citizenship, should be welcome in Al-Aqsa, many others protested against Emirati tourists being awarded with the right to easily visit Jerusalem's holy sites for betraying the Palestinians and forming an alliance with their oppressors.

We have every reason to be frustrated when we

generation of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza grew up without ever stepping foot in Al-Aqsa.

And this Israeli "travel ban" is not only targeting Palestinians living in Palestine. Palestinian refugees and members of the diaspora living in neighbouring countries are still denied their right to return, even for a brief visit.

Another point of frustration is the fact that Emiratis can now simply take a direct flight from Dubai to Tel Aviv, and walk freely into the country. And Israelis can now directly fly in to the Emirates, with almost no questions asked. This is not an option for

most Palestinians. A Palestinian living in Ramallah, for example, would have to first cross into Jordan and then take a flight from the Queen Alia airport in Amman to reach Dubai. This is an arduous journey that involves many checkpoints and takes almost an entire day. Even Palestinians holding American passports cannot just fly into the Tel Aviv airport, if they are also in possession of a Palestinian ID card. So you can see why visa-free travel between the UAE and Israel is irritating to many of us, the natives who are denied that same right in our homeland.

I do not believe that anyone, including we Palestinians, deserve unconditional love and support from any nation. But the Emiratis are not even brave enough to openly say that they do not care about us and support our struggle. Instead, they repeatedly claim that the normalisation between the UAE and Israel will eventually be "beneficial" for the Palestinians. I struggle to see any logic in this assumption. All the current evidence points to these normalisation deals further emboldening Israel and its apartheid. After all, none of the normalising states, and especially the UAE, are challenging Israel on its decades-long illegal occupation of Palestinian territories or its inhumane treatment of its Palestinian citizens and occupied subjects.

It is a criminal injustice bestowed upon us by Israel – we have no freedom of movement in our own historic homeland. We cannot support an Emirati citizen having the right to walk in and out of our lands at our expense, as we continue to languish in open-air prisons and struggle to survive under Israel's illegal occupation. Whatever leaders of the Arab states normalising relations with Israel may say, their actions are not aimed at helping peace and none of these deals will ever benefit Palestinians. Those sovereign countries chose to sign those deals to serve their own national interests; they do not have the Palestinians in mind, and they should be honest about this fact.

....  
Al Jazeera



# Technology in Aspects of Emotions

Guests prefer High-speed Wifi over Tasty Food

KHALID MUSTAFA

Our books have been replaced by digital resources. This is dangerous as we're increasingly dependent on shortcut resources which may be unverified and even false. This has, infact, led to more hatred and violence because of misinformation

Apart from some, people still struggle for things as basic as food. Now, even technology has been wired into some brains and lives as a necessity.

Not only the young generation but elderly people have become screen dependent. There was a time when young people would spend time with the elders in their homes and hear folk and fairy tales from them. But now, we're glued to our screens and miss all these treasures which were true to our past.

Our interactions are limited to texting each other and we have no time for our loved ones. We are stuck to screens even when critical discussions are happening or during family time.

Different NGOs and Government bodies should come forward to provide the knowledge and awareness among people about being dependent on technology and how they affect our daily love, care and physical activity etiquettes in society.

Technology does not just mean to have internet connectivity and having smart gadgets you are dependent on but now we have technology that requires us nothing but a wifi connection to operate our lives. This not only gives birth to emotional problems but to a lot more health issues.

When we book a hotel or visit any relative or friend's house, it is now a priority to check whether the place has wifi connectivity; food is secondary now. This is enough to understand our level of dependence on the internet.

Special dates like birth dates, holidays, and celebrations were once fondly memorized. Now, we're reminded about these on our socials. Unfortunately, even the news of someone's death is now received as we scroll past insignificant things on the internet.

We have stopped truly caring for



each other and practice formality by text and show emotion by a smiley. People don't have supporting shoulders to cry on.

We may in the coming days not need any mirrors in our houses. We now have selfies and can put great filters to it. These filters may hide scars on our faces but cannot hide the grief that comes with feeling alone as people have grown distant.

However, technology is also a blessing to the human race. This is obvious from our experience during the Covid-19 Pandemic. The world depended heavily on the internet across sectors. Education, Business and all such sectors started shifting online. Work from Home became a norm.

We should use the technology for

our good because it has that potential. But, reckless use of it can lead to more bad than good. Something that connects shouldn't isolate us and affect our relationships with the world. Emotions are welcome when they are real.

Medical sciences have already warned us for the same but we are not taking the things seriously even when the situation is alarming.

The affection graphs towards our relations are going downwards and we can raise the graph again by not being too dependent on the internet world only. We should join hands together to revive and revise our childhood memories and actions: spend time together, talk, hug and love each other beyond the virtual.

Our books have been replaced by digital resources. This is dangerous as we're increasingly dependent on shortcut resources which may be unverified and even false. This has, infact, led to more hatred and violence because of misinformation.

One discussion in front of each other is worth thousand meetings performed online. Life is limited and we should protect the human race and our health mentally, emotionally or physically. We should take measures to come out of this virtual world for some time and experience the real nature and world.

The author is an IT & Management Expert, Presently Manager IT-Operations at HK Nissan

## The Great WFH Experiment

Flexible working lessons from the great work from home mass experiment

JANE PARRY

For years, politicians and employers alike have talked up the promise of flexible working. And it looked like change was happening.

Last year, the UK government announced a consultation around whether flexible work should not just be available, but become employees' default option in its annual Queen's Speech. But 2020 rapidly became a hugely different year in Westminster and flexible working rights seemingly ground to a halt at the political level.

In the end it took the COVID-19 pandemic, with its attendant government-enforced lockdowns, for working from home to sit at the centre of an unanticipated global experiment and to become the catalyst for a real discussion about flexible work.

The changes set in place this year have radically highlighted how employees' diverse commitments and characteristics affect their work on a daily basis. And employers have taken vast strides in appreciating how well-managed flexibility keeps workforces productive. Working arrangements that reflect these differences and keep all staff motivated and working to their best effect will play a key role in organisations' survival and ultimately the UK's financial recovery.

But in this new world of work, organisations cannot afford to let flexible working arrangements remain a perk reserved for their higher-level staff after the pandemic.

### Unequal privilege

Before the pandemic, we knew that flexible work was an unequal privilege in organisations – that you were more likely to get it if your work was highly valued, or if you had a sympathetic manager. Organisations had found that an accepted opposition to flexible work requests was that certain jobs simply couldn't be done remotely. And so many much-needed flexible work requests faltered.

Now this thinking has been disproved. We have seen that most formerly office-based jobs can be performed from home.

Our research suggests that many people even think they are more productive away from the distractions of the office



– incredible as this seems, considering that lockdown offered no normal working from home conditions. Children and very often partners were at home too, competing for space and time.

Yet productivity gains are borne out by the organisational evidence from lockdown. Our Work after Lockdown survey, which I carried out with colleagues, found that nine out of 10 people felt that they got more – or at least as much – done at home as they had in their offices. Seven out of 10 people who responded to our survey want to continue to work from home at least part of the week after offices reopen.

It will therefore be difficult for the managers who had been so suspicious of working from home to reinforce standard business hours now that they have seen their employees going over and beyond their role

expectations for month after month.

We now find ourselves on the cusp of change. There is a desire for action and as organisations start to seriously engage for the first time in hybrid working, it's becoming evident that this is not a binary discussion about whether work is performed in or outside of organisations. More important is how employees schedule their time and key to this is engaging with a much broader range of flexible working arrangements that reflect people's different circumstances.

For so long, flexible work has lagged because organisations had not bought into its business case. Now, with the kind of looming recession that no one could have foreseen, the benefits of flexible work are very clear in the ability to help managers deal with complex working arrangements,

maximise productivity and hold onto their skilled workforces when they will be most needed to weather the storm.

### Sustaining productivity gains

It will be vital that flexible work is deployed in ways that are mutually beneficial to employees and employers. With workforce wellbeing at a low ebb during lockdown (our survey respondents scored 47.5 out of 100 on The World Health Organisation's wellbeing index), it is critical that employers respond quickly.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's review of the evidence collected from member countries in recent years concluded that remote workers' wellbeing is important in sustaining productivity gains.

Lockdown has made managers more

The changes set in place this year have radically highlighted how employees' diverse commitments and characteristics affect their work on a daily basis. And employers have taken vast strides in appreciating how well-managed flexibility keeps workforces productive

aware than ever of staff diversity, with different home circumstances, styles of working and personality characteristics. Managers got more creative with their fixes and in the process developed a more sophisticated sense of workforce needs.

One of the key recommendations driven by the first wave of findings in our ESRC-funded research is that the right to flexible work should be extended to all employees from the start of their contracts. This will help employers keep their valued staff working effectively through the next challenging period of recession, whilst also negotiating a new relationship with the EU.

By arrangements with the Conversation



# Lassipora unit holders asked to make IGC synonymous with development

**PULWAMA:** Advisor to Lieutenant Governor, Baseer Ahmad Khan, today visited Industrial Growth Centre Lassipora to assess the functioning of various business units there besides taking stock of their issues and concerns.

While interacting with the unit holders at IGC, Advisor Khan urged upon them to make the Industrial Growth Centre synonymous with development and growth. He said that besides being the engine of economic activity in J&K IGC Lassipora should be identical to entrepreneurship and business. He said Industries should not

only provide sustainable jobs to the unemployed youth but should create an atmosphere of entrepreneurship and investment. He urged upon the officers of line departments to act as beacons in the Ease Of Doing Business and make these Industrial estates the islands of hope and positivity.

Advisor said that Government is committed to provide all the logistical support to make IGC Lassipora a centre of Industrial excellence. He added that the spirit of Ease of Doing Business is only possible through coordination among the department

of Industries and Commerce, SIDCO, PDD and Pollution Control Board. He assured the units holders that all their genuine demands would be solved on priority basis.

Advisor visited several cold storage units and inspected various sections including CA store grading line, packaging and plant room, Food Park and interacted with the unit holders who apprised him of various issues being confronted by them.

Advisor also visited GIS grid station and assured the unit holders about the settling of power curtailments.

Later, Advisor had an interactive meeting with the unit holders and entrepreneurs of the district.

On the occasion, representatives of Chamber of Industries from IGC Lassipora highlighted various issues like adequate water supply to the units, accountability of Pollution Control Board, dumping site, waiving off of interest on loans/rent, deployment of adequate staff in the DIC and installation of fibre cable from Pulwama to IGC.

Earlier, Advisor planted a sapling of Deodar in the lawn of Conference Hall SIDCO.

# Devotees Hold Special Prayers For Peace, Prosperity In J-K On Christmas



**SRINAGAR:** Christmas was celebrated in Kashmir on Friday with religious fervour as devotees held special prayers for peace and prosperity in the union territory.

However, the celebrations were a low-key affair due to the coronavirus-related restrictions.

The biggest gathering in the Valley was held at Holy Family Catholic Church at Moulaana Azad Road in the

heart of the city, where members of the Christian community, including women and children, assembled to celebrate the birthday of Jesus Christ and held special prayers.

The church, decorated with colourful bunting and balloons, wore a festive look.

However, the celebrations were subdued due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Among the believers were a few tourists who joined the locals on the auspicious day and prayed for peace and prosperity in Jammu and Kashmir and the world over.

The Christmas celebrations this year were held in compliance to COVID-19 protocols as devotees wore masks and maintained social distancing and followed other standard operating procedures (SOPs).

## Group of northeast Delhi riot victims claim officials coercing them to withdraw complaints

**NEW DELHI, DEC 25 (PTI):** A group of northeast Delhi riot victims on Friday alleged that they have been pressured to withdraw their complaints and give statements against an advocate who helped them.

The victims held a press conference at Press Club of India in the national capital on Friday evening and came forward in support of senior advocate Mehmood Pracha whose office was searched by police a day earlier.

They claimed that after the riots in February this year when no government or law enforcement agencies provided assistance to them, Pracha stood by and provided legal assistance and other possible help free of cost. Mohammad Mumtaaz (27), a resident of Khajuri, alleged that he was coerced into withdrawing his case.

My restaurant was vandalised and burnt on February 23 around 8 pm. We have been pressured by authorities and local leaders to withdraw our case and give statements against Mehmood Pracha to lodge false cases. They also said that they will give compensation to us, Mumtaaz said.

Wasim, who was allegedly beaten by police personnel during the

riots to sing the national anthem, said, Policemen refused to register an FIR on my complaint. I got to know about Pracha. He helped me in getting the police complaint. Police asked me disengage myself from Pracha, alleged Wasim.

Firoz Akhtar (42), another victim of the riots, said that he was also pressured not to associate with Pracha.

"I was attacked during the riots when I was offering namaz in a mosque at Mustafabad area. I have been receiving calls and being pressured not to be associated with Pracha, Akhtar said.

On Thursday, the Delhi Police searched premises of two advocates -- Mehmood Pracha and Javed Ali -- in a case related to alleged use of forged documents as genuine in judicial records in a northeast Delhi riots case.

According to police, two teams were formed and sent to Nizamuddin and Yamuna Vihar on Thursday. One team completed its tasks with cooperation of Ali, who is an advocate in Yamuna Vihar. The other one was heckled, obstructed and verbally abused by Pracha and his associates at Nizamuddin West, they claimed.

## 8 UK-returned people test COVID positive during Delhi govt's door-to-door drive

**New Delhi, Dec 25 (PTI):** In the ongoing door-to-door contact drive being conducted by the Delhi government to test UK-returned persons for prevalence of COVID-19, eight have so far been found infected with the coronavirus, officials said on Friday.

A total of 19 passengers out of over 13,000 who landed from the UK at the IGI airport here between November 25 and December 21 have been found positive for the virus.

Eleven were tested positive at the airport while eight others were found positive during the door to door contact and testing drive being carried out in all the districts of the city, said a top Delhi government source.

"All the 19 positive patients have been admitted to the special facility set up at LNJP hospital where they will undergo genome testing to determine whether they are infected by the super spreader strain of the coronavirus that has been reported in United Kingdom," the source said.

So far, one person each in the south east and south west districts of Delhi who returned from the UK in recent weeks were reported positive for the virus. The remaining positive persons were residents of other districts.

A person from Dwarka in south west Delhi who had returned from the UK on December 19 has been diagnosed as COVID-19 positive. The father of that person has also tested positive but he is asymptomatic, an official said.

The whole family has been quarantined in an institutional facility, the official said. In New Delhi district, the UK-returned passengers are being tested through RTPCR tests. No one has tested positive so far, they said.

The door to door contact and monitoring is also underway to keep watch on the persons who returned from the UK in the last few weeks. Among them, those showing even the slightest symptoms are being RTPCR tested, they said.

Out of the over 13,000 passengers who landed at IGI airport from the UK, around 1400 have been identified as Delhi residents, officials said. The list of passengers provided by the Bureau of Civil Aviation is being sorted and all the Delhi residents who returned from the UK are being contacted, they said.

Delhi Health minister Satyendar Jain said on Wednesday that tracing and testing of all those who travelled to Delhi from the UK in the past two weeks will be ensured.

Delhi Government is aware, and all the people who have travelled from the UK to Delhi in the past two weeks will be traced, tested and advised quarantine," he had said in a statement.

The authorities have enhanced monitoring of city residents who returned in the past few weeks from the UK to prevent any violation of home isolation, Delhi government officials said on Wednesday.

## NIT Srinagar students to get direct admission into PhD to IIT Delhi

**NEW DELHI, DEC 25 (PTI)** Students from National Institute of Technology (NIT) Srinagar will get direct admission to PhD programme at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi, according to an MoU signed on Friday.

The MoU was signed by V Ramgopal Rao, Director, IIT Delhi and Rakesh Sehgal, Director, NIT Srinagar.

As per the agreement, NIT students with a CGPA of 8.00 at the end of their 6th semester (three years), will be eligible to apply for a project in summer or winter and complete their fourth year (7th and 8th semesters) at IIT Delhi. After that they will be considered for an early admission to the IIT Delhi PhD programmes.

"The requirement of GATE is waived off since the students will

enter IIT Delhi with a minimum CGPA of 8.00. This scheme will also help NITS students to enhance their chances of qualifying for the Prime Minister's Research Fellowship for PhD at IIT Delhi," an official statement said.

"During the stay of NITS students in IIT Delhi as visiting students, they would not be charged any academic fees, since they will be paying the same to their parent institution. The students will also be provided on/off-campus hostel accommodation on paid basis during their one-year stay," it added.

The MoU will also provide an opportunity to the faculty of NITS under which they may apply for suitable postdoc positions or any other opportunities available at IIT Delhi.

## Militant Associate Held In Tral: Police

**SRINAGAR:** Police on Friday claimed to have arrested a militant associate in Tral area of South Kashmir.

In a statement issued here, a police spokesperson said that the joint team of police, army's 42 RR and 180 BN CRPF on Friday morning conducted search of a house in Syedabad village of Tral and arrested a militant associate Amir Ashraf Khan.

The police spokesperson also claimed to have recovered a Chinese hand grenade from his possession which he had kept concealed in a plastic jar in the compound of his house.

"A Case FIR No.109 / 2020 under relevant sections of law stands registered against the said militant associate in Police Station Tral," he added.

### FROM THE FRONT PAGE

### Where Will ...

to pieces in the November bombing. A month later, the homeless man living in the line of firing says the government has left his tribe to die.

"Government's underground bunkers are yet to see the light of the day here," Gani says, deflating the official claims of construction of 125 community bunkers along the LoC in Baramulla and Kupwara districts.

The need of the hour, says Lal Din Khatana, Sarpanch of Charunda village, was to construct the underground bunkers to shelter and save people from shells.

"In our village, at the zero line, shelling damaged several houses on November 13," Khatana says. "But like others, we were provided a meagre amount in the name of compensation."

Mohammad Ahsan Mir, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Baramulla, refused to talk about this overwhelming anguish at the zero line.

"I am busy with counting votes," Mir said. "Can't talk."

Amid this apathy, Gani is getting numb inside a temporary shanty he shares with his family of seven.

"The intense cold has made life very difficult for us," he says.

"Despite making rounds of the government offices for compensation, we are living a life of refugees in our own homeland. Where will we go this winter?"

### Soldiers 'Thrash' ...

The officer assured protesting journalists that a team will be constituted to inquire about the incident--(KNO)

### Cold Wave ...

The MET Office has said there is a possibility of light rains and snowfall in the valley for a few days from Saturday.

There is no forecast of any major snowfall activity till the end of this month, it added. (PTI)

### NC Condemns ...

arrested yesterday after he had led a DDC member to meet party high command. In another instance, he said, Lone was also bundled out in Naidkhai area of north Kashmir.

"District President Shopian Showkat Ahmed Ganaie is also under detention for three days now; the grounds of detention have not been made known by the administration as yet," he said, while demanding immediate release of detained leaders.

"Falling to make any mark in the recently concluded DDC polls and coaxing to win over crossovers democratically, the powers that be are now resorting to witch-hunting and undue intimidation of political leaders," the NC spokesperson added.

### 2 Porters ...

On November 26, a JCO was killed and a civilian critically injured in Pakistani shelling in Kirni and Qasba sectors of Poonch.

A havaldar in the Indian Army was killed on November 21 in Pakistani shelling in Laam sector in Rajouri district.

On November 13, as many as 11 people, including five security personnel, were killed in multiple ceasefire violations by Pakistani troops along the LoC in north Kashmir. (With PTI inputs)

### PDP Leader ...

face is exposed now before the masses, he said. "Barbaric assault on BJP leader Ripu Daman by PDP leader Surinder Choudhary is to be seen as an act of terrorism at the behest of PDP's top leadership," Gupta said. (PTI)

### Govt Puts ...

"Whereas, there have been incessant efforts by the anti-national elements (ANEs) to lure gullible youth to join militant ranks and the field agencies have underlined the need to continue suitable restrictions on high speed mobile internet connectivity to curb the unfettered use of social media in uploading/ downloading/circulating provocative videos, rumour mongering, fake news etc," reads the order.

Subsequently, the government ordered extension in the ban on high speed internet in all but Ganderbal and Udhampur district till January 8, 2021. The order also asked ISGP, Kashmir/Jammu to communicate these directions to the service providers forthwith and ensure their implementation in letter and spirit.

### 2 Soldiers ...

"Initial exchange of fire took place in orchards and now militants are trapped inside a residential house," he said

"All entry and exits points have been sealed and lights have been installed in the area, so that militants don't flee from the spot," he added.

Earlier, police, army's 44 RR and CRPF laid a siege around Kanigam on the basis of information suggesting presence of militants in the area. When the joint team started advances, the hiding militants opened fire towards them in a bid to escape from their dragnet.

After a brief exchange of fire, the guns fell silent. However, in the late night hours, the two sides traded another bout of fire.

Meanwhile, internet services have been snapped in Shopian district by the authorities in view of the combing operation.

### KPC Demands ...

Bollywood actor Amisha Patel was the chief guest -- alleged that the scribes

were abused and at least three of them were thrashed by the soldiers. While Army officials did not comment on the incident, the KPC sought an inquiry.

The Kashmir Press Club notes with concern the incident that has taken place with three video journalists during an event in north Kashmir today and calls for a probe into the matter, the club said in a statement.

It said the club received several calls by the anguished local journalists that the scribes were thrashed by soldiers while covering the function.

As per them, the incident took place without any provocation when they were trying to get a sound byte of the Bollywood actor on the sidelines of the function, the KPC said.

The club terms the incident very unfortunate and urges the Army authorities to inquire into the matter and take stern action against those found guilty, the statement said.

### Baramulla Encounter ...

Mehraj-ud-Din Qazi son of Gulam Nabi Qazi of Wanigam Baramulla, has been missing from last two days.

"He is missing from last two days. We searched him everywhere but to no avail. We are now filing a missing report with the police," said Syed Aijaz Ahmad Bukhari, brother-in-law of the missing person, according to news agency GNS.

He said that Qazi is a 40-year-old businessman who deals with fruits and has two children besides wife.

At the time filing this report, the family was on way to the police station to file the missing report.

### Cultural Events ...

said. He said that twenty young boys drawn from various districts of the Union Territory will undergo the 7-day introductory Ski course during which the group will be introduced to the basics of Skiing.

"All the lodging & boarding and the Ski equipment is being provided free of cost by the Tourism Department. A four member Ski instructors team will be imparting Skiing training to these beginners," he said.

As per the official spokesperson, the Directorate of Tourism, Kashmir has drawn a weekly calendar for imparting basic skiing training to as many as 6 groups this season. Among these 6 groups, he said, two will be exclusively meant for outside J&K youth including one girls group. Another exclusive girls group will be from the UT.

"At the end of their training programme, the best three among the trainees in each of the six groups will be selected for intermediate & advance level courses," he said.

Apart from the Tourism Department, the official spokesperson said, hundreds of boys and girls are being imparted basic ski training this season by the youth services & sports Department.

"The Indian Institute of Skiing & Mountaineering has also started various Ski training courses at Gulmarg," he said.

Besides the launch of introductory skiing courses, the tourism department also continued to enthrall tourists with festivities and cultural programmes on the festival of Christmas.

Speaking on the occasion, Assistant Director, Tourism, Dr Javed-ur Rehman said that colourful cultural events amidst skiing activities at Gulmarg are meant to entertain the tourists and introduce them to the rich culture of Kashmir.

"A grand function will be held here at Gulmarg on New Year's Eve for which preparations are in full swing," he added.

### J&K Farmers ...

100% coverage under PM-Kisan Samman Nidhi has been ensured in J&K so that no beneficiary is left behind in availing the benefits of the scheme," Sinha, as per official spokesperson said.

To achieve the tangible results, the LG said that the government is extending sustained handholding and support to the farming community facilitating the rapid growth in the agriculture and its allied sectors for improving productivity and profitability of farmers.

"With an aim to promote farm mechanization and creating self-sufficient villages, in this financial year, 500 Tractors with Rs 2 lakh subsidy, besides Power Tillers, Paddy Planters and Threshers are being distributed among the farmers across J&K," the LG said.

Emphasizing on better storage provisions for farm produce, Sinha stressed on the need for establishing Modern storage systems in the UT. Further, Four pesticide laboratories and Soil Testing Labs are also being set up in Jammu and Kashmir.

The LG said that the promotion of Agriculture, Horticulture, Dairy and Poultry sectors are our priorities and the Administration is going to take every step for the development of these sectors. He also underscored the importance of launching a massive campaign to make farmers aware of land use and other facets of modern agriculture.

"I have identified four issues that are being addressed on priority - Increasing productivity through Intervention of technology, ensuring best price and market support, mitigation of risks and diversification through allied activities," Sinha said.

"We are working out the prioritization and convergence wherever required to make our efforts more effective in improving the viability, profitability, and sustainability of agriculture and allied

sectors," he added. The LG further said that around 70 percent of the population of Jammu & Kashmir is engaged in Agriculture and its allied sectors and that it was imperative that the administration set up a large number of modern granaries, cold storages and modern agriculture equipment so that the local farmers are able to double their income in the next two years.

He said that through Custom Hiring Centres which are being set for assisting small and marginal farmers, such farmers can easily borrow expensive machinery.

Highlighting the measures taken by the Government in fostering Agriculture and allied sectors, the LG said that the government is providing a 50 percent subsidy for starting a fodder plant.

"Similarly, for setting up a dairy with 50 cows, a 50 percent subsidy is being provided by the Administration, besides 50 percent subsidy is also being provided for setting up milk chilling and processing plants," he said.

"To increase flow of bank credit to small and marginal farmers, more focus is being given by the administration to this segment, the credit disbursement targets of Agriculture and allied sectors for the current financial year increased by 2.5 times against the last year disbursement," he added.

The LG also termed high density plantation, intercropping and diversification in Agriculture as the need of the hour. In the near future, around 1900 hectare area is going to be brought under high density apple plantation. "It would help increase income of apple growers four times," he said.

He also expressed happiness over the keen interest shown by the youth in taking agriculture as a career.

"There is no dearth of facilities and resources. The administration is working day and night to uplift the farmers of Jammu & Kashmir," the LG said. He further said that farmers from both divisions of the UT are being connected to the other markets of India through E-NAM at Narwal Jammu and Parimpora Srinagar.

"Innovative measures are being taken catering to the irrigation needs of the farmers. Jeevika Initiative, Udhampur has led to a new approach of integrated and remunerative farming, besides the number of bore-wells is being increased to benefit the farmers. In Jammu Division, work is on to install 265 bore-wells and to provide subsidy to the farmers for the Pump Sets," he said.

"The agro-climatic conditions of the region are conducive for crops like basmati, saffron, kidney beans, honey, apples, cherry, walnuts, strawberry and flowers. There is a huge market waiting for our farmers in other parts of the country," he added.

Referring to the recent developments,

the LG said that Lulu Group from Abu Dhabi is going to set up a food processing plant in J&K, while Kashmir Saffron has been given a GI tag which would help in its promotion and export throughout the world.

"The United Arab Emirates is going to import products from Jammu & Kashmir directly. Bhaderwah Rajma, Kishtwar pear, Doda-Poonch walnut, Aamrapali and Mallika mangoes of Jammu, pecan nuts of Poonch and litchi from Reasi would also be given GI tags through the efforts of the Administration," he said.

Sinha said that agricultural reforms by the Centre Government are for the betterment of the farmers. Under the reforms, he said, the farmers would be free to cultivate their land and sell their produce according to their wish.

"I would assure that the farmers are equally allowed to sell their produce at their own price as they are to sell at the Minimum Support Price (MSP). Post implementation of the latest reforms, the trade at agriculture markets throughout the country has increased and there has been no shutdown. To dispel the fears pertaining to 'contract farming', I would assure that the contract is limited to exchange of goods and not the land. There is no mention of land in these reforms," he added.

### One More Corona ...

Meanwhile, 284 new cases of Covid-19, including eight paramilitary CRPF men and four minors were detected in J&K in the last 24 hours, officials said.

They said Srinagar reported 65 cases, Baramulla 9, Budgam 32, Kupwara 9, Pulwama 18, Anantnag 2, Bandipora 1, Ganderbal 3, Kulgam 1, Shopian 0, Jammu 96, Udhampur 8, Rajouri 7, Doda 11, Kathua 12, Kishtwar 0, Samba 5, Poonch, Ramban 2 and Reasi 2.

### Structure Collapses ...

Quoting officials, the report said that three army men were present near the structure which collapsed.

"Two of them died on the spot while one is critically injured who was evacuated from the spot and has been taken to army hospital Pathankot for specialised treatment," officials said, adding that the area where incident took place falls under the jurisdiction of Billawar Police Station of Kathua district.

Jammu PRO of Army also confirmed the incident--(KNO)

### Muslims Help ...

helping the family to cremate the deceased. In Wussan locality around a dozen pandit families are residing who did not migrate from Kashmir valley during early 1990's and instead decided to stay put. Since then the two communities have lived in the locality in harmony and have always shown compassion to each other. (KNO)





# Masks block 99.9% of large Covid-linked droplets: Study

**P**ARIS: Face masks reduce the risk of spreading large Covid-linked droplets when speaking or coughing by up to 99.9 percent, according to a lab experiment with mechanical mannequins and human subjects, researchers have said.

A woman standing two metres (yards) from a coughing man without a mask will be exposed to 10,000 times more such droplets than if he were wearing one, even if he is only 50 centimetres away, they reported in the journal Royal Society Open Science.

"There is no more doubt whatsoever that face masks can dramatically reduce the dispersion of potentially virus-laden

droplets," senior author Ignazio Maria Viola, an expert in applied fluid dynamics at the University of Edinburgh's School of Engineering, said.

Large respiratory droplets — which act like projectiles before being pulled towards the ground by gravity — are thought to be the main driver of SARS-CoV-2 transmission, he noted.

Smaller ones, sometimes called aerosol droplets, can remain suspended in the air for longer periods.

"We continuously exhale a whole range of droplets, from micro-scale to millimetre-scale," Maria Viola said by phone. "Some of the droplets will drop faster than others" depending on temperature, humidity and

especially air speed, he said.

The study focused on particles larger than 170 microns in diameter — roughly two to four times the width of a human hair.

Aerosol particles, which tend to follow currents in the air, are generally described as smaller than 20 or 30 microns. Intermediate size droplets can behave either way, the study found.

"If you wear a mask, you are mitigating the virus transmission by an order of magnitude — 10 times less," Maria Viola said.

"In our study, for the larger droplets we measure, we're talking about 99.9 percent less." According to the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) in Seattle, Washington, 55,000 lives could be saved in the

United States over the next four months if a policy of universal mask use were adopted.

The Institute's modellers — who accurately predicted in mid-July that Covid-19 deaths in the US would top 224,000 by Nov 1 — project 561,000 deaths on current trends by April 1, 2021.

Universal mask-wearing would reduce the global death toll by 400,000 over the same period, from 2.9 million to 2.5 million, they calculate. To date, the virus has claimed about 1.7 million lives.

Earlier this month, the World Health Organisation (WHO) updated its Covid-19 guidance on masks to recommend they be worn indoors in the presence of other people if ventilation is inadequate.

The guidelines apply especially in areas of known or suspected community transmission.

Masks serve primarily to reduce the emissions of virus-laden droplets by people when they cough, sneeze, sing, talk or simply breathe, but they can also help prevent the inhalation of droplets by the person wearing them.

"Cloth masks not only effectively block most large droplets — 20-30 microns and larger — but they can also block the exhalation of fine droplets and particles, also often referred to as aerosols," according to the CDC.

.....  
Agencies

## Study suggests chest pain risk assessment may reduce treatment disparities

**T**he use of a standardised tool for assessing the risk of serious outcomes in patients with chest pain was associated with women at high risk receiving comparable care to men, according to new research.

The results of the research were published in the journal Annals of Emergency Medicine. Care received by women at low and intermediate-risk was consistent with current clinical recommendations. Men received more stress testing and were more likely to be hospitalized than women.

The researchers' goal in this study was to look at gender disparities after developing and implementing a standardized approach to cardiac care for patients in 2016, using the HEART score. The HEART score, which stands for the history, electrocardiogram, age, risk factors, and troponin level, is used to determine risk for adults with the suspected acute coronary syndrome, and based on that risk informs clinical decisions and standard care recommendations.

"Historically, a lot has been published about disparities in cardiovascular care for women, including misdiagnosing them," said Adam Sharp, MD, MSc. "So, we hypothesised that our standardized approach with more objective risk stratification may reduce or eliminate disparities in care for women.

"We found after implementation of the HEART score that women received more appropriate care than men with physicians less likely to recommend low-value cardiac testing for lower and intermediate-risk levels, and comparable care for those at high risk."

This study used data collected from more than 34,000 emergency department visits from May 20, 2016, to December 1, 2017, at 15 emergency departments within Kaiser Permanente in Southern California. The study findings included:

Women were hospitalised or



received stress tests less frequently than men even after adjusting for HEART score and comorbidities.

-Women received care consistent with guidelines:

-Low-risk women were less likely to be referred for stress tests or to be hospitalized than men.

-High-risk women received similar care to high-risk men.

-Despite less care, women still had fewer reports of heart attacks or death within 30 days of the emergency department visit than men overall, and particularly

**We found after implementation of the HEART score that women received more appropriate care than men with physicians less likely to recommend low-value cardiac testing for lower and intermediate-risk levels, and comparable care for those at high risk**

among those at low risk.

Dr. Sharp said the study showed that risk stratification by HEART score of emergency department patients with suspected heart attacks may be useful in improving the care of women, and an opportunity to avoid nonrecommended care in low-risk men.

Kaiser Permanente strives to provide the right care, at the right place and time, and to reduce the amount of non-recommended care for heart patients and others. Unnecessary and non-recommended care can have negative effects on patient safety, convenience, and the overall affordability of health care.

"There is always a margin of error with any testing, which requires physicians and patients to weigh the benefits against the risks," Dr Sharp said.

"More testing in low-risk patients can lead to more invasive tests, which has potential health risks as well as potential time in the hospital. No one wants to take time off to go to the hospital. Especially if it's unnecessary."

-Agencies



### سانحہ ارتحال

یہ خبر انتہائی دکھ کے ساتھ دی جاتی ہے کہ اہلیہ مرحوم عبداللہ میر سائیکہ منور آباد سرینگر حال حیدر پورہ اس دار فانی سے بروز **24 دسمبر 2020** رخصت کر گئی۔ ان اللہ وان الیہ راجعون

اس سلسلے میں مرحومہ کی اجتماعی فاتحہ خوانی بروز **27 دسمبر 2020** صبح **11 بجے** ان کے آبائی قبرستان واقع منور آباد سرینگر میں انجام دیا جائے گا۔ موجودہ حالات کے مد نظر گھر میں کوئی تعزیتی مجلس نہیں ہوگی۔

سوگواران  
نذیر احمد میر، ثناء احمد میر، مشتاق احمد میر، زاہد حسین میر (فرزند ان)

### The Jammu And Kashmir State Board Of School Education, Branch Office Sopore

The candidates whose photograph is published in this notice is claiming to have lost the original marks certificate of 10TH & 12th under Below mentioned particulars

Name: MOHAMMAD SALEEM RATHER  
Fathers Name: MOHAMMAD SABIR RATHER  
Mothers Name: DILSHADA  
Roll No : (10TH) 343589 Session /Year Bi-annual 2005  
(12TH) 321553 Session /Year Bi-annual 2008

Now the candidate has applied for Duplicate Marks Card. Anybody (if) having any objection may file the same before undersigned with (07) Seven days from the date of publication of this notice. Besides, the original marks card is teated as cancelled.

Sd/ Assistant Secretary  
Branch Office Sopore

AMS

### GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR

## OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR SHEEP BREEDING FARM POSHNAR

### QUOTATION

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir sealed quotations affixed with Rs.5/= are invited from the interested persons/contractors/hay suppliers for supply of hay jungle [100qtls] to sheep breeding farm Poshnar for the year 2020-21

The other terms and conditions of the quotation notice are as follows:

- The hay should be dry , free from twigs , branches, dust , leaves , thorns etc.
- The rates should be quoted for per quintal including unloading, dumping, staking and weighment at SBF poshnar .
- The quotations should reach to the office of the undersigned by or before 30/12/2020 up to 12.30 pm and the same shall be opened by the committee of officers /officials framed for the purpose on the same day.
- Each quotation should be accompanied by a CDR for Rs,5000/= pledged in favour of Assistant Director ,Sheep Breeding Farm Poshnar without which the quotations shall not be accepted.
- The successful tenderer shall have to deposit and additional amount of Rs.10000/= on-spot as security deposit .The CDR amount and security deposit . The CDR amount and the security deposit shall be released to the successful tenderer after completion of hay.
- The C.D.R. amount of the unsuccessful tenderer shall be released within one week.
- The supply should start within 3 days from issuance of supply order should be completed within on week.
- The payment shall be released to the successful tenderer only after the completion of the supply of the hay.
- Other terms and condition of the contract can be obtained from the office of the undersigned on any working day during the office hours up to 30-12-2020.

Sd/= Assistant Director  
Sheep Breeding Farm Poshnar

Dated:23 -12-2020

NO:AD/SBFP/Store/ Tender .2/578-81

DIPK-10822/20



# 7 US lawmakers write to Mike Pompeo on farmers' protest in India

India has called the remarks by foreign leaders and politicians on protests by farmers as "ill-informed" and "unwarranted", asserting that the matter pertains to the internal affairs of a democratic country.



A group of seven influential US lawmakers, including Indian-American Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal, have written to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, urging him to raise the issue of farmers' protest in India with his Indian counterpart. India has called the remarks by foreign leaders and politicians on protests by farmers as "ill-informed" and "unwarranted", asserting that the matter pertains to the internal affairs of a democratic country.

"We have seen some ill-informed comments...relating to farmers in India. Such comments are unwarranted, especially when pertaining to the internal affairs of a democratic country," External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Anurag Srivastava said earlier this month.

This is an issue of particular concern to Sikh Americans linked

to Punjab, although it also heavily impacts the Indian Americans belonging to other Indian states, the lawmakers said in their letter to Pompeo dated December 23.

"Many Indian Americans are directly affected as they have fam-

ily members and ancestral land in Punjab and are concerned for the well-being of their families in India. In view of this serious situation, we urge you to contact your Indian counterpart to reinforce the United States' commitment to the freedom of political speech abroad," they said.

In their letter, the lawmakers said that the US as a nation that is familiar with political protests can offer counsel to India during their current period of social disturbance.

"As national legislators, we respect the right of the government of India to determine national policy, in compliance with existing law. We also acknowledge the rights of those in India and abroad who are currently protesting peacefully against agricultural laws that many Indian farmers see as an attack on their economic security," the lawmakers said.

Thousands of farmers from Punjab, Haryana and several other states have been protesting on various borders of Delhi since November 26, seeking repeal of three farm laws enacted in September. Dubbing these laws as "anti-farmer", these farmers claim that the newly enacted legislations would pave the way for the dismantling of the minimum support price system, leaving them at the "mercy" of big corporations.

However, the government has maintained that the new laws will bring farmers better opportunities and usher in new technologies in agriculture. There have been multiple rounds of talks between representatives of the protestors and the Indian government but the logjam continues.

In addition to Jayapal, the letter has been signed by Congressmen Donald Norcross, Brendan F Boyle, Brian Fitzpatrick, Mary Gay Scanlon, Debbie Dingell and David Trone. Over the past few weeks, more than a dozen US Congressmen have expressed their concerns on the ongoing protest by the farmers in India.

Earlier this month, Congressman John Garamendi, Co-Chair of the American Sikh Caucus, along with Congressman Jim Costa and Congresswoman Shelia Jackson Lee – members of the American Sikh Caucus – sent a letter to Indian Ambassador to the US Taranjit Singh Sandhu, expressing solidarity with the protestors and defending their right to peaceful protest.

Democratic American lawmaker David Trone on Tuesday urged the Indian government to provide safety to the protesting farmers and hailed the recent offers of dialogue and a proposal from India's Supreme Court to set up mediation. —(HT)



THE TOURISM DEPARTMENT On Friday kick-started the first batch of ski courses in the world famous Gulmarg valley.

## Political rivals misusing farmers' protest to push their agenda: PM Modi

Modi says government is willing to talk to all on farm issues

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday squarely blamed those with political agenda for the deadlock in the Centre's talks with protesting farmers and asserted that his government is willing to hold dialogues with all, including those staunchly opposed to it, as long as talks are based on farm issues, facts and logic.

In a blistering speech targeting Opposition after transferring an installment of Rs 2,000 each to over nine crore farmers, Modi said when the agitation began farmers had some genuine demands like guaranteed minimum support price but people with political motives then took over and began making unrelated demands like the release of those accused of violence and making highways toll-free.

While putting up a strong defence of the three farm laws, enacted in September, he said farmers in overwhelming numbers across the country have welcomed the three Acts and listed their benefits as well during his interaction.

His government is approaching dialogues with protesting farmers with an open heart, Modi said, claiming that the parties rejected by the electorate are pushing their political agenda by misleading farmers and using their shoulders to fire at the government as they lack any logical argument against these laws.

Defeated in elections, these parties are now indulging in event management for selfies and are appearing on television for publicity, he said.

"Our decision can be tested on logic and facts. If there is any shortcoming, it should be highlighted. It is a democracy. We are not claiming that God has given us all knowledge," he added. Farm reforms became necessary because poor farmers, who are over 80 per cent, were getting poorer during rules of earlier governments, he said.

He cited the BJP's victory in panchayat elections in several states, in which farmers were the main voters and including in areas surrounding protest sites, to argue that these reforms have received support from cultivators.

Though the government is making

humble efforts to resume the dialogue, some are not letting talks happen due to political reasons and are misleading the farmers, Modi said.

Thousands of farmers, mainly from Punjab, Haryana and parts of Uttar Pradesh, are camping on

opposing policies that have existed through several governments. Why have they shifted from farmer's issues to new demands," he added.

Despite that, farmers across the country have wholeheartedly welcomed agriculture reforms, he said,



various Delhi borders for almost a month to protest against the three farm laws. At least five rounds of formal talks have failed to break the deadlock with the farmer groups refusing to accept anything less than the complete repeal of the laws.

While the government has projected these laws as major reforms for benefit of farmers, protesting unions have been saying that these legislations would leave them at the mercy of corporates by weakening the MSP and mandi systems.

The government has maintained that such apprehensions were unfounded as the MSP and mandi systems are not just continuing but also being expanded and strengthened further. Reacting to Modi's speech, several protesting union leaders said it appeared aimed at creating a divide among farmers by misleading them and urged for a concrete action plan to provide a legal guarantee on MSP and on other demands.

In his speech, Modi said, "You would have seen that when the agitation started their demand was about MSP guarantee. They had genuine issues because they were farmers. But then those with political ideology took over."

"MSP, etcetera were pushed aside and now what is happening is that they are demanding release from jail of those accused of violence... They want highways toll-free,

assuring farmers that he will not let them down.

Referring to some strong allegations and attacks made on him, Modi said politicians, who do not believe in democracy and are known in other countries as well, have used kind of language that he cannot share but he has tolerated this and will appeal to protestors to talk with the government in the interest of farmers.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi had alleged on Thursday that there was "no democracy" in India and had earlier thrown "incompetent" barb at the prime minister. Farmers' protest sites have also seen some rude remarks aimed at the prime minister and his government.

"I don't know what all they have said. I cannot even share that. Despite all this, tolerating all this and keeping my cool, I once again appeal to those who are protesting that our government is ready to discuss with them in the interest of farmers. But the discussion will be on issues, facts and logic," he said.

Some of his barbs appeared to be aimed at Left-affiliated outfits.

Those ruling Kerala for years are joining Punjab farmers for selfies and publicity but they did nothing for the mandi system in their own state, he said, claiming that many leaders have used the protests to further their own ideology. —PTI

## Muslim teenager arrested in Uttar Pradesh for walking with Hindu friend

UP's new law has been criticized by a large number of experts, who believe it is giving the police and right-wing Hindu groups power to harass Muslims

A Muslim teenager from Uttar Pradesh's Bijnor has been arrested under the state's new "anti-conversion" law after he walked home from a birthday party with his former classmate, a Dalit girl.

The 16-year-old girl has repeatedly said that all allegations of "love jihad" are completely false, and that the boy was a friend of hers.

"I have told this to the magistrate, and I will say this again. Those men had a problem with me walking with my friend. They made videos of me and are now calling it love jihad. I did nothing wrong. I went on my own free will," she told the Indian Express.

Around 10 pm on December 14, two of them were walking home from a friend's birthday party when they were allegedly chased by a group of right-wing Hindu men, beaten with sticks and questioned.

On learning that the two belong to different religions, the group forced them to go to a police station, the newspaper reported.

The FIR, apparently based on a complaint from the girl's father, said the boy "induced the girl to elope with him" with the "intention to marry and convert her."

However, the girl's father has denied all such allegations, reports The Wire.

"I trust my daughter completely. What wrong did she do? Why must she be made part of politics? Is it unlawful for a boy and a girl to walk together now?" he said.

He insisted that the local pradhan had politicized and communalized the matter. "This is all politics. They made videos of my daughter and falsely claimed that this was a case of love jihad. I have been pradhan before and was planning to contest again. But now they have shamed my daughter and polarized the village."

The Muslim boy – who the police say is 18 years old but his family says is 17 – has been charged under the new law, for abduction, and under sections of the SC/ST Act and POCSO Act.

"The accused is in judicial custody. If he is minor, they will have to produce documents to show that. We have invoked appropriate sections in this case after questioning the girl and on the basis of her father's complaint," said Arun Kumar, station house officer, Dhampur.

The arrested young man works in Dehradun as a welder's apprentice, his family said, and came back to Bijnor on December 9 because his mother was unwell.

UP's new law has been criticized by a large number of experts, who believe it is giving the police and right-wing Hindu groups power to harass Muslim men and interfaith couples. Recently, an interfaith couple were taken into custody while registering their marriage, and the woman suffered a miscarriage while at the state's 'shelter home'.

UP, which has a significant Muslim population, was the first to pass an ordinance or an executive order to tackle "love jihad." According to the ordinance, a marriage will be declared null and void if a woman converts into a religion solely for marriage. Those wishing to change their religion after their wedding would need to apply to the district magistrate a month in advance. (Agencies)

## IIM-Ahmedabad to demolish 14 dorms designed by Louis Kahn

IIM-A Director Errol D'Souza said the dorm buildings were unsafe for living now

At least 14 of the 18 student dormitories designed and built by legendary American architect Louis Kahn at the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) in Ahmadabad will be demolished.

They will be replaced with new buildings, reports The Times of India on Friday.

Kahn, who died in 1974, is one of the world's most revered architects. The modernist national assembly building (parliament building) in Dhaka was designed by him and his guiding philosophy was to represent Bangladeshi culture and heritage through a striking use of geometric shapes.

Although Kahn began working on the design in 1962, the building was not completed until 1982, eight years after his death.

The iconic structures at IIM were built in the 1960s and suffered damage over the years. Plans to restore the dormitories built on the old campus – also known as "heritage campus" – have apparently failed to yield any results, reports Scroll.in.

In a 11-page letter on Wednesday to the alumni, IIM-A Director Errol D'Souza said the dorm buildings were unsafe for living now.

"Our hearts have been ripped open whilst taking the call of doing

all it takes to preserve the plaza of the library, the faculty wings, and the classrooms, and the dorms on the edges of the complex so that we do not lose a gift bestowed on us," the letter said.

"For a few of the dorms, however, there will be a new history that we will strive to have in a relation-



ship of continuity with the surrounding buildings of Kahn rather than otherwise," it added.

D'Souza's letter also said slabs falling from the roofs of the dormitories can have damaging consequences for those living there, according to The Indian Express.

"Over the past couple of decades, the buildings have undergone dilapidation and structural deterioration," he wrote. The director further said multiple problems in the existing structures have made it "unlivable," wondering if

it was appropriate to "colonize future perceptions" of living spaces.

D'Souza also said: "We have grappled with questions as to why we should presume that the past is not changeable and why we should assume that future generations will value things in exactly the same way that past generations have.

"In today's world, our experience is that students hardly use these shared spaces as they have gravitated to virtual modes."

D'Souza's letter to the institute's alumni was sent a day before the deadline for submission of Expression of Interest to select a firm that will design the new buildings to accommodate more students. Currently, the dormitories can house 500 students and the plan is to build 800 rooms in a new hostel complex, reports said.

The decision by the institute's administration to demolish the buildings was taken even as Mumbai-based Somaya and Kalappa Consultants were working to restore it, according to The Indian Express.

Last year, the firm got a UNESCO award for its library restoration work on the campus. Somaya, one of the founders of SNK, said they were not aware of the decision. —Agencies

## Bus ride to Lahore with Vajpayee: When Kapil Dev was most gracious and Dev Anand went down memory lane

**NEW DELHI:** A host of luminaries from different fields were on the bus that took Atal Bihari Vajpayee on the historic journey from Amritsar to Lahore in 1999 but cricketer Kapil Dev was perhaps the most gracious, recalls the late prime minister's private secretary Shakti Sinha in a new book.

It took 40 minutes for the bus to go from the Indian side of the Punjab to the Pakistani side and the seat next to Vajpayee on that momentous ride was a much coveted one.

"The bus had two seats on either side of the aisle. Vajpayee was on the first seat on the left side of the bus, all by himself. Throughout the short forty-minute journey, we provided an opportunity for each member of the delegation to sit with Vajpayee and chat for a while.

"Kapil Dev came across as the most gracious, quickly moving out when it was the turn of somebody else to sit with Vajpayee. With some of the others, I had

to almost physically evict them; they shall not be named as they are not with us anymore," Sinha writes in "Vajpayee: The Years that Changed India" that hit the stands on Friday, the late leader's 96th birth anniversary.

Among the others accompanying Vajpayee on the journey were journalist Kuldip Nayar, poet Javed Akhtar, actor Dev Anand, singer Mahendra Kapoor and actor-politician Shatrughan Sinha. Sinha also has a tale to tell about the late Dev Anand, who has legions of fans in Pakistan.

When the bus reached the other side of the border, the two prime ministers, Vajpayee and Nawaz Sharif, hugged each other. Dev Anand, who stood next to them, started reminiscing about the time when he left Lahore for Mumbai.

"... (he) would have carried on till we gently guided him away," Sinha says.

The prime minister's motorcade gets a free pass on the roads but a car carrying his hearing aid does not, he says,



recounting the delay at the beginning of the journey in Delhi.

On the way to the airport in Delhi to board the flight to Amritsar, Vajpayee realised he had forgotten his hearing

device at home.

"On our way to the airport, Vajpayee turned to me and nervously told me that he had left his hearing device at home. He had been checking his pockets and

found them empty! Fortunately, we had cell phones by then, so I quickly rang back and asked for it to be sent pronto," Sinha writes.

"... fortunately for us, the PM's plane, operated by the air force, always has sufficient margin, a fact I knew by then. That knowledge gave us breathing space. We boarded but could not leave immediately since the car with the hearing aid was still on the way. But we were lucky that the traffic was light and the delay was a manageable twenty minutes," he adds.

The inaugural bus, 'Sada-e-sarhad', ran on February 19, 1999 between Delhi and Lahore, a distance of around 500 km, with three technical halts, taking a total of 14 hours.

Though Vajpayee was to travel all the way from Delhi, the plan was later modified and he boarded the bus at Amritsar airport.

Sinha, who is presently the director of Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Policy Research and International Studies, MS

University, Vadodra, also says Pakistan's then prime minister Sharif sent a word to his wife Begum Kulsoom Nawaz to drive from Islamabad to Lahore when he noticed that Vajpayee's foster daughter Namita Kaul Bhattacharya was part of the delegation.

Namita Kaul's husband Ranjan Bhattacharya and their daughter Niharika were also part of the tour. "This indicated how much Vajpayee was personally invested in the visit, raising the tenor of the occasion by a few octaves," Sinha writes

The 'bus diplomacy', as it was called in later years, was hailed as the dawn of a new era in India-Pakistan relations but proved to be a short-lived thaw in the stormy relationship between the two countries. Within months India and Pakistan were embroiled in the Kargil battle.

The over 300-page book, which consists of 10 chapters, is published by Penguin Random House India. —PTI