

Widom

Quote!

“Everything you do is triggered by an emotion of either desire or fear.”

— Brian Tracy

NEWS DIGEST

New Covid-19 Variant Detected In Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Tuesday confirmed its first case of the new coronavirus variant found in the UK after it identified the strain that spreads at a much faster pace in three samples taken from passengers who had returned from Britain.

The health department in Sindh said the samples of 12 returnees were taken for genotyping, out of which six tested positive.

“Samples of 3 UK returnees show a 95 per cent match to the new coronavirus variant from the UK in the first phase of genotyping,” it said in a tweet.

The health department said that the provincial government was tracing contacts of these patients, and all those who came in contact with them were being isolated.

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Uri Cricketer Dies Of Heart Attack

SRINAGAR: A man died of a heart attack on Tuesday while playing cricket in Uri area of north Kashmir’s Baramulla district.

35-year old Reyaz Ahmad Awan experienced chest pain while playing cricket in his native village of Dhank Syedain Uri, news agency KNS reported.

Awan, the report said, collapsed on the ground before he was rushed to nearby primary health centre (PHC) Baniyar in an unconscious state. The doctors there declared him brought dead.

Block Medical Officer (BMO), Baniyar Parvez Masoodi said Awan had suffered a heart attack due to which he passed away.

3 Held Over Minor’s Murder: Police

SRINAGAR: Police on Tuesday claimed to have solved murder case of a minor in central Kashmir’s Budgam district by arresting three accused.

On December 1, police received a written complaint from Hilal Ahmad Najar of Chewdara that his minor son Burhan was missing from his home, a police spokesperson said Tuesday.

Accordingly, he said, a case under relevant sections of law was registered in police station Beerwah and investigation was taken up.

● More On P6

Woman Killed As Car Falls Into Gorge

SRINAGAR: A woman was killed while three of her family members were injured on Tuesday in a road accident in north Kashmir’s Kupwara district.

Zoona Begum, wife of Abdul Khaliq died on the spot while three others—Naseer Ahmad, his wife Jameela Begum and Shabeena Akther—were injured when the car (JK09B-3517) they were travelling in fell into a nallah in Potushie near JNV in the Kupwara district on Tuesday morning, news agency GNS reported.

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Bandipora Man Held For Killing Wife

SRINAGAR: Police on Tuesday claimed to have solved murder case of a woman by arresting her husband from Bandipora district of north Kashmir within a week after he committed ‘crime’.

Acting on a written complaint of Abdul Rehman Matahanji of Laharwalpora Bandipora that her daughter has been murdered by her husband Shabir Ahmad Pahlou of S.K Payeen; police filed a case FIR No.177/2020 under relevant sections of law at the police station Sumbal on December 21 and started investigating the allegations, a police spokesperson said Tuesday.

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Encounter Rages On In Srinagar Outskirts

Traffic Diverted On Srinagar-Baramulla Highway

OBSERVER MONITORING DESK

SRINAGAR: An encounter broke out between militants and government forces in the Lawaypora area of the city outskirts on Tuesday evening prompting the authorities to divert traffic on the busy Srinagar-Baramulla highway.

Police, army’s 2 RR and CRPF launched a joint cordon-and-search operation in Lawaypora Hokarsar area of the city outskirts on Tuesday evening amid specific information about the presence of the militants, news agency GNS reported.

As the joint team started advances, the report said, the hiding militants fired upon them in a bid to escape from their dragnet. The joint team, reports said, returned the fire setting off an encounter.

“Essential traffic coming from Baramulla, Sopore, Gulmarg towards Srinagar is diverted via Magam- Budgam to Srinagar and vice versa in view of a security situation, inconvenience is regretted,” police said in a tweet.

Injured CRPF Officer Dies

SRINAGAR: An Assistant Sub Inspector of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) died at a hospital here on Tuesday, six days after suffering grave injuries in a grenade attack in central Kashmir’s Ganderbal district.

ASI Nitra Pal Singh succumbed to the injuries at SKIMS Soura, taking the death toll in last Wednesday’s grenade attack to two, officials said Tuesday. Earlier on December 24, a constable Mritun Joy succumbed to the wounds at the tertiary care hospital here.

Besides the two slain CRPF men, four others, including a policeman and an RDD official were injured when suspected militants lobbed a grenade towards the joint team of CRPF and police in Tawheed Chowk area of Ganderbal town on Wednesday last.

Missing SPO Held With Rifle

SRINAGAR: A week after going missing in Kulgam, a Special Police Officer (SPO) was arrested along with an AK-47 rifle in south Kashmir district on Tuesday. SPO Zakir Ahmad Malik (No. 9677/K) son of Mohammad Sikinder Malik of Hangir was arrested along with the rifle, one magazine and 24 rounds, news agency GNS reported Tuesday. He had deserted along with an AK weapon, one magazine and 30 rounds from police station Frisal on 22 December. A senior police officer confirmed the arrest and said that further investigations are underway. (GNS)

Non-Local Among 4 More Die Of Covid-19

OBSERVER MONITORING DESK

SRINAGAR: Four people, including a non-local died of coronavirus in Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday, even as the Union Territory reported 234 fresh cases of Covid-19, including 3 paramilitary men, six travellers and two minors during the last 24 hours.

Two people lost the battle with the deadly infection in Jammu division while two others died of virus in Kashmir Valley on Tuesday, officials said. Among the two victims to die in Valley, officials said, included a 63-year-old man from Rawalpura and a 40-year-old man from Gujarat, presently residing at Bemina here.

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Rs 177 Crore Bank Fraud Case

NC Leader’s Son Gets Bail Nearly A Year After Arrest

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

JAMMU: The Jammu and Kashmir High Court on Tuesday granted bail to Hilal Rather, son of a former National Conference minister, in a Rs 177 crore bank fraud case.

Hilal, son of former finance minister Abdul Rahim Rather, was arrested by the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) on January 17 for his alleged involvement in misappropriation of crores of rupees from the term loans sanctioned by J&K Bank for his ambitious township project known as Paradise Avenue at

Biden Picks Kashmir-Born Aisha In Digital Team

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

WASHINGTON: US President-elect Joe Biden on Monday announced the members of his White House Office of Digital Strategy, where Kashmir-born Aisha Shah has bagged a senior position.

Shah has been named as Partnerships Manager at the White House Office of Digital Strategy, which would be headed by Rob Flaherty, Director of Digital Strategy, according to an announcement by the Biden transition team.

Raised in Louisiana, Shah previously served as digital partnerships manager in the Biden-Harris Campaign. She currently serves as an advancement specialist for the

Smithsonian Institution. Prior to this role, Shah worked as an assistant manager on the Corporate Fund of



the John F Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, supporting the first-ever expansion of a presidential memorial.

Shah also served as a strategic communications specialist

at Buoy, an integrated marketing firm that specialises in social impact communications, as well as spitfire strategies, where she enabled nonprofits to use pop culture as a tool for social change.

Among other members of the White House Office of Digital Strategy are Brendan Cohen (Platform Manager), Maha Ghandour (Digital Partnerships Manager), Jonathan Hebert (Video Director), Jaime Lopez (Director of Platforms), Carahna Magwood (Creative Director), Abbey Pitzer (Designer), Olivia Rainsner (Traveling Content Director), Rebecca Rinkevich (Deputy Director Of Digital Strategy), Christian Tom (Deputy Director Of Digital Strategy) and

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‘Free Kashmir’ Poster Mumbai Police Files C Summary Report

MUMBAI: Police in Mumbai have submitted a C summary report before a metropolitan court here in a case filed against a woman who was accused of holding a ‘Free Kashmir’ poster during a protest held at the Gateway of India against the JNU violence in January this year, a senior police official said on Tuesday.

A C summary report is issued by the police in a matter when the criminal case was filed due to mistake of facts or the offence complained about is of a civil nature.

The C-summary report has been submitted in a case registered against Mehak Mirza Prabhu at Colaba police station, the official said.

An FIR had been registered against Prabhu at Colaba police station in south Mumbai under section 153 B (Imputations, assertions prejudicial to national integration) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC). About 2,000 people, mostly college students, had gathered at

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Ladakh Gets Separate MeT Centre

NEW DELHI: A meteorological centre was inaugurated in the Union Territory of Ladakh on Tuesday which would provide localised weather forecasts thus strengthening weather-related early warning system for the region.

At 3,500 metres, this meteorological centre is the highest such facility in India, Union Earth Sciences Minister Harsh Vardhan said at the inauguration of the facility.

He said it will provide short range (three days), medium range (12 days) and long range (one month) forecast for the two districts -- Leh and Kargil -- of the Union Territory.

The region is unique in terms of weather, climate, culture, topography with extreme temperatures, ranging from minus 40 degrees

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CCG Asks CM Yogi To Withdraw Interfaith Marriage Ordinance

OBSERVER NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR: The Concerned Citizens’ Group (CCG) led by former Union Minister Yashwant Sinha on Tuesday asked Uttar Pradesh government led by Yogi Adityanath to withdraw the ordinance on interfaith marriage and, suitably compensate the people who have suffered from its “un-constitutional enforcement”.

In an open letter to CM Yogi, the CCG, comprising former civil servants have expressed anguish over the infamous Moradabad

incident, and several similar incidents that have occurred at about the same time in Uttar Pradesh.

The letter refers to the alleged harassment of 22-year-old Rashid and his 25-year-old brother, Saleem, who were arrested in Moradabad, and released two weeks later when Rashid’s wife, Pinki, gave testimony that she had married him willingly, without any compulsion. The couple married in July 2020, the letter says were on their way to have their marriage registered on December 5 when they were

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A group of children playing on a snow covered hill in Srinagar outskirts on Tuesday, KO photo Abid Bhat

Kashmir Receives Another Snow Spell

Gulmarg Coldest At Minus 7.5 Degrees Celsius

SRINAGAR: There was moderate snowfall at most places in Kashmir on Tuesday, bringing cheer to those associated with tourism and trade as they expect business to pick up in the New Year’s Eve.

Officials said snowfall started in Srinagar around 7 am, several hours after it had begun in neighbouring Budgam and Pulwama districts. Snowfall was also going in Kulgam and Anantnag districts of south Kashmir, they said.

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Dense Fog Disrupts Flight Ops In Jammu

Jammu: Four flights to and from the Jammu airport were cancelled and seven more delayed as dense fog engulfed the region on Tuesday, a day after high-altitude areas, including the Vaishno Devi shrine, received the season’s first heavy snowfall, officials said. Jammu Airport Director Pravat Ranjan Beuria said flight operations were yet to begin due to “poor visibility” caused by foggy conditions.

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My Govt Fell After I Refused BJP Diktats: Mehbooba

Says Her Ally Wanted Rampant PSAs, Deny Militant Bodies To Families; Crackdown On Jama'at

OBSERVER MONITORING DESK

SRINAGAR: The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) president Mehbooba Mufti claimed on Tuesday that her party’s coalition government with Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) collapsed in 2018 after she refused many demands of her ally, including the denial of militants’ bodies to their families and crackdown on Jama’at-e-Islami.

Addressing her party workers and the newly elected DDC members at her party headquarters here, the former Chief Minister said that her father late Mufti Mohammad Sayeed had joined hands with the saffron party only to cage the ‘genie in a bottle’ so that Article-370 is secured. She



said despite being in coalition with the BJP, she did not compromise on her party agenda and instead got two BJP ministers dropped for rallying for the culprits of minor Kathua girl.

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Maiden DDC Polls Mark Resumption Of Electoral Process In Reorganized J&K

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

SRINAGAR: Maiden District Development Council (DDC) elections in the fag end of 2020 marked a resumption of political activity in Jammu and Kashmir after abrogation of special status and reorganisation of the erstwhile state last year.

The year 2020 began amid uncertainty as most of the

mainstream political leaders continued to be under various forms of detention following the landmark constitutional amendments of 2019.

While some leaders were released in the first two months of the year — purportedly after signing a bond not to speak against the abrogation of Article 370 — the outbreak of coronavirus pandemic hastened the release of

The administration has now taken on the responsibility of trying to collect independent candidates for the BJP and its recently formed subsidiary”

many others including Farooq Abdullah and Omar Abdullah in March.

However, PDP president Mehbooba Mufti remained in incarceration for the longest period — 14 months — and was released only in October, just ahead of the DDC polls.

The better part of the year was spent dealing with the COVID outbreak that affected over 1.19 lakh

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In new research, scientists at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis have shown that Chiari 1 malformation (common brain disorder) can be caused by variations in two genes involved in brain development.

About one in 100 children has a common brain disorder called Chiari 1 malformation, but most of the time such children grow up normally and no one suspects a problem. But in about one in 10 of those children, the condition causes headaches, neck pain, hearing, vision and balance disturbances, or other neurological symptoms.

In some cases, the disorder may run in families, but scientists have understood little about the genetic alterations that contribute to the condition.

The condition occurs when the

'Common Brain Malformation Traced To Its Genetic Roots'

lowest parts of the brain are found below the base of the skull. The study also revealed that children with unusually large heads are four times more likely to be diagnosed with Chiari 1 malformation than their peers with the normal head circumference.

The findings, published in the American Journal of Human Genetics, could lead to new ways to identify people at risk of developing Chiari 1 malformation before the most serious symptoms arise. It also sheds light on the development of the common but poorly

understood condition.

"A lot of times people have recurrent headaches, but they don't realize a Chiari malformation is the cause of their headaches," Haller said. "And even if they do, not everyone is willing to have brain surgery to fix it. We need better treatments, and the first step to better treatments is a better understanding of the underlying causes."

If people start experiencing severe symptoms like chronic headaches, pain, abnormal sensations or loss of sensation, or weakness, the malformation is treated with

surgery to decompress the Chiari malformation.

"There's an increased risk for Chiari malformations within families, which suggests a genetic underpinning, but nobody had really identified a causal gene," said senior author Gabriel Haller, PhD, an assistant professor of neurosurgery, of neurology and of genetics. "We were able to identify two causal genes, and we also discovered that people with Chiari have larger head circumference than expected. It's a significant factor, and easy to measure. If you have a child

with an enlarged head, it might be worth checking with your pediatrician."

To identify genes that cause Chiari 1 malformation, Haller and colleagues sequenced all the genes of 668 people with the condition, as well as 232 of their relatives. Of these relatives, 76 also had Chiari 1 malformation and 156 were unaffected. The research team included first author Brooke Sadler, PhD, an instructor in pediatrics, and co-authors David D. Limbrick, Jr., MD, PhD, a professor of neurosurgery and director of the Division of Pediatric Neurosurgery, and Christina Gurnett, MD, PhD, a professor of neurology and director of the Division of Pediatric and Developmental Neurology, among others.

Agencies

Office Of The Assistant Regional Transport Officer Budgam Kashmir

NOTICE



Where a application for transfer of ownership has been recieved from one. Shri : Shabir Hussain Bhat S/o: Ghulam Mohiudin Bhat R/o: Ichigam Budgam (Transferor) of LMV Wagon R. Vehicle bearing registration number JK04D - 8875. Chasis number 18654 Engine no. 930985 Model 2017. in favour of Shri.. Shabir Ahmad Bhat S/o. Abdul Hamid Bhat R/o Shankarpura Wanabal Budgam (Transferee) as well as HPA cancellation with M/S J & K Bank B/U HDFC Bank B/u Gole Market Srinagar also required.

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

No. ARTO/ BUDGAM.2036
 Dated 29/12/2020

Assistant Regional Transport officer
 Budgam Kashmir

Office Of The Assistant Regional Transport Officer Budgam Kashmir

NOTICE

Whereas an application has been recieved from one. Shri : Arshad Ahmad Bhanday S/o: Ghulam Mohammad Bhanday R/o: Beerwah Budgam owner of vehicle bearing Registration No: JK04D-6203 for cancellation of hire purchase agreement with M/S J&K Bank B/U Beerwah..

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

No. ARTO/ BUDGAM.2031
 Dated 29-12-2020

Assistant Regional Transport officer
 Budgam Kashmir

Office Of The Assistant Regional Transport Officer Budgam Kashmir

NOTICE

Whereas an application has been recieved from one. Shri : Bashir Ahmad Malik S/o: Mohammad Akbar Malik R/o: Sehpora Magam owner of vehicle bearing Registration No: JK04E-1287 for cancellation of hire purchase agreement with M/S J & K Bank B/U Magam.

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

No. ARTO/ BUDGAM.2030
 Dated 29-12-2020

Assistant Regional Transport officer
 Budgam Kashmir

Office Of The Assistant Regional Transport Officer Budgam Kashmir

NOTICE

Whereas an application has been recieved from one. Shri : Bashir Ahmad Shah S/o: Abdul Samad Shah R/o: Banpora Soibugh Budgam owner of vehicle bearing Registration No: JK04D-1342 for cancellation of hire purchase agreement with M/S Mahindra & Mahindra Finance B/U Srinagar.

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

No. ARTO/ BUDGAM.2032
 Dated 29-12-2020

Assistant Regional Transport officer
 Budgam Kashmir

Office Of The Assistant Regional Transport Officer Budgam Kashmir

NOTICE

Whereas an application has been recieved from one. Shri : Mushtaq Ahmad Mugloo S/o: Mohammad Jamal Mugloo R/o: Ichkoot Budgam owner of vehicle bearing Registration No: JK04D-8112 for cancellation of hire purchase agreement with M/S J & K Bank Ltd B/U Ichigam.

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

No. ARTO/ BUDGAM.2047
 Dated 29-12-2020

Assistant Regional Transport officer
 Budgam Kashmir

Office Of The Assistant Regional Transport Officer Budgam Kashmir

NOTICE

Where a joint application has been recieved from owner. Shri : Firdous Ahmad Dar S/o: Ghulam Mohammad Dar R/o: Mahwara Budgam (as Transferor) & Shri. Sajad Ahmad Malik S/o Abdul Ahad Malik R/o Kuthipora Chatergam Budgam,as Transferee) for transfer of Tipper Carriage route permit No.1628/Gc/ Budgam vehicle No. JK04D -0491 As well as HPA Cancellation with M/S J & K Bank B/U N.S. Pora Budgam.

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

No. ARTO/ BUDGAM. 2046
 Dated 29-12-2020

Assistant Regional Transport officer
 Budgam Kashmir

Government of Jammu & Kashmir

Directorate of Tourism, Kashmir

e-mail: ddtreg123@gmail.com

Subject: - Grant of Registration of the Proposed Travel unit under the name & style "M/s Al-Fouzan Travel Services".

PUBLIC NOTICE

Whereas, Mr. Abrar Ahmad PamporiS/o Mr. Bashir Ahmad PamporiR/o Baghi Sunder, Payeen Karan Nagar, Srinagar, Kashmir has applied in this office for Registration of his proposed Travel Unit under the name and style "M/s Al Fouzan Travel Services" situated at Kaka Sarai, Karan Nagar, Srinagar under Tourist Trade Act 1978/82/2011-12.

Whereas, the applicant has submitted State Subject, Site Plan, Affidavit, Bank Statement and Rent Deed (Sub-Registrar), Character certificate and other related documents.

Now therefore, in exercise of powers conferred on me under section 10 of Registration of Tourist Trade Act 1978/82/2011/12, before the request of the applicant is considered for registration of the unit, the matter is hereby notified for information of general Public/Financial Institutions/Banks/Organizations, etc for objection if any. The same should reach to this office with necessary objections within a period of 7 days from the publication of this notice in the local newspaper. No objections beyond a period of 7 days will be entertained and request of the applicant will be considered as per rules.

No: Reg/T/UP/1128/DTK
 Dated: 28.12.2020

Sd/-
 Deputy Director Tourism,
 Registration (Kashmir)

DIPK-11022/20

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
IRRIGATION AND FLOOD CONTROL DIVISION KUPWARA

SUBJECT:- Corrigendum

Please read this office NIT No: - 28 of 2020-21, Sr No: - 01. namely Balance Work for Construction of Distribution system by way of operational tower for Rangwar Storage Tank bearing Tender ID 2020_IFC_112015_1, the bid closing date and tender opening date is hereby extended.

S.no	Bid closing date	Tender opening date
01	04-01-2021	05-01-2021

No: -
 Dated: -

Executive Engineer
 I & FC Division Kupwara

DIPK-10980/20

Government of Jammu and Kashmir

Office of the Executive Engineer
Department of Floriculture
Kashmir.

email: exnflori@rediffmail.com Contact No: 0194-2478128.

Sub: Extension Notice No. 01

In view of poor response, the Bid Submission end / opening date (online) of technical bids in respect of e-NIT No: 73 (a) of 2020-21 Dated: 17.12.2020 invited by this office under endorsement No. EE/FDK/2285-91 dated: 17-12-2020 with regard to "Construction of Polyhouse (225 sft) at New Secretariat Lawn Srinagar/providing and fixing of iron stands for display of planting material" is hereby extended as per details given below:-

1.	Bid Submission End date & time	06/01/2021	Up to 04:00 PM
2.	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	07/01/2021	02:00 PM

Other terms and conditions shall remain same as laid down in the aforesaid e-NIT Notice.

Sd/-
 Executive Engineer,
 Floriculture Department,
 Kashmir.

No: EE/FDK/2453-54
 Dated: 28/12/2020

DIPK-10978/20

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

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

1ST FRESH SHORT TERM NOTICE INVITING TENDERS.
NIT No: - E-NIT/87/CRD OF 2020-21 R&B/ e-tendering, DATED: 28-12-2020.

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

S. No	Name of Work	Est. Cost (Rs. In Lacs)	Cost of T/ Doc. (In Rs.)	E/M (In Rs.)	Time	T&D of Opening of Bid	Class of Contractor	Major Head of Account
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	Upgradation of link road at Peer Takiya Nigeen by way of providing and fixing of cement concrete tiles.	Rs.2.97 lacs	Rs.200/-	Rs.5940/-	20 Days	05-01-2021 at 11:00 AM	DEE Class Civil	3054 M&R (addl)

Position of funds committed.

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

1.	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	28-12-2020.
2.	Period of downloading of bidding documents	FROM 29-12-2020 10:00 A.M TO 04-01-2021
3.	Bid submission Start Date	29-12-2020
4.	Bid Submission End Date	04-01-2021
5.	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	05-01-2021 at 11:00 A.M in the Office of the Executive Engineer PWD (R&B), City Roads Division Srinagar.

- Bids must be accompanied with cost of tender document in shape of introducing Treasury Challan or simply uploading a copy of necessary Treasury challan receipt in favour of Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) City Roads Division Srinagar and Earnest money / Bid security in shape of CDR/ FDR/ pledged to Executive Engineer, PWD (R&B) City Roads Division Srinagar (tender receiving authority).
- The date and time of opening of Technical Bids shall be notified on Web Site www.jktenders.gov.in and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The Financial bids of Responsive bidders shall be opened online on same Web Site in the office of Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) City Roads Division Srinagar., (Tender receiving authority).
- The bids for the work shall remain Valid for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of bids.
- The earnest money shall be forfeited, if:-
- Any bidder/tenderer withdraws his bid /tender during the period of bid validity or makes any modification in the terms and conditions of the
- Failure of Successful bidder to furnish the required performance security as specified.
- Failure of Successful bidder to execute the agreement within 28 days after fixation of contract.

NOTE: The Contractor is directed to visit the site before participating in tendering process.
 NIT/91/CRD OF 2020-21 R&B/ e-tendering.
 DATED:- 28-12-2020.

DIPK-11008/20

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

Govt proposes mandatory airbag for front passenger seat in vehicles



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI: The government on Tuesday said it has proposed to make airbag mandatory for the passenger in the front seat of a vehicle.

The step aims at improving passenger safety in case of accidents. The

road transport ministry has issued a draft notification in this regard.

"In a significant measure to boost passenger safety, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways proposes to make it mandatory that an airbag be provided for the passenger seated on the front seat of a vehicle, next to

the driver," the ministry said in a statement.

The proposed timelines for the implementation of the move is April 1, 2021, for new models and June 1, 2021, for existing models. A draft notification to this effect has been published on the ministry's website, the statement said.

Green jalebi, marriage procession: Farmers look at unique ways to grab eyeballs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI: Serving 'green jalebis' to taking out a 'baraat' (wedding procession), farmers protesting at Singhu border here are using innovative ways to communicate their grievances and demands to the central government.

A group of farmers from Mohali in Punjab have been serving special green jalebis (sweet), saying it symbolised the colour of their crops and the prosperity associated with it.

"We have been distributing green jalebis from the last few days. Nearly five quintals of the sweet are distributed everyday," Jasvir Chand, a protesting farmer, said.

"The green colour of the sweet symbolises Green Revolution as well as peace and tranquillity," Chand's companion Baldev Singh (65) said at the protest site.

"We have been peacefully protesting against the three new farm laws of the central government for over a month. Although the government has not accepted our demand, we are determined to continue the protest peacefully," he said. Notably, many curious people queued up to taste the 'green jalebi' which is usually available in golden colour.

Meanwhile, some youths from Karnal in Haryana took out a marriage procession at the protest venue to draw attention towards their agitation.



"We thought a marriage procession will be an interesting way to communicate to the people and the government our demands and issues with the farm laws," said 22-year-old Jagdip Singh from Dabri village in Karnal.

The procession with a protester wearing the full attire of a groom and sitting on a tractor passed through the crowded highway attracting lot of merriment from the protesting farmers camping there for over a month. Farmers mainly from Punjab, Haryana and Uttar

Pradesh have been camping at different border points of Delhi for over a month to demand repeal of the three agriculture laws, which were voted through in Parliament in September amid strong protests by opposition parties.

"We are requesting Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his government to give legal status to minimum support price (MSP) to empower the farmers. The government should also address our genuine concerns over the three farm laws," Chand said.

"If anyone is employed by the government, his salary is regularly revised, similarly there should be legally guaranteed purchase of crops since farmers invest not only their hard work, but also whatever scarce resources are there at their disposal," he said.

The new farm laws have been projected by the central government as major reforms in the agriculture sector that will remove the middlemen and allow farmers to sell their produce anywhere in the country.

Iran Begins Clinical Trials Of Its Own COVID-19 Vaccine: Report



AGENCIES

TEHRAN: Iran launched Tuesday the first phase of a clinical trial of a vaccine developed in the Islamic Republic, the region's country hardest hit by the pandemic, state television reported.

"The first vaccine against the coronavirus, developed by Iranian researchers, has been unveiled by injecting three people," the public broadcaster said.

The novel coronavirus has killed nearly 55,000 out of more than 1.2 million people infected in Iran, according to health ministry data. Iran has accused arch enemy the United States of hampering its access to vaccines through its tough sanctions regime. While food and medicine are technically exempt, international banks tend to refuse transactions involving Iran.

President Hassan Rouhani on Saturday said Washington had demanded that Tehran pay for the drugs through US banks and said he feared the United States would seize the money.

State television on Tuesday broadcast images at the trial launch showing two men and one woman receiving injections in the presence of the

health minister and the Iranian vice-president in charge of science and technology. It said the vaccine project was funded by the a state-run conglomerate whose president is appointed by the Iranian supreme leader, called the Execution of Imam Khomeini's Order or EIKO.

The state TV report said the three volunteers were the daughter of the president of EIKO and two high-ranking officials of the conglomerate.

The vaccine will be administered to "56 volunteers" in two doses two weeks apart, according to Iribnews, the state television site, quoting a person in charge of developing the drug.

The result would be announced 28 days after the second injection, it said.

Another Iranian vaccine, developed at the country's Razi Institute, "will receive authorisation" for the start of human trials "in the very near future," said Health Minister Saeed Namaki.

Namaki early this month said Iran had "pre-purchased" about 16.8 million vaccine doses via Covax, the mechanism for the equitable distribution of vaccines established by the UN World Health Organisation.

UK plans to ban unhealthy 'buy 1 get 1 free' food promos as part of anti-obesity drive

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

LONDON: The UK government has set out plans to ban unhealthy promotions on food and drinks high in fat, salt or sugar from April 2022 as part of a wider anti-obesity drive.

The new rules, confirmed on Monday, will prohibit retailers from offering multibuy promotions such as "buy one, get one free" or "3 for 2" offers on these products. Unhealthy promotions will also no longer be featured in key locations, such as at check-outs, store entrances, aisle ends and their online equivalents.

"We know families want to be presented with healthier choices. This is why we are restricting promotions and introducing a range of measures to make sure the healthy choice is the easy choice," said UK Public Health Minister Jo Churchill. "Creating an environment which helps everyone eat healthier foods more regularly is crucial to improving the health of the nation," she said.

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) said that promotions often appear to help shoppers save money.

However, data shows that these deals actually increase purchases of promoted products by almost 20 per cent. They encourage people to buy more than they need or intended to buy in the first place. Free refills of sugary soft drinks will also

be prohibited in the eating-out sector.

In the New Year, Public Health England's Better Health Campaign will also run new adverts on TV and online to inspire and support people to maintain a healthy weight, the DHSC said.

It warns that obesity is one of the biggest health crises the country faces; almost two thirds (63 per cent) of adults in England are overweight or living with obesity and one in three children

everyone and support people to lead healthier lives. The location of products within stores can lead to "pester power" from children and can also significantly affect people's purchases.

For example, end-of-aisle displays have been shown to increase soft drink sales by over 50 per cent. The latest announcement forms a key part of the UK government's strategy to tackle obesity and "get the nation fit and healthy".



leave primary school overweight or obese.

Obesity-related illnesses cost the National Health Service (NHS) 6 billion pounds a year.

The government says its planned changes will make supermarkets and other retailers place healthy choices for

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought to the fore the impact that obesity can have on people's health and health outcomes.

These measures will support people in achieving and maintaining a healthy weight and overall will improve the nation's health, the DHSC added.

UK plans to ban unhealthy 'buy 1 get 1 free' food promos as part of anti-obesity drive

AGENCIES

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to sell a stake in Reliance's oil and petrochemical units, a deal he had originally hoped would reduce debt and finance his high-tech pivot earlier this year.

Every Move

Investors are watching Mukesh Ambani's every move as he overhauls his empire -- with a market value of \$179 billion -- in the middle of a pandemic, wading into highly competitive industries and taking on rivals from Amazon.com Inc. to Walmart Inc. Reliance shares rose as much as 55% this year to an all-time high in September, but they've since pared gains as stakeholders look for more evidence that he can execute.

"The jury is out," said Nandan Nilekani, who co-founded Infosys Ltd. in 1981 and now serves as chairman of the Bangalore-based software services provider valued at about \$72 billion. "There's a lot of work to be done."

A spokesman for Mumbai-based Reliance Industries declined to comment for this story.

While Mr Ambani has publicly embraced his new partnerships with investors including Facebook (he and Mark Zuckerberg traded compliments during a livestreamed conversation on Dec. 15), the tycoon's fundraising spree was initially meant to be more of a Plan B. His original goal was to sell a 20% stake in Reliance's oil and petrochemicals division to Saudi Arabian Oil Co., at an enterprise value of \$75 billion, implying a \$15 billion valuation for the stake.

PM Meets Two Warring Kerala-Based Syrian Church Groups Over Century-Old Dispute

PM Modi met three senior priests of the church at his office, a day after discussions with representatives of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church.

KOCHI, KERALA: Prime Minister Narendra Modi today held discussions with representatives of the Jacobite Syrian Christian Church in New Delhi in an attempt to resolve the century-old dispute between two Kerala based Syrian church groups.

He met three senior priests of the church at his office, a day after discussions with representatives of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church.

The two church groups issued separate statements today, hailing their meeting with PM Modi as "cordial and fruitful".

The feud between the two factions intensified following the implementation of a 2017 Supreme Court order, granting the Orthodox faction possession of over 1,000 churches and properties attached to them.

Following their separate meetings with the PM over two days, representatives of the two

groups met at Mizoram Bhawan in New Delhi for the lunch hosted by Governor PS Sreedharan Pillai, who arranged their meetings with PM Modi.

The Jacobite faction said their delegates drew the attention of PM Modi to the "denial of religious freedom, freedom of worship and justice that the Jacobite Syrian Church is undergoing" and sought his intervention to end the dispute.

In its statement, they described the Orthodox faction as a "dissident group" who separated from them and were "creating issues by misusing" a 2017 top court order in a church dispute case.

"The faithful of the Jacobite Church are evicted from their churches and even denied burial rights in their cemeteries," they said. It said that disputes, especially related to faith, can not be resolved through endless

litigation and there should be other means to find solutions to the issues.

"The Hon'ble Prime Minister's involvement is valuable", the Jacobite faction said in the statement.

The Church said their delegation appealed to PM Modi to "intervene to protect" their "constitutional and fundamental rights".

"Also ensuring the democratic rights of believers of this ancient church in India, namely Jacobite Syrian Christian Church, is needed", the statement said.

The Jacobite church said PM Modi carefully listened to their grievances and assured he would do his best for an amicable solution.

"Hon'ble Prime Minister Modiji himself is a person who always cares for the marginalised. We feel today's meetings were a step in the right direction", the

statement added.

The Orthodox faction said a key factor presented before the PM was the July 3 2017 Supreme Court decision, which determined that there should be a united church, based on the 1934 constitution of the Malankara Orthodox Church.

As a public trust, there could not be a division or separation of churches within the church, it said in a statement.

The Orthodox faction said the prime minister gave a patient hearing to various issues, and while aware of the ancient origins of the Malankara Orthodox Church, expressed hope that a reconciliation formula should be worked out on the basis of the Supreme Court judgement.

Hw also expressed his sincere commitment to ensure that there is a larger peace and brotherhood among the faithful, the Orthodox faction said.

Censor Board Denied Certificate To Movie On JNU Agitation: Producer

Aryadan Shoukath, the film's producer-script-writer, said the CBFC officials here did not point out any reason for denying the certification

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

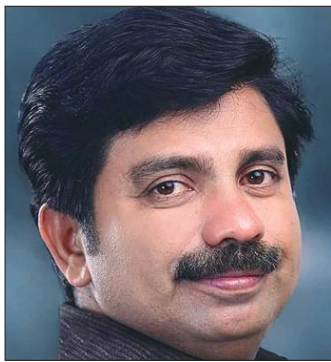
Malayalam film Varthamanam, set in the backdrop of students' protest held in Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) in New Delhi early this year, has been denied permission for screening by the Censor Board of Film Certification's (CBFC) regional office here.

Directed by noted filmmaker Sidhartha Siva with award winning actress Parvathy Thiruvoth in the lead role, the movie revolves around the journey of a Keralite woman who goes to the JNU campus from the home state for her research studies.

Aryadan Shoukath, the film's producer-script-writer, said the CBFC officials here did not point out any reason for denying the certification.

He also said the movie would be submitted to the revising committee of the Censor Board

in Mumbai for certification this week itself. "The CBFC officials here just informed us that the film has to be submitted to the



revising committee. We still do not know why the movie is denied the certification," Mr Shoukath, who is also a Congress leader, told news agency Press Trust of India.

The award-winning script writer said he had carried out several months of research and

studies before penning the script and spent several days in Delhi to get first-hand experience of the culture and lifestyle in JNU campus.

"We cannot send the movie for any award this time if we do not get the Censor Board clearance before December 31," he said.

Mr Shoukath suspected that the nod for screening was denied on political grounds, citing a recent tweet of a censor board member, who is also the state vice president of SC Morcha of the BJP.

"Advocate V Sandeep Kumar, a censor board member, recently tweeted that the permission was denied as Aryadan Shoukath was its script writer and producer. Now a days, censor board has several political appointees who have no basic knowledge of cinema," he said.

Mr Shoukath had also uploaded the screenshot of the controversial tweet of the regional censor board member on his Facebook page.

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Lying about Kashmir

A story published in a magazine Sunday Guardian on December 27 about a marriage between a J&K girl Suman Devi and a Maharashtrian Army man Ajit Patil has claimed that before the scrapping of Article 370 no Kashmiri girl could marry outside the former state and that "only Pakistani and Kashmiri boys were allowed to marry Kashmiri girls". The story adds that Devi and Patil are now man and wife, "but that wouldn't have been possible if Article 370 wasn't scrapped from Jammu and Kashmir". Ajit is also hailed as the "first son-in-law of Kashmir". Nothing can be farther from the truth and that a magazine would give this patently fake news a pride of place on its website is deplorable. A formal publication is expected to give their readers a rigorously fact-checked story. It is not social media where every account holder is a publisher and can post anything. But stories like the one about the marriage between Devi and Ajit and using it to peddle a patent lie on Kashmir is a graver violation of ethics and professionalism than even the fake news on social media.

As for the truth about the marriages between Kashmiris and outsiders, they used to take place always. And even the consequent loss of family property by a woman marrying outside J&K, a line of argument against Article 370 plied by a vocal section of opinion in India, is not based on fact. The truth is that the woman didn't lose property rights. This is something that the J&K High Court had settled a long time ago. The former chief minister Omar Abdullah is on record to have said that his sisters, who are married outside the state, own property in Kashmir as much as he does.

According to the High Court order in 2002, the Kashmiri women would not lose their residency rights if they marry a man from another state. Also, a Pakistan man wouy not get Kashmiri citizenship if he married a Kashmiri woman. The case titled State and others vs Dr Susheela Sawhney and others was settled by a full bench of High Court in October 2002 by striking down the provision of the permanent residency law whereby the women marrying outsiders would lose their permanent resident status. The judgement read: 'In view of the majority opinion, we hold that a daughter of a permanent resident marrying a non-permanent resident will not lose the status of permanent resident of the state of Jammu and Kashmir.' Later the judgement was reproduced in the document prepared by the Lok Sabha Secretariat.

But despite these facts, a narrative persists that Kashmiri women lost their right to property when they married non-state subjects. The reason for this is the propaganda designed to achieve political ends and the false reporting carried by a section of media that manipulates and shapes a hostile public opinion about the region. It is thus important that such false reporting about Kashmir is called out.

OTHER OPINON

No room for complacency

In the past week, India has, on average, reported 292 new Covid-19 deaths every day, and 21,072 new infections daily — both the lowest in around half a year. Since the peak of India's first wave in mid-September, both these numbers have dropped nearly 80%. Also in the last week, the positivity rate — the proportions of samples tested that return positive for Sars-CoV2 — is at the lowest ever. This is a key metric key in determining how widespread the virus is in a community. According to the World Health Organization, if the positivity rate remains five per cent or below for two weeks, a region can be said to be keeping its outbreak under control. India's positivity rate has been below this threshold for 45 days now — a remarkable feat for a country of this size.

On the other hand, the grand exercise to vaccinate more than 300 million people by summer appears to be only days away with drug regulators expected to soon take a decision on emergency approvals for vaccines. On Monday, officials in four states carried out vaccination drills, testing arrangements for the first phase of the drive. The calm waters that India's outbreak is in right now should not be taken as a sign that the tide has turned in the battle against the disease. States are tracking down passengers who have recently returned from the United Kingdom (UK), where a new and more transmissible virus variant has been discovered.

On Monday, it emerged that some of them have tested positive for the variant. This serves as a warning sign to not let the guard down. Even if 300 million people are vaccinated by summer in India, it would mean that 75% of the country's population remains vulnerable.

Hindustan Times

Why Deny the Benefits of Progressive Central Laws in J&K?

RFCTLARR Act , PoA Act, FRA, RTI Act not implemented in toto

Raja Muzaffar Bhat

One of the reasons given by the Narendra Modi government for making Article 370 redundant was that the "special status" had deprived the people of Jammu and Kashmir of various rights that the rest of India enjoyed, as central laws were not applicable in the state which is now a Union Territory (UT) . It is now more than a year since several central laws have been extended to Jammu & Kashmir but people are yet to get the benefits of these laws especially those laws which are very progressive and pro-people.

Through this piece I will explain in detail how liberal and pro-people legislations like Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency under Land Acquisition Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act (RFCTLARR Act 2013), Forest Rights Act (FRA 2006) , Scheduled Castes and Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 or even Right to Information Act (RTI) are not implemented on the ground.

More than 7 years back, when the Congress led UPA-II came up with Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency under Land Acquisition Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act (RFCTLARR Act 2013), it was neither extended to J&K nor was a similar law enacted by JK Govt. From 2013 onwards, the ultimate sufferers have been people of J&K especially those agrarian families whose land and property was acquired for various developmental projects like highways, road widening, construction of dams, power projects, defence estates etc

Successive Governments also Responsible

Affected people in towns, cities and villages whose land, commercial establishments and residential houses came under alignment of various developmental projects have been demanding fair compensation for the last many years but successive Governments in J&K were adamant to replace the J&K Land Acquisition Act 1934 for unknown reasons. I am not only blaming the present BJP lead Modi Govt for this as successive state Govt's in J&K are also very much responsible for not repealing JK Land Acquisition Act 1934 in past. Affected farmers protested over this several times but nobody paid any attention towards them. J&K RTI Movement too has been advocating for a robust land acquisition law in J&K right from 2012 onwards, when center was drafting the RFCTLARR Bill. I have written almost two dozen columns on this subject during the last 8 years, but neither NC-Congress Govt nor PDP- BJP Government took steps to extend RFCTLARR Act 2013 to J&K nor was similar state law enacted by J&K legislature. I even met with the former Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti when she was in power.

86 year old law repealed

The archaic J&K Land Acquisition Act 1934 enacted during Maharaja Hari Singh's period got automatically repealed after abrogation of Article 370. The benefits of this law are yet to reach the affected people of J&K. Government is denying acquiring land under new law in Budgam district where farmers are losing 3700 kanals (480 acres) of agricultural land. The same is coming in the alignment of Srinagar Ring Road project. In most of the cases due to efflux of time, the notification issued under JK Land Acquisition Act 1934 almost 4 years back stands lapsed. This has been authenticated by the Deputy Commissioner Budgam as well in his official communication with Divisional Commissioner Kashmir in May this year vide letter No: DCB/LAS/20/300-10 Dated: 18.05.2020. Nobody is ready to listen to the affected farmers while on the other hand Government claims to be saviors of farmers and kissans. J&K Govt wants to conclude the land acquisition proceedings under an outdated and repealed law which doesn't apply to J&K anymore. This is unacceptable to affected farmers.

Ring Road Project

PM Narendra Modi in May 2019 inaugurated two Ring Road projects in J&K aimed at decongesting traffic in Jammu and Srinagar cities. In Jammu, around 400 acres (3200 kanals) of land has already been acquired for a 58-km highway. The



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work on the project has been going on. Affected farmers have been denied fair compensation as the proceedings were undertaken under JK Land Acquisition Act 1934 plus the stamp rates in Jammu district were very low. The land acquisition process has been completed there. For Srinagar Ring Road, 600 acres (4800 kanals) of agricultural land is going to be acquired for 62-km highway connecting Pulwama with Ganderbal via Budgam. Srinagar Ring Road will cross through Pampore, Wathoora Chadoora, Budgam, Dharmuna, Narbal and then pass via Srinagar's western outskirts in Rambir Garh and enter Ganderbal after crossing the Srinagar Bandipora road. Affected people, especially the farmers in Budgam and some other districts under the banner of Ring Road Land Owners Welfare Committee have been demanding fair compensation from 2017 onwards. There were legal issues in the past but now the Government can invoke the fair compensation law but they seem to be reluctant.

Old Notification has lapsed

Massive urbanization and population growth have led to shrinking of farmlands in Kashmir. The land which was sold for Rs 80 lakhs an acre (Rs 10 lakhs / kanal) a decade back is now sold @ Rs 5 to 6 crores / acre. The land rates around Budgam district have gone very high due to its better connectivity with Srinagar city. The authorities on the other hand are trying to acquire the same for a meager compensation. After abrogation of article 370, we lost several state institutions and good laws like J&K RTI Act 2009, but Right to Fair compensation, Forest Rights Act (FRA-2006) and SC ST prevention of atrocities act 1989 are few central laws that could have been beneficial to us. It seems authorities at helm don't want to give the benefits of these laws to people.

In Jammu, district land for Jammu Ring Road project has already been acquired for peanuts and some months back, one affected land owner, Harbans Lal committed suicide at Bishnah. People are losing apple orchards, plum orchards, paddy fields and vegetable farms in Budgam. In other districts like Pulwama and Srinagar authorities have almost completed the land acquisition proceedings for Srinagar Ring Road project. In these districts, the affected farmers were not much in number, but in Budgam district this got delayed and final awards of many villages have not been finalized and thus the Government could not take possession of the land. During the same time J&K's Land Acquisition Act 1934 got repealed post article 370 abrogation and from October 31st 2019 Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency under Land Acquisition Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act (RFCTLARR Act 2013) got applicable in J&K.

The authorities want to take possession of the land by invoking provisions of old law (JK Land Acquisition Act 1934). This is a completely ridiculous and unfair practice

which the affected farmers are opposing. In some cases the High Court of J&K has stayed the land acquisition proceedings and Government has been directed through an interim order to issue fresh notification in case farmers continue to be in possession of land. The respondents are not even filing the counter statement before the High Court especially in cases of Ali Mohammad Akhoun V/S State of J&K and Abdul Salam Bhat V/S State of J&K.

Awards to be made within 2 yrs

Many affected families in Budgam have been paid some part of the compensation by the district collector in past but this is an advance money which can be paid to affected persons as per the repealed JK Land Acquisition Act 1934. Authorities call it a tentative award, but there is no mention of this word in any land acquisition law. Award means final award only which was awaited but has got automatically lapsed even under the provisions of section 11-B of erstwhile J&K Land Acquisition Act 1934 samvat 1990 which reads as "Collector shall make award under section 11 within a period of 2 years from the date of the publication of the declaration". In case of Budgam it is almost 4 years now since the land acquisition notification under section 4 and 6 was published (March 2017, August 2017 respectively)

Taking this into consideration, land acquisition proceedings in almost 20 villages have lapsed and the Deputy Commissioner has sent a detailed list to the Divisional Commissioner Kashmir. Section 24 sub section 1 & 2 of Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act -RFCTLARR Act 2013 also has a similar provision which reads as:

"Notwithstanding anything contained in this Act, in any case of land acquisition proceedings initiated under the Land Acquisition Act, 1894, — (a) where no award under section 11 of the said Land Acquisition Act has been made, then, all provisions of this Act relating to the determination of compensation shall apply.

Pertinently, the 1894 land acquisition act was applicable across India (except J&K) prior to enactment of 2013 Right to Fair compensation law. In our case, 1894 law can be equated with J&K Land Acquisition Act 1934.

There are some villages where not even a single penny has been taken as compensation by the farmers like villages of Wathoora and Buchroo and in such cases Government has to invoke the new land acquisition act by issuing a fresh notification but it seems Government isn't ready to do that. On the other hand, Financial Commissioner Revenue some months back okayed the awards sent by the present DC Budgam which is completely illegal as the awards have lost their validity due to time efflux, plus JK Land Acquisition Act 1934 having been repealed.

Termination of Contract

Infrastructure company namely M/S RAMKY Infra was allotted the contract for Srinagar Ring Road project after necessary bidding process. The Letter of Award (LoA) was issued to them on March 5th 2018 by National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) which is the intending agency. On December 7th 2019, M/S RAMKY Infra gave Termination of Contract (ToC) notice to NHAI as the Government failed to acquire the land from the farmers especially in Budgam district. As mentioned above, the then Deputy Commissioner Budgam has clearly intimated the Government that notification issued in 2017 has lapsed in case of almost 20 villages as final awards could not be finalized even after more than 3 years which otherwise has to be completed within 2 years as per section 11-B of JK land acquisition act 1934 (now repealed).

Conclusion

The Govt instead of issuing fresh notification for Srinagar Ring Road under Right to Fair compensation law, is adamant to conclude land acquisition proceedings under an outdated and repealed law (JK Land Acquisition Act 1934). This is completely unjust and a legal fraud which is unacceptable to people. Similarly, before rolling out Forest Rights Act 2006 (FRA) in J&K, Government wanted to evict forest dwellers by invoking Indian Forest Act of 1927 which is a 93-year-old law. FRA 2006 ensures scheduled tribes and other traditional forest dwellers living in a forest area for 3 generations or more to get right over the forest land for agriculture and allied activities but before this law could be enforced on ground Forest officials started issuing eviction notices to people living near forests especially in district Budgam. In village Kanidajan, 10,000 apple trees were axed and till date no action has been taken against the accused. Action could have been taken against accused officials under the Scheduled Castes and Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 popularly known as Prevention of Atrocities Act (POA) but this law is all not being rolled out. In case of RTI Act 2005, the Public Information Officers (PIOs) continue to deny information to applicants and the Govt has not even held a single training workshop for officials. Aggrieved have now moved to Central Information Commission (CIC) against PIOs of DC office Budgam, Rural Development Department Civil Secretariat and Services Selection Board (SSB) as JK State Information Commission (SIC) was shut down post 370 abrogation.

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

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Can Academics Afford Political Neutrality?

Ashok Swain

Participation in the political debate is not the academic merit of a researcher or a professor in the eyes of the employer. Rather, those academics who openly express their views on politics are often seen as intellectual lightweights by their peers and as troublemakers by their superiors

The year 2020 has come to an end. It has been an incredibly harsh year, the world is not only facing a once-a-century pandemic, but also a collapsing global economy, an increasing number of armed conflicts, political instability, and many popular protest movements in different parts of the world.

Pandemic enforced global lockdown has however some unintended positive side effects. One of them is that many home-confined academics have become more active than before in participating in public debates by writing opinion pieces and blogs, increasing their media appearances and using social media to voice their views, and regularly contributing to podcasts and vlogcasts.

Greater research-policy interface

For some time, there has been an increasing societal expectation of a greater research-policy interface. While taxpayers demanding to get a certain direct return for the money they are paying to academic institutions, university administrations are also encouraging their professors and researcher to actively take part in the public discourse and policy dialogues to fulfil their ‘contributions to society’ objectives.

Despite all these, there is no such official incentive to do this as to get the promotions and tenures, academics are invariably judged by their classroom teaching and publications in research journals, not for their contributions to the policy community or participation in public discourse.

In the absence of any direct benefit from the workplace, some academics do engage with the policy community as it helps to raise additional research funding and get consultancy assignments from the government, nongovernment and inter-government agencies.

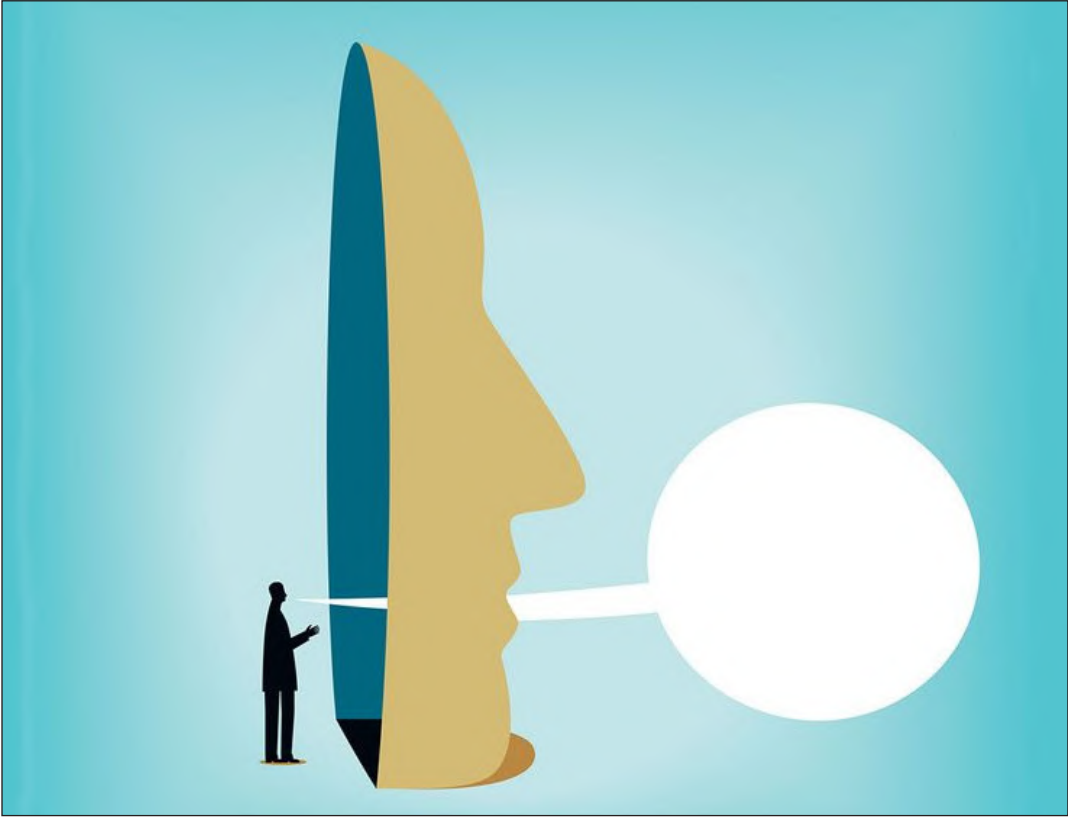
These implicit incentives have helped somewhat to increase the involvement of academics in policy-making platforms in areas like development, environment, education, climate change, migration, public health, and gender, etc. The year 2020 has surely witnessed an upsurge in this trend.

Reluctance to join political debates

While the hesitation to participate in policy debates has been melting gradually, academics are still reluctant to join the political debates. Unless an academic has political ambition, the disincentives are too many for her or him to enter the political-debate minefield.

Participation in the political debate is not the academic merit of a researcher or a professor in the eyes of the employer. Rather, those academics who openly express their views on politics are often seen as intellectual lightweights by their peers and as troublemakers by their superiors.

Established profiling of an academic lead to this unfortunate conclusion as they are expected to behave in a certain manner, and maintaining a façade of intellectual neutrality is a very important trait in that. Taking part in political debate not only gets construed as being politically partisan but also it opens up these opinionated academics



to criticism, abuse, and even threats from the supporters of the opposite political spectrum.

While ruling establishments are generally nonchalant over what gets published as ‘scientific’ publications, but they can be very vindictive if academics express their critical opinions by writing opinion pieces or giving media interviews, or using social media platforms.

Academic institutions, though formally encourage their employees to participate in public debates they lack resources as well as willingness to protect politically opinionated professors and researchers from motivated criticisms and retributions.

Silence in the name of academic neutrality

Remaining silent in the name of academic neutrality is probably fine as long as the politics and politicians are adhering to established norms of governance and respecting constitutional proprieties, but not when ethno-nationalist populists are on the rampage and polarising the societies and countries to capture or remain in power.

Those are wrong who expect universities to be ‘free from politics’ and only become ‘sites of learning’ when the country is going through a political metamorphosis. Is it acceptable for a political scientist to remain silent in the name of academic neutrality while the political establishment is openly and systematically destroying the basic principles of liberty, equality, and justice in a country?

Or, for a historian to keep quiet when a politi-

cal group is manufacturing history not based on historical evidence but for its narrow divisive politics? Or, for a scientist to look the other way when the government is actively undermining scientific inquiry and forcing the people to accept national and sectarian myths as science?

Or, is it OK for a professor of medicine to be tongue-tied when a ruling dispensation openly promotes ‘voodoo’ medicines while belittling the contributions of medical science and its breakthroughs.

Political discourse is too important to be left to a group that makes a profit out of it. While in many countries media is not free and independent, the political debates and discussions are limited to politicians and professionally biased political commentators.

Thus, society needs its academics to take part in political discussion and education, using whatever platforms available to them to be able to present an independent as well as impassive analysis of it.

If the politics of a country goes seriously wrong, all other contributions academics are making or hoping to make by maintaining so-called academic neutrality will become useless.

Thus, even if it is time-consuming and perilous, academics should rather respect their moral and professional conscience and actively contribute to the political debate of the country.

Gulf News

The New Variant

Coronavirus new variant genomics, researcher answers key questions

Lucy van Dorp

A new variant of SARS-CoV-2, the virus which causes COVID-19, is thought to be driving increased transmission of the disease in parts of the UK. The government has placed some regions including London under new, stricter coronavirus restrictions, known as Tier 4. People in Tier 4 areas will not be able to gather with anyone outside their household for Christmas, while those in the rest of the country can only gather on Christmas Day itself.

Boris Johnson, the prime minister, and his chief scientific advisors said that the new variant could increase transmission of COVID-19 by as much as 70% and increase the R or reproduction number by 0.4.

What’s the significance of this new discovery? The Conversation asked Lucy van Dorp, a microbial genomics researcher and an expert in the evolution of pathogens, some key questions about what we know at this point in time.

What do we know about this new variant?

The new UK variant, known as VUI-202012/01 or lineage B.1.1.7, was first announced by Matt Hancock, the health secretary on December 14. It was subsequently confirmed by Public Health England and the UK’s COVID-19 sequencing consortium. Screening back through databases of SARS-CoV-2 the first sample was taken in the county of Kent on September 20.

The variant carries 14 defining mutations including seven in the spike protein, the protein that mediates entry of the virus into human cells. This is a relatively large number of changes compared to the many variants we have in circulation globally.

To date, genetic profiles – or genomes – of this variant have been largely sequenced and shared from the UK but include some in Denmark and two cases in Australia. There have also been reports of a case in the Netherlands. These countries all have very large genome sequencing efforts and it is very possible that these observations do not reflect the true distribution of this variant of the virus, which could exist undetected elsewhere. We will know more as more genomes are generated and shared.

Thanks to the efforts of data sharing, genomic surveillance and COVID-19 test

results in the UK, it seems that this variant is now starting to dominate over existing versions of the virus and that it may be responsible for an increasing proportion of cases in parts of the country, particular in regions where we also have rapidly expanding case numbers.

It is always very difficult to disentangle cause and effect in these cases. For example increases in the appearance of certain mutations can be due to viral lineages carrying them rising in frequency just because they happen to be the ones present in an area where transmission is high, for example due to human activities or choice of interventions.

Though this is still a possibility, there are clearly enough concerning observations so far for this variant to warrant very careful characterisation, surveillance and interventions to curb transmission.

Is it more dangerous?

Chris Whitty, the chief medical officer, stated clearly that there was no evidence to date that this variant alters disease severity, either in terms of mortality or the seriousness of the cases of COVID-19 for those infected. Work is underway to confirm this.

How do virus mutations happen?

Mutations are a natural part of virus evolution. In the case of SARS-CoV-2, these mutations may arise due to random errors during virus replication, be induced by antiviral proteins within infected people, or via genetic shuffling – known as recombination. Though signs of recombination are not currently detected in SARS-CoV-2.

Most viral mutations are expected to have no impact. For example, when our team assessed individual mutation replacements in more than 50,000 genomes from the first wave of the pandemic, we detected none that significantly altered viral fitness – the ability of the virus to survive and reproduce.

However, every so often a mutation, or in this case a particular combination of mutations, may strike lucky and offer the virus a new advantage. Viruses carrying these combinations of mutations may then increase in frequency by natural selection given the right epidemiological environment.

Where did the variant come from?

Right now, we don’t know. To date, scientists have not identified any closely related viruses to support the theory that the variant had been introduced from abroad. The patterns of mutations observed are

we should be reassured that vaccines stimulate a broad antibody response to the entire spike protein, so it is anticipated that their efficacy will not be significantly hampered by mutations. This is already being tested.

more supportive of an extended period of adaptive evolution most likely in the UK based on current data.

Similar patterns of mutation to these have been observed in the evolution of SARS-CoV-2 in chronically infected patients with weaker immune systems. The current hypothesis is that such a scenario of chronic infection, in a single patient, may have played a role in the origin of this variant. This will continue to be investigated.

How many variations of SARS-CoV-2 have we found?

There are many thousands of lineages of SARS-CoV-2 which differ on average by only a small number of defining mutations. It remains true that SARS-CoV-2 currently in global circulation have little genomic diversity. Subtleties in the mutations carried in different lineages can, however, be very useful for reconstructing patterns of transmission.

As an example, work early in the pandemic used lineage assignments to identify at least a thousand introductions of SARS-CoV-2 into the UK.

Why is this one different?

It is important to note that many of the mutations defining the UK variant have been observed in SARS-CoV-2 before and even sometimes quite early in the pandemic.

Yet the UK variant, or lineage, is defined by an unusual number and combination of mutations. One of these mutations, N501Y, has previously been shown to increase binding of the virus to receptors in our cells. N501Y was first sequenced in a virus in Brazil in April 2020 and is current-

ly associated with a SARS-CoV-2 variant also rising in frequency in South Africa – an independent lineage from B.1.1.7 that is also warranting concern.

The particular deletions identified in the spike protein of B.1.1.7 have appeared in multiple other lineages of the virus at increasing frequency and are also observed in chronic infections where they may alter antigenicity - recognition by immune antibodies. These deletions may also be associated with other mutations in the binding region of the coronavirus spike protein, including those observed in infections among farmed mink and a mutation shown to play a role in the virus’s ability to evade the immune system in humans. B.1.1.7 also harbours a truncated ORF8 gene, with deletions in this region previously associated with decreased disease severity.

The functional effect of these mutations and deletions, particularly when in the combination reported in B.1.1.7, are still to be determined. The high number of mutations and the recent increase in prevalence of this particular variant, together with the biological relevance of some of the mutation candidates, emphasises the need for in-depth study.

What does this mean for the vaccine?

At the moment we don’t know. Though we should be reassured that vaccines stimulate a broad antibody response to the entire spike protein, so it is anticipated that their efficacy will not be significantly hampered by mutations. This is already being tested.

However, there is an increasing body of evidence that other species of seasonal coronaviruses exhibit some ability to escape immunity over longer time periods.

It is therefore conceivable that we may reach a point where we are required to update our COVID-19 vaccines, as we do for influenza, to reflect the variants in circulation at the time. It’s too early to say if this will be the case now, but extensive genome sequencing, data sharing, and standardised reporting of variants will be vital to inform these efforts.

By arrangements with
The Conversation

18 KAS Officers ...

Choudhary, Rifat Arif, Ghulam Mohammad Dar, Ravinder Nath Sadhu, Shah nawaz Bukhari, Nazir Ahmad Baba, Mohammad Hanief Malik, Nazir Ahmad Lone, Kuldeep Kumar, Abdul Rashu Bhat, Attam Dev Singh, Muhammad Ayub and Bharti Sharma—(KNO)

Mumbai Police ...

the iconic Gateway of India on January 7 to protest against the attack by masked goons on the Jawaharlal Nehru Campus in Delhi as well as the Citizenship (Amendment) Act and the proposed National Register of Citizens.

Images and videos of the woman, later identified as Prabhu, holding a large poster with the words "Free Kashmir" written in big bold letters, had gone viral on social media.

In a related development, police on Monday filed a chargesheet against 36 persons in connection with the Gateway of India protest, another senior police officer said.

Names of some city-based lawyers and activists who were part of the protest were mentioned in the chargesheet. So far, 29 accused persons in the case have been granted bail by a court.—Agencies

Ladakh Gets ...

Celsius in Drass to scanty average precipitation of 10 centimetres annually, which makes the region a distinct cold desert, he said.

Ladakh also experiences various kinds of extreme weather events like cloud bursts, flash floods, glacial lake outbursts, avalanches and drought.

"To avert losses due to such weather events in the future, the Government of India felt the need to establish a meteorological Centre at Leh to strengthen weather-related early warning system in Ladakh. At 3,500 metres, Meteorological Centre, Leh, will be the highest meteorological centre in India," Vardhan said.

The centre will also give weather forecasts about tourist places such as Nubra, Changthang, Pangong Lake, Zaskar, Kargil, Drass, Dha-Baima (Aryan valley), Khalsi, he said.

Some important services are highway forecast, forecast for mountaineering, trekking, agriculture, flash flood warning, information on gusty winds, low and high temperatures.

"Keeping in mind the geo-strategic importance, harsh environment, changing climate and vulnerabilities to various natural hazards and disasters affecting the region adversely, the government felt the need to open a state-of-the-art meteorological centre in Leh," the Union Minister added.

IMD Director General Mrutunjay Mohapatra said the new centre will help augment the weather services.

Ladakh has four Automatic Weather Stations (AWS), two each in Leh and Kargil, of which one is at Drass, the coldest place in India.

To improve the network of observations, IMD plans to install more AWSs next year at the remotest of places like Nubra, Zaskar, Changthang, Parkachik and others, thus covering the whole of Ladakh, Mohapatra said.

To begin with, the India Meteorological Department established a surface observatory at Leh for reporting daily meteorological parameters like pressure, humidity, temperature, snowfall, etc. With the availability of quality data from Ladakh, IMD will generate city-specific forecasts based on numerical models, the MeT department said.

Maiden DDC ...

people and claimed nearly 1900 lives. Anti-corruption agencies intensified probes against mainstream political leaders as Farooq Abdullah had properties worth Rs 11.86 crore attached by the Enforcement Directorate in connection with the JK Cricket Association scam while youth PDP leader Waheed Para went behind bars for alleged links with militants.

For the record, Para won the DDC polls, defeating his nearest rival from BJP by a huge margin.

High speed internet on mobile devices remained suspended in most parts of Jammu and Kashmir even after passage 16 months since abrogation of Article 370 as the administration still feels that allowing the service poses a threat to sovereignty and integrity of India.

On the administration front, BJP leader Manoj Joshi replaced Girish Chander Murmu as the Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir amid rumours of a rift between the latter and Chief Secretary of the union territory B V R Subrahmanyam.

But the successful conduct of the DDC elections was the highlight of 2020.

However, within hours of final results being declared, opposition parties charged the union territory administration of luring independents to support the BJP or its proxies.

Seven mainstream political parties — NC, PDP, People's Conference, Awami National Conference, People's Movement CPM and CPI — cobbled an alliance under the name of People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) with Farooq Abdullah as its head.

The main purpose of forming the alliance was to strive for restoration of the special status of Jammu and Kashmir. Even before the alliance could take baby steps, the DDC elections were announced and the PAGD was expected to boycott. But the alliance took the electoral plunge as a grouping.

The results were along the expected lines with minor surprises here and there. The PAGD bagged 110 seats, Kashmir predominantly voted for the PAGD candidates with BJP bagging three of the 140 seats while Apni Party of Altaf Bukhari winning few others. However, the three wins for BJP were a massive shot in the arm for the saffron party as it marked its first victory in any election where the National Conference and the PDP were also taking part.

On the other hand Hindu-dominated districts in Jammu region and Doda district gave a resounding mandate to the BJP. In fact, 63 of the 75 seats won by the BJP came from six districts of Jammu, Kathua, Samba, Udhampur, Reasi and Doda.

However, the BJP faced a blank in Poonch and managed just three seats each in Rajouri, Kishtwar and Ramban districts — a performance below par compared 2014 assembly elections.

"The administration has now taken on the

responsibility of trying to collect independent candidates for the BJP and its recently formed subsidiary," National Conference leader Omar Abdullah said.

"It seems the government does not have enough to do and has branched out in to this line of work as well," Omar said about wooing of independent DDC members.

Independents emerged as the third largest entity in the DDC polls, bagging 50 seats. The BJP with 75 seats and the National Conference with 67 were the top two parties.

"There are some disturbing reports about interference in democracy, in peoples' verdict, wherein the government of the day is acting in a partisan manner... facilitating moves by some people to attract independents towards them," PAGD spokesman and Peoples Conference chairman Sajad Lone said.

Lone said the government should desist from humiliating the "great verdict" of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

"History is replete with examples that those who tried to humiliate the verdict of the people, they end up with a disaster," he added.

While DDC elections in the rest of the country have become a norm for a long time now, residents of Jammu and Kashmir had their first experience of directly electing district-level council.

However, the process of election — mainly campaigning — was marred by allegations of favouritism towards BJP and its allies while the opposition parties' leaders were prevented from campaigning.

The sudden announcement of DDC elections in the newly-carved union territory caught most of the regional parties off-guard.

The National Conference and People's Democratic Party (PDP) did not take part in the panchayat elections in 2018 due to apprehensions that the BJP-led government at the Centre was planning to tinker with the special status of Jammu and Kashmir. The result of the boycott was that BJP for the first time won any kind of election in the valley.

CCG Asks CM ...

accosted by alleged Bajrang Dal men, who accused Rashid of "love jihad", and took them to the police.

"Saleem was with them at the time. While Rashid and Saleem were arrested, Pinki was sent to a shelter home. Pinki repeatedly told the media, the police and the court right then that she had married Rashid willingly and wanted to live with her husband's family," the letter reads.

It adds that the police remained mute as the vigilantes harassed and interrogated the innocent couple and Pinki suffered a miscarriage, possibly as a result of the harassment.

Regrettably this is only one of a series of heinous atrocities committed by your administration against young Indians across Uttar Pradesh (UP), Indians who are simply seeking to live their lives as free citizens of a free country. These atrocities, regardless of the indignation of all Indians devoted to the rule of law, continue unabated," the CCG letter reads.

It accuses the UP government's anti-conversion ordinance of being used as a stick to victimise especially those Indian men who are Muslim and women who dare to exercise their freedom of choice.

"While the various High Courts, including the Allahabad High Court, have ruled unequivocally that choosing one's life partner is a fundamental right guaranteed under the Constitution, the state of UP is blithely undermining that very Constitution, " the letter reads.

"The vigilantes are acting as a power unto themselves in intimidating innocent Indian citizens. It has become painfully evident that, in recent years, UP state, once known as the cradle of the Ganga-Jamuna civilisation, has become the epicentre of the politics of hate, division and bigotry and that the institutions of governance are now steeped in communal poison. What is worse is that your law enforcement machinery, with the active backing of your government, is playing a role reminiscent of the secret police in authoritarian regimes. You can pose no greater threat to the nation than by turning its own citizens against oneanother, a conflict that can only serve the country's enemies. As Chanakya taught us, a crafty politician must sow dissension amongst rivals. Here you are sowing dissensions among our own people," it adds.

The CCG letter further demanded that the "illegal ordinance" be withdrawn forthwith and those Indians that have suffered from its "unconstitutional enforcement be suitably compensated".

"The policemen who were responsible for allowing this must be called to account under the law, suitably investigated at a senior level of the magistracy and if found to have facilitated the death of the unborn infant, be put to trial under the IPC," the CCG said.

"Moreover, the entire police force of Uttar Pradesh needs to be trained without delay in respecting the rights of all citizens; and the politicians of UP, including yourself, need to re-educate yourselves about the provisions of the Constitution which you and other lawmakers have sworn to uphold. While our past communications to you give us little reason to expect that your government will take corrective action to uphold the rule of law, we do hope this letter will contribute to mobilising informed public opinion against these developments and that the Courts will take notice and intervene to stem the rot," it added.

New Covid-19 ...

The new variant is considered as 70 per cent more transmissible and has sparked concerns around the world.

The development came as Pakistan extended a ban on the UK flights till January 4. The ban was announced on December 21. Several countries have closed their borders with the UK and suspended flights amid growing concerns of an "out of control" new variant of coronavirus spreading at a much faster pace in parts of England.

The new variant is said to be 70 per cent more transmissible, though health experts say there is no evidence that it is more deadly or would react differently to vaccines.

Meanwhile, 63 more people have died in Pakistan in the last 24 hours, taking the

COVID-19 death toll to 9,992. Another 2,259 patients were in critical conditions, according to the Ministry of National Health Services.

The total number of COVID-19 infections have reached 475,085 after 1,776 new cases were detected across the country. A total of 425,494 people have recovered, it said.

The authorities carried out 30,666 tests in the last 24 hours, registering a positivity rate of 5.44 per cent.

3 Held Over ...

A day later, the police spokesperson said, the body of the missing minor was recovered from a canal outside his village. "During further investigation and sustained efforts by police, one accused who is the cousin of the victim was arrested. When the officers spoke to her they learnt about the involvement of other two suspects. All the 3 accused persons have been arrested in the instant case and are currently under custody," he said.

He further said that the case was under investigation and will be charge-sheeted within the shortest possible time.

Woman Killed ...

The injured, the report said, were shifted to Sub District Hospital Kupwara for treatment.

The report further said that it was believed that the slippery road conditions caused the accident.

Meanwhile, the report also quoted an unnamed police officer as saying that a has been registered in this regard.

Bandipora Man ...

Subsequently, he said, a special team headed by DO Police Post Ajas recovered the body of the woman and handed it to her legal heirs for last rites after completion of all medico legal formalities.

During the course of investigation, the police spokesperson said, officers came to know that Pahlloo was involved in the commission of the crime. He said after strenuous efforts and swift action of police, the accused person was arrested.

"During questioning, the accused admitted that during the intervening night of 20/21 December the duo were engaged in a brawl over Mehar and golden ornaments and he strangled his wife to death," he said.

He further said that the accused has been arrested and shifted to the police station where he remains in custody.

"Further investigation in the case is going on," he added.

Non-Local ...

Two other victims were from Jammu and include one each from Doda and Reasi districts respectively.

With these deaths, the total fatality count in J&K reached 1879—1185 in the Valley and 694 in the Jammu region.

Srinagar district with 449 deaths tops the list followed by Jammu (354), Baramulla (171), Budgam (108), Kupwara (91), Pulwama (88), Anantnag (83), Doda (63), Bandipora (60), Udhampur (57), Kulgam (53), Rajouri (54), Kathua (48), Ganderbal (43), Shopian (38), Samba (38), Poonch (23), Ramban (21), Kishtwar(21), and Reasi (15).

Meanwhile, six travelers, three paramilitary CRPF and BSF personnel besides two minors were among 234 fresh cases of virus reported in J&K in the last 24 hours, taking the total case tally to 120527.

Among them, 103 are from Jammu Division and 131 from Kashmir Valley, officials said.

Giving district-wise details, Srinagar reported 69, Baramulla 6, Budgam 15, Kupwara 4, Pulwama 21, Anantnag 5, Bandipora 3, Ganderbal 3, Kulgam 1, Shopian 4, Jammu 65, Udhampur 5, Rajouri 5, Doda 3, Kathua 11, Samba 3, Poonch 3, Ramban 7 and Reasi 1 new case of Covid-19.

Moreover, they said, 299 more patients have recovered and discharged from various hospitals 159 from Jammu Division and 140 from Kashmir. (With GNS inputs)

My Govt Fell ...

"If we had compromised with our principles maybe the government would not have fallen. They (BJP) called me weak. They wanted me to take action against Jamaat-e-Islami; they wanted me to deny bodies of militants to their families, besides rampant use of PSA on more and more people. The government collapsed after I refused to do all this," she said.

During the PDP-BJP coalition government, Mehbooba said, she revoked FIRs of 12000 youth and facilitated one month unilateral ceasefire in Jammu and Kashmir by Modi-government at the Centre.

"We also managed to send a delegation of Indian parliamentarians at the doors of Hurriyat leaders so that talks could be initiated. Unfortunately, the doors didn't open," she said.

"The then Home Minister said six times that his doors are open for dialogue. But his offer got no response from the other side," she added.

The former Chief Minister further said that her party came into existence to play a role in the final resolution of Kashmir issue between the two nuclear neighbours.

"J&K will be a bridge between India and Pakistan not a battlefield. We are not saying anything new but what Atal Bihari Vajpayee said and did. We demand opening of our traditional routes too," she said.

The former chief minister, who was an ally of the BJP from 2015 to 2018, said the mainstream political parties in Kashmir were working to achieve their goal of restoration of special status "within the Constitution of the country".

"National Conference talks about autonomy, it is within the Constitution. We (PDP) talk of self-rule, open borders, reconciliation ... how long can you maintain peace through the barrel of the gun?" she asked.

The PDP president said that the resolution of the Kashmir issue was a cause close to her father Mufti Mohammad Sayeed's heart.

"Even from his death bed (in December 2015), he asked me if (Prime Minister) Modiji had gone to Lahore (Pakistan). He (Mufti) said now some way could be found for a resolution," she said.

"We want peace, but we are not the ones to raise the white flag," she added.

Mehbooba said her party's struggle is not

against the people of the country but the party and the government that "humiliated Jammu and Kashmir" by repealing its special status.

"PDP is going nowhere till it plays its role in restoring what has been snatched from us," she said.

Mehbooba claimed that the formation of the People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) had led to frustration in the ruling party and referred to the recent detention of some leaders.

Coming down heavily on BJP government, Mehbooba said that the saffron party was using country's top agencies as its partners including NIA, ED, CBI only "suppress people and intimidate them".

She alleged that all the winning candidates of NC, PDP or other parties, even independents were being blackmailed, lured with money or threatened to be booked in false cases for not striking a deal with BJP's proxy party.

"The government is shouting that democracy has been restored in Jammu and Kashmir. However, the fact is that they have made a joke of democracy after the poll results came out. An Adda has been created and unfortunately some police officers are also involved in it," she said.

"A person who was caught along with three guns in his car was let go and his case was withdrawn as he became BJP's proxy. On the contrary PDP youth leader Waheed Para, who made hundreds of youth join PDP was put behind the bars by NIA," she added.

She expressed disappointment that despite court orders, Para wasn't allowed to take oath in jail. (With KNO inputs)

Kashmir Receives ...

The officials said the ski-resort of Gulmarg in north Kashmir recorded seven inches of fresh snowfall, while Pahalgam resort in the south and Sonamarg resort in central Kashmir received around three to four inches of snow each.

Gurez in north Kashmir recorded three inches of fresh snowfall, they said, adding that there are reports of snowfall in other areas in the upper reaches of the Valley as well.

The officials said the area around the Jawahar Tunnel – on the Srinagar-Jammu national highway – also received snowfall since Monday but the arterial road was open for vehicular movement.

The snowfall ahead of the new year has seen many domestic tourists and locals rushing to Gulmarg and Pahalgam, they said.

The officials said Gulmarg saw more than 1,200 domestic tourist arrivals on Monday, while over 2,500 locals from various parts of the Valley were also in the skiing resort. The numbers are expected to swell over the next two days, they added.

Pahalgam resort also was seeing brisk footfall ahead of the new year celebration.

Meanwhile, overcast conditions meant that the night temperature in the city remained around freezing point.

The officials said the minimum temperature in Srinagar – the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir – was 0 degree Celsius on Monday night.

They said the mercury in Pahalgam tourist resort in south Kashmir settled at minus 3 degrees Celsius, minus 7.5 degrees Celsius in Gulmarg, minus 0.4 degree Celsius in Qazigund, minus 1 degree Celsius in Kupwara and minus 3 degrees Celsius in Kokernag.

The ski-resort of Gulmarg was the coldest recorded place in the valley.

Meanwhile, 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). (PTI)

Dense Fog ...

"Four morning flights -- three scheduled to operate on Srinagar-Jammu-Srinagar route and one on Jammu-Srinagar-Jammu -- have been cancelled, while seven other flights are delayed," Beuria said.

He said visibility was zero at the airport at 9 am, and it improved to 500 metres at 1 pm.

"We are waiting for the visibility to improve to the required level (1,000 to 1,200 metres) to restart the flight operations," the director said.

Normal life was been hit across the Jammu plains by the dense fog and chilly weather, the officials said.

The fog cleared in most parts by noon, providing some sort of relief to the people, they added.

The minimum temperature in Jammu fell by over two notches compared to the previous night to settle at 3.7 degrees Celsius, which is 3.7 degrees below the normal during this part of the season, a spokesperson of the Meteorological department said.

He said the city had recorded a maximum temperature of 13.2 degrees Celsius on Monday, which was 5.8 degrees below the season's average.

The day and night temperatures plunged below the season's average following moderate to heavy snowfall in the high-altitude areas in most parts of Jammu region during the intervening night of Saturday and Sunday.

The Vaishno Devi Shrine in Reasi experienced its first

snowfall, while other high-altitude areas, including Patnitop hill station in Udhampur and the upper reaches of Doda, Kishtwar, Rajouri, Poonch, Kathua, Reasi and Ramban, also experienced fresh snowfall.

While the Jammu-Srinagar national highway remained open for traffic, Mughal Road, which connects the twin districts of Rajouri and Poonch in Jammu region with south Kashmir's Shopian district, was closed after Peer Ki Gali and adjoining areas witnessed heavy snowfall. (PTI)

Biden Picks ...

Cameron Trimble (Director of Digital Engagement).

"This team of diverse experts has a wide range of experience in digital strategy and will help connect the White House to the American people in new and innovative ways. They bring a shared commitment to building our nation back better, and I am thrilled to have them on our team," Biden said.

These diverse, accomplished, and talented individuals demonstrate that the president and vice president-elect are building an administration that looks like America and is ready to deliver results on day one, the transition team said.

A reflection of the critical role digital strategy plays in reaching the American people, the Biden-Harris White House will feature a robust digital team.

In addition to amplifying and engaging users online through traditional measures, the White House Office of Digital Strategy will develop partnerships that are focused on extending the president-elect's reach beyond his own social platforms, it said.

"Digital communities and online spaces have taken on even more importance in the wake of the pandemic. We're building a team to speak to the lived experiences of all Americans. With much of our lives online, it is critical for this administration's digital efforts to be inclusive and extensive," said Vice President-elect Kamala Harris.

"Digital outreach will be a key pillar of the Biden-Harris Administration's engagement with the public. By bringing a talented team of digital strategists to the White House, we will ensure a robust dialogue with the American people, wherever they are," said incoming White House Chief of Staff Ron Klain. (PTI)

NC Leader's ...

on medical grounds before the Special CBI judge, Jammu seeking interim bail after the central probe agency filed a chargesheet against him and others in the fraud case within 10 days of taking over the case.

In this application, Hilal had cited the prevailing threat of contracting the coronavirus during his incarceration.

The case which was probed by the anti-corruption branch of Jammu and Kashmir Police was handed over to the CBI because of "international ramifications" of the conspiracy of loan funds diversion.

"The possibility of stashing of funds and diversion of funds to subversive elements cannot be ruled out," the ACB had stated as one of the reasons for handing over the probe to the central agency.

It is alleged that Hilal had taken a loan from the J&K Bank for his ambitious township project in 2012, when his father was the Finance Minister of the erstwhile state, and that the loan was sanctioned without submitting any collateral and the money was diverted from the bank account.

The account had turned a non-performing asset in 2017, the officials had said.

In the chargesheet filed before the Special Court, Jammu, the CBI has also named the then branch heads of J and K Bank, New University Campus branch, Iqbal Singh and Arun Kapoor as accused.

The CBI has alleged that Hilal entered into a criminal conspiracy with the then officials of the Bank to get loans of Rs 177.68 crore (approx) in violation of the rules and guidelines.

"The loans that were sanctioned for construction of flats were allegedly diverted and misappropriated by the accused using the bank accounts of his employees. It was further alleged that the accused submitted forged certificates and bills to the bank," a CBI spokesperson had said.

On August 6, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) launched multiple raids at 16 locations in Kashmir, Jammu, Delhi and Ludhiana in connection with the money laundering case linked to the bank fraud probe against Hilal.

The ED had filed a money laundering case against Hilal and others, under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), taking cognisance of a CBI FIR and Income Tax Department probe against him in the alleged bank fraud scam.

The allegations were denied by Hilal's family after the agency filed an FIR in the case.

A statement issued by Hilal's legal counsel had earlier claimed that having failed in its primary task of holding public officials accountable, the agency (ACB) was trying to give a different colour to the case by resorting to "canards and false accusations". (PTI)

Dr.Shabir Ahmad Dar Consultant Neuropsychiatrist GMC Srinagar

AVAILABLE:

MONDAYS, WEDNESDAYS & FRIDAYS

Timing : 4:00pm - 5:30pm

The disorders which will be delt include Depression, Anxiety,Epilepsy, Mood Swings, Chronic Headache including Migraine, Sleep disorders, Sexual Problems,

Addiction disorders and Behavioural problems in children. Consultation by prior appointment only. Kindly feel free to contact.. 7006086700 for booking.

Raashid Ali
SHARIF MEDICAL HALL
SHARI BHAT ALAMGARI BAZAR SRINAGAR

Study Finds Music-Induced Emotions Can Be Predicted From Brain Scans

Researchers at the University of Turku have discovered what type of neural mechanisms are the basis for emotional responses to music.

Altogether 102 research subjects listened to music that evokes emotions while their brain function was scanned with functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI). The study was carried out in the national PET Centre.

The researchers used a machine-learning algorithm to map which brain regions are activated when the different music-induced emotions are separated from each other.

- Based on the activation of the auditory and motor cortex, we were able to accurately predict whether the research subject was listening to happy or sad music. The auditory cortex processes the acoustic elements of music, such as rhythm and melody. Activation of the

motor cortex, then again, maybe related to the fact that music inspires feelings of movement in the listeners even when they are listening to music while holding still in an MRI machine, says Postdoctoral Researcher Vesa Putkinen.

The researchers also discovered which brain regions are activated when the research participants watched videos that evoke strong emotions and tested whether the same regions were activated when the participants were listening to music that evokes emotions.

The results suggest that the emotions evoked by films and music are partially based on the operation of different mechanisms in the brain.

- Films, for instance, activate the deeper parts of the brain that regulate emotions in real-life situations. Listening to music did not strongly activate these regions nor did their activation separate the music-induced emo-

tions from each other. This may be due to the fact that films can more realistically copy the real-life events that evoke emotions and thus activate the innate emotion mechanisms. As for the music-induced emotions, they are based on the acoustic characteristics of music and coloured by cultural influences and personal history.

Traditionally, music-induced emotions have been studied through classical instrumental music.

- We wanted to use only instrumental music in this study as well so that lyrics did not impact the emotions of the research subjects. However, we included film music and songs by the guitar virtuoso Yngwie J. Malmsteen, notes Putkinen.

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Agencies



“The researchers used a machine-learning algorithm to map which brain regions are activated when the different music-induced emotions are separated from each other.

New mammal reference genome helps ID genetic variants for human health

The rhesus macaque is the most widely studied nonhuman primate in biomedical research. A genome sequencing project for this species, led by a team of researchers has created a new framework for the study of this important primate.

Research published in the journal Science has established a new reference genome assembly and identified more than 85 million genetic variants in the rhesus macaque, the largest database of genetic variation for anyone nonhuman primate species to date.

“This is a major step forward in the amount of information we have about genetic variation in the rhesus macaque,” said Dr. Jeffrey Rogers, associate professor at the Human Genome Sequencing Center and Department of Molecular and Human Genetics at Baylor and one of the corresponding authors of the study. “We have actually identified thousands of new mutations in the population of research animals. Now colleagues all over the country who are investigating various aspects of health and disease using rhesus macaques can begin to make use of that information.”

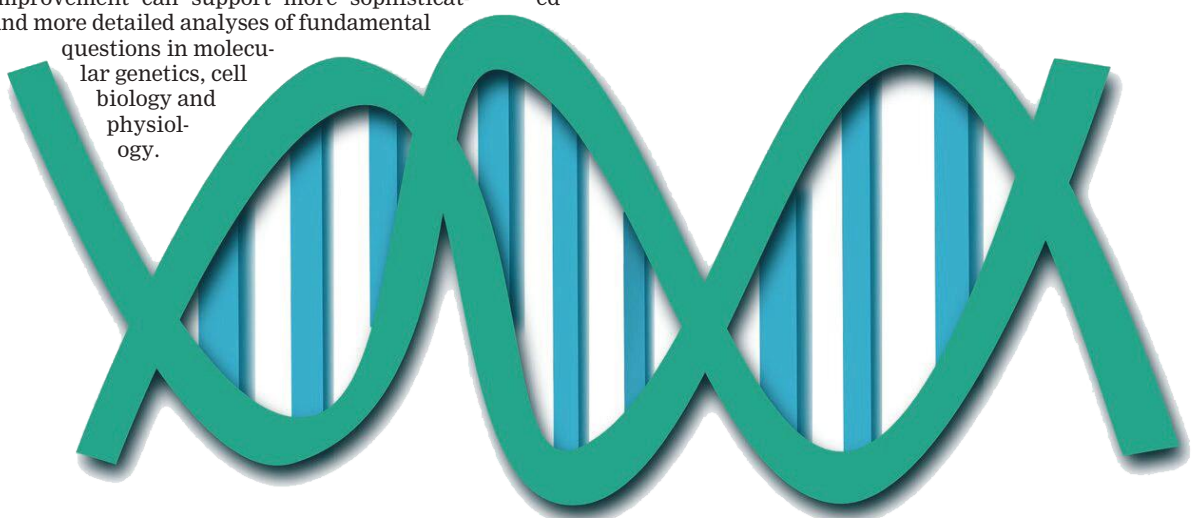
Dr. Wesley C. Warren at the University of Missouri and Dr Evan Eichler at the University of Washington, both corresponding authors of the study, used a combination of several advanced technologies to substantially improve the rhesus macaque reference genome assembly first created in 2007. The new reference genome published today provides a more complete and accurate picture of the rhesus macaque DNA sequence. This improvement can support more sophisticated and more detailed analyses of fundamental

“When we coupled this higher quality genome reference with a broader sequencing of expressed genes, our team discovered gene structures unique to macaque as well as specific repeat sequences undergoing deletions that suggest evolutionary competition to suppress these elements from expanding continues today,” said Warren, professor at the University of Missouri’s Bond Life Sciences Center.

Researchers at Baylor’s Human Genome Sequencing Center sequenced the genomes of 853 rhesus macaque from research institutions around the country and compared them to the new reference genome. The genome analysis showed that rhesus macaque have more genetic variants per individual than humans. Among the millions of genetic variants identified, researchers found several damaging mutations in genes known to cause genetic disorders in humans, including autism, inherited blindness and several others.

“We can find naturally occurring models of genetic disorders by surveying the rhesus macaque population,” Rogers said. “We will find animals that naturally carry interesting and useful genetic mutations that can help us understand genetic variation and susceptibility to disease in humans. Rhesus macaques are also widely studied by primatologists and evolutionary biologists, so this new reference genome will also provide new insight into the evolution of the nonhuman primate and human genomes.”

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Agencies



“The new reference genome published today provides a more complete and accurate picture of the rhesus macaque DNA sequence

WhatsApp To Stop Working On These Devices From Jan 1, 2021

Millions of smartphone users won't be able to access WhatsApp from January 1, 2021, onwards.

The WhatsApp announcement

January 1, 2021, onwards as their devices will no longer remain compatible with the messaging app. WhatsApp has yet again announced that is withdrawing support for certain older devices which are currently compatible with the messaging app.

Some users of older devices will still be able to access WhatsApp by updating to the latest software. However, for some devices, WhatsApp will become permanently inaccessible from January 1, 2021, onwards.

Dropping support for older devices is a regular exercise for WhatsApp. This time it is dropping support for any iPhone running on software older than iOS9. Users with these phones won't be able to

use WhatsApp from January 1, 2021, onwards.

The WhatsApp announcement

can all be updated to iOS9, hence they will be able to support WhatsApp once updated.

Android phone users have not been spared either. WhatsApp will no longer work on Android devices running on devices running Android 4.0.3 or older versions of the operating system. If users have such phones that are no longer compatible with WhatsApp then they must back up their chats before January 1, 2021, if they want to retain them.

They can do so by going to 'Chat backup' option under Chats section in Settings. Aside from backing up their chats, users of old devices should also start looking for smartphones that are compatible with WhatsApp if they want to use the messaging app in the future.

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Agencies



SRINAGAR DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Fresh e-TENDER NOTICE NO: 08 of 2020

For and on behalf of the Srinagar Development Authority, the Executive Engineer, Srinagar Development Authority, invites tenders by e-tendering system on item rate basis from Registered firms of J&K for the below mentioned work:-

S.No	Name of work	Cost of work	Earnest Amount	Cost of Tender Document	Duration of contract
01	Printing out / preparation of different drawings/plans and Documentation for Srinagar Development Authority.	Rs.5.00 lacs	Rs.10,000/-	Rs.500/-	One years

Position of Funds (Available)
01. Date of Publishing 24/12/2020.
02. The Bidding document can be downloaded from the website <http://jktenders.gov.in> from 10.00 PM on 25/12/2020 to 12/01/2021 upto 4.00PM.
a. The bids shall be deposited in electronic format on the website <http://jktenders.gov.in> from 01/01/2021 to 12/01/2021 upto 4.00PM. The bids received will be opened at 12.00 Noon on 14/01/2021 on line.
b. The complete bidding process will be on line.

Sd/-
Executive Engineer,
Srinagar Development Authority

No:- SDA/EE/ 1332-39
Dated: 26/12/2020

DIPK-NB-4867/20

Office Of The Executive Engineer
Mech. City Drainage Division Srinagar.

Email address:-exenmcdsdmscgr@gmail.com
Contact No. 0194 2591900

Corrigendum No. (2) to N.I.T No.E_08 OF 2020-21
D A T E D :- 09-12-2020

In view of the request made by some intending bidders for extension of bid submission end date, the critical dates in respect of above mentioned NIT are hereby re-scheduled as under:-

Bid submission end date	08-01-2021 upto 6.00 PM
Date & time of opening of bids	09-01-2021 at 2.00 P.M

Moreover, the online rates to be quoted by the bidders in respect of above mentioned N.I.T. shall include rebate on old scrap material (Old material to be retained by contracting agency).
All other terms and condition shall remain same as laid down in the main N.I.T.

NO.CDM/2272
Dated:- 29-12-2020

Sd/-
EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
MECH. CITY DRAINAGE DIVISION SGR.

DIPK-11039/20

Government of Jammu & Kashmir

Directorate of Tourism, Kashmir
e-mail: ddtregl23@gmail.com

Subject: - Grant of Registration of theProposed Travel unit under the name &style “M/s Traveezy Kashmir Tour & Travels”.

Public Notice

Whereas, Mr. Mubashir Ahmad Ganie S/oMr. Ghulam Mohammad Ganie R/o Manzgam, Brein, SrinagarKashmir has applied in this office for Registration of his proposed TravelUnit under the name and style “M/s Traveezy Kashmir Tour & Travels”situated at Manzgam, Brein, Nishat, Srinagar under Tourist Trade Act 1978/82/2011-12. Whereas, the applicant has submitted State Subject, Site Plan, Affidavit, Bank statement and Original Rent Deed duly attested by Sub-Registrar and other related documents.

Now therefore, in exercise of powers conferred on me under section 10 of Registrationof Tourist Trade Act 1978/82/2011/12, before the request of the applicant is considered for registration of the unit, the matter is hereby notified for information of general Public/Financial Institutions/Bank/Organization, etc for objection if any. The same should reach this office within a period of 7 days from the publication of this notice in the local newspaper. No objections beyond period of 7 days will be entertained and request of the applicant will be considered as per rules.

No: Reg/T/UP/1122/DTK
Dated: 28-12-2020

Sd/-
Deputy Director Tourism,
Registration (Kashmir)

DIPK-10990/20

Caringly yours



LIFE IS UNPREDICTABLE, KEEP YOURSELF PREPARED



One Policy, A World Of Protection
Mukammal Hifazat

Bajaj Allianz General Insurance Co. Ltd. | Bajaj Allianz House, Airport Road, Yerwada, Pune – 411006. Reg.: 113 | CIN: U66010PN2000PLC015329 | UIN: IRDAI/HLT/BAGI/P-P/V.I/30/14-15 | For more details, log on to: www.bajajallianz.com or call at: Sales - 1800 209 0144 / Service - 1800 209 5858 (Toll Free No.) | For more details on risk factors and Terms and Conditions, please read the sales brochure before concluding a sale.

J&K Bank Ltd is a licensed Corporate Agent [bearing License No.: CA0029] of Bajaj Allianz General Insurance Company Ltd. [IRDAI registration No. 113]. The benefits/features of products are indicative and for more details on risk factors and Terms and Conditions, please read the sales brochure before concluding a sale. | BIAZ-O-JK-0006/17-Mar-20

General Insurance

Faayde ki baat