



Maximum : 04°C SUNSET
Today 05:36 PM
Minum : 0°C SUNRISE
Humidity : 98% Tomorrow 07:37 AM



News Digest

Budgam Scholar Dies Of Cardiac Arrest

SRINAGAR: A PhD scholar died of a cardiac arrest on Tuesday in central Kashmir's Budgam district. Shakeel Ahmad Dar, a resident of Wathoor village suffered a massive cardiac arrest on Tuesday morning at his home, news agency KDC reported. He was immediately rushed to the nearby hospital where doctors declared him brought dead. Shakeel had completed his PhD from SKUAST University.

Hunter Injured As Gun Goes Off

SRINAGAR: A hunter was injured on Tuesday when his gun went off accidentally in Ganderbal district of central Kashmir. 33-year-old Gulzar Ahmed Gaabru was hunting in Rabitar area of the district on Tuesday when his 12 bore file accidentally went off leaving him injured, police sources said. The injured hunter was removed to district hospital Ganderbal for treatment. However, the doctors there referred him to Srinagar's SKIMS for specialised treatment. Meanwhile, police have registered a case and set investigation into motion. (KNT)

Jewellery Looted From Budgam House

SRINAGAR: Police on Tuesday quizzed two brothers in central Kashmir's Budgam district after unknown burglars struck a house in Wadwan area and decamped with jewellery. Unidentified burglars broke into the house of Muhammad Ashraf Bhat in Wadwan area and looted gold jewellery, including rings, ear rings and bangles before making a quick exit, local news agency KNT reported Tuesday. Bhat, the report said, filed a complaint with the police naming two brothers, both residents of Nasrullahpora as suspects. Accordingly, police ● P06

Medical Officer Suspended Over Absence

SRINAGAR: The authorities in south Kashmir's Anantnag district on Tuesday suspended a medical officer over 'unauthorized absence from duties'. An order in this regard, reads that "Pending enquiry into the 'unauthorized absence from duties', Dr. Faheem Shah, Medical Officer, PHC Khiram is placed under suspension with immediate effect and attached with Block Medical Officer, Bijbehara." "Additional Deputy Commissioner (S) shall conduct an enquiry and furnish a detailed report within 5 days positively", the order reads further. (GNS)

'Drug Peddler' Held Along LoC In Poonch

JAMMU: An alleged drug peddler was arrested on Tuesday along LoC in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district, officials said. A police team along with local Army units apprehended the person from Dabbi village in Balakote border belt of Mendhar sub division, and recovered 300 grams of heroin from him, they said. Searches are going on in the area as a huge quantity of arms and ammunition was recovered from this village recently, officials said. Police is also probing if the incident is linked ● P06

Heavy Snowfall Batters Kashmir

Major Roads And Highways Closed, Air Traffic Suspended; Avalanche Alert Renewed

Observer Monitoring Desk

SRINAGAR: Several residential houses were damaged as Kashmir valley witnessed widespread snowfall for the third straight day Tuesday, bringing normal life to a grinding halt.

Nearly 4500 vehicles, mostly trucks carrying essentials to the valley, are stranded along the highway at various places.

"The Jammu-Srinagar National Highway is closed due to accumulation of snow at many places, especially around Jawahar Tunnel," an official of the traffic control department said.

He said snow clearance operations were in full swing and efforts were on to restore movement of stranded vehicles along the 260 kilometre road.

Mughal Road, which connects the valley to Jammu division through Shopian-Rajouri axis, has been closed for several days due to heavy snowfall in the region.

The flight operations to and from Srinagar remained suspended for third consecutive day, the officials said.

They said that no flight could take off or arrive at the Srinagar international airport due to poor visibility.

The airlines have already cancelled or rescheduled the flights and as per the officials, it was highly unlikely for any operation to take place at the airport in wake of the snowfall.

The officials said south Kashmir's Bhatnagar district received highest snowfall with three to four feet of snow accumulated at some places.

Anantnag district has also received heavy snowfall, they said.

The officials said that Srinagar received 8cms of snowfall in the last 24 hours till 0830 hours while Qazigund, the gateway town of Kashmir, recorded the highest depth in the plains across Valley—29.8cms—during the time and 80cms (32inches)



KO Photo Anil Bhat

Thousands Stranded On Highway

BANIHAL: The Jammu-Srinagar national highway remained closed for the third consecutive day on Tuesday following heavy snowfall and multiple landslides, even as over 250 stranded vehicles, mostly carrying passengers, were cleared after the arterial road was briefly opened for one-way traffic between Banihal and Qazigund, officials said.

The 270-km highway, the only all-weather road linking

Kashmir with the rest of the country, was closed for traffic on Saturday night after Jawahar Tunnel, the gateway to Kashmir, experienced snowfall that left over 4,500 vehicles, mostly trucks stranded on either side.

With no let up in the snow in and around Jawahar Tunnel coupled with multiple landslides, mudslides and shooting of stones from the hillocks overlooking the highway at various places between Samroli

and Banihal, the strategic road was closed for vehicular traffic since Sunday, the officials said.

However, they said over 100 Jammu-bound trucks were cleared from Jawahar Tunnel area after the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) managed to clear the road of over three feet of accumulated snow on Monday evening.

Over 250 passenger vehicles and dozens of trucks carrying essential commodities to ● PAGE 06

in the last 48 hours.

Pahalgam, the famous tourist destination, and Kokernag recorded 18cms and 26cms of fresh snowfall in the 24 hours respectively.

Regarding Gulmarg, the official said that the famous skiing resort accumulated 20cms of fresh

snowfall in the last 24 hours while Kupwara recorded 2cms of snowfall. Central Kashmir's Ganderbal and Budgam districts received almost the same snow depth as Srinagar even as higher reaches accumulated around 24-30cms or more fresh snow.

Reports said that several main roads and almost all interior lanes are still clogged with snow even as the divisional administration pressed men and machinery into service in the early hours of the day to clear snow from the roads. The snowfall has also ● PAGE 06

THE JAMMU-SRINAGAR NATIONAL HIGHWAY IS CLOSED DUE TO ACCUMULATION of snow at many places, especially around Jawahar Tunnel," an official of the traffic control department said.

Amid Bird Flu Scare, Alert Sounded In J&K



Image for representation

JAMMU: As neighbouring Himachal Pradesh reported cases of bird flu, Jammu and Kashmir has sounded an alert and started collecting samples to check the health of the winged guests flocking the Union territory during winters, officials said.

The joint teams of Animal Husbandry and Wildlife departments on Tuesday visited Gharana wetland in the outskirts of Jammu and collected 25 bird droppings for testing to ascertain whether any of the

birds is infected with the dreaded avian influenza, the officials said.

The J&K government has sounded an alert following reports of bird flu cases in Himachal Pradesh and issued certain guidelines as a precautionary measure, Wildlife Warden, Jammu, Anil Atri said.

Atri, who along with Dr Ranjit Katoch of the Wildlife department joined the Animal Husbandry team at Gharana wetland, said all the birds present in the wetland looked healthy. ● PAGE 06

J&K Reports 137 New Corona Cases, 6 Deaths

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday recorded 137 new COVID-19 cases, while six deaths took place in the last 24 hours, taking the total case-load to 1,21,923 and the death toll to 1,897, officials said.

Of the fresh cases, 71 were from Jammu division and 66 from Kashmir division of the Union territory, they said.

The officials said Jammu district recorded the highest with 49 cases followed by 22 in Srinagar district.

While five districts -- Kulgam, Poonch, Rajouri, Shopian and Reasi -- did not report any fresh cases, 11 other districts had fresh cases in single digits. Besides Jammu and ● P06

NC Leaders Meet LG, Raise Fears of 'Horse Trading'

Seek Judicial Probe Into Lawaypora Encounter, Jeweller's Killing

JAMMU: An eight-member National Conference delegation on Tuesday met Lt Governor Manoj Sinha here and drew his attention to alleged attempts being made to mutilate the mandate of the people by encouraging horse-trading of the recently elected DDC members, the party said.

The NC stressed the crucial need of ensuring neutrality and impartiality of the administration in establishment of District Development Councils and said this is imperative for respecting the mandate and upholding people's faith in the grass-roots level democratic institutions which hold promise for transforming rural landscape in Jammu and Kashmir.

Tarigami Seeks Probe Into Lawaypora Killings

CPIM(M) leader Mohammad Yousuf Tarigami on Tuesday called on Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha here and demanded a probe into an encounter in Srinagar in which three alleged militants were killed. According to police, ● P06

The delegation was by led by party's Jammu provincial president Devender Singh Rana and included former ministers ● PAGE 06

Shopian Woman Delivers Baby On Stretcher

Observer Monitoring Desk

SRINAGAR: Contrary to the claims of government that they were fully prepared to meet any challenge arising out of the heavy snowfall, a pregnant woman on Tuesday delivered a baby on a make-shift stretcher before she could be taken to a hospital in the snowbound Keller belt of south Kashmir's Shopian district.

Akhter Jan, wife of Papa Poswal of Zrakan Keller gave birth to a baby on a make-shift stretcher as the villagers were carrying her to a hospital for delivery, news agency KNO reported Tuesday. The villagers, the report said, were carrying the woman on cot amidst the heavy snowfall as the roads blocked by the snow were not cleared.

"The lady developed labour pain following which the locals put efforts to shift her to SDH Keller, which is around 10 km from Zrakan village," Choudhary Showkat Shabir, a local said.

"However, before she could be taken to the hospital, the woman delivered on a make-shift stretcher. The condition of both baby and mother is stable at SDH Keller," he added.

Shabir alleged that the ● P06

3 Of A Family Die Of 'Asphyxiation'

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR- Three persons of a family were found dead on Tuesday morning purportedly due to 'suffocation' in Nehalpora village in Pattan of north-Kashmir's Baramulla district.

Reports said that three members of a family identified as Mohammad Maqbool Lone (50) his wife Hasena Begum (45), their son Talib Maqbool (4) were found dead at their home early this morning.

Upon intimation by locals, teams from police and medical department reached the spot upon which bodies of the trio were removed to a hospital for autopsy, the reports said.

Meanwhile a police official confirming the incident said that they are ascertaining the cause of death, "although it seems that the trio has died of suffocation."

Boris Pulls Out As R-Day Chief Guest

NEW DELHI: South Block's preparations for the Republic Day parade have been thrown in a tizzy after UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson cancelled his India visit with a terse announcement from Downing Street that cited the need to oversee the pandemic response at home.

In 2018, US President Donald Trump had declined PM Narendra Modi's invite to be the Chief Guest at the 2019 Republic Day celebrations. However, Trump had conveyed his regrets nearly three months before the event, giving South Block enough time to invite South African President Cyril Ramaphosa.

India had last suffered a last-minute pull out in 2013 when the Sultan of a West Asian monarchy declined the invitation but the King of Bhutan Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, who was the Chief Guest barely eight years back, graciously decided to ● P06

Amarnath Yatra LG Chairs Preparatory Meet

JAMMU: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Tuesday called for best-in-class arrangements for pilgrims during the Amarnath Yatra to the holy cave shrine in south Kashmir Himalayas.

The LG was chairing a preparatory review meeting of Amarnath Yatra-2021 here at Civil Secretariat. He will personally oversee the preparations and setting up of on-ground facilities for the pilgrims, an official spokesman said.

Sinha called for best-in-class arrangements for pilgrims to improve their yatra experience, he said.

Laying special emphasis on providing the best medical facilities to the pilgrims, the LG passed directions for the increase of accidental insurance to pilgrims during the yatra, besides doubling the ● P06

In FOCUS / 500-Year-Old Spade Still Calling A Spade In Snowbound Kashmir

Umer Ahmed

As snowfall began blanketing Budgam's Muihpathri area on January 3, Chowdhary Manzoor came out with a unique and rustic wooden spade locally called "Fueh" to clear paths.

With an imposing figure, Manzoor stood in the backdrop of mounds of snow holding his ancestral article with pride.

"This is how my forefathers would come out and clear paths during the harshest winters in Kashmir," said Manzoor, holding the legacy spade in his hand. "This exceptional piece has witnessed vagaries of weather

and is still working just fine."

Every winter as it snows, Manzoor uses his inherited shovel only for emotional means to clear snow.

"I feel the presence of my father while using it," he said. "It seems as if he is just observing me from behind."

Once done with snow-clearance, Manzoor properly cleans the spade, before putting it back in the room filled with his family relics.

Manzoor received this antique spade from his father, late Mohammad Shafi Chowdhary, who had inherited it from his father, Lal Sheikh, who in-turn had received it from his father, Raj Sheikh.

"I only know three generations of



my family who has inherited it [the spade] but there's a story my father had told me," Manzoor recalls.

"My forefathers had taken it from someone 400 years ago, and that person had been carrying it for

some 100 years already. And since then, we have been using it every winter as a snow-clearing object."

Fueh is a unique piece of carpentry in itself. Made up of a single wooden slate, it has rectangular-shaped base, with a long handle. It is mostly made of Deodar or Kail wood which makes it durable and light weight.

But now, Manzoor is little worried as lately some cracks have appeared in his legacy tool.

"Such tools can't be repaired even if I wanted to repair it badly," he says. "It's not just a tool to clear snow but an article that carries emotions and memories. I'm preserving it so that someday I can tell this story to my children and hand it over to them so that they carry this legacy forward."

For kids with behavioural issues, focusing on diversion yields positive results: Study

The majority of justice-involved youth have a history of mental health and/or substance use issues, and have experienced a great deal of trauma



Researchers found that focusing on diversion -- instead of detention -- yields positive results for youth with behavioural health issues. Of the 5,300 children enrolled in the Ohio Behavioral Health Juvenile Justice Initiative since 2006, 21 per cent reported that someone close to them had been murdered in the past year. Nearly half of the boys and more than a quarter of the girls in the

program have both substance abuse and mental health disorder. But there's good news, too: From 2017 through 2019, 81% of the participants -- aged 10 through 17 -- successfully completed the state's juvenile diversion program, and data indicated that 79% of youth reduced their contact with police while in treatment. Those findings are from a new detailed evaluation of the Ohio Behavioral Health Juve-

nile Justice Initiative (BHJJ) by researchers at the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences at Case Western Reserve University. The key conclusion: Many youthful offenders can benefit from community-based diversion programs designed to address mental health and substance use issues in lieu of commitment to local or state-run detention centres. "The majority of justice-

involved youth have a history of mental health and/or substance use issues, and have experienced a great deal of trauma," said Jeff Kretschmar, co-author of the study and the research associate professor at the university's Begun Center for Violence Prevention Research and Education. "However, local jurisdictions are often ill-equipped to accurately assess youth for behavioural health problems and provide appro-

priate treatment. Ohio's Behavioral Health Juvenile Justice Initiative was intended to transform and expand the local systems' options to better serve these youths." The report focused on youth currently enrolled in the program rather than retrospectively, Kretschmar said, to "identify emerging behavioural health trends and better understand the effectiveness of the model as it operates across Ohio today." Report highlights include: -Youth reported a significant decrease in trauma symptoms and problem severity from intake to termination, and a significant improvement in functioning. -Since 2015, only 3.8% of youth enrolled in BHJJ were committed to a state-run detention facility after enrollment. -BHJJ costs about \$5,200 per child, compared with \$196,000 per child who enters a state-run detention facility. "The breadth of the data provides us with an opportunity to examine outcomes for youth in BHJJ from a variety of angles and provides practitioners with enough information to match programming with behavioural health needs," said Fredrick Butcher, research assistant professor at the Begun Center. -

.. Agencies

How scientists studied coughs to model COVID-19 spread

When the COVID-19 pandemic struck the world, IIT-Bombay Professor Rameesh Bhardwaj was studying how droplets evaporated for applications in spray cooling and inkjet printing, and his collaborator Amit Agarwal was working on point-of-care medical devices and electronic cooling. But once it became clear that the pandemic was mainly spreading through cough and sneeze aerosols from infected individuals, the duo began applying their knowledge to understand the evaporation of respiratory droplets from surfaces and the spread of cough clouds. "Our plans were to continue in the domain of thermal and fluid engineering. However, the pandemic came as an opportunity to diversify and explore other research areas. We thought of extending and applying our knowledge to several unanswered questions in the context of COVID-19," Agrawal, Institute Chair Professor from the Department of Mechanical Engineering, IIT-Bombay, told PTI. Bhardwaj and Agrawal, both experts in the field of fluid mechanics, said their understanding of the motion of fluids helped them model how the novel coronavirus spread. "Air and water are the most common fluids, and also the carrier of most viruses and bacteria, it is not that surprising that the subject is playing an

important role in understanding and managing the current pandemic," Bhardwaj told PTI. Numerous studies, over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, applied principles of fluid mechanics to provide scores of important insights about the distance over which different size respiratory droplets travel, the safe distance between people, and the efficacy of various types of masks in reducing the transfer of contaminated droplets. Scientists also probed into the process by which larger droplets underwent evaporation and subsequently precipitation to turn into microdroplets called aerosols. "During this process, big droplets settle on the ground after a short distance in flight while the smaller ones remain airborne for a longer period forming aerosols," explained Saptarshi Basu, from the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru. "In short, the entire story of droplets leading to infections is a fluid dynamics problem," Basu, Chair Professor in the Department of Mechanical Engineering, told PTI. Two studies by Basu and his team, both published in the journal Physics of Fluids, applied fluid dynamics experiments to show how the respiratory droplets dried and formed aerosols, and how virus particles are distributed within them. PTI

Scientists discover novel film that evaporates sweat six times faster, holds 15 times more moisture

A team of researchers from the National University of Singapore (NUS) has created a novel film that is very effective in evaporating sweat from our skin to keep us cool and comfortable when we exercise. The moisture harvested from human sweat can be used to power wearable electronic devices such as watches, fitness trackers, and more. Sweating is a natural process for our body to reduce thermal stress. "Sweat is mostly composed of water. When water is evaporated from the skin surface, it lowers the skin temperature and we feel cooler. In our new invention, we created a novel film that is extremely effective in evaporating sweat from our skin and then absorbing the moisture from sweat. We also take this one step further - by converting the moisture from sweat into energy that could be used to power small wearable devices," explained research team leader Assistant Professor Tan Swee Ching, who is from the NUS Department of

Material Science and Engineering. The main components of the novel thin film are two hygroscopic chemicals - cobalt chloride and ethanolamine. Besides being extremely moisture-absorbent, this film can rapidly release water when exposed to sunlight, and it can be 'regenerated' and reused for more than 100 times. To make full use of the absorbed sweat, the NUS team has also designed a wearable energy harvesting device comprising eight electrochemical cells (ECs), using the novel film as the electrolyte. Each EC can generate about 0.57 volts of electricity upon absorbing moisture. The overall energy harvested by the device is sufficient to power a light-emitting diode. This proof-of-concept demonstration illustrates the potential of battery-less wearables powered using human sweat. This technological breakthrough was reported in the September print issue of the scientific journal Nano Energy. Absorbing moisture for personal

comfort. Conventional hygroscopic materials such as zeolites and silica gels have low water uptake and bulk solid structures, making them unsuitable for absorbing moisture from sweat evaporation. In comparison, the new moisture-absorbing film developed by NUS researchers takes in 15 times more moisture and do this 6 times faster than conventional materials. In addition, this innovative film shows a colour change upon absorbing moisture, from blue to purple, and finally pink. This feature can be used as an indicator of the degree of moisture absorption. The NUS team packaged the film into breathable and waterproof polytetrafluoroethylene (PTFE) membranes, which are flexible and commonly used in clothing, and successfully demonstrated the application of the moisture-absorption film for underarm pad, shoe lining and shoe insole. Agencies

Government of Jammu & Kashmir UT

Mechanical Division, Srinagar.

Tel: 0194-2497056Email: xenmds@gmail.com

GIST OF NOTICE INVITING SHORT TERM TENDER

NO. MDS/TENDER/2020-21/ 160; DATE:- 02.01.2021.

Sealed tenders affixed with Rs. 5/= revenue stamps are invited for and on behalf of Governor of Jammu & Kashmir Territory from registered firms/Contractors for:

Description of the work	Est. Cost (in Rs.)	Cost of Tender document	Time of completion	Position of Funds
Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of Hydraulic tools and accessories for Snow Clearance Machinery Fleet of Mechanical Division Srinagar.	62,000/=	Rs.200/-	03 days	Available
Date of sale of tender documents	02-01-2021 to 08 -01-2021 (up to 4.00 pm)			
Last date of receipt of tenders	09-01-2021 (up to 2.00 pm)			
Date of Opening of Tenders	09-01-2021 (up to 2.00 pm)			
Tender receiving & opening authority	Executive Engineer, Mechanical Mechanical Division Srinagar.			

The Tender document can be had from the office of the undersigned during working hours against cost mentioned above, in the form of IPO/Demand Draft or cash payment. The tender documents shall be issued subject to production of following documents:

1. Self-attested copy of GST Certificate of Registration of the firm.

2. Application for issuance of tender document from the firm duly signed and stamped by the proprietor, however, in case the proprietor of the firm wishes to purchase the tender document through his representative, a valid authorization letter duly signed and stamped by the proprietor shall have to be produced prior to purchase of tender document.

In case the last date of receipt of tenders happens to be a non-working day due to any reasons, the tenders shall be received in this office on next working day.

NO: MDS/TS / 6449-53

Sd/= (Abdul Rashid Bhat) Executive Engineer Mechanical Division, Srinagar.

DIPK-11324/20

Date: 02-01-2021

Government of Jammu & Kashmir

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER

R&B CONSTRUCTION DIVISION NO.II, SGR.

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

NIT No.142/CDII/12601-II of 2020-21

DATED: 02.01.2021

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

S.No	Name of Work	Adv. Cost (Rs. In Lacs)	Cost of T/ Doc. (In Rupees)	Time of completion	M.H of Account	Class of Contractor
1	2	3	4	5	7	6
1.	Providing barricading and other allied works/arrangement on the eve of Republic Day on 26 th January 2021 at S.K Cricket Stadium Sonwar Srinagar.	14.92	600/-	07 Days	A.R.D	"BEE/CEE / DEE"

Position of Funds: Available

Position of funds: Available

1. The Bidding documents Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, 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 schedule of dates given below:-

1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	
2	Period of downloading of bidding documents	03.01.2021 from 10.00 AM
3	Bid submission Start Date	03.01.2021 from 10.00 AM.
4	Bid Submission End Date	09.01.2021 upto 4.00 PM.
5	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	10.01.2021 at 11.00 AM in the office of Executive Engineer R&B Construction Division No.2 nd , Srinagar

2. Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in shape of Treasury Challan in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Construction Division No.2nd, Srinagar (tender inviting authority) (The Date of Treasury Challan should be between the date of start of bid and Bid Submission End date) pledged to Executive Engineer R&B Construction Division No.2nd, Srinagar (tender receiving authority).

3. All Bidders has to submit Bid Security Declaration Form instead of Earnest money as per the circular of Finance Department (Bid Security Declaration Form is as per Annexure "A" below)

4. The 1st lowest Bidder has to produce an amount equal to 3% of contract as performance security in shape of CDR/FDR/BG within 02 Days before fixation of contract and shall be released after successful completion of work.

5. The date and time of opening of Bids shall be notified on Web Site www.jktenders.gov.in and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The bids of Responsive bidders shall be opened online on same Web Site in the Office of Executive Engineer R&B Construction Division No.2nd, Srinagar (tender receiving authority).

The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of Technical bids

DIPK-11319/20

No. 12601-II

Dated: 02.01.2021

Sd/- Executive Engineer

R&B Construction Division IInd Srinagar

J&K SERVICES SELECTION BOARD,

Hema Complex, Adjacent to Gauri Shanker Mandir, Channi Himmat, Sect 03, Jammu.

(www.jkssb.nic.in)

NOTIFICATION

Subject:- Document Verification of candidates for District Cadre Posts of Accounts Assistant (Panchayat) in Department of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj, Advertised Vide Advertisement Notice No 02 of 2020 dated 06-07-2020.

1. The J&K Services Selection Board, issued Provisional Short List of candidates vide Notification No SSB/Secy/Sel/2021/12-17 dated 01-01-2021, for District Cadre Posts of Accounts Assistant (Panchayat) in Department of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj, Advertised Vide Advertisement Notice No 02 of 2020 dated 06-07-2020.

2. The J&K Services Selection Board has decided to call the candidates figuring in Provisional Shortlist in phases for Document Verification, in keeping with the requirement of filling the notified vacancies, in accordance with the extant norms.

3. Now, therefore, in the 1stPhase the candidates shown in Annexure "A" to this notification are hereby called to appear for Document Verification before the designated Document Verification Committees as per the dates and venue shown against each, at 10.30 AM sharp.

i. The said candidates are required to appear before the Document Verification Committee with the following documents in original; and

• Copy of Online Application form.

• D.O.B Certificate.

• Reservation category certificate, if applicable.

• Domicile Certificate.

• Other documents as per the advertisement.

• Bonafide certificate on the format prescribed by the Board duly issued by the Controller /Registrar of the concerned University in respect of candidates, who have obtained degrees from the Universities/ Colleges outside the State of J&K, other than Central Universities.

ii. The candidates are required to produce OnlineApplication Formas well as above original documents together with a self-attested photocopy of each document/ certificate/bonafide on the day of counselling and document verification.

iii. Some candidates are figuring in reserved categories, based on the details they have incorporated in their data i.e online application form. Their respective claims on this account are further subject to production of valid reserve category certificate during the process of counselling and document verification, in addition to the normal process of verification indicated at para 2(I) and 2(II).

iv. The Board may call candidates from amongst the shortlisted candidates for Documents Verification in 2nd phase,keeping in view requirement and other relevant aspects. The notification for which shall be issued separately.

v. The shortlisting and subsequent selection is subject to outcome of any writ petition pending before the Hon'ble Court.

DIPK-11352/20

(Musheer Ahmed Mirza)KAS, Controller of Examination, J&K Services Selection Board, Jammu.

No. SSB/Secy/Sel/2021/46-52

Dated:- 04-01.2021

Power Supply Restored To All Essential Depts: Govt

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The administration today said power supply has been restored to all essential departments amid the snowfall. Like-wise, 95 percent water supply has been also restored .

Giving details an official spokesman said this was revealed at a video conferencing which LG's advisor Bas-eer Khan held with district administrations of Kashmir and Jammu divisions.

Khan asked them to work 24×7 and with unflinching commitment to ensure that 100% power supply is restored and roads are cleared of snow across the entire Union Territory.

Deputy Commissioners of Kashmir division and Ramban district, Chief Engineer KPDCL, Chief Engineer PWD (R&B) Kashmir, Chief Engineer PHE Kashmir, Chief Engineer (Mechanical) Kashmir and other officers attended the meeting through video conferencing.

The concerned DCs said that they are continuously monitoring the situation and are taking steps as the situation is unfolding.

The details with regard to restoration of power supply, essential supplies to hospitals, road clearances and position of supplies were given by the Deputy Commissioners of both the divisions.

DCs apprised that restoration efforts are in full

swing to restore power supply and restore other essential supplies in their districts affected by snow-fall. They informed that teams of line departments are being deputed to different locations to address the grievance of people on real time basis. They informed that majority of the feeders and receiving stations have been restored.

Regarding response of the district administration with regard to health emergency, DCs informed that power is being restored in the essential institutions and expecting pregnant women are being evacuated in advance to the health institutions.

DC Srinagar informed that all 36, 33 KV lines stand restored and 246 out of 258 11 KV feeders also stand restored adding that only 7 distribution transformers have been damaged out of 6505.

In Budgam, all the 10, 33 KV lines stand restored and out of 93, 11 KV lines, 55 stand restored while as DC Ganderbal informed that all the 08, 33 KV lines stand restored and out of 43 feeders, 33 stand restored.

DC Baramulla informed that all 17 (33 KV) lines stand restored and 140, 11 KV feeder out of 157 have also been restored. Out of 5081, only 12 transformers have been damaged while in Kupwara all 08, 33 KV lines stand restored and 50, out of 68 11 KV lines have been restored.

Prof Romshoo Elected Fellow of Indian Academy of Sciences

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Days after being elected as Fellow of the Indian Society of Geomatics, Kashmir University's Dean of Research Prof Shakil A Romshoo has been elected as Fellow of the prestigious Indian Academy of Sciences.

Prof Romshoo is the first Fellow of the Academy from Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh ever since its inception in 1934. The Academy, which plays a pivotal role in furthering the cause of science in India, has so far elected around 2000 top-notch scientists from within and outside the country as its Fellows.

Founded by Nobel Laureate Professor C V Raman, the Indian Academy of Sciences is an autonomous institution under the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India.

Congratulating Prof Romshoo on behalf of the university for this great achievement, KU Vice-Chancellor Prof Talat Ahmad said he was glad to see Prof Romshoo being

recognised by the Indian Academy of Sciences for his profound and sustained contributions to the promotion of science in the country.

“We all need to work together to raise the stature of science across the country and inculcate scientific temper amongst our youth,” Prof Talat said.

Pertinently, Prof Romshoo has made remarkable contributions to the understanding of glacier systems of the sparsely instrumented Himalaya, and to the investigation of feedbacks between various environmental niches—from alpine glaciers to the depleting river flows in the Indus basin, which was a knowledge gap. His research has produced crucial information for choosing policy and management options for sustainable use of depleting water resources and for meeting the Indus Water Treaty (IWT) obligations, and to deal with impacts of climate change in the basin, the waters of which are shared between India and Pakistan.



Massive fire breaks out in Welcome Hotel

KO NEWS DESK

Srinagar: A massive fire broke out in Welcome hotel Boulevard road in Srinagar on Tuesday.

An eyewitness said that the fire engulfed the hotel around 1:30 pm; however, there were no immediate details about the cause of the fire.

An official from the Fire and Emergency department Srinagar said that a team rushed to the spot to douse off the flames. The official added that the cause of the fire is yet to be ascertained.

An employee of the hotel told

Kashmir Observer that the Tourist police reached the spot on time and with the help of the locals they were able to douse off the fire.

He said around 50 tourists were present in the hotel and all were evacuated safely with the help of locals. He further added that they are yet to access the damage.

“The fire was caused by a short circuit in one of the rooms. But the timely help of the locals and fire-fighters brought the fire under control by 3:30 pm,” he said.

The Hotel belongs to senior vice president of JKHC Riyaz Shahdad.

Meanwhile, J&K Hoteliers Club has expressed regret over the fire incident at Hotel Welcome.

Chairman JK Hoteliers Club Mushtaq Chaya expressed sadness over the incident and expressed full sympathy to the owner.

Chaya also urged the administration to provide full support to the Hotel owners in this time of crisis.

General Secretary of the Club Tariq Rashid Ghani also urged the government to assess the fire incident loss and assist the hotelier for its refurbishing.

Inquiry report into Mudasir Ali's death hogwash: KWJA

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: KDC: Kashmir Working Journalists Association (KWJA) has rejected the inquiry report of the Health Department into the death of senior journalist Mudasir Ali as misleading and wanting in facts.

The report appears to be a cover-up for the negligence and shortcomings of the Health Department and its staff rather than an exercise in understanding the facts of the case, a statement said.

While Mudasir Ali was denied access to oxygen and other lifesaving drugs at the SDH Charar-i-Sharief on November 20, the inquiry report seeks to shift the blame of losing the golden hour towards the family.

“The inquiry report is an attempt to cover up the negligence of the doctor, the administrator of SDH Charari Sharief, and the Health Department who collectively and miserably failed to save Mudasir Ali's life on that fateful night,” said KWJA General Secretary Samaan Lateef.

The inquiry committee has claimed Mudasir Ali started developing symptoms at around 11:30 p.m., while the fact remains that he was in touch with his colleagues at Greater Kashmir until around 12:30 a.m. Muddasir Ali even asked his mother to stay back a little longer in his room until he went to sleep at around 1:00 a.m. when he was yet to complain of any problems.

KWJA wants an inquiry com-

mittee to explain how has it concluded that Muddasir Ali developed symptoms at 11:30 p.m.

KWJA is shocked at the committee's attempt to falsely blame Mudasir's family for the loss of ‘golden hour’ while seeking to give a clean chit to the Health Department.

The committee report says that “all the required gadgets, drugs and equipment needed to manage critical cases at SDH level including stretchers and wheelchairs were found to be available, in plenty and functional” at Charari Sharief SDH. However, the report does not explain why the facilities were inaccessible to the patient on that fateful night.

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

TENDER NOTICE

Serial NIT No.143/CDII/12653-63 of 2020-21

Dated: 04.01.2021.

For and on behalf of Lt. Governor Jammu and Kashmir, sealed tenders affixed with Rs.5.00 (Revenue stamps) are invited from the approved PWD Contractor's for the below mentioned work/s. The tenders should be addressed to the Executive Engineer, Construction Division No.IIind, Srinagar which should reach to his office on or before 09.01.2021 till 2.30 P.M. The Tenders can also be cast in the office of Superintending Engineer, PWD (R&B) Circle Sgr/Budgam. The tenders will be opened on the same day or later in presence of the contractors who like to be present. In case the date of receipt of tenders is declared holiday, transport strike etc. the tenders will be received by the competent authority on the next working day.

S.No.	Name of work/s	Approx. cost (Rs.in Lakhs)	Class of Contr.	Time of Compl.	Cost of T.D
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
1.	Providing PVC foamed insulation to exposed water pipes and insulation/Jacking for exposed water storage tanks at VIP Guest House Dachigam.	Rs.0.76 Lakhs	“DEE”	07 Days	Rs.200/-
2.	Restoration of water supply to SSG Complex at Fair View Guest House Gupkar.	Rs.0.73 Lakhs	“DEE”	03 Days	Rs.200/-

TERMS AND CONDITIONS:-

- Tender document can be purchased from Divisional office against Non-refundable Cash payment from 04.01.2021 during office hours upto 08.01.2021 till 12.00 P.M. Incase of tenderer is unable to purchase the tender documents for the work/works the tenderer can quote their rates as per the advertised quantity schedule in the tender form already issued to him in the form of a tender booklets. In such instance the tenderer shall be required to enclose a crossed postal order in favour of the Executive Engineer, Construction Division No.IIind, Srinagar for an amount to equal to the cost of tender document. This amount of postal order is non-refundable. The tender forms issued by the competent authority during the year 2020-21 can only be utilized for submission of tenders. The tenders received on lapsed tender forms shall be totally rejected.
- The 1st lowest Bidder has to produce an amount equal to 3% of contract as performance security in shape of CDR/FDR before fixation of contract and shall be released after successful completion of work.
- All Bidders has to submit Bid Security Declaration Form instead of Earnest money as per the guidelines of Finance Department (Bid Security Declaration Form is as per Annexure “A” below)
- The bidder shall be at liberty to send their bids either in person or through registered post but shall subscribe the following in front of the envelopes.
 - Name of work.
 - Cost of work
 - Full name of contractor
- Date of receipt of tenders
- Ref. to NIT No.
- The bidding documents shall be issued by this office against Non-refundable cash payment as mentioned above to eligible contractors on production of valid Registration Card on any working day.
- Bids from Joint ventures are not being allowed.
- All bidders are advised to quote the rate on percentage basis for whole Contract of the work. The tender wherein lump-sum rate /Item Wise rate has been quoted against any/all item shall be liable for rejection..
- Any item of items of work beyond the allotted items necessitated at site if any shall be also paid on allotted appreciation/ depreciation on the estimates Rate.
- The bidders should record permanent contact number on his tender document.
- The bids for the work (works) in the form of tender forms issued by the competent authority from time to time during the year 2020-21 or tender documents issued by the competent authority, duly filled and complete in all respects should reach the concerned office on the schedule date and time. Any bid received after the deadline
- All other terms and conditions will be as per PWD Form No.25 (Double agreement form) and detailed NIT issued vide this office No. 07/CDII/2011-12/389-414 dated 07.04.2011.

FOR & ON BEHALF OF LT. GOVERNOR J&K
No. 12653-63
Dated: 04.01.2021

DIPK-11328/20

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

DIAL-EMMA



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

AIRPORTS

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311



RAILWAYS

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



HIGHWAY STATUS



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



HIJRI

CALENDAR

21 Jumada al-Awwal

1442

PRAYERS

FAJR 6: 08

ZUHR 12: 35

ASR 3:57

Magrib 5:37

ISHA 7:03

This Day In History

- 1661 - The Fifth Monarchists unsuccessfully attempt to seize control of London
- 1781 - Battle of Jersey: Major Francis Peirson and his men defeat invading French troops
- 1784 - Turkey & Russia sign treaty in Constantinople
- 1809 - Napoleonic Wars: Invasion of Cayenne, by combined British, Portuguese and colonial
- Brazilian forces, begins
- 1842 - 4,500 British & Indian troops leave Kabul, massacred before reaching India
- 1853 - Franklin Pierce, the President-elect of the United States at the time, and his family are
- involved in a train wreck in Massachusetts
- 1857 - Patent for reducing zinc ore granted to Samuel Wetherill, Penn
- 1887 - ' - Abd-Allah II of Harar opens the Battle of Chelenqo with an attack on the camp of the
- Shewan army of Negus Menelik II
- 1896 - 1st US women's 39s 6-day bicycle race starts, Madison Square Garden
- message from a submerged submarine, by Simon Lake
- Event of interestEvent of interest
- 1907 - Maria Montessori opens her 1st (Montessori) school (Rome)
- 1912 - New Mexico becomes 47th state of the Union
- 1912 - Alfred Wegener, geophysicist and meteorologist, presents his controversial theory of
- continental drift in a lecture at the Geological Association (Geologischen Vereinigung) at the
- Senckenberg-Museum, Frankfurt.
- 1921 - The Iraqi Army is formed
- 1925 - Mussolini forms a cabinet composed entirely of Fascists in Italy
- 1929 - Mother Teresa arrives in Calcutta to begin a her work amongst India's poorest
- 1930 - 1st diesel engine automobile trip (in a Packard sedan) completed
- 1931 - Thomas Edison submits his last patent application
- 1941 - US President Franklin Roosevelt makes his 'Four Freedoms' speech (freedom of speech
- and worship; freedom from want and fear) during his US State of Union address
- 1950 - Britain recognizes Communist government of China
- 1951 - Ganghwa massacre: Hundreds of South Korean communist sympathisers are slaughtered
- 1953 - The first Asian Socialist Conference opens in Burma
- 1968 - Surveyor 7 (last of series) launched by US for soft-landing on Moon
- 1971 - Berkeley chemists announces 1st synthetic growth hormones
- 1972 - Vladimir Bukowski is exiled from USSR
- 1976 - China performs nuclear test at Lop Nor, PRC
- 1980 - Indira Gandhi's Congress Party wins elections in India
- 1986 - STS 61-C scrubbed at T-3sec because of liquid oxygen valve problem
- 1987 - Astronomers at University of California see 1st sight of birth of a galaxy
- 1993 - Jean Mueller discovers comet Mueller/1993A
- 1993 - 55 Kashmiri civilians are killed in Sopore, Jammu and Kashmir by Indian Border Security Force units
- 1995 - A chemical fire in an apartment complex in Manila, Philippines, leads to the discovery of
- plans for Project Bojinka, a mass-terrorist attack.
- 2009 - Israel begins an assault on the Gaza Strip
- 2012 - A suicide bomber blows himself up at a police station in Damascus, Syria, killing 26
- people and wounding 63
- 2014 - Truce begins between Free Syrian Army and forces loyal to President Bashar al-Assad in
- northern Damascus
- 2016 - North Korea states that they have successfully conducted their fourth nuclear test, saying
- it was a hydrogen bomb in a claim disputed by most international experts.

From KO Archives

Who will go to Pakistan?

Prof Ghani wants passports for all

NEW DELHI - Caught in a cleft stick over the choice of a Hurriyat Conference team to visit Pakistan, [its chairman, Abdul Ghani Bhat, today said the Centre should give passports to all the seven executive members of the amalgam to make the dream of peace initiatives between India and Pakistan a reality.

“We trust the Government Issue passports in favour of all the seven members of the executive council with a view to helping the process to move forward in the right direction/ Bhat told PTI over phone from Srinagar.

With consensus elusive on the composition of the team, Bhat has been authorised to nominate the team to hold talks with militant leadership and other Pakistani officials.

Insiders say Bhat will have to do a tight rope walking as it would be difficult for him to choose a team in the wake of statements by Hizb-ul-Mujahideen asking them to include firebrand Jamaat-e-Islami leader Syed Ah Shah Geelani in the team travelling to Pakistan.

Bhat would be waiting for a goodwill gesture from Geelani like the one from Abdul Ghani Lone, who on January 1 said he would opt out of the team if it was required for consensus.

When it was pointed out to Hurriyat chairman that Geelani and another senior Hurriyat leader Sheikh Abdul Aziz had not applied either in writing or verbally for passport, Bhat said probably it should be taken in the larger interest as a request for the issuance of the passports to them too.

However, the Centre, which is understood to have given clearance for issuance of travel documents to Bhat, Lone, Shia leader Moulana Abbas Ansari and providing new travel document to JKLF leader Yaseen Malik (who applied in September last year), has not given a go ahead for passports to Geelani and Aziz.

Informed sources said that since these two had not applied for the same, a decision could not be taken.

The Hurriyat chairman is, however, of the opinion that the peace initiative needs to be pushed forward in the right perspective in order to achieve a breakthrough.

All of us in Delhi, Islamabad as well as Srinagar and Muzaffarabad (in Pakistan-controlled Kashmir) will have to proceed imaginatively and with openness to make the peace process a genuine, purposeful and a result-oriented exercise, the Hurriyat chairman said

We have to achieve a breakthrough but this has to be borne in mind that we cannot do it unless we make a positively good beginning, Bhat said and added issuance of passports to all Hurriyat members will mean that a beginning has been made.

(KASHMIR OBSERVER, 06 January, 2001)

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From the 18th century onwards, Islam as an imperial power began to stagnate. Its nemesis was the Muslim community's slide into myopia. It was eventually overwhelmed by European colonialism, powered by economic, militarist, political and social modernity based on the principles of the 'Age of Enlightenment' i.e. rationalism, science, democracy, secularism and capitalism

Brexit: Finale at Last

The British public will have to face the repercussions of the sordid Brexit saga, mostly based on lies, during the pandemic times

Asad Mirza

On 31 December 2020, at 11 pm UK time and 12 pm Brussels time, four years, 27 weeks and two days after a referendum that split the UK almost down the middle in 2016, the curtains on the Brexit saga, finally came down, as the UK left the embrace of the European Union (EU) in a departure that was notably low key.

Most observers view the Brexit campaign, which claimed the job of two British prime ministers in its wake, as one built on lies and deceit. With the public being misled and fed wrong and inflated information, the result was in favour of some politicians who acceded to the chair at No. 10, like Boris Johnson.

In his New Year message, British prime minister Boris Johnson largely ignored Brexit, an issue he arguably shaped more than any other politician. Instead he preferred to focus on the toll of Covid-19 and what he called "the grimness of 2020". It seemed a far cry from his 2019 message, when after his recent election victory, he had promised "a fantastic year and a remarkable decade for our United Kingdom".

He described the moment as 'amazing', citing what he said were boundless possibilities with trade and innovation, and the UK was now "free to do trade deals around the world, and free to turbocharge our ambition to be a science superpower". He added: "We have our freedom in our hands and it is up to us to make the most of it."

Politicians' Reactions

Politicians in Britain and the EU expressed both triumph and bitter regret after the UK's Brexit transition period ended on New Year's Eve. Though, most of the Conservative leaders and politicians like Nigel Farage exulted in their messages.

However, across the Channel, the French president Emmanuel Macron in

his new year's address, expressed regret. "The United Kingdom remains our neighbour but also our friend and ally," he said. "This choice of leaving Europe, this Brexit, was the child of European malaise and lots of lies and false promises."

Nearer home in Scotland, which had voted 'Remain' strongly in the 2016 Brexit referendum, the pro-independence Scottish first minister, Nicola Sturgeon, promised to continue the Scottish independence drive, she tweeted: "Scotland will be back soon, Europe. Keep the light on." In a retort Johnson said the Scots could continue to dream, as this one will not be fulfilled during this generation.

Nigel Farage, who played a key role in the 2016 referendum, tweeted: "25 years ago they all laughed at me. Well, they're not laughing now." The UK's chief Brexit negotiator, Lord Frost, said the UK had a "great future before us" with the chance to "build a better country for us all". The Conservative MP Bill Cash, who has campaigned for Brexit for decades, said it was a "victory for democracy and sovereignty."

UK Media Coverage

Britain's Eurosceptic newspapers, after decades of bashing Brussels, celebrated victory in the year's first day editions after the Brexit transition period ended, but pro-EU outlets dwelt on a "day of sadness".

The Guardian's headline focused on Britain finally quitting the EU in the midst of a "crisis, without fanfare", an editorial called Brexit a "tragic national error". The Times splashed Johnson's "upbeat new year's message" celebrating an "amazing" future for the UK. The on-line Independent ran a satirical cartoon portraying leading Brexiteers as various species of fish. The front page of the Daily Express showed a picture of the White Cliffs of Dover and the headline "Our future. Our Britain. Our destiny". The Sun relegated the Brexit story to a

Several European commentators weighed in on what Britain's departure from the EU means. Most viewed its reputation for pragmatism and probity shredded by a campaign which they saw as profoundly populist and dangerously dishonest, and predicted an uncertain future for the UK

front-page box headlined "PM: Britain Brexpects", reporting Johnson's words that Brexit marked a moment for national renewal in which the country would "turbocharge" scientific innovation. "Welcome to 2021 – and two reasons to hope for a much brighter future," ran the Daily Telegraph headline, where Johnson made his name as a Brussels-bashing Europe correspondent in the 1990s. The Daily Mail preferred to focus entirely on the pandemic-related news, coolly ignoring Brexit.

View from the Europe

Several European commentators weighed in on what Britain's departure from the EU means. Most viewed its reputation for pragmatism and probity shredded by a campaign which they saw as profoundly populist and dangerously dishonest, and predicted an uncertain future

for the UK.

The Guardian reported Rem Korteweg, of the Clingendael Institute think tank in the Netherlands, as saying "For us, the UK has always been seen as like-minded: economically progressive, politically stable, respect for the rule of law – a beacon of western liberal democracy, ... which has been seriously hit by the past four years. Brexit is an exercise in emotion, not rationality; in choosing your own facts. And it's not clear how it will end."

Britain's long-polished pragmatic image had been "seriously tarnished", Nicolai von Ondarza, of the German Institute for International and Security Affairs told The Guardian. But trust in the UK, too, had taken a heavy battering on the Brexit rollercoaster, he added.

The "sovereignty" in whose name Brexit was done remained, essentially, a myth, Jean-Dominique Giuliani, of the Robert Schuman Foundation in France, told The Guardian. "Take back control" is a nationalist, populist slogan that ignores the reality of an interdependent world. Our maritime neighbour will be much weakened," he added.

The German historian Helene von Bismarck doubted whether Brexit would end what she described as a very British brand of populism. "British populism is a political method, not an ideology, and it does not become redundant with Brexit," she said. She identified two key elements in this method: an emotionalisation and over-simplification of highly complex issues, such as Brexit, the Covid pandemic or migration, and a reliance on bogeymen or enemies at home and abroad. "Populists depend on enemies, real or imagined, to legitimise their actions and deflect from their own shortcomings," she said. If the EU has been the "enemy abroad" since 2016, it will steadily be replaced by "enemies within".

Elvire Fabry, of France's Institut Jacques Delors, told The Guardian that the past four years had shown Europe-

ans and Britons "just how little we really knew each other". They had also revealed, she said, the fragility of a parliamentary system seen by many on the continent as a point of reference.

In Der Spiegel, Nikolaus Blome opined that there was "absolutely nothing good about Brexit ... which would never have happened had Conservative politicians not, to a quite unprecedented degree, deceived and lied to their people".

Meanwhile, the UK has now signed trade agreements with 62 countries, the latest one with Turkey, after agreements with Japan, Canada, Switzerland and Norway were secured earlier.

Also the news of the British prime minister's father Stanley confirming that he is applying for a French passport came as a shot in the arm of anti-Brexit lobby. Stanley Johnson described himself as a French not a British, he was one of the first UK civil servants to work in Brussels after Britain joined the European Economic Community in 1973.

The critics are also warning of how the individuals and businesses both in the UK and beyond may face a dizzying new array of red tape, a good deal of it still to be worked out. In addition, the parting of ways could also have major constitutional repercussions for the United Kingdom. Northern Ireland, which shares a border with EU member the Republic of Ireland, remains more closely tied to the bloc's economy under the divorce terms, a status some fear could pull it away from the rest of the UK, just like Scotland, which is clamouring for independence, and if any of them succeed, then the United may fall like a house made of play cards.

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

Asad Mirza is a Political Commentator based in Delhi

In a 2012 lecture at the Institute of Advanced Studies, the late Danish-American historian Patricia Crone described Omer Saeed Sheikh as an "acculturated native" who had rebelled against his adopted cultural mores.

Sheikh is a British citizen who was arrested in Pakistan for his role in the kidnapping and murder of American journalist Daniel Pearl in 2002. Sheikh was born in London to Pakistani parents who had migrated to England in 1968. They quickly adopted British cultural norms and established a successful clothing business there. Sheikh was enrolled at a prestigious private school in London and was then sent to Lahore's equally prestigious Aitchison College.

He returned to England and enrolled at the famous London School of Economics. But he soon dropped out and travelled to a war-torn Bosnia in the early 1990s. This is when Sheikh threw himself completely into becoming a radical Islamist.

According to Crone, acculturated natives embrace cultural norms of their adopted societies. They do so to advance their status in these societies. These natives may be living in regions where they do not have ancestral roots, or in their ancestral regions that have been colonised by foreign powers. But when, despite integrating the foreign cultural ethos, they feel that their progress is being restricted by the producers of these ethos, they walk out from their acculturated selves, rebel against it and adopt their ancestral culture.

But what they believe is their 'authentic/ancestral culture' is often a romanticised concoction, or even an unintentional caricature. In their rebellion against their former acculturated selves, they may begin to dress in the manner they believe

Muslim Community's Slide Into Myopia

Islam's rational past defies views of fundamentalists who challenge modernity by romanticising the past.

Nadeem F. Paracha

people in their ancestral culture do (or ought to), or they may begin to follow their religion in a more overt manner.

To Crone, the acculturated non-European native's anger, triggered by his inability to achieve prestige and success despite adopting the ethos of a dominant western culture, is a rebellion against modernity. On the other hand, according to Crone, it is also a failure of Western modernity. The failure in this respect is its inability to hold on to non-Europeans who had willingly adopted modernity but then walked out to rebel against it. Crone says this is because of a fear within the purveyors of modernity that their positions of power might be usurped, by those who had adopted their ideas but were not from its race of origin.

Islam's rational past defies views of fundamentalists who challenge modernity by romanticising the past to project themselves as authentic

To Crone this is not an irrational fear, but one that an idea needs to let go of if it is to retain converts and grow. In her 2014 book The Nativist Prophets of Early Islamic Iran, Crone writes that one of the main reasons behind the rapid growth of Islam was the fact that its purveyors had made it extremely simple to convert to the new faith.

The faith's first century was dominated

by Arabs who lived in garrison cities, away from the natives they had conquered. But the natives could enter the garrison cities and enjoy all of its perks and power by adopting Islam. The acculturated native, in this context, did not face any hindrances to progress or rise to a position of power. According to Crone, this is why the native retained his acculturated self and did not walk out or rebel against it, despite his dislike of Arab hegemony. He may have rebelled against the Arabs but not the idea that he had converted to.

Indeed, the huge influx of non-Arab natives into the fold of Islam consequently overthrew the hegemony of its original purveyors (the Arabs) — especially after the Abbasid Revolution in 750 CE. But the faith continued to grow. In Pakistan, however, from the mid-1970s onwards, certain political and constitutional developments have led to the growth of a particular non-inclusive strand of Islam, alienating those who may follow a different strand or may belong to a different faith.

They believe that, even if they acculturate themselves with this dominant strand, they will not be able to achieve the kind of success or position that those who were born into this strand can. They are thus more likely to walk out and leave the idea of nationhood based on this

strand vulnerable to contraction. And it has been contracting.

From the 18th century onwards, Islam as an imperial power began to stagnate. Its nemesis was the Muslim community's slide into myopia. It was eventually overwhelmed by European colonialism, powered by economic, militarist, political and social modernity based on the principles of the 'Age of Enlightenment' i.e. rationalism, science, democracy, secularism and capitalism.

This saw vast sections of colonised Muslims acculturating themselves to this modernity, so that they were not left behind. But because of reasons pointed out by Crone, many walked out of it, giving birth to radical Islamist ideas based on romanticised notions of their faith and its history.

Interestingly, according to the British academic Jonathan Israel, in the anthology The Secular State and Islam in Europe, Muslims who had adopted modernity were actually integrating ideas that were originally inspired by ancient Muslim rationalists. This was also often pointed out by 19th century Muslim modernists such as Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and Muhammad Abduh.

Israel writes that, as the seeds of the Enlightenment were being sown in Eu-

rope, there were European thinkers who were challenging monarchism and the Church by debunking their hostile perceptions of Islam, and informing their audiences that Islam was a rational and inclusive faith.

According to Israel, not all purveyors of the Enlightenment agreed. But 18th century Enlightenment philosophers such as Pierre Bayle, Henri de Boulainvilliers and Denis Diderot presented Islam as a rational and tolerant faith. Israel writes that these men were inspired by certain ancient Muslim thinkers, and their ideas seeped into the overall construct of Enlightenment philosophies, producing modernity.

Muslim modernists have often reiterated this narrative, pointing out that, by adopting Western modernity, Muslims were simply acculturating themselves with an Islamic past that had been repressed by conservatives. Sir Syed understood this as a battle between aqal (reason and logic) and naqal (tradition and ritual). According to the 20th century Islamic modernist and scholar the late Fazal-ur-Rahman Malik, Islam's rational past does not fit the world view of 'fundamentalists' and radicals who, to challenge modernity, have constructed a largely romanticised past to tout their disposition as being 'authentic.'

In other words, those who rejected acculturation (to modernity) by claiming it was alien, were rejecting a repressed Islamic tradition that had inspired this modernity, and falling back on a mythical understanding of the faith's history to justify their rebellion.

Long COVID: who is at risk?

Frances Williams

Long COVID is characterised by a constellation of symptoms, including – variably – shortness of breath, marked fatigue, headache, and loss of ability to taste and smell normally

For most people, infection with SARS-CoV-2 – the virus that causes COVID-19 – leads to mild, short-term symptoms, acute respiratory illness, or possibly no symptoms at all. But some people have long-lasting symptoms after their infection – this has been dubbed “long COVID”.

Scientists are still researching long COVID. It’s not well understood, though our knowledge about it is growing. Here I take a look at what we’ve learned about it so far – who is at risk, how common it is and what its effects are.

In defining who is at risk from long COVID and the mechanisms involved, we may reveal suitable treatments to be tried – or whether steps taken early in the course of the illness might ameliorate it.

Broad vulnerability

Long COVID is characterised by a constellation of symptoms, including – variably – shortness of breath, marked fatigue, headache, and loss of ability to taste and smell normally. A relatively large study of 384 individuals ill enough to be admitted to hospital with COVID-19 showed that 53% remained breathless at a follow-up assessment one to two months later, with 34% having a cough and 69% reporting fatigue.

Indeed, early analysis of self-reported data submitted through the COVID Symptom Study app suggests that 13% of people who experience COVID-19 symptoms have them for more than 28 days, while 4% have symptoms after more than 56 days.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, people with more severe disease initially – characterised by more than five symptoms – seem to be at increased risk of long COVID. Older age and being female also appear to be risk factors for having prolonged symptoms, as is having a higher body mass index.

Those using the app tend to be at the fitter end of the population, with an interest in health matters. So it is surprising that such a high proportion have symptoms one to two months after the initial infection. Generally, these aren’t people who are highly vulnerable to COVID-19.

Another piece of early research (awaiting peer review) suggests that SARS-CoV-2 could also have a long-term impact on people’s organs. But the profile of those affected in this study is



different to those reporting symptoms via the app.

This research, which looked at a sample of 200 patients who had recovered from COVID-19, found mild organ impairment in 32% of people’s hearts, 33% of people’s lungs and 12% of people’s kidneys. Multiple organ damage was found in 25% of patients.

Patients in this study had a mean age of 44 years, so were very much part of the young, working-age population. Only 18% had been hospitalised with COVID-19, meaning organ damage may occur even after a non-severe infection. Having a disease known to lead to more severe COVID-19, such as type 2 diabetes and ischaemic heart disease, wasn’t a prerequisite for organ damage either.

Finding out what’s going on

There are many reasons why people may have symptoms months after a viral illness during a pandemic. But getting to the bottom of what’s going on inside people will be easier for some parts of the body than others.

Where symptoms point to a specific organ, investigating is relatively straightforward. Clinicians can examine the electrical flow around the heart

if someone is suffering palpitations. Or they can study lung function – tissue elasticity and gas exchange – where shortness of breath is the predominant symptom. To determine whether kidney function has deteriorated, components in a patient’s blood plasma are compared to those in their urine to measure how well the kidneys are filtering waste products.

Rather harder to explore is the symptom of fatigue. Another recent large-scale study has shown that this symptom is common after COVID-19 – occurring in more than half of cases – and appears unrelated to the severity of the early illness.

What’s more, tests showed that the people examined didn’t have elevated levels of inflammation, suggesting that their fatigue wasn’t caused by continued infection or their immune system working overtime. Risk factors for long-lasting symptoms in this study included being female – in keeping with the COVID Symptom App study – and, interestingly, having a previous diagnosis of anxiety and depression.

While men are at increased risk of severe infection, that women seem to be more affected by long COVID may

reflect their different or changing hormone status. The ACE2 receptor that SARS-CoV-2 uses to infect the body is present not only on the surface of respiratory cells, but also on the cells of many organs that produce hormones, including the thyroid, adrenal gland and ovaries.

Some symptoms of long COVID overlap with menopausal symptoms, and hormone replacement using medication may be one route to reducing the impact of symptoms. However, clinical trials will be essential to accurately determining whether this approach is both safe and effective. Applications to launch such research have been made.

With so much having happened over the last year, we will need to tease apart which impacts stem from the virus itself versus which might be the consequence of the massive social disruption wrought by this pandemic. What is clear, however, is that long-term symptoms after COVID-19 are common, and that research into the causes and treatments of long COVID will likely be needed long after the outbreak itself has subsided.

By arrangements with
The Conversation

There’s no doubt that 2020 was difficult for everyone and tragic for many. But now vaccines against Covid-19 are finally being administered – giving a much needed hope of a return to normality and a happy 2021.

However, months of anxiety, grief, and loneliness can easily create a spiral of negativity that is hard to break out of. That’s because chronic stress changes the brain. And sometimes when we’re low, we have no interest in doing the things that could actually make us feel better.

To enjoy our lives in 2021, we need to snap out of destructive habits and get our energy levels back. In some cases, that may initially mean forcing yourself to do the things that will gradually make you feel better.

Here are six evidenced-based ways to change our brains for the better:

1. Be kind and helpful

Kindness, altruism, and empathy can affect the brain. One study showed that making a charitable donation activated the brain’s reward system in a similar way to actually receiving money. This also applies to helping others who have been wronged.

Volunteering can also give a sense of meaning to life, promoting happiness, health, and well-being. Older adults who volunteer regularly also exhibit greater life satisfaction and reduced depression and anxiety. In short, making others happy is a great way to make yourself happy.

2. Exercise

Exercise has been linked with both better physical and mental health, including improved cardiovascular health and reduced depression. In childhood, exercise is associated with better school performance, while it promotes better cognition and job performance in young adults. In older adults, exercise maintains cognitive performance and provides resilience against neurodegenerative disorders, such as dementia.

What’s more, studies have shown that individuals with higher levels of fitness have increased brain volume, which is associated with better cognitive performance in older adults. People who exercise also live longer. One of the very best things that you can do to reboot your brain is go out and get some fresh air. Do make sure to pick something you actually enjoy to ensure you keep doing it though.

3. Eat well

Giving Your Brain A Reboot

After a difficult year of Covid-19, here are six ways to make 2021 better

Barbara Jacquelyn Sahakian



To enjoy our lives in 2021, we need to snap out of destructive habits and get our energy levels back. In some cases, that may initially mean forcing yourself to do the things that will gradually make you feel better.

Nutrition can substantially influence the development and health of brain structure and function. It provides the proper building blocks for the brain to create and maintain connections, which is critical for improved cognition and academic performance. Previous evidence has shown that long-term lack of nutrients can lead to structural and functional damage to the

brain, while a good quality diet is related to larger brain volume. Therefore, whatever your age, remember to eat a well-balanced diet, including fruits and vegetables.

4. Keep socially connected

Loneliness and social isolation is prevalent across all ages, genders, and cultures – further elevated by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Robust scientific evidence has indicated that social isolation is detrimental to physical, cognitive, and mental health.

One recent study showed that there were negative effects of Covid-19 isolation on emotional cognition, but that this effect was smaller in those that stayed connected with others during lockdown. Developing social connections and alleviating loneliness

is also associated with decreased risk of mortality as well as a range of illnesses.

Therefore, loneliness and social isolation are increasingly recognized as critical public health issues, which require effective interventions. And social interaction is associated with positive feelings and increased activation in the brain’s reward system.

In 2021, be sure to keep up with family and friends, but also expand your horizons and make some new connections.

5. Learn something new

The brain changes during critical periods of development, but is also a lifelong process. Novel experiences, such as learning new skills, can modify both brain function and the underlying brain structure. For example, juggling has been shown to increase white matter (tissue composed of nerve fibers) structures in the brain associated with visuo-motor performance.

Similarly, musicians have been shown to have increased grey matter in the parts of the brain that process auditory information. Learning a new language can also change the structure of the human brain.

A large review of the literature suggested that mentally stimulating leisure activities increase brain-reserve, which can instil resilience and be protective of cognitive decline in older adults – be it chess or cognitive games.

6. Sleep properly

Sleep is an essential component of human life, yet many people do not understand the relationship between good brain health and the process of sleeping. During sleep, the brain reorganizes and recharges itself and removes toxic waste byproducts, which helps to maintain normal brain functioning.

Sleep is very important for transforming experiences into our long-term memory, maintaining cognitive and emotional function, and reducing mental fatigue. Studies of sleep deprivation have demonstrated deficits in memory and attention as well as changes in the reward system, which often disrupts emotional functioning. Sleep also exerts a strong regulatory influence on the immune system. If you have the optimal quantity and quality of sleep, you will find that you have more energy, better well-being and are able to develop your creativity and thinking.

By arrangements with
The Conversation

NIA Files Supplementary Charge Sheet In Hizb Narco-Militancy Case

JAMMU: The NIA on Tuesday filed a supplementary chargesheet against two alleged narco-militants in a case registered last year following the arrest of a Hizbul Mujahideen operative along with Rs 29 lakh from Punjab, a spokesperson of the investigating agency said.

Earlier, a chargesheet was filed in the Hizbul Mujahideen (HM) narco-militancy case on October 10 against 10 people, including the slain chief of the Kashmir-based militant group Riyaz Ahmad Naikoo.

The supplementary chargesheet was filed against narco militants Jaswant Singh alias "Jassa" of Gurdaspur and

Gursant Singh alias "Gora" of Tarn Taran in the NIA special court in Mohali, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) spokesperson said.

The accused persons were involved in collection, distribution and selling of heroin smuggled from Pakistan as also in collection and channelisation of proceeds to further activities of the HM, he said.

"Gora was one of the important members of the militant gang and as a close associate of prime accused Iqbal Singh alias "Shera", was responsible for safe movement of heroin and proceeds to various places/unknown persons," the spokesperson said.



son said.

The investigation has also brought to the fore that he has purchased many immoveable properties to be used as hideouts and luxury cars for transportation of drugs and proceeds, he said.

The earlier chargesheet was filed against Hilal Ahmed Shergojri of Jammu and Kashmir's

Pulwama, Bikram Singh, Gagandeep Singh, Ranjit Singh and Maninder Singh (Amritsar), and Ranjit Singh and Jaswant Singh (Gurdaspur).

The spokesperson said all have been arrested except Iqbal Singh of Amritsar and Zafar Hussain Bhat, of Jammu and Kashmir's Anantnag. While Iqbal Singh is absconding, Bhat is hiding in Pakistan, he said.

The spokesperson said a case was registered at the Sadar Police Station in Amritsar on April 25 last year following the arrest of Shergojri and recovery of Rs 29 lakhs from his possession by the Punjab Police.

The NIA took up the investiga-

tion of the case on May 8 last year.

During the course of investigation, it emerged that the accused, who had come to Amritsar to collect the money, was a member of proscribed militant organization Hizbul Mujahideen and a close associate of Naikoo.

"This led to busting of a major narco-militant module involved in smuggling and selling of heroin in India and channelising of drug-proceeds to Pakistan through Hawala and to the HM militants based in J&K at the behest of HM militants based in Pakistan," the spokesperson said, adding further investigation against the absconding is underway. PTI

Single Window Process For Mining NOCs

Observer Monitoring Desk

JAMMU: The Chief Secretary, B V R Subrahmanyam on Tuesday chaired a meeting to review the execution of mining leases in Jammu and Kashmir and evolve a strategy to facilitate ease of doing business in the sector.

Administrative Secretaries of departments of Revenue, Animal/Sheep Husbandry & Fisheries, Mining, Forest, Ecology & Environment, and Jal Shakti, besides Divisional Commissioner, Jammu and Deputy Commissioner, Jammu participated in the meeting, an official spokesperson said Tuesday.

Emphasizing the importance of time-bound systematic and scientific exploitation of min-

erals in J&K, Chief Secretary, he said, impressed upon the Department to undertake a pre-assessment of the mining blocks before their auction.

"This will facilitate the successful bidders to obtain environmental clearance in a timely manner leading to prompt operationalization of the leased mines", he said, as per the official spokesperson.

"For the blocks which are currently under the process of obtaining environmental clearance, the department was directed to get the cases expedited through district level single window committees headed by the concerned Deputy Commissioner within a period of 45 days," he added.

China's Provocative Actions To Change Status Quo Responded In 'Firm' And 'Non-Escalatory' Way: Def Ministry

NEW DELHI: The "unilateral and provocative" actions by the Chinese military to change the status quo by force in more than one area on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) were responded to in a "firm" and "non-escalatory way", the Defence Ministry has said in an annual report.

The report said Indian troops are well entrenched to counter any "misadventure" by Chinese forces and that the Indian Army is prepared for any eventuality, adding talks are also progressing to resolve the issue in an amicable manner.

Referring to the Galwan Valley clashes on June 15 that marked one of the most serious military conflicts between the two sides

in decades, the defence ministry said the Chinese side also suffered "significant casualties".

Twenty Indian soldiers were killed in the clashes.

"Unilateral and provocative actions by the Chinese to change the status quo by force, in more than one area on the Line of Actual Control (LAC), were responded to in a firm and non-escalatory way, ensuring the sanctity of our claims in Eastern Ladakh," it said.

"Indian Army has maintained all protocols and agreements between the two countries while the PLA escalated the situation by utilisation of unorthodox weapons and amassing a large number of troops," it added.

DGP Inaugurates Highway Patrol Vehicles CCTV Network Monitoring Lab In Jammu

JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir Director General of Police Dilbag Singh on Tuesday inaugurated highway patrol vehicles CCTV network monitoring lab here and directed for the deployment of skilled manpower for optimum results.

The DGP also reviewed the functioning of modern 'nakas' (checking points) in the Jammu zone and directed for augmenting highway patrol and check-points with bullet-proof bunker vehicles and quick reaction teams, a police spokesperson said.

Inaugurating the highway patrol vehicles CCTV network monitoring lab at police control room here, he congratulated and appreciated the efforts of Jammu zone senior officers for working towards further modernization, he said.

Singh was briefed by IGP Jammu Zone Mukesh Singh and SSP PCR Kulbir Singh about the working and various modern functions of the highway patrol vehicles deployed at 33 places across the zone, the spokesperson said.

He said a live demonstration of the working of these highway

patrol vehicles was given and senior officers interacted with the personnel on duty with these vehicles at different locations.

These highway patrol vehicles will be very helpful in surveillance and speedy response to incidents. These vehicles will be complementing the Naka Network already established on the highway grid, the police chief said, adding that communicating and directing the personnel on these vehicles on a real-time basis from PCR is going to be very useful in prevention and checking of

crimes on the highways.

He directed the officers that all personnel working on these vehicles should be given training for handling the surveillance gadgets fitted on the vehicles and for proper communication skills for optimum results.

Singh also directed that the highway patrol and naka grid be further augmented with the bulletproof bunker vehicles and Quick Reaction Teams (QRTs) so that no time is lost in reacting to situations befittingly, the spokesperson said.

The DGP said it has been an endeavor of the police headquarters to provide mobility, surveillance networks and modern gadgets to the police units so that prevention and detection of crime is ensured in the shortest possible time.

Describing the main features of these vehicles, the SSP PCR said they are equipped with two cameras, one each at front and rear of the vehicle, network video recorder, two-way audio transmission device, a touch screen and an alert button.

Heavy Snowfall Batters...

led to disruptions in milk and vegetable supplies to Srinagar. Reports said one walnut tree fell on a residential house of one Abul Hameed Dar at Sagam Kokernag and damaged the roof. Also, middle School Kanderpora Guree in Bijbehara Anantnag suffered damaged along with roof of two residential houses at Manigam Kulgam. A house was also damaged in Zoonimar area of Srinagar even as there was no loss of life or injury reported. Meanwhile, the minimum temperature improved in most places in the valley due to the snowfall but still stayed below the freezing point, the officials said.

Srinagar city recorded a low of minus 0.8 degrees Celsius -- up from the previous night's minus 0.9 degrees Celsius, they said. The minimum temperature in Gulmarg tourist resort settled at minus 4 degrees Celsius compared to minus 5 degrees Celsius a night earlier.

Pahalgam tourist resort in south Kashmir, recorded a low of minus 1.1 degrees Celsius up from minus 6.7 degrees Celsius on the previous night, the officials said.

Qazigund recorded a minimum of minus 0.2 degrees Celsius, Kupwara, in the north, minus 0.7 degrees Celsius and Kokernag, minus 1.0 degrees Celsius.

The MET Office said moderate to heavy snowfall, with isolated very heavy snowfall, was most likely to take place, especially in south Kashmir, Gulmarg, Banihal-Ramban, Poonch, Rajouri, Kistawar and Zanskar, Drass as well as on the higher reaches of Ladakh UT, over next 24 hours.

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 the most frequent and maximum during this period and most areas, especially in the higher reaches, receive heavy snowfall.

Thousands Stranded On...

Kashmir valley were also cleared before the traffic was again halted at around 8 pm on Monday, the officials said, adding all the vehicles reached their destination safely.

Dozens of passengers, including three cancer patients, were provided food and shelter by the local residents of Tathaar-Nowgam village of Banihal before they were allowed to move towards their destination by the authorities.

The officials said a mud-slide which had struck the highway near Samrol in Udhampur district due to overnight rains was cleared around 2 pm Tuesday, thus paving the way for resumption of traffic on Jammu-Kishtwar-Doda highway.

Despite inclement weather, they said the road clearance agencies concerned are working to ensure early reopening of the Jammu-Srinagar national highway.

The highway is blocked at multiple locations, especially between Panthiyal to Ramsu, due to land and mudslides along with heavy accumulation of snow in Jawahar Tunnel-Qazigund stretch. Efforts are on to restore the highway as soon as possible, a traffic department official said.

He said there are over 4,500 vehicles, mostly trucks, stranded on either side of the highway and these vehicles would be cleared first before allowing fresh traffic after the restoration of traffic. The Meteorological department has predicted improvement in the weather from Wednesday morning.

The prevailing weather condition is likely to continue till late tonight or early tomorrow (Wednesday). We are expecting a significant improvement in weather from Wednesday across J&K, a spokesman of the MeT department said, predicting cold wave conditions from January 7.

Meanwhile, Jammu and other plains were lashed by heavy rains, while high altitude areas in the region experienced intermittent snowfall for the third day on Tuesday.

Jammu recorded 32.4 mm of rains during the past 24 hours ending 8.30 am Tuesday, the spokesman said, adding the city recorded a minimum of 11.9 degrees Celsius which was 4.6 degrees above normal during this part of the season.

Bhaderwah in Doda district, Banihal and Batote in Ramban district experienced 4 cm, 3.2 cm and 0.5 cm of snowfall during the same period, the spokesman said.

Admin Orders Rationing...

Divisional Commissioner P K Pole, buses, trucks and commercial vehicles will get a maximum of 20 litres, while private vehicles (four wheelers) will get only 10 litres.

Three wheelers will get five litres of fuel while two wheelers will get only three litres.

The administration has also put a cap of 21 days on refill for LPG cylinders.

The tehsildars and tehsil supply officers concerned were directed to ensure implementation of the orders while line departments were instructed to crack whip on those indulging in malpractices like overcharging, black marketing or profiteering.

Fresh Avalanche Warning...

said a medium-level avalanche warning has been issued for the higher reaches of Poonch, Rajouri, Ramban, Doda, Kishtwar, Anantnag, Kulgam, Kupwara and Bandipora districts, besides the Waltengu Nad, south and north portals of the Jawahar Tunnel, Verinag, Kapran, Chowkibal-NC Pass, Gurez, Dawar and Neeru areas.

"Similarly, a low-level avalanche warning has been issued for the upper reaches of Udhampur, Baramulla, Ganderbal, Sonamarg-Zojila, Z-Gali-Kalaroose, Kanzalwan, Tangmarg and Gulmarg," he added.

People living in these avalanche-prone areas have been advised not to venture out to avoid loss of lives, the spokesperson said.

Bhatnagar Takes Stock Of...

R&B, Mechanical and Jal Shakti departments of both Jammu and Kashmir divisions to review the post snowfall situation, an official spokesperson said. Bhatnagar, he said, impressed upon the officers to work 24x7 with commitment and proficiency to ensure that 100 per cent roads are cleared of snow across the Kashmir Valley and snow bound areas of Jammu division.

He said that the LG's Advisor also directed the officials that men and machinery already stationed near inter-district roads, connecting arteries and roads leading to hospitals and other emergency services should be pressed into services for timely clearance of snow.

"He further stressed upon the officers that the snow on major roads and highways should be cleared at the earliest so that required services do not get disrupted in view of the heavy snowfall," he added.

As per the official spokesperson, Bhatnagar also directed the Chief Engineers to maintain coordination among their respective departments during snow clearance operations and other restoration works.

"He asked them to keep greater synergy with other agencies like SMC, UEED, Urban Local Bodies and others besides maintaining regular coordination with district level teams for smooth flow of services," he said.

He further said that Bhatnagar also asked the officers to be in the field so as to infuse motivation among subordinate officers and employees besides involving Panchayat Raj Representatives in restoration of essential services in view of heavy snowfall.

University, Board Exams...

and nursing theory examination announced vide a date sheet on December 19 last year. "The next date of holding the theory examination will be notified separately," reads an order by the president/Dean Dr Shahi Sudan

Kashmir University's Controller of Examinations Prof Irshad A Nawchoo said that UG 1st year examination scheduled to be held on 6th January 2021 (Wednesday) stands postponed in view of the inclement weather conditions.

The examinations of BDS Final (Community Dentistry) and UG 6th semester, which are scheduled to be held on 7th January 2021 (Thursday), are also postponed, he said.

New dates for the deferred examinations will be notified later on, Prof Nawchoo said.

Meanwhile Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education (JKBOSE) said that the class 11th exam scheduled on 6th January has been postponed in view of snowfall.

"Due to inclement weather across Kashmir Division, the examination of class 11th Annual Regular, Kashmir Division scheduled on 06.01.21 stands postponed," Joint Secretary (Examination) JKBOSE, Kashmir Division Fresh date will be notified separately, he said, in a statement.

Shopian Woman Delivers...

incident has yet again highlighted the sufferings of Gujjar Bakerwal community due to the non-clearance of snow from the roads. He requested authorities to clear the roads in their area so that they could heave a sigh of relief.

Amid Bird Flu Scare,...

Gharana Wetland Conservation Reserve in R S Pura sector near the International Border was notified in 1981 and is home to more than 170 species of birds like bar-headed geese, gadwalls,

common teals, purple swamp hens, Indian moor hens, black-winged stilts, cormorants, egrets and green shanks.

During the winter, the wetland is visited by thousands of birds from Central Asia and some of the migratory bird species visiting this wetland are endangered.

The team of Animal Husbandry Department, Jammu collected the bird dropping samples for testing, he said, adding there is no need for alarm as this is being done just as a precautionary measure in view of reported cases in HP, Rajasthan, Kerala and Madhya Pradesh to keep the wetlands safe and check the spread of the H5N8 virus.

We have alerted our staff and the public in accordance with the government guidelines like avoiding touching any animal with symptoms and wearing of proper personal protective kits. They were also asked to report immediately if they see any change in the behavior of the birds, Atri said.

Asked about the number of birds present at the wetland, he said the figure fluctuates between 1,000 and 2,000.

The number does not remain static and keeps changing as the migratory birds move from one wetland to another including those across the border. Bar-headed geese outnumber other migratory birds at the wetland," he added.

Dr Katoch said the sampling team of the Animal Husbandry Department collected the samples which would be tested in Jalandhar.

So far, no death of any migratory or local bird was reported from the wetland. We have checked the birds and all are healthy, he said.

He added that observatory staff has been alerted to keep an eye on the birds. (PTI)

J&K Reports 137 New Corona...

Srinagar, Ganderbal and Pulwama were the only districts to report more than 10 cases in the past 24 hours.

The number of active cases dropped to 2,600 in the UT, while 1,17,426 patients have recovered so far, the officials said.

Meanwhile, the UT reported six COVID-19 deaths -- five from Jammu division and one from Kashmir valley -- in the last 24 hours. (PTI)

NC Leaders Meet LG, Raise...

Ajay Kumar Sadhotra, Surjeet Singh Slathia, Syed Mushtaq Ahmed Shah Bukhari and former legislators Javed Rana, S Tarlochan Singh Wazir, Rattan Lal Gupta and Sheikh Bashir Ahmed, the party said in a statement here.

"During their meeting with the Lt governor at Raj Bhavan, the delegation drew his attention to the attempts being made to mutilate the mandate of the people by encouraging horse-trading of the recently elected Councillors which is not good for democracy, it said.

The People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) comprising of seven mainstream parties, including the NC and the PDP, swept the DDC polls by winning 110 seats and accused the BJP and Apni Party of forcing elected DDC members to shift their loyalties to control the post of DDC chairman.

"The people's mandate has to be respected. This is actually the message sent out by the electors, loud and clear. They lauded the efforts of the Lt governor in ensuring peaceful conduct of the polls," the delegation said, adding that the promise of upholding democratic values has to be kept by foiling the "machinations of reversing the will of the people".

"This is imperative for the larger interests of democracy," the senior leaders said.

They also referred to the impressive turn-out in elections despite weather vagaries and said this reflects people's unflinching faith in democracy and the democratic institutions.

"The deep yearning of the people in becoming part of decision making is healthy sign of democracy and this spirit is required to be upheld by foiling the attempts of reversing the popular will by undemocratic means," the delegation said.

It also sought a judicial probe into the recent brutal assassination of a gold smith and an encounter in Lawaypora area of Srinagar and called for measures to instil sense of security and trust among the people.

The NC leaders also called for inter-regional, intra-regional and inter-faith community people to people dialogue in order to defeat the designs of the elements creating polarisation and divide in the society.

"Jammu and Kashmir has been known for peaceful co-existence of the people and no attempt of vitiating this atmosphere should be allowed. The dialogue between a cross section of people will help promote better understanding and harmony as respecting each others' sentiments is imperative for healthy societal growth, the delegation said.

The statement said the LG assured the delegation that the administration would play a non-partisan role in the establishment of the DDCs and also assured transparent and fair conduct of enquiry in the two incidents. (PTI)

Tarigami Seeks Probe Into...

Ajaz Maqbool Ganai, Zubair Ahmad Lone and Athar Mushtaq Wani were killed in an encounter in Parimpora on the outskirts of Srinagar on December 31. Police said while they were not listed as militants in their records, they were radicalised and two of them had links with the Lashkar-e-Taiba.

In his meeting with the Lt Governor at the Raj Bhavan, the CPI(M) leader urged him to order an impartial and time-bound probe so that reality comes to the fore.

The families of the three alleged militants have claimed that they were innocents and killed in a staged encounter.

National Conference leader Omar Abdullah and PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti had also demanded a probe into the incident. (PTI)

Boris Pulls Out As R-Day...

step in. PM Modi had converted the guest list at Republic Day parades from statement of intent regarding the foreign policy into an event that appeared to suggest India's coming out party.

The first two parades during his tenure was a continuation of inviting India's close allies. But in 2017 there were seven chief guests and there were 10 in 2018. Last year, plans to continue with the multi-person format did not work out, and South Block had to settle for the Brazilian President.

Ironically, Johnson announced the pull out on a day his Foreign Office announced the filling up of the vacant High Commissioner's slot here. Deputy National Security Adviser Alex Ellis will be the new High Commissioner, said a UK Foreign Office announcement.

The previous incumbent Philip Barton, also a career diplomat like Ellis, has gone home several months back and is now the Permanent Under-Secretary of the Foreign Office. Besides India, he had also served as the High Commissioner to Pakistan from 2014 to 2016.

Before entering the bureaucracy, Ellis was a history teacher and sings in a choir. On the official side, he is reported to have extensive experience in security issues and strategy.

Ellis takes over at a time when Britain is eyeing a major defence deal; its previous mega order of advanced jet trainers to the Indian Air Force having run its course.

As was the case with his predecessor, this will not be his first attempt at a top job. Ellis has served as the British Ambassador to Brazil (2013 - 2017) and Portugal (2007-10).

LG Chairs Preparatory Meet...

number of life-saving ambulances, the spokesman said.

Sinha directed officials to explore the possibility of setting up a well-equipped and well-staffed CHC to handle emergency cases, he said.

The LG asked the CEO of the Amarnath shrine board to rope in the governments of neighbouring states to provide services of more doctors and paramedics, besides various NGOs that already send healthcare professionals during the yatra.

The LG directed the officers concerned to improve the utilities en route, besides repair of roads and other infrastructure well in time.

He asked them to take all requisite measures and involve more NGOs and religious organisations to ensure smooth pilgrimage of the yatis.

He also stressed on dissemination of informative material and pamphlets in as many languages as possible, including official languages of the UT, to reach out to the wider population, the spokesman said.

During the meeting, Sinha sought a detailed report on all aspects related to the conduct of Amarnath yatra, which included routes to the holy cave shrine, terrain, accommodation and tent facilities, medical arrangements, duration of yatra, weather conditions, registration process, langar arrangements etc, he said. (PTI)

Jewellery Looted From...

registered a case vide FIR number 5/2021 under section 454, 380 and called the accused for questioning, the report added.

'Drug Peddler' Held Along...

to any militant activities as the area is near the Line of Control (LoC), and evidence suggests the incidence of trans border smuggling in this region, they said.

Further investigation is going on, they added.

Saudi, Qatar To Reopen Land, Maritime Borders After Three Years Of Feud



Agencies

Riyadh has reached an agreement with Doha to end a three-year feud by reopening the Saudi airspace and land and sea borders to Qatar as of Monday, Kuwait's foreign minister said in televised comments. "An agreement has been reached to open airspace and land and sea borders between Saudi Arabia and Qatar as of this evening," Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Ahmad Nasser al-Sabah said on Kuwait TV ahead of a Persian Gulf Arab summit in Saudi Arabia on Tuesday.

Kuwait's foreign minister said a declaration would be signed at the summit, which was postponed from its usual December date as Riyadh pushed for an agreement toward ending the rift.

The emir of Qatar plans to attend the Tuesday summit in Saudi Arabia at the head of a high-ranking delegation, according to Al Jazeera.

The deal between Riyadh and Doha may put an end to the row in which Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt severed diplomatic, trade and travel ties with Qatar in mid-2017.

The four boycotting countries had accused Qatar of supporting terrorism. Doha denies the charges and says the embargo aims to curtail its sovereignty.

Doha had been set 13 demands, ranging from closing Al Jazeera television and shuttering a Turkish base to cutting links to the Muslim Brotherhood and

downgrading ties with Iran.

Qatar rebuffed the demands as "unreasonable."

The blockade led Qatar to forge closer ties with Iran and Turkey in order to broaden its trade options or reroute its flights.

However, Saudi Arabia and Qatar are now reportedly close to reaching a preliminary deal in a bid to resolve the dispute that has dragged on for three and a half years.

In late December, the foreign ministers of Persian Gulf Arab countries held an online meeting ahead of a summit of [Persian] Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to discuss settlement of the diplomatic row with Doha.

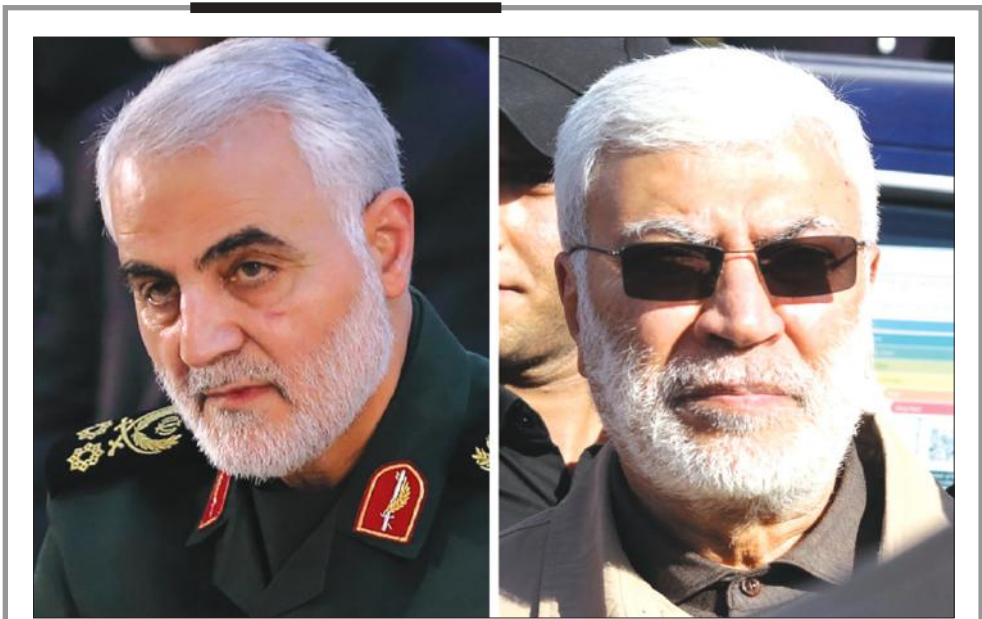
The meeting was attended by the foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Kuwait, Oman and Bahrain as well as Qatari Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Saad Al Muraikhi.

Yemen's Ansarullah hails Riyadh-Doha deal

Mohammed Ali al-Houthi, the chairman of the Supreme Revolutionary Committee of Yemen, hailed the deal between Qatar and Saudi Arabia to reopen their borders, expressing hope that the move would be a beginning to the end of all conflicts.

"We congratulate Qatar on the end of the [Saudi] blockade and the resumption of its ties with Saudi Arabia," he said in a tweet on Monday evening.

"We hope the resumption of Qatar-Saudi relations would serve as a beginning point for the end of conflicts and cessation of Yemeni invasion," he added.



IRANIAN GENERAL QASEM SOLEIMANI, left, Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis were killed last year in a US drone attack [Ahmad al-Rubaye/ Iranian Supreme Leader's website via AFP]

Iran Issues Interpol Arrest Notice For Trump, 47 Others

Agencies

Tehran, Iran – US President Donald Trump has had a "red notice" request for his arrest issued through Interpol by Iran.

Iranian judiciary spokesman Gholamhossein Esmaili announced during a press conference on Tuesday that Iran has requested the international police organisation to arrest Trump and 47 other American officials identified as playing a role in the assassination of top general Qasem Soleimani last year.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran is very seriously following up on pursuing and punishing those who ordered and executed this crime," Esmaili told reporters.

Soleimani, Iran's top general who led the foreign operations arm of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, was assassinated on January 3, 2020, in a US drone strike in Baghdad ordered by Trump.

The assassination was deemed to be against international law by Agnes Callamard, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions.

It was the second Iranian re-

quest for an international arrest warrant for Trump and dozens of US officials in the Pentagon and US Central Command, among other organisations.

In June, Tehran prosecutor Ali Alqasimehr issued an arrest warrant for Trump and dozens of US officials saying they face "murder and terrorism charges".

But France-based Interpol rejected Iran's request, saying its constitution forbids it from undertaking "any intervention or activities of a political, military, religious or racial character".

Renewed talks of prosecuting Trump and other US officials come as part of Iranian promises to avenge Soleimani one year after his murder in an American drone strike in Iraq.

They also come shortly before Trump has to leave office on January 20, something Iran hopes could boost his chances of facing consequences.

'Accountable'

In a ceremony in Tehran to mark Soleimani's assassination anniversary, judiciary chief Ebrahim Raisi said Trump was a main target of prosecution and should not be immune because of his political status.

"Fortunately, Trump's presi-

dency has ended. But even if his term hadn't ended, it would be unacceptable to say someone shouldn't be accountable to law due to his administrative position," he said.

The spokesman of the powerful constitutional vetting body, the Guardian Council, also said last week Iran would legally pursue Trump after he leaves the White House.

Ali Kadkhodaei said Trump's legal immunity as head of state is problematic for legally pursuing him, but "some international experts hold the view that after Trump's presidency is over this might be possible".

Tensions between Iran and the US have been on the rise around the first anniversary of Soleimani's assassination.

The US has flown nuclear-capable B-52 bombers over the Gulf several times in the past month and on Monday reversed its decision to get a Navy aircraft carrier out of the region for what it said was because of renewed threats by Iranian officials.

Iran, on the other hand, has warned that hawks in the US and Israel may be trying to start a war in Trump's remaining days in office.

Iran Guards Seize South Korean Tanker Amid US Tensions

Agencies

TEHRAN, IRAN: Iran said Monday its Revolutionary Guards had seized a South Korean-flagged tanker in Gulf waters for breaking "environmental laws," at a time of heightened tensions with the United States.

Seoul demanded the release of the Hankuk Chemi and its multinational crew of 20 and deployed its military's anti-piracy unit to the area close to the strategic Straits of Hormuz.

The Guards said on their Sepahnews website that the ship carrying 7,200 tonnes of oil chemical products "was seized by our force's (navy) this morning".

"This tanker was headed from Saudi Arabia's Al Jubail port and was seized due to the repeated infringement of maritime environmental laws," it added.

The seizure came days before South Korea's deputy foreign minister was due to visit Tehran according to Iran's foreign ministry, as Iran wants South Korea to release billions in its assets held as a result of US sanctions.

It also follows days of high US-Iranian tensions and came on the day Iran said it had started the process to enrich uranium to 20 percent purity, a move which drew swift international concern.



The previous day marked the first anniversary of the US assassination of Iran's revered military commander Major General Qasem Soleimani in a Baghdad drone strike.

The United States Sunday reversed a decision to bring the aircraft carrier USS Nimitz home from the Gulf, with the Pentagon citing "recent threats" by the Islamic Republic.

'Framework of law'

Iran's foreign ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said in a statement the tanker's seizure was over a "purely technical issue and due to polluting the sea".

"Just like other countries, Iran is sensitive towards such infractions, especially polluting the maritime environment, and therefore confronts it in the framework of law."

The Guards said the arrested crew were from South Korea, Indonesia, Vietnam and Myanmar.

A photo released by Sepahnews appeared to show three speedboats and a patrol boat approaching the tanker.

The seizure had come at the request of Hormozgan Province's maritime organisation and upon the order of the provincial prosecutor, Sepahnews said.

The Guards' statement did not specify where the tanker was seized but said it was transferred to Bandar Abbas port in Hormozgan with the "case handed to judicial authorities".

The deputy head of Hormozgan's maritime body told Tasnim news agency that the tanker had "caused a large sea pollution 11 miles away of Greater Tunb" island.

Trump Says He'll 'Fight Like Hell' To Hold On To Presidency



Agencies

DALTON (US): With mounting desperation, Donald Trump has declared he would "fight like hell" to hold on to the presidency and appealed to Republican lawmakers to reverse his election loss to Joe Biden when they convene this week to confirm the Electoral College vote.

Electoral voters won by President-elect Biden were "not gonna take this White House!" he shouted as supporters cheered at an outdoor rally in Georgia on Monday night.

Trump's announced purpose for the trip was to boost Republican Senate candidates in Tuesday's runoff election, but he spent much of his speech complaining bitterly about his election loss – which he insists he won "by a lot".

Earlier, in Washington, he pressed Republican lawmakers to formally object Wednesday at a joint session of Congress that is to confirm Biden's victory in the Electoral College, itself a confirmation of Biden's nationwide victory November 3.

Though he got nothing but cheers on Monday night, Trump's attempt to overturn the presidential election is splitting the Republican Party.

Some GOP lawmakers backing him are rushing ahead, despite an outpouring of condemnation from current and former party officials warning the effort is undermining Americans faith in democracy.

All 10 living former defence secretaries wrote in an op-ed that "the time for questioning the results has passed".

It is unclear the extent to which the GOP leaders in Congress will be able to control Wednesday's joint session, which could drag into the night, though the challenges to the election are all but certain to fail. Trump himself is whipping up crowds for a Wednesday rally near the White House.

Vice President Mike Pence, who is under pressure to tip the results for Trump, will be closely watched as he presides in a ceremonial role

over Wednesday's joint session.

"I promise you this: On Wednesday, we'll have our day in Congress," Pence said while himself campaigning in Georgia ahead of Tuesday's runoff elections that will determine control of the Senate.

Trump said in Georgia: "I hope that our great Vice President comes through for us. He's a great guy. Of course, if he doesn't come through, I won't like him quite as much." He added: "No, Mike is a great guy."

One of the Georgia Republicans in Tuesday's runoff – Senator Kelly Loeffler, who faces Democrat Raphael Warnock – told the crowd she will join senators formally objecting to Biden's win. The other Republican seeking re-election, David Perdue, who is running against Democrat Jon Ossoff, will not be eligible to vote.

Trump repeated numerous times his claims of election fraud, which have been rejected by election officials – Republican as well as Democratic in state after state – and courts up to the US Supreme Court. His former attorney general, William Barr, also has said there was no evidence of fraud that could change the election outcome.

The congressional effort to keep Trump in office is being led by Senators Josh Hawley of Missouri and Ted Cruz of Texas, along with rank-and-file House members, some on the party's fringe.

"Just got off the phone with @realDonaldTrump," tweeted newly elected Republican Marjorie Taylor Greene of Georgia, who is aligned with a conspiracy group backing Trump.

"He wants you to call your Rep & Senators TODAY, ALL DAY!" she tweeted Monday. "Don't let Republicans be the Surrender Caucus!" She later joined the president on Air Force One as he travelled to Georgia. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has tried to prevent his party from engaging in this battle, which could help define the GOP in the post-Trump era. House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, a Trump ally, has declined to say much publicly on it.

England Placed Under Lockdown Till Mid-Feb

Agencies

LONDON: British Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced on Monday a new national lockdown for England until at least mid-February to combat a fast-spreading variant of the coronavirus, even as Britain ramped up its vaccination programme by becoming the first nation to start using the shot developed by Oxford University and drugmaker AstraZeneca.

Johnson said people must stay at home again, as they were ordered to do so in the first wave of the pandemic in March, this time because the new virus variant was spreading in a frustrating and alarming way.

"As I speak to you tonight, our hospitals are under more pressure from Covid than at any time since the start of the pandemic," he said.

Under the new rules, which are set to come into effect as soon as possible, primary and secondary schools and colleges will be closed for face to face learning except for the children of key workers. University students will not be returning until at least mid-February.

All non-essential shops and personal care services like hairdressers will be closed, and restaurants can only operate takeaway services.

As of Monday, there were 26,626 Covid patients in hospitals in England, an increase of more than 30 percent from a week ago. That is 40



percent above the highest level of the first wave in the spring.

The UK has seen an alarming surge in coronavirus cases in recent weeks as public health officials struggle to control the spread of a new variant of COVID-19 that is more contagious than previous variants. Authorities have recorded more than 50,000 new infections a day since passing that milestone for the first time on Dec. 29. On Monday, they reported 407 virus-related deaths to push the confirmed death toll total to 75,431, one of the worst in Europe.

Hours earlier, Scottish leader Nicola Sturgeon also imposed a lockdown in her nation until the end of January.

Beginning on Tuesday, people in Scotland will be required to stay at home except for essential reasons, to help ease the pressure on hospitals and intensive care units, Sturgeon said.

New vaccine

The announcements come on the day UK health authorities began putting the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine into arms around the country, fueling hopes that life may begin returning to normal by the spring.

NEWS MAKERS

UK Judge Rejects Julian Assange's Extradition To US

Agencies

A British judge ruled on Monday that WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange should not be extradited to the United States to face criminal charges including breaking a spying law, saying his mental health problems meant he would be at risk of suicide.

The United States said it would continue to seek the extradition of Australian-born Assange and US prosecutors are set to appeal Monday's decision to London's High Court.

The US authorities accuse Assange of 18 offences relating to the release by WikiLeaks of vast



troves of confidential US military records and diplomatic cables which they say put lives in danger.

Assange's lawyers will seek bail on Wednesday for their 49-year-old client, who has spent most of the last decade either in prison or self-imposed confinement.

"We will continue to seek Mr

Assange's extradition," said a US Justice Department statement, adding that the United States had won on all the legal points, including arguments relating to freedom of speech and political motivation.

A spokeswoman for the transition team of President-elect Joe Biden, who takes office on January 20, had no comment.

The Obama administration, in which Biden served as vice president, decided not to prosecute Assange over concerns about the precedent the case could set for free speech and journalists.

Outgoing US President Donald Trump and his administration have sent mixed messages on Assange and there was no

immediate White House comment on the ruling.

Shortly before the 2016 presidential election, Trump praised WikiLeaks after it released hacked emails which caused embarrassment for his opponent Hillary Clinton, saying, "I love WikiLeaks."

But within months of Trump becoming president, his first CIA director Mike Pompeo, now secretary of state, denounced WikiLeaks as "a non-state hostile intelligence service."

Assange's legal team argued that the US effort to extradite him was launched under pressure from Trump's administration, and that his extradition would pose a severe threat to press freedom.

Leave Your Guns At Home, Washington Police Warn Pro-Trump Rally-Goers

Agencies

City officials in Washington have warned supporters of President Donald Trump not to bring guns to protests this week against congressional certification of his election defeat and enlisted hundreds of National Guard troops to help keep order.

"We have received some information that there are individuals intent on bringing firearms into our city and that just will not be tolerated," Metropolitan Police Chief Robert Contee told a City Hall news

conference late on Monday.

He added that anyone found doing so or provoking violence would be arrested.

More than 300 troops will be on hand to support the city government, providing crowd control and aiding fire and rescue services, the D.C. National Guard said in a statement on Monday.

They will be joined by the U.S. Capitol Police, U.S. Park Police and U.S. Secret Service, Contee said.

The District has some of the United States' strictest gun laws, and forbids open carry of weap-



ons or possession of a handgun without a local license.

Thousands of Trump supporters, including some far-right nationalist groups that openly carry arms at protests elsewhere, are expected to

converge on the U.S. capital starting on Tuesday to oppose Congress' certification the next day of the Republican president's Nov. 3 election loss to Democrat Joe Biden.

Contee said the protests could be bigger than November and December rallies marred by stabbings and brawls as hundreds of Proud Boys, a group of self-described "Western chauvinists," and other Trump loyalists clashed with counter-protesters, and sought fights with antifa, or anti-fascists, and Black Lives Matter activists.










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