



P3 CITY

ADV KHAN ASKS OFFICERS TO EXPEDITE REGISTRATION PROCESS OF HOUSEBOATS

Advisor to Lieutenant Governor, Baseer Ahmad Khan Saturday chaired a meeting of officers and took review of the status of Bio-digesters in Houseboats in Dal Lake, at...

P7 THINK

INTERNET OF BODIES (IOB)

Jammu and Kashmir is almost always in the news for one reason or another. Apart from the obvious political headlines, J&K was also in the news because of covid-19. As the world struggled with covid-19 pandemic, J&K faced a peculiar situation....



P5 STATE

ACB ARRESTS JPDC ENGINEER FOR ACCEPTING BRIBE

The Anti Corruption Bureau Saturday said it arrested Sushma Parihar, JE (Electrical) posted at Nai Basti Fish Market, Jammu for accepting bribe. In a statement...



Widom Quote!
The road to success is dotted with many tempting parking spaces.
—Will Rogers

NEWS DIGEST

LG Extends Holi Greetings

JAMMU: Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha on Saturday extended his heartiest greetings to the people on the eve of 'Holi'. In his message of felicitations, the Lt Governor observed that Holi, a spring festival of colours is an integral part of our rich composite culture which promotes the tradition of 'Unity in Diversity' and strengthens the social fabric, an official spokesperson said. "The auspicious occasion also endorses affection. ● More On P10

Fraudster Arrested In Rajouri

JAMMU: A fraudster, allegedly involved in swapping of ATM cards, was arrested in Rajouri district of Jammu and Kashmir on Saturday, police said. The arrest followed a complaint lodged by Kulsum Akhtar of Gakhrore alleging that her ATM card was fraudulently replaced by a person during a transaction in the town, a police official said. The official said an investigation was set into motion and the accused was identified as Faizan Ali, a resident of Poonch, who was subsequently arrested from his rented ● More On P10

8 Injured In Highway Accident

SRINAGAR: At least eight people, including a driver were injured in a road accident that took place along the highway at Pampore-Lasjan bypass on Saturday. Police officials said that a Tavera bearing (JK03B-8668) met with an accident around 03:50 pm at Pampore-Lasjan bypass leaving the driver and seven people on board the cab injured. The officials informed that all the injured were shifted to a nearby hospital and are undergoing treatment—(KNO)

Four Held With Narcotics In Jammu

JAMMU: Four alleged drug peddlers were arrested on Saturday after they were found in possession of narcotic substances in three different cases in the Jammu region of the Jammu and Kashmir, police said. Two persons were arrested in Udhampur district while one each was nabbed in Reasi and Ramban districts, they said. The two arrested from Bimra Pull in Udhampur district were identified as Dheeraj Sharma and Anil Sharma, police said, adding they were found in possession of 5.5 grams of heroin, one weighing machine and a sum ● More On P10

2 Militants, Soldier Killed In Ongoing Shopian Encounter

Two Army Men Injured, 2-3 Militants Believed To Be Trapped



File Photo

Observer Monitoring Desk

SRINAGAR: Two unidentified militants and a soldier were killed and two others injured in an ongoing encounter in south Kashmir's Shopian district. According to the reports,

a heavy contingent of police, army's 34 RR and CRPF personnel cordoned off Wangam on Saturday evening on a tip-off regarding the presence of militants in the village, officials said. When the joint team started the ● More On P10

CASO In Kulgam Ends After 2 Days

Government forces called off a major search operation against militants in south Kashmir's Kulgam district, nearly two days after it was launched on Wednesday, reports said Saturday. Special operations group (SOG) of police, army's 9 RR and the personnel of CRPF 18 battalion laid a ● More On P10

Bukhari Demands Revision Of Mining Policy

SRINAGAR: Apni Party President Syed Altaf Bukhari on Saturday reiterated his demand for revision of Geology and Mining policy that according to Himalayas has severely affected livelihood of lakhs of families besides halting private and public developmental works across Jammu and Kashmir.

Briefing the media persons about the protest programmes launched by the Apni Party across J&K, Bukhari appealed to the ● More On P10

Weather Turns Pleasant In Kashmir

SRINAGAR: Kashmir witnessed pleasant weather on Saturday as mercury rose across Kashmir Valley with Gulmarg recording minimum temperature above sub-zero level, officials said. A meteorological department official said that the mercury settled at 6.4 degree Celsius against previous night's 3.6 degree Celsius in Srinagar. It is above 0.3 degree Celsius in the summer capital of the J&K for this time of the year, the official said. ● More On P10

Registration For Amarnath Yatra To Start From April 1

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: Registration for the upcoming annual pilgrimage to the Himalayan cave shrine of Amarnath in south Kashmir is going to start from April 1, an official said on Saturday.

The 56-day yatra to the 3,880-metre-high shrine is scheduled to start from the twin routes of Pahalgam and Baltal on June 28 and culminate on August 22.

In a meeting earlier this month, officials had said that all COVID-19 protocols are in place and standard operating procedures ● More On P10

HC Quashes PSA Detention Of Pulwama Youth

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir High Court has quashed detention order under Public Safety Act against a youth from Pulwama and ordered authorities to release him forthwith provided he was not required in any other case.

"Bare perusal of the grounds of detention reveals that the detaining authority has relied upon three FIRs while issuing the order impugned. ● More On P10

CAG Raps J&K Govt Over Departmental Deficiencies

Calls For System Revamp To Ensure Proper Response To Audit Observations



Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: Stating that its audit has pointed out several deficiencies in the implementation of various programmes and internal-control measures in selected departments in Jammu and Kashmir, the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India has asked the Union Territory

administration to look into the matter and revamp the system to ensure a proper response to the audit observations in a time-bound manner.

In its report on the social, general, economic (non-public sector undertakings) sectors for the year ending March 31, 2019, the CAG said the pendency of a large number of paragraphs ● More On P10

'9 PSUs Non-Operational For Last 5 To 29 Yrs'

There are nine Public Sector Undertakings which are non-operational for the last five to 29 years, the Comptroller and Auditor General of India has said. The CAG, in its report on social, general and economic (non-PSUs) in the erstwhile state for the year ending 31 March, 2019 said among the nine PSUs, four are in Power Sector alone and have investment of Rs 56.60 crore towards share capital (Rs 55.77 crore) and long term loans (Rs 0.83 crore), by the State Government. The nine PSUs include Jammu and Kashmir Power Transmission ● More On P10

'LAHDC Leh, Kargil Fail To Submit Audit Accounts'

The Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Councils (LAHDCs) for Leh and Kargil districts have failed to submit accounts for audit since their inception, the Comptroller and Auditor General of India said, terming it a "serious financial irregularity". The audit reports of eight other autonomous bodies in Jammu and Kashmir, including both wings of Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agriculture Science and Technology (Kashmir and Jammu) (SKUAST), J&K state housing ● More On P10

Man Dies Hours After Vaccine Shot In Handwara



Representative image

Agencies

SRINAGAR: An elderly man from north Kashmir's Handwara on Saturday died hours after he was administered a coronavirus vaccine jab by the health department officials.

A close relative of the deceased said that the septuagenarian— Ghulam Mohammad Ganie son of Habibullah Ganie of Haril Mawer— was inoculated

Saturday afternoon. However following some 'complications', he subsequently died at around 3 pm.

Village-head of the area said that the elderly man was administered the vaccine at around 12:40 pm, at serial number 67, following which he normally went home and took his meals. The elderly man, as per the village-head, had taken his sheep to a nearby ● More On P10

J&K Reports 271 New Corona Cases

Jammu and Kashmir recorded 271 new COVID-19 cases on Saturday, which includes 58 travellers, taking the infection tally to 1,29,684, while one fatality pushed the death toll in the union territory to 1,985, officials said. Seventy-five of the fresh cases were from Jammu division and 196 from Kashmir division, they said. The officials said Srinagar district recorded the highest number of 118 new cases, which includes 39 travellers, followed by 56 in Jammu district and 42 in Baramulla. Four districts did not report any cases, while 12 others detected new cases in single digits. The number of active cases, which has been rising steadily over the past week, has now reached 1,813 in the union territory, while 1,25,886 patients have recovered so far, the officials said. ● More On P10

Centre Asks States, UTs To Increase Testing

As India recorded the sharpest rise in weekly COVID-19 cases since May last, the Centre on Saturday came out with a five-point containment strategy for the 12 states and union territories reporting a surge that included exponential increase in testing while the worst affected Maharashtra announced a complete ban on all types of gatherings. The magnitude of the rise in coronavirus cases could be also gauged from the fact that India registered 62,258 new infections in a day, the highest single ● More On P10

India, Pak Must Move Beyond Secret Talks: Omar

Says The Two Countries Must Resolve Issues Through Open Dialogue

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: National Conference vice-president Omar Abdullah Saturday welcomed the peace overtures between India and Pakistan but said the two countries must move beyond secret talks and have an open dialogue to resolve all issues including Kashmir.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a party function in Pulwama district in south Kashmir, he said his party has always maintained that the betterment of not only Jammu and Kashmir, but the whole of south Asia lies in the friendship between the two countries.

"It is good that the two



countries are talking about friendship rather than threatening each other, but there is still much more to do," he said.

Referring to reports of secret talks between India and Pakistan, the former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister said the two ● More On P10

Keep Kashmir At The Front, Centre Of Parleys: PDP

Srinagar: The PDP Saturday urged India and Pakistan to go beyond rhetoric, deepen the process of dialogue and broaden the scope of political engagement by keeping Jammu and Kashmir at the "front and centre of the process" to make it result-oriented and sustainable. The party held a meeting of its political affairs committee (PAC) - its top decision-making body - which was ● More On P10

O B I T U A R Y



Shuja Hussain: A Perfect Gentleman

Zaid Bin Shabir

Taking turns to recall the legend of the departed engineer, a multitude of masked mourners are endlessly detailing their own encounters with Syed Shuja Hussain who would always wear his dapper looks and diligence on his sleeves.

The solemn footfall is gathering mass and momentum inside a heritage house shadowed by a nearby paramilitary barrack in one of the peaceful pockets of plush Rajbagh locality of Srinagar.

A pitched tent in the middle of a manicured lawn is housing the mourners — who call the departed 'a long-time friend' and 'the gentleman they don't make anymore'.

"Engineer Shuja Hussain was a landmark man," says an elder inside the tent.



"His expert touches are visible in the major city and countryside signposts. The man's service is a shining example of a legacy one should leave behind as a professional."

While there seems no dispute on the departed engineer's robust legacy, his

own tribe members are idolizing his methods and mentorship as part of their farewell speech.

"An engineer of his own repute," says Er Manzoor Nawchoo. "A great human being who helped everyone," says Gazi Ahmad, a government official. "A life so beautifully lived deserves to be beautifully remembered," says Nisar Gilani. "A great personality, very charming and always dapper," says Muzzafar Shah of ANC.

Amid this torrent of tributes, Er Shuja Hussain's lawyer son, Syed Zulfikar Hussain, is swarmed by black coats in the lawn.

After his grandfather Syed Nisar Hussain—the erstwhile Wazir-e-Wazarat—retired as Financial Commissioner, Zulfikar says his father sustained the family's service culture as an engineer.

"Growing up, we had this impression that the Hazratbal shrine was constructed by our father only," Zulfikar says.

"We learned it much later that he had only finished the project. But such was his sway that his name became synonymous with the shrine project."

Today, that shimmering white marvel on the banks of Dal Lake remains one of the major engineering feats of his career. However, the celebrated civil engineer, Zulfikar says, was equally adept in bridges and buildings.

"During his lifetime only, his workmanship never went unnoticed," the son says.

"I remember during his posting in Anantnag, Mufti Mohammad Saeed said that my father was his favourite engineer. Even during the Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's ● More On P10

از نیابت درگولہ بااجلاس ایکڈمیکیٹیو مجسٹریٹ وجہ اول
عنوان: مضمون درخواست عامر بشیر چوہانی و رانیہ بانو اولادان بشیر احمد چوہانی ساکنہ
موضوع: درگولہ بمراد عطا یکتی SC
اشہاد بمراد آگاہی ہر خاص و عام
معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان صدر میں سائل نے ایک درخواست بمراد SC پیش کی ہے۔ جو کہ فتر ہذا میں زیر کاروائی ہے اور اجراء کرنے مطلوب ہے کہہ بذیل افترا پر مشتمل ہے

بشیر احمد چوہانی ولد محمد سلطان چوہانی	Casual Porter	45 سال
فاطمہ بیگم زبیر بشیر احمد	گھریلو کام	40
عامر بشیر چوہانی پسر	زیر تعلیم	21
رانیہ بانو دختر	زیر تعلیم	19
شازیہ بشیر دختر	زیر تعلیم	17
شبنم بشیر دختر	زیر تعلیم	16

اسکے علاوہ عمرہ کی مہمانداری زریعہ وغیرہ زریعہ 2010 سے سرٹیفکیٹ زیر بحث ادا کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص یا اشخاص کو کوئی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ اپنا عذر یا اعتراض ساتھ ایم کے اندر پیش کریں۔ معاد کرنے کے بعد کوئی عذر یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہو گا۔

نائب تحصیلدار
sult

OFFICE OF THE REGIONAL TRANSPORT OFFICER KASHMIR NOTICE

Where as an application for transfer of ownership has been received from MS Anleeb Fayaz S/D/W/O Fayaz Ahmad R/O Wazapora S.R. Gunj Srinagar (Transferor) of Altoo 800 bearing registration No. JK01AJ-1526 chasis No: 59988 Engine No: 116142 Model 2018 in favour of Mohd Ehsaan S/o Molvi Riyaz R/O Jinab Sahib Astan Soura Srinagar (Transferee). Now, therefore, it is notified for the information of the general public that representation/ Objection, if any in connection with proposed transfer will be received within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice in the daily newspaper Kashmir Observer to the address of undersigned. No, representation/ objection shall be considered unless it is made writing it is made in the aforesaid period.

NOJK-RTOK 8352 Sd/-
Dated: 26/03/2021 Regional Transport Office, Kashmir

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have lost my 5th class Certificate under Roll No: 43 somewhere. Now I am applying for the duplicate of the same if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the Govt Primary School Checki Ramnagri Shopian within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. Afte that no objection shall be entertained.

Yasmeena Jan
D/o Mohammad Qasim Kasana
R/o Checki Ramnagri AST

PUBLIC NOTICE

My name has been wrongly mentioned in school records as Minza Jabar while my correct name is Alisha Jabbar which needs immediate coerection if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the Islamic Educational Institute (IEI) S.K. Pora Budgam within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Alisha Jabbar D/O Abdul Jabbar Bhat
R/o Razwen Aaqilpora Magam Budgam
Ph: 9906442188 BMG

OFFICE OF THE REGIONAL TRANSPORT OFFICER KASHMIR NOTICE

Where as an application for transfer of ownership has been received from Farooq Ahmad Misgar S/O Mohammad Maqbool R/O Naseemabad Saderbal Hazratbal (Transferor) of M/Car bearing registration No. JK01V-1988 chasis No: 667244 Engine No: 4616757 Model 2014 in favour of Manzoor Hussain S/o Ghulam Mohammad Lone R/O Barthana Srinagar (Transferee). Now, therefore, it is notified for the information of the general public that representation/ Objection, if any in connection with proposed transfer will be received within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice in the daily newspaper Kashmir Observer to the address of undersigned. No, representation/ objection shall be considered unless it is made writing it is made in the aforesaid period.

NOJK-RTOK 8107 Sd/-
Dated: 27/03/2021 Regional Transport Office, Kashmir

MALAVIYA NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, JAIPUR
(An autonomous Institute of National Importance funded by MHRD, Govt. of India)
JLN Marg, Jaipur - 302017 (Rajasthan)

MBA Admissions 2021-22
MNIT Jaipur invites applications for FULL TIME MBA program for AY 2021-22.

Department of Management Studies, Malaviya National Institute of Technology, Jaipur, established in 1996, has been playing a pivotal role in the growth of the corporate world and management education. Here future business leaders are groomed by following a judicious blend of theory and practice, using highly innovative teaching pedagogy.

Spread over 325 acres in heart of Jaipur and equipped with state-of-the-art and modern infrastructure, the residential campus presents a spectacle of harmony in architecture and natural beauty.

Admissions to MBA program are done on the basis of exhaustive criteria including score obtained in any of CAT / GMAT / CMAT / MAT examination, past academic performance, work experience and performance in GD and PI.

For Program Brochure admission details and online application, visit our website: www.mnit.ac.in. for specific queries contact mba.admission@mnit.ac.in

REGISTRAR

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have lost my Discharge Certificate of Class 10th issued by Govt Boys High School Jalalabad Sopore. Now I have applied for the duplicate of the same if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the Principal Govt Boys High School Jalalabad Sopore within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Aadil Manzoor Sheikh
S/O Manzoor Ah Sheikh
R/o Jalalabad Sopore ams-r

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have lost my wallet which contains Departmental Card, 2 ATM Cards, Aadhar Car, Powre Bill and some money. If anybody has found please contact on below given address otherwise I have to apply for the duplicate documents if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the Concerned Offices within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Tariq Ahmad Dohie S/o Alamdeen Dohie
R/o Check Chotipora Shopian ast

PUBLIC NOTICE

I had lost municipal DOB Certificate of my daughter vide DOB 24/06/2015, now I am applying for its duplicate in this regard if anybody have any kind of objection may file the same to executive officer municipal council Sopore with in the period of Seven days from the date of publication of this notice.

Mohd Ayoub ganaie
F/o: Ayesha Ayoub
R/o: Gulabad Arampora Sopore gms

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have lost my Discharge Certificate of Class 10th issued by Govt Boys High School Jalalabad Sopore. Now I have applied for the duplicate of the same if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the Principal Govt Boys High School Jalalabad Sopore within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Nayeem Nazir Sheikh
S/o Nazir Ah Sheikh
R/o Jalaabad Sopore ams-r

THE J&K BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL (BOPEE) ENTRANCE EXAMINATIONS
Tel/Fax: 0194-2433590-2437647 (srinagar) : 0191-2479371, 2470102 (jammu)
website: http://www.jkbopee.org. email: ceojkbopee@gmail.com

Subject: Provisional Select List of BUMS and BPT courses-2020 through (physical) mop-up round of counselling.

Reference: (i) Notice No. 009-BOPEE of 2021 dated 18-01-2021.
(ii) Notification No. 035-BOPEE of 2021 dated 09-03-2021.
(iii) Letter F.No. L11011/1/2020-EP-1(Part-1) dated 19-09-2021.
(iv) Notification No. 041-BOPEE of 2021 dated 20-03-2021.

Notification No. 046-BOPEE of 2021 Dated: 25-03-2021.

Consequent upon receipt of shortfall from Government/Private Colleges in respect of Notification No. 035-BOPEE of 2021 dated 09-03-2021 and the seats, which remained unfilled after the conclusion of third round of physical counselling and subsequent reducing the cut off score notified vide Notification No. 041-BOPEE of 2021 dated 20-03-2021, the Board conducted the mop-up round (physical) counselling of eligible candidates on 25-03-2021 at BOPEE Office, Srinagar and Jammu simultaneously for admission to BUMS and BPT seats. The provisional select list of candidates, who participated in this round of counselling is annexed as Annexure "A" to this Notification, which shall, however, be available on the BOPEE website: www.jkbopee.gov.in only.

Further, a candidate bearing UT Rank 3270 (waiting list. W.1) shall report to the CRC, Bemina Srinagar on 31-03-2021 at 2.00 P.M. for admission subject to the condition that if any candidate from amongst the selected candidates as indicated in Annexure 'A' to this Notification fails to join the College up 1.00 p.m. on 31-03-2021.

The candidates shall join the upgraded/ allotted Colleges upto 31-03-2021 (01.00 PM). The Heads of Institutions shall submit the shortfall, if any, to the Board on 31-03-2021 at 5.00 p.m. through e-mail helpdesk@jkbopee@gmail.com/coejkbopee@gmail.com

The colleges shall keep the admission counters open on all days including holidays w.e.f 26-03-2021 to 31-03-2021 to facilitate the candidates for taking admission in their allotted/ upgraded colleges without any difficulty.

The other terms and conditions shall remain the same as notified in the Information Brochure of NEET UG-2020 and in the notifications/ notices issued by the Board from time to time on the subject.

Note:-
1. The admission of candidates is purely provisional and shall be liable to be cancelled in case any information furnished by any candidate proves to be false/ fabricated, and action as warranted under law shall be initiated against such candidate (s).
2. The Heads of Colleges are advised to release the documents and fee to the candidates who have been upgraded during this round of counselling without wasting their time to enable them to report to the upgraded college by or before 31-03-2021.
3. In case any candidate, who has been allotted a seat in JCP under OM fails to join against such seat, the candidate(s) selected under Management Quota of the said College shall and shall be deemed to have been selected/allotted against an OM vacant seat and such candidate(s) shall be charged the same fee as is applicable to the OM candidates in the said College (JCP).
E & O E

(Dr. Sunil Gupta)
Controller of Examinations
J&K BOPEE

DIPK-NB-6717/20
No: BOPEE/Exam-35/2020 Dated: 25-03-2021

J&K TOURISM DEVELOPMENT CORPORATIO LIMITED
TOURIST RECEPTION CENTRE SRINAGAR

For and on behalf of Managing Director, Jammu & Kashmir Tourism Development Corporation Limited, e-Tenders are invited under Two Bid System i.e. Technical Bid and Financial Bid from Registered/ reputed companies/ firms/ individuals/ societies etc. for providing laundry services to city based JKTDC Hotels/Restaurants for a period of one year (extendable to further one year) on the terms and conditions mentioned in the tender document. E-tender Notice No: JKTDC/GMO/3180-86 Dated 26.03.2021

Category of laundry	Earnest Money (EMD)	Cost of Tender documents	Class of Service provider	Tender inviting authority
1. Hotel laundry			Registered/ reputed companies/ firms/ individuals/ societies etc.	General Manager (Operations) K
2. Restaurant laundry	Rs. 20,000/-	Rs. 1000/-		
3. Staff uniform				
4. Guest laundry				

1. The bidding documents consisting of qualifying information, eligibility, specification, bill of quantities (B.O.Q) Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/download from the website www.jktenders.gov.in as per schedule of dates given below:-

S	Date of issue of tender notice	26.03.2021 1.00 pm
2	Period of downloading of bidding documents	27.03.2021 10.00 am
3	Bid submission Start Date	29.03.2021 10.00 am
4	Bid submission End Date	19.04.2021 upto 4.00 pm
5	Deadlines for receiving the Hard Copy (Original DD & EMD) with all relevant documents (In case of untoward situation/ Govt. holiday) the hard copies will be received in next working day	20.04.2021 upto 4.00 pm
6	Opening of Technical Bid /hard copies (In case of untoward situation/Govt. holiday) the technical bid will be opened in next working day	22.04.2021 1.00 pm

Sd/-
General Manager (O)
Kashmir

DIPK-NB-6704/20

Srinagar Municipal Corporation
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER RIGHT RIVER WORKS DIVISION

Mr.Shokwat Ahmad Baghwan
S/O Ghulam Hassan
R/O Gousia colony Babademb Sgr

No.SMC/EERRWD/3410-15 Dated: 22-03-21

Subject: Non-Execution of allotted work

Reference: This office allotment No.SMC/EERRWD/362-63 dated:08-03-2021, Assistant Executive Engineer Sub Division Eidgah office communication No.AEE/EG/362-63 dated:08-03-2021

FINAL NOTICE

Whereas you have been authorized / allotted the work under above reference Number and date. Whereas, despite lapse of considerable period of time you have not started any execution of the work at respective site.

Whereas, you have been asked various times to start the execution of the work through telephonic message and social media by this office and as well as by the concerned Assistant Executive Engineer but nothing has been done with regard to the execution of the work.

Whereas through this notice you are given final opportunity to start the work within three days positively failing which the work shall be taken up for execution and completed through some other source at your risk and cost and requisite recovery shall be made through proper medium on account of work done for the completion of the work. Moreover, you shall be debarred from tendering process in future in this Division, unless the concerned AEE shall report that the work has been started by you.

This notice may be treated as final chance and no excuses/ justifications and reasons shall be accepted for not starting the works

Executive Engineer
Right River Works Division
Srinagar Municipal Corporation.

DIPK-NB-6691/20

SRINAGAR MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER LEFT RIVER WORKS DIVISION

M/S Yuganter
Parade Road near Electric (PDD) Department,
Jammu.

Subject: Construction of CTPT at Govt. Polytechnic College, Gogji Bagh.

(Final Notice).

Whereas above cited work has been allotted to you vide Allotment No. SMC/EELRWD/1518-31 dated: 04-08-2017.

Whereas time of completion as stipulated in the allotment order is 90 days from the date of issue of allotment i.e. 04-08-2017.

Whereas you started the work On 05-08-2017 but failed to maintain the progress and have subsequently abandoned/left work unattended since long.

Whereas notices have been issued to you for completion of the work vide AEE Sub Division 1st No: ASD/1st/254 dated: 28-11-2019, Joint Commissioner (Works) SMC No: SMC/JCW/SE/3742-49 dated: 21-11-2019, Commissioner SMC No: SMC/PS/Com/TO/1141-1153 dated: 09-12-2019, Executive Engineer LRWD No: SMC/EELRWD/398-405 dated: 19-06-2020 but no response has been received from your side till date.

Whereas despite lapse of 1327 days, the work continues to be unattended without any progress and same has been viewed seriously by the authorities.

In view of above, you are hereby given final opportunity to resume the work within 05 days positively from the date of issue of this notice failing which it shall be presumed that you are not interested in executing the balance work and accordingly same shall be got executed through some other agency at your risk and cost for which you shall be personally responsible.

No: SMC/EELRWD/8032-39
Dated: 26-03-2021

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

DIPK-NB-6684/20

Houseboat Association President Abdul Hameed Wangnoo Passes Away

NC, PDP, Others Express Grief Observer News Service

Srinagar: President Houseboat Owners Association, Haji Abdul Hamid Wangnoo passed away on Friday. Several people, including Abdullah's have expressed grief over his demise.

National Conference (NC) President and Member of Parliament from Srinagar Dr Farooq Abdullah and Vice President Omar Abdullah expressed grief over the demise of Haji Abdul Hameed Wangnoo.

In a condolence message, the duo said that the demise of Wangnoo has created a deep void in the tourism industry.

They said the deceased worked for safeguarding the interests of people associated with the tourism sector particularly House boat owners. They prayed for peace to the soul of the deceased and much needed strength to the bereaved family to bear the irreparable loss.

Among others, Party's General Secretary Ali Muhammad Sagar, Provincial President Nasir Aslam Wani also expressed deep sorrow over the demise of Wangnoo. The functionaries prayed for peace to the soul of the deceased and much needed strength to the bereaved family.

Apni Party President Altaf Bukhari expressed deep condolences over the demise of Haji Abdul Hamid Wangnoo.

In a condolence message, Bukhari said that the demise of Wangnoo has brought profound shock especially to those who are affiliated with the tourism sector.

"His absence will be deeply felt as he was a thorough gentleman who had envisioned promoting J & K tourism far and wide," Bukhari said.

5,972 People Illegally Occupy 10,000 Kanals Of Govt Land In Srinagar: Admin

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Provincial Commissioner Kashmir Saturday published the names of those who have occupied government land in the Srinagar district. These include government employees, farmers, traders, and others.

Following the directions of the Jammu and Kashmir High Court, the administration started compiling a list of beneficiaries of the Roshni

Act. The list also includes former ministers, businessmen, and bureaucrats.

A senior administration official said that the Revenue Department has already ruled out a move in the matter. "We are currently compiling a list of beneficiaries, which will be published later on the website," he said.

"So far we have collected the details of more than 15,000 people and more details are being collected," he added.

"After this operation, government land worth crores of rupees will be recovered," he said.

He said that under the Roshni Act, about 348,200 kanals of land have been given to the people. The Srinagar district administration has included the names of a former minister, a Congress leader and a businessman in its list in the Roshni Act case, he claimed.

According to sources privy to the developments, Former

Finance Minister Haseeb Drabu and his three relatives namely Shahzada Bano, Ejaz Drabu and Iftikhar Drabu have been named in the list.

In addition to this prominent businessman and Congress leader KK Amla, Rachna Amla, Veena Amla, Mushtaq Ahmed, former bureaucrat Muhammad Shafi Pandit and his wife Nighat Pandit and Syed Muzaffar Agha have also been mentioned as the beneficiaries of the Roshni Act. (CNS)

Adv Khan Asks Officers To Expedite Registration Process Of Houseboats

SRINAGAR: Advisor to Lieutenant Governor, Baseer Ahmad Khan Saturday chaired a meeting of officers and took review of the status of Bio-digesters in Houseboats in Dal Lake, at SKICC, Srinagar.

The meeting was attended by Secretary Tourism, Sarmad Hafeez; Director Tourism, G N Itto; J&K Bank officers, Representatives of Houseboat and Shikara Associations.

VC, LAWDA and CE, UEED participated virtually through Video Conference.

Threadbare discussion was held regarding the installation of Bio-digesters in Houseboats to stop discharging of effluents in Lake. Also the meeting discussed various issues pertaining to department of Tourism, Floriculture and upcoming tulip festival.

On the occasion, Advisor

exhorted on the VC, LAWDA to install Bio-digesters in the Lake in a time bound manner.

Advisor also reviewed the registration process of Houseboats and impressed on the concerned officers to complete the registration at the earliest.

Advisor also interacted with representatives of the Houseboat and Shikara Association and listened to their issues.

Meanwhile, Advisor also

reviewed the arrangements for the celebration of Six day Tulip Festival starting from April 03.

The meeting held threadbare discussion on the slew of measures put in place for the successful conduct of Tulip Festival.

On the occasion, Advisor stressed for coordination between Tourism Department, SMC and related departments to put concerted measures in place for success of the Festival.

Name Change

I want to change the name of my son, Ahmad to Ahmad bin Umar, who is studying at Tyndale Biscoe School, Srinagar in 3rd standard (Blue) bearing Roll No 45. Anybody having objections, if any, in this regard may contact the school authorities within a period of seven days. No objection will be entertained after that.

UMAR RIGOO
F/O AHMAD BIN UMAR

Loss Of RC

I have lost the RC of my vehicle Bearing Registration No. JK04A-7829. Now applied for its duplicate if anybody has any objection in this regard may file at ARTO Badgam within Seven (7) days after that no objection shall be entertained.

Name:- Ab Ahad Padder
S/O Ab Gani Padder

R/O Sadiwara Duroo Anantnag

MJA

PUBLIC NOTICE

My Name in Driving License has been wrongly entered as Showkat Ahmad Thakria S/O Gh Hassan Thakria while my Correct Name is Showkat Hussain Thakria S/O Gh Hassan Thakria. Now I want the same to be corrected if anybody has any objection in this regard He/ She may file his/ her objection in the Office of the ARTO Anantnag within a period of seven (7) days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Name:- Showkat Hussain Thakria
S/O Gh Hassan Thakria
R/O Dadoo Marhama Anantnag

mja

Government of Jammu & Kashmir OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER WATER WORKS DIVISION SRINAGAR

GIST OF NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER
FRESH E-N.I.T No:- 55/WWD OF 2020-21 DT:- 27.03.2021

Executive Engineer Water Works Division Srinagar on behalf of Lt. Governor of J&K (U.T), for Annual Stage Contract for restoration of water supply in different areas under the Jurisdiction of Water Works Division Srinagar, invites tenders by e-tendering mode from approved & eligible "AEE", "BEE" & "CEE" Class registered Contractors of J&K.

Status of A.A.A.: 'Accorded'

Major Head of Account: 'M&R'

Position of Funds: Available

S. No	Name of Work	Estd. Cost (in lacs)	Cost of tender Document (challan) (in Rupees)	Stage Period	Class of Contractor
1	Annual Stage Contract for restoration of Water Supply in different areas falling under the Jurisdiction of NWRWW Sub Division Srinagar for the year 2021-22	26.00	1000	April 2021 To March 2022	"AEE" & "BEE"
2	Annual Stage Contract for restoration of Water Supply in different areas falling under the Jurisdiction of CityWW Sub Division Srinagar for the year 2021-22	23.00	900	April 2021 To March 2022	"BEE" & "CEE"
3	Annual Stage Contract for restoration of Water Supply in different areas falling under the Jurisdiction of DoodhgangaWW Sub Div. Sgr for the year 2021-22	19.00	800	April 2021 To March 2022	"BEE" & "CEE"

Note:- For further details, bidders are requested to refer to e-NIT instructions published on website: <http://www.jktenders.gov.in> in this office endorsement No:- WWD/55 of 2020-21 Dt: 27-03-2021. The dates showing bid submission date/closing date etc. are given below;

1	Date of publishing	27-03-2021
2	Document downloading date	27.03.2021/1800hrs
3	Bid submission start date	27.03.2021/1800hrs
4	Bid submission closing date	03.04.2021/1600hrs
5	Date and time for opening bids	03.04.2021/1630hrs
6	Place of opening of bids	Office of The Executive Engineer W. W. Division Srinagar.

Note: Bid security declaration "Self Attested" be uploaded with the bid as per Appendix II as per Finance Deptt. Govt. of U.T. of J&K letter No. A/Misc. (2018)-III-895/J dt. 22-12-2020.

The bid uploaded without challan of Tender Document Fee shall be rejected straightaway

No: WWD/10077-91
Dated: 27.03.2021

DIPK-15694/20

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
Water Works Division Srinagar

THE J&K BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL ENTRANCE EXAMINATIONS (BOPEE)

Tel/Fax: 0194-2433590-2437647 (srinagar) : 0191-2479371, 2470102 (jammu)
website: <http://www.jkbopee.org>, email: ceojkbopee@gmail.com

Subject: Provisional Select List of eligible candidates for admission to Medical Record Technician courses-2020 at SKIMS, Srinagar (mop-up round of physical Counselling).

Reference: i. Notification No.030-BOPEE of 2020 dated 19.09.2020.
ii. Notice No.056-BOPEE of 2020 dated 07.10.2020.
iii. Notice No.059-BOPEE of 2020 dated 13.10.2020.
iv. Notification No.011-BOPEE of 2021 dated 22.01.2021
v) Notification No. 017-BOPEE of 2021 dated 04-02-2021
vi) Notification No: 020-BOPEE of 2021 dated 10-02-2021.
vii) Notification No. 44-BOPEE of 2021 dated 23-03-2021.

NOTIFICATION No: 047-BOPEE of 2021
DATED: 27-03-2021.

Consequent upon receipt of shortfall in respect of Notification No: 020-BOPEE of 2021 dated 10-02-2021 and in pursuance of Notification No. 44-BOPEE of 2021 dated 23-03-2021, the mop-up physical round of counselling of eligible candidates was held on 27.03.2021 for admission to 12th based Paramedical Courses in Medical Record Technician Course-2020 (SKIMS, Soura, Srinagar). The candidates who have participated in the said counselling and have been allotted seats as per their merit-cum-preferences are hereby provisionally selected for admission to the Medical Record Technician Course-2020 (SKIMS, Soura, Srinagar) as per Annexure "A" to this notification which is available on website of the Board www.jkbopee.gov.in only for completion of admission process. The candidates are advised to report to the institution from 29-03-2021 to 03-04-2021 (3.00 PM).

The Director, SKIMS is requested to furnish the shortfall, if any, to the Board through e-mail (helpdesk@jkbopee@gmail.com/ceojkbopee@gmail.com) on 03-04-2021 (4.00 PM).

Further, due to non availability of the eligible reserved category candidates in the following categories, the Board, as provided under Proviso to Section 9(2) of the J&K Reservation Act, 2004, converted these seats into Open Merit and filled up the same from amongst the available eligible OM category candidates:-

1.	ST	=	02
2.	OSC	=	01
3.	PSP	=	01
4.	ALC/IB	=	01
5.	CDP	=	01

Note:

1. The admission of the candidates is purely provisional and shall be cancelled in case any information furnished by any candidate proves to be false/fabricated, and action as warranted under law shall be initiated against such candidates.

2. The other terms and conditions shall remain the same as notified in information Brochure/Notifications/Notices issued by the Board from time to time on the subject.

E&OE
DIPK-NB-6720/20

(Dr Sunil Gupta)
Controller Of Examinations
J&K BOPEE

No:BOPEE/Exam-35(vi)/2019 Dated: 27-03-2021.

Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir Directorate of Hospitality and Protocol J&K Gulami Bagh, Canal Road, Jammu-Tele-0191-2501409-251410-Tele.0194-2500088/2500623

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER
NIT No.DHP/Accts/eT-NIT/029 Dated: 29-03-2021

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor of the UT of Jammu and Kashmir, e-Tenders are invited from registered/approved agencies in connection with OUT SOURCING OF HOUSEKEEPING AND CLEANING OF VARIOUS BUILDINGS OF HOSPITALITY AND DPROTOCOL DEPARTMENT JAMMU, under two bid tendering process i.e. "Technical Bid" and "Financial Bid" as per details given below:-
Instruction to bidder (ITB)

Name of Tenderer	OUT SOURCING OF HOUSEKEEPING AND CLEANING OF VARIOUS BUILDINGS OF HOSPITALITY AND PROTOCOL DEPARTMENT JAMMU
Cost of Tender Document	Rs.1,000/- (Rupees One thousand only) in the form of Demand Draft in favour of Accounts Officer, Directorate of Hospitality and Protocol, J&K.
Earnest Money Deposit (CDR)	No need to deposit CDR but the bidder has to give undertaken (in lieu of CDR i.e. Bid Security Declaration) if he misled the department by quoting low rates and did not carry the contract shall be Blacklisted for participating in any tendering process in UT of J&K for period of one year.
Period of Contract	One year
Date from which tender document can be downloaded	(26-03-2021)
Period of downloading tender document	(21) days from the date of issue of Tender Notice
Bid Submission end date	16-04-2021
Last date for receiving hard copy (Bank Draft and undertaking in lieu of CDR)	16-04-2021
Last date for receiving of hard copies (Bank Draft & Undertaking in lieu of CDR) etc.	16-04-2021
Date and time of opening of Bids online.	16-04-2021 or any other date convenient to Directorate level Contract Committee.

DIPK-15665/20

Sd/-Accounts Officer
Hospitality And Protocol, J&K

DIAL-EMMA



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

AIRPORTS

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311

RAILWAYS

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

HIGHWAY STATUS

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



HIJRI
CALENDAR
13 SHABAN
1442

PRAYERS

FAJR 5:00
ZUHR 12:36
ASR 5:01
Magrib 6:51
ISHA 8:12

This Day In History

- 1535 - Bloemkamp Abbey (Oldeklooster) attacked & destroyed - 1556 - Origin of Fasl Era (India)
- 1738 - Parliament sends an address to the king requesting that he demand redress from Spain (War of Jenkin's Ear)
- 1774 - Britain passes Coercive Act against Massachusetts
- 1776 - Juan Bautista de Anza finds the site for the Presidio of San Francisco.
- 1794 - Louvre opens to the public (although officially opened since August)
- 1794 - Allies under the prince of Coburg defeat French forces at Le Cateau.
- 1802 - Heinrich Wilhelm Matthäus Olbers discovers 2 Pallas, the second asteroid known to man.
- 1809 - Peninsular War: France defeats Spain in the Battle of Medelin.
- 1845 - Mexico drops diplomatic relations with US
- 1854 - Britain & France declare war on Russia (Crimean War)
- 1866 - 1st ambulance goes into service
- 1885 - US Salvation Army officially organized
- 1891 - 1st world weightlifting championship held
- 1904 - Japanese troops advance in Korea, defeat the Russians at Chongju, and capture the town
- 1910 - 1st seaplane, takes off from water at Martiniques France (Henri Fabre)
- 1913 - Guatemala becomes a signatory to the Buenos Aires copyright treaty.
- 1920 - Anton Denkin's White Russian troops defeated by Bolsheviks/Soviets at Novorossijsk on the Black Sea (The British aid Denkin in his escape)
- 1922 - 1st microfilm device introduced
- 1929 - Democratic constitution goes into effect in Ecuador
- 1930 - Turkish cities Constantinople & Angora change their names to Istanbul & Ankara
- 1933 - German Reichstag confers dictatorial powers on Hitler
- 1935 - Robert Goddard uses gyroscopes to control a rocket
- 1939 - Spanish Civil War ends, Madrid falls to Francisco Franco
- 1941 - Sea battle at Cape Matapan: British fleet under Cunningham defeats Italy
- 1942 - 234 RAF bombers attack Lubeck
- 1942 - British naval forces raid Nazi occupied French port of St Nazaire.
- 1945 - Last German V-1 (buzz bomb) attack on London
- 1946 - Cold War: The United States State Department releases the Acheson-Lilienthal Report, outlining a plan for the international control of nuclear power.
- 1959 - 11 days after Tibet uprising, China dissolves Tibet's government & installs Panchen Lama

From KO Archives

Pak support to Kashmiris dwindling: Geelani

NEW DELHI - Observing that Islamabad's support to "Kashmiris' movement" had diluted lately, chairman of Hurriyat Conference (G) Syed Ali Shah Geelani today was Non-committal about his meeting with President Pervez Musharraf when he visits India next month.

"I will think about it when I get an invitation," the headline leader was quoted as saying by PTI here when asked whether he would meet Musharraf considering that he boycotted Pakistan Day function at the Pakistan High Commission here on Wednesday.

"I will discuss it with my colleagues. The Majlis-e-Shura (highest decision-making body of his Tehreek-e-Hurriyat conglomerate) will take a decision on it," Geelani said.

All Pakistani leaders visiting India make it a point to meet separatist leaders. Pakistan Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, during his visit here in November, held four hour-long talks with the separatist leaders, trying to forge unity among them.

When referred to his boycott of Pakistan Day function. Geelani said it was to "register token protest" against Islamabad's decision to go ahead with the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service.

The separatist leader, however, maintained that he did not wish to have "confrontation" with Pakistan, as the country has been "supporting our cause for the last 57 years." Geelani said the protest was to "give Pakistan a feeling that they have to continue providing moral and diplomatic support to Kashmiris' movement. It is their obligation." Asked whether he felt that this support had diluted lately, Geelani replied in affirmative.

"It may not be reflected in the statements but it is clear by actions (of Pakistan), he said.

He claimed that plying of the bus service was "not favourable to our movement".

When that Pakistan pointed out to him was going ahead with the bus service despite his "token protest", Geelani said "governments cannot be stopped from its work. Has government of India been stopped from indulging in atrocities in Kashmir?" A vocal supporter of Pakistan, Geelani on Tuesday had lashed out at Islamabad, accusing it of "rubbing salt into wounds" of Kashmiris by deciding to run the bus service.

(Kashmir Observer, 28 March, 2005)

US Spy Agencies Warn Biden Of Possible Taliban Takeover Of Afghanistan: NY Times



Agenceis

WASHINGTON: US intelligence agencies have told the Biden administration that the Taliban could overrun most of Afghanistan within two to three years if US troops leave before a power-sharing deal is reached between the warring sides, a news report said on Friday.

Such a takeover potentially would allow al-Qaeda to rebuild in Afghanistan, the New York Times reported, quoting anonymous US officials.

President Joe Biden is deciding whether to meet a May 1 deadline for the withdrawal of the last 3,500 American troops that was set in a February 2020 accord struck with the Taliban under his predecessor, Donald Trump.

Some US officials who favour

keeping US troops in Afghanistan are using the intelligence report to argue that the soldiers should remain beyond the deadline, the Times said. The White House declined to comment. The classified intelligence assessment was prepared last year for the Trump administration, the Times said.

Biden on Thursday told his first White House news conference that it would be hard to comply with the deadline, which also requires the departure of some 7,000 allied forces.

At the same time, Biden said he "could not picture" US troops being in the country next year.

The Taliban on Friday said it would resume hostilities against foreign forces -- which ended under the US-Taliban deal -- if they remain beyond the deadline.

Days After \$500 Million Cleared By IMF, World Bank Loans Over \$1 Billion To Pakistan



Agenceis

Islamabad: The World Bank has signed agreements with Pakistan to provide a loan of USD 1.336 billion for assistance to boost the cash-strapped country's foreign exchange reserves and help support social sector programmes.

A total of six project agreements, worth USD 1.336 billion in loans, including a USD 128-million grant, were signed on Friday to support the government's initiatives in social protection, disaster and climate risk management, improving infrastructure for resilience, agriculture, food security, human capital development and governance sectors, Pakistan's Dawn newspaper reported.

Secretary of Ministry of Economic Affairs Noor Ahmad, signed the financing agreement on behalf of the government of Pakistan, while representatives of the provincial governments of Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan signed their respective agreements online.

Najy Benhassine, Country Director of the World Bank, signed the agreements on behalf of his organisation. Minister for Economic Affairs Khuroso Bakhtyar also attended the ceremony.

The Pakistani newspaper reported that the first USD 600 million loan agreement pertained to the Crisis-Resilient Social Protection Programme (CRISP) to support the development of a more adaptive social protection system that will contribute to future crisis-resilience among poor and vul-

nerable households in the country. The loan was signed by the board of executive directors of the bank, a day earlier under its International Development Association (IDA) programme.

Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, millions of families across Pakistan face economic hardship, particularly those working in the informal sector, who have no savings or are not covered by existing social safety net programmes, said Najy Benhassine.

The CRISP will facilitate the gradual expansion of Ehsaas social protection programmes to better reach informal workers through an innovative, hybrid approach that blends social assistance with promotion of increased savings that informal workers, particularly women, can depend on in the event of economic shocks.

It will provide a platform through which the government can rapidly respond to support the most affected households during an economic crisis.

Earlier in the week, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) too agreed to release the next tranche of USD 500 million loan for Pakistan after approving four pending reviews of the country's economic progress.

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For the first time in 68 years, Pakistan's economy contracted in the outgoing fiscal year with a negative 0.38 per cent due to the adverse impact of the COVID-19 pandemic coupled with the already weak financial situation before the pandemic hit the country.

64 Protesters Killed In Myanmar On 'Day Of Shame For Armed Forces'

Agenceis

Myanmar's security forces shot and killed at least 64 people, including a young boy, on Saturday, news reports and witnesses said, even as the ruling junta's leader said the military would protect the people and strive for democracy.

Protesters against the February 1 military coup came out on the streets of Yangon, Mandalay and other towns, defying a warning that they could be shot "in the head and back", while the country's generals celebrated Armed Forces Day.

"Today is a day of shame for the armed forces," Dr. Sasa, a spokesman for CRPH, an anti-junta group set up by deposed lawmakers, told an online forum.

The deaths on Saturday, one of the bloodiest days since the coup, would take the number of civilians reported killed to nearly 400. Tens of thousands of people demonstrated in parts of Myanmar on Saturday.

A boy reported by local media to be as young as five was among at least 13 people killed in Myanmar's second city of Mandalay. The Myanmar Now news portal said 64 people had been killed in total across the country by 2.30 p.m. (0800 GMT).

Three people, including a man who plays in a local under-21 football team, were killed in a protest in the Insein district of Myanmar's biggest city Yangon, a neighbour told Reuters.

"They are killing us like birds or chickens, even in our homes," said Thu Ya Zaw in the central town of Myingyan, where at least two protesters were killed. "We will keep protesting regardless... We must fight until the junta falls." Deaths were reported from the central Sagaing region, Lashio in the east, in the Bago region, near Yangon, and elsewhere. A one-year-old baby was hit in the eye with a rubber bullet.

Meanwhile, one of Myanmar's two dozen ethnic armed groups, the Karen National Union, said it had overrun an army post near the Thai border, killing 10 people -- including a lieutenant colonel -- and losing one of its own fighters.

Myanmar's ethnic armed factions will not stand by and allow more killings, the leader of one of the main armed groups said on Saturday.



A military spokesman did not respond to calls seeking comment on the killings by security forces or the insurgent attack on its post.

After presiding over a military parade in the capital Naypyitaw to mark Armed Forces Day, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing reiterated a promise to hold elections after overthrowing elected leader Aung San Suu Kyi, without giving any time-frame.

"The army seeks to join hands with the entire nation to safeguard democracy," the general said in a live broadcast on state television, adding that authorities also sought to protect the people and restore peace across the country.

"Violent acts that affect stability and security in order to make demands are inappropriate."

SHOTS TO HEAD

In a warning on Friday evening, state television said protesters were "in danger of getting shot to the head and back". The warning did not specifically say security forces had been given shoot-to-kill orders and the junta has previously suggested some fatal shootings have come from within the crowds.

But it showed the military's determination to prevent any disruptions around Armed Forces Day, which commemorates the start of the resistance to Japanese occupation in 1945 that was orchestrated by Suu Kyi's father, the founder of the military.

Suu Kyi, Myanmar's most popular civilian politician, remains in detention at an undisclosed location. Many other figures in her party are also being held in custody.

In a week that saw international pressure on the junta ramped up with new U.S. and European sanc-

tions, Russia's deputy defence minister Alexander Fomin attended the parade in Naypyitaw, having met senior junta leaders a day earlier.

"Russia is a true friend," Min Aung Hlaing said. There were no signs of other diplomats at an event that is usually attended by scores of officials from foreign nations.

Support from Russia and China, which has also refrained from criticism, is important for the junta as they are permanent members of the United Nations Security Council and can block potential U.N. actions.

Gunshots hit the U.S. cultural centre in Yangon on Saturday, but nobody was hurt and the incident was being investigated, U.S. embassy spokesperson Ariyani Manring said. The United States has led criticism of the killings of protesters.

Protesters have taken to the streets almost daily since the coup that derailed Myanmar's slow transition to democracy, despite the mounting toll.

"The Myanmar Armed Forces Day isn't an armed forces day, it's more like the day they killed people," General Yawd Serk, chair of the Restoration Council of Shan State/Shan State Army - South, told Reuters in neighbouring Thailand.

"If they continue to shoot at protesters and bully the people, I think all the ethnic groups would not just stand by and do nothing."

Author and historian Thant Myint-U wrote on Twitter: "A failed state in Myanmar has the potential to draw in all the big powers - including the US, China, India, Russia, and Japan - in a way that could lead to a serious international crisis (as well as an even greater catastrophe in Myanmar itself)".

China Signs 25-Year Deal With Iran, Poses A Challenge To Biden's Administration

Agenceis

China and Iran signed an overarching deal aimed at charting the course of their economic, political and trade relations over the next 25 years, Iranian state TV reported, in a challenge to the Biden administration.

The "Comprehensive Strategic Partnership" agreement, signed in Tehran on Saturday by Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and his Chinese counterpart, Wang Yi, has been in the works since 2016, when President Xi Jinping became the first Chinese leader to visit the Iranian capital in over a decade.

"The document can elevate bilateral ties to a new strategic level," Foreign Ministry Spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said in a televised interview. The deal focuses on boosting private-sector collaboration and the Islamic Republic's role in Xi's flagship infrastructure and investment program, the Belt and Road Initiative, he said.

A draft copy of the outlines of the accord that surfaced on media last year showed plans for long-term supply of Iranian crude to China as well as investment in oil,



gas, petrochemical, renewables and nuclear energy infrastructure.

The alliance between Beijing and Tehran is a challenge to U.S. President Joe Biden's administration as it sets about trying to rally allies against China, which Secretary of State Antony Blinken has said is the world's "greatest geopolitical test."

The China pact comes as efforts to revive the Iran nuclear accord with world powers are stalled. The Biden administration has indicated that it is open to reengaging with Iran after then-President Donald Trump abandoned the deal nearly three years

ago and reimposed economic sanctions, but the two sides have yet to even agree to meet.

Iran's closer integration with China may help shore up its economy against the impact of the U.S. penalties, while sending a clear signal to the Biden administration of Tehran's intentions. Wang Yi, who arrived in Tehran on Friday, also met with President Hassan Rouhani to discuss the nuclear deal.

In a televised speech, Rouhani reiterated his view on the prospect for the easing of restrictions before the end of his second and final term as president in early August.

Over 180 People Trapped In Mozambique Hotel After ISIL Attack

Agenceis

More than 180 people including foreign workers are trapped inside a hotel in a northern Mozambique town under siege for three days by fighters linked to the ISIL (ISIS) group, workers and security sources said Friday.

Several people were dead, according to witnesses and a rights group, after the attack in Palma near a liquefied natural gas (LNG) site in Cabo Delgado province.

French oil giant Total is the principal investor in the \$20bn project - Africa's largest - with six other international firms including ExxonMobil involved in the area.

ISIL-linked fighters began a raid on the coastal town on Wednesday afternoon, forcing terrified residents to flee into the surrounding forest as LNG and government workers sought shel-

ter at the Amarula Palma hotel. "Almost the entire town was destroyed. Many people are dead," said a worker on the LNG site speaking on the phone Friday evening after he was evacuated to Afungi.

"As locals fled to the bush, workers from LNG companies, including foreigners, took refuge in hotel Amarula where they are waiting to be rescued," he said, asking not to be named.

Human Rights Watch said the attackers are linked to a group known locally as al-Shabab, which has no known direct link to the Somali armed group with a similar name.

"Several witnesses told Human Rights Watch that they saw bodies on the streets and residents fleeing after the Al-Shabab fighters fired indiscriminately at people and buildings," the rights group said in a statement on Friday.

The Mozambique government on Thursday confirmed the attack on the town and said soldiers had launched an offensive to evict the fighters from the town, the hub of the giant gas project.

The fresh round of attacks began on Wednesday hours after Total announced a gradual resumption of work at the LNG project, which had been hampered by the continuing rebellion in the region.

Armed fighters affiliated with ISIL have raided villages and towns across the province, causing nearly 700,000 to flee their homes.

The violence has left at least 2,600 people dead, half of them civilians, according to the US-based data collecting agency Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED).

In a statement Friday, the US embassy in Maputo condemned the attack on Palma, pledging its commitment "to working with the government of Mozambique to counter violent extremism".



open the canal. "We have equipment and capacity that most countries don't have and we're seeing what we can do and what help we can be, US President Joe Biden told reporters.

An initial investigation showed the vessel ran aground due to strong winds and ruled out mechanical or engine failure, the company said. GAC, a global shipping and logistics company, had previously said the ship had experienced a power blackout, but it did not elaborate.

Bernhard Schulte said two canal pilots had been aboard when the ship got stuck. Such an arrangement is customary, but the ship's captain retains ultimate authority over the vessel, according to experts.

In addition to the over 200 vessels waiting near the canal, more than 100 ships were en route to the waterway, according to the data firm Refinitiv.

Apparently anticipating long delays, the owners of the stuck vessel diverted a sister ship, the Ever Greet, to head around Africa instead, according to satellite data. Others also are being diverted. The liquid natural gas carrier Pan Americas changed course in the mid-Atlantic, now aiming south to go around the southern tip of Africa, according to satellite data from MarineTraffic.com.

About 10% of world trade flows through the canal, which is particularly crucial for transporting oil. The closure also could affect oil and gas shipments to Europe from the Middle East. Oil markets are absorbing the disruption for now, said analyst Toril Bosoni.

"Oil inventories have been coming down but they are still relatively ample," he told The Associated Press, adding that he believes the impact might be more pronounced in the tanker sector than in the oil industry.

"We are not losing any oil supply but it will tie up tankers for longer if they have to go around" the tip of Africa, he said, which is roughly an additional two-week trip.

A team from Boskalis, a Dutch firm specializing in salvaging, was working with the canal authority using tugboats and a specialized suction dredger at the port side of the cargo ship's bow. Egyptian authorities have prohibited media access to the site.

"It's a complex technical operation" that will require several attempts to free the vessel, Lt Gen Osama Rabei, head of the Suez Canal Authority, said in a statement.

Attempts earlier on Friday to free it failed, said Bernhard Schulte Shipmanagement, the technical manager of the Ever Given.

The Suez Canal Authority has said it welcomed international assistance. The White House said it has offered to help Egypt re-

open the canal. "We have equipment and capacity that most countries don't have and we're seeing what we can do and what help we can be, US President Joe Biden told reporters.

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NEWSMAKERS

US-China Rivalry Risks 'Catastrophic' Conflict, Kissinger Warns

Agenceis

Former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger has warned that the United States and China must come to an understanding on international affairs or there will be a risk of "catastrophic" conflict similar to the one before the First World War.

Speaking online at a Chatham House event in London, Kissinger said "endless" competition between the world's two largest economies risks unforeseen escalation and subsequent conflict, and that the ultimate question was whether or not the United States and its Western allies could develop an understanding with China about a new global order.

"It is infinitely more dangerous now than it was then," Kissinger

added, stressing that the high-tech weaponry on both sides could lead to a very grave conflict.

"A conflict between countries possessing high technology with weapons that can target themselves and that can start the conflict by themselves without some agreement of some kind of restraint cannot end well," the former US diplomat said. "And that's an understatement."

Kissinger served as Secretary of State and National Security Advisor under President Richard Nixon, making two trips to China in 1971, the first of which was in secret, to establish rapprochement between Washington and Beijing.

Kissinger met Chinese officials on behalf of Nixon at that time without telling George H.W. Bush, who was

then Washington's ambassador to the United Nations, about the talks.

The US and China have been engaged in a trade conflict for the past two years and have imposed billions of dollars of tariffs on each other's goods.

Since early 2018, the US administration has pursued a deliberate policy of attempting to hurt China's economy in response to concerns about the shifting balance of economic power and unfair trade practices.

Washington and Beijing are also engaged in a number of other disputes, including US naval operations in the South China Sea, the US relationship with Taiwan, the Xinjiang issue and US Congress support for protesters in Hong Kong.

Citing an admission by a former US senior official, Chinese Foreign

Ministry spokesman Hua Chunying said on Friday that allegations of human rights violations against the Muslim Uighur minority in the western state of Xinjiang was nothing but a strategic US plot to destabilize China from the inside.

Hua made the comments after showing journalists at the ministry's regular press conference a video of Lawrence Wilkerson, a retired US Army Colonel and former chief of staff to US Secretary of State Colin Powell, giving a speech in August 2018.

The video showed Wilkerson saying if the CIA wanted to destabilize China, that would be best to form unrest and join with Uighurs in putting pressure on China internally rather than from outside.

"It's time to end the 'drama' from

the US side," Hua said, adding that the footage showed the unseemly role played by the US and some of its allies and a few media outlets when they attack China on the issue of Uighurs in Xinjiang.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson also said the US and its western allies colluded with anti-China forces and accused Beijing of committing "crimes" including forced labor, forced sterilization and even genocide and subsequently imposed sanctions on Chinese institutions and personnel.

The official also underlined that the US cooked up the so-called "Xinjiang problem" not because it cares about the Muslim Uighur minority but to undermine China's security and stability, and to hinder its development and growth.

J&K Bank Signs Agreement With EPFO For Pension Disbursement



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Bank has entered into an agreement with the Central Board of Trustees of Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO), according to which the latter has appointed and authorized J&K's premier financial institution as their agent for the purpose of disbursement of pension under the Employees' Pension Scheme 1995.

The agreement that will come into effect from April 1, 2021 was signed by President Government Business Operations Rakesh Koul on behalf of J&K Bank and Regional Provident Fund Commissioner - II (Jammu) K. Ramesh, who represented The Central Board.

As per the tie-up, the Bank's three Business Units- Residency Road Srinagar, Shalimar Road Jammu and Leh Main Ladakh- have been designated as Link Branches where Trustees' Saving accounts for the disbursement of the pension will be maintained.

Terming the agreement an important milestone in collaboration President Rakesh Koul said, "Trusted institution like the Central Board of Trustees of EPFO appointing J&K

Bank as their agent to disburse the pension is a strong recognition of Bank's reputation and remarkable range of its offerings. The trust and reliability has been earned over the years by exhibiting professionalism and performance while empowering the region's through effective financial intermediation besides providing world class banking and allied services. In our long journey, collaboration with EPFO is a huge development and is going to benefit our people."

Speaking on the occasion, the EPFO Central Board's K Ramesh said that J&K Bank was very important financial institution with largest net work in the region adding, "the tie-up will help large number of pensioners."

Notably, the EPFO had chosen J&K Bank as one of the banks for collection of provident fund in the country after two parties signed an MoU in August, last year. The agreement enabled the Bank to serve as central bank account for online collection of contribution, dues, damages, remittance, payment or charges payable to the Central Board by an employer, an establishment, a person or any other entity, having bank account with J&K Bank.

ACB Arrests JPDCL Engineer For Accepting Bribe

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Anti Corruption Bureau Saturday said it arrested Sushma Parihar, JE (Electrical) posted at Nai Basti Fish Market, Jammu for accepting bribe.

In a statement, the ACB said that a complaint was received where the complainant said that he had applied for a new electrical connection (Commercial, 3 Phase) for his premises situated at Rani Talab Digiana, Jammu. After completing all the formalities, the file was marked by the AEE (Electrical) Gangyal on 23.03.2021 to JE (Electrical) Sushma Parihar whose office is opposite Nai basti Fish Market Jammu.

The statement said that Parihar called the complainant the next day to her office and told him categorically she won't sanction his connection until he pay her Rs. 20,000/- as bribe. Moreover, she also said that she would keep the Kilowatt connected load on the lower side by way of which he will have to pay less amount in Govt. exchequer. That, despite repeated requests the JE was adamant



on having the bribe amount because of which she has also kept the file with her and has granted him 3-4 days time to arrange the money. As the complainant don't want to give the amount of Rs. 20,000/- as bribe to the JE Sushma Parihar, he approached the ACB to take immediate necessary action under law.

The ACB said that on the receipt of this complaint a pre trap verification was conducted and as per complaint and report of verifying officer, prime facie, offence U/s 7 of Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Act, 2018 was found made out against Parihar, Junior Engineer of Jammu

Power Distribution Corporation Ltd, as such, case FIR No. 04/2021 was registered in Police Station ACB Central Jammu.

It said thereafter, a trap team was constituted and independent witnesses including lady officer and magistrate were associated with the same. The trap team laid a successful trap and caught the accused red handed while demanding and accepting the bribe from the complainant. The amount of bribe to the tune of Rs. 20,000/- was also recovered on the spot. Searches were also conducted in the house of the accused.

Further investigation of the case is going on, it said.

Three Notorious Drug Peddlers Arrested

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Police Saturday said it arrested three notorious drug peddlers and recovered huge quantity of contraband substance from their possession.

In Anantnag, a police party led by DO Sangan at a checkpoint established in their jurisdiction intercepted a vehicle bearing registration number JK18A-5981 driven by Showkat Ahmad Ganie son of Ab Aziz Ganie resident of Sirhama Bijbehara. On checking, they were able to recover 2.5 kilograms of charas powder from the vehicle. He has been arrested and shifted to police station where he remains in custody. Vehicle used in the commission of crime has also been seized.

A case FIR number 57/2021 under relevant sections of law stands registered and investigation into the matter has been taken up.

Similarly in Handwara, officers at a checkpoint established in the jurisdiction of Police Station Vilgam intercepted two individuals riding a Scooty bearing registration

number HR05BA-3742.

They have been identified as Tariq Ahmad War @tiger mama son of Mohd Akbar War resident of Handwara and Gh Nabi Dar son of Mohd Munawar Dar resident of Pazipora. During checking, officers were able to recover 50 grams of Charas and cash Rs.1900/- from their possession. They have been arrested and shifted to police station where they remain in custody. The vehicle used in the commission of crime has also been seized.

Accordingly, case FIR number 21/2021 under relevant sections of law has been registered in Police Station Vilgam and investigation into the matter has been initiated.

Community members are requested to come forward with any information regarding drug peddlers in their neighbourhood. Persons found indulging in drug peddling will be dealt as per law.

Our consistent actions against drug peddlers should reassure the community members that we are making efforts to keep our society free from the scourge of drug menace as reiterated in our community meetings.

Three Meat Shops Seized In Chadoora

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Law enforcing authorities on Saturday seized three meat shops for selling meat on exorbitant rates.

Naib Tehsildar Nagam Gh.Hassan seized three meat shops in village Ronger in Chadoora Tehsil of Central

Kashmir's Budgam district.

"Meat sellers whose meat shops were seized have been identified as Aijaz Ahmad Dar, son of Muhammad Shafi Dar, Abdul Hameed Bhat, son of Ghulam Muhammad Bhat, and Muhammad Rafiq Dar, son of Ali Muhammad Dar. (KNS)

On Duty ZEO Dies Of Heart Attack In Rajouri

Observer News Service

RAJOURI: Incharge Zonal Education Officer Peeri and Principal Higher Secondary School Panihad Rajesh Gupta Saturday died of cardiac arrest while on duty in Rajouri district of Jam-

mu region.

Gupta was in a school in Swari area of Kotranka Subdistrict when he suffered cardiac arrest. He was Principal Higher secondary School Panihad besides in-charge ZEO, Zone Peeri in District Rajouri. (KNS)

Body Of 58-Year-Old Woman Recovered From Poonch River

Observer News Service

POONCH: Body of a 58-year-old woman was recovered from a river in the Chhaktoro area of Poonch district on Saturday.

The body has been identified as Sharifa Bibi, wife of Noor Din, resident of Dana-doi, Mandi.

According to police sources, the body has been taken to the hospital for fulfillment of legal requirements so that the cause of death can be ascertained.

Meanwhile police sources also added that the case under the relevant sections of law has been registered in police station Poonch to ascertain the facts and the further investigation is going on. (CNS)

Illicit Timber Seized In Rafiaband, Bandipora



Observer News Service

BARAMULLA/BANDIPORA: Forest Protection Force Gamma Unit Langate Saturday recovered a huge quantity of illicit timber from Braman forests during a search operation in Rafiaband Range of Langate Forest Division.

Conservator of Forests North Kashmir Irfan Rasool said, "on a specific tip off received regarding dumping of illicit timber, a team of Forest Protection Force from K-10 gamma unit was constituted which included officials of Forest department also. The team was headed by Jehangir Khan Assistant Director FPF Langate. The team rushed to the spot and located illicit timber. On measurement, the quantity was found FIR sawn 54No.s equal to 116.5 cft."

The timber was seized from co.15A Braman block, he added.

A case has been registered and investigations have been taken up, he said.

Meanwhile, Forest Protection Force Saturday seized 14 feet illegal timber in Kanabati area of the district.

Deputy Director Forest Protection Force Bandipora, Eijaz Ahmed said that they have seized illegal 14 feet timber in Kanabati Bandipora area of the district.

"We have started an investigation, though no arrests have been made so far," he said. (KNS)

DIC Bandipora Organises Media Workshop

Observer News Service

BANDIPORA: The District Information Centre (DIC) Bandipora Saturday organised a daylong Media Workshop for journalists at Conference Hall of Mini Secretariat here.

The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Dr Owais Ahmad inaugurated the workshop. Joint Director Planning Intiyaz Ahmad and District Information Officer Jahangeer Akhoun besides other senior officers were also present on the occasion.

During the event, resource persons, Dr Fowzia Afaq and Mohammad Mudasir Shah shared their views about various topics including Development journalism, new media, ethics and fake news.

Terming media as a fourth pillar of democracy, the DC said that media has a great role in dissemination of information regarding various sectors of the government to the people, including centre and state level schemes.

He hailed the media fraternity of the district for playing a positive role in highlighting the developmental activities of the administration. He urged upon them to maintain coordination and bridge the gap between people and administration.

While speaking on the occasion, the Joint Director Planning reiterated the role of developmental journalism in real transformation of the district.

He stated that Bandipora, owing to its remoteness, pose great developmental challenges and therefore the need of the hour is to hold more such workshops, to

strengthen ties of Administration and Media partners to expand outreach, coverage benefits of central and UT run schemes.

He further stated that media partners can help best in IEC, impact Evaluations of schemes, feedback for midterm reappraisals etc.

The District Information Officer (DIO) Bandipora, said that the District Information Centre is an interface between District administration, media and people at large.

He said the responsibility of the department is not only to project, highlight and disseminate the activities of the Government through print, electronic media and new media but also to assist the media persons in day to day coverage besides arranging such workshops for capacity building.

Dr Fowzia Afaq- while delivering her lecture stressed on the greater focus on development journalism in the district. She said the Development Journalism pays sustained attention to the coverage of events dealing with the improvement of the life of people especially education, health and other parameters that help in improving the living standard of the people.

She said with respect to the advancement of print and electronic media, a social obligation of creating awareness among people about various development endeavors at national, regional and local levels is necessary. The media is required to play a decisive role in the process of development in a pluralistic society like India.

Seven-day Training For NSS Programme Officers Concludes At KU

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: A seven-day training programme for officers of National Service Scheme (NSS) from different degree colleges of Jammu and Kashmir concluded at the University of Kashmir on Saturday.

Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Pandurang K Pole was the chief guest at the valedictory session, where Vice-Chancellor Prof Talat Ahmad was a guest of honour and Registrar Dr Nisar Ahmad a special guest.

The training programme, second of its kind this year, was organised by the varsity's NSS, a university statements said.

In his presidential remarks, Pole said the volunteerism generated by the NSS across the country infuses in students a sense of selfless service towards the society apart from leading to their personality development based on the virtues of discipline, compassion and mutual respect.

He urged the NSS team to evolve a mechanism whereby its volunteers would organise year-long camps in villages in their catchment areas to help address social and environmental concerns

specific to each such village.

"Doing so would lead to better diagnosis and understanding of problems at grassroots and their appropriate resolution by way of volunteerism," he said, congratulating the varsity's NSS team for taking up some pressing social issues for discussion during the technical sessions, including drug abuse, disaster management, environment protection and others.

Pole also suggested to the NSS team to provide its list of volunteers to district administrations for hassle-free coordination in times of need.

In his special address, Prof Talat underlined the varsity's commitment to widen its societal outreach to help address important problems like drug abuse and mental health.

He urged the NSS programme officers from colleges to train their students with social service skills that they learned during the seven-day training programme.

"Eventually your learning during this training programme will have to be passed on to your students to widen the ambit of the social service that NSS aims to achieve," he said.

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER I&FC DIVISION SUMBAL (Jal Shaki Deptt)

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDERS
SHORT TERM E-NIT NO-IFC/Sumbal/21 OF 2020-2021

For and on behalf of Lt. Governor, J&K Union Territory, e-tenders are invited (in single cover system) on "item rate basis" from Eligible Registered/ Approved and valid agencies registered with J&K Government for the following works:-

S. No	Name of Work	Appr. cost of Rest. (in Lacs)	Earnest Money	Cost of T.D	Time	Class of Contract	M.H of Account	Position of Funds
01	Repairing of damaged wall of Dumbkhan Pump Station	Rs.1.24	Bidders declaration Form	200.00 indicate Name of work with NIT S.No on TR/E-Challan	10 days	DEE	2702-M&R	Budgetary provision under maintt. Grant 2021-22

POSITION OF AAA = under submission

01. The bidding documents consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, drawings (if any), book of quantities (BoQ) set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/ downloaded from the website www.jktenders.gov.in as per schedule of dates given below.

01	Publishing Date	23/03/2021
02	Download date Starts	From 23/03/2021
03	Bid submission date starts	23/03/2021
04	Bid submission date ends	29/03/2021 upto 04:00 PM
05	Submission of hard copies	Hard copies shall be obtained only from the bidder who is declared as 1 st lowest bidder (L1) at the time of opening of tenders. The cost of tender documents will be collected through e-challan / receipt under head of account 0702. However, the unsuccessful bidders will submit the same separately after the opening of bids online.
06	Date and time of opening bids online	30/03/2021 in the office of Executive Engineer I&FC Division Sumbal (Jal Shakti Department)

- The bids shall be deposited in electronic format on the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in
- The bids uploaded on the Web site up to due date and time will be opened in the Office of the Executive Engineer Irrigation and Flood Control Division Sumbal in presence of the bidders who wish to attend. In case of Holidays or office happening to be closed on the date of opening of the bids, the same will be opened on the next working day at the same time and venue. The complete bidding process will be online.
- Bids must be accompanied with cost of tender document (Non-Refundable/ Non-transferable) to be deposited under MH: 0702-Rev. Misc. in shape of Treasury Challan / receipt or e-Challan (mentioning tender NIT No, Serial No of work and Adv. Cost of work) to be pledged in favour of the Executive Engineer Irrigation and FC Division Sumbal and Bid Security declaration form duly self-attested instead of Bid Security (EMD) as per Finance Department J&K Civil Secretariat Jammu/ Srinagar Circular issued vide No. A/ Misc(2018)-III-895/J, besides the date of instrument must not be prior to date of issuance of this tender Notice. However, in case of compelling circumstances the same shall be obtained from the successful bidder by this department. (Refer Appendix-I).
- Performance Security upto 03% shall have to be furnished by the successful tenderer whenever asked by the department (Refer Appendix-I).
- The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 90 days from the date of opening of Price bids.
- Instructions to bidders regarding e-tendering process.
- Bidders are advised to download bid submission manual from the "Downloads" option as well as from "Bidders Manual Kit" on website www.jktenders.gov.in acquires bid submission process.
- To participate in bidding process, bidders have to get "Digital Signature Certificate (DSC)" as per information Technology Act- 2000. Bidders can get digital certificate from any approved Vendor.
- The bidder has to submit their bids online in electronic format with digital signature. No bid will be accepted in physical form.
- Bids will be opened online as per time schedule mentioned in above at Serial No.1.
- Bidders must ensure to upload scanned copy of all necessary Documents.

- Note: Scan all the documents on 100 dpi with black and white option.
- The department will not be responsible for delay in online submission of tender due to any reason/ reasons.
 - Scanned copy of Bid Security Declaration Form as per Appendix-I, cost of tender documents in shape of e-challan or Treasury challan/ receipt pledged to the Executive Engineer Irrigation and FC Division Sumbal enlistment card duly renewed, G. S. Tin No.,
 - Bidders are advised not to make any change in BOQ (Bill of quantities) contents, in no case they should attempt to create similar manually. The BOQ downloaded should be used for filling the item rate inclusive of all taxes and it should be saved with the same name as it contains.
 - The unit rates and prices shall be quoted by the bidder entirely in Indian Rupees and the rates quoted shall be deemed to include price escalation and all taxes up to completion of the work unless otherwise, specified. 1) Special Conditions:-
 - a) Price escalation and Taxes: The item wise cost / offer be quoted by the bidder entirely in Indian Rupees and the cost quoted shall be deemed to include price escalation and all taxes till completion of work.
 - b) Deduction on account of taxes shall be made from the bills of the contractor on gross amount of the bill of the contractor as per the rates prevailing at that time.
 - c) Bidders are advised to use "My Document" area in their uses on JK tenders e-Tendering portal to store such documents as are required.
 - d) The bidder shall have the experience of having executed such nature of works i.e., water retaining structures.
 - e) Complete Bio Data of contractor/ agency as per Appendix (II).
 - f) Errors/omissions, if any shall be read with SOR 2020.
 - Nothing shall be paid on account of dewatering, diversion or construction of ring bund quantities executed in or under water, making of tracks, ramps and removal of the same after completion even if involved at site. The contractor shall quote their rates accordingly.
 - Draw of Agreement within 10 days after fixation of contract.
 - Production of original documents necessary for verification on declaration of the lowest bidder by or before 07 days of the opening of Price Bid/generation of comparative statement.
 - Material:-
 - a) In case of non-availability of stocks in divisional stores the contractor may purchase the required material of quality and specifications prescribed, to be certified by Engineer in charge after getting non availability certificate from Executive Engineer and shall not be entitled for any type of excessive rates on this account. 13) Qualification criteria for the work and other terms and conditions are as below:-
 - a) All bidders shall include the following information and documents with their bids G.S.T No./ PAN No./Regd. Card duly renewed for the current year.
 - b) If the bidder does not quote rate for any item of the BOQ, such item/items shall be deemed to be part of the overall/ total contract value and no rate shall be allowed for such item/ items.
 - c) The date of start of the work shall be reckoned with in 7th day from the date of issuance of LOI/ contract allotment as the case may be.
 - d) Restoration of work:- On completion of contract the contractor shall be responsible to remove all un-used material and restore all work in its original position at his own cost, any damage if caused during execution of work shall be restored by the contractor at his own cost.
 - e) The contractor has to manage housing for labours, electricity, water storage for material, watch and ward and other facilities at his own.
 - f) Arbitration: The Arbitration and conciliation Act-1996 shall be deemed to apply to the arbitration, disputes, if any regarding reference to Courts shall be subject to the jurisdiction of the J&K Courts only.
 - g) Defect Liability Period (DLP): The contractor should be responsible to maintain the work within a defective liability period of Six (06) months.
 - h) Safety: The contractor shall be responsible for safety of all activities at site of work during execution. i) Termination: The employer may terminate the contract if the contractor causes any fundamental breach of the contract, which shall include stoppage of work without any reason.

No:- I&FC/Sbl/
Dt:- 23/03/2021

DPK-15653/20

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
I&FC Division Sumbal
(Jal Shakti Deptt)

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NO HOLDS BARRED



The doctors Association in Kashmir along with the administration did as much as possible through their efforts. For that we are all thankful to them. However, it is about time that we integrate our Healthcare System by upgrading it and introducing to it new technologies from the current world

The Absent Voices of Development Economics

ARVIND SUBRAMANIAN |
DEVESH KAPUR

The long-standing problem of underrepresentation is being amplified by the growing use of randomized controlled trials (RCTs) to test the effectiveness of specific poverty-reduction interventions in low-income countries. Although the RCT movement deserves immense credit for highlighting the need for evidentiary rigor in development economics, it has had exclusionary consequences

NEW DELHI – The lack of representation of marginalized groups in the corridors of power – political, financial, and cultural – is a growing source of global concern. Knowledge confers power, so who creates it matters. As the Nobel laureate economist Paul Samuelson famously said, “I don’t care who writes a nation’s laws...if I can write its textbooks.”

Development economics focuses on improving the well-being of billions of people in low-income countries, but the Global South is severely underrepresented in the field. Unfortunately, a small number of rich-country institutions have appropriated it, with serious consequences. And the problem appears to be getting worse.

Consider the Journal of Development Economics, a leading outlet for research papers in the field. Neither the journal’s editor nor any of its ten co-editors are based in a developing country. Just two of its 69 associate editors are, with Africa and Asia completely unrepresented.

Then there is the World Bank’s prestigious Annual Bank Conference on Development Economics (ABCDE). The 2019 event celebrated the 75th anniversary of the Bretton Woods conference that established the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, but none of the 77 participants were from an institution located in a developing country. And our analysis of the ABCDE’s three-decade history shows that just 7% of those authoring conference papers have been from developing-world institutions.

The long-standing problem of underrepresentation is being amplified by the growing use of randomized controlled trials (RCTs) to test the effectiveness of specific poverty-reduction interventions in low-income countries. Although the RCT movement deserves immense credit for highlighting the need for evidentiary rigor in development economics, it has had exclusionary consequences.

By virtue of their well-deserved academic reputations, RCT-oriented economists now work at the world’s most prestigious universities and research institutions and serve on the editorial boards of top economics journals. This crucial gatekeeping role gives them agenda-setting power. Two decades ago, for example, there were virtually no RCT-based papers in development economics; in 2020, accord-



ing to our analysis, they accounted for about 40% of the articles in the leading journals.

And exclusion characterizes the RCT movement itself. At the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL), the most influential global center for development-related RCT research, about 5% of the nearly 225 affiliated professors are based in developing countries, with no representation from institutions in East Asia. Moreover, conducting RCTs is expensive, which means that poverty-reduction research – and funding for it – is increasingly concentrated in the richest universities (J-PAL was established at MIT).

Indeed, the cost of carrying out RCTs can run into millions of dollars per paper, making it difficult for developing-country researchers to study their own countries without genuflecting to wealthy institutions’ academic orthodoxies. If these researchers cannot do RCT-based studies, they have little chance of getting published in leading journals, and risk being consigned to second-class status. Even on a generous interpretation of authorship, our analysis suggests that developing-country institutions accounted for less than 10% of RCT-based papers in the top six economics journals in 2020.

A subtler cost concerns prioritization of research. There is an inherent power imbalance between relatively weak developing-country governments and reputationally and finan-

cially powerful researchers, as well as tension between what policymakers in lower-income economies consider important and what academics deem worthy of publication in top journals. These factors surely privilege research that yields high private returns to researchers based in rich countries but meager public returns to developing-country decision-makers.

True, scholars from developing countries in these elite institutions make important contributions to development economics. But the incentives and priorities of the institutional cultures they inhabit play a powerful role.

The final cost relates to the type of knowledge that is ignored. Several highly successful economies – including South Korea, Taiwan, China, Vietnam, Mauritius, and Botswana – did not rely on RCTs to change their destinies and lift their large populations out of poverty. Yet, academics from these countries generally do not sit on the editorial boards of major journals or participate prominently in development economists’ conferences and seminars – an omission that is particularly telling in the case of China, with its historically unprecedented economic transformation. It is as if these countries’ development successes have no lessons to offer.

To preempt the Global North’s monopoly of knowledge creation in development economics requires, first,

recognizing that the Global South has ceded dominance as much as the North’s elite institutions have appropriated it. Many developing countries have severely undermined their own universities and knowledge-production systems both through lack of funding and political interference, with the latter being especially pernicious in the social sciences. Unless they remedy this, they will continue to suffer the consequences of the global imbalance.

We also must heed the novelist Kazuo Ishiguro’s 2017 Nobel lecture, in which he urged a broadening of “our common literary world to include many more voices from beyond our comfort zones of the elite first-world cultures.” That means searching “more energetically to discover the gems from what remain today unknown literary cultures, whether the writers live in far-away countries or within our own communities,” while taking “great care not to set too narrowly or conservatively our definitions of what constitutes good literature.”

Substitute “development economics” for “literature,” and Ishiguro’s injunction yields a constructive agenda of corrective action for intellectuals in the Global North. It also suggests that diversity and broader representation are the best safeguards against intellectual narrowness resulting from elite capture.

Project Syndicate

Internet of Bodies (IoB) Future of Healthcare & Medical Technology



KHALID MUSTAFA

Jammu and Kashmir is almost always in the news for one reason or another. Apart from the obvious political headlines, J&K was also in the news because of covid-19. As the world struggled with covid-19 pandemic, J&K faced a peculiar situation due to its poor health infrastructure. Nonetheless, all sections of society did a commendable job in keeping covid under control and preventing the loss of life as much as possible. The doctors Association in Kashmir along with the administration did as much

as possible through their efforts. For that we are all thankful to them. However, it is about time that we integrate our Healthcare System by upgrading it and introducing to it new technologies from the current world.

We’ve all heard of the Internet of Things, a network of products ranging from refrigerators to cars to industrial control systems that are connected to the internet. Internet of Bodies (IoB) the outcome of the Internet of Things (IoT) is broadly helping the healthcare system and every individual to live life with ease by managing the human body in terms of technology. The Internet of Bodies connects the human body to a network of internet run devices.

The use of IoB can be independent or by the health care heroes (doctors) to monitor, report and enhance the health system of the human body. The internet of Bodies (IoB) are broadly classified into three categories or in some cases we can say three generations – Body Internal, Body External and Body embedded. The Body Internal model of IoB is

The Internet of Bodies is a small part or even the offspring of the Internet of Things. Much like it, there remains the challenge of data and information breach as we have already witnessed many excessive distributed denial of service (DDoS) attacks and other cyber-attacks on IoT’s to exploit the data and gather information

the category, in which the individual or patient is interacting with the technology environment or we can say internet or our healthcare system by having an installed device inside the human body. Body External model or generation of



IoB signifies the model where the device is installed external to the body for certain usage viz. Apple watches and other smart bands from various OEM’s for tracking blood pressure, heart rate etc which can later be used for proper

health tracking and monitoring purposes. Last one under this classifications are Body Embedded, in which the devices are embedded under the skin by health care professionals during a number of health situations.

Sometimes we go through and cherish amazing experiences which just happen without proper planning and preparation. When we enroute on unknown and unfamiliar journeys, there is always something we get in return. Life is not predetermined. Poignant events are also part of life. They bring forth pain and pity but with the due course of time they can also reform us. Life doesn't cease to exist due to the bad experiences. We move on and rebuild ourselves with the remarkable experiences. They are always worth a try. When we remember those truly profound and fulfilling moments, we relive and reform our new affirmations, so as to bring out our best. We reflect on them and rediscover ourselves. Those memories become motivations for us to set even much bigger goals on our bucket list. They inspire and spur us into action. We cannot enjoy these experiences, if we remain cocooned in our comfort zones.

We might have to slow down due to the fateful events of life but we cannot afford to remain stuck there. We have to find ways to release our stress and anxieties from the self loathing and self imprisonment. Life becomes beautiful and amazing when we dare to explore our inner strength and step out to enjoy the abounding beauty of nature. It needs keen observation and understanding to find natural beauty in different forms. I stayed in UAE for more than 10 years and used to trek barren hills of Fujairah and Khorfakhan but to a very small extent I could connect myself with its landscape. There was something missing and everything looked so artificial. I always wanted to spend rest of my life in Kashmir and remain deeply connected with my roots. I wished to explore and enjoy the mesmerizing beauty of our veritable paradise.

Allah SWT has His own plans and unique ways to test our intentions. There came a day when I met an accident and had to be bed ridden for more than two years. My life was thrown out of gear. It was a roller coaster ride for me. I got entangled in worrying state of affairs but I tried my best to retreat into my shell. Days metamorphosed into months, then into years and I was clueless about my fate. Sedentary lifestyle took a heavy toll on my health. I put on so much of weight and worries but I never budged before the adverse circumstances. I always have a firm faith in Allah and handed over my deep concerns to Him only. I slowly and steadily started collecting and composing myself.

Once again, it was His mercy and my mindset that I could get back on my feet. It was an uphill task ahead to be back on the track. A lot of things changed for me. I didn't remain the same person who used to drive at 200 Km/Hr but I didn't give up to explore

An Impromptu Trip to Mt. Mahadev

RIYAZ KAZMI



what nature has to offer me. I don't carry my fears and insecurities over my shoulders and let them crush my spirits. I adeptly adopted the new lifestyle and bore with the limitations. To be honest, my injuries were blessing in a disguise. I am now settled in Kashmir and enjoying its mundane beauty. In nature, I have found myself and my mental peace. Here I go to share one of my impromptu trekking experience which will always remain the most cherished and challenging adventure of my life.

My Maiden Trip to Mighty Mahadev

Mount Mahadev is the pinnacle peak of Zabarwan range located at an elevation of 3966 Mtrs. It is located in the vicinity of Dachigam National Park. Given its prominent presence and highest point of Srinagar city, it grabs the attention of everyone. It radiates its beauty far and wide.

On 26th July 2020, around 10 pm, I got a call from my cousin brother Humayun Khan from Karan Nagar who invited me for a trekking trip to Mount Mahadev. My beatitude was spaked and in one go, I agreed to join him. Since it

We were surprised when two kids from the Bakerwal Community aged 12 and 9 years agreed to show us the track leading to Mahadev. It was time consuming and difficult to walk on the long stretch of slippery rocks. We moved very carefully so as to avoid being caught in the wrong foot. Our two little frontline soldiers did not leave us despite many hurdles

was too late, he told me not to bring any eatables. He assured me that they had planned and arranged everything including the guide, Tea, Tandoori chickens and Tetra pack juices for the trip. I

was excited and flying higher above the skies. More than anything else I was encouraged to join them as my great relish for the delicious food. I couldn't sleep a wink and was very much restless. At the break of dawn, Humayun picked me. We along with Suhail Khan, Shahid Sheikh and Obaid from Street Fighters group headed towards our destination. At 6.15 a.m we reached Dardehkhovor near Scholars school, there I was surprised and sad to know that neither the guide nor the friend who promised us to bring Tandoori chickens had turned up. We hardly carried any food items in our backpacks except water bottles, Black tea, Butter and Tandoori Rotis.

We were clueless about the serpentine trail but not demotivated to tread this path. At around 6.45 a.m we enroute on our journey from Gorrripador. To our surprise and big relief, just after covering a distance of few Kilometers, we met a Bakerwal shepherd, who was also heading towards Lidwas for joining his folks. He was very agile. He outstripped us. It seemed as if he was flying at Kannipather in his 'Coaster shoes'. We couldn't keep a

pace with him but he remained very steadfast, supportive and sober with us. He showed us every captivating spot on the way. The Bakkerwal family at Bobjan served us Nun Chai. The tea break recharged all of us. It gave us enough energy and motivation to cover the rest of the journey at a decent speed. We were brimming with happiness and awestruck by the sublime beauty of Bobjan. We were stunned by the savageness of Yarribouni. After rigorous hiking, we finally reached Lidwas at 11.30 a.m. We retrieved the joy of togetherness with the guide and celebrated this little victory by clicking the group photographs. We had a tea there and also rested for half an hour. Afterwards we were all alone. We were astonished to see the majestic beauty of Astanmargi meadow. The vastness of blue sky and panoramic view of green pastures were so soul soothing that each one of us tried to absorb its serenity. We didn't want to miss anything so walked at snails pace till we reached at Hammipather at around 12.30 pm. There we rested for 15 minutes as fog had enveloped all the surroundings.

We were surprised when two kids from the Bakkerwal community, aged 12 and 9 years agreed to show us the track leading to Mahadev. It was time consuming and difficult to walk on the long stretch of slippery rocks. We moved very carefully so as to avoid being caught in the wrong foot. Our two little frontline soldiers did not leave us despite many hurdles. We reached the top at around 1.30 pm. Our joys knew no bounds when we saw the breathtaking beauty swathed by clouds. From the Mahadev, the eye catching beauty of Sheen Mean, Sunset peak, Kolahai Mountain, Brahamsaki, Trattakutti was just breathtaking. It was an amazing view and exhilarating experience. We felt engrossed and short of words to express our jubilation. Over all it was an out of world experience. On our return to Hammipather, one Bakkerwal family served us lunch. We felt touched by their simplicity and hospitality. We then left with utmost gratitude and quickly embarked on our return journey.

We summited Mt. Mahadev within a day. The uphill climb and down hill descend took us almost 12 hours covering almost 33 Kilometers which summed up to 43,500 footsteps. We were dead tired but felt victorious when we safely returned back at around 7.30 p.m. We didn't do everything with perfect aplomb. This adventure was worth an effort. We are the only one responsible for picking ourselves up when we fall. We could or only those can do it who can shore up their courage with indomitable faith, fearless attitude and strong will power.

The Author is senior Columnist and trekking member of Crampon Adventures

How Reading Changed My Life

ANEKA AHMAD

Last year, the pandemic left me confined between the walls of my home, with no physical social interaction with my friends. I was exasperated. With no work to tend to, I spent all my days in boredom and thinking of the depressing situation resulting from the pandemic. I finally decided to find solace in reading books.

I vividly remember the first time I met Charles Dickens in Great Expectations, how the book stirred up a whirlwind of emotions inside me. When

I couldn't go anywhere, I could travel to London, Walworth and the countryside. When I was restricted by circumstances to not meet anyone, I met Pip and Estella.

How, in Little Women, I had the pleasure of living with Meg, Amy, Jo and Beth in New England, witnessing the struggles of Jo in becoming an independent woman and a writer, and the hardships that came with it.

Then I had the chance to meet Arundhati Roy and the Bronte sisters. Later on, I also met Emily Dickinson and Oscar Wilde – and then I finally met the great Shakespeare.

While staying at home, I met so many people who were incomparable to those I could meet in reality. The fragile intangibility of the people and places I encountered, made me more drawn to fiction, far from the tribulations of the real world. All these experiences changed my life during the pandemic.

Here is a look at how reading improves our lives and the impact it made on me, changing me forever, and for the better.

Gives a new perspective

Reading gave me an unaccustomed perspective in life, rendered unconventional ideas, allowed me to hear unexplored voices, know visionary opinions and gain an understanding of new concepts.

Reading set my soul free, untethered and unfettered by the limitations that ceased to exist once I lost myself between the pages of a book, making me realise that the world is nothing but a place of infinite possibilities. Perceiving the world through a protagonist's eyes and empathising with his struggles, gave me a profound insight of how to approach my decisions.

Every revolution that has occurred in history had an impact on the literature of the time. Or maybe it was literature that influenced those events? The world of books and the world we live in are a reflection of one another, both taking inspiration from each other in their own way.

Reading made me look at the world in a new way, since I had had the privilege to go inside the



Reading set my soul free, untethered and unfettered by the limitations that ceased to exist once I lost myself between the pages of a book, making me realise that the world is nothing but a place of infinite possibilities

minds of so many great writers through their books, and learn to see things from their points of view.

Cultivates imagination and creativity

Our imagination is what makes us humans, not just flesh, bones and blood. It is the sheer tendency to dream of everything you could be and you couldn't be, all at once. Without imagination, we would be just as inanimate as the things around us. Reading stimulates our brain, boosting emotional intelligence as well as awareness.

Reading ignites our imagination to come up with imaginary scenarios of our own. Sometimes we start living the life of the protagonist we are reading about and get affected by the things they go through in the story.

Makes you smarter

An avid reader is familiar with history and significant events of the past, which otherwise would have been ignored or not read by the person. Hence

being fully aware and always having an abundance of knowledge makes you the smarter one in the room.

Scientists have proven that reading boosts cognitive function, thereby making us smarter. When we age, our brain function slows down a bit, therefore, doctors recommend regular reading to keep the mind and memory sharp. Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body, important for its fitness.

Instils empathy and sympathy

Reading novels gave me a more passionate understanding of human affairs, which are otherwise too intricate to be understood by science or logic.

I felt the harrowing ordeal people of Afghanistan experienced when I read Khaled Hosseini's Kite Runner and A Thousand Splendid Suns. The narrator of the author's pain is the reader's affliction.

George Martin has said, "A reader lives a thousand lives before he dies."

Reading gave me a new life, a meaningful one. Similarly, the infamous holocaust in 1941, the loss of

numerous lives, the bereaved families and the mass slaughter as painful as it seems in the news, made it even more intense when I read Ludwig's Room by Alois Hotschnig.

Just like that, I came to know of various incidents and tragedies in history – the systematic oppression, the inherent racism in America, the nuclear bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki 1945, the nuclear disaster of Chernobyl 1986, September 11 attacks; the exploitation of rights of indigenous people and the list goes on and on.

Furthermore, all the social issues encompassing the contemporary world, such as gender inequality, racial discrimination, civil rights, climate change, access to justice and health care facilities, especially in times of coronavirus, poverty, etc. become more real to people who have nothing to do with it when they read about it. This leads to the generating empathy and understanding of things that are far removed from our own circumstances but which, as humans, we need to be aware of to be more understanding of the world around us.

Opens mind

Reading broadens our mind and makes us more receptive to ideas and change. A reader embraces possibilities, adjustments and uncertainties more willingly. Reading the vast narratives of struggles and adversities and how people overcame it, makes one accept and tackle the challenges unreluctantly.

Reading books of different backgrounds and genres makes you aware of the cultural perception that exists in this world. How traditions and customs make culture, and how culture makes people. An excellent, short Ted Talk by Lisa Bu summarises it brilliantly.

Enriches vocabulary

While reading you will stumble upon many words or phrases which you don't know the meaning of, leading you to search the meaning of that word. Because of this, now you become acquainted with a new word which you can use in your writing or while speaking.

Having a vast assortment of words will help you express your feelings in a more precise and clear manner. The words you befriend during reading will facilitate you academically while writing an essay, or even during a speech.

I want you too, to start with reading one book, one page or one paragraph, and watch how your life becomes more meaningful, content and open to thousand possibilities.

Dawn

Broken heart and stressed brain are connected, says new study



Agencies

Heighted activity in the brain, caused by stressful events, is linked to the risk of developing a rare and sometimes fatal heart condition called Takotsubo syndrome (TTS), also known as 'broken heart' syndrome, according to new research from the European Society of Cardiology.

The research was published in the European Heart Journal.

The study found that the greater the activity in nerve cells in the amygdala region of the brain, the sooner the condition known as Takotsubo syndrome (TTS) can develop. The researchers suggest that interventions to lower this stress-related brain activity could help to reduce the risk of developing TTS; these could include drug treatments or techniques for lowering stress.

TTS, also known as "broken heart" syndrome, is characterised by a sudden temporary weakening of the heart muscles that causes the left ventricle of the heart to balloon out at the bottom while the neck remains narrow, creating a shape resembling a Japanese octopus trap, from which it gets its name.

Since this relatively rare condition was first described in 1990, evidence has

suggested that it is typically triggered by episodes of severe emotional distress, such as grief, anger or fear, or reactions to happy or joyful events. Patients develop chest pains and breathlessness, and it can lead to heart attacks and death. TTS is more common in women with only 10% of cases occurring in men.*

The amygdala is the part of the brain that controls emotions, motivation, learning and memory. It is also involved in the control of the autonomic nervous system and regulating heart function.

"The study suggests that the increased stress-associated neurobiological activity in the amygdala, which is present years before TTS occurs, may play an important role in its development and may predict the timing of the syndrome.

It may prime an individual for a heightened acute stress response that culminates in TTS," said Dr Ahmed Tawakol, co-director of the Cardiovascular Imaging Research Center at Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School (Boston, USA), who led the study.

"We also identified a significant relationship between stress-associated brain activity and bone marrow activity in these individuals. Together, the findings provide insights into a potential mechanism that may contrib-

ute to the 'heart-brain connection'."

In the first study to look at brain scans using F-fluorodeoxyglucose positron emission tomography/computed tomography (PET-CT) to assess brain activity before TTS develops, Dr Tawakol and colleagues analysed data on 104 people with an average age of 68 years, 72% of whom were women.

The patients had undergone scans at Massachusetts General Hospital (Boston, USA) between 2005 and 2019. Most of them had the scans to see if they had cancer and the scans also assessed the activity of blood cells in bone marrow. The researchers matched 41 people who went on to develop TTS between six months and five years after the scan with 63 who did not. The interval between the scan, the onset of TTS, last follow-up or death was an average (median) of 2.5 years for the 104 patients.

Dr Tawakol said: "Areas of the brain that have higher metabolic activity tend to be in greater use. Hence, higher activity in the stress-associated tissues of the brain suggests that the individual has a more active response to stress. Similarly, higher activity in the bone marrow reflects greater bone marrow metabolism. The PET/CT scans produce images that reflect the distribution of glucose metabolism. The brain images thereby yield a map of brain meta-

bolic activity: the higher the values, the greater the activity in those brain regions."

The researchers found that people who went on to develop TTS had higher stress-related amygdalar activity on initial scanning (measured as a ratio of amygdalar activity to activity of brain regions that counter stress) compared to individuals who did not subsequently develop TTS.

Further, the higher the amygdalar signal, the greater the risk of developing TTS. Among the 41 patients who developed TTS, the average interval between the scan and TTS was 0.9 months, whereas among the control group of 63 patients, the average interval between the scan and last follow-up or death was 2.9 years.

"It was notable that among the 41 patients who developed TTS, the top 15% with the very highest amygdalar activity developed TTS within a year of imaging, while those with less elevated activity developed TTS several years later," said Dr Tawakol.

He said future studies should investigate whether reducing stress-related brain activity could decrease the chances of TTS recurring among patients who have experienced TTS previously.

"These findings add to evidence of the adverse effect of stress-related biology on the cardiovascular system. Findings such

as these underscore the need for more study into the impact of stress reduction or drug interventions targeting these brain regions on heart health.

In the meantime, when encountering a patient with high chronic stress, clinicians could reasonably consider the possibility that alleviation of stress might result in benefits to the cardiovascular system."

The process by which stress induces TTS is not well understood but may involve a multi-organ mechanism starting with activation of the stress-sensitive tissues of the brain. This brain activity in turn triggers several further events, including release of stress hormones, activation of the sympathetic nervous system and release of inflammatory cells, each of which can contribute to the development of TTS.

Limitations of the study include that it was a single-centre, retrospective study that consisted mainly of patients with a diagnosis of cancer, a known TTS risk factor, which may limit the generalisability of the findings.

The researchers were unable to measure instantaneous changes in brain activity in response to a stressful event that led to TTS and so cannot directly show a causal relationship. Nor were they able to measure changes in activity in other regions of the brain, which could also play a role.

Narcissism is driven by insecurity: Study

Agencies

Ever thought what motivates narcissism? It is driven by insecurity and not an inflated sense of self, finds a new study.

The findings suggest that genuine narcissists are insecure and are best described by the vulnerable narcissism subtype, whereas grandiose narcissism might be better understood as a manifestation of psychopathy.

"More specifically, the results suggest that narcissism is better understood as a compensatory adaptation to overcome and cover up low self-worth," said lead author Mary Kowalchuk from the New York University.

"Narcissists are insecure, and they cope with these insecurities by flexing. This makes others like

them less in the long run, thus further aggravating their insecurities, which then leads to a vicious cycle of flexing behaviours," Kowalchuk added.

For the study, published in the journal Personality and Individual Differences, the team surveyed nearly 300 participants. They examined Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD), conceptualised as excessive self-love and consisting of two subtypes, known as grandiose and vulnerable narcissism.

A related affliction, psychopathy, is also characterized by a grandiose sense of self. They sought to refine the understanding of how these conditions relate.

To do so, they designed a novel measure, called PRISN (Performative Refinement to soothe Insecurities about Sophistication), which

produced FLEX (perFormative self-Elevation index). FLEX captures insecurity-driven self-conceptualizations that are manifested as impression management, leading to self-elevating tendencies.

The PRISN scale includes commonly used measures to investigate social desirability ("No matter who I am talking to I am a good listener"), self-esteem ("On the whole, I am satisfied with myself"), and psychopathy ("I tend to lack remorse").

FLEX was shown to be made up of four components: impression management ("I am likely to show off if I get the chance"), the need for social validation ("It matters that I am seen at important events"), self-elevation ("I have exquisite taste"), and social dominance ("I like knowing more than other people").

Government of Jammu and Kashmir

Directorate of Handicrafts & Handloom, Kashmir Kashmir Haat, Exhibition Grounds Srinagar

Email:dir.handicraft@jk.gov.in

Corrigendum

Due to the rising cases of Covid, the Department has decided to hold the pre-bid meeting through online mode (ZOOM) on 29-03-2021 at 11.30 hrs instead of Institute of Hotel Management RajBagh Srinagar.

The meeting id is as under.

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://zoom.us/j/97439552636?pwd=alZZYk5xdWlUOUUpNlIiMVhZsVituUT09>

Meeting ID: 974 3955 2636
Passcode: 7EFEES

No: DHHK/P&E/59/21

Dated: 27. 03.2021.

DIPK-15684/20

Sd/-

Publicity cum Exhibition Officer
Handicrafts & Handloom Department

STATE ELECTION COMMISSION UT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR NIRVACHAN BHAWAN, RAIL HEAD COMPLEX, JAMMU

Corrigendum to Notificaton No: EA/Pyt/2020/09 Dated 13.11.2020.

In partial modification to Notification No. EA/Pyt/2020/09 dated 13.11.2020 read with corrigendum No: 53/SEC/Pyt/2020 dated 04.03.2021 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 36 of Jammu & Kashmir Panchayati Raj Act, 1989, read alongwith Rule 108-G of the Jammu & Kashmir Panchayati Raj Rules, 1996, it is hereby ordered that the date appearing at clause (h) i.e "the date before which the election shall be completed", of the said Notification shall be deemed to have been further extended to 30th of April, 2021 in respect of District Development Council, Constituency Drugmulla appearing at S. No. 10 of the Annexure to the said Notification, in view of deferring of counting of votes in the DDC Constituency Drugmulla, Kupwara vide Election Authority communication No. 53/SEC/Pyt/2020/1868 dated 22.12.2020 addressed to District Panchayat Election Officer, Kupwara.

DIPK-NB-6724/20

Sd/-
K.K. Sharma, IAS (Retd.)
State Election Commissioner
Election Authority
J&K Panchayati Raj Act, 1989
Dated: 26.03.2021

No: 53/SEC/Pyt/2020

STATE ELECTION COMMISSION UT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR NIRVACHAN BHAWAN, RAIL HEAD COMPLEX, JAMMU

Corrigendum to Notificaton No: EA/Pyt/2020/14 Dated 23.11.2020.

In partial modification to Notification No. EA/Pyt/2020/14 dated 23.11.2020 read with corrigendum No: 54/SEC/Pyt/2020 dated 04.03.2021 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 36 of Jammu & Kashmir Panchayati Raj Act, 1989, read alongwith Rule 108-G of the Jammu & Kashmir Panchayati Raj Rules, 1996, it is hereby ordered that the date appearing at clause (h) i.e "the date before which the election shall be completed", of the said Notification shall be deemed to have been further extended to 30th of April, 2021 in respect of District Development Council, Constituency Hajin-A appearing at S. No. 10 of the Annexure to the said Notification, in view of deferring of counting of votes in the DDC Constituency Hajin-A vide Election Authority communication No. 54/SEC/Pyt/2020/1867 dated 22.12.2020 addressed to District Panchayat Election Officer, Bandipora.

DIPK-NB-6722/20

Sd/-
K.K. Sharma, IAS (Retd.)
State Election Commissioner
Election Authority
J&K Panchayati Raj Act, 1989
Dated: 26.03.2021

No: 54/SEC/Pyt/2020

Petrol, Diesel Remain Static For 2nd Straight Day

Agenceis

MUMBAI: In the national capital, petrol was sold for Rs 90.78 per litre. Price of the fuel in Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata was at Rs 97.19, Rs 92.77 and Rs 90.98 per litre, respectively on Saturday.

Diesel prices in Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata were at Rs 81.10, Rs 88.20, Rs 86.10 and Rs 83.98 per litre, respectively.

Fuel prices which impact the common man's budget to a great extent have been largely unchanged ahead of the state elections.

In fact, prices declined on Wednesday and Thursday after a long time amid the pandemic.

Oil marketing companies have

been maintaining restraint off late despite surging crude oil prices. The May contract of Brent crude on the Intercontinental Exchange is around \$64.5 per barrel.

Retail fuel prices although have not been increased for around a month now, they are already around record high levels making a hole in the pockets of the common man.

The petrol and diesel prices have increased 26 times in 2021 with the two auto fuels increasing by Rs 7.46 and Rs 7.60 per litre respectively so far this year.

Officials in public sector oil companies said that retail prices may rise again if crude and product prices pick up.

PM Invites 50 Bangladeshi Entrepreneurs To Visit India, Announces Scholarships



Press Trust of India

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday invited 50 Bangladeshi entrepreneurs to visit India to connect with the country's start-up and innovation eco-system and meet its venture capitalists and announced 'Swarna Jayanti' scholarships to mark 50 years of Indo-Bangla ties.

Addressing Bangladesh's 50th Independence Day anniversary at the National Parade Square, Modi said: "It is a happy coincidence that the 50th anniversary of Bangladesh's liberation and the milestone of the 75th year of India's independence have arrived together."

"For both of our countries, in the 21st Century, our journey over the next 25 years, will be very important. We have a common heritage, we have common development also. We have common goals, and we have common challenges too," he said.

Modi said the 50 Bangladeshi entrepreneurs could learn from their Indian counterparts and Indian businessmen could also learn from

their Bangladeshi counterparts.

Modi, who arrived in Dhaka this morning on a two-day visit, said both the countries have the power of democracy and a clear vision for moving forward.

"To strengthen India-Bangladesh relations, there is an equal need to better connect the youth of the two countries. On the occasion of 50 years of India-Bangladesh relations, I would like to invite 50 entrepreneurs from Bangladesh to India," Modi said.

"Come to India, meet venture capitalists, connect with our start-up and innovation ecosystem. We will also learn from them, they will also get an opportunity to learn," he said.

"Along with this, I am also announcing Subarna Jayanti scholarships for the youth of Bangladesh," he said.

Modi said the two nations share similar possibilities in the area of trade and development.

"I am pleased that under Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's able leadership, Bangladesh is showing its dynamism to the world," Modi said.

Facebook Services Restricted In Bangladesh Amid Pm Modi's Visit

Agenceis

Social network Facebook and its messaging app have been down in Bangladesh since Friday, the U.S. tech giant said on Saturday, as protesters oppose Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's two day visit to the country.

Four people were killed on Friday after police opened fire after protesters allegedly attacked a police station in the Bangladeshi city of Chittagong during a demonstration against Modi's visit.

"We're aware that our services have been restricted in Bangladesh," Facebook said in a statement. "We're working to understand more and hope to have full access restored as soon as possible."

The government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina did not comment if it had blocked Facebook

and its messenger, but it has previously used internet shutdowns as a tool to curb the spread of protests.

Facebook also said it had serious concerns about the manner in which it was being restricted in Bangladesh at a time when effective communication was necessary to tackle the coronavirus pandemic.

Local headline group Hefazate-Islam, meaning protection of Islam, has called for a nationwide strike on Sunday to protest the Chittagong killings. Hefazat and its supporters accuse Modi of alienating minority Muslims in India.

Modi landed in Dhaka on Friday for a two-day visit, his first international trip since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic last year, to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the nation's independence.

He is due to hold formal talks with Hasina on Saturday.

"Technical Or Human Errors" Likely Behind Suez Canal Blockage: Official



The MV Ever Given has been wedged diagonally across the span of the Suez canal since Tuesday.

Agenceis

SUEZ: Egypt's Suez Canal Authority chief said Saturday that strong wind was not the main reason for the grounding of the MV Ever Given cargo ship in the waterway.

"Strong winds and weather factors were not the main reasons for the ship's grounding, there may have been technical or human errors," Osama Rabie said at a press conference in Suez.

"All of these factors will become apparent in the investigation," he added.

Asked when the ship could be afloat again, he suggested it was possible "today or tomorrow, depending on the ship's responsiveness to the tides."

The MV Ever Given, which is

longer than four football fields, has been wedged diagonally across the canal since Tuesday, blocking one of the world's most vital waterways in both directions.

The canal authority chief said over 300 vessels are now treading water at either end of the canal, which links the Mediterranean and the Red Sea.

Addressing journalists in Suez, Rabie outlined Egypt's efforts with tugboats and excavators to free the bow and propellers of mega-ship in order to reopen the canal.

Rabie noted that on 10.30 pm Friday the propellers had been able to spin, although not at full speed.

However they were jammed again due to the changing tide, he said, adding that rescuers had had to

resort to excavators again overnight to continue the dredging process.

"The type of soil we're dealing with is very difficult to manage, as are the tides which affect the vessel due to its size and its cargo load," he added.

Rabie also noted that the blockage had caused "no fatalities or pollution". The ship's grounding is holding up some \$9.6 billion worth of cargo each day between Asia and Europe, according to Lloyd's List data.

Rabie estimated that Egypt is losing some \$12-14 million in revenue from the canal for each day it is closed. The United States also said it was ready to send support, including a team of US Navy experts.

Rabie thanked the US for its support along with China and the United Arab Emirates.

US Proposes Action Against India's Equalisation Levy

Agenceis

NEW DELHI: The other countries under investigation included Italy, Turkey, UK, Spain and Austria.

A statement from the office of the USTR said that in January it was found that digital service taxes (DST) adopted by Austria, India, Italy, Spain, Turkey, and the United Kingdom were subject to action under Section 301 because they discriminated against US digital companies, were inconsistent with the principles of international taxation, and burdened US companies.

USTR is proceeding with the public notice and comment process on possible trade actions to preserve procedural options before the conclusion of the statutory one-year time period for completing the investigations.

"The United States is committed to working with its trading partners to resolve its concerns with digital services taxes, and to addressing broader issues of international taxation," said Ambassador Katherine Tai.

"The United States remains committed to reaching an international consensus through the OECD process on international tax issues. However, until such a consensus is reached, we will maintain our options under the Section 301 process, including, if necessary, the imposition of tariffs."

Among the proposed actions, the Joe Biden administration has proposed to impose retaliatory tariffs up to 25 per cent on around 40



Indian products including shrimps, basmati rice, gold and silver items.

The Government of India will examine the proposed action with the stakeholders concerned and would take suitable measures keeping its trade and commercial interest of the country and overall interest of its people, according to official sources.

With regard to India, the investigation was targeted on the 2 per cent equalisation levy (EL) levied by India on e-commerce supply of services. The investigation included whether the EL discriminated against US companies, was applied retrospectively, and diverged from US or international tax norms due to its applicability on entities not resident in India.

The U.S. requested for bilateral consultations in this matter, and India submitted its comments to the USTR on 15 July 2020, participated in the bilateral consultation

held on 5 Nov 2020.

India made a strong case that the levy is not discriminatory and only seeks to ensure a level-playing field with respect to e-commerce activities undertaken by entities with permanent establishment in India.

It also clarified that the equalisation levy was applied only prospectively, and has no extra-territorial application, since it is based on sales occurring in the territory of India through digital means.

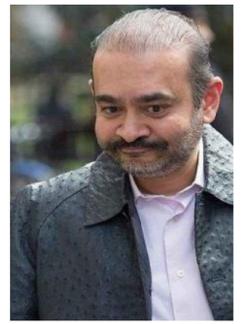
India based e-commerce operators are already subject to taxes in India for revenue generated from Indian market. However, in the absence of the levy, non-resident e-commerce operators, not having any permanent establishment in India but with significant economic presence, are not required to pay taxes in respect of the consideration received in the e-commerce supply or services made in the Indian market.

CBI In Court To Get Nirav's Brother Extradited From US in PNB case

Agenceis

MUMBAI: After a UK court gave its nod to the extradition of fugitive diamond merchant Nirav Modi, the Indian government will seek to extradite his brother Nehal Modi from the US to face legal proceedings in the Rs 6,498 crore alleged Punjab National Bank (PNB) fraud case.

The CBI on Friday initiated proceedings before the special court submitting that Nehal, a Belgian national, was arrested in December in the US for his alleged involvement in another criminal case there. The investigating agency submitted an "affidavit of extradition request of the Government of the Republic of India to the Government of the United States of America for the extradition of Nehal Modi" before special CBI judge VC Barde.



The CBI said that Nehal did not join the probe despite summons and a non-bailable warrant issued against him. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) had requested the Interpol to issue a Red Corner Notice against Nehal.

AEPC Urges Government To Put Restrictions On Cotton Yarn Exports



Agenceis

NEW DELHI: The Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEPC) on Saturday urged the government to impose restrictions on exports of cotton yarn in order to curb prices and increase supply for domestic manufacturers.

AEPC chairman A Sakthivel said despite several efforts by the government to reduce the price of cotton yarn, it has consistently increased in the last four months and was affecting the entire value chain.

"We request immediate intervention to increase the supply of yarn to domestic manufacturers. We suggest that quantitative restrictions should be imposed on exports of cotton yarn, specifically on cotton yarn of 26 counts and above," he said.

Sakthivel further said the Cotton Corporation of India (CCI) has reduced the price of cotton for small mill owners but this did not result in reduction of cotton yarn prices.

"The rate of increase in yarn prices far exceeds that of cot-

ton prices. The steep increase in prices and unpredictability in availability of yarn means that garment exporters cannot honour commitments they made to their customers.

"This has also affected handloom and powerloom weavers badly. Looms have stopped production. Due to this, the domestic industry has also got affected adversely," he added.

The AEPC chairman said the sector would be hit hard if yarn is exported at the cost of domestic and export-oriented manufacturing industry.

"We also suggest that export duty should be levied on exports of cotton yarn. This will result in a sharp decline in domestic yarn prices and an increase in value addition and employment in the country."

"This will also help in increasing garment exports. And, it will result in only normal profits accruing to yarn spinners, not the super normal profit owing to the profiteering currently happening," Sakthivel said.

Curtains Not Down On Tata-Mistry Feud Yet



Agenceis

The thumb rule in bargaining is to start the bid at half the asking price. Most Indians excel at it, but sparring partners Tata Sons and Shapoorji Pallonji Group are about to find themselves in a similar situation. On the block is SP Group's contentious 18.4 per cent stake in Tata Sons, which it values at Rs 1.75 lakh crore.

However, the Tatas peg it at less than half at Rs 70,000-80,000 crore. Both parties are now expected to start negotiations, but the manner in which they'll arrive at a mutually-acceptable price will be closely watched.

The stake sale is critical for both companies to reduce debt. While SP Group with a debt of about Rs 23,000 crore has been scouting for funds since last year, Tata Sons with a debt of Rs 1.96 lakh crore (all group firms) must put the matter to rest to focus on growth.

The Supreme Court's (SC) verdict on Friday was in favour of Tata Sons on all counts (including upholding Tata Sons' decision sacking Cyrus Mistry as its Chairman and Executive Director), the 3-judge bench led by Chief Justice S A Bobde, however, decided not to adjudicate on the issue of

shares and instead suggested legal route to resolve the matter.

"The valuation of the shares of SP Group depends upon the value of the stake of Tata Sons in listed equities, unlisted equities, immovable assets etc., and also perhaps the funds raised by SP Group on the security/pledge of these shares. Therefore at this stage and in this Court, we cannot adjudicate on the fair compensation. We will leave it to the parties to take the Article 75 route or any other legally available route in this regard," the SC ruled.

Trouble is, Article 75 was the very provision that the SP Group had objected to, saying it ignores "constitutionally valid safeguards in company law," with respect to minority shareholders. It mandates minority shareholders to approach the Tata Sons board with an offer and also grants the board the power of right of first refusal to either buy the stake, or get investors.

In essence, attempts to offload stake could be either long-drawn or see a deadend given that the list of investors with billions of dollars to spare is usually limited. While the verdict does bring finality to the long-drawn corporate boardroom battle, much depends on whether the sparring partners can find a middle path.

'Treating Us Like Robots': Amazon Workers Seek Union

Agenceis

BESSEMER: Linda Burns was excited at first to land a job at the Amazon warehouse outside Birmingham, Alabama. The former nursing assistant had always enjoyed ordering from the company. Now, she would be working for them.

A cog in a fast-moving assembly line, her job involved picking up customers' orders and sending them down the line to the packers. Now she is a staunch supporter of getting a union at the Bessemer facility. She said employees face relentless quotas and deserve more respect.

"They are treating us like robots rather than humans," said Burns, 51, who said she is out of leave after developing tendonitis.

This week, Amazon workers and union advocates, including Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, made a last-minute push as voting comes to a close in the high-stakes union battle. If organizers are successful, it could lead to



a chain reaction of other unionization pushes at Amazon facilities. If voted down, it would be another loss for organizers hoping to win a rare labor victory in the Deep South.

Amazon is fighting the union. The company argues the warehouse created thousands of jobs with an average pay of \$15.30 per hour — more than twice the minimum wage in Alabama. Workers also get benefits including health care, vision and dental insurance without paying union dues, the company said.

Sanders spoke at a union rally in Birmingham on Friday, saying a labor victory against the tech and retail giant owned by the richest person in world — and in a historically anti-union state — would resonate across the country.

"What you are doing here is historical, historical, because all over this country people are sick and tired of being exploited, sick and tired of not having the dignity that they deserve. And your message to people all over this country is stand up and fight back," Sanders said.

"This country belongs to all of us, not just a handful of billionaires," the former Democratic presidential candidate said.

Ahead of Sanders' visit, Amazon CEO Dave Clark tweeted that they "actually deliver" a progressive workplace with a \$15 hourly minimum wage and good health benefits that Sanders said he supports.

"So, if you want to hear about \$15 an hour and health care, Senator Sanders will be speaking downtown. But if you would like to make at least \$15 an hour and have good health care, Amazon is hiring," Clark tweeted.

Burns and Harvey Wilson, a 41-year-old who works as a "picker" at Amazon, both said they're supporting the union because of poor working conditions at the warehouse. Employees face relentless quotas and the mammoth size of the facility makes it nearly impossible to get to the bathroom and back to your station during a workers' break time, they said.

"How could you work for some-

body who is trillion, billion whatever you want to call it, how can you work for them and they don't want you to go to the bathroom?" Burns said.

Wilson said he is unsure how the vote would go because a number of younger workers are fearful they could lose benefits.

"A lot of people are scared to vote because they are afraid they are going to lose their jobs," Wilson said.

Employees are seeking to be represented by the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union. Ballots on the vote must be returned by Monday.

The vote in Alabama comes after efforts to start unions at Southern auto plants came up short.

Emmit Ashford, a part-time Amazon worker, said that even if the vote fails, he believes the workers in Bessemer have ignited something.

"No matter what happens with this vote, the bell has been rung and it won't stop here. We will not stop fighting," Ashford said at a rally ahead of the vote.

2 Militants, Soldier

combing operation and zeroed in on the suspected house, the hiding militants opened fire upon them in a bid to escape from their dragnet.

"The joint team returned the fire setting off an encounter. In the exchange of fire, an unknown militant was killed," officials said, adding "One American made assault M4 rifle was also recovered from the slain militant."

However, police on its official Twitter handle claimed to have killed another militant in the late night hours, taking the number of militants dead in the encounter to two.

"Search going on. Further details shall follow," the Tweet added. According to the reports, three soldiers were also injured in the initial exchange of fire.

However, a local news agency KDC reported that one of the soldiers identified as Pinku Kumar, a resident Bagpat district of Uttar Pradesh, succumbed to his injuries at the Badambagh cantonment hospital here, while his colleague Mandeep Kumar was being treated upon by the doctors there.

According to the reports, two to three militants were believed to be trapped in the village. The reports further said that the state forces have installed lights and tightened cordon to ensure that the holed-up militants don't escape under the cover of darkness.

Pertinently, this is the third encounter of the month in Shopian district. (With agency inputs)

CASO In Kulgam

siege around Panipora village of Kulgam in the wee hours of Wednesday and launched a combing operation, news agency KNO reported. The search operation, the report said, was launched on specific inputs suggesting presence of militants in the area.

During the 45-hour long operation, the report said door to door searches were carried out.

"After conducting searches for around 45-hours, nothing was found in the area and the search operation ended peacefully on Friday evening," an official said.

The report also quoted locals as saying that only students and elders were allowed to come out and movement of the general public was restricted to their compounds despite it being the peak season for fruit trees' pruning.

Registration For

issued by the government will be followed.

"The registration will start from April 1 for both the routes through 446 designated bank branches of the Punjab National Bank (316), the Jammu and Kashmir Bank (90) and the YES Bank (40), all over the country," Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Sri Amarnathji Shrine Board (SASB) Nitishwar Kumar said.

He said that details about the procedure for registration, application form and state-wise list of bank branches with complete addresses are available on the board's website.

The CEO said that only health certificates that are issued by doctors or medical institutes authorised by state governments or union territory administrations will be accepted at the registered bank branches.

The certificates are mandatory as the shrine is at a very high-altitude and the journey is arduous.

"For the Yatra-2021, only those health certificates which have been issued after March 15 shall be valid. The steps which yatis (pilgrims) need to follow in order to register for the yatra (pilgrimage), have been put on the board's website www.shriamarnathjishrine.com," Kumar said.

He added that it also contains relevant information on how to reach the base camps, fee for registration, tariff for ponies, palanquin and porters.

Kumar said people under the age of 13 years or above the age of 75 years and women who are more than six weeks pregnant would not be registered for this year's yatra as per COVID-19 norms.

He said permits for the yatra would be different for each day of the week and routes.

Different colour code for each day will be used to facilitate police personnel deployed at the access control gates at Baltal in Ganderbal district and Chandanwari-Pahalgam in Anantnag district to regulate the yatra for the relevant date and route, the CEO said.

In this context, he cautioned pilgrims against undertaking this arduous yatra without securing a permit and the required compulsory health certificate.

Kumar stressed that, for ensuring effective security arrangements along the difficult tracks, only those yatis who are in possession of a permit which is valid for a specified date and route, will be allowed to proceed beyond the base camps, and cross the entry gates.

He appealed to pilgrims to complete necessary formalities for registration in advance and obtain a permit so that they do not face any inconvenience.

Pilgrims who propose to travel by helicopter do not require advance registration as their tickets will suffice for this purpose, Kumar said.

However, Kumar said they would be required to produce the compulsory health certificate issued by an authorised doctor in the prescribed format before they are allowed to travel by helicopter.

HC Quashes PSA

All these FIRs pertain to the year 2016, whereas order impugned has been passed on 6th August 2019. Thus there is a delay of three years in passing the detention order," a bench of Justice Rajesh Oswal said.

"Thus the delay of three years in passing the order of detention has snapped the link between the prejudicial activities and the purpose for which the detention order is passed."

Subsequently, the court quashed the PSA detention (38/DMP/PSA/19) dated 06 August 2019 issued by District Magistrate Pulwama by virtue of which the youth—Ashiq Ahmad Rather of Pulwama was detained under the provisions of J&K Public Safety Act.

In his plea filed through his father, Ashiq had challenged the order submitting that the grounds of detention are vague and on the basis of such vague grounds, no prudent man can make an effective representation against those allegations.

He said that the detaining authority has not prepared the grounds of detention itself which is a pre-requisite before passing the order.

"No material has been furnished to the (detainee), as such he was disabled to make an effective representation against the detention order," he said. (GNS)

CAG Raps J&K

indicates a lack of adequate response from the government departments to the audit.

The report, recently submitted in Parliament, said in the last few years, the audit has pointed out several significant deficiencies in the implementation of various programmes or activities as well as on the quality of internal-control measures in certain departments, which have a negative impact on the success of the programmes and the functioning of the departments.

"The government may look into this matter and revamp the system to ensure a proper response to the audit observations from the departments in a time-bound manner," it said.

During 2018-19, the CAG said a compliance audit of 727 drawing and disbursing officers and 74 units of 25 autonomous bodies was conducted by the office of the Principal Accountant General (Audit), Jammu and Kashmir.

"The focus was on auditing specific programmes/schemes in order to offer suitable recommendations to the executive for taking corrective action and improving service delivery to the citizens.

"Twenty-three paragraphs were sent to the Principal Secretaries/Secretaries of the respective departments. Replies in respect of nine paragraphs included in this report were not received (September 2020)," it said.

The report said the handbook of instructions for a speedy settlement of audit observations or inspection reports (IRs) issued by the government (finance department) provides for a prompt response by the executive to the IRs issued by the Principal Accountant General (Audit) to ensure remedial or rectification action in compliance with the prescribed rules and procedures.

The heads of offices and the next higher authorities are required to comply with the observations contained in the IRs, rectify the defects and report their compliance to the Principal Accountant General (Audit), it said, adding that based on the results of the test audit, 49,523 audit observations contained in 11,531 IRs were outstanding as on March 31, 2019.

"The pendency of a large number of paragraphs indicates a lack of adequate response of the government departments to the audit," the CAG observed.

Further, only two Audit Committee meetings were held during 2018-19, in which 28 audit paragraphs were settled, which account for 0.06 per cent of the pending objections as of March 2019, the report said, urging the respective departments to constitute audit committees and monitor the progress of the settlement of paragraphs.

To ensure accountability of the executive to issues dealt with in various audit reports, the government (finance department) issued instructions in June 1997 to the administrative departments to furnish suo-motu action-taken notes (ATNs) to the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) or the Committee on Public Undertakings (COPU) on all the audit paragraphs featuring in the audit reports, irrespective of whether those are taken up for discussion by these panels or not.

"These ATNs are to be submitted to these committees, duly vetted by the Principal Accountant General (Audit) within a period of three months from the date of presentation of audit reports in the state legislature. It was, however, noticed that out of the 495 audit paragraphs featuring in the civil chapters of the audit reports from 2000-01 to 2015-16, the suo-motu ATNs in respect of 146 audit paragraphs had not been received up to September 30, 2020," it said.

The report said the ATNs, duly vetted by the Principal Accountant General (Audit) on the observations or recommendations made by the PAC or the COPU in respect of the audit paragraphs discussed by them are to be furnished to these committees within six months from the date of such observations or recommendations.

"Out of 495 audit paragraphs featuring in the civil chapters of audit reports for the years from 2000-01 to 2015-16, only 245 audit paragraphs have been discussed by the PAC up to March 31, 2020. Recommendations in respect of 223 audit paragraphs have been made by the PAC. However, ATNs on the recommendations of the committees are pending from the government of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh in respect of 165 paragraphs," it said.

9 PSUs Non

Company Limited, Jammu Power Distribution Company Limited, Kashmir Power Distribution Company Limited, Jammu and Kashmir Power Trading Company Limited, Jammu and Kashmir State Handloom Handicrafts Raw Material Supplies Organisation Limited (A Subsidiary of Himalayan Wool Combers Limited), Tawi Scooters Limited, Himalayan Wool Combers Limited, Jammu and Kashmir Road Development Corporation Limited and Jammu and Kashmir International Trade Centre Corporation Limited.

In all there are 42 PSUs, 33 of them are working. The PSUs were established to carry out activities of commercial nature keeping in view the welfare of people and occupy an important place in the economy of the J&K, the CAG said.

The PSUs consist of State Government Companies and Statutory Corporations. As on 31 March 2019, there were 421 PSUs (six in Power Sector and 36 in Sectors other than Power Sector), including three Statutory Corporations under the audit jurisdiction of the CAG.

The 33 working PSUs, the CAG said, registered an annual turnover of Rs 9,784.90 crore and earned an aggregate profit of Rs 448.02 crore as of 30 September 2019 as per their latest finalized accounts. "This turnover was equal to 6.33 per cent of Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP), which was rs 1,54,441 crore (at current prices) for the State for 2018-19."

One PSU, Jammu and Kashmir Bank Limited, having a total paid-up equity of Rs 55.70 crore is listed on the stock exchange since July 1998. "This paid-up equity of Rs 55.70 crore of the Bank is held partly by the State Government (59.23 per cent) and the remaining part by Foreign Institutional Investors, Resident Individuals and others (40.77 per cent).

"During the year 2018-19, six PSUs were incorporated and no PSU was closed down. There are two power generation Companies, Jammu and Kashmir State Power Development Corporation Limited (JKSPDC) and Chenab Valley Power Project Private Limited (CVPPP)," the CAG said in the report.

"The Chenab Valley Power Project Private Limited (CVPPP) which is a joint venture Company, has an investment of Rs 1,439.18 crore as of March 2019 (JKSPDC: Rs 687.55 crore, NHPC: Rs 747.55 crore and PTC: Rs 4.08 crore."

As a consequence of the unbundling of the Power Sector, one power transmission Company—Jammu and Kashmir Power Transmission Company Limited, two power distribution companies—Jammu Power Distribution Company Limited and Kashmir Power Distribution Company Limited (June 2013) and one Company—Jammu and Kashmir Power Trading Company Limited—exclusively to conduct trading activities in power were incorporated on behalf of the State Government. "However, these Companies which have been incorporated between March 2013 and June 2013, are yet to start their commercial operations as of March 2019," the CAG noted. "In the absence of commercial operations by these companies, the power transmission and distribution activities continue to be carried out by the Power Development Department of Jammu & Kashmir Government." (GNS)

'LAHDC Leh,

board and state legal service authority are also pending for many years, the CAG said.

The CAG, in its report on social, general and economic (non-PSUs) in the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir for the year ending 31 March, 2019, submitted in the parliament recently, said 10 autonomous bodies, including LAHDC, Leh and LAHDC Kargil required to be audited had not furnished the annual accounts.

Jammu and Kashmir was bifurcated into two Union territories of J&K and Ladakh in August 2019.

"The LAHDC, Leh has failed to submit accounts for audit since its inception (1995-96) although substantial funds are being released to the Council and unspent balances at the end of the year remain credited in a non-lapsable fund in the Public Account of the State," the CAG said.

"The position in respect of LAHDC, Kargil which came into existence in the year 2004-05 is similar and the accounts are in arrears since its inception. Non-submission/delay in submission of accounts by these bodies receiving substantial funding from the State budget is a serious financial irregularity persisting for years," it said.

It said the LAHDC received a grant of Rs 546.24 crore in 2018-19, while the LAHDC Kargil got Rs 597.95 crore during the same financial year.

"In view of this non-compliance, the audited accounts of these statutory bodies have not so far been presented to the State Legislature as required under the Statutes under which these bodies were created. This has deprived the State Legislature of the opportunity to assess their activities and financial performance," the report said.

The Compensatory Afforestation Management and Planning Authority (J&K), which had not received any grants in 2018-19, had failed to submit its accounts for audit for the last 10 years.

The accounts for audit of SKUAST (Kashmir) is pending for nine years though it received a grant of Rs 228.60 crore in 2018-19 and similarly, the SKUAST (Jammu) which had got a grant of Rs 101 crore in 2018-19, has failed to submit its account for three years, the report said.

The CAG said the State Legal Service Authority received a grant of Rs 12.48 crore in 2018-19, but failed to submit its accounts for audit, while Khadi and Village Industries Board got Rs 23 crore grants in 2018-19 and its account details are pending for four years.

Other bodies which have not submitted their accounts for audit include Jammu and Kashmir State Housing Board (seven years), Building and other Construction Workers Welfare Board (six years) and Employees Provident Fund Board, Srinagar (four years), the report said, adding that none of these have received any grants during 2018-19.

Man Dies Hours

field for grazing, where he felt dizziness and went to fetch some water from a house.

During the course of time, he felt unconscious and was removed to a nearby hospital. However the doctors there declared him dead on arrival, he said.

Meanwhile, Dr. Lateef who was part of the drive told a local news agency GNS that the person was vaccinated Saturday afternoon by a team of doctors and kept him under observation for AEFI (adverse event following immunization).

The elderly person didn't show any complications during the time, he said. "However we have learnt that he has died at 3 pm," he said.

"As mandated by the protocol we are supposed to keep a patient under observation for half an hour, and he didn't show any signs during that time," he said adding that "There may be some underlying reasons causing his death."

He said that in two days, 250 doses—(100 on March 26 and 150 on March 27) were administered and "none of the persons vaccinated showed any complication."

On Tuesday, Minister of State, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Ashwini Kumar Choubey told Rajya Sabha that as on March 16, a total of 89 deaths of vaccinated persons have been reported following COVID-19 vaccine vaccination. "None of the deaths so far have been causally attributed to COVID-19 vaccination as per the current evidence," he said.

To a question on authority responsible, the MoS said adverse events following immunization (AEFI) are monitored through a well-structured and robust AEFI surveillance system.

"Causality Assessment of all serious and severe AEFIs are done by the designated AEFI committee to determine if AEFI is related to the vaccine or vaccination process or otherwise," he said as per the reply.

Adequate measures, he said, have been put in place to manage AEFIs like availability of anaphylaxis kits at each vaccination site, immediate referral to AEFI management center and observation of vaccine recipients for 30 minutes at session site for any adverse events so as to take timely corrective measure. "Also the AEFI management of such cases are provided free of cost treatment in Public Health Facilities," he said. (With GNS inputs)

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The fatality was reported from Kashmir valley, they added. (PTI)

Centre Asks States

day rise so far this year, and also the highest since October 16last when 63,371 new cases were reported in a span of 24 hours.

Besides the "strong advice" given by the Centre for a significant increase of testing in all districts in line with their positivity rate, the strategy to be adopted included effective isolation and contact tracing of those infected, Re-invigoration of Public and Private Healthcare resources, ensuring of COVID Appropriate Behaviour and targeted approach to vaccination in districts reporting large numbers.

The strategy was finalised after a high-level review meeting chaired by Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan with top officials of the 12 states and the UTs and Municipal Commissioners and District Collectors of the 46 districts that are the most affected by rising COVID cases and rising mortality, according to a statement by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

The states and UTs are Maharashtra, Gujarat, Haryana, Tamil Nadu, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Delhi, Jammu and Kashmir, Karnataka, Punjab and Bihar.

"Through a detailed presentation, the states were informed that the country has seen the sharpest rise in weekly COVID cases and fatalities since May 2020 (7.7% and 5.1% respectively)," the statement said.

The focus was on 46 districts that have contributed 71 per cent of the cases and 69 per cent of the deaths this month.

Of the total 36 districts in Maharashtra, 25 are most affected that account for 59.8 per cent of the cases reported in the country during the past one week, the statement said.

A granular analysis of affected districts in these states and UTs along with some key statistics was presented at the meeting, it added.

Almost 90 per cent of the COVID deaths continue to be in the category of those aged above 45 years. Findings of studies were highlighted which depicted that while 90 per cent people are aware, only 44 per cent actually wear face masks, the statement said.

"One infected person could spread COVID-19 to an average of 406 other individuals in a 30-day window without restrictions which could be reduced to just 15 by decreasing physical exposure to 50 per cent and to a further 2.5 (average) by decreasing physical exposure to 75 per cent."

It was also highlighted that the concept of 'second wave' reflected more the laxity among everyone regarding COVID-appropriate behaviour and virus containment and management strategy at the ground level.

Hence, stringent action, including effective containment and contact tracing, for at least 14 days in the 46 districts was strongly recommended for breaking the chain of transmission and "not frittering away" the gains of collaborative efforts of last year, the Centre told the states.

Six states—Maharashtra, Punjab, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh—continue to report a high surge in daily COVID cases and account for 79.57 per cent of the new infections reported in a span of 24 hours, the Health Ministry said.

India's total active cases have reached 4,52,647 and currently comprise 3.8 per cent of the country's total infections, it added.

The country saw 62,258 new cases being registered in the last 24 hours, the highest single day rise so far this year, according to the ministry. The nationwide tally stood at 1,19,08,910.

Maharashtra has reported the highest daily new cases at 36,902 followed by Punjab (3,122) and Chhattisgarh (2,665), the ministry said. Maharashtra also reported 166 COVID-19 deaths in 24 hours, highest since last October, a state health official said in Mumbai.

Struggling to contain the fresh surge, the Maharashtra government said that holding of social, cultural, political and religious gatherings in the state is being banned completely.

Auditoriums or drama theatres should not allow their property to be used for such events, said an official order issued in Mumbai.

The government also ordered that restaurants, gardens and malls will remain shut between 8 pm and 7 am beginning Saturday night. People will also not be allowed to visit beaches during 8 pm to 7 am, the order said.

Drama theatres will also remain shut from Saturday night. However, the government has exempted delivery of food in night hours in its new set of guidelines.

"Gatherings of more than five people will not be allowed from 8 pm to 7 am effective from midnight on 27th March. Violation will attract penalty of Rs 1,000 per person on offenders.

"All public places including gardens and beaches will remain closed during the same period and violators will be fined with Rs 1,000 per person. Not wearing of face mask will attract Rs 500 fine while the same is Rs 1,000 for public spitting," the order said.

In Delhi, the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) ordered that not more than 200 guests will be allowed in open-air venues and there will be a cap of 100 in weddings at banquet halls following a rise in COVID cases.

Delhi reported over 1,500 cases for the third day on the trot on Saturday, while 10 more people, highest in around two-and-a-half months, succumbed to the disease, the health department said.

The national capital has registered 1,558 new infections which pushed the tally to 6,55,834, while over 6.38 lakh patients have recovered from the virus.

This is the highest number of cases since December 15 last year when 1,617 people tested positive for the virus, according to official data.

The Gujarat government also announced that a negative COVID-19 RT-PCR test report will be mandatory for those arriving from other states.

Earlier, the state government had made negative test report must only for those coming from neighbouring Maharashtra. The new wave of coronavirus in Gujarat has also hit two of the country's premier educational institutions with IIM-Ahmedabad and IIT-Gandhinagar reporting active cases in double digits.

The Indian Institute of Management-Ahmedabad currently has 40 active cases, while Indian Institute of Technology-Gandhinagar has 25 active cases, official sources said.

"The IIM-A campus was almost COVID-free with only isolated cases till March 12. Subsequently there was a rise in infections, mostly among students. Many of these cases are asymptomatic," the institute said in a statement. (PTI)

India, Pak Must

countries must have an open dialogue to address all issues.

"We have heard that secret talks were held, we wish the day would come sooner when they will sit across the table and have an open dialogue on all issues and there are a lot of issues be it J-K or something else. We want them to resolve all the issues through dialogue," he said.

Asked about the Enforcement Directorate questioning PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti, Abdullah said that is the price one pays for opposing the Centre's policies.

"From J-K to Tamil Nadu, from Assam to Gujarat, Mehbooba

Mufti is not the first leader and will not be the last (to be questioned by the ED). Unfortunately, for the last few years, it has been our experience that the price for opposing the Centre's policies is a summons by these agencies. But, wherever these actions take place, they will be fought strongly," he said.

Earlier while addressing the NC workers at party office 'Mujahid Manzil', Abdullah expressed hope that the positive shift in the relation between India and Pakistan augurs well for long-lasting peace and prosperity in the entire region.

"The renewed engagement between India and Pakistan vindicates the long-standing stand of the NC on the inevitability of dialogue between India and Pakistan. The party has been a strong votary of greater India-Pakistan bonhomie knowing that such a step, if endured positively and sincerely, will have a positive impact on the lives of people of Jammu and Kashmir and the entire region as well," he said.

Abdullah said the NC has all along maintained that there is no substitute to dialogue and expressed hope that the new opportunity of friendship was not lost.

He, however, said their repeated pleas for dialogue and peacemaking were made a point of ridicule by the ruling party.

"But, finally our stand is vindicated in wake of the fresh diplomatic outreach in terms of DGM0-level talks and IWT meeting between the two nations. We believe that PM Narendra Modi's letter to his Pakistani counterpart is a step in the right direction. I hope that the step further helps in building an environment of trust," he said.

Referring to the August 5, 2019 measures - when the Centre revoked J-K's special status, Abdullah said the measures were undertaken at the pretext of ushering in development in Jammu and Kashmir, but the "government has lost its plot".

"The state was downgraded, divided and sheared off its constitutional status in the nonappearance of its elected leaders who were caged for months altogether both at in-house and out-house confinement centres to ensure that the Centre had a free walk in bulldozing the state's political identity and other constitutional safeguards," he alleged.

"But, so far the promised flood of investment, development, infra-upgrade is nowhere visible on the ground. What is it that has been achieved by GOI? Contrary to it, the entire region has been put on the path of terminal alienation and dismemberment," he said.

He said the striking feature of Kashmir post August 5, 2019 has been marked by administrative inertia, development deficit, crumbling economy, and failure of the administration to even ensure basic amenities like water, electricity and connectivity to people.

"All the promises have deflated and the only thing that the Centre has been able to achieve is to put the entire region on the path of terminal alienation," Abdullah added.

He said it was told that peace will prevail in the region post the nullification of the state's constitutional status, but the prevailing situation does not attest to what was being claimed.

Asking people to remove 'Pherans' at government functions explains it all. It has never been the case, even in the height of turmoil. Nobody was ever asked to remove their 'Pherans' at government functions. Having such a measure in place now reveals how better the security situation has become, he said.

He said the NC is fighting for truth, justice and restoration of the people's rights.

"We are committed to fight a long drawn battle for the restoration of people's rights and protection of J-K's dignity and identity. We won't budge from that path," he said.

Keep Kashmir

chaired by its president Mehbooba Mufti. The meeting was the first post the party restructuring and re-election of Mehbooba as president, a party spokesman said.

He said the meeting deliberated upon the prevailing political situation in the state and the party's response to the emerging situation.

The PAC members welcomed the recent gestures of peace between India and Pakistan and the ceasefire agreement leading to de-escalation of tensions.

"The PAC urged governments in both capitals to go beyond rhetoric, deepen the process of dialogue and broaden the scope of political engagement keeping Jammu and Kashmir front and centre of the process to make it result oriented and sustainable," the meeting resolved.

Termining connectivity and free flow of goods and people as pivotal for uplift of people in the subcontinent devastated by wars and penury, the meeting pitched for early resumption of cross-Loc trade, opening up of Srinagar-Muzaffarabad, Poonch-Rawalakote, Kargil Skardu and Jammu-Sialkote roads, the spokesman said.

He said while ruling the "uncertainty" and the "imposed atmosphere of panic unleashed", the members lauded the resolve of the party and unanimously endorsed the stance of the party president regarding the prevailing situation and issues post August 5, 2019 when the Centre revoked J-K's special status.

Highlighting the dynamic shift in the geopolitical engagements of the subcontinent, the meeting observed that the stance and agenda as propounded by PDP is proving to be the guide for establishment of durable peace in the region thereby proving it more relevant than ever before, the spokesman said.

He said the meeting condemned the unleashing of central agencies to "coerce and muzzle" Mehbooba and expressed their solidarity with the party president and resolved to stand by her and the party in the fight for restoration of the rights and dignity of people of Jammu and Kashmir.

The spokesman said senior leaders and PAC members Mohammad Sartaj Madni and Naem Akhtar could not attend the meeting as both "are under illegal detention".

"The meeting condemned their continued incarceration and demanded their immediate release and well as the release of all political prisoners," he said.

The PAC also rejected the "frivolous charges" leveled against the party youth president Waheed ur Rehman Parra, termed his detention a part of "political witch hunt" and demanded his immediate release, the spokesman added.

The meeting expressed gratitude to the party workers at the grassroots level who have stood with the party and its struggle despite the "pressures and harassments exhorted by the system".

"The workers are the real strength of the party and PDP shall stand firm to represent their aspirations," the meeting resolved. (PTI)

Jonny Bairstow Hits Back At Gavaskar For Questioning His Intent In Test Cricket



Press Trust of India

PUNE: England opener Jonny Bairstow has hit back at Sunil Gavaskar for questioning his intent in the Test series defeat, saying the Indian legend is more than welcome to call or message him and discuss about his 'will' to play the longest format.

Bairstow had scores of 0, 0, 0 and 28 in the four innings that he played in England's 1-3 Test series defeat against India, prompting Gavaskar to comment that he looked "uninterested".

"Yeah, he's more than welcome to give me a ring and ask me about my will to do well in Test cricket and my enjoyment in Test cricket," Bairstow said in response to Gavaskar's comments.

The 31-year-old smashed 112-ball 124 as England made a mockery of India's 337-run target to canter home with 39 balls to spare.

Following Bairstow's dismissal off Ravichandran Ashwin in the second innings of the final Test in Ahmedabad, Gavaskar had commented that the batsman looked "uninter-

ested" during his stay at the crease.

"You have not scored a run, and just come in and pushed at it, as if there was no fielder at backward short leg. It looked to me as if it was the shot of a person uninterested."

"What's he trying to do? First ball, he should be looking to play a soft defensive shot. There is a fielder there at backward short leg. Uninterested," Gavaskar had said during his TV commentary. Bairstow, however, said he had not heard what the Indian legend had remarked.

"First of all, I hadn't heard what he said. Second, I'm interested in knowing how an opinion can be made especially when there has been no correspondence or communication between him (Gavaskar) and me..."

"As I said, my phone is on and if he just wants to give me a call or a message, he can feel free to do so," he said.

Bairstow has scored 4,197 runs at an average of 34.12 in 74 Tests, while amassing 3,425 runs, including 11 centuries, at 48.92 in 85 ODIs for England. India and England will clash for the title in the third ODI on Sunday.

ISSF WORLD CUP

Vijayveer, Tejaswani Shoot Gold In 25m Rapid Fire Pistol Mixed Event

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: India's Vijayveer Sidhu and Tejaswani claimed the gold medal in the 25m rapid fire pistol mixed team event to extend the country's dominant run in the ISSF World Cup here on Saturday.

In an all-Indian gold medal match, Sidhu and Tejaswani comfortably beat the duo of Gurpreet Singh and Ashok Abhidnya Patil 9-1 at the Dr Kanti Singh Shooting Range.

In the Qualification 2, Gurpreet and Patil finished at the top with a total score of 370 while the team of 16-year-old Tejaswani and 18-year-old Sidhu aggregated 368.

On Friday, Sidhu won the individual silver medal in the 25 rapid fire pistol event ahead of Anish Bhamwala and Gurpreet.

However, the Indian pair of Kynan Chenai and Shreyasi Singh missed out on a podium finish as they settled for the fourth place in the trap mixed team final of the prestigious tournament.

The home team lost to Turkey's Safiye Saritürk and Yavuz İlnam 35-38. Kynan, who finished fourth in the individual men's trap on Friday, began badly but improved as the mixed final progressed, even

as Shreyasi too missed a few shots while finding the target on other occasions.

The Indian duo shot 141 in the qualifications to qualify in the fourth place for the bronze medal match behind Saritürk and İlnam (143), who made up for his partner's off-colour outing with his consistent showing.

The Italian team of Alessia Lezzi and Valerio Grazini topped the qualifications with 145 while the Slovakian pair of Zuzana Rehak Stefecekova and Adrian Drobný was second with 143.

In the final, Lezzi and Grazini prevailed over the Slovaks Stefecekova and Drobný 39-36 on the shotgun range. The medal-less outing in trap notwithstanding, a dominant India continued to lead the standings with 13 gold, eight silver and six bronze for a total of 27 podium finishes.

Three finals are lined up on the last competition day on Sunday — men's 25m rapid fire pistol team, trap team women and trap team men.

As many as 294 athletes from 53 countries are taking part in the tournament, the last major international outing for pistol and rifle shooters before the upcoming Tokyo Olympics.

Sachin Tendulkar Tests Positive For COVID-19, In Home Isolation

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Legendary cricketer Sachin Tendulkar has tested positive for COVID-19 and is currently in home isolation. The former India captain confirmed the news on his social media handle.

One of the biggest names to have tested positive for the virus in recent times, Tendulkar, however, informed that all his other family members have tested negative.

"I have been testing myself and taking all the recommended precautions to ensure COVID is kept at bay. However, I have tested positive today following mild symptoms," the 47-year-old wrote on his Twitter handle.

"All others at home have tested negative. I have quarantined myself at home and I am following all the necessary protocols as advised by my doctors. I want to thank all the healthcare professionals who are support-



ing me and many others across the country. Take care all of you," he further wrote in his official statement.

The COVID-19 cases have been on a surge in Maharashtra and Mumbai with over 36,000 positive cases re-

corded on Friday.

Tendulkar recently took part in the Road Safety World Series Challenge veteran's tournament in Raipur.

He led the Indian team to victory in the tournament.

IND VS ENG 3RD ODI, PREVIEW

Cornered India Need A Change Of Strategy For Series Decider Against England

Press Trust of India

PUNE: Indian cricket team may like to revisit its 50-over template while picking up pieces from the Friday carnage with an aim to complete a hat-trick of series wins against England in the third and final ODI here on Sunday.

On batting belters that's been on offer at the Gahunje Stadium, England hit an astounding 20 sixes in a 337-run chase which became a cakewalk, thanks to inept bowling from spinners Kuldeep Yadav and Krunal Pandya.

Never before has captain Virat Kohli missed Ravindra Jadeja as much as he would have on Friday when Jonny Bairstow and Ben Stokes took the micky out of India's left-arm wrist and orthodox spinners.

In the bowling department, Kuldeep scripted an unwanted record when he conceded 8 sixes, most by an Indian bowler. He leaked 84 runs in the second game after giving 64 runs in the first. And, so did Krunal Pandya, who gave 72 runs in six overs with an embarrassing average of 12 per over.

So, in all probability, the duo could be replaced by leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal and Washington Sundar, who can also chip in with the bat, if needed.

From team's perspective, it would be impossible to ignore Yuzvendra Chahal's inclusion in the playing XI even though the Haryana leg-spinners hasn't been in the best of forms.

Pandya senior would still make it to the team because of his batting skills but the apology of left-arm spin has certainly ensured that he won't be considered as a long term option.

In terms of batting, a total of 337 is certainly not bad by any standards but perhaps India can now look to have strategic shift in terms innings building process.

The Men In Blue are the only



India's captain Virat Kohli and teammates react as they watch the replay of an unsuccessful run-out during the second One Day International cricket match between India and England at Maharashtra Cricket Association Stadium in Pune on Friday.

team that always believes in accelerating in the last 15 overs, a template that was set by their illustrious former captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni.

It has worked on most occasions but of late, England with a world title has shown the world that attacking up front on batting tracks is the way forward.

It might just help Rishabh Pant and Hardik Pandya with their brand of power-hitting change the course of the innings in the back-10.

Skipper Virat Kohli, who hit two successive 50 plus scores, would be keen to carry his form and convert the start into a really big total and end the century drought.

The skipper has however made it clear that he is not looking at milestones.

"I never played for 100s in my life, that's probably why I ended up getting so many in such little time."

"It's all about contributing to the team cause. If the team doesn't win when you get three figures it doesn't mean anything. You're not going to sit back at the end of your career and look at numbers, it's more about how you

played the game."

For the record, his last century came in August 2019 in this format.

Hardik would continue to play his role of a finisher but question mark remains on what kind of workload management is happening considering that he has rarely bowled save a few overs in the recently concluded T20 International.

On the pace front, while India would go ahead with spearhead Bhuvneshwar Kumar, they could try going in with left-arm pacer and yorker specialist T Natarajan, in case they want to rest Shardul Thakur for the game.

Also, there could be a choice between Mohammed Siraj and Prasidh Krishna although Prasidh's pace is an advantage for the hosts.

Meanwhile, England would be bolstered by their Friday's performance and the biggest positive would be the return of form of Ben Stokes, who otherwise struggled on many occasions on the entire tour.

Come Sunday, it remains to be seen, if India win the game, it couldn't be better gift on eve of festival of colours Holi.

'I Need To Improve My Performance With The New Ball,' Says Prasidh Krishna



Press Trust of India

PUNE: Prasad Krishna has impressed one and all with his pace and bounce but Team India's newest pace sensation admitted that he needs to work hard on trying to be more economical with the new ball.

In both ODIs, Prasad got wickets in his second spell with semi-new ball and got a bit of stick from England batsmen during his opening overs.

"Personally, I would like to start better. I would like to improve on how I have been starting with the (new ball). Otherwise, all the runs that I gave away were scored off bad balls. So I would go back and work on those aspects," Prasad said after India lost the second ODI by six wickets.

While Indian bowlers had a poor day in office, Prasad said that they could have hardly done anything in the face of an onslaught from Jonny Bairstow and Ben Stokes.

"We could have bowled better, am not denying the fact but we need to give credit to the way they

played as well. It was an onslaught, we got hit quite bad."

With only four fielders outside the circle during the second Powerplay (between 11-40 overs), it is always difficult to stop the batsmen on a flat deck.

"That's the game of white-ball cricket today. With four outside for the 11 to 40 overs, that's bound to happen."

"It was a very good wicket to bat on, no doubt. The score says it all. We scored 330-plus and they chased it down in the 44th over. It says it all. It was a flat wicket, challenging wicket for bowlers where the margin of error was very, very less," he noted. The execution part went all awry and Prasad seemed a trifle irritated with repeated references.

"Our executions could have been slightly better, personally for me. Other than that, it is a repetitive question, the third time I am being asked. Yes, we did make mistakes, we could have done better but they batted well too," the Karnataka pacer reiterated.

Sunil Chhetri Named Among 13 Strikers For AFC Cup's All Time Best Three



Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Talismanic India captain Sunil Chhetri was on Saturday named among 13 strikers for the fans to pick the all-time best three in the AFC Cup, the continent's second-tier club competition.

The 36-year-old Chhetri has scored 18 goals in four editions of the AFC Cup since 2013 when he appeared for Churchill Brothers. He then played for Bengaluru FC in the AFC Cup in 2016, 2017 and 2018.

His best achievement was to captain Bengaluru FC to a runners-up finish in the 2016 AFC Cup, losing to Air Force Club of Iraq in the final.

"An iconic figure of the modern Indian game, and a player whose 72 national team goals have given him an international profile, Sunil Chhetri has also regularly shown his ample quality on the continental club stage in the AFC Cup," the AFC said on its website.

"Despite not appearing in the competition until his late twenties, Chhetri's impact has lasted the best part of a decade."

"He captained Bengaluru to the 2016 final, his personal high point coming when he scored twice in a

classic semi-final performance to eliminate defending champions Jor-Darul Ta'zim."

Chhetri is currently the second highest international goal scorer among active players just behind Portugal superstar Cristiano Ronaldo with 72 strikes from 115 matches.

A host of top strikers from different countries, including Maldives legend Ali Ashfaq, made up the 13 nominations out of whom the fans will choose three strikers through a poll via internet.

"Three places remain in our All-time AFC Cup XI, with some of Asian football's most iconic goal scorers to vie for a place in our fans' dream selection."

"Football lovers from every corner of Asia have selected a goalkeeper, three defenders and a four-man midfield in previous weeks, now it's time to crown the tournament's greatest ever forwards, with countless worthy contenders to choose from," the AFC said.

With a staggering 344 AFC Cup goals between them, the 13 nominated strikers hailed from Europe, Africa, South America, and of course Asia.

A Barrier Falls As Women Officiate Men's Football World Cup Qualifiers

Agencies

WASHINGTON: Kathryn Nesbitt ran the sidelines, waving a flag, blending in for all the right reasons.

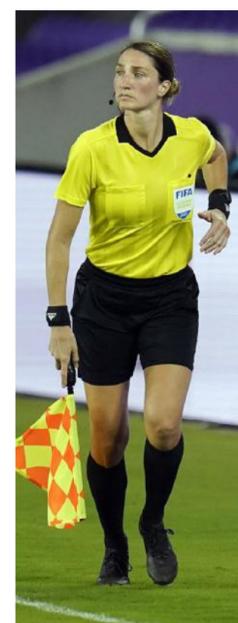
The 32-year-old from Philadelphia became a pioneer as FIFA appointed women to work on-field officials for men's World Cup qualifiers, serving as an assistant referee on Thursday night when Canada opened with a 5-1 rout of Bermuda at Orlando, Florida.

There were no controversies in a match that featured Bayern Munich's Alphonso Davies setting up three goals for Besiktas' Cyle Larin. Nesbitt disappeared into the background as much as one can while working in a yellow jersey and black shorts, an orange and yellow flag in her hands.

FIFA announced the first men's World Cup qualifiers with woman referees will be when Stéphanie Frappart of France works the Netherlands' match against visiting Latvia on Saturday and Kateryna Monzul of Ukraine calls Austria's game vs the visiting Faeroe Islands on Sunday.

Karen Diaz Medina of Mexico served as an assistant referee for Suriname's 3-0 win over the Cayman Islands on Wednesday.

"I'm hoping that people will bring her to the men's World Cup in a couple of years instead of the Women's World Cup — actually



both," said Rick Eddy, U.S. Soccer's director of referee development. "If FIFA really wants to make a stand towards saying they're supporting women, here's their opportunity."

Nesbitt worked 18 MLS games last season, including the MLS is Back tournament final, and was voted the league's assistant referee of the year. The workload of the 6-foot tall official has included 82 league games in all since 2015 plus seven more as an assistant video referee during the last two seasons.

Nesbitt earned a FIFA badge in 2016 and officiated at that year's Women's Under-17 World Cup, the 2018 Women's Under-20 World Cup, and two matches at the 2019 Women's World Cup.

"She's pretty imposing physically," said Howard Webb, a Premier League referee from 2003-14 who is entering his fourth season as general manager of Major League Soccer's Professional Referee Organization.

"She's tall, athletic. She's very calm and clearly intelligent as well. She's able to process a lot of information quickly and accurately."

In U.S. soccer, "The Professor" was the nickname of Julio Mazzei, who served two stints as coach of the Cosmos in the old North American Soccer League in 1979-80. Nesbitt is a real professor with a Ph.D. She taught analytical chemistry as an assistant professor at Towson University in Maryland from 2017-19.

She quit to become a full-time soccer official.

"I actually started when I was 14 years old. Clearly, that was more of

a hobby at the time," she said.

"So it's just kind of made its way into a career over the last 20ish years or so."

A competitive figure skater for 15 years and a volleyball player in college, she began officiating under-8 games while growing up in Rochester, New York.

She started to work adult and semipro matches after she finished her bachelor's degree at St. John Fisher College and worked toward her doctorate at the University of Pittsburgh.

"It kept me active and I really liked that way of thinking about the game," she said.

She made her professional debut in a National Women's Soccer League match between Kansas City and Portland on April 13, 2013, and her MLS debut when D.C. United played Columbus on May 2, 2015.

"I have always felt respected there, and there really hasn't been an example for me that stands out as sexism towards me," she said.

"My first couple of years in the league, I think I was treated the same way a new referee would be treated, as, who is this person and are they going to be any good?"

At the 2019 Women's World Cup in France, Nesbitt worked Norway vs. Nigeria and Sweden vs. Canada game plus three more games as a video official, including the England-Sweden third-place match.

Manchester United Women's Team Makes Its Old Trafford Debut

Agencies

MANCHESTER: The Manchester United women's team made its Old Trafford debut on Saturday in a league game against West Ham.

The team normally plays its Women's Super League home matches at Leigh Sports Village but switched to Old Trafford during the international break in the men's game.

"It's an amazing experience to

play in Europe because of the rich history in football and a stadium like Old Trafford holds that richness, that history," United striker Christen Press, an American international, told the club's website.

The last time a women's soccer game was played at Old Trafford was during the 2012 London Olympics. United entered the match in third place. The top three teams qualify for the Women's Champions League.

"Supplied More Vaccines Globally Than Vaccinated Our Own," India Tells UN



Agenceis

UNITED NATIONS: India has supplied more COVID-19 vaccines globally than vaccinated its own people, the country has told the UN General Assembly and cautioned that vaccine inequity will defeat the collective global resolve to contain the coronavirus as the disparity in the accessibility of vaccines will affect the poorest nations the most.

India was one of the initiators of the 'Political Declaration on Equitable Global Access to COVID-19 Vaccines' that garnered the support of more than 180 UN member states.

India's Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador K. Nagaraj Naidu said at the General Assembly informal meeting on Friday that while the COVID-19 pandemic continues to persist, the year 2021 began on a positive note with the global scientific community coming up with multiple vaccines to contain the pandemic.

"While the vaccine challenge has been resolved, we are now confronted with ensuring the availability, accessibility, affordability, and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines. Lack of global cooperation and disparity in the accessibility of vaccines will affect the poorest nations the most," Mr Naidu said.

India has been at the forefront of the global fight against COVID-19. Mr Naidu told the General Assembly that India will not only be vaccinating 300 million of its own frontline workers over the next six months but in the process has also supplied vaccines to over 70 nations.

"In fact, as of today we have supplied more vaccines globally than have vaccinated our own people," Mr Naidu said.

Two of India's vaccines, including the indigenously developed Covaxin, have already been granted emergency authorization, Mr Naidu said, adding that 30 more vaccine candidates are at various phases of clinical trials.

The vaccine Covishield is the version of the AstraZeneca/Oxford vaccine produced by the Serum Institute of India. Covaxin is the indigenously developed vaccine by pharma company Bharat Biotech.

The Political Declaration states that equitable and affordable access to safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines must be ensured to have a speedy recovery and contribute to putting an end to the pandemic.

The declaration also expresses deep concern that despite international agreements and initiatives, the distribution of COVID-19 vaccines is still uneven worldwide, both among and within countries.

"Therefore, we express our deep concern that a considerable number of countries have not yet had access to COVID-19 vaccines, and stress the need for global solidarity and multilateral cooperation to increase vaccine production and distribution, on regional and global levels."

Mr Naidu said that as highlighted by the declaration equity in access to the vaccine is important for mitigating the impact of the pandemic.

"Vaccine inequity will defeat our collective resolve to contain the virus. The current disparity calls for solidarity and cooperation within the international frameworks such as COVAX," he said.

India, a significant source of supply to Gavi's COVAX facility, has contributed 20 million doses to the facility last month. India had also announced a gift of 200,000 COVID-19 vaccine doses for UN peacekeepers.

The shipment of vaccines for peacekeepers left Mumbai in the early hours of Saturday and will land in Denmark soon, Mr Naidu said.

India also underlined the need to collaborate on genomic surveillance to track virus mutations and variants and exchange information in a timely fashion.

"Vaccine hesitancy should also be countered with science and public health infrastructure and capacities of health workers in vaccine delivery needs to be strengthened globally," he said.

Mr Naidu highlighted the need for the international community to collectively work towards supporting initiatives that ensure speedy and equitable distribution of vaccines and therapeutics to the most disadvantaged populations.

"Affordability, access, and logistical issues should in no way become a hindrance in our fight against one of the biggest challenges facing humanity," he said.

Mr Naidu added that India is working actively with Gavi, the World Health Organisation and ACT Accelerator.

"India and South-Africa have also called for WTO (World Trade Organisation) to suspend intellectual property rights related to COVID-19 for a limited period of time, to ensure rapid scaling-up of manufacturing of vaccines and ensuring accessibility and affordability of vaccines for all," he said.

He also stressed the importance of ensuring that ongoing global immunisation programmes pertaining to polio, diphtheria and other diseases do not get impacted as that will lead to the resurgence of other deadly diseases.

World Health Organisation chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus has called for countries to work together so that all States could begin vaccinating within the first 100 days of 2021. He said 177 countries and economies have started vaccination and added that with just 15 days left before the 100 days are up, 36 countries are still waiting for vaccines so they can start inoculating health workers and older people.

President of the 75th session of the UN General Assembly Volkan Bozkir said at the meeting that the world, which went into the COVID-19 pandemic together, can emerge from it together as well.

"But that depends on fair and equitable access to vaccines. From the health worker in a small island developing state, to a teacher in a refugee camp, to the elderly in care facilities across our countries, we must all be covered," Mr Bozkir said.

He stressed that the most vulnerable groups - people on the move, in conflict zones, and those already marginalised - must be prioritised.

Bengal Polls See 79.79% Turnout On First Day, Sporadic Incidents Of Violence



Press Trust of India

Sporadic incidents of violence were reported from various places that went to polls on Saturday during the first phase of Bengal assembly polls, even as the overall poll situation was largely peaceful with 79.79 per cent turnout recorded till 5 pm, an official said.

Voting was held in 30 seats - several of them part of the once-Naxal-hit Jangalmahal region - amid tight security and strict adherence to COVID-19 guidelines, the Election Commission (EC) official said.

In some booths, voters were provided with masks, sanitisers and polythene gloves.

Of the 30 seats that went to polls - nine are in Purulia, four each in Bankura and Jhargram, six in Paschim Medinipur, and seven in high-stakes Purba Medinipur district.

"Till 5 pm, 79.79 per cent polling has been recorded in the state. By and large, elections were held peacefully," the EC official said.

Purba Medinipur recorded the highest turnout at 82.51 per cent, followed by Jhargram at 80.56, Paschim Medinipur at 80.12 per cent, Bankura at 79.90 per cent and Purulia at 77.07 per cent. Violence and scuffle, however, marred the polling process in some areas.

In Kanthi Dakshin seat of Purba Medinipur district, voters staged protests outside a polling booth over alleged malfunctioning of an electronic voting machine.

The agitators blocked a road outside a polling station at Rajna, claiming that the VVPAT slip showed results in favour of a par-

titular party, no matter which outfit they voted for.

A contingent of central forces was sent to the area to control the situation, an EC official said, adding that the VVPAT machine was eventually replaced.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, during a rally in West Midnapore, claimed that the BJP has manipulated EVMs and used central forces to intimidate the voters.

"Today, in some polling booths of Kanthi, the VVPAT showed that votes were getting polled in favour of the BJP, even as a person pressed the button next to the symbol of some other party. In some areas, central forces were seen threatening voters. The EC must take action," she said.

BJP leader Suwendu Adhikari's younger brother Soumendu claimed he was attacked in Kanthi by TMC supporters.

He also alleged that his car was vandalised, and his driver sustained injuries in the attack.

"I was passing through Kanthi, when the TMC supported hurled bricks at my car and smashed its window panes. It seems they have lost their minds, sensing defeat," Soumendu said.

At Mohonpur in Dantan assembly constituency, four persons were injured in clashes between workers of the TMC and the BJP, after alleged attempts to capture booths were made by some of them.

At Keshiari in Paschim Medinipur, security forces baton-charged locals who staged demonstrations, claiming that votes were being cast only in favour of one party.

Later in the day, the protesters

blocked an adjoining road stating that security forces attacked women during house-to-house raids.

A man identified as Mangal Soren was found dead near his home in Begumpur area of Keshiari earlier in the day, the police said.

BJP leaders claimed that Soren, a party supporter, was killed by TMC "goons", a charge rubbished by the ruling party.

In its report to the EC, the district administration said the death had no connection with the polling process. Dipak Bauri, a BJP leader in Purulia, claimed that the constituency's TMC candidate Sujoy Bandyopadhyay threatened to shoot him during an altercation.

In Paschim Medinipur's Salboni seat, CPI(M) candidate Susanta Ghosh was heckled, and stones were hurled at his car, allegedly by TMC supporters. Police personnel posted in the area escorted him to safety.

According to reports, a few journalists who were covering the incident were also manhandled.

An EC official said three persons were arrested in connection with the attack. The TMC, however, denied any involvement.

Long queues were seen outside most booths during the morning hours, with people stepping out early in the day to avoid the sweltering heat, and violence or protests, if any. In several areas, including Egra, voters complained of intimidation by central forces.

A few EVMs, found non-functional during the voting process, were either replaced or restored, the EC official said, adding that the polling wasn't affected due to it.

India, Bangladesh sign five MoUs after PM Modi meets Sheikh Hasina

Agenceis

Prime Minister Narendra Modi met his Bangladeshi counterpart Sheikh Hasina on Saturday and discussed the progress achieved in areas like connectivity, energy, trade, health and developmental cooperation following which the two countries signed five MoUs covering a number of areas of bilateral cooperation.

Modi, who is visiting Bangladesh on his first trip to a foreign country since the outbreak of the coronavirus, held one-on-one talks with Hasina which was followed by a delegation-level meeting which continued for over an hour.

"Relationship going from strength to strength! Prime Minister @narendramodi and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina discussed the progress achieved in areas of health, trade, connectivity, energy, developmental cooperation and many more, Ministry of External Affairs Spokesperson Arindam Bagchi tweeted after the talks.

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He also handed over a representational box to her as a symbol of India's gift of 1.2 million COVID vaccine doses to Bangladesh.

Hasina presented a gold and a silver coin released on the occasion of the birth centenary of her father and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to Modi. She also handed over a silver coin released on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Bangladesh's Independence.

The two leaders also jointly opened some projects virtually.

Modi's visit is taking place at a time Bangladesh is commemorating Mujib Borsho, the birth centenary of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and 50 years of the country's war of liberation. The two countries are also celebrating 50 years of the establishment of diplomatic ties.

On Friday, Modi attended the celebrations of the golden jubilee of the country's independence, the birth centenary of Bangabandhu in Dhaka.

The two prime ministers held a virtual summit on December 17

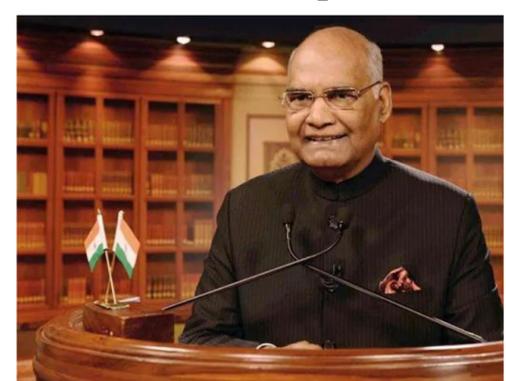


The two sides signed five Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) covering areas such as connectivity, commerce, information technology and sports.

In a humanitarian gesture, Prime Minister Modi handed over a representational key of 109 ambulances to his counterpart Ha-

during which Modi said Bangladesh is a key pillar of New Delhi's 'Neighbourhood First' policy, while Hasina described India as a "true friend" and asserted that both countries could play a significant role in the global and regional value chains by further integrating their economies as well as boosting connectivity.

President Kovind Shifted to AIIMS For Planned Bypass Procedure: Rashtrapati Bhavan



Agenceis

President Ram Nath Kovind was on Saturday shifted to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in New Delhi for a planned bypass procedure which is expected to be performed on Tuesday, a statement issued by Rashtrapati Bhavan said.

The president's health condition is stable and he is under the care of experts, it said.

Kovind, 75, had undergone a health check-up at the Army Hospital (R&R) in New Delhi following chest discomfort on Friday morning.

The President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind has been shifted to the AIIMS, Delhi, in the after-

noon today. Post investigations, doctors have advised him to undergo a planned bypass procedure which is expected to be performed on the morning of March 30, Tuesday.

"The President's health is stable and he is under the care of the experts at the AIIMS, the statement said.

Earlier on Saturday, the Army hospital said in a medical bulletin that the president is being referred to AIIMS, Delhi for further investigation.

"The hospital had on Friday said, "President of India visited Army Hospital (R&R) following chest discomfort this morning. He is undergoing routine check-up and is under observation".

BJP MLA Thrashed By Farmers In Punjab, Chief Minister Condemns Attack

Press Trust of India

CHANDIGARH: A BJP MLA in Punjab was allegedly thrashed and his clothes torn by a group of farmers at Malout in Muktsar district on Saturday, police said.

When Abohar legislator Arun Narang reached Malout along with local leaders to address a press conference, they got surrounded by a group of protesting farmers and black ink was thrown at them, officials said.

Some police personnel took the MLA and local leaders to a shop. But later when they came out of it, the protesters allegedly thrashed them and tore Narang's clothes, police said.

Mr Narang was later escorted to a safer place by the police, officials said. Deputy Superintendent of Po-

lice (Malout) Jaspal Singh said the protesters were adamant that they would not allow the BJP legislators to hold the press conference. A police official sustained a minor injury in the incident, he said.

Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh has condemned the attack and warned strict action against "anyone disturbing state's peace". A video has surfaced on social media, purportedly showing the MLA in torn clothes being shifted to a safer place by the police.

Later, Mr Narang told PTI that he was "punched" by some people.

"I was punched a lot and my clothes were also torn off," he alleged.

The BJP legislator said he had gone to Malout to address a press conference but the protesters did not allow it. They got violent and surrounded

him, the MLA claimed. Asked whether he has lodged a complaint in this matter, Narang said he will talk to the party leadership over this issue.

Darshan Pal, the leader of Samyukta Kisan Morcha, an umbrella body of farmers' union, spearheading the agitation against the central agri laws, said, "Today, farmers protested against BJP MLA from Abohar. Under adverse circumstances, it turned violent and the MLA was physically assaulted."

"It is a matter of regret that an elected representative was treated this way. We do not encourage such behaviour. We strongly condemn this act," he said in a statement.

Pal also said the Samyukta Kisan Morcha appeals to all protesters to remain peaceful and disciplined. The ruling Congress in Punjab, the

BJP, as well as the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) condemned the incident.

Such "unlawful behaviour" has no place in a democracy and the farmers' protest will be weakened by these incidents, State Congress chief Sunil Jakhar said.

While terming the attack "highly unfortunate", he said everyone should be allowed to present his views and every citizen should respect each other's right to speak. No one should be allowed to take law and order in their own hands, the state Congress chief said.

BJP national general secretary Tarun Chugh slammed the Amarinder Singh-led government over the incident and claimed that it has "exposed the complete collapse of law and order in the state".

There Is No Growth In Country Except For Beard Of Narendra Modi: Mamata

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Friday mocked Prime Minister Narendra Modi, saying his growing beard is inversely proportional to the state of the economy in the country.

Banerjee, who was addressing poll rallies in Paschim Medinipur district, also accused BJP of being the "biggest fraud party" of the country.

The TMC supremo, who is contesting the election from the high-profile Nandigram seat in Purba Medinipur district, said she would be staying put there till the end of polling in the constituency on April 1 as there are chances that BJP has "plans to loot votes by using goons from other states" and cautioned TMC workers in the state against complacency.

"The Indian economy has gone

for a toss. There is no industrial growth. There is no growth except for the beard of Narendra Modi. At times, he dresses like Rabindranath Tagore and at times like Mahatma Gandhi," she said mocking the prime minister.

Keeping up her attack, Banerjee said, "The day is not far off when the entire country will be sold and named after Narendra Modi... BJP is trying to throttle democracy in the country. As we (opposition parties) are all busy with Assembly elections in five states, the BJP government is passing laws to intrude into the constitutional powers of the elected government in Delhi by giving more powers to the lieutenant-governor. This is shameful."

Recounting the cancellation

of the visa of Bangladeshi actor Firdaus for campaigning for her party's candidates for the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, Banerjee wondered why the same should not be done for Modi for campaigning for former US president Donald Trump.

"If Firdaus's visa can be cancelled for campaigning in a foreign land, then Modi's visa should also be cancelled for campaigning for Donald Trump in America. Have you forgotten the slogan Ab Ki Bar Trump Sarkar," she said.

The Trump government, aiming to woo the influential Indian-American voters, in August 2020 had launched a video commercial containing clips of Modi's speeches and the former US president's historic address in Ahmedabad.