



P3 CITY

UNVACCINATED SHOPPERS TO UNDERGO COVID TEST AT ENTRY OF SHOPPING STORES

The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Mohammad Aijaz Asad Monday said that all unvaccinated persons visiting any Shopping Store/Complex/ Malls in Srinagar will have to undergo for...

P6

LIMITS OF NAYA KASHMIR

By now, it seems that the stirrings of a political process in Jammu and Kashmir may have less to do with the latest version of the great game that is drawing to a chaotic climax in the region, or with the Biden administration's gentle reminders about the need to restore

THINK



P7 STATE

1ST CENSUS OF NOMADS STARTS IN SHOPIAN

The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shopian, Sachin Kumar Vaishya Monday kick started the first census of nomads in the district from Sirmal here by interacting with the Nomads so that the survey teams will facilitate them in every respect by



...HIGH ALERT IN JAMMU

Soldiers Foil Fresh Drone Attack On Garrison

Press Trust Of India

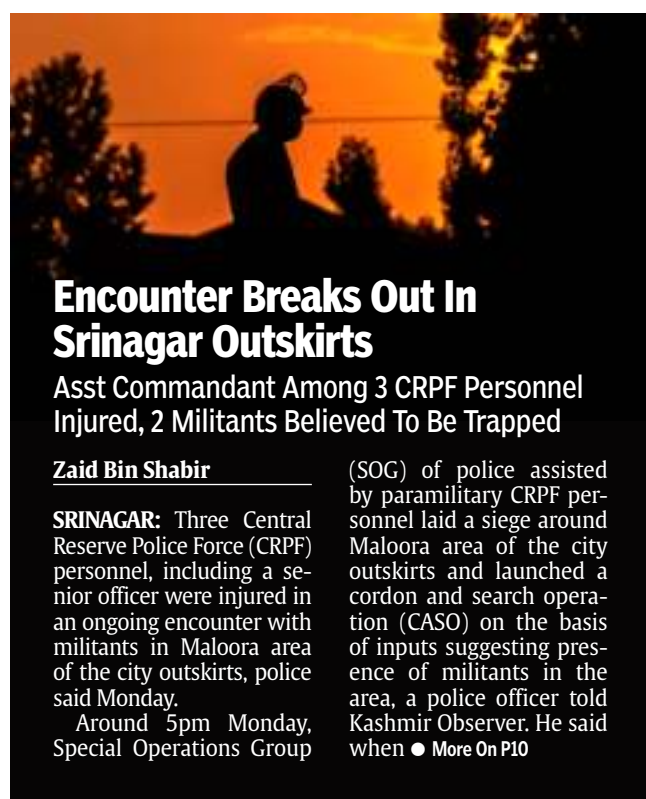
JAMMU: A fresh attempt to attack a military installation with the help of drones was foiled by alert Army sentries at the Ratnuchak-Kaluchak station who fired at the unmanned aerial vehicles that flew away, an incident that came hours after an IAF station saw the first militant attack using quadcopters.

The first drone was spotted at around 11.45 pm on Sunday followed by another at 2.40 am over the military station, which was witness to a militant attack in 2002 in which 31 people were killed, including 10 children.

Officials on Monday said that alert Army troops fired nearly two dozen rounds to bring down the drones hovering over its brigade headquarters.

"...two separate drone activities were spotted over Ratnuchak-Kaluchak military area by alert troops," Jammu-based Army PRO Lt Col Devender Anand said in a statement here.

He said a high alert was sounded immediately and Quick Reaction Teams (QRTs) engaged the drones with firing. "Both the drones flew away. A major threat was thwarted by the alertness and proactive approach. ● More On P10



Encounter Breaks Out In Srinagar Outskirts

Asst Commandant Among 3 CRPF Personnel Injured, 2 Militants Believed To Be Trapped

Zaid Bin Shabir

SRINAGAR: Three Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel, including a senior officer were injured in an ongoing encounter with militants in Maloora area of the city outskirts, police said Monday.

Around 5pm Monday, Special Operations Group

(SOG) of police assisted by paramilitary CRPF personnel laid a siege around Maloora area of the city outskirts and launched a cordon and search operation (CASO) on the basis of inputs suggesting presence of militants in the area, a police officer told Kashmir Observer. He said when ● More On P10

Slain SPO's Daughter Succumbs, Toll 3

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: A 23-year-old girl who was injured along with her parents after firing by suspected militants at their residence in Awantipora area of south Kashmir's Pulwama succumbed at a hospital here, officials said on Monday. Her parents- SPO Fayaz Ahmad (Father) and Raja Begum (Mother) were killed in the incident late last night.

A senior police officer said that Rafiya (23) succumbed to the wounds at SKIMS Soura, according to ● More On P10

Gupkar Alliance Puts Off Today's Meet

SRINAGAR: A meeting of the People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) -- an amalgam of six mainstream political parties in Jammu and Kashmir seeking the restoration of the special status of the erstwhile state which was scheduled to take place on Tuesday here has been postponed.

The meeting has been postponed because of some prior "personal" engagement of the alliance's ● More On P10

LG Launches Property Management Portal

Maximum Time For Delivery Of Any Service Capped At 21 Days



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir administration on Monday launched the property management portal allowing people to avail a

host of services and ease of access with maximum time for delivery of any service capped at 21 days.

Setting a new benchmark of accountability & transparency in ● More On P10

Pays Obeisance at Amarnath Shrine

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday offered prayers at the Amarnath cave shrine in south Kashmir's Anantnag district. According to an official spokesperson, the LG accompanied by Lt Gen DP Pandey, General Officer Commanding (GOC) 15 Corps; Pandurang K Pole, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir; Dr. Piyush Singla, Deputy Commissioner Anantnag; Abdul Jabbar, DIG South Kashmir Range (SKR); Anup Kumar Soni, Additional Chief Executive Officer, SASB besides officers of Army, Police, CRPF and the Shrine Board and performed puja at the cave shrine. ● More On P10

VACCINES FOR ALL
FREE FOR ALLWORLD'S LARGEST
FREE VACCINATION CAMPAIGN

Shri Manoj Sinha
Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor

Thank You PM Modi!

So far, free vaccines were available for people above 45 years of age.

From June 21st, free vaccines available for everyone above 18 years in government centres.

Visit www.cowin.gov.in to register and find vaccination centres near you!

Issued in Public Interest by: Health and Medical Education Department, J&K

SD/-
EXECUTIVE ENGINEER,
R&B SUB DIV. MAGAM

Sikh Leaders Seek Muslim Help To Rescue ‘Abducted’ Girls



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR:—Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) leader Manjinder Singh Sirsa on Monday said that some vested interests were trying to hijack the “forced conversion issue” and were giving it a political colour.

Sirsa, who landed in Srinagar on Sunday after the Sikh community held a protest demonstration against the alleged “forced conversation” of two Sikh girls from Srinagar.

He alleged that two more young women of their community have been “kidnapped” while only one was handed over to family the other one was still untraceable.

Sirsa, who is also the president of Delhi Gurudwara Prabhandak Committee, joined the protesters in Srinagar.

The incident has been given a political colour, with Sikhs demanding the introduction of anti-conversion law in Jammu and Kashmir, as has been implemented in Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.

However while addressing a press conference, Sirsa told reporters that he has apprised his community that some wested interests were trying to hijack the incident and bring out their own agenda.

“The communal harmony among the Kashmiri Sikhs and Muslims should not be damaged. Some people will try to make it a different issue. But we had a meeting today and I have informed

our people that we don’t have to allow it,” Sirsa told reporters.

He however said that the people from the majority community should stand by them as they have always come to rescue of Kashmiri Muslims.

“It is unfortunate that the majority community is silent on the issue. We have stood behind the Kashmiris during every good and bad time,” he said.

Sirsa further said the people from other communities are taunting them for rescuing Kashmiris in distress times as the community failed to speak on the incident.

He also slammed unionist leaders including the separatists for not speaking out on the issue.

While slamming the court order, Sirsa alleged the order was biased and they have strongly condemned it.

“We have sought a meeting with the Chief justice of India and we will register our protest regarding the order,” he said.

Sirsa also demanded an anti-conversion law in the Valley which would mandate parents’ permission for the marriage.

“We also expressed the demand of having an anti-conversion law which would mandate parents’ permission,” Mr Sirsa said.

He added that a Sikh delegation also discussed the issue of the local gurdwara land in the meeting with LG Sinha to which he readily agreed upon.

Forced Conversion Claims In Interfaith Marriage Denied

Auqib Javeed

SRINAGAR: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday assured action after Sikh groups in Jammu and Kashmir held protests, alleging that two young women were kidnapped, converted and married off to elderly men - charges that have been contested by authorities.

Police sources said on Monday that the allegations of forced conversion of a Sikh girl are false and that the girl has been recovered and handed over to her parents.

A section of the Sikh community staged protested against the alleged forced marriage and conversion of an 18-year-old Sikh woman with disabilities with a man from a different religion in Srinagar.

While the police handed over the woman to her parents and arrested the man on charges of kidnapping on Sunday, the woman in a statement before the court has said that she married him out of her own free will.

A top police official told

Kashmir Observer that they received a complaint from a Sikh family of Rainawari alleging that their daughter was “abducted” by a person from Khanyar nearby locality.

“We registered cases of abduction and recovered the girl and the boy,” the officer said, wishing anonymity.

Police officer also refused the claims that the man was 60-year old and has forcefully converted the girl to Islam.

“The boy is 29-years old and is right now behind bars. There is nothing like forced conversion. The girl confessed before police as well as the court that she had willingly escaped with the boy,” he said adding that “after recording the statements, the girl was handed over her parents.”

Meanwhile speaking to the media about the reported abduction and religious conversion of two Sikh girls in Kashmir, Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC) president Bibi Jagir Kaur informed that one of the two, who was married off to a Muslim man, does not want to reconvert and neither does she want to come back to her family.

Speaking to the media about the reported abduction and religious conversion of two Sikh girls in Kashmir, Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC) president Bibi Jagir Kaur informed that one of the two, who was married off to a Muslim man, does not want to reconvert and neither does she want to come back to her family.

According to a report by The Tribune, the SGPC president, while addressing the media in Patiala said, “As Sikhs, it is the family’s duty to educate and encourage their children to follow the Sikh way of life. We, as the SGPC can only preach about the religion but no one can force a religion on someone.”

She informed that the girl’s family and relatives had approached SGPC, requesting them to try and convince their daughter to revert to Sikhism and come back home. “The girl instead did not relent and as such, we can’t force anything on her,” Jagir Kaur said.

No Place For 'Forcible Conversion' In Islam: Grand Mufti

SRINAGAR: Kashmir’s Grand Mufti Nasir-ul-Islam Monday said that Sikhs were part and parcel of Kashmiri society and that there was no place for “forcible conversion in Islam”.

Reacting to what he termed as “disturbing reports” that a Sikh girl has been allegedly abducted and forcibly converted to another

religion and then married to man from another religion, Mufti said: “First of all, there is no place for conversion by force in Islam. Conversion to Islam has to be by one’s conviction and choice without any force or compulsion” .

Demanding strict action against the wrong doers Mufti said Sikhs are part and parcel

of Kashmiri community and no one will be allowed to disrespect their faith in the Valley.

“Let there be an impartial enquiry into the matter,” he said. He said Kashmir is known for maintaining communal harmony for years together and Sikhs are an important part of Kashmir’s age-old culture, ethos and communal brotherhood.

Unvaccinated Shoppers To Undergo Covid Test At Entry



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Mohammad Aijaz Asad Monday said that all unvaccinated persons visiting any Shopping Store/Complex/ Malls in Srinagar will have to undergo for Covid-19 testing and after his report comes negative will be given entry in the said shopping mall. Those having a prior 48

hours Negative report will not be subjected to repeat testing.

He said that the decision has been taken in the interest of larger public benefit so that no Covid-19 infected person puts the life of other people at risk. He also stressed that no positive person should mix with other people and said necessary action under law will be taken against such persons.

The DC urged the general public to cooperate with the administra-

tion for the larger public interest and ensure strict adherence to Covid-19 SOPs to save themselves, their family and the whole society from deadly coronavirus.

While interacting with the owners of various business establishments, the DC stressed them to ensure that no customer is given entry in their shops who are unvaccinated. He also asked them to maintain proper inventory of the customers with necessary details.

He said anti Covid Vaccination and Covid Appropriate Behavior is the only weapon with us to defeat Covid-19 pandemic and make us strong enough to fight the expected 3rd wave of Covid-19 as predicted by health experts. He urged all left out eligible persons of the district to get vaccinated at an earliest to make Srinagar district a safe place with regard to Covid-19.

City Subscribers Rue Poor Jio Network

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The subscribers of Jio in Srinagar city are aghast with the poor network and internet services in the capital city.

The subscribers alleged the service provider is playing down the issue despite being brought to the notice of the officials.

Aggrieved subscribers of Jio said they have been facing problems due to frequent disruptions in voice and internet services.

Many subscribers of Jio said that they face problems at various locations in the Srinagar city particularly in Dalgate, Boulevard, and Nishat.

They said that each time a call

is made, it reverts false bells.

Meanwhile, students attending online classes amid covid situation have also been facing problems as the signal keeps breaking.

A group of students said that they have made repeated calls to the authorities of Jio. “Nothing has been done to mitigate the issue,” they said.

The subscribers urged the officials to take their complaint seriously and address the issue at the earliest.

Meanwhile, the Public Relations Officer of Jio, Anjali Kachroo told Kashmiri observer that everything is fine on their end.

“I have got it checked and there is no issue,” she said.



Div Com Stresses On Speedy Transfer Of Land Parcels To SDA

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Divisional Commissioner (Div Com) Kashmir, Pandurang K Pole Monday stressed on expediting the transfer of land parcels and instructed concerned to ensure 500 Kanals of land transfer weekly to ensure speedy completion of the process.

He directed DCs to identify more land transfers for development of housing colonies under the housing mission.

The Div Com took stock of the land transfer progress of various land parcels including Khushipora, Shalteng, Shonglipora Noorbagh, Achin, Khushalsar Sazgaripora, Gandalf Dara, Chadpora, Kanihama, Rakh Arath Bemina and other land parcels.

He emphasised on the concerned to expedite the transfer of these land parcels and ensure removal of encroachments if any on war footing.

Four Training Courses Begin At Srinagar IMPARD Campus

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Director General J&K Institute of Management, Public Administration and Rural Development (IMPARD), Saurabh Bhagat Monday inaugurated four trainings courses at IMPARD’s main campus here.

The training courses which were inaugurated by the DG IMPARD include Disaster management with reference to flash floods and landslides; Geospatial technologies in

rural development; Social welfare administration and Civil Services Rules.

The officers and officials from the departments of Rural Development, Horticulture, School Education, Social Welfare etc are participating in these training courses.

Director General stressed the importance of training modules and updating new initiatives in training so that the officers and officials will remain abreast with recent trends to gain administrative skills.

LG Advisor Directs Officers To Expedite Works At City Shrines

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Advisor to Lieutenant Governor, Baseer Ahmad Khan Monday took stock of various developmental projects undertaken under centrally sponsored Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritualty Augmentation Drive (PRASAD) scheme at different shrines in Srinagar.

At Hazratbal the Advisor inspected the works carried out for beautification of Gate and Ornamental fencing carried out by the Tourism department. The Advisor asked the officers to complete the works before the end of next month and directed them to stick to the timeline strictly.

He also inspected the wuzu khana (ablution centre) and asked them to make it functional within 15 days by connecting it to the reliable water supply.

The Advisor also visited the construction site of multi level parking at Hazratbal shrine. The Advisor directed them to complete it before the year ending. He said that the facility is going to streamline the traffic on this busy route especially on the auspicious days of Eid Milad and other festivals.

The Advisor directed the Wakf Board officers to have the beautification of the surroundings done by aesthetically landscaping the area



around the Hazratbal shrine.

At Gurudwara Chatti Padshahi, Rainawari the Advisor asked the Director to accommodate the demands of the Gurudwara committee so that the religious shrine has all the facilities available to make the devotees comfortable.

He asked them to complete the canopy work forthwith and invite tenders in a week’s time for other beautification works like parking lot, devri path, illumination and khatambandh. He urged upon them to complete all the works within three months.

At Khan-kahi-Moulla sufi shrine the Advisor was informed that the papermachie work has been completed and

the exterior facilities are being augmented. It was given that the project’s estimated cost is about Rs 4.15 crore.

The Advisor asked them to install all the fire fighting equipments like fire hydrants, smoke alarms besides lightning conductors in the shrine so that the heritage site remains safe from any accidental damage.

He advised the officers to look for acquisition of the land and building in front of the gate and explore options for relocation of electric transformer there. He asked them to develop the ghat on the river flowing behind the shrine so that devotees take the benefit of water transport facility to be started soon.

DIAL-EMMA



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

AIRPORTS

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311



RAILWAYS



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

HIGHWAY STATUS

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

This Day in History

- 1534 - Jacques Cartier discovers Prince Edward Islands Canada
- 1552 - Italian physician and mathematician Girolamo Cardano arrives in Edinburgh, Scotland to treat John Hamilton, Archbishop of St Andrews for over two thousand gold crowns
- 1659 - The Russians, led by Prince Trubetskoy are defeated by the Ukrainian armies of Ivan Vyhovsky in the Battle of Konotop.
- 1755 - 515 prominent filipinos baptized as Catholic
- 1767 - British pass Townshend Revenue Act levying taxes on America, helping to intensify opposition to British rule
- 1776 - Mission Dolores founded at San Francisco Bay by Lieutenant José Joaquín Moraga and Francisco Palóu
- 1786 - Alexander Macdonell and over five hundred Roman Catholic highlanders
- 1850 - British ex-Prime Minister Sir Robert Peel falls off his horse; dies three days later
- 1857 - Battle at Chinhat (Indies rebel under Barkat Ahmed beat British)
- 1858 - Treaty of Algun, China cedes north bank of Amur River to Russia
- 1863 - Battle at Westminster, Maryland: Federal assault
- 1880 - France annexes Otaheite (Tahiti)
- 1900 - The Imperial Chinese Court issues what is essentially a declaration of war against the foreigners in China and blames hostilities on them, giving license to Boxers for even greater ferocity
- 1911 - Freiherr Gautsch von Frankenthurn becomes Minister-President of Austria
- 1913 - The attack by Bulgarian General Michael Savov on Greek and Serbian positions leads to beginning of the second Balkan War
- 1916- Boeing aircraft flies for 1st time
- 1929- 1st high-speed jet wind tunnel completed Langley Field Ca
- 1932- USSR & China sign non-aggression treaty
- 1943- US forces landed at Nassau Bay, near Salamaua, New Guinea
- 1943- Germany begins withdrawing U-boats from North Atlantic in anticipation of the Allied invasion of Europe
- 1949- US troops withdraw from Korea after WW II
- 1961- Launch of Transit 4a, with 1st nuclear power supply (SNAP-3)
- 1966- In the Vietnam War, US planes bombed Hanoi & Haiphong for 1st time
- 1966-US bombs fuel storage facilities near North Vietnamese cities
- 1967- Israel removes barricades, re-unifying Jerusalem
- 1972- USSR launches Prognoz 2 into earth orbit (549/200,000 km)
- 1981- Bomb attack on headquarters of Islamic Party in Teheran, 72 killed
- 1985-NASA launches Intelsat VA F-11
- 2002- Naval clashes between South Korea and North Korea lead to the death of six South Korean sailors and sinking of a North Korean vessel.
- 2008- Thomas Beatie, the world's first pregnant man, gives birth to a daughter
- 2012 -15,000 Japanese anti-nuclear protesters blockade the Japanese Prime Minister's office in Tokyo
- 2015- Beijing Times reports 30% of the Great Wall of China has disappeared due to natural forces and stealing of bricks



HIJRI
CALENDAR

18

ZIQADAT
-UL-
HARAAAM

1442

PRAYERS

FAJR

3: 37

ZUHR

12: 33

ASR

5:34

MAGRIB

7:50

ISHA

9:31

From KO Archives

Ravishankar & APHC Brewing A New Recipe For Kashmir

SRINAGAR - The attendance by separatist Hurriyat leaders at an international peace conference in Srinagar addressed by spiritual leader Sri Sri Ravishankar, famed for his 'Art of living' has sparked off a debate.

And the debate will be lively, given the fact that the two entities, Hurriyat and Ravishankar are as different from each other as 'chalk and cheese'.

While the Hurriyat is a conglomeration of 20 odd separatist groups, Ravishankar is a spiritual leader preaching the gospel of peace and amicable livelihood among people.

Also interesting is the fact that Hurriyat in spite of refusing to take part in the electoral process in Jammu and Kashmir, claims itself to be the sole representatives of the Kashmiris.

It is in this perspective that the attendance by these separatist leaders at the peace conference has generated heat in the cool climate of Srinagar.

Following Pakistan President General Pervez Musharraf’s frank statement that, -Islamabad cannot force New Delhi to accommodate Hurriyat into Indo-Pak bilateral dialogue, and his subsequent advice to them to separately hold talks with India, the Hurriyat is awaiting call from New Delhi.

Politicians from Pakistan controlled Kashmir (PcK) have in recent times, said that Kashmir talks should include Kashmiri Pandits and Ladakhis.

It may be that by attending a peace conference by a guru like Sri Sri Ravishankar, the Hurriyat is trying to gain acceptability among the Kashmiris including the minority Kashmiri Hindus.

Hurriyat leader Maulana Abbas Ansari said in the backdrop of the conference: "We should not put emphasis on the person but the content of the speech. He spoke on my religion in his own way. As we are all human beings, we would have love towards each other but it is not so." (ANI)

(Kashmir Observer, 29 June, 2005)

US Raids Slammed As ‘Blatant Violation’ Of Iraq’s Sovereignty

Agencies

Iraq’s Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhemi has condemned the overnight US air attack on Iran-backed armed groups in Iraq and Syria which a monitor said killed at least seven fighters.

In a statement on Sunday, the US military said it targeted operational and weapons storage facilities at two locations in Syria and one location in Iraq in response to drone attacks against the US personnel and facilities in Iraq.

The attacks came at the direction of US President Joe Biden, the second time he has ordered retaliatory attacks against Iran-backed militia since taking office five months ago.

“We condemn the US air attack that targeted a site last night on the Iraqi-Syrian border, which represents a blatant and unacceptable vi-

Human Rights said at least seven fighters were killed and several others wounded.

Syria’s state-run SANA news agency said one child had been killed and at least three other people were wounded.

Threat of retaliation

Two Iraqi militia officials told The Associated Press news agency in Baghdad that four militiamen were killed in the air attacks near the border with Syria.

Armed groups aligned with Iran in a statement named four members of the Kataib Sayyid al-Shuhada faction they said were killed in the attack on the Syria-Iraq border. They pledged to retaliate.

“We will remain the shield defending our beloved nation, and we are fully ready ... to respond and take revenge,” it said.

Since the start of the year, there have been more than 40 attacks



olation of Iraqi sovereignty and Iraqi national security,” said a statement from the Iraqi PM’s office.

John Kirby, a spokesman for the Pentagon, said in a statement that the Kataib Hezbollah and Kataib Sayyid al-Shuhada military factions were among the “several Iran-backed militia groups” that had used the targeted facilities.

“The United States took necessary, appropriate, and deliberate action designed to limit the risk of escalation – but also to send a clear and unambiguous deterrent message,” Kirby said, adding that the targets were selected because “these facilities are utilized by Iran-backed militias that are engaged in unmanned aerial vehicle [UAV] attacks against US personnel and facilities in Iraq”.

The statement did not say whether anyone was killed or injured, but the UK-based Syrian Observatory for

against US interests in Iraq, where 2,500 American troops are deployed as part of an international coalition to fight the armed group ISIL (ISIS).

Saeed Khatibzadeh, Iran’s foreign ministry spokesman, also reacted to the attacks.

“The US still continues the wrong path in the region. What we see today is not only the sanctions but also following the wrong policies of the previous administration with actions they carry out in the region,” said Khatibzadeh.

Al Jazeera’s Mahmoud Abdelwahed, reporting from the Iraqi capital Baghdad, described the US attacks as “significant”.

“The PMF say that they will attack American military facilities with missiles. Politicians affiliated with the PMF have also been tweeting, saying the United States only understands the language of force,” he said.

Iran’s Drones Can Travel Over 7,000Km: State Media

Agencies

Iran’s Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Commander Major General Hossein Salaami on Sunday announced that the country had drones with a range of 7,000 km. “They can fly, return home, and make landing wherever they are planned to,” General Salaami said at the Baqiyatallah University of Medical Sciences in Tehran.

Iran has had experience using drones since the war with Iraq in the 1980s. However, in recent times, Iranian-made drones have been used by Iranian proxies across the middle east. The 2019 Abqaiq-Khuraib attack on Saudi Aramco facilities that crippled the country’s oil production abilities for days—purportedly carried out by the Houthis that the kingdom was at war against in Yemen—reportedly featured Iran-made missiles and drones, Saudi Arabia claimed afterwards.

While Iranian drones like the Shahed 129 are known to have a ferry range of under 2,000km with an endurance of 24, the existence of a 7,000km-range drone has not yet been confirmed by Iran. In May, the IRGC unveiled its Ghazeh armed drone, touting a flight time of 2,000km with the ability to carry 13 bombs. However, in 2011, a US-made RQ-170 Sentinel was captured by Iranian forces, granting Iran access to sophisticated UAV technology. Iran later displayed seemingly reverse en-



gineering copies with its Shahed 171 Simorgh and Saegheh UAVs.

Iran is known to have supplied drones to allied militias like Hezbollah in Lebanon and the Houthis in Yemen, including “kamikaze UAVs” designed to crash into their targets. According to a Reuters report, Iranian proxies like the Houthis manufacture their weapons locally using foreign expertise and parts smuggled in from Iran. Drone attacks by Iran-backed militias in Iraq have also increased, prompting concern from US military officials. These fixed wing drones fly low so as not to be picked up by defensive systems. Such drone strikes have targeted US facilities in recent times.

The use of armed drones by proxies has increasingly spread around conflict zones in the world. India on Sunday witnessed its first instance of an IED-laden blown striking a military airport in Jammu and Kashmir.

In January, Iran had unveiled a range of suicide drones it claimed could hit targets 4,000km away. Last year, the IRGC unveiled fast-attack boats that were equipped with Ababil-2 suicide drones that it deployed to the Sea of Oman and Persian Gulf.

Delta Threat Looms As European Union Revives Travel With Covid Pass

Agence France-Presse

BRUSSELS: An European Union (EU)-wide Covid certificate for easier travel comes into force on Thursday, just in time for Europe’s busy summer vacation period, but the more-infectious Delta variant is already threatening to curtail its use.

The EU document -- sporting a QR code and available in digital form on smartphones or hard copy -- shows whether the bearer is vaccinated with one of the EU’s approved jabs (from BioNTech/Pfizer, AstraZeneca, Moderna or Johnson & Johnson), has recovered from an infection, or has a recent negative Covid test.

Under an EU law adopted this month, the certificate does away with the need for quarantines or further testing when travelling between the EU’s 27 countries or four associated European nations (Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and Liechtenstein).

Twenty EU countries have already started issuing and accepting it, with the others expected to follow suit shortly.

But a surge in the Delta variant, first detected in India and now rampant in former EU member Britain, could trigger an “emergency brake” provision suspending its acceptance.

With Delta becoming dominant in Portugal, Germany has announced a ban on incoming travellers from there except for its own citizens or residents.

Even they are required to quarantine for two weeks, regardless of vaccination or test status.

Portugal and Spain on Monday abruptly announced entry restrictions for travellers from Britain, with Lisbon requiring them to be fully vaccinated and Madrid demanding proof of vaccination or a negative Covid test.

Britain’s Delta Problem

A European Commission spokesman said on Monday that Britain “is now working with us” on aligning international Covid travel require-



ments with the aim of having mutually accepted documents.

But Britain’s rise in Delta infections -- giving it an infection rate more than four times that of the EU -- is generating deep concern on the continent.

At an EU summit last week, German Chancellor Angela Merkel criticised southern EU countries for allowing in Britons with few, if any, Covid checks.

The move gives Brits access to the entire passport-free Schengen zone and has brought them in proximity to vacationing Europeans.

Under non-binding EU guidelines, all member states were urged to allow in only fully vaccinated travellers from outside the bloc, or those with urgent reasons to visit.

But Portugal, Spain and Greece initially opted for a laissez-faire attitude, hoping to revive their vital tourist sectors.

That calculation is now changing under pressure from Germany’s decisions and realisation that Delta infection rates in the EU could match current British levels within weeks.

A second European Commission spokesman said that an EU panel composed of representatives of member states and the Brussels executive was meeting on Monday to discuss “the possible application of the emergency brake”.

Vaccination Hope

Evidence on whether vacci-

nations keep down infections, hospitalisations and deaths even from the Delta variant will be decisive for its impact on the EU Covid certificate, from scuppering the programme altogether to simply adding a note of caution to the summer rollout.

Britain, which registered its sudden rise in Delta infections in April, still has relatively low case numbers.

Some MPs in the governing Conservative party argue that vaccinations have “broken the link” between infection and deaths and the country should drop all Covid restrictions on July 19.

But many EU leaders are more cautious, hoping to slow the spread of the Delta variant to give time for more jabs. Governments recall how surges in past variants saw lags of many weeks between spikes in infections and death rates.

AFP statistics collating official health data from across the EU show that 49.6 per cent of the bloc’s population has now received at least one vaccine dose (compared with 65.3 per cent in Britain).

So far, 31.5 per cent in the EU are considered completely vaccinated.

Covid experts had initially believed “herd immunity” could be reached with 70 per cent of a population fully vaccinated, but now judge it would need 80 per cent or more immunised, given Delta’s infectiousness and the fact vaccines are less effective against it.

Vaccination Against Covid-19 May Not Be Enough, Masks, Distancing Must Continue: WHO

By IANS

As the highly contagious Delta variant of coronavirus disease is spreading rapidly across the globe, being vaccinated may not be enough, people must continue wearing masks, maintain social distancing and other Covid-appropriate behaviours, the World Health Organization (WHO) has said.

According to the global agency, the Delta variant (B16172), first detected in India in October last year, has now spread to at least 92 countries, CNBC reported. It is becoming the dominant variant of the disease worldwide.

“People cannot feel safe just because they had the two doses. They still need to protect themselves,” Mariangela Simao, WHO assistant director-general for access to medicines and health products, was quoted as saying during a news briefing.

“Vaccine alone won’t stop community transmission.



“People need to continue to use masks consistently, be in ventilated spaces, hand hygiene ... the physical distance, avoid crowding. This still continues to be extremely important, even if you’re vaccinated when you have a community transmission ongoing,” Simao said.

Meanwhile, according to new data from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), more than 4,100 people have been hospitalised or died with Covid-19 in the country, even after being fully vaccinated, the report said.

About 3,907 people were hospitalised with Covid after two-doses of vaccinations, but more than 1,000 of those patients were asymptomatic or their hospitalisations weren’t related to Covid-19, the CDC said. Similarly, 142 of 750 deaths of fully vaccinated people after Covid, were asymptomatic or unrelated to Covid-19, according to the CDC data.

Even as Covid vaccines helped drive down the number of new infections and deaths, many countries, including the US and Israel, have largely done away with masks and pandemic-related restrictions.

Israel had lifted the mandate on masks on June 15, following one of the world’s fastest successful vaccine roll out. However, about 50 per cent of vaccinated adults in the country have now been infected with the Delta variant, forcing it to re-impose wearing face masks indoors, the Wall Street Journal reported.

Fighting Around Afghan City Displaces Thousands Of Families

Agencies

Days of fighting between the Taliban and Afghanistan’s government forces have made about 5,000 families flee from their homes in Kunduz, officials said Saturday, with the insurgents continuing to surround the key northern city.

The Taliban briefly seized the city twice in recent years but have now captured the surrounding districts and a nearby border crossing with Tajikistan.

“About 5,000 families have been displaced by the fighting,” Gulam Sakhi Rasouli, director of the Kunduz Refugees and Repatriation Department, told Agence France-Presse (AFP).

He said up to 2,000 of those families had fled to Kabul and other provinces.

Many people took refuge in a school in the city and had been provided with food and other relief items, Kunduz provincial council member Gulam Rabbani Rabbani said.

displaced across the province of Kunduz following a month of sporadic clashes between the insurgents and government forces, Rasouli added.

He said authorities were unable to provide relief items to all the displaced families across the province.

Kunduz city’s public health director Ehsanullah Fazli said that since the fighting erupted more than a week ago, 29 civilians have been killed and 225 wounded.

Fighting has raged across Kunduz province for days, with the Taliban and Afghan forces engaged in bloody battles.

On Tuesday the insurgents captured Shirkhan Bandar, Afghanistan’s main border crossing with Tajikistan, in one of their most significant gains in recent months.

Since early May, the Taliban have launched several major offensives targeting government forces across



Video footage taken by AFP showed dozens of people, many of them women and children, sitting inside tents set up in a school compound.

“We are six families living together here for three days ... you can see my children are sitting on the ground,” Juma Khan, who fled with his family, told AFP.

“We have still not received any help. A team came today to survey some families but after a few minutes they left,” said Akhtar Mohammad, who has also taken refuge in the school. Another 8,000 families have been

the rugged countryside and say they have seized nearly 90 of the country’s more than 400 districts.

Many of their claims are disputed by the government and difficult to independently verify.

Violence surged after the United States military began the withdrawal of its last remaining 2,500 troops from the country to meet the Sept. 11 deadline announced by President Joe Biden to end America’s longest-ever war.

Peace talks between the two warring sides remain deadlocked in Qatar.

Israel Demolishes Palestinian Bedouin Village Of Al-Araqib For 189Th Time



Agencies

The Palestinian Information Center, citing local sources, reported on Monday that Israeli troops raided the village in the Negev region with bulldozers and destroyed every single Palestinian house.

Dozens of its inhabitants, including children and elderly people, have become displaced and should suffer from the harsh weather of the desert for a while before they could build new makeshift homes.

The residents of Araqib village live in a constant state of fear due to the fact that Israeli troops may raid and raze their homes at any moment after they manage to build them again.

However, Israel’s criminal policy of forced displacement of Palestinians has strengthened the residents’ resolve to rebuild their villages even if Israel demolishes them a thousand times.

Al-Araqib is one of the 35 Bedouin villages considered “unrecognized” by Israel. The areas are

denied access to the national water and electricity grids, lack basic infrastructure, and receive no health and educational services.

The village, with about 220 residents, was first demolished in 2010, but has since then been rebuilt multiple times by its residents and activists.

Israeli authorities have been carrying out forced evacuations against Bedouins since 1949.

The demolition of Bedouin homes is part of the regime’s massive land-grab policy, which will forcefully displace thousands of people.

Tel Aviv has so far refused to recognize the rights of Palestinian Bedouins and denies them access to basic services. Rights groups accuse Tel Aviv of pursuing a policy of transferring the indigenous Palestinian population from the Negev region to other areas in a bid to make room for the expansion of illegal settlements.

More than 600,000 Israelis live in over 230 settlements built since the 1967 Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories of the West Bank and East Jerusalem al-Quds.

All Israeli settlements are illegal under international law as they are built on occupied land. The UN Security Council has condemned Israel’s settlement activities in the occupied territories in several resolutions.

NEWS MAKERS

Man Jumps From Moving Plane At Los Angeles Airport



By Associated Press

A passenger was taken to the hospital Friday night after jumping out of a moving plane at Los Angeles International Airport, authorities said. United Express flight 5365, op-

erated by SkyWest, was pulling away from a gate shortly after 7 p.m. when the man unsuccessfully tried to breach the cockpit, then managed to open the service door and jumped down the emergency slide onto the tarmac, according to the airport and Sky-

West.

The man was taken into custody on the taxiway, treated for injuries that were not life-threatening and taken to the hospital, authorities said. The twin-engine Embraer 175, which was headed to Salt Lake City, returned to its gate, the airport said.

It was still there hours later. Nobody else aboard the plane was injured.

The FBI was investigating. It was the second disruption at LAX in two days.

On Thursday, a driver plowed through a chain-link fence at a FedEx cargo facility and went onto the airfield, crossing runways as police chased the car.

Police said the driver was detained and no injuries were reported. Two runways were briefly closed.

Catalans Jeer Spanish King Amid Efforts To Ease Tensions

Supporters of independence for Catalonia protested Sunday against a visit to its regional capital Barcelona by Spain’s King Felipe VI, as high-level efforts to allay tensions there gain new momentum.

The king was in Barcelona to help mark the opening of a major international wireless trade fair, called Mobile World Congress, which begins Monday.

Demonstrations against visits to Catalonia by the monarch, who is a symbol of rule from Madrid and who has criticized separatist movements, are common.

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The Catalan regional president, Pere Aragonès, who supports Catalan independence,

is due to meet in Madrid on Tuesday with Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez. It will be their first encounter since Aragonès became regional chief earlier this year.

The talks come exactly a week after Sánchez’s government pardoned nine Catalan separatists who were in prison because of their attempts to break their region away from Spain.

The pardons were seen as a goodwill gesture by Sánchez as he seeks a breakthrough on an issue that has dogged Spain for decades.

Catalonia’s separatist movement, which is supported by roughly half the 7.5 million residents in the region, wants to create a republic for the wealthy northeast corner of Spain.-AP

KASHMIR OBSERVER

Printed & Published by Sajjad Haider on behalf of the
Kashmir Observer LLP
Published from: # 5- Boulevard, Srinagar-190001
Printed at: KT Press Pvt. Ltd, Rangreth Ind Area, Srinagar.
RNI Registration No: 69503/98
Postal Registration No-L/159/KO/SK/2014-16
Editor-in-Chief : Sajjad Haider
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K O V I E W

Point of the PM's meeting

A lot has been written about the June 24 meeting between prime minister Narendra Modi and J&K leaders. The drift of the analyses hasn't set much store by the meeting, terming it more an exercise in public relations than a genuine outreach to Kashmir. And it's true: the takeaway of the meeting isn't cause for any celebration.

In his statement, the PM stressed expediting the delimitation exercise that is expected to enhance the seats of J&K assembly. More of these are believed to go to the former state's Jammu division. To this end a delimitation commission has already been in place since the last over a year and it may soon complete its exercise.

The enhancement of the Assembly seats, the PM's statement indicates, will be followed by holding of the elections within the union territory framework. Though the statement does not say it, the statehood is hoped to be followed by the elections. And it is not clear whether this statehood would be full or a truncated one where the real power would vest with the governor.

So actually there is nothing concrete that has come out of this meeting. The centre has more or less stayed true to its ideological course on Kashmir and ironically wants now Kashmiri leaders to be its partners in this pursuit.

In Kashmir, the run up to the meeting was marked by a hectic political activity. The leaders of the People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration met at the residence of the alliance's chairman and National Conference chief Farooq Abdullah to decide their course of action. Earlier, the parties had held consultations within their own ranks on Delhi's outreach. It didn't take them much time to decide to attend the meeting.

In their interaction with the media, the PAGD leaders reiterated that the restoration of Article 370 is their single point agenda. But what reportedly happened during the meeting with the PM hasn't given any confidence that they have stayed true to their word. Going by the reports in the media, the accent in the meeting has been on the return of statehood. Leaders have generally eschewed demanding the restoration of Article 370. The PAGD members also are reported to have talked about the repealed constitutional provision in subdued tones. This has not gone down well in Kashmir where people expected the PAGD and the other leaders to forcefully raise their issues, particularly the withdrawal of J&K autonomy.

On its part the centre hasn't departed even marginally from its Kashmir agenda. Only difference now is that it wants to take the entire spectrum of mainstream politicians on board its Kashmir project. And the latter, it appears, is willing to play the ball.

OTHER OPINION

Future State: On Centre's J&K outreach

Restoration of Statehood should be at the start of the revival of the democratic process in J&K

Political leaders from Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) who attended a meeting called by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday came away with a sense of optimism: restoration of Statehood is somewhere on the horizon, even if a total reversal of the withdrawal of the special status remains unlikely. The meeting itself was a surprise, and came at a time when expectations of any quick resolution were very low. But the fact that a spectrum of political leaders got the invitation from the Centre without any set pre-conditions had raised hopes of progress. Eventually, the meeting gave reason to Kashmir's political class to believe in possibilities that did not seem to exist just a week earlier. But restoration of Statehood to J&K, which was reorganised as two Union Territories, should be the first step in the revival of the democratic political process and not the culmination of some elaborate negotiation strategy. Mr. Modi described the meeting as an "important step in the ongoing efforts towards a developed and progressive J&K". While committing to strengthen grassroots democracy, he called for quick delimitation of constituencies, after which legislative polls could be held. Home Minister Amit Shah insisted the restoration of Statehood will follow delimitation and elections. Not surprisingly, many participants were not convinced by this sequence suggested by the Centre. But the positives are that the long meeting was freewheeling, without rancour and all parties were united in the demand for the restoration of Statehood. Most participants also sought an assurance to return the domiciliary rights concerning land and State services, but considering the BJP's strident position, this might be difficult.

As Mr. Modi argued, the focus must be on the future, but this will have to be built on the trust and cooperation of the people of J&K. Decades of turmoil have created unique problems of governance and mistrust. The NC and the PDP, with all their deficiencies, remain India's best messengers to the people of the Valley. In deciding to engage them, and other parties, the Centre has made a departure from its earlier position. By seizing the opportunity, these parties also showed maturity. Global and domestic factors might have nudged the Centre towards what appears to be a tentative accommodation of other viewpoints. But the political challenge to its decision to hollow out Article 370 is all but fading. The restoration of Statehood has been placed so far down the path that any discussion on special status is unthinkable in the near future. In that sense, the Centre and the BJP have irreversibly reset the conversation on J&K. That success should not blind them to the resentment among the people. Mr. Modi and Mr. Shah will have to look forward to the future rather than being bound by their past rhetoric on Kashmir.

The Hindu



PAGD's Meet with PM: An Opportunity Lost

Altaf Hussain

The recent meet of Kashmiri leaders with prime minister Narendra Modi was both an opportunity and challenge for leaders of the PAGD (People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration) or Gupkar Alliance, for short.

These leaders had already lost much of their relevance and credibility after the abrogation of Articles 370 and 35A. At least Farooq Abdullah and his son, Omar had had a meeting with the prime minister, a couple of days before the Modi govt took the extreme step of withdrawing the special status of Jammu and Kashmir and breaking the state into two Union territories. It is hard to believe that the father-son duo were too naive to size up the situation. But they fumbled for a proper response. All they and other leaders of the Gupkar Alliance, including Mehbooba Mufti, did was to commit themselves to protecting Art. 370 or Jammu and Kashmir's internal sovereignty. For this, they resolved to seek an audience with the President of India, the Prime Minister and leaders of the Opposition parties across India.

An interesting thing happened then. A few workers of the National Conference told a photo journalist at Farooq Abdullah's residence that they had been pleading with Omar Abdullah to give a call for Eidgah Chalo or March to Eidgah. They lamented that he was not listening to them. Such was their desperation that they asked the photojournalist to intervene which he politely refused.

Many suspect that the subsequent arrest of Farooq, Omar, Mehbooba and other leaders of the PAGD was actually a face-saving for them. This suspicion became stronger when none of these leaders did anything of consequence after their release from prison. The only decision, right or wrong, they took was to participate in the District Development Council polls with the apparent aim to prevent BJP from making inroads in Kashmir Valley and secular constituencies elsewhere.

Omar Abdullah is a politician and is, as such, supposed to put up a political fight. He has, instead, been indulging in escapism. Mehbooba Mufti has apparently taken a tougher stand. But in her case too, it is rhetoric sans (without) any practical plans.

Ahead of their meeting with the PM, the PAGD leaders spoke with huge energy and enthusiasm to assure ordinary people of Kashmir that they would represent their sentiment. They said they would demand what was rightfully theirs and had been wrongfully snatched from them. This was in sharp contrast with the suspicions and wariness of ordinary people who feared a security lockdown like the one in 2019 on the day of the meeting or immediately after. Rumours flew fast and thick that the Muslim-majority Kashmir Valley might be dismembered. So suspi-

cious were people of the government's intentions that even the cancellation of this year's Amsrnsth Yatra was seen, by many, as a step dictated by considerations of politics and law and order rather than by the Covid situation. Some people fled the Valley for fear that the internet might be suspended again.

There fears of a fresh lockdown or internet blockade have not come true. But the PAGD leadership has not generated any hope either. The only outcome of their meeting with the PM is that the govt will complete the delimitation process and then hold elections to the Assembly. Restoration of statehood will, if at all, happen later. As for Articles 370 or 35A, nothing has been heard about them.

It is important to note that the delimitation process evokes strong fears among ordinary Kashmiris who see it as part of a conspiracy to give more seats to Hindu majority Jammu region. What makes the people more suspicious is that while all over India delimitation is due only in 2026, it has been advanced only in Jammu and Kashmir.

Coming back to Article 370. Omar Abdullah said in an interview that NC has not given up its demand about J&K's special status. But he emphasised that his party would not take the law into its own hands. He said the fight for J&K's special status would be fought in the Supreme Court. He hasn't answered the question as to how many people share his optimism about the Supreme Court restoring Article 370. In any case, it is for the lawyers to fight it out in the judiciary. Omar Abdullah is a politician and is, as such, supposed to put up a political fight. He has, instead, been indulging in escapism. Mehbooba Mufti has apparently taken a tougher stand. But in her case too, it is rhetoric sans (without) any practical plans. Some say, she has, instead, been playing victim because she is more often than not prevented by police from visiting any family for condolence.

Coming back to the PM's meeting with PAGD leaders, it has been a disappointment for ordinary people in Kashmir. They find that leaders (from PAGD and other parties) called to the meeting with the PM proved themselves either collaborators or a spineless lot. People may still vote for PAGD in elections. But that'll be more a vote against BJP than for Abdullahs or Muftis.

Many observers are now convinced that PM Modi talked to Kashmiri leaders only to deflect international pressure. There are so many indications of such pressure. Recently, the President of the UN General Assembly, while on a visit to Pakistan, talked of the Kashmir problem and the need to address it. In an article captioned "India in geopolitical churn, PM Narendra Modi forced to dial back" Sushant Singh, Senior Fellow, Centre for Policy Research, writes: "It is no secret that the Modi government has been at the receiving end of the Biden administration's strident advocacy of democratic principles and human rights concerns, though these tough conversations have taken place behind closed doors so far." He further writes: "Earlier this month, during a Congressional hearing on 'Democracy in the Indo-Pacific', Acting Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia Dean Thompson was asked pointed questions by Congresswoman Chrissy Houlihan on Kashmir. Thompson's reply

The crisis in Ladakh happened immediately after the abrogation of J&K's special status. India now faces the threat of two front war (with China and Pakistan). This, according to observers, has prompted India to resume back channel diplomacy with Pakistan

was telling: "Kashmir is one area where we have urged them to return to normalcy as quickly as possible. We've seen some steps taken: the release of prisoners, the restoration of 4G access, things of that nature. There are other -- electoral -- steps we'd like to see them take and that we have encouraged them to do and will continue to do so."

Then there is the China factor. The crisis in Ladakh happened immediately after the abrogation of J&K's special status. India now faces the threat of two front war (with China and Pakistan). This, according to observers, has prompted India to resume back channel diplomacy with Pakistan. Late last year, Pakistan PM Imran Khan's National Security Advisor, Moeed Yusuf revealed during an interview to Karan Thapar that India was keen to have talks with his country. "We have got a message of desire for conversation" he told Mr Thapar.

Of late, Pakistan has made any formal talks with India conditional on India undoing its Aug 2019 decision on Kashmir which impacts demography in the erstwhile state. Incidentally, this Pakistani demand is a far cry from India making bilateral talks conditional on Pakistan ending her support to armed militancy in Kashmir.

Sushant Singh makes an important point. He says the Indian "government's refusal to restore statehood to J&K suggests that the backchannel talks with Pakistan have stalled, as Islamabad focusses on US troop withdrawal from Afghanistan."

So, whatever may have been PM Modi's compulsion to "dial back", the PAGD leaders have once again squandered an opportunity to restore their own credibility. Ordinary people are more convinced than ever before that Kashmir is too big an issue for Kashmiri leaders and will be resolved between India and Pakistan through peace or through war. Even separatist political leaders have lost much of their relevance. They have kind of gone into hibernation, occasionally issuing statements on social and health issues, rather than political.

Views expressed in the article are the author's own and do not necessarily represent the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer

The author is a veteran journalist who has served as the BBC bureau chief in Srinagar



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All letters intended for publication must include the writer's name and address, even if a pseudonym is used. Letters are edited as clarity, space and accuracy of expression require. Our publishing a letter does not mean we agree with everything or even anything in it. -EDITOR

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Rising Suicides, Dying Future

One of the significant features of a conflict zone is that there is permanent chaos, confusion, hatred, mistrust, suspicion and insecurity of life. Human relations whether social, economic, political or religious are always defined in terms of negativity. Life is meaningless and the future is uncertain. Ideologies are marked

with aggression and approach towards dialogue is individualistic and self-righteous. Life here, in these societies, is less valued and considered an ordinary thing and its loss is hardly regretted.

The Valley of Kashmir, being a conflict zone, is in serious crises and its survival is at stake because its youth has pushed them-

selves towards the negative trend of suicide. We have seen an undesirable rise in suicide tendencies, attempts and deaths. This increase has shaken the hope, courage and future prospects of our collective conscience.

We need to understand that fundamentally, suicide in its essence, is actually caused by a mental health

issue and must be treated as such. If ignored, it will increase day by day. A society is as good as its youth and when it is the young suffering the most, the situation is dire and the matter most urgent

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Looming Droughts: An Imminent Global Crisis

Drought is a hidden global crisis that risks becoming “the next pandemic” if countries do not take urgent action on their water and land management

Asad Mirza

“The Climate Change threat is really more dangerous and omnipresent. Until and unless the world’s leaders act in unison and honour their commitment to raise and spend \$100 billion, to tackle the threat as per the Paris Agreement and take some coordinated and concerted measures at Glasgow, the human race may face a dire threat

A recent UN report states that at least 1.5 billion people have been directly affected by drought during the current century, and its economic cost has been estimated at \$124bn (£89bn). The true cost is likely to be many times higher as estimates do not include much of the impact in developing countries.

The report, “Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk reduction: Special Report on Drought 2021”, published earlier this month will be part of discussions at the next climate talks known as COP26, which are scheduled to take place in Glasgow, UK in November.

Mami Mizutori, the UN secretary general’s special representative for disaster risk reduction in the foreword of the report says that drought is on the verge of becoming the next pandemic and there is no vaccine to cure it. Most of the world will be living with water stress in the next few years. Demand will outstrip supply during certain periods. Drought is a major factor in land degradation and the decline of yields for major crops.

She says many people had an image of drought as affecting desert regions in Africa, but that this was not the case. Drought is now widespread, and by the end of the century all but a handful of countries will experience it in some form.

She further says that people have been living with drought for 5,000 years, but what we are seeing now is very different. Human activities are exacerbating drought and increasing the impact, threatening to derail progress on lifting people from poverty.

Developed countries too have not been immune to drought. The US, Australia and southern Europe have experienced drought in recent years. Drought costs more than \$6bn a year in direct impacts in the US, and about 9bn (£7.7bn) in the EU.

A senior scientist at the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and a co-author of the report, Roger Pulwarty has been quoted as saying that drought also goes beyond agriculture. He gives the example of River Danube in Europe, where recurring drought has affected transport, tourism, industry and energy generation. He further opines that we need to have a look at how to manage resources such as rivers and large water basins.

A common scientific theory opines that changing rainfall patterns as a result of climate breakdown is a key driver of drought, but the report also identifies the inefficient use of water resources and the degradation of land under intensive agriculture and poor farming practices as playing a major role. Deforestation, overuse of fertilisers and pesticides, overgrazing and over-extraction of water for farming are also major problems, identified in the report.

Mizutori has called for governments to take action to help prevent drought by reforming and regulating how water is extracted, stored and used, and how land is managed. She says early warning systems could do much to help people in danger. She stressed on working with local people and techniques, as local and indigenous knowledge could help to inform where and how to store water and how to predict the impact of dry periods.

Energy Imbalance

Meanwhile, in another related alarm, scientists from NASA and NOAA say that earth’s ‘energy imbalance’ roughly doubled from 2005 to 2019 in an ‘alarming’ manner. According to a new re-



search, details of which were released earlier this month, the earth is trapping nearly twice as much heat as it did in 2005, described as an ‘unprecedented’ increase amid the climate crisis.

‘Energy imbalance’ refers to the difference between how much of the Sun’s ‘radiative energy’ is absorbed by Earth’s atmosphere and surface, compared to how much ‘thermal infrared radiation’ bounces back into space. In a statement about this study NASA said that, “A positive energy imbalance means the Earth system is gaining energy, causing the planet to heat up, and the trends we found were quite alarming in a sense”.

Any increase in greenhouse gas emissions keeps heat in earth’s atmosphere, trapping radiation that would otherwise move into space. This warming spurs other changes, including ice and snow melt. Any increase in water vapour, and changes to clouds, could further exacerbate this warming, NASA says.

The study found that this doubling is the result, in part, by an increase in greenhouse gases and water vapour, as well as decreases in clouds and ice. Researchers also said that a ‘naturally occurring’ shift in the Pacific Ocean from a cool phase to a warm one probably had a significant role in amplifying this energy imbalance.

The study also determined that unless the rate of heat uptake slows, greater shifts in climate patterns should be expected.

Some cheer for activists

On the other hand, in an historical judgement, a Belgian court has ruled that Belgium’s climate failures violate human rights. In the latest legal victory against public authorities that have broken promises to tackle the climate emergency,

Belgian Judges said the state’s failure to meet climate targets breaches civil law and human rights conventions.

The Brussels court of first instance declared

the Belgian state had committed an offence under Belgian’s civil law and breached the European convention on human rights.

By not taking all “necessary measures” to prevent the “detrimental” effects of climate change, the court said, Belgian authorities had breached the right to life (Article 2) and the right to respect for private and family life (Article 8).

The NGO, Klimaatzaak - which means climate case in Dutch, and which brought the case hailed the judgment as historic, both in the nature of the decision and the court’s recognition of 58,000 citizens as co-plaintiffs.

The legal victory in Belgium follows similar rulings in the Netherlands, Germany and France, where judges have condemned governments for inadequate responses to the climate crisis or failing to keep their promises.

According to the European Commission, Belgium, the first continental European country to undergo the industrial revolution, is on track to miss its emission reduction targets for 2030.

What all these three news put together mean is that the Climate Change threat is really more dangerous and omnipresent. Until and unless the world’s leaders act in unison and honour their commitment to raise and spend \$100 billion, to tackle the threat as per the Paris Agreement and take some coordinated and concerted measures at Glasgow, the human race may face a dire threat

Views expressed in the article are the author’s own and do not necessarily represent the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer

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When you get the AstraZeneca vaccine, or an mRNA vaccine such as Pfizer, it directs your body to make the SARS-CoV-2 spike protein at the injection site. This prompts an immune response, which recognises and remembers this spike protein. But the vaccines don’t make the spike protein for very long, nor do they spread it. This restricts the size of the immune response.

Limiting each dose and delivering it twice generally leads to better and longer-lasting immune responses than a single dose.

Just like your own memory, which improves by repeated viewing or listening with a break in between, our immune memory generally improves with repeated exposure to something it needs to protect us against.

When should you get your second dose?

The recommended interval between doses of AstraZeneca is 12 weeks, while the minimum is four weeks after the first dose.

This is based on clinical trial data which showed around 73% “efficacy” after the first dose. This means in experimental studies, the first dose of the vaccine reduced the risk of getting COVID19 caused by the original strain by 73%.

When people received their second dose after 12 weeks or more, the efficacy reached 81%.

In these trials, a longer duration between the first and second doses – 12 weeks, rather than eight or less – resulted in higher levels of antibodies which can stop the virus.

These antibodies will inevitably fall over time, but starting at a higher level after the last dose means it will take longer for them to fall to levels where protection is compromised.

How well does AstraZeneca protect against variants?

When the Alpha variant is dominant, the AstraZeneca vaccine provides 55-70% protection after

Should I Get my Second AstraZeneca Dose?

Meru Sheel, Cyra Patel, David Tsharke



one dose and 65-90% after two doses.

What about blood clots following second dose?

Thrombosis with thrombocytopenia syndrome (TTS) is a rare clotting condition that can occur after AstraZeneca vaccination because of an abnormal immune response.

The risk of TTS is smaller following the second dose of AstraZeneca than the first dose.

Of the nearly 16 million people who received the second dose of AstraZeneca in the UK, 23 developed TTS, a rate of 1.5 per million people vaccinated. This compares with 14.2 per million for a first dose.

The risk of death from TTS is further reduced. If you received your first dose of AZ vaccine without developing TTS, you are even less likely to get it with the second dose.

That’s why health authorities recommend people who safely received their first dose of AstraZeneca vaccine have their second dose and protect themselves optimally.

The goal is full vaccination

The best way out of this pandemic is to ensure everyone is vaccinated as quickly as possible. Full protection kicks in about two weeks after completing vaccination.

“Limiting each dose and delivering it twice generally leads to better and longer-lasting immune responses than a single dose. Just like your own memory, which improves by repeated viewing or listening with a break in between, our immune memory generally improves with repeated exposure to something it needs to protect us against.

While one dose offers some protection, it’s not as high as two doses. And we don’t know how long the protection from one dose will last.

Right now, a second dose of AstraZeneca vaccine is ready and waiting for everyone who had their first dose 12 weeks ago. So if you’re eligible, get both doses of the vaccine brand available to you, rather than settling for second-best and incomplete protection.

By Arrangement with The Conversation

Powerful people less likely to be understanding when mistakes are made: Study

Agencies

According to a new study, those with power, such as the wealthy are more likely to blame others for having shortcomings and they are also less troubled by reports of inequality.

The findings of the study were published in the journal 'Social Psychological and Personality Science'. The research was led by the University of California San Diego's Rady School of Management.

The study defines power as control over valuable resources. The paper found that people in positions of power are more likely to adopt a "choice-mind-set," which means that although they have more choices (the definition of power in many cases) they still see others with less power as having lots of choices, regardless of their situation.

Consequently, high-power individuals are more likely to blame others if they perform poorly and they are also more likely to punish them.

"Being in a choice-mindset changes how individuals think, feel and behave," said Yidan Yin, the first author of the paper and recent PhD graduate from the Rady School.

"Compared to low-power people, high-power people are less likely to be aware of others' constraints. As a result they assign more blame when people make mistakes or have shortcomings. Thus, they see the current hierarchy as more justified," added Yin.

The results from the research were derived from three

different studies the authors conducted to replicate the findings in different settings.

Research findings hold up in three robust study settings

The first study was conducted via a survey in which the researchers measured the sense of power of 363 members of the general public recruited through the platform Prolific.

They also asked the participants to complete a separate survey, claiming it was unrelated, in which they were crowdsourcing how to resolve a human resources issue at the university. The survey explained that their academic department was weighing whether to give an administrative assistant a bonus though they had missed a deadline on a big project due to conflicting priorities.

The survey participants who measured as having a greater sense of power overwhelmingly responded the administrative assistant did not deserve the bonus and that their excuses were without merit.

The second study was conducted with the platform Amazon Mechanical Turk involving 393 members of the general public who were randomly assigned to roles as supervisors and subordinates in completing various tasks. Though the assigned ranks were random, supervisors were told they earned the role for their proficiencies and subordinates were told they were designated as such because they were outperformed by supervisors.

The two groups had to judge the performance of an anonymous individual, who by

design, made mistakes in completing their tasks. Once again, the researchers found that those with a greater sense of power (supervisors) were harsher, less understanding with their judgment and recommended punishment more than subordinates.

The third study was done in a lab with UC San Diego undergraduates and mirrored the second experiment. The main difference was that both supervisors and subordinates knew that the target person they had to judge had the rank of a subordinate and therefore less choices. The results from the first two studies held up with subjects that had more power assigning more blame and recommending more punishment.

"Each study was designed to build on the others," Yidan and co-author Pamela K. Smith, associate professor of economics and strategic management at the Rady School wrote.

"In study one, we were measuring power, in study two, we manipulated power and in study three, we created a world in which the judges knew the target person had less power and less choices. We wanted to see if the perceptions remained consistent in all three settings. It was a combination of replication and adding these additional twists and turns," Yidan and K. Smith further wrote.

Implications for more equitable public policy and workplace environments

The results from the study have significant implications for public policy, according to the authors.

COURT OF PRINCIPAL DISTRICT JUDGE ANANTNAG

Present Mr Naseer Ahmad Dar

1. Javid Ahmad Kumar S/o Ghulam Hassan Kumar R/o Bidder hayatpora Tehsil kokernag	V/S	1. HasenaAkther W/oMohdAfroz Kumar R/o Adigam 2. MehboobaAkther W/o Abdul Salam kumar R/o SaidwaraDooru 3.FirdousaHmad Kumar 4 Rommijan non applicant no 1, 2 and 4 are daughters non applicant No 3 is son of deceased Mst Raja R/O Bidder
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PUBLIC NOTICE

Whereas an application for succession certificate has been moved by petitioner (s) in respect of an amount of Rs 10,40,982 name of deceased Raja Banoo W/o Ghulam Hassan Kumar R/o Bidder Kokernag Hence Objections if any are invited from all and Sunday to the aforesaid claim ,by or before next date of hearing Le06/07/2021 falling which matter shall be determined on merits .

Issued under my hand seal of the court on 28/06/2021

Principal District Judge

Anantnag

RNA

COURT OF PRINCIPAL DISTRICT JUDGE ANANTNAG

Present MrNaseer Ahmad Dar

1. AteeqaBanoo (Widow aged 44 years) 2. Ruqaya Amin (Minor daughter through mother ateeqabanoo) Z.Sahil Abass bakshi Amin Tantray R/o Narupora	V/S	1.AbGaniTantray (Father aged 67 ears 2 SarwaBanoo(mother aged 61 years Tehsil Kokernag Anantnag 3 Naimul Amin daughter 25 years 4 Shaista Amin daughter 25 years 5 Wajib-ul Amin son aged 19 years of Mohammad amintantray R/o narupora Tehsil kokernagDistt.Anantnag
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PUBLIC NOTICE

Whereas an application for succession certificate has been moved by petitioner (s) in respect of an amount 711462in the name of deceased MohdaminTantrayS/o AbGaniTantrayR/o NaruporaKokernag Hence Objections if any are invited from all and Sunday to the aforesaid claim ,by or before next date of hearing Le06/07/2021 falling which matter shall be determined on merits .

Issued under my hand seal of the court on 28/06/21

Principal District Judge

Anantnag

RNA

COURT OF PRINCIPAL DISTRICT JUDGE ANANTNAG

Present MrNaseer Ahmad Dar

1. Saleema Akther (aged 56 years W/o Mohdyousfzargar R/o Jablipora tehsil Bijbehara Distt. Anantnag	V/S	1 Irshadyousf (aged 39) s/o Mohammad yousfzargar 2. Shayistayousf aged 42 D/o Mohdyousfzargar R/o Jablipora tehsil Bijbehara Distt. Anantnag
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PUBLIC NOTICE

Whereas an application for succession certificate has been moved by petitioner (s) in respect of an amount 8,25,847in the name of deceased MohdYousafZargar S/o Ghulam Hassan ZargarR/o Jablipora Bijbehara Hence Objections if any are invited from all and Sunday to the aforesaid claim ,by or before next date of hearing Le07-07-21 falling which matter shall be determined on merits .

Issued under my hand seal of the court on 28/06/21

Principal District Judge

Anantnag

RNA

JAMMU AND KASHMIR PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

RESHAM GHAR COLONY, BAKSHI NAGAR, JAMMU - 180001

website: <http://jkpsc.nic.in> Jammu: G191-2566528 <f>2566530
email: jkpscsecretary@gmail.com Srinagar: 0194-2312629 (f) 2312631

Subject : Interview Notice for the post of Lecturer Dental in Health & Medical Education Department Notice Dated 26-06-2021

In continuation to the Notice dated 18-06-2021 the Interview of the following eligible candidates for the post of lecturer, periodontics, prosthodontist , orthodontics and Conservative/ Operative Dentistry in Government Dental College, Srinagar// Jammu In shall be held at J&K Public Service Commission Office, So-lina, Srinagar on 05-07-2021 at 09:00 AM

S. No.	Name Of The Candidate	Name of the dental College	Notification No. & Date
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PROSTHODONTIES

1.	Unjum Bashir	GDC, Srinagar	06= PSC (DR=P)
2	Sabzar Abdul Gni	GDC, Srinagar	OF 2019 Dated 22-04-2019
3	Nazia Majeed Zargar	GDC, Srinagar	06= PSC (DR=P) OF 2019 Dated 22-04-2019
4	Imtiyaz Ahmad Magary	GDC, Srinagar	06= PSC (DR=P) OF 2019 Dated 22-04-2019
5,	Nazia Nazir	GDC, Srinagar	06= PSC (DR=P) OF 2019 Dated 22-04-2019
6.	Talib Amin Naqash	GDC, Srinagar	06= PSC (DR=P) OF 2019 Dated 22-04-2019

(Subject to the production of the Following Information/ documents / A) All the documents and teaching experience certificate should be certified byt he Indian Embassy situated in that country. Or

b) An affidavit duly notarized from the applicant mentioning that the applicant has worked in the concerned institution (mention the name of the institution) situated at outside country during the period (period to be mentioned) as full time Dental faculty to teach Dental students and the documents as are in order in all aspects and the applicant shall take all the responsibility in case of documents/information as furnished by him/her are not in order and DCI may take any legal action in the matter. c) Copy of all pages of passport duly attested by Gazetted officer. d) Copy of visa duly attested by Gazetted Officer. e) Copy of certificates of UG/PG qualification duly attested by Gazetted Officer. f) A certificate from the competent authority confirming the status of the institution in the Country from which the Indian citizen has obtained the teaching experience whether is a recognized/ approved institution for the purpose of imparting Dental education and practice in that country.

Orthodontics		
1.	Numeeta Kaur	GDC, Srinagar
2.	Emtiyaz Ahmad Lone	GDC, Srinagar
3.	Faisal Anshad	GDC, Srinagar
		11-PSC(DR-P) of 2018 dated 26.9.2018
		11-PSC(DR-P) of 2018 dated 26.9.2018
		11-PSC(DR-P) of 2018 dated 26.9.2018

از نیابت عشیپورہ

مضمون کاغذات درخواست منجانب برہان الاسلام وعدنان الاسلام پسران محمد مقبول وانی ساکنہ موضع راجوارہ برعاطا بگی RBA تحت 294 SRO

اشتہار بمراد آگاہی ہرخاص وعام

معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں درخواست سائل دفتر ہذا میں زیر کار کوئی ہے اس سلسلہ میں برپوری حالت سے رپورٹ بشمول ریکارڈ طلب کیا گیا ہے جس سے عیاں ہے کہ سائل موضع راجوارہ میں رہائش پذیر ہے اور کہہ بذیل افراد پر مشتمل ہے

محمد مقبول وانی ولد محمد یوسف دکانداری 48 سال سربرہ کہہ
جنوبہ تیمم زید محمد مقبول گھر دیگام 45 سال
فیضان الاسلام پسر ز تعلیم 23 سال
عدنان الاسلام ز تعلیم 18 سال
برہان الاسلام ز تعلیم 17 سال
اس کے علاوہ کوئی افراد کہہ نہیں سے سائل کے کہہ کی ماہوارہ آمدنی 50,000 ہے سرفیکٹیٹ اجرا کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص کوئی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ اپنا عذر یا اعتراض ساتھ ہیوم اندر دفتر ہذا میں پیش کرے معیار کوئی بھی عذر یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا

نائب تحصیلدار sultr

اظہار تعزیت

انا للہ وانا الہ راجعون

ہم جناب مرحوم بشیر احمد سلطان ولد محمد قاسم سلطان ساکنہ عوشتا باغ کے انتقال پر ملال پران کے خاوا دے خصوصاً محمد عمران سلطان ،مدثر حسین سلطان ،اور داماد گلزار احمد تاجوہ دیگر اقربا کو دل سنبھرتے و تسلیت پیش کرتے ہیں اور ان کے اس بڈڑش غم میں برابر کے شریک ہیں۔

اللہ تعالیٰ مرحوم کو روت روت جنت اور اوتھین کو پھر جہنم عطا فرمائیں۔

دعا گو۔۔۔۔۔ عبد الرحمن آخون

info

PUBLIC NOTICE

i have lost my 10Th pass marks card under roll no 339209 session Annual regular 2012,12Th pass marks card 3120214 session Annual 2014 and my DoB certificate .Now i am applying for duplicate if anybody have any objection in this regard He/She may contact Board of School education(BOSE) sub office baramulla within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained .

UMMAR ALI KHAN
S/O ALI MOHD KHAN
R/O VIZER WAGOORA BARAMULLA

alj

PUBLIC NOTICE

i have lost marks card of my Medical Assistant course under roll MA -1/ 46399 session 2017.Now i am applying for its duplicate if anybody have any objection in this regard He/Dhe may contact Principal AMT School Baramulla within seven days from the publication of this notice after that no objection will be entertained .

UMMAR ALI KHAN
S/O ALI MOHD KHAN R/O VIZER WAGOORA BARAMULLA

alj



OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT REGIONAL TRANSPORT OFFICER ANANTNAG



Whereas an joint application has been received by this office from Mr Ashok Kumar S/o Bali Ram R/o Mansar Samba (Party no ist) as transferor (seller) owner of the vehicle HUV Truck bearing registration No Jk03B



0501(commercial /non-commercial) covering under R/p No 1320/Gc/ ANG and MrZahoor Ahmad Wani S/o MohdAkramWani R/o WayunPampore (party no 2nd) as transferee (purchaser) requesting for transfer of R/C & R/P of the above noted vehicle from party ni 1st to 2nd and cancellation of hire purchase agreement with

Before the case is disposed off on its merits,anybody having any objection regarding the proposed transfer may file his objection within 7 days from the publication of this notice to the office of the undersigned .No any representation /objection shall be entertained after sitipulated period.

No: 7033/ARTO/Ang

Dated : 28/06/21Assistant Regional Transport

Officer Anantnag

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

Tele/Fax: 0194-2433590, 2437647 (Srinagar); 0191-2479371, 2470102 (Jammu)

Website: www.jkbopee.gov.in E-mail: coejakbopee@gmail.com/helpdeskjakbopee@gmail.com

Subject:-**Extension of date for submission of online Application Forms for Common Entrance Test (CET) for Post Basic B.Sc. Nursing Course 2021.**

Reference:-Notification No.065-BOPEE of 2021 dated 09-06-2021.

Notice No. 054-BOPEE of 2021
Dated: 26-06-2021

It is notified for information of all such eligible interested candidates who are willing to apply for admission to Common Entrance Test (CET) for Post Basic B.Sc. Nursing Course 2021 that the Board has decided to extend the last date for submission of online Application Forms for the said courses from 26-06-2021 to 12-07-2021(mid-night).

The other terms and conditions shall remain the same as notified in the e-information Brochure and the Notification No. 065-BOPEE of 2021 dated 09-06-2021.

E&OE

No. BOPEE/Exam-16/2021 Dated: 26-06-2021

DIPK-NB-1437/21

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

Signature Of Candidate

Dated: 26-06-2021

DIPK-3659/21

(Mushtaq Ahamd) KAS
Additional Secretary
J&K Public Service Commission
C/DR/Lecturer Dental/H& ME/2019

Sri Lanka Cricketers Suspended For Bio-Bubble Breach In England



Press Trust of India

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) on Monday suspended three players, including batsman Kusal Mendis and wicketkeeper Niroshan Dickwella, for breaching the bio-bubble during their ongoing tour of England and ordered their immediate return to the country.

The two, along with opener Danushka Gunathilaka, were seen roaming the streets of Durham after the final T20 international on Sunday night, which Sri Lanka lost by a massive 89 runs.

All three players were a part of the playing XI in the game.

"Sri Lanka Cricket executive Committee has suspended Kusal Mendis, Danushka Gunathilaka & Niroshan Dickwella for breaching the bio-bubble and they will be

immediately recalled to Sri Lanka," SLC secretary Mohan De Silva said in a statement.

Reacting to the video, which was posted by a Sri Lankan fan, SLC chief Shammi Silva said, "an investigation is underway as they have breached the (code of) conduct."

Sri Lanka went down 0-3 in the T20 series that ended on Sunday. This was the island nation's fifth straight series loss in T20 internationals since October 2020.

The defeat led to former greats such as Sanath Jayasuriya, Muttiah Muralitharan, Roshan Mahanama, Hashan Thilakaratne and Tillakaratne Dilshan expressing dismay at the poor performance.

Sri Lanka will play the first of three ODIs with England tomorrow at Chester-le-Street.

England Vs Sri Lanka Match Referee Tests Positive For COVID-19

Press Trust of India

LONDON: Phil Whitticase, the match referee who officiated in the three-match T20I series between England and Sri Lanka, has tested positive for COVID-19, the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) said on Sunday.

The 56-year-old is asymptomatic and will now isolate himself for 10 days. No members of the two teams were impacted.

"Following a PCR test administered on Friday 25 June at the Ageas Bowl, Southampton, ICC Match Referee Phil Whitticase has tested positive for COVID-19," the ECB said in a statement. "Whitticase, who was officiating during the three-match Vitality T20I Series between England and Sri Lanka, is well and is asymptomatic."

"He will now observe a period of 10-days of self-isolation from

25 June, in accordance with the UK Government's protocol on quarantine."

There are, however, no threats to the opening ODI of the three-match series between the two teams at Chester-le-Street scheduled for June 29.

"Alternative arrangements will be put in place to ensure Tuesday's ODI goes ahead as planned," the ECB said.

"Seven other members from the match officials and anti-corruption unit teams were deemed close contacts, including five members due to officiate at the first ODI on Tuesday, 29 June at Emirates Riverside, Durham."

"Those impacted will have to self-isolate for 10-days until July 7. No members of the two teams were impacted," the statement said.

England won the T20I series against Sri Lanka 3-0.

Sensational Rahi Grabs Gold At Shooting World Cup



Press Trust of India

OSIJEK: Olympic-bound Rahi Sarnobat displayed sensational form to clinch the women's 25m pistol gold medal at the ISSF shooting World Cup here on Monday but teen sensation Manu Bhaker ended seventh in the same event.

Sarnobat's gold is India's first in the ongoing edition after the country secured one silver and two bronze medals earlier in the tournament.

The 30-year-old Sarnobat fired a final score of 39 after qualifying second with a total of 591. Her stupendous performance in the final included perfect scores in the third, fourth, fifth and the sixth series.

"After I got assurance about the gold, it was more about technicalities for me in the last few series as I wanted to try out a few things so I was doing that," she said about her stellar performance.

"This competition was absolutely not about performance or medal because I was trying out a few things which I am going to do in the Olympic Games and this is the final competition before that."

"It was more about trying out things and finalising everything before the Olympics for the last time and that was just that," she added.

Nonetheless, winning a gold here has given Sarnobat the belief that her preparations are on the right track for the Tokyo Games.

"...I have to keep working on this up to and after the Olympic Games as well," she said.

The silver went to France's Mathilde Lamolle, who scored 31 in

the final. Rio Olympics silver-medallist in the 10m air pistol, Russian Vitalina Batzarashkina, won bronze with 28 hits, bowling out after the ninth five-shot series.

In the qualification, Sarnobat fired a brilliant 296 in the rapid fire round on Monday. Her precision score was an equally impressive 295 on Sunday.

Bhaker recorded a total of 588 to qualify third after firing a 296 in the rapid fire round on Monday following an impressive 292 in the precision round on Sunday.

However, she was eliminated early in the final with a disappointing score of 11, losing a shoot-off to Bulgaria's Viktoria Chaika.

There was disappointment for India in the women's 50m rifle 3 positions competition as both Tejaswini Sawant and Anjum Moudgil failed to make the finals.

Sawant ended 20th in qualification with a score of 1168, while Moudgil was further down at 32nd after firing 1162. The top eight shooters from qualification make the final cut.

Earlier in the tournament, Bhaker had teamed up with Saurabh Chaudhary for the 10m air pistol mixed team silver.

She had earlier clinched the women's 10m air pistol team bronze with Sarnobat and Yashaswini Deswal.

Before that, Chaudhary had won the men's 10m air pistol individual bronze medal. This is the last competitive outing for the Olympic-bound shooters, who will go to Tokyo after their stint here.

T20 World Cup Shifted From India To UAE, Confirms BCCI President Ganguly

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: The T20 World Cup scheduled to be held in India is being shifted to the UAE owing to the health safety concerns posed by COVID-19, BCCI president Sourav Ganguly told PTI on Monday, ending weeks of speculation surrounding the mega-event in October-November.

"We have officially intimated the ICC that the T20 World Cup can be shifted to the United Arab Emirates. The details are being chalked out," Ganguly said.

"The decision was taken keeping health safety concerns of all stakeholders in mind," he added.

The BCCI will, however, remain the hosts of the showpiece.

Asked if October 17 has been finalised as the start date of the tournament, Ganguly said: "We will be able to finalise itinerary details in some days. October 17 start hasn't yet been finalised."

Even an ICC spokesperson confirmed that the global body is yet to zero in on a final schedule.

The ICC, at the start of the month, had given BCCI a four-week window to decide and inform whether India could host the marquee event considering the COVID-19 situation in the country.

PTI was first to report on May 4 that the tournament was being shifted to the UAE.

This was after the pandemic forced the postponement of IPL, the second part of which is also being held in the UAE in September-October.

It was a foregone conclusion that India will find it difficult to host a 16-country tournament across nine cities with so many layers of health security concerns being there.

In fact, the ICC had already started its preparations and logistics for the tournament which will be held in Dubai, Sharjah and Abu Dhabi.



The qualifying round could be held in Muscat, which will give ideal time to the pitches in UAE to freshen up after 31 remaining games of IPL are held till October 15.

Once the IPL was shifted to the UAE, it was a foregone conclusion that the T20 World Cup will move too given the looming concerns about a possible third wave of COVID-19 infection around that time.

India was ravaged by the second wave in April-May with scarcity of essential medical supplies adding to the horror that unfolded with over 4 lakh daily cases at the peak of the crisis.

"If the BCCI is unable to host an eight-team IPL in September, how could it have hosted World T20 within a month? Also now we have a new variant (Delta 3) and there is every possibility of a third wave in the country in October."

"The BCCI brass was always well aware that it won't be practically feasible," an ICC board member told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

Also, India is on the 'Red List' of countries like England and Australia and travelling could be an issue if the rules are not relaxed by then. It is also understood that most

of the member nations were comfortable playing the IPL in the UAE after multiple cases of bubble breach happened during the postponed edition in India.

Also the 2020 IPL in the UAE was a humongous success with a tight bio-bubble.

The BCCI was also mulling if Mumbai, Ahmedabad and Pune could host a three-city event with the final at the Narendra Modi Stadium. But there were several complications on that front too.

"Pakistan playing in Mumbai or Pune would have always been an issue. So there were multiple factors. In IPL, multiple players got infected by COVID-19, you can have good replacements."

"But what about the weaker teams? What if they lose five or six top players? They won't have ready replacements," the source reasoned.

The Indian team, with its T20 players, will reach Dubai from Manchester on September 15 aboard a charter flight to play in the IPL.

It will be based in the country for close to two months till the second week of November when the T20 World Cup ends.

'Second-String' India Squad Arrives In Sri Lanka For ODI Series



Press Trust of India

COLOMBO: The India white-ball team led by Shikhar Dhawan, featuring as many as six uncapped players, arrived here from Mumbai for their four-week tour which will feature six limited overs games against Sri Lanka, starting July 13.

Senior all-rounder Hardik Pandya shared an Instagram story captioned: "Touchdown, Sri Lanka, Colombo."

The Dhawan-led team will play three ODIs and three T20 Internationals in the island nation.

With regular skipper Virat Kohli and the red ball side, currently touring England, Dhawan will have pacer Bhuvneshwar Kumar as his deputy.

The BCCI had named a 20-mem-

ber squad for the Sri Lanka tour that has all-rounder Hardik Pandya and the spin duo of Kuldeep Yadav and Yuzvendra Chahal for the senior lot.

Young guns like Devdutt Padikkal, Prithvi Shaw, Nitish Rana, Ruturaj Gaikwad and rookie pacer Chetan Sakariya expectedly feature in the side that also has two wicket-keeper batsmen in the young Ishan Kishan and Sanju Samson.

A day prior to the departure, Dhawan had said that this was "a nice blend of experience and youth."

According to the Sri Lanka Cricket website, the Indian team will be in room quarantine from June 29 to July 1 and then there will be phased out training from

July 2 to 4 and subsequently team training from July 5.

They will also play intra-squad simulated games for better idea.

Squad: Shikhar Dhawan (Captain), Prithvi Shaw, Devdutt Padikkal, Ruturaj Gaikwad, Suryakumar Yadav, Manish Pandey, Hardik Pandya, Nitish Rana, Ishan Kishan (wicket-keeper), Sanju Samson (wicket-keeper), Yuzvendra Chahal, Rahul Chahar, K Gowtham, Krunal Pandya, Kuldeep Yadav, Varun Chakravarthy, Bhuvneshwar Kumar (Vice-captain), Deepak Chahar, Navdeep Saini, Chetan Sakariya.

Net Bowlers: Ishan Porel, Sandeep Warrier, Arshdeep Singh, Sai Kishore, Simarjeet Singh.

Euro 2020 Elimination Caps Lackluster Season For Cristiano Ronaldo



Agencies

SEVILLE: Cristiano Ronaldo was slowly walking off the field when Romelu Lukaku came over to give him a hug. The two embraced for a few moments, with Lukaku speaking into the Portugal great's ear. Ronaldo politely thanked him, but quickly made his way back to the tunnel.

He wasn't in much of a chatting mood. While Lukaku was moving on to the European Championship quarterfinals with Belgium, Ronaldo was heading home after a disappointing end to his tournament — and to his season.

There was no repeat European title. There was no world scoring record. And there probably won't be a player of the year award, either.

The 36-year-old Ronaldo capped a lackluster season in Portugal's 1-0 loss to Belgium in the round of 16 at Euro 2020 on Sunday.

Even though he scored more than 40 goals with his club and his country, his numbers were far from impressive by his standards. He failed to win the Italian league with Juventus, where his future remains uncertain with his contract ending next year. His only titles in 2021 came in the Italian Cup and the Italian Super Cup.

Ronaldo got off to a fantastic start at Euro 2020, though, scoring five goals in the first three matches to move level with former Iran striker Ali Daei as the men's all-time top scorer with 109 goals.

If he kept scoring, and if Portugal stayed on track for another title, he could have been back in the conversation for player of the year. It didn't happen. Ronaldo

threw his captain's armband to the ground after the final whistle against Belgium, then was one of the first to walk off.

Portugal had several chances throughout the match at La Cartuja Stadium in Seville, but Ronaldo himself wasn't much of a threat. He had a few chances off free kicks in each half, and with a shot from inside the area near the end of the match.

Ronaldo was backed by a talented Portugal squad that included Bernardo Silva, Bruno Fernandes and Diogo Jota, among others. But they also faltered in attack on Sunday, and Thorgan Hazard's first-half goal ended up being enough to send Belgium to the quarterfinals.

Portugal lost at the same stage at the 2018 World Cup, two years after winning its first major title at Euro 2016. The team's other triumph was winning the inaugural Nations League in 2019.

"It's a big disappointment for us because we believed we could win, like we did in 2016," Portugal coach Fernando Santos said.

"But there are things to look forward to. In 2018, we were eliminated as well but then in 2019 we won the Nations League. Now we will try to win the World Cup (in 2022)."

Ronaldo will be 37 by then, and most likely will already have broken the international scoring record. For now, he could still take solace from having a chance to finish as the top scorer at Euro 2020. He remains the tournament's leading scorer with five goals, one more than Patrick Schick of the Czech Republic, who has advanced to the quarterfinals.

Tour de France Spectators Blamed For Two Huge Crashes, Police Investigates

Agencies

PERROS-GUIREC: A roadside spectator holding a cardboard sign caused a massive pile-up during the first stage of the Tour de France, which left several top riders being held up on Saturday, while another huge pileup with 7.5 km left brought down Chris Froome and others.

In the first crash, German Tony Martin was sent tumbling when he rode straight into the sign, which said "Allez Opi-Omi" (Come on granddad-granny, in a mix of French and German) amid scenes of chaos with 47 km left.

Overall contenders Tao Geoghegan Hart of Britain, as well as Colombian Miguel Angel Lopez, were among the riders being held up and lost considerable time on the opening day of the three-week race.

Belgian Wout van Aert, one of the favourites for the stage win, was also slowed down but made it back to the main bunch after a long effort, just like eventual stage winner Julian Alaphilippe, who had blood dripping from his knee when he crossed the line.

"I hope everyone is OK. I'm calling on the fans to be careful.

It's nice to see the fans back on the side of the road, but please be careful," said Alaphilippe.

German Jasha Suetterlin of Team DSM was consequently the first rider to abandon the race after being sent to the ground by the crash.

The second crash brought down Froome and many others including Marc Haller, Andre Greipel and Ion Izagirre as bikes were sent flying to the side of the road.

Froome climbed back on his bike after being attended to by a race doctor but looked in considerable pain when he crossed the line 14:37 behind Alaphilippe.

The Briton, a four-time Tour champion, was back on the race after missing the last two editions following a horrific crash in June 2019.

Even before the crash he had little hope of winning the race, having failed to recover his best form. Meanwhile the French police on Sunday said they were still looking for the spectator with the cardboard sign.

"The Landerneau police are investigating and we haven't heard back from them yet," Tour deputy director Pierre-Yves Thouault said. The statement came after the organisers ASO filed a lawsuit against the unidentified spectator.

BWF Cancels India Open, Hyderabad Open; Shifts Sudirman Cup & World Tour Finals From China

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: The India Open Super 500 and Hyderabad Open Super 100 tournaments were on Monday cancelled by the Badminton World Federation (BWF), which announced a revamped international calendar to salvage the remaining season affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The USD 400,000 India Open, which was supposed to be one of the qualifiers for the Tokyo Olympics, was scheduled to be held from May 11 to 16 but was postponed in April due to rising COVID cases in the national capital. The USD 1,00,000 Hyderabad Open was slated to be held from August 24 to 29.

However, Syed Modi India International Super 300 tournament, scheduled to be held in Lucknow from October 12 to 17, remained on course as of now, according to the new calendar.

"A number of tournaments previously classified as postponed from Q1 and Q2 or originally slated for Q3 and Q4 of 2021 have subse-



quently been cancelled," BWF said in a statement.

In other announcements, the world body on Monday said that Finland will host the Sudirman Cup Finals in September-October while the season-ending World Tour Finals will be staged in Indonesia.

China was scheduled to host both the Sudirman Cup Final and the World Tour Finals but BWF decided to move both the events out of the coun-

try due to COVID-19 restrictions. The apex body also decided to push the prestigious World Championships, to be held in Spain, by two weeks.

"COVID-19 restrictions have meant it is not feasible to conduct tournaments in China this year. Therefore, alternative host cities have been identified for the TotalEnergies BWF Sudirman Cup Finals 2021 and the HSBC BWF World Tour Finals 2021," BWF said.

"Vantaa, Finland is the new host of the TotalEnergies BWF Sudirman Cup Finals 2021 in week 39 (26 September 3 October 2021)."

Action will then shift to Denmark which will host the Thomas & Uber Cup Finals 2020 in Aarhus (October 9-17), which was postponed last year. It will be followed by back-to-back World Tour events -- DANISA Denmark Open in Odense (October 19-24), YONEX French Open in Paris (October 26-31) and SaarLorLux Open in Saarbrücken, Germany (November 2-7).

The governing body will then create a bio-bubble in Indonesia, similar to Thailand, to host a three-tournament Asian Leg in Bali, including the World Tour Finals.

The Indonesia Masters and Indonesia Open will be held from November 16-21 and November 23-28, followed by the World Tour Finals from December 1-5.

"The final tournament of the calendar year will be the TotalEnergies BWF World Championships in Huelva, Spain in Week 50 (12-19 De-

cember 2021)," the world body said.

Talking about the new calendar, BWF secretary general Thomas Lund said: "...we have been able to work with the Badminton Association of Indonesia (PBSI) to present a comprehensive plan for a three-week bubble-style setup in Bali similar to what we saw at the Asian Leg in Bangkok earlier this year."

"...Unfortunately, though, we won't be able to conduct any tournaments in China, and therefore won't be able to host the HSBC BWF World Tour Finals in its spiritual home in Guangzhou."

"We are also very grateful to Badminton Finland for coming to us with a solution to stage the TotalEnergies BWF Sudirman Cup Finals 2021 in Vantaa instead of in China."

"We also thank those hosts who have committed to this new plan and accommodated any necessary changes, including the Spanish Badminton Federation which has agreed to push back the TotalEnergies BWF World Championships by two weeks," he added.

LG Reviews Functioning Of J&K Sports Council, YSS Department

SRINAGAR: Giving special impetus on the involvement of more youth in sports activities, Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha on Monday set this year's target for the Department of Youth Services & Sports and J&K Sports Council for engaging 17.5 lakh boys & girls from across the UT in different sports disciplines.

The Lt Governor was chairing a meeting to review the functioning of the Department of Youth Services & Sports and J&K Sports Council here at Civil Secretariat.

While taking a detailed assessment of the activities, achievements, and targets for 2021-22, the Lt Governor advised the concerned functionaries to encourage youth to take up sports by adopting multi-pronged strategy – developing Sports Infrastructure, conducting Sports Activities and imparting Training/Coaching; besides ensuring full utilization of the assets and the available human resources.

The chair was informed that

play-fields are being developed in 1628 panchayats and for the rest of the panchayats, school grounds will be utilized for the sporting activities for the time-being. The Lt Governor directed the Department of Youth Services & Sports for maintaining an inventory online, besides preparing the data of sports equipment distributed at various levels. Identify sports persons working in different departments and rope them in for training and coaching purposes, the Lt Governor asked the Sports Council.

For the first time, J&K is going to host 17 National events in different sports disciplines with a target participation of around 12000 athletes from other States/UTs, which will go a long way in promoting sports amongst the younger generation in the UT, remarked the Lt Governor.

Laying special emphasis on involving more youth from sensitive and rural areas, the Lt Governor asked the officials to link the

youth engagement activities in these areas with Youth clubs.

On being informed that a total of 6,27,166 sportspersons had participated in 2020-21 under Departmental Activities; Back To Village-3; Trekking; My Town My Pride; 24th National Youth Festival; Snow Skiing and Fit India, Rashtriya Ekta Diwas, the Lt Governor asked the Youth Services and Sports Department to prepare a database of the sportspersons participating in various sports activities being organized by the department. Identify more trekking routes and put the details on the official website for the public view, he added.

Stressing on extending all the basic amenities to the sportspersons, the Lt Governor called for putting a dedicated focus on the up-gradation of existing infrastructure with facilities like drinking water, change room, approach road, seating arrangement, parking etc.

On IEC activities on Covid-19 pandemic, the Lt Governor asked the department to run a vibrant campaign regarding Vaccination and Covid Appropriate Behaviour. In order to facilitate the Sports coaches and sportspersons (above 18 years), the Lt Governor directed for their inclusion in priority groups for vaccination.

He further asked the department to set a self-target for rejuvenating important water bodies of J&K. The Lt Governor asked the Sports department to continue providing sustained hand-holding to the young budding sportspersons of the UT and lay a solid platform for them to display their talent at higher level.

Taking serious note of delays in projects, the Lt Governor passed strict directions for the completion of all projects within the set timelines. He further instructed for completion of all sanctioned PMDP projects by the end of this year.

HC Quashes 3 PSA Detention Orders

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir High Court on Monday quashed detention order under Public Safety Act (PSA) against three detainees and ordered their release from custody "forthwith".

A bench of Justice Ali Mohammad Magrey quashed the detention orders against Assadullah Bhat of Dadsara Tral district Pulwama (at present Chattabal Srinagar), Majid Ahmad Bhat of Karimabad Tehsil Pulwama and Javid Ahmad Bhat of Khanu Babagund in Kralgund Kupwara.

Majid and Assadullah were booked under PSA on the orders by District Magistrate Pulwama on 9 and 11 November 2020 respectively while Javid was detained under the legislation on the orders by District Magistrate Kupwara



on 19 October 2019.

All of them had challenged the detention orders among other grounds on non-communication of the ground of detention.

"So far as the ground taken i.e non communication of the grounds of detention is concerned, perusal of file reveals, that there is nothing to show or suggest that the grounds of detention couched in English language were explained to the (detainees) in a language understood by him, as there is no material to that effect on record," the court said.

Subsequently, the court quashed the detention order against all three of them with the direction to release them forthwith. (GNS)

Teenager Tourist Dies While Taking Selfie

SRINAGAR: A teenage girl from Uttar Pradesh died while attempting to click a selfie in the tourist resort of Doodhpathri in central Kashmir's Budgam district.

14-year-old Arohi Morya and her 26-year-old sister Anmol, daughters of Ramesh Singh from Uttar Pradesh's Lucknow city slipped into Shali Ganga stream on Monday while taking selfies, a police officer told Kashmir Observer. While Anmol was rescued by the police and locals in injured condition and rushed to the hospital in Khansahib for treatment, her sister Arohi could not make it out alive from the gushing waters.

"Unfortunately, one of the two sisters died of drowning while the second one was rescued by the timely action of police and locals. She was shifted to Khansahib hospital and later SMHS hospital for treatment," the officer added.

The women, he said, were on a day visit to the famous tourist resort with their family.

Afghan Parliamentarian Calls On LG

SRINAGAR: Ms. Naheed A. Farid, Member of Afghanistan Parliament on Monday called on Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha here at Raj Bhavan, an official spokesperson said.

Ms. Farid discussed with the Lt Governor about various issues of public importance, he said, adding that the visiting Parliamentarian also shared her views on the present development scenario of Jammu & Kashmir.

Baby Dies Of Electric Shock

SRINAGAR: A thirteen-month-old baby girl died of electric shock on Monday in south Kashmir's Shopian district. 13-month old Zaira Nazir, daughter of Nazir Ahmad received a shock after she came in contact with a live wire while playing at her residence in Landoora village of Shopian district on Monday afternoon, officials said. The baby succumbed minutes after she was admitted to the hospital.

J&K Bank Directed Not To Release Payments Of Unvaccinated Beneficiaries In Kupwara Village

Observer News Service

KUPWARA: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kupwara, Imam Din Monday directed the officers to intensify the door to door vaccination drive and ensure the achievement of the target within the stipulated time frame. He directed the Manager J&K Bank Vilgam to stop the payment to beneficiaries without vaccination certificate.

He also asked all the stakeholders to support the vaccination drive to ensure

complete eradication of Covid pandemic from the district.

He also visited various areas of the district to take stock of the ongoing vaccination process.

During the visit, the DC inspected vaccination centres established at Gushi, Kralpora and Ramhal block.

At Ramhal, the DC chaired a joint meeting of officers, field functionaries and PRIs in which thorough awareness was provided regarding benefits of vaccination and intensifying of vaccination drive.

Man Ends Life In Kulgam; Woman, Teenage Girl Attempt Suicide In Sopore

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: A 40-year-old man committed suicide after consuming some poisonous substance in Kulgam, while a woman and a teenage girl attempted to end their lives in Nothr Kashmir's Baramulla district.

Officials said that a man (name withheld) son of Asadullah Bhat, a resident of YK Pora Kulgam died after consuming poison at his home.

They said after consuming poison, family members shifted him to hospital where doctors declared him brought dead.

Police have taken cognisance of the incident and registered a

case to investigate the reason.

Meanwhile, in North Kashmir's Sopore town, a woman and a teenage girl attempted to end their lives by consuming poison at their homes.

Officials said that a woman (name withheld) wife of Muhammad Ramzan Bhat, a resident of Check Shutloo Rafiabab was shifted to GMC Baramulla after she attempted suicide. She is undergoing treatment at GMC Baramulla.

An 18-year-old girl (name withheld) daughter of Akbar Malla attempted suicide at Tarzoo Sopore. The girl is also undergoing treatment at GMC Baramulla.

Police have taken cognisance of both incidents and registered cases. (Agencies)

J&K Logs Lowest 259 Cases, 6 Deaths

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir recorded 259 coronavirus cases Monday, taking the total number of infections to 3,14,990, while six deaths pushed the toll to 4,310, officials said. Out of the fresh cases, 90 were from the Jammu division and 169 from the Kashmir division of the union territory, they said. They said Srinagar district recorded the highest 64 cases, followed by 31 in Kupwara district. The number of active cases has dropped to 4,996 in the union territory, while 3,05,684 patients have recovered so far, the officials said. The death toll in the union territory due to the pandemic rose to 4,310 as six patients died in the past 24 hours.

Meanwhile, the officials said, there were 29 confirmed cases of Mucormycosis (black fungus) in the union territory as no fresh case was reported since last evening.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Soldiers Foil

of troops," he said, adding the security forces are on high alert and the search operation is in progress.

The officials said the whole area outside the military station was cordoned off immediately and a massive search operation was going on when the last reports were received.

Nothing objectionable has been found on the ground so far, the officials said.

The latest incident comes hours after a drone, in a first-of-its kind strike, dropped two bombs at Indian Air Force (IAF) station here, causing minor injuries to two personnel.

The military station at Kaluchak has been on high alert ever since the 2002 attack. Thirty-one people, including three military personnel, 16 Army family members -- women and children -- and 11 civilians were killed in the attack. Forty eight people, including 13 Army personnel, 20 Army family members and 15 civilians were injured.

RDX Used In IAF Station Attack

A preliminary analysis of the payload carried by the two drones used in attacking the IAF station here Sunday indicates that a cocktail of chemicals including RDX may have been used, officials said Monday, with investigators yet to establish the flight path of the unmanned aerial vehicles.

The IAF station located at Jammu airport continued to remain out of bounds for all but probe teams, including one from the National Investigation Agency, which picked up every bit of evidence available on the ground.

The officials said the explosive material dropped by the drones might have been manufactured using a cocktail consisting of RDX but a final confirmation was still awaited.

LeT Commander

on the state forces. As per reports, a pistol and a grenade were recovered from Abrar, who is blamed by police for the killing three CRPF men in an ambush in Lawaypora area earlier this year. "Top LeT commander Nadeem Abrar arrested. He was involved in several killings. Big success for us," a police spokesperson quoted Inspector General of Police (IGP) Kashmir, Vijay

Kumar as saying.

Encounter Breaks

the joint team started advancing towards the suspected spot, the militants hiding in a residential house fired upon them in a bid to break their dragnet and escape from the besieged area.

The officer said that the forces returned the fire setting off an encounter. In the initial exchange of fire, he said, an Assistant Commandant Satender Kumar of CRPF 21 battalion was injured.

"As the encounter raged on, two more CRPF men, including an Sub-Inspector Shivam Kumar of quick reaction team (QRT) got wounded. Both of them were removed to the army's Badamibagh cantonment hospital for treatment," the officer said, adding "The militants also declined surrender offer and engaged the search team in a gun-battle,"

Pertinently, the encounter broke out nearly an hour after police claimed a big success by arresting Lashkar-e-Taiba's commander Nadeem Abrar in the nearby area of Parimpora.

According to the police officer, two militants, including a Pakistani are believed to be trapped in the area.

"We suspected Lashkar militant Junaid was hiding in the house. If we are successful in eliminating him, it will be a huge blow to the outfit as he's considered to be the backbone of the militant organization," the police officer added.

However, he quickly added that the holed-up militants were possibly carrying huge cache arms and ammunition with them.

The police officer further said that the arrest of LeT commander and the encounter in Maloora were indicating that the militants were planning a big strike against state forces.

Meanwhile, gunshots continue to rattle the area when the last reports came in. Many civilians, as per reports have also been evacuated by the joint forces as the encounter has intensified.

The army also joined the anti-militancy operation when the last reports came in.

Slain SPOs

news agency GNS.

On Sunday night, suspected militants forced their entry into the house of Fayaz Ahmad (SPO) at Hariparigam area of Awantipora, and fired indiscriminately, injuring the trio.

Fayaz Ahmad died on way to hospital while his wife Raja Begum succumbed to the wounds at GMC Anantnag.

Police has already registered a case and started further investigation into the incident.

Meanwhile, mainstream political parties in Jammu and Kashmir on Monday condemned the killing, calling it "dastardly and cowardly" and a blot on the security scenario in the valley.

"I unreservedly condemn the dastardly & cowardly militant attack on the J&K police SPO Fayaz Ahmed, his wife and his young daughter at their home last night. I pray they receive their place in Jannat and their loved ones find strength during this terrible time," National Conference (NC) vice president Omar Abdullah wrote on Twitter.

The NC called the incident a blot on the security scenario in Kashmir.

"JKNC unequivocally condemns the barbaric killing of ex-SPO Fayaz

Ahmad, his wife and their 23-year-old daughter. It is a dastardly, inhuman act and a blot on the security scenario in Kashmir," the NC said on its Twitter handle.

PDP president Mehbooba Mufti said no words were strong enough to condemn the cowardly attack.

"No words are strong enough to condemn the cowardly attack in Awantipora that claimed the lives of a JKP officer Fayaz Ahmad, his wife and daughter. May Allah Ta'aala grant them maghfirat and their loved ones the fortitude to bear this loss (sic)," Mufti tweeted.

Peoples Conference (PC) chairman Sajad Lone said the news of the killing was "extremely distressing" and called the perpetrators "thugs of violence".

"Woke up to extremely distressing news of violence. An entire family fell to bullets. No respite from these thugs of violence. May they rest in peace. May the family muster courage to bear this loss," Lone said in a tweet.

BJP's J&K spokesman Altaf Thakur also condemned the attack as cowardly and barbaric, saying barging into the house of a cop and killing him and his family members is nothing but a pure form of militancy.

"The act deserves the strongest condemnation and that those behind the act will meet the same fate. What was the fault of the innocent wife and daughter of the policeman? The killing (of) women is (in) no way bravery, but a pure cowardly attack which deserves the highest form of condemnation," Thakur said.

He expressed sympathies with the bereaved family and urged the police to bring the perpetrators of the crime to justice as soon as possible.

Senior CPI(M) leader Mohammad Yousuf Tarigami said killing unarmed civilians cannot be justified in any way.

"Killing innocents, including women, is highly condemnable and such incidents have no place in the civilised world. Attacking civilians by the combatants is an act of cowardice and must be condemned by all in one voice," Tarigami said.

He said cycles of violence have been going on in Kashmir for the more than three decades, "but what has been achieved so far?"

"Whom does violence suit? There is a need to ponder over the persistent violence, and society must come out and express itself against such brutal acts of violence," he said.

He expressed condolences to the bereaved family.

Gupkar Alliance

Vice-Chairperson and PDP president Mehbooba Mufti.

"PAGD meeting which was scheduled for tomorrow is postponed because of personal engagement of Mtr Mehbooba Mufti," PAGD spokesperson M Y Tarigami said.

The meeting was scheduled to be

held at the alliance's chairperson Farooq Abdullah's residence in Gupkar area of the city at 11 am.

Earlier, the PAGD spokesperson had said the meeting will discuss the all-party meet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi on June 24, and the way forward for the alliance. PTI

LG Launches

the working of the Administration, Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha on Monday launched the portal developed by the J&K Housing Board here at Civil Secretariat.

Speaking on the occasion, the LG, as per an official spokesperson said that the initiative is aimed at simplifying the process, making delivery of services time-bound with accountability.

"He appreciated the functionaries of the Housing and Urban Development Department for bringing transformation in the functioning of the Housing board and asked for adopting the same for other departments as well," he said.

Highlighting the key features of the portal, Sinha, he said, observed that the complete data of all colonies has been authenticated, digitized, and hosted on cloud for security and ease of access with maximum time for delivery of any service capped at 21 days.

According to the official spokesperson, timelines have been fixed for the submission and approval of applications at various levels. At every level of processing of the application, the applicant will get the message (through SMS).

"The applicant will have option to clarify/ rebut the adverse proposal, if any, within the given time frame of three days at every level. Open file process is there to make the system more participatory and transparent through which an applicant can see and participate in decision making, first of its kind in the UT of Jammu and Kashmir," the LG said, as per official spokesperson.

"Now, the people can avail services like transfer of Leasehold Rights, transfer of Leasehold Rights to Freehold Rights, transfer of Leasehold Rights in favour of Legal Heirs of original Allottee/Transferee, extension of Leasehold Rights, transfer of Ownership Rights, transfer of Ownership Rights for Legal Heirs and transfer of Leasehold rights in favour of Legal Heirs of Attorney Holder through the portal which were being provided manually. Besides Online payment & SMS gateways were also provided to facilitate the people," he added.

Meanwhile, the LG directed the Housing Department to explore all the possibilities to develop Housing colony in Srinagar and laid special emphasis on bringing more transparency in the working of Municipal Corporations and Development Authorities.

"He further instructed for making

the process of availing Building permission online by Srinagar Municipal Corporation" the official spokesperson said.

He further said that Dheeraj Gupta, Principal Secretary, Housing and Urban Development Department briefed the chair about the services provided to the residents of 18 colonies under its administrative control in an efficient and transparent manner.

"He informed that the portal will cater to around 14500 allottees in 18 colonies of the J&K Housing Board in Jammu, Srinagar, Udhampur, Kathua, Reasi, Bijbehara and Baramulla including 210 shops, 380 commercial sites and 429 flats and will be applicable to the colonies being administered by the JDA and SDA in due course. He also mentioned that the process flow of the application for availing the services being provided by the J&K Housing Board has been squeezed to three levels against the existing twelve levels," he added.

Pays Obeisance

"May the divine blessings of Lord Shiva ensure good health and happiness in everyone's life and bless us with strength to overcome the ongoing health crisis," prayed the LG.

"The annual pilgrimage testifies to the tradition of the wonderful cultural syncretism of Jammu and Kashmir. But, considering the ongoing situation due to Covid-19 pandemic, Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra has been cancelled.

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The Commerce Minister said the US is working on antitrust laws for e-commerce and several other countries, the UK, Luxembourg and other European countries are also working on these issues. "Australia has already passed along news media and digital platforms mandatory bargaining. Now clearly, the world is waking up to the reality of these large tech and big e-commerce companies," he added. —IANS

SC Rejects Plea Seeking SIT Probe Into 'Forcible Conversion' Of Hindus In Haryana's Nuh

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Monday refused to entertain a plea seeking setting up of a special investigating team (SIT) to probe the alleged forcible conversion of Hindus in Haryana's Nuh district. Sorry, the plea is dismissed, a bench headed by Chief Justice N V Ramana told senior advocate Vikas Singh, who was appearing for the petitioners.

Singh told the bench, also comprising Justices A S Bopanna and Hrishikesh Roy, that two of the petitioners had visited the area and met people there including the family of 21-year-old Nikita Tomar, who was shot dead outside her college in Ballabgarh in October last year.

"We do not think we can entertain this petition based on newspaper reports," the bench observed.

One of the accused in the murder case identified as Tausif was trying to force the student to marry him.

In March this year, a fast-track court in Haryana's Faridabad had sentenced two men to life imprisonment for Tomar's murder.

The plea, filed in the apex court through advocate Vishnu Shankar Jain, had alleged that life, personal liberty and religious rights of Hindus in the areas of Nuh are being "continuously eroded" by members of the minority community who are in a "dominating position" there.

The petition, filed by a group of lawyers and a social worker based in Uttar Pradesh, had claimed that the state government, district administration and the police have failed to exercise their powers due

to which the life and liberty of Hindus, particularly of women and Dalits, are in jeopardy and they are bound to lead "life under sword" of the dominant group there.

It had sought the top court's direction for constituting a SIT, comprising members from the CBI and the NIA, under the supervision of a retired apex court judge.

It had said the SIT should probe instances of alleged forcible conversion of Hindus, illegal execution of sale deeds of their properties, atrocities committed against Hindu women and girls, encroachment made on public land, conditions of temples and religious places and also cremation grounds existing in the area.

It had said the authorities should be directed to rehabilitate Hindus at their respective properties and restore all temples, places of worship and cremation grounds, which been encroached upon by any member of society, in their original form.

Referring to the Census 2011, the plea said the total population of Mewat district was 10,89,263 in which Muslim population was estimated to be 79.20 per cent, Hindus comprised 20.37 per cent and the remaining 0.43 per cent were Sikh, Buddhist, Jains etc.

"It is relevant to mention that there are about 431 villages in Mewat-Nuh. As many as 103 villages have become totally devoid of Hindus. In 82 villages, only 4-5 Hindu families are left," the plea submitted, adding, "There is significant decline of Hindu population in the district of Mewat-Nuh giving rise to a demographic change which will be disastrous for the unity of the nation." PTI

Terrorism Reduced In Ladakh After Becoming Union Territory: Rajnath Singh



Press Trust of India

LADAKH: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Monday said terrorism has reduced in Ladakh after it became a Union territory.

"After becoming a Union territory, terrorism has reduced in Ladakh. There is mutual coordination among the Army, paramilitary forces and local police. We have data and figures that terrorism has reduced," said Rajnath Singh.

Rajnath Singh also revealed that many people had doubted the intention of Prime Minister Narendra Modi when Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh became a union territory by calling it a "political vested interest".

He also informed that the Centre want to re-start the political process quickly in both regions.

"After Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh were made Union Territories, many doubted the intention of Prime Minister as political vested interest. But he wants the political process to start in both regions. He spoke to political leaders of Jammu and Kashmir and will speak to leaders in Ladakh soon," he added.

Rajnath Singh also lauded the Army and said, "Our Army is sensitive as well. Even if the terrorists want to surrender and want to get into the mainstream then they are also given this opportunity."

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Monday inaugurated 63 infrastructure projects constructed by the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) from Ladakh.

Rajnath Singh is currently in Leh for a three-day visit to Ladakh.

AFTER JAMMU AND KASHMIR AND LADAKH WERE MADE UNION TERRITORIES, many doubted the intention of Prime Minister as political vested interest. But he wants the political process to start in both regions. He spoke to political leaders of Jammu and Kashmir and will speak to leaders in Ladakh soon."

Arvind Kejriwal Promises Free Electricity In Punjab If AAP Wins

Agenceis

New Delhi: Ahead of assembly elections in Punjab next year, Delhi Chief minister Arvind Kejriwal on Monday promised free electricity in that state if his Aam Aadmi Party wins the polls.

A day ahead of his visit to Chandigarh, the AAP leader also claimed that women in Punjab are very unhappy with inflation.

"...In Delhi we provide 200 units of free electricity to every family. The women are very happy. Women in Punjab are also very unhappy with inflation. The AAP government will also provide free electricity in Punjab. See you tomorrow in Chandigarh," Kejriwal tweeted in Punjabi.

AAP spokesperson and Delhi MLA Raghav Chadha said the Punjab Chief Minister's office has denied



the party permission to hold a press conference at a pre-decided venue.

Mr Chadha said Mr Kejriwal will make a "mega announcement" in Chandigarh on Tuesday.

"@capt_amarinder's fear of Kejriwal has reached a point where his office has denied us permission to hold press conference at the

EU Excludes India's Covishield from New Covid 'Green Pass'



NEW DELHI: Travellers vaccinated with Covishield may not be eligible for the European Union's 'Green Pass' that will be available for use from July 1.

Many EU member states have started issuing the digital "vaccine passport" that will enable Europeans to move freely for work or tourism.

The immunity passport will serve as proof that a person has been vaccinated against the coronavirus disease (Covid-19), or recently tested negative for the virus, or has the natural immunity built up from earlier infection.

Only four vaccines—Comirnaty of Pfizer/BioNTech, Moderna, Vaxzervria by AstraZeneca-Oxford and Johnson & Johnson's Janssen—have been approved by the European Medicines Agency (EMA) and only those vaccinated by these vaccines will be given vaccination passports and will be allowed to travel within the EU during the pandemic.

Serum Institute Seeks Govt Intervention

Serum Institute of India (SII) has

requested the government to take up the matter of inclusion of Covishield vaccine in the EU COVID-19 Vaccination Passport with the European Union and other countries, citing this will affect students and business travellers and cause severe disruptions to the Indian and global economy.

"India has a large population. However, not including Covishield into the EU COVID-19 Vaccination Passport will not allow Covishield vaccinated people to travel to European countries and this will affect students, business travellers back and forth, and cause severe disruptions to our economy and to the global economy," a source quoted Adar C Poonawalla, CEO of SII, as having communicated in a letter to External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar.

Sources said referring to Poonawalla's letter, Director, Government and Regulatory Affairs at SII, Prakash Kumar Singh, has also sought Jaishankar's intervention at the highest level, saying, "It will be in the national interest as well as in the interest of people at large globally if Covishield vaccine is included in the EU COVID-19 Vac-

cination Passport."

Poonawalla in his letter is learnt to have mentioned that nearly 30 crore people have already been vaccinated with Covishield in India and it is expected that more than 50 per cent of Indian population will be protected with Covishield vaccine finally.

The letter also mentions that AstraZeneca-SII Covishield has been manufactured under technology transfer from Oxford/AstraZeneca and that clinical trials of the vaccine have been conducted successfully abroad and has been approved by MHRA for emergency use approval.

Poonawalla on Monday said he has taken up the issues faced by Indians who have taken the Covishield jab travelling to the European Union at highest levels and hopes to resolve them soon.

"I realise that a lot of Indians who have taken Covishield are facing issues with travel to the EU. I assure everyone, I have taken this up at the highest levels and hope to resolve this matter soon, both with regulators and at a diplomatic level with countries," Poonawalla said in a tweet.

Twitter Shows J&K As Separate Country

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Amid a stand-off with the Indian government over compliance with new IT rules, the Twitter website is displaying a wrong map of the country that shows Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh as separate country.

The glaring distortion, which appears on the career section of Twitter website under the header 'Tweep Life', has triggered a heavy backlash from netizens who are demanding strict action against the microblogging platform.

This is not the first time that Twitter has misrepresented India's map. Earlier, it had shown Leh as part of China. A mail sent to Twitter on the issue did not elicit a response.

The US digital giant has been engaged in a tussle with the Indian government over the new social media rules. The government has confronted Twitter for deliberate defiance and failure to comply with the country's new IT rules, despite repeated reminders.

Notably, the microblogging platform has lost its legal shield as an intermediary in India, becoming liable for users posting any unlawful content.

On Monday, social media users slammed Twitter's gross misrepresentation of India's map that appears

on its career section. The global map, showing Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh outside India, triggered angry responses from netizens who are demanding stringent action be initiated against the microblogging platform that has flouted rules on multiple occasions in the past.

In October last year, Twitter came under heavy criticism and faced backlash after its geotagging feature displayed "Jammu & Kashmir, People's Republic of China" in a live broadcast from Leh's Hall of Fame, a war memorial for fallen soldiers in the Union Territory of Ladakh.

India has issued a stern warning to Twitter that time, making it clear that any disrespect of the country's sovereignty and integrity is totally unacceptable.

In November, government issued a notice to Twitter for showing Leh as part of Jammu and Kashmir instead of the Union Territory of Ladakh, as Centre lambasted the platform for disrespecting the territorial integrity of India by showing an incorrect map.

Twitter's apparent heavy-handedness has come under government scrutiny when the microblogging platform did not fully comply with the new rules, called intermediary Guidelines, that mandate setting up a robust grievance redressal mechanism and appointing officers to coordi-

nate with law enforcement.

The rules became effective from May 26; and Twitter, even after the expiry of the additional time, had not appointed the requisite officers, leading to it losing the 'safe harbour' immunity.

Even in the backdrop of heightened strained relations with the Indian government, Twitter on Friday briefly blocked IT Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad from accessing his account over alleged violation of US copyright law - a move that was immediately slammed by the minister as being arbitrary and in gross violation of IT rules.

Meanwhile, Twitter's interim grievance officer for India, Dharmendra Chatur, has quit within weeks of taking over the key role.

California-based Jeremy Kessel has now been named as India's grievance redressal officer, on the platform's website - although the appointment does not meet the requirements of new IT rules, which clearly mandate officers including the grievance officer, to be resident in India.

Twitter and the government have been at loggerheads over multiple instances in the past months, including during the farmers' protest and later when the microblogging platform tagged political posts of several leaders of the ruling party BJP as "manipulated media", triggering a sharp rebuke from the centre.

Navjot Sidhu To Meet Rahul, Priyanka Gandhi in Delhi On Tuesday

Agenceis

New Delhi: Congress leader Navjot Singh Sidhu will meet senior party leaders Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra in Delhi on June 29, sources in his office said on Monday.

His meeting with the Gandhis comes amid the ongoing infighting in the Punjab Congress.

Rahul Gandhi has been meeting party leaders from Punjab to

divested of the local bodies portfolio in 2019, has been at loggerheads with Chief Minister Amarninder Singh. He has attacked the chief minister over the alleged delay in justice in the 2015 incidents of sacrilege and subsequent police firing.

Singh had slammed Sidhu for continuously attacking him over the sacrilege issue and termed the former's outbursts "total indiscipline".



get their views on the political situation in the state and the steps needed to strengthen the party ahead of the 2022 assembly polls.

On June 25, the former Congress president held one-on-one meetings with ministers Brahm Mohindra, Vijay Inder Singla, Balbir Singh Sidhu and Rajya Sabha member Shamsheer Singh Dullu and MLA Lakhvir Singh Lakha.

He has already met state Congress chief Sunil Jakhar and Rajya Sabha MP Partap Singh Bajwa.

Sidhu, who had resigned from the Punjab cabinet after he was

Early this month, Sidhu appeared before a three-member panel set up by the Congress to resolve the infighting within the party's state unit.

On June 22, Singh appeared before the panel, headed by leader of opposition in Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge, in Delhi. However, he returned to Chandigarh without an audience with party president Sonia Gandhi or Rahul Gandhi.

AICC general secretary in-charge of Punjab affairs Harish Rawat and former MP J.P. Aggarwal are members of the panel.

Lakshadweep Residents Stage "Coconut Leaves And Palm" Protest



Agenceis

Residents of Lakshadweep on Monday staged "coconut leaves and palm" protest across inhabited islands against the administration's order to levy a fine if coconut palm leaves, shells or trunks were found in and around their dwelling places.

Holding placards which read "introduce mulching" and "stop imposing fine", the islanders, under the banner of Save Lakshadweep Forum (SLF), stood in front of a pile of coconut leaves in the properties urging the administration to withdraw the "anti-people" order.

In their one-hour long protest, the islanders urged the administration to withdraw the decision to impose fine on them and introduce technology to convert the organic materials from the coconuts as compost - a mixture of ingredients used to fertilize and improve the soil.

"Our demand is that the fine imposed on the people should be withdrawn and a proper waste management system should be implemented. Unless the waste management system is implemented there is no genuine right from the side of administration to collect fine on falling of coconut leaves and other palms in their property," Lakshadweep MP Mohammed Faizal P P told PTI. "Where do the people of islands are expected to do the scientific processing of leaves and palms," he asked.

The Lok Sabha member said an islander cannot afford to have his own scientific processing unit or incinerator and it is the prime duty of the Lakshadweep administration to provide such a facility. "If such facilities are made available and people are not obeying this, then you can impose the fine. The primary responsibility of the administration should be to ensure the installation of the scientific processing units like incin-

erators in the island," Faizal said.

In the order issued on June 4 on management of cleanliness and hygiene in the islands in the wake of Covid-19 pandemic, the administration has said each family of individuals who stay in any premise shall maintain cleanliness with certain standards and hygiene in and around their respective places at all times.

It said tender coconut shells, tree leaves, coconut husks, trunks etc in and around dwelling places/public places must be disposed off scientifically by the landowners without affecting hygiene to the environment.

"No persons is allowed to throw or break or spread coconuts, fruits leftovers, vegetables waste on roads, footpaths, public areas, lagoon, sea and the beaches", it said, prohibiting the disposal by burning of any type of solid waste at roadsides, beaches and in open places.

It said whoever violates or contravenes any of the aforesaid directions shall be liable for punishment with fine as per Schedule 1 of the Lakshadweep Solid Waste Management Bye-Law, 2018 and also be liable to criminal proceedings for offence punishable Under Section 188 IPC (Disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant).

Lakshadweep has been witnessing a series of protests by residents for the past few weeks against Administrator Praful Khoda Patel's decision to implement reform measures in the islands. The Save Lakshadweep Forum (SLF), a platform of protesters, has alleged that the measures were being implemented without taking people of islands into confidence. Accusing the administration of going ahead with the "anti-people reform measures" in the islands, the SLF has said they would continue their protest till the administration withdraws such measures in the archipelago.

Heroin Worth Rs 126 Crore Seized From 2 South African Men At Delhi Airport

Agenceis

NEW DELHI: In a major catch, heroin worth Rs 126 crore has been seized from two South African men at the international airport here as they were trying to smuggle it into the country, according to an official statement on Monday.

The two accused were intercepted on Saturday upon their arrival from Johannesburg via Doha.

"On detailed personal and baggage search of the passengers, off-white colour powder/granules, found to be heroin, weighing 8 kg was recovered from one passenger and 10 kg was recovered from another," said the statement issued by the customs department.

Both of the accused were found



to be part of a syndicate, it said.

It stated that the off-white colour powder/granules, weighing 18 in total and estimated to be valued at Rs 126 crore, were ingeniously concealed inside their checked-in trolley bags.

Both the men have been arrested and a case of smuggling has been registered against them, a customs officer said. — PTI