



P3 CITY

500 SUICIDE CASES REPORTED AT SMHS HOSPITAL IN ONE YEAR

A Sikh woman, who was restored to her family from her alleged kidnapper amid allegations of forced conversion, was Tuesday married off to a man from the Sikh community...

THINK

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...



P5 STATE

GOVT SANCTIONS RS 1 CR AS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR ADVOCATES DURING COVID-19

In view of adverse effect on legal profession consequent to restricted functioning of Courts due to Covid-19 pandemic, the Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir has...



Quote!

Somewhere, something incredible is waiting to be known.
— Carl Sagan

NEWS DIGEST

LG Hails Doctors For Fighting Pandemic

SRINAGAR: Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, in his message on the eve of "National Doctors' Day" has expressed his deepest gratitude to all the doctors for epitomizing sacrifice and dedication in the face of this unprecedented public health crisis by rendering selfless services to humanity. "Our country is grateful for the extraordinary courage and leadership exhibited by the medical fraternity, who... More On P10

Fire Triggers Landmine Blasts Along LoC

JAMMU: A forest fire triggered several landmine explosions along the Line of Control (LoC) in Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday, officials said. The fire started in a forest across the LoC and spread to the Indian side in Mendhar sector, they said. The officials said the fire triggered the explosion of nearly half a dozen landmines that were part of the anti-infiltration obstacle system. The fire was still... More On P10

No Weekend Picnicking In Pahalgam

ANANTNAG: Authorities on Wednesday ordered closure of famous tourist destination of Pahalgam for day-picnickers on weekends to prevent "possible COVID-19 resurgence and save ecology of the fragile area". However, people who have confirmed booking in hotels in Pahalgam shall be allowed on producing valid proof. "It has been observed... More On P10

Jammu Sizzles At 42.9 Degree Celsius

JAMMU: The winter capital Jammu recorded its hottest day of the season on Wednesday with the mercury settling at 42.9 degrees Celsius – five notches above season's average, weather office said. The minimum temperature in the city was also 2.4 notches above normal at 28 degrees Celsius, the regional meteorological department official said. Most parts of Jammu and Kashmir have been reeling under scorching... More On P10

Youth Found Dead In Baramulla

SRINAGAR: A youth allegedly committed suicide on Wednesday inside his home in Wagoor area of north Kashmir's Baramulla district. The 24-year-old was found hanging inside his house in Wagila village of Wagoor on Wednesday morning by his family members, an official said. The youth was a first year college student and is suspected to have ended his life by strangulation, he said. Meanwhile, police have started inquest proceedings... More On P10

3 Militants Killed In Kulgam Encounter: Police



KoFile Photo

Two Soldiers Also Injured, Airlifted To Army Hospital

Zaid Bin Shabir

SRINAGAR: Three local militants of Lashkar-e-Taiba were killed and two soldiers injured in an encounter in south Kashmir's Kulgam district, police said Wednesday.

Acting on specific input about the presence of militants, police, army's 9

RR and the personnel of CRPF18 battalion cordoned off the Chimmer area of the district on Wednesday afternoon and launched a search operation, a police spokesperson said. When the joint team zeroed in on the suspected spot, the holed-up militants, he said, turned down the surrender offer and opened indiscriminate fire leaving two soldiers injured.

Both the soldiers, police spokesperson said, were airlifted to... More On P10

PERTINENTLY, ZAKIR BASHIR HAD recently joined the outfit. As per police records, all the killed militants were part of a group involved in various militancy crimes."

End Of 'Durbar'? Employees Given 21 Days To Vacate Govt Quarters

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: The Jammu and Kashmir administration on Wednesday cancelled residential accommodations of 'durbar move' employees in Jammu and Srinagar, days after Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha announced an end to the age-old practice.

The officials have been asked to vacate their quarters in the twin capital cities within three weeks. The L-G had on June 20

announced that the Jammu and Kashmir administration has completely transitioned to e-office, thereby ending the practice of the biannual 'durbar move'.

Now both the Jammu and Srinagar secretariats can function normally for 12 months. This will save the government Rs 200 crore per year, which will be used for the welfare of the deprived sections, he had said.

Now an order issued by Commissioner Secretary, Estates... More On P10

HC To Resume Physical Hearing From July 5

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir High Court will resume physical hearing of cases from Monday but only advocates and

staff members who have been vaccinated against COVID-19 will be allowed to enter the court premises, an official order said on Wednesday.

The order issued by... More On P10

Drone Sightings Continue In Jammu, 2 More Spotted

Cops Begin House-To-House Verification Drive Near Jammu Airport

Press Trust Of India

Jammu: Police began a house-to-house verification drive in residential colonies near the Jammu airport, three days after an Indian Air Force station (IAF) there was targeted in a first-of-its-kind militant attack using drones, officials said on Wednesday.

In the drive that began from Peer Baba in the Chatta area, police personnel collected details of residents, including their

contact numbers. The IAF also deployed an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) fitted with camera over its station and nearby residential areas for several hours in the afternoon, the officials said.

They said additional floodlights have been installed at the IAF base and more lights on high masts are being set up.

In what was the first instance of militants deploying drones to strike vital... More On P10

NSG, CISF Chiefs Inspect Strike Spot

The chiefs of the counter-terror force NSG and the civil airports guarding Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) on Wednesday inspected the scene of the first-of-its-kind militant attack using drones at the Air Force station in Jammu, officials said. National Security Guard... More On P10

Drone Use Banned In Rajouri

Amid heightened security across Jammu and Kashmir after the recent bombing of IAF station by armed drones here, authorities in border district Rajouri on Wednesday ordered ban on the storage, sale or possession and use and transport of the... More On P10

UN Chief Asks India To End Pellet Gun Use In Kashmir

Agencies

GENEVA: United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has expressed concern over "grave violations" in Kashmir and has asked the Indian government to end the use of shotgun pellets against children.

"I call upon the government to take preventive measures to protect children, including by ending the use of pellets against children, ensuring that children are not associated in any way to security forces, and endorsing the Safe Schools Declaration and the Vancouver Principles," he said in the UN



Report on Children 2021, Al-Jazeera reported Wednesday.

"A total of 39 children (33 boys, 6 girls) were killed (9) and maimed (30) by pellet guns (11) and torture (2) by unidentified perpetrators (13) (including resulting from explosive remnants of war... More On P10

Diplomatic Relations Only If India Reverses Kashmir Changes: Imran

Agencies

SRINAGAR: After remaining suspended for more than seven weeks, train services are resuming partially in Kashmir Valley from Thursday, officials said.

Official sources said that two pairs of trains shall operate between Budgam to Banihal in the morning and evening only. There shall be no services towards Baramulla, they said.

"In the morning one pair (04617/04618) and in the evening session one pair (04619/04622) will run between Budgam – Banihal only as per their existing time table," they said. On May 10, the... More On P10

Prime Minister Imran Khan said on Wednesday that Pakistan would not restore diplomatic ties with India until New Delhi revokes its decision of scrapping the special status of Jammu... More On P10

Trains To Chug Off After 7 Weeks Today

Agencies

SRINAGAR: After remaining suspended for more than seven weeks, train services are resuming partially in Kashmir Valley from Thursday, officials said.

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LG Rolls Out Scheme For Covid Hit Families

Scholarships For Students, Monthly Rs 1000 For Families Who Lost Their Bread Earners

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha on Wednesday rolled out a special scheme that offers scholarship to school and college students hit by pandemic besides financial assistance to families who have lost their sole bread earner due to Coronavirus disease.

"Special Assistance Scheme for COVID Mortalities – SASCM", was rolled out by LG on Wednesday by handing over the grant of Scholarship and Pension certificates to the children and the members of the families affected due to coronavirus.



"J&K government is committed to support children who lost their parents in this pandemic. The administration as a guardian will take all necessary

steps for their well-being and education, so they can have a bright future," Sinha said, as per an official spokesperson.

"We stand in... More On P10

'No Evidence Found': How Innocent Kashmiri Man Spent 11 Years In Gujarat Prison

Auqib Javed

SRINAGAR: A decade of dirges, distress and disturbing dreams is finally over for Bashir Baba's mother. The day her diligent son was held captive in a Gujarat jail in early 2010, she compensated his absence by regularly taking rest in his room, touching his books, singing dirges in his longing, whispering his name, praying for his return and dreaming about him. She would often rush to tell her husband, her younger son, and two daughters, "I saw Bashe Lal [Bashir's sobriquet] in my dream. Tell me he's fine there!" Spending 11 years in this agony tormented this once happy

Kashmiri family which exhausted all the means to prove their son's innocence.

But now, the void has been filled with the return of their loved one. It's a sweltering summer day in Srinagar, and visitors are arriving in twos and threes to meet the free man in his old city home. Bashir steps out of the washroom after performing ablution for Asar prayers. The joy of gratitude reflects from his face. He doesn't seem to carry any anguish about his long-drawn incarcerated life.

"All praise to Allah that I'm finally a free man," he tells a group of well-wishers, including his friends and relatives. The long walk to freedom came



on June 22, 2021, when a Sessions court in Gujarat "acquitted" Bashir of all charges under the Unlawful

Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) and ordered his release. Additional Sessions judge

rejected the Anti-Terrorism Squad of Gujarat's case that Bashir was associated with Hizbul Mujahideen.

The judge said that no evidence was found that he was in touch with "terrorist elements" through electronic gadgets. The court observed that the prosecution relied on emotional argument and "a person cannot be held guilty merely on its fear of anarchy".

But like in many such cases, Bashir came out after spending his prime years behind the bar.

A number of Kashmiris who have spent years and decades in multiple jails across India were acquitted after the courts found them not guilty.

At his home, Bashir's mother

Mokhta is happy and excited over the return of her "bridegroom". The years of separation is now being compensated with constant hugs and kisses. The sentimental scene makes everyone emotional inside the room.

"I never knew that his last call about his homecoming will take 11 years to mature," the mother says.

A night before his dramatic detention, Bashir had called his mother from Gujarat where he had gone for a training program.

"Besides running a computer institute in my hometown, I was also working as assistant project manager of a cleft centre run by NGO Kimaya, associated with a German NGO Maya Foundation,"

Bashir says. The NGO runs projects for surgical treatment of cleft lips in children. Bashir was selected by his foundation to attend a training session in Gujarat in February 2010.

"I had gone to Ahmedabad on February 19, 2010 for training," he recalls his life's turning point.

But while his mother waited for his homecoming, the son soon landed in a quagmire known to consume many Kashmiris in the name of "terror and terrorists".

"After the training ended, I was planning to come back home on February 27, 2010. However, in the midnight, Gujarat's Anti-Terrorism Squad and Intelligence Bureau raided... More On P10



Novel Face Mask Developed By MIT, Harvard Can Detect COVID-19 Infection

Boston: Researchers at MIT and Harvard University have designed a new face mask that can diagnose if the wearer is infected with SARS-CoV-2, the virus which causes COVID-19, within 90 minutes.

As the researchers were finishing up their work on the wearable sensors early in 2020, COVID-19 began spreading around the globe, so they quickly decided to try using their technology to create a diagnostic for the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

minutes. "This test is as sensitive as the gold standard, highly sensitive PCR tests, but it is as fast as the antigen tests that are used for quick analysis of Covid-19," said Peter Nguyen, a research scientist at Harvard University in the US.



The mask design, described in the journal Nature Biotechnology, has embedded tiny, disposable sensors that can be fitted into other face masks, and could also be adapted to detect other viruses.

The researchers showed that the sensors could be incorporated into not only face masks but also clothing such as lab coats, potentially offering a new way to monitor health care workers' exposure to a variety of pathogens or other threats.

"We have demonstrated that we can freeze-dry a broad range of synthetic biology sensors to detect viral or bacterial nucleic acids, as well as toxic chemicals, including nerve toxins," said James Collins, a professor at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in the US. "We envision that this platform could enable next-generation wearable biosensors for first responders, health care personnel, and military personnel," Collins, the senior author of the study, said. The face mask sensors are designed so that they can be activated by the wearer when they are ready to perform the test, and the results are only displayed on the inside of the mask, for the privacy of the user.

To produce their diagnostic face mask, the researchers embedded freeze-dried sensors into a paper mask. These freeze-dried components are surrounded by silicone elastomer, the researchers said. The sensors are placed on the inside of the mask, so they can detect viral particles in the breath of the person wearing the mask. The mask also includes a small reservoir of water that is released at the push of a button when the wearer is ready to perform the test. This hydrates the freeze-dried components of the sensor, which analyses accumulated breath droplets on the inside of the mask and produces a result within 90

The prototypes have sensors on the inside of the mask to detect a user's status, as well as sensors placed on the outside of garments, to detect exposure from the environment. The researchers can also swap in sensors for other pathogens, including influenza, Ebola, and Zika, or sensors they have developed to detect organophosphate nerve agents. "Through these demonstrations we have essentially shrunk down the functionality of state-of-the-art molecular testing facilities into a format compatible with wearable scenarios across a variety of applications," said MIT's Luis Soenksen, a lead author of the research paper.

از نیابت کریری
 مضمون کاغذات درخواست آفرین ریاض دفتر مروجہ ریاض احمد ڈاکٹر اسکاٹ
 دولت پورہ بمبر اعطای ڈیپنٹ سرٹیفکیٹ
اشتہار بمراد آگاہی ہر خاص و عام
 معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصد میں درخواست سائل / سائل دفتر حد میں زیر کاروائی ہے اس سلسلے میں پیواری حلقہ سے رپورٹ بشمول ریڈیو طلب کیا گیا ہے جس سے میان سائل کا والد ریاض احمد مورہ 12-06-2000 کو فوت ہو چکا ہے سائل / سائل کی ماں نے دوسرے شادی کی ہے مطابق چچی آمدہ دفتر جناب ڈپٹی کمشنر صاحب بارہمولہ زیر نمبر 02-06-2021/DCB/SRO-43/75/77 ریاض احمد ڈاکٹر کے پاس میں بطور نیشنل کام کرتا ہوں۔ فریڈ کونڈیشن میں ہے۔
 آفرین ریاض دفتر ریاض احمد ڈاکٹر زیر تعلیم 21 سال
 سرٹیفکیٹ زیر بحث اجرا کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص کو کوئی اعتراض وغیرہ ہو تو وہ دفتر حد میں اندر سات پیم پیش کریں بعد معیاد گذرنے کوئی اعتراض وغیرہ قبول نہ ہوگا۔
 _ajz_r_ نائب تحصیلدار

از دفتر نائب تحصیلدار چنوسہ
 درخواست منجانب: اجملی خان و ہارونہ بانو و موصومہ بانو و شاہ زیب احمد خان:
 حصول نبت: PSC:
اشتہار بمراد آگاہی ہر خاص و عام
 معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصد میں درخواست سائل دفتر حد میں زیر کاروائی ہے اس سلسلے میں پیواری حلقہ سے رپورٹ بشمول ریڈیو طلب کیا گیا ہے جس سے میان سائل / سائل کی ماں نے دوسرے شادی کی ہے مطابق چچی آمدہ دفتر جناب ڈپٹی کمشنر صاحب بارہمولہ زیر نمبر 02-06-2021/DCB/SRO-43/75/77 ریاض احمد ڈاکٹر کے پاس میں بطور نیشنل کام کرتا ہوں۔ فریڈ کونڈیشن میں ہے۔
 آفرین ریاض دفتر ریاض احمد ڈاکٹر زیر تعلیم 21 سال
 سرٹیفکیٹ زیر بحث اجرا کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص کو کوئی اعتراض وغیرہ ہو تو وہ دفتر حد میں اندر سات پیم پیش کریں بعد معیاد گذرنے کوئی اعتراض وغیرہ قبول نہ ہوگا۔
 _ajz_r_ نائب تحصیلدار

ٹھیکہ داری کارڈ نکالنا مطلوب ہے
 ہر خاص و عام مطلع کیا جاتا ہے کہ ٹھیکہ داری کارڈ نکالنا مطلوب ہے۔ اس بارے میں اگر کسی شخص کو کوئی اعتراض ہو تو وہ سات دنوں کے اندر اندر اپنا اعتراض آرا بیڈٹی ڈیویشن و ایڈو کھنڈل اینٹ ناگ کے دفتر میں پیش کریں۔ معیاد گذرنے کے بعد کوئی بھی اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔
 اے جے
 غلام محمد ریڈر ولد غلام احمد ریڈر
 ساکنہ نامت پورہ دروائے تحصیل لارنو
RNA

از نیابت وندیگام یا اجلاس منظور احمد خان نائب تحصیلدار
 درخواست منجانب: بلال احمد اور سجاد احمد اور ولد منظور احمد ڈاکٹر اسکاٹ حلقہ ضلع اینٹ ناگ
 بضر حصول PSC پہاڑی سیکولنگ سرٹیفکیٹ۔
 اشتہار بمراد آگاہی ہر خاص و عام۔
 معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصد میں سائل نے ایک درخواست بضر حصول PSC سرٹیفکیٹ دفتر حد میں پیش کیا ہے جو کہ زیر کاروائی ہے۔ پیواری حلقہ سے رپورٹ طلب کی گئی جس سے میان سائل کا کتبہ بڈیل افراد ہیں۔
 نام افراد کتبہ: عمر 45 سال، پیشہ COOK، آمدنی 9000/=، 2- سلیبہ بانو 43 سال، گھریلو کام، 3- شامین جان 22 سال، گھریلو کام، 4- بلال احمد ڈاکٹر 19 سال، زیر تعلیم، 5- سجاد احمد ڈاکٹر 20 سال، زیر تعلیم، 6- بلال احمد ڈاکٹر 19 سال، زیر تعلیم۔
 اسکے علاوہ اور کوئی افراد کتبہ موجود نہیں ہے۔ اور کتبہ کی تمام آمدنی زرعی وغیرہ ایک لاکھ پچتر ہزار روپیہ تک ہے۔ لہذا سرٹیفکیٹ اجراء کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص کو کوئی اعتراض ہوگا وہ ایک ہفتہ کے اندر دوران دفتر ی اوقات میں اپنا اعتراض پیش کریں۔ معیاد گذرنے کے بعد کوئی بھی اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔
 RNA
 نائب تحصیلدار۔

Distt. Anantnag Department of AYUSH Indian Systems of Medicine & Homeopathic Anantnag.
 AYUSH Immune Booster Medicine Distributed at village Narupora Anantnag from ISM Dispy. Narupora Anantnag



On 30/06/2021 The Directions of Director Indian Systems of Medicine (AYUSH) J & K & ADMO ISM Anantnag/ DNO ISM AYUSH Anantnag . FREE AYUSH Immune Booster Medicines were distributed at Village Narupora Anantnag and also importance of COVID SoPs and vaccination was explained in detail From Govt. ISM Narupora 220 beneficiaries received immunity boosting drugs .
 mja

Office Of The Assistant Regional Transport Officer Anantnag
 Whereas a joint application has been received by this office from Mr/Mohd Anwar Lone S/o MohdJabar Lone R/o Push Kirri/Srigufwara Anantnag(Party no ist) as transferor (seller) owner of the vehicle MarutiSuz.car 800 bearing registration No JK03C 1266 (commercial /non-commercial) covering under R/p No Nil and MrsMasrat Jan W/o Zahooraahmad Shah R/o Khahpora Bon nambat Anantnag (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 J&K Bank BaghatBarzulla Srinagar. 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 stipulated period.
 No: 101/7073/Ang
 Dated : 30/06/2021
 Assistant regional transport officer anantnag
 RNA

ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY
 AWANTIPORA, KASHMIR.
 Tele: 01933-247954/247955. Website: www.iust.ac.in
NOTICE
 It is notified for information of all the concerned that the last date for submission of online application forms for admission to various Programmes notified vide Admission Notification No. 02 of 2021 Dated: 04-06-2021 has been extended upto **15-07-2021**. The candidates can apply online for the aforesaid academic programmes on the University Website www.iust.ac.in
 Queries, if any, can be made on EPABX: 01933-247252 Phone: 9858306455/ 9906400789
 Email ID: admissions@islamicuniversity.edu.in.
 No: IUJST/Acad/Admissions/21/177
 Dated: 30-06-2021
 Sd/-
 Assistant Registrar, Academics

CENTRAL UNIVERSITY OF KASHMIR
 Green Campus, Ganderbal – 191201 (J&K)
EMPLOYMENT NOTIFICATION
 Online applications are invited from the eligible candidates for engagement to the posts of **Software Engineer, Content Writer & Graphic Designer** on short term contract/need basis. The detailed eligibility conditions and online prescribed application form is available on the University website www.cukashmir.ac.in. The last date for submission of online application form is **15-07-2021**.
 No. 04 of 2021
 Sd/ Registrar
 Dated: 21-06-2021

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, MECHANICAL IRRIGATION DIVISION SRINAGAR
 NEAR J&K BANK, (Zaldagar)
 Telefax No. 0194-2503195 e.mail Id: xenmidsrinagar@gmail.com
Gist of Short Term e-NIT No. 09 OF 2021-22, Dated: 29-06-2021

For and on behalf of Lt. Governor of UT of J&K, Executive Engineer, Mechanical Irrigation Division, Srinagar, invites e- tenders on item rate basis by e-tendering mode for:-

| S. No. | Particulars of the work | Tender fee (In Rs.) | Estimated Cost of work "Rs" in Lacs | Exemption Allowed | Completion Period | Class/ Registration Type |
|--------|---|---------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--|
| 1. | Repairing of 75HP VT motor at De-Watering cum Lift Irrigation Scheme Takenwari Old. | 100.00 | 0.705 | Yes | 05 days | Electrical Contractors/ SSI Unit Holders/ Workshop holders/ firms having relevant experience.. |
| 2. | Fabrication, providing and fitting of 350 mm dia MS extension pipe to the suction line and urgent repairs to be carried out at LIS Bakshipora Kernabal. | 100.00 | 0.684 | Yes | 05 days | Mechanical Contractors/ SSI Unit Holders/ Workshop holders/ firms having relevant experience. |
| 3. | Rewinding of 90HP horizontal 3-Phase motor at LIS Bakshipora Kernabal. | 100.00 | 0.60 | Yes | 05 days | Electrical Contractors/ SSI Unit Holders/ Workshop holders/ firms having relevant experience.. |
| 4. | Repairs to be carried out to 100 KVA HT/LT transformer at De-Watering Station Khushipora. | 100.00 | 0.484 | Yes | 05 days | Electrical Contractors/ SSI Unit Holders/ Workshop holders/ firms having relevant experience.. |

The bidding process shall be completed online in single cover containing Tender Document fee, Bid Security Declaration, prequalification and technical bid. Financial Bid in the prescribed BOQ.

The critical dates are as tabulated below:-

| i | ii | iii | iv | v | vi | vii |
|--------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|---|
| Publish Date | 29 /06/2021 at 1600 hrs | Document Download/sale start Date | 29 /06/2021 from 1600 hrs | Clarification start date | N.A | Bid submission start date |
| | | | | | 29/06/2021 from 1600 hrs | Clarification end date |
| | | | | | N.A | Bid submission/ Document Download/sale end date |
| | | | | | 05 /07/2021 upto 1400 hrs | Date and time of Bid opening |
| | | | | | 06 /07/2021 at 1400 hrs | |

The bid uploaded on the website up to due date and time will be opened on scheduled date /time or any other date convenient to the tender opening authority in the office of the Executive Engineer, Mechanical Irrigation Division, Zaldagar Srinagar.

All other terms and conditions shall remain same as laid down in PWD Form No. 25 & 33.

| Position of funds | Available |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Position of AA | Under Submission |
| Position of Technical sanction | Sanctioned vide No's. 34, 35 & 37, 38 and 39 of 06/21 respectively. |

 No. MIDS/Ts/ 1201-06
 Dated:- 29-06-2021
DIPK-3828/21
 Executive Engineer,
 Mechanical Irrigation Division, Srinagar

OFFICE OF THE REGIONAL TRANSPORT OFFICER KASHMIR
NOTICE
 Where as an application for transfer of ownership has been received from Abdul Majeed Lone S/O Lt Ghulam Hassan Lone R/o Umar Colony Wanabal Rawalpura Sgr (Transferor) of KWD-RXT bearing registration No. JK01AB-7442 chasis No: 3340529 Engine No: 03 5616 Model 2016 in favour of Sajad Ahmad Baba S/O Abdul Rehman Baba R/o Barthana Rehmattullah Shah Colony Qamarwari Sgr (Transferee). Now, therefore, it is notified for the information of the general, public that representation/ Objection, if any in connection with proposed transfer will be received within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice in the daily newspaper Kashmir Observer to the address of undersigned. No, representation/ objection shall be considered unless it is made writing it is made in the aforesaid period.
 Sd/-
 NOJK-RTOK 2829
 Dated: 30/06/2021
 Regional Transport Office, Kashmir
 fko

Deptt. of Indian Systems of Medicine & Homeopathic (AYUSH) District Anantnag.
 AYUSH Immune Booster Medicine Distributed at village Rain Chowgund Anantnag from ISM Dispy. R.C.Gund Anantnag



On 29/06/2021 The Directions of Director Indian Systems of Medicine (AYUSH) J & K & ADMO ISM Anantnag/ DNO ISM AYUSH Anantnag . FREE AYUSH Immune Booster Medicines were distributed at Village Rain Chowgund Anantnag and also importance of COVID SoPs and vaccination was explained in detail From Govt. ISM Dispensary R.C.Gund Anantnag 357 beneficiaries received immunity boosting drugs
 mja

OFFICE OF THE REGIONAL TRANSPORT OFFICER KASHMIR
NOTICE
 Where as an application for transfer of ownership has been received from Vakeel Ahamd Laway S/O Haji Mohammad Ismail R/o Naweedabad Batamloo Sgr (Transferor) of Duster bearing registration No. JK01X-0281 chasis No: 8038156 Engine No: 106430 Model 2014 in favour of Imtisall Rasool S/O Ghulam Rasool R/O H. NO 114 Ward No 1 near Fisheries Office Kishtwar Kmr (Transferee). Now, therefore, it is notified for the information of the general, public that representation/ Objection, if any in connection with proposed transfer will be received within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice in the daily newspaper Kashmir Observer to the address of undersigned. No, representation/ objection shall be considered unless it is made writing it is made in the aforesaid period.
 Sd/-
 NOJK-RTOK 2790
 Dated: 29/06/2021
 Regional Transport Office, Kashmir
 fko

500 Suicide Cases Reported At SMHS Hospital In One Year



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Over 500 suicide cases from different areas of the Valley have been reported at Srinagar's Shri Maharaja Hari Singh (SMHS) hospital in last one year, officials said Wednesday.

The officials said most of the cases reported at the hospital had consumed poisonous substances. For the last one year, a total of

515 people, who were brought to SMHS hospital, had consumed poisonous substances, adding that 172 among them are male while 343 are female.

The officials said that from April this year, a total of 17 persons were brought to SMHS, who had committed suicide by hanging themselves at different places. They said most of them were brought dead to the hospital.

The officials further said that at least 15 cases of suicides by jumping into water bodies have been reported at the hospital since April, 2021.

Meanwhile, the experts said that the parents can play a pivotal role in curbing the number of cases.

Dr. Junaid Nabi, a psychiatrist said that intolerance power among the people has resulted in an increase in the suicidal cases, adding that job loss and drug abuse is also among the causes, which has recorded an increase in the suicide cases.

He said that killing oneself is not a solution, there is a need to put efforts to curb the number, adding that the parents can play a pivotal role in this matter. "We should talk to the people facing mental issues and help them to come out from such a situation," he said.

FCS&CA Directed To Complete Ration Distribution Ahead Of Eid



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Mohammad Aijaz Asad Wednesday passed directions to FCS&CA to ensure that process of Ration distribution is completed before Eid so that people do not face any difficulty in this regard.

He directed the officers to intensify the market checking and ensure all commodities are sold at already fixed prices besides ensure availability of all essential supplies in the market to avoid hoardings and profiteering.

He directed the SMC authorities to ensure proper fumigation, sanitation and cleanliness at all the places amid COVID-19 pandemic besides proper functioning of all street lights.

The DC said strict orders have been placed that no one should be allowed to violate SOPs related to COVID-19 because of anticipated consumer rush in the markets, and anyone found in such involvement will be dealt strictly under law.

The meeting was informed that on the eve of Eid ul Azha the Sheep Husbandry Department would set up sale outlets (Mandees) for sale of Sacrificial animals (Goats/Sheeps) at designated places across Srinagar.

The DC asked the concerned

to take appropriate measures for ensuring Covid-19 protocols at the sale mandies and place banners/poster's regarding Covid-19 SOPs to sensitize the masses. It was also directed that teams of Veterinary department be kept at these mandees.

During the meeting, the DC urged upon Sectoral officers of PHE and PDD to ensure uninterrupted supply of water and electricity barring curtailment schedule to the district. He asked the PHE department to keel water tankers in ready state to cater any exigent need. The R&B authorities were asked to complete necessary road repairs in the City.

The DC instructed the Food Safety department to activate its market surveillance Squads to check the quality of food items such as Bakery, Confectionery, Milk, Meat Chicken, Vegetables and other essentials in the market and take strict action against the erring traders.

On the occasion, the Traffic police authorities were asked to ensure smooth movement of traffic across the City and issue necessary route plans if required to overcome any traffic jams. Similarly, Fire & Emergency authorities were asked to remain alert and establish fire tenders at specific places including near Shrines and other prominent religious places.

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

- 69 - Roman General Vespasian is first proclaimed Emperor by troops in Egypt, during year of the four emperors
- 251 - The Battle of Abrittus is won by the Goths against the Romans. Roman Emperor Decius and Herennius Etruscus are killed
- 1097 - 1st Crusaders defeat Sultan Kilidji Arslan of Nicea
- 1200 - In China, sunglasses are invented
- 1253 - Battle at Westkapelle-Floris the Guardian beats Wigjide van Dampierre
- 1543 - England & Scotland sign Peace treaty of Greenwich
- 1674 - Spain, France & Netherlands form Triple Alliance
- 1690 - Army of Protestant King William III defeats deposed Roman Catholic King James II in Battle of Boyne in Ireland
- 1747 - Battle at Lafeld: France beat British/Dutch army USA
- 1776 - 1st vote on Declaration of Independence for Britain's North American colonies
- 1798 - Napoleon's fleet reaches Alexandria, Egypt
- 1810 - Louis Napoleon abdicates as king of the Netherlands
- 1839 - Abdul-Medjid succeeds Mahmud II as Sultan of Turkey
- 1862 - Battle of Malvern Hill [Poindexter's Farm], day 7 of 7 days battles, Union forces repel Confederate attack, Tactical Union victory (US Civil War)
- 1890 - Great Britain and Germany sign Zanzibar-Helgoland Treaty
- 1896 - Wilfrid Laurier sworn in as 1st French speaking Prime Minister of Canada
- 1905 - Albert Einstein introduces his theory of special relativity
- 1910 - Union of South Africa becomes a dominion
- 1913 - Serbia and Greece declare war on Bulgaria
- 1916 - First day of the Battle of the Somme: the British Army suffers its worst day, losing 19,240 men (WWI)
- 1921 - The Communist Party of China is founded and Chen Duxiu elected its leader
- 1930 - Great Britain signs accord for Independence of Iraq
- 1942 - German troops conquer Sebastopol
- 1945 - Allies troop land on Balikpapan
- 1950 - 1st 407 US soldiers flown to South Korea
- 1954 - Khalid Hasan, Pakistani cricket leg-spinner makes his Test debut against England at just 16 yrs 352 days, then world record
- 1956 - Ibrahim Hashiro succeeds Said el-Moefti as premier of Jordan
- 1959 - Israeli Knesset agrees to weapon sales to West Germany
- 1960 - The independent Somali Democratic Republic, commonly known as Somalia, is formed out of former British and Italian territories
- 1960 - Ghana becomes a republic
- 1960- USSR shoots down US RB-47 reconnaissance plane
- 1962- Algeria votes for independence from France
- 1962- Burundi & Rwanda gain independence from Belgium (National Days)
- 1968- US, Britain, USSR & 58 nations sign Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty
- 1968- USSR performs underground nuclear test
- 1971- Britain and Argentina sign accord about Falkland Islands
- 1982- Kosmos 1383, 1st search & rescue satellite, launched
- 1992- Ali Kafi becomes president of Algeria
- 1993 Russian manned space craft TM-17, launches into orbit
- 1993- STS-57 (Endeavour) lands
- 1997- United Kingdom returns Hong Kong and the New Territories to the People's Republic of China
- 2002- The International Criminal Court is established to prosecute individuals for genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and the crime of aggression
- 2004 - Saturn Orbit insertion of Cassini-Huygens begins at 01:12 UTC and ends at 02:48 UTC.



HIJRI CALENDAR

20

ZIQADAT -UL-HARAAM

1442

PRAYERS

FAJR 3:37
ZUHR 12:33
ASR 5:34
MAGRIB 7:50
ISHA 9:31

Regional Conference On Good Governance Practices Begins In Srinagar Today



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: A two day Regional Conference on the theme "Replication of Good Governance Practices" will be held in Srinagar on July 1 and 2, 2021. The Conference is being organised by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) under the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions in collaboration with Jammu and Kashmir Administration.

The Conference will take place at the Sher-e-Kashmir International Convention Centre (SKICC) through semi-virtual mode.

Dr. Jitendra Singh, Minister of State (Independent charge) of the Ministry of DONER, Minister of State for PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions;

Atomic Energy & Space along with Manoj Sinha, Lieutenant Governor of the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir, will inaugurate the 2-day event. Arun Kumar Mehta, Chief Secretary, J&K and Sanjay Singh, Secretary, DAR&PG will also address the Inaugural Session.

Delegates from 10 States/Union Territories will participate in the Conference. Around 400 delegates from Jammu & Kashmir and 300 delegates from other States will participate in the conference through semi-virtual mode.

The e-Magazine titled 'MINIMUM GOVERNMENT, MAXIMUM GOVERNANCE' (MGMG), comprising of write-ups on select Administrative Innovations will be released during the Conference.

V Srinivas, Additional Secretary (AR&PG) will Chair the inaugural Session on the topic "Innovation (Centre)". In the post lunch session, presentations will be made on Innovations (States), and Innovations (Districts). On the second day, presentations will be made on 'Administrative Innovations in J&K', 'Aspirational Districts', 'Annual Credit Plan' and 'Swachh Bharat'.

SKIMS Doctor Bags First Prize At National Level

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Post graduate resident of psychiatry SKIMS Medical College & Hospital Bemina has bagged the first prize at national level.

In a statement, SKIMS PRO said that Dr Hadiya Kar, a post graduate student at psychiatry SKIMS medical college Bemina, Srinagar won the first prize for short case presentation at national level.

"The virtual mock practical examination was organised by Topiwala National Medical College & BYL Nair Ch. Hospital & Department of Psychiatry in association with the Indian Psychiatric Society Sub-committees on Post Graduate Education and Faculty Training from 24th to 26th June 2021."

As per the statement, HOD psychiatry Dr Abdul Majid informed that Dr Hadiya Kar was the youngest presenter all over India to compete in the event. "The award will be big boost to the ongoing postgraduate education for the department of psychiatry, which has started post graduate course just few years ago," he added.

NIT Srinagar Hosts FC, BOG Meetings With Ministry Of Education

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The National Institute of Technology (NIT) Srinagar on Wednesday held Finance Committee (FC) and Board of Governors (BOG) meetings in which various issues related to finance and budget were discussed with representatives of the Ministry of Education (MoE).

Director NIT Srinagar, Prof. Rakesh Sehgal, who chaired the twin meetings, paid tributes to Madan Mohan, ADGC (NIT's) and termed his departure as a big loss for the nation in general and the ministry of education in particular.

"He played a crucial role in converting Regional Engineering Colleges (REC) to NIT's. Especially in the case of NIT Srinagar, he was extraordinary all the possible help and advice," Director NIT said.

Prof. Sehgal said various issues related to finance, budget allocation, issues regarding and funds, up-gradation of facilities, faculty,



HE PLAYED A crucial role in converting Regional Engineering Colleges (REC) to NIT's. Especially in the case of NIT Srinagar, he was extraordinary all the possible help and advice,' Director NIT said.

students, nomination of new members for the FC, BOG were discussed during the meetings.

"Various pending issues were approved during the meetings" he said.

The Agenda of the Finance Committee (FC) was presented by Registrar NIT Srinagar Professor Kaiser Bukhari.

Govt Warns Secretariat Employees Over Laxity In Covid Appropriate Behavior

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Government on Wednesday warned employees working in civil secretariat against any laxity regarding Covid appropriate behaviour.

"It has been observed that some employees working in various departments of Civil Secretariat are not displaying COVID appropriate behaviour viz violating social distancing norms, not wearing face masks or wearing face masks improperly," a government order reads.

"This irresponsible behaviour on part of these employees not

only endangers their own lives but also risks the lives of other employees working on the premises, an issue which has been viewed seriously by the authorities," noted the order.

Accordingly, all employees working in Civil Secretariat have been asked to follow COVID appropriate behaviour, wear face masks properly and adhere to social distancing norms.

"Any violation in this regard shall be treated as breach of conduct rules and disciplinary action including forfeiture of annual increment shall be initiated against such employees," the order added.

HC Asks Govt To Ensure Vaccination Of Disabled Persons



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The High Court on Wednesday asked authorities to ensure vaccination of the disabled persons in Jammu and Kashmir.

Hearing a petition, a bench of Justice Ali Mohammad Magrey asked the authorities to take effective steps for their vaccination as per the guidelines of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India.

"The Additional Chief Secretary, Health and Medical Education Department shall file an affidavit, indicating therein the steps for ensuring vaccination of the disabled persons in the Jammu and Kashmir. The affidavit shall be filed by or before the next date of hearing," the court said as per GNS and posted the matter on July 8.

In petition filed by one Javed Ahmad Tak on behalf of Humanity Welfare Organization Helpline, representing specially abled persons, the petitioner seeks direction to the government to treat all the persons with disabilities as special category and ensure their vaccination in terms of the policy of Government of India, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, as also that of Government of Union Territory of J&K

Referring to Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, advocate Syed Musaib, said the legislation enables all persons with disabilities certain benefits on priority basis. He submitted that despite having approached the authorities in the shape of representations, no effective action has been taken for vaccination of the disabled persons in Jammu and Kashmir, which formed a ground for seeking indulgence of the Court in the present petition.

HC Directs Srinagar Admin To Allow KCCI Elections

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir High Court has directed Deputy Commissioner Srinagar to allow the holding of elections of Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) in 15 days time, a statement issued by the trade body said on Wednesday.

The statement said, the judgment has come on a petition filed by Sheikh Ashiq Ahmad, the President of KCCI&I.

In his petition, Sheikh had sought directions to the Deputy Commissioner, Srinagar to permit the holding of elections of Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry at the earliest.

After the court orders were issued Sheikh Ashiq has appealed all contesting candidates and members of KCCI&I to prepare for free and fair elections being held anytime in the next two weeks.

Pertinently, KCCI&I executive body election date was earlier fixed as April 26, 2021. However, the polls were deferred just a day ago when the District Administration declared Sonawar area of Srinagar as a Covid red zone, where Amar Singh Club, the proposed polling centre is located.

Justice Tashi Rabstan, in his order issued on Monday, "this application is disposed of with a direction to the Deputy Commissioner, Srinagar to conduct the elections of the Executive Committee of Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry within a period of 15 days from the date of receipt of the copy of this order, to be supplied by the applicants herein, provided the Sonwar area where Amar Singh Club is situated has not been declared as a containment zone as also keeping in view the feasibility to conduct the elections in view of Covid-19 pandemic."

Court has already formed an Election Committee of six persons for conducting the election of Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

KCCI&I President Sheikh Ashiq said that with the fresh Court directions, elections of the Executive Committee are expected to hold anytime in the coming two weeks. He has assured that the elections will be held in a free and fair environment and by the guidelines of the KCCI&I Constitution. He has appealed all the contesting candidates to adhere to the norms and regulations of the election process.

Enforcement Wing Of SDA Demolishes Illegal Structures At Nowgam Bypass

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Enforcement wing of Srinagar Development Authority in continuation to their Demolition drive in their areas of jurisdiction carried out a Drive at Nowgam bypass wherein few unscrupulous persons had carried out illegal construction.

The enforcement wing swung into action on 29th June 2021

and removed the unauthorised construction.

General public residing within SDA jurisdictions are advised not to indulge in any illegal constructions whether residential or commercial without obtaining building permission from SDA. Any structure raised in without

obtaining building permission shall be sealed/demolished.

RASM-E-CHAHARUM

With profound grief, we inform the sad demise of Begum Aga Syed Muzaffar Hussain Rizvi of Wani Mohalla, Amda Kadal, at present Lawaypora Srinagar. She left for heavenly abode during the intervening night of June 29-30 after brief illness.

Congregational Fateh Khwani will be held on Friday, July 2, at our ancestral graveyard at Wani Mohalla, Amda Kadal at 6:30 am. Later, condolence meetings will be held at her home in Lawaypora throughout the day.

BEREAVED

Aga Syed Muzaffar Hussain Rizvi and family

IZ-KO

From KO Archives

Geelani Accuses Pak Of Influencing Oic's Move

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR - perturbed over not being invited for OIC foreign ministers' meet in Yemen, the hardline Hurriyat Conference today charged Pakistan with using its good offices in getting invitation for Mirwaiz-led Hurriyat from OIC and justifying its decision to recognise that faction as the real one.

"Since Pakistan recognises Mirwaiz Umer Farooq led Hurriyat as real Hurriyat to prove its decision correct it used its good offices and got invitation from OIC for the Hurriyat, hardline Hurriyat chairman Syed Ali Shall Geelani told here.

However, he said he was not worried for not being invited by OIC as Islamic countries have no role with regard to Kashmir issue. "I Trust in God and not Islamic countries for resolution of Kashmir issue," he added.

Geelani said the people of Jammu and Kashmir have to decide and support the Hurriyat which represents them correctly.

(Kashmir Observer, 01 July, 2005)

Covaxin "Effectively Neutralises" Delta Variant: Top US Health Institute



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

WASHINGTON: India's Covaxin, developed by Bharat Biotech in collaboration with the Indian Council of Medical Research, effectively neutralises both Alpha and Delta variants of coronavirus, the US National Institute of Health has said.

The NIH said results of two studies of blood serum from people who had received Covaxin suggest that the vaccine generates antibodies that effectively neutralise the B.1.1.7 (Alpha) and B.1.617 (Delta) variants of SARS-CoV-2, first identified in the UK and India, respectively.

The top American health research institute, which has a history of strong scientific collaboration with India, also said that an adjuvant developed with funding from it has contributed to the success of the highly efficacious Covaxin, which has been administered to roughly 25 million people till date in India and elsewhere.

Adjuvants are substances formulated as part of a vaccine to boost immune responses and enhance a vaccine's effectiveness.

Covaxin comprises a disabled form of SARS-CoV-2 that cannot replicate but still stimulates the immune system to make antibodies against the virus. Published results from a phase 2 trial of the vaccine indicate that it is safe and well tolerated, the NIH said, adding that safety data from a phase 3 trial of Covaxin will become available later this year.

"Meanwhile, unpublished interim results from the phase 3 trial indicate that the vaccine has 78 per cent efficacy against symptomatic disease, 100 per cent efficacy against severe COVID-19, including hospitalisation, and 70 per cent efficacy against asymptomatic infection with SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19," it said.

"The results from two studies of blood serum from people who had received Covaxin suggest that the vaccine generates antibodies that effectively neutralise the B.1.1.7 (Alpha) and B.1.617 (Delta) variants of SARS-CoV-2, first identified in the UK and India, respectively," the NIH said.

Ending a global pandemic requires a global response, said Anthony S Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), part of NIH.

"I am pleased that a novel vaccine adjuvant developed in the US with NIAID support is part of an efficacious COVID-19 vaccine available to people in India," he said.

The adjuvant used in Covaxin, Alhydroxiqum-II, was discovered and tested in a laboratory by the biotech company ViroVax LLC of Lawrence, Kansas with support from the NIAID Adjuvant Development Program.

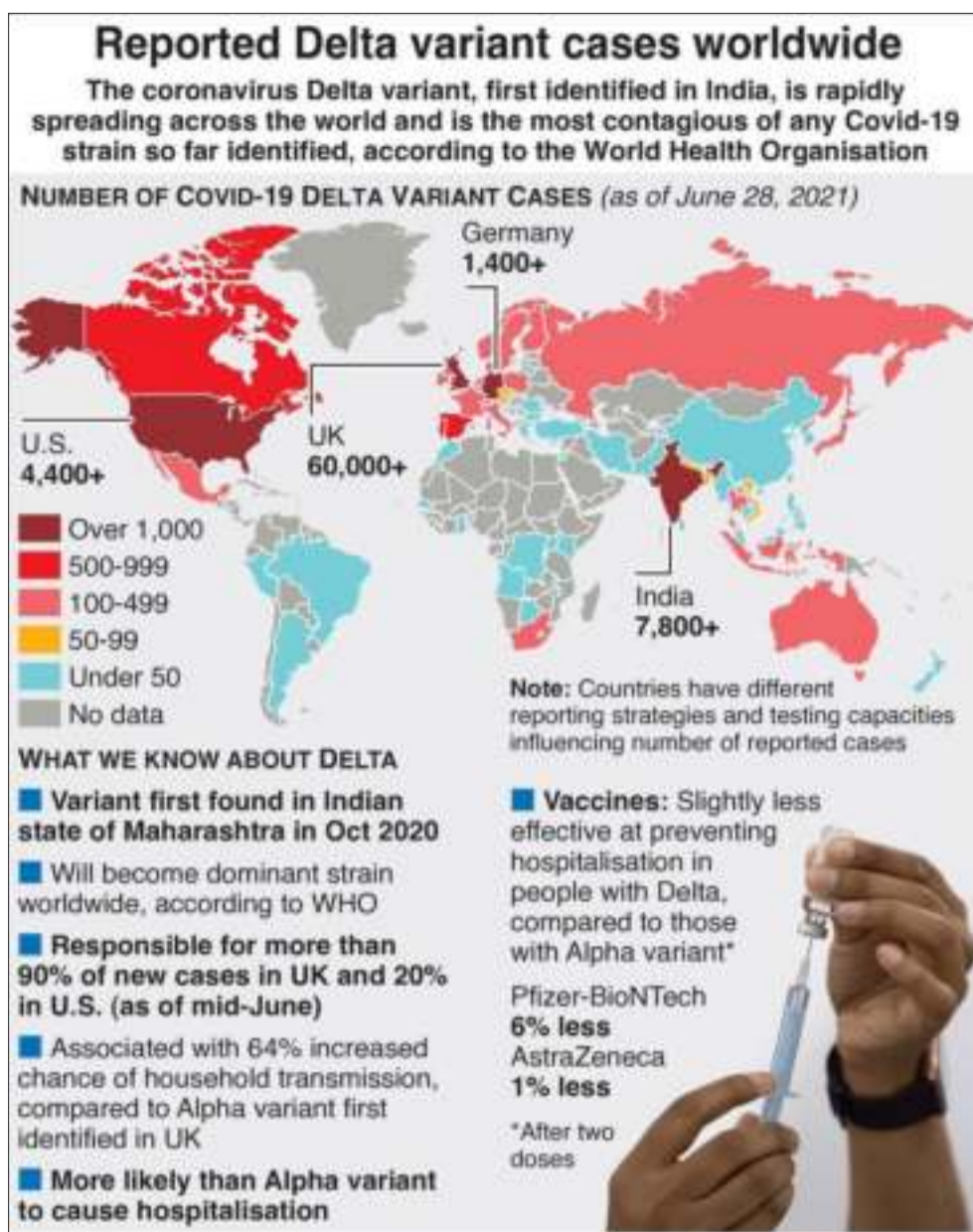
Alhydroxiqum-II is the first adjuvant in an authorised vaccine against an infectious disease to activate receptors TLR7 and TLR8 that play a vital role in the immune response to viruses.

In addition, the alum in Alhydroxiqum-II stimulates the immune system to search for an invading pathogen. Molecules that activate TLR receptors stimulate the immune system powerfully, but the side effects of Alhydroxiqum-II are mild, the NIH said.

According to the NIH, the NIAID Adjuvant Program has supported the research of the founder and chief executive officer of ViroVax, Sunil David, MD, PhD, since 2009. His work has focused on searching for novel molecules that activate innate immune receptors and developing them as vaccine adjuvants.

The collaboration between Dr David and Bharat Biotech International Ltd. of Hyderabad was initiated during a 2019 meeting in India coordinated by the NIAID Office of Global Research under the auspices of NIAID's Indo-US Vaccine Action Program.

A delegation of five NIAID-funded adjuvant investigators, including Dr David; two members of the NIAID Division of Allergy, Immunology, and Transplantation; and the NIAID India representative, visited four



Afghan Civilians Take Up Arms As Us-Led Forces Leave

REUTERS

PARWAN, AFGHANISTAN: Gun in hand, 55-year-old Dost Mohammad Salangi recites poetry as he leads a small group of men to a look-out post high in the rugged hills of Parwan province, north of the Afghan capital Kabul.

Heavily bearded and wearing a traditional circular pakol hat to keep off the sun, he has a warning for the militant Taliban movement, which has increased attacks on Afghan forces and claimed more territory as foreign troops withdraw.

"If they impose war on us, oppress us and encroach on women and people's property, even our seven-year-old children will be armed and will stand against them," he told Reuters.

Salangi is one of hundreds of former "mujahideen" fighters and civilians who have felt compelled to take up arms to help the army repel a growing Taliban insurgency.

The group's ascendancy on the ground comes as the last US-led international forces prepare to leave after two decades of fighting that ended with no clear victory for either side.

"We have to protect our country... now there is no choice as the foreign forces abandon us," said Farid Mohammed, a young student who joined a local anti-Taliban leader from Parwan.

He was speaking as the German military concluded the withdrawal of the second largest contingent of for-



ign troops after the United States with around 150,000 soldiers deployed over the past two decades, many of them serving more than one tour in the country.

US President Joe Biden and NATO said in mid-April they would pull out the roughly 10,000 foreign troops still in Afghanistan by Sept. 11, the 20th anniversary of the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York that prompted the mission.

The United Nations envoy for Afghanistan said this week the Taliban had taken more than 50 of 370 districts and was positioned to control provincial capitals as the country looked increasingly unstable as foreign military support ended.

Armed mainly with old assault rifles, pistols and grenade launchers, men like Salangi and Mohammed have joined local shopkeepers and trad-

ers as part of a loosely-formed Public Uprising Force trying to reclaim some of those areas.

Ajmal Omar Shinwari, a spokesman for the Afghan defense and security forces, said Afghans keen to take up arms against the Taliban were being absorbed into the structure of territorial army forces.

But some political analysts warn of the growing risk of a return to civil war as more groups took up arms.

Faced with rising violence, President Ashraf Ghani visited Washington in June to meet Biden, who pledged US support to Afghanistan but said Afghans must decide their own future.

Talks to try and find a political settlement in Afghanistan have stalled, although the head of the Afghan peace council has said they should not be abandoned despite the surge in Taliban attacks.

UN Chief Urges US To Remove Iran Sanctions As Agreed In 2015

Agencies

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres appealed to US President Joe Biden's administration to lift or waive all sanctions on Iran as agreed under a 2015 deal aimed at stopping Tehran from developing a nuclear weapon.

In a report to the United Nations Security Council, Guterres also urged the United States to "extend the waivers with regard to the trade-in oil with the Islamic Republic of Iran, and fully renew waivers for nuclear non-proliferation projects".

The 15-member council will on Wednesday discuss the secretary-general's biannual report on the implementation of a 2015 resolution that enshrines the nuclear deal between Iran, the United States, France, the United Kingdom, Germany, Russia, China and the European Union.

Guterres' appeal to Washington comes amid talks to revive the deal - known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) - under which Iran accepted curbs on its nuclear programme in return for a lifting of many foreign sanctions against it.

Former US President Donald Trump abandoned the pact in 2018 and reimposed harsh sanctions, prompting Tehran to start violating some of the nuclear limits in 2019.

One of Iran's moves to reduce compliance was a decision to end extra monitoring of its nuclear sites by the IAEA in February. The inspections were



extended twice by temporary deals, the last of which ended last week.

"I appeal to the United States to lift or waive its sanctions outlined in the plan," said Guterres, who also appealed to Iran to return to full implementation of the deal.

Iran has refined uranium up to a purity of roughly 60 percent, far above the deal's limit of 3.67 percent and much closer to the 90 percent suitable for atom bomb cores, though it maintains that it seeks only civilian nuclear power and could quickly reverse its moves if Washington rescinded sanctions and returned to the 2015 deal.

Some experts believe that Iran had been waiting for the election of Ebrahim Raisi, whose headline approach is backed by Supreme Leader Ali Hosseini Khamenei, the ultimate arbiter of Iran's foreign policy.

Analysts have said Iran could strike a deal before Raisi takes office in August - letting him take the credit for the expected economic boost but blame outgoing President Hassan Rouhani, a moderate who championed a better relationship with the West, if the situation deteriorates.

Foreign Vessels Should Leave Persian Gulf: Iran

Agencies

TEHRAN: Stating that there is no reason for the existence of foreign forces in the Persian Gulf, Iran's Navy Commander said that the presence of US and EU vessels near our shores should be suspended.

Rear Admiral Hossein Khanzadi made the remarks on the sidelines of the Seventh Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) in his meeting with Pierre Vandier, the Chief of Staff of the French Navy.

Referring to the geostrategic position of Iran in the region, Khanzadi said, "The Islamic Republic of Iran is located in a special position in the northern region of the Indian Ocean, and many geopolitical experts refer to Iran as the heart of the earth."

"One of the reasons for this is the very good passage capacity, energy and also the existence of very important straits in this area," he added.

"While the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman is a safe and stable region, in recent years we have witnessed a lot of insecurity in the Gulf of Aden and the Bab al-Mandab Strait," he noted, adding, "For this reason, we do not understand the existence of coalition forces in the Persian Gulf region, and we believe that the main reason for this presence is that the dialogue between the effective navies has diminished."

Stating that Iran is closely following the moves of the coalition forces, Khanzadi said, "Today, a number of American and European vessels, as well as France, are present in the Persian Gulf region, but we monitor all their moves and vessels."

Iran's Navy Commander emphasized that the security of the maritime areas of any geography should be provided by the countries of that region.

He also highlighted that these undesirable security combinations [coalition forces] do not enhance

collective security and should be suspended.

Pierre Vandier, for his part, pointed to the performance of the Islamic Republic of Iran during the presidency of the IONS, saying, "Despite the coronavirus pandemic, the Iranian navy was able to successfully manage the summit for three years."

During Trump's presidency, when he was very sensitive about Iran's nuclear program, the Americans stepped up military pressure and invited all their allies to the region to increase pressure on Iran, but the French navy backed down slightly from the US stance, he added.

Of course, European countries should have been present in the Persian Gulf to ensure the security of the region but France was not present in any of the American operations, Vandier noted.

Stating that Denmark and the Netherlands participated in US naval operations, he added that this cooperation has also been to help reduce tensions and pressures.

The approach of France and Europe is to maintain interaction and balance in the region, and in the last two years, the position of France and Europe has been a balanced position with dialogue, and instead of increasing tensions, they are trying to defuse and reduce tensions, he said.

"France and European countries are seeking peace in the region. Of course, the French navy, with the help of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is helping to reduce tensions in Yemen and the Persian Gulf, and we wish that peace and friendship return to the world and that all countries have this mutual understanding," Vandier added. "This meeting was very important to me, and from now on, the relationship between the navies of the two countries should be increased in order to help reduce tensions in the region."

Biden Meets Israeli Counterpart, Conveys Unwavering Support



Agencies

Washington: US President Joe Biden conveyed his unwavering support for Israel's security and also committed to deepen the cooperation between the two countries during a meeting with his Israeli counterpart Reuven Rivlin.

During their meeting at the White House on Monday, the two leaders discussed "the many challenges facing the region, including the threat posed by Iran", as per an official readout.

Rivlin is due to retire next month after the end of his seven-year term. Biden also

emphasised under his administration, Iran will never get a nuclear weapon, said the White House readout.

"He also assured President Rivlin the US remains determined to counter Iran's malign activity and support for terrorist proxies, which have destabilizing consequences for the region."

Separate infra bill from reconciliation, Dems urged

US Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell has urged congressional Democrats to follow President Biden in separating the bipartisan infrastructure bill from a larger reconciliation legislation.

NEWS MAKERS

Record Shattering Heat In Canada, Blackouts In US Cities

Bloomberg

The rare and powerful heat wave that's shattering records across the U.S. Northwest is taking a bruising toll on the region's infrastructure, buckling highways, hobbling public transit and triggering rolling power outages.

Avista Corp. -- which serves nearly 340,000 customers in eastern Washington, Idaho and Oregon -- instituted rolling outages for the first time in company history as temperatures soared. The blackouts, affecting about 9,300 customers late Monday, are expected to last into Tuesday. Heat also warped Seattle highways and scorched Portland's streetcar wires, suspending service.

The breakdowns amid the worst recorded heat wave in Pacific Northwest history are the latest sign that unprecedented challenges loom this summer. Heat, drought and wildfires



tied to climate change have authorities on edge as they try to keep the power on and avoid more heat-related deaths that claim about 650 U.S. lives annually. President Joe Biden will meet governors of Western states Wednesday to discuss how to address wildfire threats.

In Portland, the mercury hit 116 degrees Fahrenheit (47 Celsius) Monday, a third-straight record, while Seattle notched another

all-time high at 108, the National Weather Service said. Lytton, British Columbia reached 118, a new record for Canada just one day after shattering a prior high since 1937.

"I have never seen anything like this in my 40 years of forecasting," said Paul Walker, a meteorologist with AccuWeather Inc. in State College, Pennsylvania.

Meanwhile, the Northeast also is kicking off a heat wave from Penn-

sylvania to Maine that could push New York into the upper 90s, the National Weather Service said. Humidity will make it feel even hotter this week, driving energy demand across the region that relies on air conditioners to beat summer heat.

Boston tied a daily record of 97 Monday, the 10th time this year the city topped 90, while Newark tied a record at 99. The East Coast heat wave however will be different from the Northwest's because it will reverse in coming days, with rain and a high of just 77 forecast for New York Friday.

"It is hot all over, which is putting a demand on already tight resources," said Scott Miller, executive director of the Western Power Trading Forum. "There is limited transmission to move generation around. Folks weren't used to having such high temperatures in the Pacific Northwest."

Elon Musk's Starlink To Deliver Internet Nearly Worldwide Within Weeks

Thomas Seal, Bloomberg

Elon Musk's satellite network Starlink is on track to beam broadband internet everywhere in the world except polar regions by August, he said on Tuesday.

Space Exploration Technologies Corp. has launched more than 1,500 satellites so far and has Starlink operations in about a dozen countries, Musk said during a presentation at the Mobile World Congress conference. That's costing a lot. SpaceX's total investment in the network will be between \$5 billion and \$10 billion before cash flow is positive, he said.

"We recently passed the strategically notable number of 69,420 active users," Musk joked. "We're I think on our way to having a few hundred thousand users, possibly over



500,000 users within 12 months."

SpaceX aims to offer broadband to as much as 5% of the world's population where conventional fiber and wireless networks can't reach. Musk said he's signed two deals with "major country" telecom operators but he couldn't name them yet, and he's in discussions with more. Starlink will provide so-called "data back haul" spines for their networks. The satellite network currently moves about 30 terabits of data per sec-

ond, and Musk said he's targeting a user latency -- or network response time -- of less than 20 milliseconds.

Musk, who turned 50 on Monday, discussed several additional upgrades in the works during an update on the \$74 billion SpaceX business.

The company is set to launch a new version of Starlink's satellites next year that will have inter-satellite laser links to help them cover polar regions. Its engineers are developing a new ground terminal to stem losses: the dishes customers are currently installing on rooftops cost more than \$1,000 to make but only retail for half that, he said.

SpaceX is also planning an orbital flight of its giant Starship rocket "in the next few months" he said.

National Electrical Safety Week Safety Not A One Time Affair, Constant Alertness Necessary: Kansal

- 12,000 Field Level PDD Employees Insured To
- Rs 5 Crores Being Spent On Safety Equipment This Year
- PDD observes National Electrical Safety Week



SRINAGAR: Principal Secretary, Power Development Department (PDD), Rohit Kansal Wednesday remarked that the motto of the department is to ensure a zero accident system. He was speaking in a function organised to observe the National Electrical Safety Week. He also informed that the department is spending nearly Rs 5 crores for various safety devices this year. He also revealed that 12,000 employees at the field levels had been insured this year.

Speaking at the event organised at Electric Division Rajbagh in Srinagar, Kansal observed that safety cannot be a one time or part time affair and constant alertness and observance of SoPs is required. He emphasised on ensuring operationalisation of every layer of protection, be it personal protection or system isolators and other protective equipment.

Kansal further exhorted upon

the staff especially the field staff to operate system protection measures like use of isolators and temporary earthing before taking up any tasks in the field. He advised them to work as per the SoPs and liaise with the feeder managers so that there is no miscommunication between them. He stated that if all SoPs are faithfully implemented the chances of accidents would be eliminated.

He further emphasised that feeder managers and other staff are accountable for safety and that they should ensure that before taking up any of the repair work adequate communication at all levels to ensure shut-downs is made. They should also encourage and ensure use of personal protection gear like safety belt, hand gloves, helmet, shoes with rubber soles and reflective jackets. He warned that there would be zero tolerance for accidents and all cases of negligence would invite action.

Chairman DDC, DC Kupwara Distribute Relief Under SASCM

Observer News Service

Office, Kupwara.

KUPWARA: On the launching ceremony of Social Assistance Scheme for Covid Mortalities (SASCM) by Lieutenant Governor J&K today, Chairman, District Development Council, Kupwara, Irfan Sultan Pandit-pori and Deputy Commissioner Kupwara, Imam Din distributed relief among the beneficiaries under the scheme, here at D.C.

On the occasion, 12 sanction orders pertaining to monthly pension of Rs.1000 were handed over by the dignitaries to the beneficiaries. Besides, 10 sanction orders of scholarships were also distributed among beneficiaries, consisting 8 scholarships of Rs.20000 each and 2 scholarships of Rs.40000 each. The scheme is sponsored by the Social Welfare Department.

Govt Sanctions Rs 1 Cr Assistance For Advocates

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: In view of adverse effect on legal profession consequent to restricted functioning of Courts due to Covid-19 pandemic, the Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir has sanctioned an amount of Rs 1 crore as financial assistance in favour of Advocates.

The amount has been sanctioned in favour of Advocates working in different courts of Jammu and Kashmir.

Additional Secretary to Government of J&K issued a communication to the Registrar General of the High Court along with a cheque of the said amount. A Bench of Justice Ali Mohammad Magrey took the same on record on Tuesday.

Today, Sajad Ashraf, learned GA, Assisting Counsel of Mr. D.C.

Raina, learned Advocate General, has produced a communication bearing No. LAW-Jud/41/2021-10 dated 24.06.2021, addressed to Registrar General, J&K, High Court, Srinagar, by Additional Secretary to Government, intimating that the Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor, J&K, has sanctioned an amount of Rs. 1.00 Crore as financial assistance in favour of Advocates working in different courts of UT of Jammu and Kashmir out of Relief Fund. The cheque bearing No. 652739 is enclosed with the communication. Copy of the communication along with cheque is taken on record," the order stated.

The Bench has also directed the Registrar General to expedite the matter for release of amount in favour of the deserving lawyers, who have already applied, so as to ensure their timely help and assistance.

Infant Among Four Killed In Kashmir Highway Accident

Four Others Suffer Injuries

Observer News Service

RAMBAN: Four people including two women and a two-year-old kid were killed in the wee hours of Wednesday when their vehicle skidded off the road and plunged into a deep gorge on the Kashmir highway, officials said.

The vehicle was on its way to Srinagar from Jammu with a group of labourers from Chhat-tisgarh when the accident occurred at around 5:30 am near Khuni Nallah in Ramban district, they said.

A rescue operation was immediately launched by the police and local volunteers.

Three people including two women were found dead while five others were taken to district hospital Ramban where two-year-old Aryan succumbed to injuries, the official added.



Three of the injured have been identified as Narayan Manji (21), Dinesh Kumar (19) and Maghe Lal (17), they said.

The Kashmir highway, officially known as the Srinagar-Jammu highway—the only major road link connecting Kashmir to rest of the world—has reported over 8,000 road accidents in the last ten years that caused nearly 1,800 fatalities, official data reveals.

The data compiled by the J&K Traffic Police Department reveals, the Srinagar-Jammu highway reported a total of 8,128 accidents between 2010

to 2020 that led to 1,750 deaths and 12,131 injuries.

The treacherous stretch from Banihal to Chanderkote in particular has been the most fatal witnessing 858 deaths as per the data.

Officials have attributed the highway accidents to the increasing volume of traffic on the highway and the rocky terrain of the road, saying it would take three to four years to "stabilise" the highway.

A traffic police official said that the vulnerability of the highway often leads to vehicles being stranded for a couple or more days, "which exhausts the drivers and they often meet accidents when sleep overtakes them."

Experts believe that a lot of bad engineering and unnecessary barricades on the highway were causing majority of the accidents.

THE KASHMIR HIGHWAY HAS REPORTED OVER 8,000 road accidents in the last ten years that caused nearly 1,800 fatalities, official data reveals.

LG Calls For Robust Public Distribution System In J&K

Directs For Streamlining Distribution Chain, Aadhaar Seeding Of Beneficiaries



SRINAGAR: Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha Wednesday said the Government is taking huge strides in ensuring food security for the residents of the UT through timely availability, efficient Supply Chain Management and streamlining distribution of food grains, besides moving towards 100% Aadhaar seeding of the beneficiaries under various schemes.

He made these remarks during the meeting he chaired to review the Public Distribution System in the Union Territory of J&K, at Civil Secretariat.

During the meeting, the Lt Governor took stock of the performance and future targets for the Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs (FCS&CA) department under Public Distribution System.

Emphasising on streamlining the distribution chain, besides rationalising the availability of quality food grains at subsidised and affordable prices, the Lt Governor directed the concerned officials

to bring reforms at the policy planning level to make the system more robust.

"Make all schemes available online, besides fully automating the distribution process, authentication of beneficiaries and putting special focus on public grievance to facilitate the people," the LG directed the officials.

He further passed directions pertaining to timely winter dumping and providing them to the beneficiaries in advance.

Laying stress on the need to be proactive towards the issues of public in the wake of Covid pandemic, the Lt Governor directed the department to ensure seamless distribution of additional free-of-cost food grains under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) to alleviate the hardships faced by the poor and needy.

The LG observed that 'One Nation, One Ration Card', part of the Prime Minister's

Technology Driven System Reforms under the AtmaNirbhar Bharat Abhiyan, has empowered the poor and the needy. It is one of the game changer initiatives giving flexibility and seamless access to PDS and delivery of food-security entitlements to all beneficiaries, anywhere in the country. "A perfect example of integrating technology with the government process and putting it to optimum use for benefit of poor", he added.

The Lt Governor also stressed on ensuring seamless availability of food grains to the consumers, while identifying priority assessments including moving maximum ePOS machines to online mode, introduction of Nomination Policy to cover deprived claimants, coverage of vulnerable groups, streamlining distribution of Kerosene oil, tracking of Supply Chain Management, formulation of NFSA Rules, Aadhaar seeding of Non-NFSA etc.

MAKE ALL SCHEMES AVAILABLE ONLINE, BESIDES FULLY automating the distribution process, authentication of beneficiaries and putting special focus on public grievance to facilitate the people," the LG directed the officials.

Sikh Body Demands Implementation Of Inter-Caste Marriage Act, Anti-conversion Law In J&K



Press Trust of India

SRINAGAR: A Sikh organisation here on Wednesday demanded the implementation of the Inter-Caste Marriage Act and the enactment of an anti-conversion law in Jammu and Kashmir.

This comes amid a row over the allegations of alleged forced conversion of four women from the Sikh community to Islam in the union territory.

"I, on the behalf of the Sikh community, would request that the Inter Caste Marriage Act is implemented in Jammu & Kashmir. Once this Act is put in practice at this place, the inter-caste marriages would come to an end automatically," All Parties Sikh Coordination Committee Chairman Jagmohan Singh Raina told reporters here.

Raina, also a senior office-bearer of the Apni Party, said these laws would safeguard the interests of the people belonging to different faiths and religions.

"The elements who want to

take mileage out of such marriages would also face an inevitable defeat," he added.

Raina said that over the years, the members of elite political families of Jammu and Kashmir have entered into inter-caste marriage but nobody pointed fingers at them.

"Whenever such an incident happens in a normal (ordinary) family, the issue gets blown out of proportion. This needs to be analyzed and people should be vigilant so that the opportunistic politicians don't exploit them," he said.

"At the same time, it is also important that Anti-Conversion Law is implemented in Jammu & Kashmir. This would stop the forcible conversion of people belonging to any religion whatsoever. As a result of the same, the friction between the different communities would also come to an end once for all. There would be no tensions between the communities and all the people would live without fear," he said.

Mumkin Scheme DC Shopian Discusses Modalities For Execution Of CLG Programme



Observer News Service

SHOPIAN: The District Development Commissioner (DDC) Shopian, Sachin Kumar Vaishya Wednesday chaired the maiden meeting of District Level Implementation Committee (DLIC) to discuss modalities for the implementation of Customized Livelihood Generation (CLG) Scheme- "Mumkin" in the district at Mini Secretariat here.

At the outset, the Assistant Labour Commissioner apprised the meeting that a list of eligible unemployed youth has been framed after they filed applications online. He said the same will be submitted for sanctioning to higher authorities after the approval by the DLIC.

It was given out in the meeting that around 41 applications were received from the beneficiaries submitted through online mode, out of which 29 have been approved and the rest are

under process. He informed that under this scheme eligible youth of J&K shall be encouraged to start a sustainable livelihood in the transport sector by providing financial assistance for purchase of small commercial vehicles like load carriers, taxis, mini bus, light commercial vehicles, tempo and other modes of transportation of similar nature under public carrier permit.

The DDC called upon the members to create mass awareness about the scheme so that eligible candidates can avail its benefits. Besides, he directed the concerned to ensure error free compilation of all applications fulfilling all the criteria conditions before approval for further sanctioning.

The meeting was attended by Lead District Manager, Gh Mohammad Dar, Assistant Labour Commissioner, Abdul Majid Tantray and other concerned.

MC Chairman Sumbal, BDC Chairman Naidkhai Asked To Vacate Govt Accommodation

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The district administration Bandipora on Tuesday ordered the Municipal Committee, Chairman, Sumbal and BDC Chairman Naidkhai to vacate the accommodation and warned them of initiating necessary action under law if they fail to do so in the stipulated time.

Jahangir Ahmad, the incumbent Chairman of Municipal Committee, Sumbal and BDC Chairman Naidkhai Ghulam Nabi Ganai in North Kashmir's Bandipora district said that they have been asked to vacate the government accommodation provided to them when they won the chairman elections.

They said that on Tuesday morning they received a letter from the Executive Engineer of

I & FC, Sumbal directing them to vacate the accommodation. Jahangir added that they have been warned of action if they fail to do so.

"Despite facing continuous threats from different quarters, we always uphold the dignity and credibility of democracy and persuade the people to believe in democracy. Why are we being directed to vacate the accommodation at a time when militant attacks on soft targets are on rise in the valley," he said.

They alleged that this all is being done by the concerned Sub Divisional Magistrate as Jahangir said that he had confronted him several times and didn't fall into SDM's line.

They appealed to the DGP, IGP, SSP Bandipora and Deputy Commissioner Bandipora to intervene in the matter.

Four Vehicles Seized For Illegal Extraction Of Minerals In Baramulla

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir Police Wednesday said that it seized four vehicles involved in illegal extraction and transportation of minerals in Kreeri & Mirgund areas of Baramulla district.

A police spokesperson said that officers from Police Station Kreeri & PP Mirgund under the supervision of senior officers seized four vehicles involved in extraction and transportation of raw materials illegally extracted in Kreeri & Mirgund areas of Baramulla.

The spokesperson requested the people not to indulge in illegal mining activities from any Nallah as it is the violation of Government rules. "Persons found indulging in illegal mining activities shall be dealt as per law."

Optimum Use Of Infrastructure Necessary For Betterment Of Rural Society: Adv Khan

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Advisor to Lieutenant Governor, Baseer Ahmad Khan Wednesday visited Dara, Fakir Gujree Srinagar to review the Covid-19 arrangements and inspected the ongoing Rural Development works in the area.

He said that it is the responsibility of the PRI members to inform and educate the people about the Covid appropriate behaviour and said that they need to be proactive in this regard. He said there are clear and categorical directions to get the vaccination of above 45 years age done and in this regard high degree of acceleration in the vaccination drive is required to be undertaken. Simultaneously vaccination for 18 and above is also needed to be pursued at a faster pace.



During his visit, the Advisor also visited the Covid Care Centres at Government High School Dara-B and New Type Public Health Centre Faqir Gujree and reviewed the status of vaccination and facilities provided to the patients. He impressed upon the officers to intensify the vaccination drive and start door to door campaigns in order to achieve the desired results, besides generating awareness among the local populace.

Advisor Khan said that rural infrastructure should be put to optimum use for overall betterment of the rural society.

He said that works should be properly thought-out before sanctioning and there should be strict monitoring of works on regular basis for smooth execution of projects.

from the Executive Engineer of

KASHMIR
OBSERVER

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K O V I E W

Back to tourism

Kashmir looks forward to a renewed tourist inflow following a drastic decline in the number of fresh Covid-19 infections across the country. From a peak of over four lakh cases, the daily infections are now under 50,000. The caseload has come down in the Valley too. And to this end, the administration is taking steps to project the Valley as a safe destination. This involves a two-pronged strategy: one, vaccination of the people associated with the tourism. Second, strict enforcement of the Standard Operating Procedure to ensure the safety of the tourists during their stay in the Valley.

The administration has already carried out vaccination drives at tourist destinations. However, it would be sometime before the tourist arrivals get to the levels before the second wave. Tourism in the Valley has been battered by the turmoil of the last two years - albeit, the tourists had started arriving in increasing numbers by November last, helped largely by the ban on international travel due to the pandemic which still continues. Another factor that worked in favour of Kashmir tourism is snow, a novelty for most Indians. The union tourism minister Prahlad Singh Patel had then said in a statement in Rajya Sabha that the tourist footfall in the union territory this year had broken the record of the last 16 years. In January all the 1800 hotel rooms in Gulmarg, Kashmir's winter wonderland, were booked till the end of March.

But following the winter's uptick, the fresh tourist arrivals petered out as the second wave reared its head and soon overwhelmed the country and J&K. Since the latter part of March, there have hardly been any tourists, cutting the nascent recovery of the sector in its bud. This has once again led to the loss of livelihoods. Hardest hit have been the low-wage workers like ponywallas, tourist guides, cab drivers, hotel staff, boatmen etc.

The government has now been doing its best to push tourism recovery. In J&K budget 2021-2022, Rs 1,000 crore shall be taken up for development of tourism infrastructure. Officials said the budget for tourism and culture was Rs 283 crore in 2020-2021 it is Rs 780 crore this financial year.

Going forward, the government wants to make tourism a holistic experience by combining it with art, culture and cuisine. This will, however, only be possible if the pandemic gets out of the way. As things stand, the number of fresh Covid-19 cases has drastically reduced. The government has already cancelled the Amarnath pilgrimage, lest it spread infections in Kashmir and across the country. If the infections continue to decline at the current rate, the situation could become normal soon. This would automatically lead to the return of tourists to the Valley.

OTHER OPINION

Reasonable plea

The prime minister's appeal to fellow Indians to put their faith in science is welcome. Narendra Modi's plea was made in an address in which he touched upon a crucial challenge confronting India: the festering public hesitancy towards the Covid-19 vaccination programme. The pace of inoculation has been woefully slow in the country; around 4 per cent of the citizens of this populous country have been fully vaccinated. The government's numerous lapses account for a large part of the inertia. But it must also be conceded that public reluctance to receive the jab has had a role to play too; one survey pegged the national vaccine hesitancy at nearly 30 per cent. Lack of awareness, prejudiced opinion, illiteracy and — this cannot be ignored — irresponsible statements from public figures have compounded the problem.

It must be said that Mr Modi's party has stolen a march on its rivals when it comes to disseminating patently unscientific views. Several leaders of the Bharatiya Janata Party are on record endorsing, among other things, such outlandish cures for the coronavirus as cow urine, sun bathing, blowing conch shells, administering holy smoke, and so on. The flock has responded to these primitive entreaties enthusiastically: reports of cow urine therapy being administered publicly have not been unknown in New India. This is only to be expected in a country where the government has been keen to let the anti-science genie out of the bottle. Notwithstanding Mr Modi's new-found respect for science, it must not be forgotten that the prime minister had thought nothing about blurring the lines between myth and reason: his claim of Ancient India mastering the modern marvels of cosmetic surgery and reproductive genetics bears testimony to this troubling conflation. At the root of the problem lies the tension between an authoritarian impulse and rationality. History has shown that the survival of repressive regimes is predicated upon the clouding of reason and judgment with falsehood. That is because reason — is it anathema to the BJP? — is the seed that sprouts into the fruit of enquiry.

Telegraph India

Limits of Naya Kashmir

Why did the government really initiate J&K talks?



Nirupama Subramanian

In the 1990s, the Narasimha Rao government withstood much stronger international pressures on Kashmir than the gentle rap on the knuckles that the US delivers now and then to the Modi government. Can Modi be seen to be doing deals with the Taliban or even Pakistan that would dilute the Sangh Parivar's Mission Kashmir, that too months ahead of an important round of assembly elections?

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 normalcy in the truncated and downgraded state, and more to do with the BJP's push to further its ideological and electoral projects in Kashmir and elsewhere in the country.

The June 24 meeting, by all accounts, was about getting the regional parties of J&K to endorse and participate in the delimitation exercise. The task of redrawing electoral boundaries is a fraught exercise anywhere in the democratic world. In J&K, it carries the additional burden of a communal divide between the two regions and a powerful national party that belongs to an ideological stream that wants to see a "Hindu" chief minister in the Muslim-majority former state.

The Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019 provides for an increase in the number of assembly seats in the Union territory from 107 to 114. Jammu, which counted for 37 seats before the 2019 changes — 46 were in Kashmir, four in Ladakh, plus 20 symbolically reserved for PoK — may gain more constituencies through delimitation. There has been no delimitation in J&K since 1995. In the intervening years, as election after election has shown, including the District Development Council election in 2020, Jammu and Kashmir have become increasingly polarised into religiously identified regions.

When the Prime Minister invited the mainstream regional parties for talks, what stood out was the walk-back from his earlier stand that the parties were irrelevant to the "Naya Kashmir" that had been inaugurated in August 2019. It was an out-of-character move. Most observers of the Modi-Shah BJP agree that the party does not do U-turns. These tend to be perceived by both supporters and detractors as admissions of failure. From demonetisation in 2016 to the farm laws that triggered the still-ongoing farmers' agitation, there have been no U-turns by this government.

That is why BJP camp followers, who had bought into the vitriolic rhetoric against the "Gupkar Gang", are aghast that the party is doing business with the same politicians they thought had been cast into the dustbin of history.

Those outside this circle of believers believe the walk-back signals the BJP's Kashmir policy has hit a wall, and the government is looking for a way out against the larger backdrop of the turmoil in Afghanistan and a hostile neighbourhood.

But there had to be a compelling reason for the government to have made this U-turn. On the face of it, the external environment — in which Pakistan might be in the driving seat in Kabul through the proxy of the Taliban before the end of this year, the situation on the Line of Actual Control where the Chinese have adamantly stayed put, the spectre of a two-front war, therefore the need to strengthen the ceasefire on the Line of Control and begin a dialogue with Pakistan, as well as remove Kashmir from the agenda of US congressional hearings — does present a compelling package of national security reasons for the sudden decision to engage these political parties after two years of saying they don't matter.

However, this government has hardly tailored its ideological projects to the demands of diplomacy or global geopolitics. After all, it is the same government that walked out of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), and was ready to throw away a carefully built relationship with Bangladesh for the communally polarising Citizenship Amendment Act (2019). Plus, it seems to carry the burden of demonstrating that it can take on international pressure better than its predecessors. In the 1990s, the Narasimha Rao government withstood much stronger international pressures on Kashmir than the gentle rap on the knuckles that the US delivers now and then to the Modi government. Can Modi be seen to be doing deals with the Taliban or even Pakistan that would dilute the Sangh Parivar's Mission Kashmir, that too months ahead of an important round of assembly elections?

In any case, this government's first-ever all-party meeting lacked both the substance and optics that would bring the reassurance of a "return to normalcy" that both Kashmiris and international interlocutors are looking for. Home Minister Amit Shah's tweet, after the meeting, about strengthening the "democratic process" might have carried more conviction had it not been under his watch that the world's biggest democracy imposed the longest internet ban on a section of its citizens, preventing both access to and dissemination of information, jailed thousands of Kashmiri politicians, and pre-

empted all protest via blanket restrictions.

Rather, it was the emphasis on delimitation in J&K by the Prime Minister and Home Minister at the meeting with J&K political leaders that certainly suggested a focus narrower than the shifting sands of regional geopolitics, which demand grand gestures of reconciliation, people-friendly confidence-building measures, and big promises. There were none of those in the meeting, and there is no indication that such gestures are in the pipeline. There was no timeline to the assurance on the restoration of statehood, a reiteration of a commitment made by the Home Minister in Parliament.

What the government made clear was the chronology. Elections and statehood may follow delimitation. The J&K leaders, who wanted statehood restored first, did not agree with this sequencing, but Prime Minister Modi tweeted that "delimitation has to happen at a quick pace so that polls can happen and J&K gets an elected government that gives strength to J&K's development trajectory". Shah tweeted that "the delimitation exercise and peaceful elections are important milestones in restoring statehood as promised in Parliament".

The renewed attention to J&K, and the emphasis on a process that is likely to create more bad blood, more polarisation along Hindu-Muslim lines, more suspicion in the Valley, could carry a wider resonance in the run-up to a string of assembly elections. Indeed, the compelling reason for a big move by the government could be a result of its single-minded focus at this point — how to ensure a BJP victory in the upcoming elections in crucial states, vital to its prospects for a third term in 2024.

If at all there is a message for Pakistan or the international community in this new phase of engagement with J&K's political leadership, it is the limits of what can be reversed to the pre-August 5, 2019 position. This is the government's roadmap towards "normalisation". It is for the hybrid military-civilian regime now to decide how to re-engage with India within this framework.

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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OBSERVER MAIL

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Power of Pen

Pen is mightier than the sword" is a metonymic adage that indicates the power of writing. This means that a pen has the power to achieve that a sword does. A king can rule only his kingdom, but a poet or writer can rule the whole world through his/her inspirational writing. The man who holds the pen is a knowledgeable and learned man, and those who hold the sword become ineffective and unsuccessful. All respected well-known philosophers, writers, doctors, poets, engineers, and wise educated men were guided by the pen.

The pen writes words, and these

words have power. Words have power to persuade, influence, dry tears, and forge smiles. Words can heal emotional wounds and eliminate fears. The words of a pen are always better than the fallen blood and gore of the sword. The pen has won many countries independences, and national leaders have used it to obtain the jewel of liberty. Great writers and thinkers have inspired the masses, since times immemorial. French revolution was boosted by the writings of Rousseau and Voltaire.

On the other hand the victories of the sword are short-lived. Alexander's desire to conquer the world re-

mained unfulfilled. Hitler was eventually defeated in the Second World War. However, the plays and poems of Kalidas, Shakespeare and word-swath are still afresh among readers.

Battles are fought for a certain period of time over a particular area. But the teachings of prophet (Pbuh), Buddha and Gandhi are universal in their appeal.

So drop the sword and pick up the pen. Unite the world and have global peace. Stop all wars and live without fears. The sword is tyranny whereas the pen brings knowledge and wisdom. The sword will bring you noth-

ing but death and burdens. The power of the pen is so great, that the pen will rule, as the sword will beg at its feet. Shun the path of violence and make a cordial bond with pen. Abolish the sword, and live in the agenda of peace and knowledge.

Let us embrace the pen and throw away all swords and weapons of mass-destruction. This is the surest way of making brotherhood and humanity prevail in the world.

Adil Afroz
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Suicide: A Storm Brewing

Amjed Ashraf

Considering the Kashmir scenario, the social fabric has always been at test. Our society is currently bearing the brunt of this horror in full swing. In these circumstances, the onus is on us more than ever before

The everyday news of suicides has left one unnerved and numb. Besides, when such acts take place around the corner, the scare is inscrutable. Suicide—a deliberate and impulsive act of ending one's own life—has hauntingly been rampant in Kashmir. Especially among the youth; the prevailing situation paints a perilous picture that is more perplexing than it has ever been in the recent past.

Broadly speaking, according to the World Health Organization report, more than seven lakh people worldwide, die every year due to suicide. Many psychologists and psychiatrists emphasize that factors like mental disorder, chronic pain and illness, traumatic experience, helplessness, financial crisis, unemployment, isolation play an indispensable role in this act. Likewise, according to the data accumulated by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), the erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir has witnessed around six thousand suicide cases in the last two decades. In 2018, Jammu and Kashmir recorded 330 cases of suicide and 284 cases in 2019. The report further outlines that the substantial cause behind the majority of suicide cases in Jammu and Kashmir goes unknown and the other causes include unemployment, family pressure etc. Ever since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, the situation has ostensibly worsened further. Now, it appears that the phantom of suicide looms large in almost every nook and cranny of the valley.

In Kashmir, the economic, and biological factors responsible for suicide are well discerned, but one can't turn a nelson's eye to the conspicuous fact that it is more of the sociological, geographical, and psychological factors that primarily drive individuals to these unfortunate deaths. According to a survey conducted in 2015 by a humanitarian organisation, Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors Without Borders (MSF), around 45% of the population in Kashmir valley are trapped in mental distress. Given the past few years, mental health issues could be highly prevalent across the valley hitherto. The active cases now can be far more than the above statistics. This is palpable because, in a conflict-ridden area, various kinds of devastations keep competing with each other daily.

Besides, the other main factors that accelerate the suicide rate especially among youth are both psychological and sociological in nature and occur mainly due to relationship breakdown, family conflict, abuse, violence, bad parenting and excessive use of the internet, mobile phones and computers etc. These factors lead to the disintegration and detachment of an individual from society. Unfortunately and inadvertently, our collective apathy and indifference furthers this lack of integration of an aggrieved individual. This leaves the affected ones forlorn and impels them to shut themselves within themselves. These factors alienate a person from society, as a result, they find it difficult to cope with the situation. Hence, introverted peculiarities overpower them and they feel compelled to commit suicide.



One can't turn a nelson's eye to the conspicuous fact that it is more of the sociological, geographical, and psychological factors that primarily drive individuals to these unfortunate deaths.

Suicide is a global and complex phenomenon. Considering the Kashmir scenario, the social fabric has always been at test. Our society is currently bearing the brunt of this horror in full swing. In these circumstances, the onus is on us more than ever before. To prevent suicides, collective efforts are required at different levels. Firstly, to impede the menace of suicide among the youth, parents need to inculcate moral and ethical values in their children; especially from a tender age. They need to encourage their young children to strive for good and despise wrong. They need to pay attention to their behaviours, commiserate with them in their hard times, understand their individuality, and spend some quality time with them to abridge the gap that exists between them. Secondly, religious and moral education needs to be imparted to both lettered and unlettered at different levels, irrespec-

tive of age. A serious lack of religious awareness exposes a large number of individuals to such menaces today. Thirdly, as responsible and conscious citizens of society, we are required to back emotionally and socioeconomically such individuals—to the best of our capabilities—who fell victim to mental, financial and other crisis. Moreover, underneath the act of suicide lies the fallacious belief that death is an eternal escape from the transient tribulations of life, that needs to be hacked off through large-scale awareness campaigns. A storm may be brewing, but together we should—we can, and we will—definitely turn the tide.

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Is India ready for a third wave of COVID? The second wave still hasn't ended but worries about a new variant, called Delta plus along with the end of most restrictions across states, has sent experts into overdrive warning us to brace ourselves. But are we really ready? Have we learnt any lessons from the devastating second wave that hit large parts of the country?

Health experts have repeatedly said the key to mitigating the effects of another wave lies in fully vaccinating people as fast as possible. But while the pace of vaccination has stepped up in recent days, it is still far from what is required to meet the government's ambitious target of inoculating all adults by the end of this year. So far, only about 5.6 per cent of the adult population of the country has received two doses of the vaccine.

Health experts have said that unlike the Alpha variant for which even one dose was enough to secure decent protection, the Delta variant, which devastated India in the second wave, requires both doses for adequate protection.

Real concerns of a third wave

Then there is the newly discovered Delta plus variant, which has so far been found in 12 states in India and is sparking real concerns of a third wave.

The highest number of Delta plus cases in the country, 22, have been reported from Maharashtra. The World Health Organisation or the WHO says this variant spreads even faster and binds more easily to lung cells, which is why full vaccination along with masks is essential.

One of India's most respected virologists, Dr Shahid Jameel, has expressed concern that the Delta plus variant may be capable of dodging vaccines and immunity from previous infections. But while more research is needed on this, what we do know at the moment is that both doses of vaccines are essential to preventing severe disease.

Meanwhile, the Indian Council of Medical Research says it is still too early to say whether the Delta plus variant will be responsible for India's third wave. The ICMR is studying the efficacy of vaccines against this mutation as well.

In the Supreme Court, the government of India has drastically reduced its estimation of the number of vaccine doses that are projected to be available in

Delta plus: Is India ready for a deadly third COVID-19 wave?

One can only hope it is not as bad as last time. For that, we must rely on science

Nidhi Razdan | Gulf News



India by December 31, 2021.

From initially stating in May that India would have 216 crore (2.1 billion) vaccine doses by December to vaccinate all adults, the centre now says this number is 135 crores (1.3 billion), which is a gap of 81 crores (800 million).

In the affidavit filed before the court, the government has said "the total population of the country aged 18 years and above is approximately 93-94 crore (930

million). As such, administering two doses to these beneficiaries would require an estimated 186 to 188 crore (1.8 billion) vaccine doses.

Out of this requirement, 51.6 crore (500 million) doses will be made available for administration by July 31, 2021, leaving a requirement of approximately 135 crore (1.3 billion) vaccine doses for complete vaccination to the eligible population".

Warning by the WHO

The WHO has warned that vaccines are not enough to deal with the Delta variants, and that masks must be used as well. A lesson Israel is learning the hard way. The country, which is the world's most 2-dose, fully-vaccinated country with 60% of its people receiving two doses of Pfizer, has reintroduced face masks as cases have surged with the Delta variant.

Dr. Ashish K Jha of Brown University has said this is largely driven by the unvaccinated part of the population and is spilling over into vaccinated people too but that those who have two doses are only getting mild disease. So vaccines work.

In India, we have virtually opened everything up with a minuscule portion of the population fully vaccinated. People are throwing social distancing norms to the wind, acting like everything is normal again. The government needs to ensure that we are not left scrambling for hospitals and oxygen ever again.

Maharashtra is actually being very careful in unlocking the economy, as Delta plus cases are detected there. But unless we learn lessons from the past, we are doomed to repeat our mistakes. The ugly political bickering over Delhi's requirement for oxygen at the peak of the second wave is a case in point.

Most of all, our vaccination drive simply has to ramp up urgently. Because as we unlock further in most of the country, and Delta plus begins to spread, this is a ticking time bomb. One can only hope and pray it is not as bad as last time. For that, we must rely on science.

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JAMMU AND KASHMIR PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

NOTIFICATION NO. PSC/EXAM/2021/43 DATED : 24.06.2021

The result of Secretariat Assistants Course/Foundation Course Departmental Examination Session March, 2021 is declared as under-

SECRETARIAT ASSISTANTS COURSE

Table with columns: ROLL NO, NAME OF THE CANDIDATE, PARENTAGE, PI, PII, PIII, PIV, Total, Remarks. Contains results for Secretariat Assistants Course.

Table with columns: ROLL NO, NAME OF THE CANDIDATE, PARENTAGE, PI, PII, PIII, PIV, Total, Remarks. Contains results for Foundation Course.

Table with columns: ROLL NO, NAME OF THE CANDIDATE, PARENTAGE, PI, PII, PIII, PIV, Total, Remarks. Contains results for another set of candidates.

Table with columns: ROLL NO, NAME OF THE CANDIDATE, PARENTAGE, PI, PII, PIII, PIV, Total, Remarks. Contains results for another set of candidates.

ICC Test Rankings: Kane Williamson Back At Top, Virat Kohli Remains Fourth



Press Trust of India

DUBAI: New Zealand captain Kane Williamson has reclaimed the number one position in the ICC Test Rankings for batsmen after leading his side to the World Test Championship title in Southampton last week.

The 30-year-old's knocks of 49 and 52 not out in the low-scoring final against India helped him move above the 900-point mark and he now enjoys a 10-point lead over Steve Smith (891 rating points).

India skipper Virat Kohli remains in fourth position while Rohit Sharma has moved up to the sixth spot. India wicketkeeper batsman Rishabh Pant is seventh.

Williamson, who conceded the top spot to Smith two weeks ago, is back in the position he had first grabbed in November 2015 during a series against Australia.

Ross Taylor, who scored an unbeaten 47 and partnered in an unbroken 96-run stand with Williamson, has advanced three places to 14th position while left-hander Devon Conway has gained 18 slots to reach 42nd place after top-scoring with 52 in the first innings.

New Zealand's fast bowlers too have gained after thriving in the seaming conditions with player of the match Kyle Jamieson continuing the stupendous start to his Test career.

BCCI To Recommend Mithali Raj, Ravi Ashwin For Khel Ratna - Report

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: The BCCI has decided to recommend women's cricket great Mithali Raj and premier spinner R Ashwin for Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna, country's highest sporting honour. For Arjuna Award, the Board will send the names of senior batsman Shikhar Dhawan, who was ignored last year, K L Rahul and pacer Jasprit Bumrah.

"No women cricketer has been nominated for Arjuna. Mithali's name has been recommended for Khel Ratna," a BCCI official told PTI on Wednesday.

It remains to be seen if Mithali is chosen by the Sports Ministry.

pointed panel in an Olympic year.

She completed 22 years in international cricket last week. The 38 year-old is also the leading run getter in ODIs with more than 7000 runs.

Ashwin, who is already an Arjuna awardee like Mithali, has also been a consistent performer for India in Test cricket. He has taken 413 wickets in 79 Tests besides 150 and 42 scalps in ODIs and T20s though he doesn't play for India in the shorter formats.

Dhawan, who will be captaining India in the upcoming limited overs series in Sri Lanka, is a front-runner for Arjuna.

The 35-year-old southpaw has scored 5977 runs in 142 ODIs besides 2315 and 1673 Test and T20 runs respectively.

JKFA To Hold Premier Football League 2nd Phase From July 5

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Jammu & Kashmir Sports Council (JKSC) and J&K Football Association (JKFA) on Wednesday announced that the 2nd Phase of Premier Football League J&K 2020-21 will be held from July 5 at Synthetic Turf TRC, Srinagar.

A total of 9 football clubs from Kashmir Valley will participate in the competition.

The teams include: J&K Bank XI (Srinagar), Kashmir Avengers FC (Srinagar), Etihad FC (Pulwama), Ferrari Lions (Ganderbal), SWFC (Baramulla), Iqbal FC (Qalosa, Bandipora), Dar Sports (Kupwara), Shopian FC (Shopian) and Khudwani Quimoe FC (Kulgam).

The participating clubs have been grouped in 4 pools.

In a statement the JKFA said that the selected clubs are the ones who have qualified from the 1st Phase of the League, held in November-December, 2020.

In the first fixture on July 5, JK

| PREMIER FOOTBALL LEAGUE J&K 2020 | | | | | | |
|---|----------|-------------------------|-----|-------------------------|------|---------|
| Organizers: J&K Sports Council & J&K Football Association | | | | | | |
| DRAWS & FIXTURE FOR PHASE 2 nd | | | | | | |
| Sl. No. | Date | Time/Place | W/T | Home/Club | Away | Timing |
| 1 | 5.7.2021 | J&K Bank XI | W/T | Khudwani Quimoe FC | A | 4:00 PM |
| 2 | 5.7.2021 | Kashmir Avengers FC | W/T | Iqbal FC Qalosa | A | 4:00 PM |
| 3 | 5.7.2021 | Etihad FC Pulwama | W/T | Dar Sports Kupwara | A | 4:30 PM |
| 4 | 5.7.2021 | Ferrari Lions Ganderbal | W/T | Shopian FC | A | 4:30 PM |
| 5 | 7.7.2021 | SWFC Baramulla | W/T | J&K Bank XI | A | 4:00 PM |
| 6 | 7.7.2021 | Iqbal FC Qalosa | W/T | Kashmir Avengers FC | A | 4:00 PM |
| 7 | 7.7.2021 | Dar Sports Kupwara | W/T | Etihad FC Pulwama | A | 4:30 PM |
| 8 | 7.7.2021 | Shopian FC | W/T | Ferrari Lions Ganderbal | A | 4:30 PM |
| 9 | 9.7.2021 | Khudwani Quimoe FC | W/T | SWFC Baramulla | A | 4:00 PM |

Bank XI will take on Khudwani Quimoe at 2 pm. The other fixture on the same day will see Kashmir Avengers FC take on Iqbal FC Qalosa at 4 pm.

The JKFA has requested all teams to strictly adhere to the Government regulated COVID-19 SOPs.

Talking to KO, JKFA said that inclusion of spectators on match days will depend on Sports Council guidelines.

"There is a possibility of limited number of fans being allowed to watch the games. But if JKSC says the competition should be held

behind closed-doors, then no spectator will be allowed," JKFA's PRO, Mr Bilal said.

The top qualifying teams of the 2nd Phase will then lock horns with football clubs from Jammu in a 3rd Phase, which will eventually decide the winner. The JKFA told KO that winners will receive a significant cash prize.

On being asked why there were no teams from districts of Anantnag and Budgam, Mr Bilal said that in-fighting between clubs and lack of football grounds were the main reasons for their exclusion.

ICC To Award Same Points For Each Match Won During WTC 2

Press Trust of India

DUBAI: The International Cricket Council (ICC) will award standardised 12 points for every match won during the second World Test Championships cycle which kicks off with the five-match series between India and England in August.

Teams will get six points in case of a tie and four points if the match ends in a draw.

That there would be changes to the points system was first declared by ICC interim CEO Geoff Allardice during a media interaction earlier this month.

"Instead of each series being worth the same number of points, 120, irrespective of whether the series is played over two Tests or five Tests, the next cycle will see each match being worth the same number of points - a maximum of 12 per match," an ICC board member told PTI.

"Teams will be ranked on the percentage of available points they won from the matches they have played."

The changes in the points system will have to be ratified by the ICC chief executives committee in the coming weeks.

"The aim was to try and simplify the points system and to allow teams to be meaningfully compared on the table at any point,



though they may have played differing numbers of matches and series," the Board member added.

Apart from the India-England series, the Ashes later this year will be the only other five-match affair in the second cycle which will end in June 2023.

Australia's tour of India next year is the only four-Test series in the upcoming cycle.

The nine Test teams will play a total of six series: three home and three away just like the previous edition.

In the inaugural edition, which New Zealand won after defeating India in the final earlier this month, the ICC had changed the qualification criteria for the World Test Championship from

maximum points earned to percentage points earned from the matches contested after many scheduled series were cancelled due to COVID-19.

During the last cycle, the value for each series was 120 points where a two-match India-Bangladesh series had 60 points for a win while a four-match India-Australia Test series had 30 points in store per victory.

"England will play the most Tests (21) in WTC-2 followed by India (19), Australia (18) and South Africa (15). The inaugural WTC winners New Zealand will play only 13 matches, similar to that of West Indies and Sri Lanka, but one less than Pakistan (14)," ESPNcricinfo reported.

The stricter regulations will not

Need To Overcome Unfair COVID Protocols To Succeed In Tokyo, Says Batra



Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: There is "no way out" of some "unfair" restrictions that Tokyo Olympics organisers have imposed on Indian athletes in view of the COVID-19 pandemic, IOA President Narinder Batra conceded on Wednesday, asking the country's contingent to be mentally prepared for added curbs.

Batra said the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) is still awaiting clarifications on several issues like athletes' training and food arrangements during the Games and hopes to have resolution for some of the issues before the event opens on July 23.

"We are trying to prepare ourselves mentally according to the present situation and if there are certain situations, we have to live with them, there is no way out," Batra told PTI in an exclusive interview on Wednesday.

India is among 11 countries identified as high risk by the Japanese authorities, who have asked the athletes travelling from here to get tested for COVID-19 for seven days before departure and be in hard quarantine for three days after landing in Japan.

Batra said negotiations are still on to ease restrictions on training during quarantine.

"Tokyo organising committee has been very co-operative and very helpful. Every country has different guidelines. Guidelines related to the pandemic are not laid down by the organising committee, these are always laid down by the respective governments."

"So, it takes time to discuss and negotiate with the government and get response. They are trying their best, and whatever responses we are getting are positive," he asserted.

"Many issues have been resolved, and on many things, we have asked for more clarifications but there is still sufficient time and we hope to get all the clarifications we need."

The clarifications that the IOA has sought is with regards identification of training areas for the Indians.

"Clarifications like where athletes will have their food, where they will have their gym training, where they will be able to train. About first three days, it's not quarantine but there are some special conditions."

"We are still awaiting replies on those parts, rest all have been clarified, testing labs have increased and many other issues have been sorted."

The stricter regulations will not

apply for Indian athletes travelling from non-high risk countries, like Italy or other parts of Europe where a lot of them are training right now.

"...the conditions that have been put that we cannot train 3-5 days before events are unfair because that is the time when the athletes attain their peak. If you let them sit idle and their diets are not taken care of, it is unfair."

"So we still await clarification, it might be that these things are resolved but as of today, I feel that the conditions are a little unfair for these 11 countries but I can only speak for India," Batra said.

He was, however, hopeful that elite athletes, who have trained for a good five years for the Games would be able to overcome some of these challenges in pursuit of medals.

"...you have trained for this Games for five years but I do know these things remain at the back of your mind. I feel one has to overcome these issues and go and give their best."

"There has been no compromise in preparation of the athletes. Proper training has happened all the time in India and outside India. The athletes are fully fit and raring to go to the Olympics," he said.

The IOA chief feels it would be a logistical nightmare if they are required to send the Indian athletes individually just before their events.

"We have asked for clarifications on this matter. For example, shooting starts on July 24 but the events are scattered all over, so do we have to send athletes one by one or everybody checks in at July 24 or five days before that? Sending athletes individually would be a logistical nightmare."

"We had a flight on 17th and 18th July but both got cancelled. We have spoken to Air India and Spicejet to give us special flights. So let's see what works out. We are planning to send the contingent of 70 or 80 athletes from India on 17th."

Over the last one year, the IOA chief has maintained that he expects a double digit medal count from the Tokyo Games. However, on Wednesday he toned down his expectations, saying it would be unfair to put pressure on the athletes in such a difficult time.

"I had made a statement in the past which has been going on consistently for the last one year, but now taking cue from our Hon'ble Prime Minister and I think he is very right that we should not put any pressure on the athletes."

MESSI'S FUTURE Up In The Air As Contract With Barcelona Ends

Agencies

MADRID: Lionel Messi's contract with Barcelona is coming to an end Wednesday with no news from the player or the club about his future.

The expectation is that the 34-year-old Messi, who is playing with Argentina at the Copa America, will stay at the Catalan club. He reportedly had been close to reaching a deal to extend his contract for two more years.

Messi's future has been a mystery since he had his request to leave the club denied at the end of the 2019-20 season. He ended up staying and said he would reconsider his options when this season was over.

A lot has changed since he announced he wanted to leave the club. That decision was made not long after the team's embarrassing 8-2 loss to Bayern Munich in the quarterfinals of the Champions League, one of the worst defeats in the club's and Messi's history. But since then, Barcelona has a new coach in Ronald Koeman and a new president after the resignation of Josep Bartomeu, who was at odds with Messi.

In came Joan Laporta, who won the club's presidential election in part because of his good relationship with the Argentina star. He was the president when Messi's career started. Laporta said recently he was optimistic that Messi would renew his con-

tract. When asked about Messi's future on Wednesday, he briefly said "don't worry."

Messi excelled again this season despite staying against his wishes. He led the Spanish league in scoring with 30 goals and helped the team win the Copa del Rey title.

In Messi's previous contract, signed in 2017, he reportedly earned 138 million euros (\$164 million) per season.

Playing in Barcelona's favour to keep Messi is the fact the club has been slowly improving financially amid the coronavirus pandemic. Koeman is staying for a second season, and some players are arriving to boost the squad, including Memphis Depay, Sergio Aguero and Eric Garcia.

Messi has won 35 titles in 17 seasons with Barcelona. He helped the club win the Champions League four times, the Spanish league 10 times, the Copa del Rey seven times and the Spanish Super Cup eight times.

While with the club, Messi earned himself a record six Ballon d'Or awards. He is the team's all-time leading scorer with 672 goals in 778 appearances, and the top scorer in the Spanish league with 474 goals in 520 matches. He also is the player with most matches with the club.

He was the top scorer in the Spanish league in eight seasons and the top scorer in the Champions League on six occasions. His 26 goals against Real Madrid are a record for the "clasico" matches against Barcelona's fiercest rival.

Messi arrived at Barcelona at age 13, when he and his family came to Spain to try his luck at the club's youth academy. He made his official debut on Oct. 16, 2004, and two years later helped the club win its first Champions League in a squad led by Ronaldinho.

Didn't Step Down As Pakistan Batting Coach Over Hasan Ali 'Ice Bath' Argument: Younis Khan

Press Trust of India

KARACHI: Former Pakistan captain Younis Khan has rejected reports that he stepped down as the national team's batting coach due to an argument with batsman Hasan Ali but also declined to state the exact reasons for his decision citing contractual obligations.

Younis resigned a few days ago but neither him nor the Pakistan Cricket Board offered any explanation for it. Later, media reports blamed the series of events on Younis' tiff with Ali over ice bath following a training session.

"Let me make it clear that the reason for my decision to step down as batting coach is not the incident with Hasan Ali. The entire episode has been blown out of proportion," he said in an interview in 'Jang' newspaper.

"Yes the trainer, Yasir Malik, had asked me to speak to Hasan and convince him that he should take an ice bath. There was an argument but Hasan apologized to me about it and we embraced and the matter was closed," Younis said.

The former batsman said Ali was touring England at the moment and for this issue to be played up was strange. He made it clear that there were other reasons for his decision to step down but he was bound by his contract with the PCB



which didn't allow him to speak on the matter for six months.

"I have not made any comments on the matter so far in the better interests of Pakistan cricket and PCB and our team is also touring England," Younis added.

But he claimed that there were some people in the PCB who leaked out things to dent his confidence and reputation.

"I have never run after money for positions. My only concern was to do something for Pakistan cricket and ensure the players could take advantage of my experience," he added.

Younis noted that from day one he had made it clear he would only talk to the Chairman, Ehsan Mani or CEO Wasim Khan.

"In future also if I have to serve

Pakistan cricket and work with the board I will ensure matters are made more transparent and clear in our agreement," he stated.

Younis, known to be a temperamental person, stepped down as batting coach just before the team's departure for England and since then there have been speculations about the reasons for his sudden exit.

Another reason being speculated for his decision was that he was declined permission to join the team's bio-bubble in England a bit later than scheduled. Younis reportedly needed the time to undergo a critical dental procedure. Pakistan's head coach, Misbah-ul-Haq has said that Younis' exit as batting coach is a big loss to the players.

“ YES THE TRAINER, YASIR MALIK, HAD ASKED me to speak to Hasan and convince him that he should take an ice bath. There was an argument but Hasan apologized to me about it and we embraced and the matter was closed.”

Pandemic Can Cost Tourism Industry Over \$4 Trillion: UN

Agence France-Presse



PARIS: The economic impact from the plunge in tourism since the pandemic emerged last year could top \$4 trillion, a UN report said Wednesday.

The report by the UN's World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) found that the lack of widespread vaccination in developing countries was leading to mounting economic losses.

"Tourism is a lifeline for millions, and advancing vaccination to protect communities and support tourism's safe restart is critical to the recovery of jobs and generation of much-needed resources," UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili said in a statement.

He noted that many developing countries are highly dependent on international tourism.

The outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic brought international air travel to a near halt for much of last year as many countries refused to allow

non-essential travel.

That punched a \$2.4 trillion hole in the tourism and related sectors last year, and the report warns a similar loss may occur this year depending on the distribution of Covid-19 vaccines.

With Covid-19 vaccination rates wildly uneven -- with some countries having inoculated less than one percent of their population while others have topped 60 percent -- will see the economic damage concentrated in those countries with low vaccination rates.

The report found "the asymmetric roll-out of vaccines magnifies the economic blow tourism has suffered in developing countries, as they could account for up to 60 percent of the global GDP losses."

It noted they already suffered the biggest drops in tourism arrivals last year, estimated at between 60 percent and 80 percent.

Although the tourism sector is expected to recover faster in countries with high vaccination rates, like the United States, the UNWTO doesn't expect international tourism to return to pre-pandemic levels until 2023 at the earliest.

The 63-75 percent drop in international tourism this year from 2019 levels forecast by UNCTAD is expected to cause between \$1.7 and \$2.4 trillion euros in lost economic activity.

KTPO, Flipkart Joined Hands For Women Entrepreneurship Program In J&K



KO NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR: In the challenging times of pandemic, Government of Jammu and Kashmir took a proactive measure, via Jammu & Kashmir Trade Promotion Organization (JKTPO) under aegis of Department of Industries of Commerce, with the initiative called "HAUSLA" for women entrepreneurs of Jammu & Kashmir. The initiative was launched by Lt. Governor Manoj Sinha on 29th June 2021 at SKICC Srinagar.

The initiative is a 5-month training program for women entrepreneurs of J&K organized by JKTPO and partnered with India's homegrown e-commerce marketplace Flipkart to give an extra-mile outreach and marketing support for the products of these women Entrepreneurs. In addition to this, Flipkart will provide them with time-bound incubation support that includes e-profiling, e-listing of products and their seamless onboarding on its marketplace as sellers.

Jammu & Kashmir Government's initiative "Hausla" will be driven by some of the big minds from the entrepreneurship domain, Financial institutes and e-commerce platform.

The program is supported by India SME Forum, Ni-MSME & Mission Youth J&K as program partners, J&K Bank as financial partner and Flipkart as an e-commerce partner. The programme will help them to overcome financial, legal, social and marketing challenges in their business ventures. Hausla shall enable and empower women entrepreneurs with wider outreach and visibility for their products and services.

Ms. Ankita Kar, Managing Director, JKTPO said "As the 'HAUSLA' programme aims to create effective marketing linkages for Women Entrepreneurs and their products, we have taken a major step in that direction to ensure an effective e-commerce platform with Flipkart for our program participants.

Jammu and Kashmir Government is committed to continue its support to women entrepreneurs of J&K with market linkage and assistance, access to finance, outreach through exhibitions and fairs."

Rajneesh Kumar, Chief Corporate Affairs Officer, Flipkart Group said "At Flipkart, we have locally developed technology and innovation at the core of all that we do. As a homegrown

company, our constant and intense engagement with local Indian businesses has enabled us to better understand their challenges and needs. We have been an enabler of women-led businesses, with a strong presence of such entrepreneurs on our marketplace.

As part of our flagship Flipkart Samarth program, we've partnered with JKTPO and we're happy to power their ambition with locally developed technology by providing them access to a large pan-India consumer market. JKTPO's program 'Hausla' is in line with our efforts to develop an enabling business ecosystem where women entrepreneurs are able to contribute to the socioeconomic developments around them."

Flipkart Samarth works closely with reputed NGOs and Government bodies and livelihood missions to reach a large number of rural entrepreneurs, with a special focus on women-led enterprises, differently-abled entrepreneurs, artisans, and weavers, who often face obstacles such as lack of access to working capital, poor infrastructure, and inadequate training. Currently, the programme positively impacts 7,00,000+ livelihoods.

RBI Ban On New Credit Cards Sale Hit Market Share: HDFC Bank



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

THE RBI's ban on selling new credit cards has impacted market share on an incremental basis, HDFC Bank said on Wednesday, promising to get back to the market "with a bang" once the "temporal" embargo is lifted and recoup the losses. The bank's head of consumer finance, digital banking and information technology, Parag Rao, said it has used the last six months to "introspect, re-engineer and innovate" about the cards business, where it has 15.5 million customers.

The bank has lost its market share by a couple of percentage points because of the ban, but the actions taken internally have ensured that it continues to hold on to market share by spends, he said.

In December, the RBI acted against repeated technological outages at HDFC Bank over two years by slapping unprecedented penalties, which included a ban on any new credit card issuance and also prohibition on launching new digital initiatives.

"We have got very aggressive plans to get back in the market with a big bang... You will rapidly see HDFC Bank not just regaining market share, but also significantly increasing our spend market share," Rao said.

Without sharing any details over when he expects the ban to be lifted, Rao said within 3-4 months of the ban getting lifted, one should expect a correction in the incremental market share back to the pre-ban levels, launch of new products and features and also partnerships which have been forged during this period.

"We were very clear that this is at best a temporal situation. During the six months when we were not issuing new credit cards, we increased our merchant acceptance base, our li-

ability franchise increased and today we are sitting on a large base of already analytically data mined customers who have already kept ready and pre-approved," he said.

The "large sales force" has been trained, re-skilled and primed for the aggressive play ahead and backend processes for them have also been made more streamlined, Rao said.

He admitted that rivals have seized up on the opportunity once HDFC Bank stopped issuing the cards, amidst reports on how ICICI Bank and SBI, among others have grown. It can be noted that HDFC Bank's credit card customers decreased by 4.67 lakh between December and April, when they stood at 14.9 million, while SBI has gained over 6 lakh new cards and ICICI gained 10 lakh.

The bank has been in constant discussion with RBI ever since the ban was imposed and has upgraded its systems as per the indications from the regulator, Rao said, adding that it has now presented a plan which focuses on the immediate, short term, mid-term and long term plan to the central bank.

"We are awaiting the comments from the RBI. We are hopeful that RBI will be satisfied with the plan which we had submitted," he said.

Rao said the bank's investments in technology were already at par with global standards, but the recent regulatory action will see higher spends on technology over the next two or three years.

Reiterating its focus outlined earlier, he said outages do happen and they happen with rivals as well, but the important aspect will be how it manages its way out of a crisis.

The bank's shares were trading 0.17 per cent down at Rs 1,499 apiece on the BSE at 1344 hrs, as against gains of 0.28 per cent on the benchmark.

Google India Publishes First Compliance Report, Says Removed 59,000 Content Pieces In April

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



GOOGLE received over 27,700 complaints in April this year from individual users in India over alleged violation of local laws or personal rights, which resulted in removal of 59,350 pieces of content, the company said in its maiden monthly transparency report. Google is among the first large digital platforms to release its monthly compliance report in compliance with the IT rules that came into force from May 26.

Under the new IT rules, large digital platforms - with over 5 million users - will have to publish periodic compliance reports every month, mentioning the details of complaints received and action taken thereon. The report is to also include the number of specific communication links or parts of information that the intermediary has removed or disabled access to in pursuance of any proactive monitoring conducted by using automated tools.

A Google spokesperson told PTI that the company has a long history of providing transparency into the different types of requests it receives from around the world, and how it responds.

"All of these requests are tracked and included in our existing Transparency Report since 2010. This is the first time we will publish a monthly transparency report in accordance with (India's) new IT Rules, and will continue to publish more details as we refine our

reporting processes for India," the spokesperson said on Wednesday.

The report said there will be a two-month lag for reporting to allow sufficient time for data processing and validation.

"In future reports, data on removals as a result of automated detection, as well as data relating to impersonation and graphic sexual content complaints received post May 25, 2021, will be included. We are committed to making improvements in the upcoming iterations of the report based on feedback from all stakeholders, including providing more granular data," the report noted.

On Tuesday, social media giant Facebook has said it will publish an interim report on July 2 providing information on the number of content it removed proactively between May 15-June 15. The final report will be published on July 15, containing details of user complaints received and action taken. The July 15 report will also contain data related to WhatsApp.

As per Google's report that has been released on Wednesday, Google and YouTube received 27,762 complaints from individual users located in India via designated mechanisms during April 2021.

J&K Bank Will Support And Handhold Genuine Entrepreneurs: Chhibber

KO NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR: A delegation of Federation Chambers of Industries Kashmir (FCIK) - an apex organization of Industrial Association- led by its President Shahid Kamili on Wednesday called upon Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) J&K Bank R K Chhibber here at Corporate Headquarters. Executive Presidents Sunil Gupta & Arun Gandotra, Special Secretary to CMD Karanjit Singh, President Anil Deep Mehta and other senior officials of the Bank were part of the meeting which saw the FCIK delegation put forth their demands and problems faced by different industrial sectors in the valley.

CMD stated that J&K Bank was a strong and successful organization which has stood the testing times ever since its inception.

"J&K Bank has a strong foundation and has always prevailed in adversities. J&K Bank's share is surging ahead owing to recently declared Financial Year 2020-21 results. Our success is primarily because of our customers, business community, second to none workforce, an efficient Board of Directors and all weather promoters as J&K and Ladhk UT Governments whose support and guidance gives us strength to come out of any crisis and lend us stability," said the CMD.

Acknowledging the business com-

munity for having emotional sentiments about the Bank, the CMD reiterated symbiotic relationship between the two.

"If your business is in a good shape, it is definitely going to have positive effect on the growth of J&K Bank. Success and failures of industrial sector has a direct effect on J&K Bank and its businesses. We will always come forward to support and handhold genuine and aspiring entrepreneurs as per set procedures and guidelines. We have already formulated a scheme for textile industry which will be soon rolled out," CMD told the delegation.

President FCIK Shahid Kamili stated that J&K Bank and Industrial sector



were married to each other saying, "We look up to J&K Bank whenever we are in distress. J&K Bank is our hope and at this point in time when there are hardly any business from last two years due to Covid 19 induced disruptions, we need handholding from J&K Bank to get us out of

this crisis. MSME sector needs special attention from the Bank for it to come out of current situation marred by multiple disruptions over the years."

The delegation collectively thanked the senior Bank management for giving a patient listening to the matters concerning them.

Fuel Prices Rise By Rs 8.50 Per Litre During Peak Of Covid

YOU May not have realised it, but your fuel bill silently increased by about 10 per cent in the past two months during the peak of the second Covid wave that disrupted millions of lives in the country.

Starting from a price line of Rs 90.40 a litre on May 1, petrol is now priced at Rs 98.81 a litre in the national capital, rising by a sharp Rs 8.41 per litre in the last 60 days. Similarly, diesel price in the capital also rose by Rs 8.45 per litre in the past two months to reach Rs 89.18 a litre in Delhi.

Though, oil companies gave respite to consumers on Wednesday, keeping fuel prices unchanged, the price pause has come after rates have been revised upwards in 32 out of 61 days between May and June to make retail rates touch new highs across the country.

Officials in oil companies put the consistent increase in fuel prices to development in global oil markets where both product and crude price have been firming up for past couple of months on demand



rise amidst slowing of pandemic. However, closer look at fuel retail prices in India gives a picture that it is high level of taxes that is keeping fuel rate higher even in times when global oil prices are firm.

Global crude oil price is now hovering around \$75 a barrel. It was over \$80 a barrel in October 2018 but even the petrol prices hovered around Rs 80 a litre across the country. So, even with lower oil prices now, petrol prices have hit century and crossed it by a wider margin now in several parts of the country.

On Wednesday, oil marketing companies (OMCs) kept petrol, diesel retail rates unchanged, but officials said it might again rise in coming days and only way retail

prices could be brought down in this period is by way of tax cuts by both the Centre and the states.

Fuel prices are already touching new highs everyday. Petrol price is most expensive in Rajasthan's Sri Ganganagar where it is now retailing at Rs 109.67 a litre. Even diesel in the city is priced at a high of Rs 102.12 a litre.

In the city of Mumbai, where petrol prices crossed Rs 100 mark for the first time ever on May 29, the fuel price reached new high of Rs 104.90 per litre on Tuesday. It remained at the same level on Wednesday. Diesel prices also increased in the city to reach Rs 96.72 a litre, the highest among metros.

With global crude prices also rising on a pick up demand and depleting inventories of world's largest fuel guzzler - the US, retail prices of fuel in India is expected to firm up further in coming days. The benchmark Brent crude reached multi year high level of over \$75 on ICE or Intercontinental Exchange. IANS

Amul Announces Pan-India Hike In Prices Of Milk By Rs 2 Per Litre



AHMEDABAD: Prices of Amul milk will be increased by Rs 2 per litre with effect from July 1 across all brands, a senior Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF) official said on Wednesday.

He said the price was being hiked after a gap of nearly one year and seven months which became necessary due to an increase in the production cost.

"Prices of Amul milk will be increased by Rs 2 per litre across India from tomorrow. The new prices will be applicable on all Amul milk brands like Gold, Taaza, Shakti, T-special, as well on cow and buffalo milk," said RS Sodhi, Managing Director, GCMMF, which markets Amul brand of milk and dairy products.

Sodhi said the hike in the milk price became necessary due to the rise in food inflation.

"Additionally, the cost for packaging has gone up by 30 to 40 per cent, the transportation cost by 30 per cent, and the energy cost by 30 per cent, which led to the increase in the input cost," he said. PTI

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International Flights Suspension Extended Till July 31



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India on Wednesday extended the suspension on international commercial flight operations till July 31, 2021.

"In partial modification of circular dated 26-06-2020, the competent authority has further extended the validity of circular issued on the above subject... regarding scheduled international commercial passenger services to or from India till 2359 hrs IST of 31 July, 2021," the circular issued by the Directorate General of

Civil Aviation (DGCA) said.

The circular said that the restriction shall not apply to international all-cargo operations and flights specifically approved by DGCA.

"However, international scheduled flights may be allowed on selected routes by the competent authority on case to case basis."

Passenger air services were suspended on March 25, 2020 due to the nationwide lockdown to check the spread of Covid-19.

Domestic flight services, however, resumed from May 25, 2020.

CA Exams: SC Allows Opt-Out Option to Candidates



Agenceis

Observing that the scheme provided by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) is not enough, the Supreme Court Wednesday permitted candidates scheduled to appear for the upcoming CA exams to opt out if they or their family members have suffered from COVID-19.

A three-judge bench of Justices A M Khanwilkar, Dinesh Maheshwari and Aniruddha Bose also made it clear that a candidate need not produce RT-PCR (real-time reverse transcription-polymerase chain reaction) test if medical certificate issued by registered medical practitioners for his family members is produced along with request for opting out.

A candidate who has suffered COVID-19 personally or any of his family members, so certified by a registered medical practitioner, as a result of which he is unable to appear for exam, or disabled from preparing for the exam, is entitled to exercise the option of opting out. It will not be considered as an attempt. Such candidate will be permitted to appear for the next examination for both old and new syllabus, the bench said.

With regard to candidates affected by lockdown during the relevant period of exam, the apex court said as per ICAI scheme, such candidate will be allowed to opt-out and will not be treated as an attempt and such candidate will be allowed to appear in the next examination.

As regards the logistical arrangements, both infrastructural and human resources-wise, the ICAI shall ensure that there is strict adherence to the SOP notified by the competent authority, including the Disaster Management Authority.

It is also clarified if any candidate who is attempting exam gets COVID-19 during exam, he will be allowed to opt out and it will not be treated as an attempt. They can give the exam in the next year. He may be permitted to appear in backup exams as per the rules, the bench said.

The top court also said that in case of last minute change of examination centres, it disapproves

the suggestion of ICAI that if it's in the same city, the candidate will not be allowed to opt out.

We direct that candidate should be allowed to opt out and it will not be treated as an attempt. Such candidate can appear in backup when situation is conducive, it said.

Senior advocate Meenakshi Arora, who was appearing for one of the petitioners, said that some serious issues have not been addressed in the note filed by the ICAI and it is not in line with what the apex court had observed.

Arora referred to the issue of RT-PCR report and said candidates, who have to travel to different places to appear in the exam, may have suffered from COVID-19 earlier but he or she has not recovered fully.

The apex court was hearing a batch of pleas seeking different reliefs including an opt-out option for the candidates, postponement of the exam, and increase in number of centres this year.

During the earlier hearing conducted through video-conferencing, the bench observed there are instances where the RT-PCR test may be negative but the person shows symptoms of COVID.

The ICAI has recently said that opt-out option will be provided in case the examinee himself or herself or his family members (residing in the same premises) are infected with COVID-19.

The bench had said that RT-PCR report should not be the parameter and there has to be a competent authority having medical experience which can issue certificate to the candidates looking at COVID or COVID related issues.

ICAI had on Monday told the apex court that it is the most conducive time to hold CA exams as COVID-19 spread is now at a substantially low level, offering an opportune moment for chartered accountants to further their professional career.

It had said that the present COVID situation in the country is similar to when this court had allowed ICAI to hold examinations in November, 2020 and there is no reason to believe that it will not take adequate precautions.

Tamil Nadu Ranks First In Handling Second Wave Of Covid-19, Maharashtra Among Top 5: Survey



Agenceis

NEW DELHI: Tamil Nadu has emerged as the top state in its overall handling of the second Covid-19 wave.

As per a survey by LocalCircles, on an aggregate basis, 59 per cent of Tamil Nadu residents rated the Tamil Nadu Government's handling of COVID 2nd wave as effective or higher.

Tamil Nadu was followed by Andhra Pradesh as on an aggregate basis, 54 per cent of Andhra Pradesh residents rated the Andhra Pradesh Government's handling of COVID 2nd wave as effective or higher.

Fifty-one per cent of Uttar Pradesh residents rate government's handling of 2nd wave as ef-

fective, 47 per cent of Maharashtra residents rated their government as effective and only 46 per cent of Gujarat residents rated Gujarat Government's handling of the COVID 2nd wave as effective or higher.

Only 43 per cent of Uttarakhand residents were impressed along with Odisha at 43 per cent, Kerala at 39 per cent, Rajasthan at 36 per cent, Haryana at 34 per cent, Punjab and Madhya Pradesh at 28 per cent, Karnataka at 25 per cent, Telangana at 23 per cent, Delhi at 20 per cent and Bihar also at 20 per cent.

Seventeen per cent of residents rated the performance of the West Bengal Government's handling (availability of testing, containment, hospital beds, oxygen, medicines, etc.) of the 2nd wave as "effective", and 41 per cent said

"somewhat effective". 17 per cent of residents surveyed rated it as "total failure", and 25 per cent said "ineffective".

Tamil Nadu, the highest-rated state had the benefit of the late arrival of the second wave and a relatively better hospital infrastructure than many other states. Despite having its state elections, the state did a reasonably good job of handling its 2nd wave of COVID with 59 per cent of its residents rating it as effective, the survey said.

Andhra Pradesh was commended for its community engagement and creating awareness about testing and surveillance of COVID positive individuals at the ward level with the effective deployment of health and ASHA workers as well as auxiliary nurses.

COVID-19: Centre Stresses On Graded Lifting Of Curbs, Continued Focus On Containment

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The Centre has told states it is critical that the lifting of restrictions and providing relaxations are carefully calibrated with continued focus on containment efforts to curb the spread of the coronavirus infection.

In a letter to states and union territories on June 28, Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan said that in order to bring uniformity, the need for following the existing framework for either imposition of restrictions or allowing relaxations based on the burden of disease and strain on healthcare infrastructure still remain important.

Bhushan shared a list of targeted actions that need to be implemented by the states which include monitoring of cases with districts as administrative units on a regular basis and taking necessary action for containment and health infrastructure upgradation.

He said case positivity calculated based on total positive cases vis-a-vis samples tested during the week is one of the prime indicators of the spread of infection in a district. Higher case positivity would imply the need for stringent containment and restrictions so as to control the spread of infection.

Similarly, he said each district needs to analyse bed occupancy vis-a-vis the available health infrastructure to ensure that it doesn't get overwhelmed and seamless patient admission and follow-up can be done. Higher bed occupancy is an indicator that the district needs to undertake specific measures to upgrade the available beds while focusing on containment activities equally vigorously.

It is important to emphasize that a lead time is required to upgrade health infrastructure (a month or more) and hence districts need to plan such upgrades after having duly analysed the case trajectory on



a regular basis, he stated.

For prioritizing districts which need intensive follow-up, states and UTs may identify districts which require the highest level of restrictions while the remaining districts may be allowed higher degree of relaxations based on lower weekly case positivity or a relatively low bed occupancy rates.

District with high weekly case positivity or a high bed occupancy would need intensive monitoring, and thus the health ministry asked the states to consider appointing a senior officer from the state headquarter as the nodal officer for these districts.

The District Nodal Officer will work in coordination with District Collector /Municipal Commissioner to identify cluster of new cases and ensure implementation of required containment activities, the letter stated.

Restrictions once imposed will remain in force for a minimum period of 14 days while in the remaining areas of the district not under containment action, clearly relaxations/restrictions may be provided.

As a monitoring mechanism, the state government may consider monitoring the status of classification parameters on a weekly basis and ensure their wide publicity so as to inform community at large and obtain their support in management of COVID-19 while restrictions are imposed or relaxations are allowed.

While positivity rate and bed occupancy rate are vital criteria that need to be monitored for selection of high focus districts requiring intensive public health action, states and UTs shall also regularly monitor districts with higher numbers of active cases per million population as it is an important indicator to predict need for upgrading health infrastructure and logistics so as to manage the cases.

Stating that COVID-19 is an ongoing challenge, the health secretary asked the states and UTs to continue working on five pillars of its management: "Test-Track-Treat-Vaccinate and adherence to COVID-Appropriate Behaviour."

Early identification of cases is important for curbing the spread, and for this adequate testing is crucial. RT-PCR machines and sufficient kits to ensure required level of testing should accordingly be maintained in all districts, the secretary said in the letter.

In addition to following clinical management protocol, the states should focus on upgradation of health infrastructure, timely commissioning of PSA oxygen plants in hospitals, adequate planning for availability of medical oxygen, availability of logistics, maintaining buffer stock of drugs and taking up necessary action for creation /re-designing of appropriate Covid-dedicated healthcare infrastructure, especially in peri-urban, rural, and tribal areas.

Sidhu Misguided Missile, Says Badal Aimed At Destroying Your 'Corrupt Businesses', Retorts Cong MLA

Agenceis

Shiromani Akali Dal chief Sukhbir Singh Badal, on Wednesday, described Congress MLA Navjot Singh Sidhu a "misguided missile" that lacks control, drawing a retort from the Amritsar legislator who said his aim is to destroy the Akali leader's "corrupt businesses".

The SAD chief's statement has come amid infighting in the state Congress and on the day Sidhu met his party's national general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra

"Therefore, he is such a misguided man who thinks of giving 'bhashan' and doing acting. Today, Punjab does not need such a person who does acting. Punjab needs a person who can lead the state and take it forward," said Badal.

Responding to Badal's remarks, Sidhu said on Twitter, "Guided and aimed at you to destroy your corrupt businesses. Until your Sukh Vilas built on Punjab's ruins is not turned into a Public School & Public Hospital to serve Punjab's poor, I won't relent !!



in New Delhi.

Sidhu is at loggerheads with Chief Minister Amarinder Singh and has gone public against him in the recent past.

Addressing the media in Amritsar, Badal said Sidhu does not get along with anyone.

After joining the BJP, the persons in the party whom he called as his "mai-baap", he dubbed them as "chor" later, alleged Badal.

"Navjot Singh Sidhu is a misguided missile which does not have any control. It can go in any direction and hit anywhere. Maybe it can hit himself," said Badal responding to a question.

"He has crammed five to six dialogues, which he used at every place. By using them, he pleased Sonia Gandhi and with them, he might have earlier pleased (Narendra) Modi sahib," he said.

Earlier, Badal also took on AAP national convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal over his announcement of giving up to 300 units of free electricity if his party comes to power in the state next year.

Badal accused Kejriwal of trying to mislead with the announcement and said people will be charged for the whole consumption even if one unit is consumed over and above 300 units.

"I want to ask in what position Kejriwal is making promises to Punjabis. Who is their CM face or who is their (AAP) leader who can make a statement or take responsibility," asked Badal.

On AAP's promise of 24-hour power supply, Badal said the previous Akali government provided round-the-clock electricity in the state.

HE IS SUCH A MISGUIDED MAN who thinks of giving 'bhashan' and doing acting. Today, Punjab does not need such a person who does acting. Punjab needs a person who can lead the state and take it forward."

Owaisi Is A 'Political Terrorist': UP BJP MLA



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BJP MLA from Ballia, Surendra Singh, known for making controversial remarks, has termed AIMIM chief, Asaduddin Owaisi, a "political terrorist" and accused him of trying to instigate and break the society.

The MLA also said that President's rule may be imposed in West Bengal soon. Talking to reporters on the sidelines of a programme

in Baira assembly segment, Singh said the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimin (AIMIM) leader should have faith in India's secularism till Hindus are in majority.

"Owaisi is a political terrorist. It is his intention to instigate and break the society," the MLA said.

The BJP MLA further said West Bengal was "going the Jammu and Kashmir way" and the central government was monitoring the situation there.

NEWS MAKERS

UP Panchayat Decrees 5 Shoe-Slaps & Rs 50K Fine For Rape

Agenceis

A village panchayat in Maharajganj district recently asked a minor girl to settle her rape case for Rs 50,000 and five slipper slaps to the accused.

The girl's family declined to accept the panchayat decision and contacted the police, after which a case of molestation was filed.

SP Maharajganj, on Tuesday, directed the police to record the girl's statement under section 164 of CrPc and get her medically examined.

According to reports said that the girl's mother, a resident of a locality under Kothibhar police



circle, lodged a complaint with the village panchayat that their minor daughter had been raped by a village youth.

Acting on the complaint, the panchayat, on June 23, asked the

girl to take Rs 50,000 from the accused and slap him five times with a slipper in front of the panchayat members to settle the issue.

However, the girl's family refused to accept the decision and contacted the Kothibhari police on June 24. On the family's complaint, an FIR was lodged under IPC section of molestation and POCSO Act against the accused.

The family later made the panchayat decision viral on social media, after which Maharajganj SP Pradeep Gupta directed the police to get the girl medically examined and also record her statement under Section 164 of CrPc.



Naseeruddin Shah Admitted To Hospital

Agenceis

Veteran actor Naseeruddin Shah has been diagnosed with pneumonia and admitted to a hospital in Mumbai, actor-wife Ratna Pathak Shah said on Wednesday.

Naseeruddin Shah, 70, was admitted to Khar Hinduja hospital on Tuesday. The actor has a "small patch" of pneumonia in his lungs and is currently undergoing treatment.

"Yes (he has) a small patch and all under control. (He is) Responding well to treatment so hope he'll be discharged soon," Ratna Pathak Shah told PTI.

The multiple National Award-winning actor was last seen in the 2020 drama "Mee Ragsam" and the acclaimed Amazon Prime Video series "Bandish Bandits".