



Maximum: 9°C
Minimum: -4°C
Humidity: 89%

SUNSET Today 06:10 PM
SUNRISE Tomorrow 07:19 AM



OBSERVER

23rd year OF PUBLICATION

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..... LIFE & TIMES/ 08

A DESKTOP PLANT CAN BE A WORKPLACE STRESSBUSTER

Does office work make you feel anxious and burnt out? Do the fast-approaching deadlines and boss meetings strike terror in your heart and set your pulse shooting up through the roof?

OS/NEWS.....



**KEJRIWAL TO TAKE OATH AS
DELHI CM AT RAMLILA MAIDAN ON FEB 16**
Arvind Kejriwal, who led the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) to a stupendous victory yet again in Assembly poll, will take oath as the Delhi Chief Minister for the third straight time on February 16.....

11/SPORTS.....

PCB SAYS UMAR AKMAL MISCONDUCT DURING FITNESS TEST WAS 'MISUNDERSTANDING'

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) reprimanded Umar Akmal after concluding proceedings into his alleged misconduct during a fitness test earlier this month. The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Wednesday concluded.....



News Digest

3 Youth Held In Nocturnal Raids

Srinagar: Government forces arrested at least three youth in nocturnal raids in south Kashmir's Pulwama district. Three youth were arrested during night raids on Tuesday from Litter village of the district, reports said. Officials confirmed to a local newsgathering agency KNO that the raid and detention of three youth, stating that they were picked up for questioning. "One of the detained youth is the brother of a slain militant," they said.

60 Shops Seized In Pulwama

Pulwama: The district administration on Wednesday seized at least 60 shops constructed in violation of the norms. Acting on the directions of Deputy Commissioner, Pulwama, Dr Raghav Langer a team of officers including Tehsildar, Executive Officer MC and SHO Pulwama today seized 60 illegally constructed shops. The DC reiterated his commitment of zero tolerance towards illegal encroachments in the District. He said that anybody resorting to illegal constructions in violation of Land Revenue, other Acts and Rules in vogue will be strictly dealt under law.

41st Anniv Of Islamic Revolution Observed

Budgam: Anjuman-e-Sharie Shian on Wednesday observed 41st anniversary of Islamic Revolution at Jamia Babul-Ilm, Mirgund Budgam. A seminar was organised to mark the occasion. Noted scholars addressed the seminar, saying Islamic Revolution alone could bring peace and tranquillity in the world. The speakers said that founder of revolution; Imam Khomeini stressed need for following the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (SAW) to defeat the nefarious designs of the enemies of peace.

Firing Creates Panic In Awantipora

Srinagar: Panic gripped Dogripora area of South Kashmir's Awantipora town on Wednesday when government forces fired warning shots after a driver ignored their signal to stop. Reports said that the government forces deployed at Dogripora check-point directed a vehicle to stop. However, the driver ignored. P10

Wild Life Department Captures Two Bears

Srinagar: The wildlife authorities on Wednesday captured two bears in Tangmarg area of north Kashmir's Baramulla district. Taking note of the complaints from the villagers, Wild Life Department constituted a team that captured these two bears from Gulgam area of Tangmarg, official sources told local newsgathering agency KNT today. They said these bears. P10

SC To Hear Plea Challenging Omar's Detention On Friday

Justice Shantanagoudar Recuses From Hearing Petition



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI: Supreme Court judge Justice M M Shantanagoudar recused himself on Wednesday from hearing the plea filed by Sara Abdullah Pilot challenging the detention of her brother and National Conference leader Omar Abdullah booked under the J-K Public Safety Act.

Sara's plea came up for hearing before a three-judge bench comprising justices N V Ramana, Shantanagoudar and Sanjiv

Khanna.

"I am not participating in this matter," Justice Shantanagoudar said at the outset without citing any specific reason for his recusal.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for Sara, urged the bench to list the matter for Friday. The bench agreed to the request and listed it for hearing on February 14.

Sara had on Monday moved the top court challenging her brother's detention under the J-K Public Safety Act, P10

Third Batch Of Foreign Envoys Arrive In Srinagar Meet BJP Politicians, Take Shikara Ride In Dal Lake

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

SRINAGAR: A second batch of 25 foreign envoys arrived here on Wednesday as part of a union government-facilitated trip to help them have a first-hand assessment of the situation in Jammu and Kashmir, a region which faced months of harsh restrictions after its special status was stripped off in August.

The envoys arrived at the Srinagar airport around 11 am but could not go ahead with their scheduled visit to Baramulla in north Kashmir due to inclement weather, officials said.

The foreign dignitaries instead went for a Shikara (boat) ride in the famous Dal Lake.

The government had taken a group of 15 envoys to Jammu and Kashmir last month. P10



Pic Abid bhat

Orchestrated Diplomacy: Iltija Mufti

Iltija Mufti, daughter of PDP president Mehbooba Mufti, on Wednesday termed the visit of foreign envoys to Kashmir as "orchestrated diplomacy" that North Korean leader Kim Jong Un "would be proud of". "How lovely! Kim Jong Un would be proud of such orchestrated diplomacy. The only thing missing is presence of 3 former J&K ex CMs in this 'curated shikara'. I'm sure they'd have lots to share," Iltija said in a tweet from her mother's Twitter handle. P10

3 Protesters Detained By Police

Three young men were detained here on Wednesday after they staged a protest against the visit of foreign envoys to Jammu and Kashmir, police said.

They protested against the visit and called it a waste of money while the envoys were enjoying a Shikara ride in the Dal Lake. A second batch of foreign envoys arrived in Srinagar on Wednesday for a two-day visit to Jammu and Kashmir for a first-hand assessment of the situation. P10

Geelani Stable, Rumours Baseless: Son

OBSERVER NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR: The family of ailing Hurriyat Conference (G) Chairman, Syed Ali Geelani on Wednesday rubbished reports making rounds on the social media over the deteriorating health of the octogenarian leader.

This evening, rumours made rounds on social media that the ailing Hurriyat leader has passed away at his Hyderpora residence. The rumours were fuelled after a purported statement of amalgam appeared on popular. P10

No Upper Age Relaxation For JK Applicants In UPSC Exam This Year

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI: Unlike last year, there will be no upper-age relaxation for applicants taking the civil services examination 2020 who are domicile of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir between 1980 and 1989, according to a notification issued on Wednesday.

The age relaxation for other categories will continue.

The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) has announced 796 vacancies in the country's bureaucracy to be filled through the civil services examination 2020, which will

be held on May 31, the notification said.

According to last year's civil services exam notification, the upper-age limit of 32 years to take the test was further relaxable for up to a maximum of five years if a candidate had ordinarily been domiciled in the state of Jammu and Kashmir during the period from January 1, 1980 to December 31, 1989.

There is no mention of such age relaxation in this year's exam notification.

The erstwhile J-K state has been bifurcated into two union territories-- Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh -- with effect

from October 31, 2019.

"A candidate must have attained the age of 21 years and must not have attained the age of 32 years on the 1st of August, 2020 i.e., he must have been born not earlier than 2nd August, 1988 and not later than 1st August, 1999," this year's notification said.

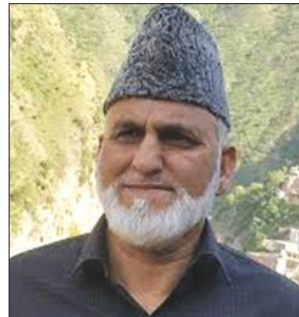
This upper-age limit is further relaxed for up to a maximum of five years if a candidate belongs to a scheduled caste or a scheduled tribe; up to a maximum of three years in the case of candidates belonging to other backward classes who are eligible to avail. P10

Nothing to Hide, Says Saroori After NIA Quizzing

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

JAMMU: A day after he was questioned by NIA in connection with militant attacks in Kishtwar district of Jammu and Kashmir, senior Congress leader and former minister G M Saroori on Wednesday said he has "nothing to hide" and does not need a certificate from anyone.

He strongly denied having any connection with Mohammad Amin Bhat alias "Jehangir Saroori", the longest-surviving militant of Hizbul Mujahideen and the brain behind the revival of



militancy in Kishtwar, declared free of militancy over a decade ago but rocked by four targeted killings since November 2018.

"He (Bhat) is neither. P10

5 Killed After Vehicle Falls Into Kishtwar Gorge

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

KISHTWAR – Five members of a family, including two women, were killed on Wednesday when their vehicle skidded off the road and fell into a deep gorge in Kishtwar district of Jammu and Kashmir, a police official said.

The accident happened when the family was carrying the body of a baby from Jammu to their Bahadat village in Drabshalla for last rites, he said.

Near Paani Nallah, the driver of the private car lost control over the wheels, the official said.

The deceased were identified as Pawan Kumar (32), his wife Rekha Devi (26), Rita Devi (30), Kewal Krishan (37) and P Kumar (30).

Senior Congress leader and former minister G M Saroori expressed grief over the loss of lives and said the repeated road accidents in Doda, Kishtwar, Ramban and Udhampur. P10

Building Collapses In Jammu, 2 Firemen Killed

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

JAMMU: Two firemen were killed and six persons injured when a three-storey building collapsed early on Wednesday in Jammu city when fire department personnel were trying to put out a blaze, an official said.

One fireman is still trapped under the debris and efforts are on to pull him out, Director General of Fire and Emergency Services, V K Singh told PTI. The building in Golepulli area of Tallab Tillo, housing a saw mill on the ground floor, collapsed during the fire fighting operation, trapping several people, officials said.

A team of National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) has also joined the ongoing rescue operation. Bodies of two firefighters, Vimal Kumar Raina and Rattan Chand, were retrieved, while search is going on for the third personnel, identified as Mohammad Aslam, Singh. P10

Day Chill Intensifies In Valley Due To Overcast Conditions

AGENCIES

SRINAGAR: Chilly weather conditions have intensified due to over cast conditions in Kashmir valley, where light to moderate rain and snow is predicted at most places during the next 36 hours under the influence of a Western Disturbance (WD), which is active in the region.

However, there was major improvement in the night temperature across the valley, where mercury settled several degrees above normal due to cloudy skies.

A Met department spokesperson said that light to moderate rain or snow would occur during the next 36 hours in Kashmir valley under

the influence of the WD, which originated from Arabian Sea.

However, he said the weather will again turn dry from Friday onwards though that will result in dip in the minimum temperature.

There were intense chilly weather conditions due to cloudy skies at world famous ski resort of Gulmarg, which received fresh snowfall on Tuesday. But, the night temperature improved and settled at minus 6 degree, which is several degrees above normal.

The night temperature in the summer capital, Srinagar, improved further and settled above freezing point. Against minus 0.2 degree recorded on Tuesday, the night temperature. P10

NIA Charges 4 Alleged Jaish Workers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI: The NIA Wednesday filed a supplementary charge sheet against four alleged Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) aides of Pulwama attack mastermind in a case of conspiring militancy attacks across country.

The NIA had last September filed a charge sheet claiming that JeM's Sajjad Ahmad Khan, a close aide of Pulwama attack mastermind Mudassir Ahmad Khan, was conspiring militancy acts across India.

The supplementary charge sheet was filed against four alleged JeM operatives under

sections 120-B (criminal conspiracy) and 121 A (waging, or attempting to wage war, or abetting waging of war, against the government of India) of IPC, and various sections of stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) and sections of Explosives Substances Act.

The agency filed the. P10

ISJK Module Busted in Budgam, 5 Held: Police

Police on Wednesday claimed to have busted a module of militant ISJK by arresting five workers of the outfit from central Kashmir's Budgam district.

A police spokesperson said that acting on a tip-off, police arrested five alleged militant associates in Budgam and recovered arms and ammunition and other incriminating material from their possession. After preliminary enquiry, the spokesperson said, it was found that these men were associated to the militant outfit ISJK and were involved. P10

Union Ministers Submit Reports On J&K To PMO

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI: More than 30 Union ministers, who visited Jammu and Kashmir last month, have submitted their feedback to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) on the implementation of various development schemes there, officials said on Wednesday.

As many as 37 central ministers visited Jammu and Kashmir to assess the ground situation and interact with people on various development schemes.

Over 30 of them have submitted their reports to the Home Ministry and those were forwarded to the PMO recently, a



government official said. The reports were primarily on how the welfare schemes were being implemented and. P10



از نیابت چھریل یا اجلاس منظور احمد نائب تحصیلدار چھریل
مضمون درخواست منجانب:- شہیر احمد شاہ ولد محمد یوسف شاہ ساکن کواریہ کام
بھڑش RBA سرٹیفکیٹ تحت آراء 294
اشتہار برآمد گا ہی ہر خاص و عام
محاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں درخواست سائل یہ عنوان مال دفتر بد میں زیر کاروانی
ہے اس بارے میں پٹواری حلقہ سے بشمول دیگر نقدا ت یونیورسٹی کا طلب کیا
گیا جس سے عیاں ہوا کہ سائل موضع کن حال میں سکونت پذیر ہے سائل کا
کنیدہ بڑیل نقوس پر مشتمل ہے:-
نام محمد ولد بھٹ
محمد یوسف شاہ ولد محمد شاہ
شہیر احمد شاہ ولد محمد یوسف
پروینہ زہرا شہیر احمد شاہ
سہانا دختر شہیر احمد
مہتاب شہیر دختر
ایمن شہیر دختر
اقسا شہیر دختر
اس کے علاوہ مزید کوئی افراد کنیدہ میں نہیں ہے سائل کے کنیدہ ماہانہ زرعی
و غیرہ زرعی سطح = 595100 روپے ہے لہذا اگر کسی شخص یا شخص کو کوئی عذر یا
اعتراض ہوگا تو وہ دفتر میں اپنا اعتراض ایک ہفتہ کے اندر درپیش کریں۔ معیاد
گزرنے کے بعد کوئی بھی عذر قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔
تحریرا لہذا صدر نائب تحصیلدار چھریل
MQJ

Public Notice
I have applied for the issuance of Pesticides license for my business unit under name and style "Crope Zone" at Bornai Sopore if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the Plant Protection Officer Agriculture Department Lalmandi Sriangar within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.
Nazir Ahmad Bhat
S/o Ghulam Mohammad Bhat
R/o Gund Drath Sopore
GM.S
Public Notice
I have lost my Driving License bearing DL No; 17669/LAB. Now I have applied for the issuance of duplicate of the same if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the ARTO Sopore within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice after that no objection shall be entertained.
Mohammad Amin Shooasha
S/o Mohammad Siddiq Shooasha
R/o New Colony Sopore
Pb: 849186708
GM.S
Public Notice
I want to change the name of my daughter from Simran Shabir to Sehreen Shabir in school records if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the Principal Green Land School Doulathpora within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.
Shabir Ahmad Malik
F/o Shereen Shabir
R/o Doulathpora
GM.S

Government of Jammu & Kashmir
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PWD(R&B) DIVISION KULGAM
NOTICE INVITING TENDERS
NIT No 115/2019-20 /RnB/ Kul/e-tendering/8415-34 dated 08-02-2020
For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, J&K U.T., e-tenders (In Single cover system) are invited on item rate basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with J&K U.T., CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for the following works:-

S. No	Name of Work	Est. Cost (Rs. In Lacs)	Cost of T/E/M (In Rs.)	Time	T&D of Opening of Bid	Class	Major Head of Account
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	Construction of 1x2 Mtr span RCC box type culvert and laying of RCC pipes at spots on Approach road leading to Girls Gujar and Bakerwal Hostel at Kulgam of Town roads at Kulgam Scheme	5.36	300	10720	15 days	19-02-2020 at 11.00 AM	Cee& Dee Sector

1.The NIT Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Bill of quantities (BOQ) Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental website www.iktenders.gov.in from 11-02-2020-10.00 A.M 18-02-2020-4.00 P.M
2. The Bids shall be deposited in electronic format on the departmental website www.iktenders.gov.in from 11-02-2020 (11.00 AM) 18-02-2020 upto 4.00PM.The bids uploaded on the Web Site upto due date and time will be opened on 19-02-2020_ at 11.00 AM in the Office of Executive Engineer (R&B) Division Kulgam in presence of the bidders who wish to attend. In case of holidays/Office happens to be closed on the date of opening of the bids, bids will be opened on the next working day at the same time and venue.
3.The complete bidding process will be on line.
3.1 Critical DATES

	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	08-02-2020
1.	Period of downloading of bidding documents	From 11-02-2020 10.00 A.M to 18-02-2020 4.00 P.M
3.	Bid submission Start Date	11-02-2020_ from 11.00 A.M
4.	Bid Submission End Date	18-02-2020_ upto 4.00 P.M
6.	Date & time of opening of Bids	19-02-2020_ at 11.00 A.M in the Office of the Executive Engineer (R&B) Division Kulgam

4. Instruction to bidders regarding e-tendering process.
3.1 Bidders are advised to download bid submission manual from the "Downloads" option as well as from "Bidders Manual Kit" on website' www.iktenders.gov.in to acquaint bid submission process.
3.2 To participate in bidding process, bidders have to get 'Digital Signature Certificate (DSC)' as per Information Technology Act-2000. Bidders can get digital certificate from any approved vendors.
3.3 The bidders have to submit their bids online in electronic format with digital Signature. No Financial bid will be accepted in physical form.
3.4 Bids will be opened online as per time schedule mentioned in Para-2 & 3.1.
3.5 Bidders must ensure to upload scanned copy of all necessary documents like CDR/PAN/TIN/ GST certificate/Treasury Challan/Receipt with the bid.
No: 8435-37
Dated:08-02-2020
Sd/- Executive Engineer
PWD(R&B) Division Kulgam
DIPK NO: 6990/M

PUBLIC NOTICE
I have applied for the issuance of Contractor Card "D CLASS".If anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of SE R & B Division Khanabal Anantnag within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.
Kausir Bashir
D/O Bashir Ahmad Padder
R/O Charigam Pehalgam Anantnag
MQJ
PUBLIC NOTICE
I have applied for the issuance of Pesticides License. If anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of Plant Protection Officer Lal Mandi Srinagar within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.
Suhail Hassan
S/O Gh Hassan Itoo
R/O Achabal Anantnag
MQJ

Government of Jammu & Kashmir
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER R&B DIVISION SOPORE.
NOTICE INVITING TENDER
NIT NO 183 of RnB-Sopore of 2019-2020 e-tendering DATED- 11 -02.2020.
For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, J&K e-tenders (In Single Cover System) are invited on item rate basis from approved and eligible contractors registered with J&K State Govt., CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for the following works:

S. No	Name of Work	Est. Cost (Rs. In Lacs)	Cost of 77 DOC (In Rupees)	E/M (In Rupees)	Time	T&D of Opening of Bid	Class	Major Head of Account	Position of AAA
01	Construction of road by way of edge wall and Nallah muck filling at Zurmunz Watlab.	20.00 lacs	800/-	40000/-	45 days	20.02.2020	CEE / BEE	4059 State-sector	Accorded


Position of funds: Available
The Bidding documents consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Drawings, bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other detail s can be seen/downloaded from the departmental website www.iktenders.gov.in as per schedule of dates given below:-

	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	11.02.2020
02.	Period of downloading of bidding documents	From 11.02.2020 (10.00A.M) to 19-02-2020 (4.00P.M)
03.	Bid submission start date	11.02.2020 from (10.00A.M)
04.	Bid submission end date	19-02-2020 upto (4.00P.M)
05.	Date & time of opening Bids (on line)	20 -02-2020 at (11.00 A.M) in the Office of the Executive Engineer R&B Division Sopore

2. Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in shape of Treasury Chilian in favour of Executive Engineer, R&B Division Sopore (tender inviting authority) and Earnest money /Bid security in shape of CDR/FDR pledged to tender receiving authority Executive Engineer R&B Division Sopore
3.The date and time of opening of Bids shall be notified on web Site www.jketenders.gov.in and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The bids of Responsive bidders shall be opened online on same web site in the office of the Tender receiving authority).
4. The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of technical Bids.
5. The earnest money shall be forfeited if:-
a. Any bidder/ tenderer withdraws his bid/ tender during the period of bid validity or makes any Modifications in the terms and conditions of the bid.
b. Failure of Successful bidder to furnish the required performance security wit6hin the specified time limit.
c. Failure of Successful bidder to execute the agreement within 28 days after fixation of contract.
6. Instruction to bidders regarding e-tendering process.
6.1 Bidders are advised to download bid submission manual from the "Downloads" option as well as from "Bidders Manual Kit" on website www.jketenders.gov.in acquaint bid submission process.
For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor of J&K
No: 12100-20
Date 11.02.2020
DIPK NO: 7003/M
Sd/-Executive Engineer R&B Division Sopore

از نیابت لکھیٹ
عنوان: درخواست منجانب توصیف احمد ذم ولد محمد مقبول ذم ساکنہ بانگا ماور
برآمد حصول ربا حقیقت تحت 294 SRO
اشتہار برآمد گا ہی ہر خاص و عام
محاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں سائل نے ایک درخواست RBA برائے انجینئر
حقیقت دفتر حاش پیش کی ہے جو زیر کاروانی ہے۔ اس بارے میں رپورٹ
پٹواری طلب کی گئی جسے پتہ چلتا ہے کہ سائل ہرل قلم لباد میں سکونت پذیر ہے
سائل کا کنیدہ مندرجہ ذیل افراد پر مشتمل ہے
اس کے علاوہ کوئی افراد کنیدہ میں بتایا گیا ہے کہ سائل کی مہمانہ آمدنی حد مقررہ سے کم
ہے لہذا حقیقت مندرجہ بالا بتن سائل کے اجرا کئے جانے میں اگر کسی شخص کو کوئی عذر
یا اعتراض ہوگا تو سات یوم کے اندر اندر دفتر خد میں تحریری طور پر پیش کریں۔ بعد از
گزرنے معیاد کوئی بھی عذر قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا
تحریرا لہذا صدر

از نیابت لکھیٹ
عنوان: درخواست منجانب رضی احمد ذم ولد عبدالرزاق ذم ساکنہ بانگا ماور
برآمد حصول ربا حقیقت تحت 294 SRO
اشتہار برآمد گا ہی ہر خاص و عام
محاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں سائل نے ایک درخواست RBA برائے انجینئر
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یا اعتراض ہوگا تو سات یوم کے اندر اندر دفتر خد میں تحریری طور پر پیش کریں۔ بعد از
گزرنے معیاد کوئی بھی عذر قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا
تحریرا لہذا صدر

Office Of The Assistant Regional Transport Officer Budgam Kashmir
NOTICE
Whereas an application has been recieved from one. Shri : Nazir Ahmad Paray S/o: Ali Mohammad Paray R/o: Mazhama Beerwah
Budgam owner of vehicle bearing Registration No: JK04E 5038 for cancellation of hire purchase agreement with M/S J&K Bank B/U Kanihama .
Now therefore it is notified for the information of the general public that objections if any to the proposed cancellation of hire purchase Agreement shall be filed in writing in the office of the Assistant Regional Transport office ARTO Budgam within a period of 12 days from the date of publication of this notice in the daily newspaper .
No. ARTO/ BUDGAM.423
Dated 12/02/2020
Assistant Regional Transport officer Budgam Kashmir


GOVT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER MECHANICAL IRRIGATION DIVISION SHADIPORA
email ID:- midshadipora@gmail.com
e- NIT No. 332 of 2019-20
Dated:- 10-02-2020
For and on behalf of the Lieutenant Governor of Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir, e-Tenders in single cover system are invited from Registered Electrical Workshop holders specialized in H.T transformers/ SSI unit holders registered with District Industries Centre for the below mentioned work:

S.No.	Name of work	Adv.cosf (in Lakh)	Cost of Tender (In Rs)	Earnest Money (in lacs)	Time of Completion
1.	Repairing of 100 KVA 11/0.433KV HT Transformer Dewatering/ Irrigation Scheme Cheki-Ganastan of Shadipora.	0.72	100.00	1440/-	5 days

1. The bidding documents consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, technical specification, bill of quantities [B.O.Q] set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/ download from the website www.iktenders.gov.in as per schedule of dates given hereunder:

	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	10-02-2020
2.	Date of start for downloading of bidding documents	11-02-2020 from 04:00 PM
3.	Bid submission Start Date	11-02-2020 from 6:00PM
4.	Bid submission End Date	17-02-2020 up to 1600 Hrs.
6.	Date of opening of fenders	18-02-2020 at 10:00 AM

Position of funds: Demanded.
Bids must be accompanied with Earnest money in shape of CDR/ FDR and cost of Tender documents in shape of e-Challan/ treasury Challan or receipt remitted to MH: 0702- Rev. Misc in favour of Executive Engineer Mechanical Irrigation Division Shadipora (Tender inviting authority).
2. The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 90 days from the date of opening of Price bids.
3. The earnest money shall be forfeited if:
dipk no: 6965/m
SD/- Executive Engineer Mechanical Irrigation Division Shadipora

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
UNION TERRITORY OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR
OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL GOVT. MEDICAL COLLEGE DODA
. Email: principalgmcdoda@gmail.com Phone/Fax: 01996-233888
Sub; Selection list of candidates under SR.G-202 for the post of "Physiotherapist" (Health & Medical Education Department) GMC Doda, Divisional Cadre Jammu Advertisement /item No.04/2019/021
Ref No:- Adm. Department letter No.ME/NG/New/GMC/03/2019 dated 04-02-2020,
NOTICE
Whereas, the Administrative Department vide above referred letter forwarded the communication No.SSB/Secy/Sel/1/10/2020/658-64 dated 17-01-2020 of Secretary, J&K Service Selection Board, Srinagar along with selection/waiting list of candidates under SRO-202 for the post of "Physiotherapist" (Health & Medical Education Department) GMC Doda, Divisional Cadre Jammu Advertisement /item No.04/2019/015 for issuance of formal appointment order subject to the production of requisite documents in origami
Now through the medium of this notice the below mentioned candidate under various categories selected vide above referred J&K Service Selection Board, Jammu communication is hereby directed to report this office along with original documents for verification within a period of seven (07) days after the issuance of this notice so that the formal appointment order may be issued in her favour.
1. Date of birth certificate
2. Qualification certificate » ;
3. Permanent resident certificate issued by the competent authority.
4. Health certificate
5. Certificate from the concerned Deputy Director, Employment and General Manager, DIC to the effect that no loan under self-employment scheme has been taken by the appointee.
6. Relevant category certificate, where applicable.
7. Any other documents as required under rules.
SELECTION LIST (OM CATEGORY)

S.No	NAME	FATHERNAME	ADDRESS	DOB	CAT
1	Susheel Gupta	S/o Tilak Raj Gupta	Rchhari, Subash Nagar. Jammu. Near Main Water Tank Rajpura Road, Jammu.	26-11-1985	OM

SELECTION LIST OF (RBA CATEGORY)

S.No	NAME	FATHERNAME	ADDRESS	DOB	CAT
1	Shabir Ahmed	S/o Gh Haider Banday	Bbarath, Near Mosque, Bharath, Bagla, Doda.	25-05-1988	RBA

No:-GMC/D/279/Adm/ 1953
Dated:- 08-02-2020
Sd/- Prof.(Dr.) Tariq Parvez Azad Principal Govt Medical College Doda
DIPK NO: 7019/M

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
UNION TERRITORY OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR
OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL GOVT. MEDICAL COLLEGE DODA
. Email: principalgmcdoda@gmail.com Phone/Fax: 01996-233888
Sub:- Selection list of candidates under SRO-202 for the post of "Telephone Supervisor". (Health and Medical Education Department (GMC Doda) Divisional Cadre Jammu Advertisement /item No.04/2019/038
Ref No:- Adm. Department letter No. ME/NG/New/GMC/03/201.9 dated 04-02-2020
NOTICE
Whereas, the Administrative Department vide above referred letter forwarded the communication No.SSB/Secy/Sel/1/03/2020/665-70 dated 17-01-2020 of Secretary, J&K Service Selection Board, Srinagar along with selection/waiting list of candidates under SRO-202 for the post of "Telephone Supervisor" (Health & Medical Education Department) GMC Doda, Divisional Cadre Jammu Advertisement /item No.04/2019/038 for issuance of formal appointment order subject to the production of requisite documents in original.
Now through the medium of this notice the below mentioned candidate under various categories selected vide above referred J&K Service Selection Board, Jammu communication is hereby directed to report this office along with, original documents for verification within a period of (07) days after the issuance of this notice so that the formal appointment order may be issued in her favour.
01 Date of birth certificate
02. Qualification certificate:
03. Permanent resident certificate issued by the competent authority.
04 Health certificate
05. Certificate from the concerned Deputy Director, Employment and General Manager, DIG to the effect that no loan under self-employment scheme has been taken by the appointee.
06. Relevant category certificate, where applicable.
07. Any other documents as required under rules.
Selection List (OM Category)

S.N O	NAME	ADDRESS	DOB	CAT
1	Mamta Devi	Hakumat Raj Miran Sahib, Bansultan, 905044, Bansultan, R.S. Pura, Jammu	15-03-1990	OM/ SC

Selection List (SC Category)

	Vinay Kumar	Swami Raj	Jodhpur, Bellana Jodhpur, Doda	24-08-1992	SC
1					

No:GMC/D/289/Adm/1955
Sd/- Prof.(Dr.) Tariq Parvez Azad Principal Govt Medical College Doda
DIPK NO: 7027/M

Coronavirus: Safe To Eat Meat, Says DAK

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: With apprehensions among people in Kashmir valley of getting new coronavirus through consumption of meat, Doctors Association Kashmir (DAK) on Wednesday said there is no risk to catch the disease from eating chicken or mutton.

Dispelling misconceptions, DAK President Dr Nisar ul Hassan said it is safe to eat properly cooked meat.

"You can eat chicken or mutton without fear of getting coronavirus which is now named as COVID-19," Dr Nisar said.

"However, one needs to make sure that the meat is not raw, uncooked or partially cooked," he said

"Till date, there is no evidence that people have not got the disease after eating meat that has been properly cooked," he added.

Dr Nisar said another mis-



conception doing the rounds is that one might contract the virus from imported goods packed in affected countries.

"The virus is not going to be transported on a box," he said adding "there is no evidence

that anyone has gotten infected from a package."

Dr Nisar said COVID-19 virus spreads from person to person via respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. People who

are nearby can get infected by inhaling these droplets containing the virus. The droplets can travel as far as 6 feet; outside that zone the risk is much lower.

And, so far the novel virus

has spread only among people who were in close personal contact.

He said studies have shown that the virus has infected more men than women and most of the patients were between 49 and 56 years of age.

"An interesting observation was that children seem to be less likely affected by the virus."

"Majority of patients who died had underlying medical conditions like diabetes, hypertension and heart disease."

Dr Nisar said the most frequent reported symptoms of confirmed cases were fever and cough and in severe cases difficulty in breathing.

"With no specific cure and vaccine for the virus, people should continue to take precautions like hand washing and cough etiquette," he said

"So far, the novel virus has killed more than 1,100 people and infected over 45,000 people worldwide," said Dr Nisar.

LG must take a call on demands of striking PHE workers: Altaf Bukhari

SRINAGAR: Former finance minister Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari on Tuesday urged the J&K government to address the issues pertaining to regularization and release of pending wages of daily rated workers of PHE department who are on strike for the last five days in Jammu and Kashmir.

Bukhari also appealed the government to have a holistic and a humanitarian view while dealing with the demands put forth by other agitating unions of daily wagers, causal workers, land donors and ITI workers in Jammu and Kashmir.

In a statement issued here, Bukhari urged the Lieutenant Governor G.S Murmu to look into the issues pertaining to regularization and release of wages to daily rated workers because their strike has impacted utility services leading to drinking water crisis especially in most of the areas in Jammu and Srinagar districts.

Fayaz, Majid take stock of public grievances in Srinagar

SRINAGAR: Commissioner Secretary, Department of Floriculture, Parks and Gardens, Shiekh Fayaz Ahmad and Secretary, Cooperative and Tribal Affairs, Abdul Majid Bhat today took stock of people's grievances during a day-long public grievance camp held at Banquet Hall, Srinagar.

During the programme, nearly 30 delegations, besides individuals from across several districts Jammu and Kashmir including, Srinagar, Budgam, Anantnag, Baramulla, Ganderbal, Kulgam, Pulwama, among other areas met the Administrative Secretaries and highlighted their issues. During the camp several service matter cases were also taken up. The deputations sought an early redress from the Government.

A deputation of transport-



ers apprised the Administrative Secretaries about their issues, seeking early redressal of their grievances.

A deputation of unemployed veterinary doctors demanded creation of posts in the department.

Another deputation demanded creation of scheme to adjust unemployed Mechanical engineers in the Transport Department.

A deputation of retired employees of Sheep Production

Development Board demanded release of gratuity and leave salary.

A delegation from Shopian demanded establishment of PG hostel in Srinagar.

Various individuals also highlighted their issues including compensation, subsidy under several centrally sponsored schemes in Agriculture and Horticulture departments.

Another delegation said that implementation of National

Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC) schemes in Jammu and Kashmir.

A delegation of contractual employees of Gujjar Bakerwal hostels demanded regularization.

Secretary, Cooperative, said that Government was taking all measures for strengthening the infrastructural edifice in the Cooperative sector in Jammu and Kashmir, besides ensuring better basic needs to people of Jammu and Kashmir.

He assured the people that the government is endeavoring hard to solve all development related issues of every area.

Administrative Secretaries assured the deputations and individuals that all their issues would be looked into for redressal.

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PHE MECHANICAL DIVISION SOUTH AWANTIPORA

Phone/Fax .No:- 01933-247380/
Email-id (phemechsouth@gmail.com)
SHORT TERM NIT SL. NO. 12 OF 2020

For and on behalf of Lt, Governor of Jammu & Kashmir, (UT) of India, sealed tenders consisting of tender documents affixed with Revenue Stamp worth Rs.6/= are invited from Registered SSI Unit Holders/ workshop holders in similar field as works contractor as per enclosed annexure which should reach the office of the Executive Engineer PHE Mechanical Division (South) Awantipora

on or before 22/02/2020 upto 2.00 PM. Together with earnest money equivalent to 2% of the advertised cost in the shape of CDR. Pledged to the official designation of the undersigned. In case last date for receipt of tenders happens to be a holiday or due to any other reason, office has to remain closed, tenders shall be received on next working day upto 2.00 PM. The tenders shall be opened by the undersigned on the same date or any other subsequent date, convenient to the tender opening authority in presence of the tenderers who may like to be present. The tender opening authority reserves the right to reject/accept any or all the tenders without assigning any reason thereof.

Annexure To this office NIT NO \ M of 2020 issued under NO: MA/ 12 of 2020 Dated: / /2020.

Last date of tender documents				/	/2020	to	/	/2020
Last date of tender receipt				/ /2020				
S So	Name of work	Adv. Cost in (lacs)	Earnest Money (in Rs)	Cost of tender document	Time of completion	Major Head		
1	Complete repairs to 10000 GPH capacity horizontal type pumping equipments filter water installed at WSS Muniward	0.28	560.00	50.00	5 days	M&R		
2	Electrical/Mech works to be carried out at WSS Kangahall Magripora	0.155	310.00	50.00	5 days	M&R		
3	Repairs to 15 HP submereible motoi ai WSS Panzgaru old	0.36	720	50.00	5 days	M&R		
4	electrification of ound house and providing of facilities for operational staff posted at WSS Larkipora	0.19	380.00	50.00	5 days	M&R		

**Executive Engineer
PHE Mech Division South
Awantipora**

DIPK No.: 7032/M

DIAL-EMMA

- TRAFFIC POLICE : 9419993745, 01998-266686
- PCR: 0194-2452092,2455883
- PDD: 0194-2450213
- FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES : 2479488,245222,2452155
- 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 - ()
- Mughal Road - (Closed)
- Srinagar- Leh- (Closed)

This Day in History

- 1916 - Germany and Austria-Hungary notify the US that they will sink any armed merchant ships starting on 1 March
- 1922 - US intervention army leaves Honduras
- 1943 - US General Eisenhower selected to command the allied armies in Europe; British General Montgomery not best pleased.
- 1944 - German troops reconquer Aprilia, Italy
- 1945 - 1st gas turbine propeller-driven airplane flight tested, Downey, CA.
- 1945 - Yalta agreement signed by FDR, Churchill & Stalin
- 1946 - World War II: Operation Deadlight ends after scuttling 116 of 156 captured U-boats.
- 1953 - USSR breaks diplomatic relations with Israel
- 1956 - British diplomats Guy Burgess and Donald Maclean deny working as spies for Soviet Russia after reappearing in the Soviet Union after going missing 5 years earlier
- 1964 - Greek & Turks begin fighting in Limassol, Cyprus
- 1964 - Taiwan drops diplomatic relations with France
- 1968 - Israeli-Jordan border fight
- 1970 - Japan becomes 4th nation to put a satellite (Osumi) in orbit.
- 1971 - US, UK, USSR, others sign Seabed Treaty outlawing nuclear weapons
- 1973 - 1st one-day international for Pakistan & NZ
- 1974 - Titan-Centaur rocket test launch fails.
- 1974 - Henry Kissinger unveils Nixon Administration's seven-point "Project Independence" plan to make the U.S. energy independent
- 1974 - Libya nationalizes three US oil companies that had not agreed to 51 percent nationalization in September
- 1975 - Margaret Thatcher defeats Edward Heath for leadership of the British Conservative Party
- 1978 - China lifts a ban on Aristotle, Shakespeare, & Dickens
- 1979 - Iran's premier Bakhtiar resigns, Ayatollah Khomeini seizes power
- 1984 - 10th space shuttle mission (41-B)-Challenger 4-returns to Earth
- 1985 - King Hussein of Jordan & PLO leader Arafat sign accord
- 1990 - Nelson Mandela released after 27 years imprisonment in South Africa.
- 1991 - UNPO, Unrepresented Nations & People Org forms in Hague Neth.
- 1994 - Space shuttle STS-60 (Discovery 18), lands
- 1995 - Space shuttle STS-63 (Discovery 19), lands
- 2008 - In East Timor, assassination attempts were made on Xanana Gusmao and Jose Ramos-Horta. Both failed.
- 2011 - Egyptian Revolution culminates in the resignation of Hosni Mubarak and the transfer of power to the Supreme Military Council after 18 days of protests.
- 2012 - Israeli Air Force conducts four air strikes in Gaza Strip
- 2013 - 18 coal miners are killed in an explosion in the Komi region, Russia
- Event of interestEvent of Interest
- 2013 - Pope Benedict XVI announces his resignation from February 28, the first pope to resign since 1415
- 2014 - 11 people are killed after a grenade was tossed into a movie theatre in Peshawar, Pakistan
- 2014 - 77 people are killed after a military transport plane crashes in Algeria
- 2014 - Peace talks resume in Geneva as leaders attempt to bring an end to the civil war in Syria
- 2016 - Discover of gravitational waves (through collision of two black holes) announced by physicists from the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (Ligo)
- 2016 - Riot between rival drug cartels at a prison in Monterrey, Mexico, leaves 52 dead

PRAYERS

FAJR
5: 54
ZUHR
12: 45
ASR
4:33
MAGRIB
6:15
ISHA
7:37

From KO Archives

Shabir Shah ready to join electoral fray

DFP Supremo Says No Intl Supervision Necessary

NEW DELHI: In a significant climb down from his earlier stand senior Kashmiri separatist leader Shabir Shah on Saturday advanced a new proposal for holding of elections in Jammu and Kashmir under the supervision of some non-governmental organisations (NGO) of the country and intellectuals.

"If the government is really interested in finding the true representatives of people of Kashmir, then elections should be held under the supervision of some Indian NGOs and in-tellectuals," Shah announced this at a press conference.

Shah made it clear that he was not seeking supervision by any international organisation or the United Nations as he had complete faith in Indian NGOs and intellectuals.

Shah, one of the founder members of militant movement in the state, said simultaneously polls under such supervi-sion should also be held in Pa-kistan-controlled-Kashmir to choose the representatives who could talk on behalf of the peo-ple in that part of Kashmir Referring to Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Farooq Abdullah, he said "if he claims to be the genuine representa-tive, he should prove his major-ity again by stepping down and facing the elections under such supervision."

He blamed Abdullah for recent killings of Sikhs in Snnagar and sought a judicial probe into it so that culprit: were brought to book Shah said he was not opposed to talks with prime minister Atal Bi-hari Vajpayee on the Kashmir issue.

(KASHMIR OBSERVER, 13 February, 2001)

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
UNION TERRITORY OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR
OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL GOVT, MEDICAL COLLEGE DODA
Email: principalgmcoda@gmail.com Phone/Fax: 01996-233888

Sub Selection list of candidates under SRO-202 for the post of "Dental Technician", (Health and Medical Education Department (GMC Doda) Divisional Cadre Jammu Advertisement /item No.04/2019/021

Ref No:- Adm. Department letter No.ME/NG/New/GMC/03/2019 dated 04-02-2020

NOTICE

Whereas, the Administrative Department vide above referred letter forwarded the communication No.SSB/Secy/Sel/J/07/2020/791-97 dated 20-01-2020 of Secretary, J&K Service Selection Board, Srinagar along with selection/waiting list of candidates under SRO-202 for the post of "Dental Technician" (Health & Medical Education Department) GMC Doda, Divisional Cadre Jammu Advertisement /item No.04/2019/021 for issuance of formal appointment order subject to the production of requisite documents in original.

Now through the medium of this notice the below mentioned candidate under various categories selected vide above referred J&K Service Selection Board, Jammu communication is hereby directed to report this office along with original documents for verification within a period of seven (07) days after the issuance of this notice so that the formal appointment order may be issued in her favour.

- Date of birth certificate
- Qualification certificate
- Permanent resident certificate issued by the competent authority.
- Health certificate
- Certificate from the concerned Deputy Director, Employment and General Manager. DIC to the effect that no loan under self-employment scheme has been taken by the appointee.
- Relevant category certificate, where applicable,
- Any other documents as required under rules.

SELECTION LIST (OM CATEGORY)

S. No	NAME	FATHER-NAME	ADDRESS	DOB	CAT
1	Gurbachan Singh	Rajinder Singh	Goha, Marmat, Prabble, Doda	28-04-1997	OM/RBA
2	Sandeep Kumar	Sant Ram	Mughalmaidan Drubeel. Kishtwar	23-01-1996	OM

SELECTION LIST OF (RBA CATEGORY)

1	Ismat Waheed	Abdul Waheed Qureshi	Kaskoot Banihal, 906429. JK Bank Kaskoot Banihal Ramban	01-12-1992	RBA
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SELECTION LIST OF (SC CATEGORY)

1	Sonam Kumari	Des Raj	Ghat. Doda Near Jamia Masjid Doda.	01-05-1995	SC
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Sd/-Prof.(Br.) Tariq Parvez Azad
Principal Govt. Medical College Doda

DIPK No.7023/M

Bernie Sanders Wins In New Hampshire As Joe Biden Crashes And Burns

Agencies

Bernie Sanders won New Hampshire's high-stakes Democratic primary on Tuesday, according to US network projections, leaving rivals including party stalwart Joe Biden in his wake as he staked his claim to challenge US President Donald Trump in November.

Sanders, the flag-bearer for the party's progressive wing, had 26 percent of votes with most of the count complete in the northeastern state, where he routed Hillary Clinton in 2016.

"Let me take this opportunity



to thank the people of New Hampshire for a great victory tonight," Sanders told cheering supporters after NBC and ABC called the result in his favor.

"This victory here is the beginning of the end for Donald Trump," the senator from neighboring Vermont added as raised the roof with his rallying cry for fairer taxes and health care reform.

Indiana ex-mayor Pete Buttigieg finished in second place at 24 percent as he readied for the more

difficult battlegrounds ahead.

"Now our campaign moves on to Nevada, to South Carolina, to communities across our country. And we will welcome new allies to our movement at every step," he said.

Midwestern moderate Amy Klobuchar maintained a late surge to place third on about 20 percent, while liberal Elizabeth Warren finished in fourth at about nine percent.

Trump weighed in, tweeting: "Bootedgedge (Buttigieg) is doing pretty well tonight. Giving Crazy Bernie a run for his money. Very interesting!" Trump tweeted.

After months atop the pack, Biden had already conceded he expected to do badly in New Hampshire, as he did a week earlier in Iowa — and the former vice president's worst fears were beginning to materialise as he languished in fifth with just over eight percent.

The performance will be a body blow to the 77-year-old Biden, who has failed to generate the fundraising numbers or the enthusiasm levels of his rivals for the top spot on the Democratic ticket.

White House hopefuls had been seeking clarity in the Granite State after the first-in-the-nation Iowa count devolved into chaos, with Sanders and Buttigieg eventually emerging neck-and-neck.

For tech entrepreneur Andrew Yang and Colorado Senator Michael Bennet, that meant facing reality and bowing out after they failed to make an impact on Tuesday.

"You know I am the math guy,

Biryani Sales Surge As BJP Faces Defeat In Delhi polls



Agencies

New Delhi: Biryani sales in India's capital New Delhi soared after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) suffered a devastating loss in a key state election to the Aam Admi Party (AAP), reported The Economic Times on Tuesday.

The report credited the surge in sales to previous comments made by senior BJP leaders, including Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, about the AAP serving the dish to anti-citizenship law protesters gathered at Shaheen Bagh.

"The Kejriwal government provides biryani to the people sitting at protests at Shaheen Bagh and other places," Adityanath had said at some election rallies he had addressed

in Delhi, it added.

Earlier in the week, Amit Malviya, head of the BJP's IT cell had tweeted, "Proof of biryani being distributed at Shaheen Bagh!"

Hundreds of women have been blocking Shaheen Bagh for weeks in protest of the Indian government's Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and the National Register of Citizens (NRC). The women have inspired thousands across India to replicate their challenge to the Hindu nationalist government.

Social media platforms were flooded with posts about citizens announcing celebrations featuring the delicacy after the AAP's win. Meanwhile, restaurants scrambled to offer discounts to cash in on the moment, the publication added.



'Looking Forward': Trump Says 'Friend' Modi Told Him Millions Would Welcome Him In India

Press Trust of India

Washington: US President Donald Trump has said that he is looking forward to his visit to India later this month where millions of people would welcome him.

"I look forward to going to India," Trump told reporters in the Oval Office, a day after the White House announced that he will be travelling to Ahmedabad in Gujarat and New Delhi on February 24 and 25.

"He (Prime Minister Naren-

dra Modi) is a friend of mine. He's a great gentleman," Trump said in response to a question.

Trump said that he spoke to Modi over the weekend and during the conversation, the prime minister told him that millions and millions of people would welcome him from the airport to the cricket stadium.

Referring to his New Hampshire rally held a day earlier, which was attended by an estimated 40,000 to 50,000 people, the president said in a lighter vein

that he might not feel so good with that number.

"When we have 50,000 people, I'm not going to feel so good... we'll have five to seven million people just from the airport to the new stadium. And you know it is the largest stadium in the world. (They are) building it now. It's almost complete and it's the largest in the world," Trump said.

Responding to a question on a potential trade deal with India, Trump said that he will do it, if "we can make the right deal".

Coronavirus now has a new name — COVID-19

Agencies

New York Times : The World Health Organization has proposed an official name for the illness caused by the new coronavirus: COVID-19. The acronym stands for coronavirus disease 2019, as the illness was first detected toward the end of last year.

The director-general of the WHO, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, noted that the new name makes no reference to any of the people, places or animals associated with the coronavirus. The goal was to avoid stigma.

Under international guidelines, the WHO "had to find a name that did not refer to a geographical location, an animal, an individual or group of people, and which is also pronounceable and related to the disease," he said on Twitter.

The death toll from the coronavirus epidemic is continuing to climb, Chinese officials said Tuesday. Tedros said that 1,017 people had died from the coronavirus. Most of the deaths occurred in Hubei province.

The number of confirmed infections in China also grew, to at least 42,700 from about 40,000 a day earlier. Most of the infections are in Hubei, though the daily tally



of new cases there fell compared with previous days.

Hubei recorded 2,097 new infections Monday, compared with 2,618 a day earlier.

There are 393 COVID-19 cases abroad, in a total of 24 countries. "With 99% of cases in China, this remains very much an emergency for that country, but one that holds a very grave threat for the rest of the world," Tedros said.

Thousands were ordered into quarantine after cluster of cases linked to department store. Nearly a third of the confirmed coronavirus cases in Tianjin, a city of more than 15 million about 70 miles southeast of Beijing, have been linked to one department store,

adding to fears about rapid transmission in tightly clustered communities.

Of 102 confirmed cases in the city, at least 33 patients worked or shopped at a department store in the Baodi district, or had close contact with employees or customers, according to Tianjin health authorities. Many of them had no history of travel to Wuhan, the city where the outbreak emerged. Officials estimated that 11,700 customers had visited the shopping complex during a period in late January. Authorities said that those customers would be quarantined and that the store itself, which they did not identify, had been sealed and disinfected.

Protests Against Gas Pipeline Project Spread Across Canada

Agencies

Ottawa: Canadians have staged large-scale protests against a new natural gas pipeline across the country, leading to major transportation disruptions, building occupations, and dozens of arrests by police.

The 670-kilometer Coastal Gas Link pipeline project, opposed by indigenous Wet'suwet'en hereditary chiefs, would make it easier to export natural gas in British Columbia but its route goes through indigenous Canadian land.

Several indigenous camps have been set up to block access to pipeline construction sites in protest.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police have over the past few days intervened to enforce a court order and clear the original protest

The Canadian National Railway said it would also close "significant" parts of its network unless rail lines were cleared.

Canadian Transport Minister Marc Garneau expressed concern about the "illegal" and "significant disruption" to rail services.

"We hope this will get resolved as quickly as possible because it's having an important impact on the economy of the country," he said, adding that protesting on railway tracks could also be dangerous.

Meanwhile in Toronto, a few dozen protesters took over Crown-Indigenous Relations Minister Carolyn Bennett's constituency office, demanding that the multi-billion dollar project be scrapped.

In Ottawa, a group of protesters occupied the lobby of the Justice Department, while in Victoria,



We hope this will get resolved as quickly as possible because it's having an important impact on the economy of the country

blocking work on a construction site. That intervention has prompted more protests in solidarity with the indigenous people.

On Monday, dozens of protesters were arrested for trying to block access to the Pacific port of Vancouver.

A major rail line connecting Toronto, Ottawa, and Montreal was also shut down by protesters on Tuesday, forcing more than 20,000 passengers to cancel trips.

a number of protesters surrounded the British Columbia legislature, preventing lawmakers' access.

This is not the first time people march in Canada to protest pipeline expansion projects. In March 2018, Canadians staged a protest rally against the Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project, expressing alarm at the risk of oil spills and detrimental impacts on the local environment and wildlife.

Number of Bangladeshis killed by Indian border forces on rise



Agencies

Dhaka: At least 15 Bangladeshis were shot dead by the Indian border forces in January - one of the worst months in decades.

That is despite India's promise to stop using live ammunition.

As Al Jazeera's Bernard Smith reports, the border between the two nations is often unmarked, making it dangerously easy to cross by mistake.

NEWSMAKERS

Four survive 32 days adrift in Pacific by eating coconuts, drinking rainwater

Four people survived a month adrift in the Pacific by eating coconuts and drinking rainwater in an ordeal that claimed the lives of eight of their companions, including a baby, reports said Wednesday.

The group, from Papua New Guinea's Bougainville province, are believed to have spent 32 days at sea.

The Solomon Star News reported the group set off from Bougainville on December 22, intending to celebrate Christmas in the Carteret Islands, about 100 kilometres (62 miles) away.

But survivor Dominic Stally said their small boat capsized and a number of the group drowned.

The rest managed to right the vessel but there were further fatalities as they floated in the remote waters at the mercy of powerful ocean currents.



"We could do nothing with their dead bodies, we just have to let go of them at sea," he told the newspaper.

"A couple have died and left behind their baby and I am the one who held onto the baby and later the baby died as well."

Stally said a number of fishing vessels passed nearby without noticing them until they were finally picked up on Janu-

ary 23 off New Caledonia after drifting some 2,000 kilometres.

The Star News said the survivors comprised two men, a woman and a girl aged about 12.

They were dropped off in Honiara, the capital of the Solomon Islands, last Saturday and were discharged into the care of Papua New Guinea's High Commissioner John Balavu after receiving treatment for dehydration.

Oscars viewership plunges to all-time low

The Nielsen company said Sunday night's audience was down 20 percent from a year ago. The previous low-water mark for the Oscars was the 26.5 million people who watched in 2018.

The Academy Awards honored Parasite as best picture. While that made history as the first-ever foreign language film to win the top award, it was clearly not an audience-grabber. The Oscars were held sooner in the year than usual, and that may have prevented the show from building buzz.

"It was too predictable, too white and too boring," said Tom O'Neil, founder of Goldderby.com, a website devoted to awards show news.

The actors who took the four biggest prizes — Joaquin Phoenix, Renée Zellweger, Brad Pitt and Laura Dern — had also swept previous awards, so there were few surprises and few indelible moments, he said on Monday.



"The only suspense of the evening was for best picture, and the average viewer hadn't seen Parasite or 1917, so they weren't emotionally invested," O'Neil said.

For the second straight year, the Oscars went hostless, opening with a rousing production number from Janelle Monae and a crisp comic monologue with Steve Martin and Chris Rock. But a handful of critics felt the lack of host was a handicap this year.

Man ends up falling into frozen river following Google Maps!

Surely, at some point, we all have blamed Google Maps for leading us to dead-ends or to narrow lanes through which one cannot drive. This mishap, however, takes the cake! A man has blamed Google Maps for causing him to fall into a frozen river in Mississippi.

It can be a very useful app once installed into your iPhone or Android phone and allows you to choose routes depending on whether you are walking, driving or taking public transport to the destination. But, the application that celebrated its 15th anniversary, does tend to mislead by often choosing routes that don't exist.

The incident that took place at around 3.00 am caused the man mild hypothermia. The incident took place near the Stone Arch Bridge and according to fire department said that the app most likely told him to use the nearby bridge that's pictured in the Street View image.

The man who claims that the app asked him to cross the river on foot, was half-submerged in water before authorities could rescue him. Apps that show routes, including Google, these days do have warnings for things like natural disasters, roadblocks and tries to notify the user if a bridge collapses.

Deoband Is "Gangotri" Of Terrorism: Giriraj Singh



SAHARANPUR :- Union minister Giriraj Singh has once again triggered controversy by claiming that Islamic seminary Deoband in Saharanpur is a factory producing terrorists.

He has termed it as "aatankvaad ki Gangotri".

Talking to the media persons in Saharanpur on Tuesday, he said that Deoband produces terrorists like Hafiz Saeed.

"I had once said earlier that Deoband is the Gangotri of terrorists. All most wanted terrorists of the world came from Deoband, including Hafiz Saeed or any of the others," said Giriraj Singh.

"These people are not against CAA, they are against India. This is a kind of a Khilafat movement," said Giriraj Singh while attacking the ongoing anti-CAA

protests in Deoband.

Deoband has seen fierce anti-CAA protests by Muslim women over the past months and has faced attack from BJP leaders.

Giriraj Singh had earlier alleged that "suicide bombers" are being raised in Shaheen Bagh.

Referring to a video, in which a few children are purportedly making some objectionable comments against Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Giriraj Singh said poison is being drilled into the minds of kids.

"This Shaheen Bagh protest is no longer an agitation. A group of suicide bombers is being raised here and conspiracy against the country is being hatched in its capital," he claimed.

Singh had made a similar statement in December too.



Kejriwal To Take Oath As Delhi CM At Ramlila Maidan On Feb 16

NEW DELHI:- Arvind Kejriwal, who led the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) to a stupendous victory yet again in Assembly poll, will take oath as the Delhi Chief Minister for the third straight time on February 16.

The oath ceremony will be held at Delhi's Ramlila Maidan on Sunday, sources have said.

According to the final figures released by the Election Commission, the AAP won in 62 of the 70 seats with a total vote share of 53.57 per cent. The BJP emerged victorious in the remaining eight seats, getting 38.51 per cent of the total votes. The Congress could not even manage a single seat and ended with 4.26 per cent vote share.

The AAP's stupendous victory comes nearly eight months after it suffered a severe drubbing in the Lok Sabha polls in which

the party drew a blank while the BJP won all the seven seats.

The victory also assumes significance as it came in the face of BJP's no holds barred attack against protesters opposing the Citizenship (Amendment) Act as "supporters of Pakistan" during the bitterly-fought campaign. "Dilliwalon, ghazab kar diya aapne (Delhiites, you have done the impossible). I love you," Kejriwal, flanked by his wife, daughter and senior party leaders, said in a brief thank you address at the party's headquarters here.

"It is the beginning of new kind of politics today. This is very auspicious message for the country and the politics of work can only take our country to the 21st century," he added.

"It is a victory for Bharat Mata (mother India)," he said

as a large number of supporters cheered him.

Later, he visited the famous Hanuman temple near Connaught Place along with his family and Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia.

Modi congratulated Kejriwal for his party's win and wished him "the very best" in fulfilling the aspirations of the people. "Congratulations to AAP and shri Arvind Kejriwal ji for the victory in the Delhi assembly elections. Wishing them the very best in fulfilling the aspirations of the people of Delhi," the prime minister tweeted.

Opposition leaders also hailed AAP's landslide win as a defeat of the politics of polarisation and hate and a victory of inclusive politics, saying "winds of change" are blowing in the country.

Court Grants Bail To 1 Arrested For Dec 15 Anti-CAA Protests



NEW DELHI: A Delhi court has granted bail to one person who was arrested in connection with protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act near Jamia Millia Islamia University here on December 15 last year.

Additional Sessions Judge Gulshan Kumar granted the relief to Mohd Haneef on furnishing a bail bond of Rs 20,000.

During the hearing, police opposed the bail plea and said allegations against Haneef were serious in nature, and the investigation was at its initial stage.

Police claimed that he was part of the mob which had allegedly turned violent during protests against the CAA in south Delhi's Jamia Nagar on December 15, 2019.

They alleged that Haneef was involved in burning of police booths, pelting stones and hurling petrol bombs at the police personnel wherein several of them were injured.

Khalil A Ansari, appearing for the accused, said Haneef has been in judicial custody since December 17 last year, and no useful purpose was going to serve by keeping him behind the bars for any longer period.

Ansari said Haneef was falsely

implicated in the case and had nothing to do with the commission of the alleged offence.

He was at his work place at the time of the incident and was arrested from his residence, the counsel said.

The lawyer said the Delhi High Court on February 3 granted bail to co-accused Danish in the case and Haneef should also be released on bail on the ground of parity.

The court had earlier sent 10 arrested people -- Haneef, Danish alias Jafar, Sameer Ahmed, Dilshad, Shareef Ahmed, Mohd Danish, Yunus Khan, Jumman, Anal Hassan, Anwar Kala -- to judicial custody.

Police had said that some locals, instigated by politicians, participated in the violent protests at JMI and damaged property.

The FIR in the case also named seven others, including local politicians and student leaders of JMI university, in the case but they have not been arrested yet.

The university had virtually turned into a battlefield on December 15 as police entered the campus and also used force following the protest that led to violence and arson in which four DTC buses, 100 private vehicles and 10 police bikes were damaged.

Delhi Rejected Politics Of Hate, Says Okhla MLA

New Delhi:- Blaming the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) for spreading only hate, Amantullah Khan, newly elected Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) legislator, said here on Wednesday, two crore people of Delhi had given electric shock to Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

Speaking to IANS, a day after winning the Okhla seat with a margin of over 71,000 votes -- the second largest winning margin in this polls -- he said the people rejected the politics of hate.

"I want to thank the people of my constituency for their love and support. The voters have proved that they wanted leaders to talk about issues concerning the people and not religions or playing the politics of hate. People have preferred politics of work over politics of hate," Khan said.

Stating that the BJP could have bagged more seat if it had told people the work they wanted to do after polls, Khan said the hate had lost and the development had won. "People voted for the AAP as they trusted Arvind Kejriwal," he said.

Rejecting the claims that he won because of religious factor, Khan said, "People voted me for my work." On his big margin victory, he said the people reposed faith in him because of the work done by him for the



several years.

The BJP had launched a vitriolic attack on the AAP and Khan saying they were supporting and instigating Muslims in and around Shaheen Bagh.

Taking a jibe at Shah who had said during the campaign that people should press the EVM button so hard that "the current is felt in Shaheen Bagh," Khan said the people have given their reply.

However, the Okhla MLA said the BJP should look into the Shaheen Bagh issue. "As an MLA, I would like to say that

Shah should go to Shaheen Bagh. He should talk to people, ask them about the issue.

"People are sitting there for the past two months. It's not a short time. It's time to resolve the issue."

Stating that Shah is the Home Minister of India and the issue is related to the central government, Khan said, "If Shah himself can't go to the protest site, he should send someone."

People, particularly women and children, are staging sit-in at Shaheen Bagh since December 15.

Ram Mandir Construction May Not Start From Apr 2: Report



NEW DELHI:- The Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Tirath Trust is yet to decide on the date of construction of the grand Ram Temple in Ayodhya. There is doubt about its commencement from April 2.

"There are many hurdles in deciding the date and the Trust is working to resolve all those issues first," a source clarified. The Trust will discuss the matter during its first meeting.

The Trust sources said that there will be 15 to 20 lakh people in Ayodhya on the occasion of Ramnavami. It will be difficult to start the process of temple construction on that day as it will be a big challenge for the administration to control the crowd and check it from going towards the Ram Janmabhoomi site.

So the Trust will consider another date.

Sources in the Trust say it will take a lot of time to level the 67 acres of land, equalise the excavation done by the Archaeological Survey, fill the pit, prepare the layout.

Sources have also said that no one has been allowed to visit the Ramlalla temple complex for the past 30 years. So no one knows what is the situation there. Without taking stock of it, it is not possible to set any date.

Also, due to security reasons, the construction of the temple cannot be started immediately because it is not possible to do anything there without the per-

mission of the security agencies.

Before starting the construction work, Ramlalla must be placed at some other place and for this also, permission has to be taken from the security agencies, this will also take some time.

All these issues will be discussed in the Trust's meeting. Also, all the initial work is related to the architects and engineers. Without their suggestions it will be difficult to decide the date of construction of the temple.

The Trust will decide on basic infrastructure in its first meeting, the source said. The Trust will also consider the matter of completing the legal process of land and ownership, obtaining documents and taking over the system there.

Only then will the Trust proceed with the help of architects and technical people. Sources say that the selection of the remaining two members of the Trust will also be discussed.

Sources said that it is difficult to include Mahant Nirritya Gopal Das and Vishwa Hindu Parishad Vice-President Champat Rai in the Trust due to legal hurdles.

Significantly, both are on trial in the Babri Masjid demolition case. The Modi government does not want any one to raise finger on the Trust or any legal difficulties. In such a situation, Rai and Das can be included in the committees of temple construction.

Patiala House Court Favouring Convicts: Nirbhaya Parents



Nirbhaya's parents on Wednesday hit out at the Patiala House Court, saying the court did not want to issue death warrant again for the convict in their daughter's gang rape and murder case.

Speaking to media, Nirbhaya's mother Asha Devi said: "This Patiala House Court is not in a mood to issue death warrant again. The court is favouring the convicts."

"The father of the convict came to the court after seven years today and pleaded before the court. The honourable judge got merciful at him and death warrant is not issued. I am the mother of the victim. I am also

pleading the court for justice. Then why the court is not listening to me," she asked.

She further said: "I urge the Supreme Court to issue the death warrant as the Patiala House Court is not going to issue the death warrant again."

Nirbhaya's father Badrinath Singh said: "First of all, I think that honourable judge is supporting the convicts. They could have issued a death warrant. This shows the judge is affectionate towards convicts."

"If they can call for providing lawyers to the convicts, then they could have also given a death warrant for a period of 14 days," he added.

NEWS MAKERS

Andhra Man Hangs Self Over Fear Of Contracting Coronavirus

TIRUPATI:- Fearing he could be infected with coronavirus, a 50-year-old man in Andhra Pradesh's Chittoor district committed suicide, his family members said.

K. Balakrishna, who had flu-like symptoms, suspected that he was infected with the deadly virus. Fearing that he could spread the infection to his family and other people, he ended his life by hanging.

The incident took place Tuesday in Seshamnaidu Kandriga village near temple town of Srikalahasti.

According to his family members, he left the house in the early hours of the day and was later found hanging from a tree near his mother's grave on the

village outskirts.

Balakrishna, an agriculturist, used to watch videos about coronavirus on internet and was also behaving in a weird manner with the family members by warning them against coming close to him.

It was on February 1 that Balakrishna complained of cold and fever. Four days later, he went to a hospital in Tirupati, where was diagnosed with viral infection. The doctors advised him to wear mask. Two days later he returned home and as there was no relief from cold, cough and fever, he started suspecting that he had coronavirus.

The man had learnt about the deadly virus through media. He confined him-

self to a room and warned his wife and children not to come closer to him. Family members and others tried to convince him that he had no coronavirus but in vain. He started to throw stones and other articles at the family members to keep them away from him.

Balakrishna's son Balamurali said he was watching videos about coronavirus on the mobile. In the early hours of Tuesday, he left the house and bolted the door from outside. When the family members woke up, they did not find him and started searching for him. He was later found hanging on the village outskirts.

Police said they have not registered any case as the family did not lodge any complaint.

Bhim Army Chief Calls For Feb 23 Shut Down Against Sc Verdict

NEW DELHI:- Bhim Army Chief Chandrashekhar Azad on Wednesday called for a Bharat Bandh on February 23 against the Supreme Court's verdict on reservation in promotions.

Azad asked leaders from the OBC to SC-ST and minority groups to participate in the shut down. He also warned that if the MPs and MLAs of the backward and Dalit classes did not support the call, there would be a demonstration in front of their houses.

The Bhim Army has also demanded reservation in jobs and promotions in the private sector.

At a press conference at the Press Club of India here, Dalit leader Chandrashekhar said that the BJP government at the Centre is trying to end the reservations. Now, "save the reservation, save the constitution" and "remove the CAA, NRC, NPR, save the constitution" movements will be launched.

He said: "On February 17, people from Dalit and backward organisations will march from Mandi House to Parliament. If the central government does not reverse the decision on reservations of the Supreme Court by bringing an ordinance, then India will be closed on February 23. This will be the same kind of demonstration as was done against the earlier decision regarding the SC-ST Act".

Chandrashekhar, while advocating reservations in promotions, said that people from these castes join the IPS through reservations but they have to toil hard for promotions to become an IG or DIG because their confidential report gets marked with a red pen.

The Supreme Court while hearing a case related to Uttarakhand had said that reservation or quota is not a fundamental right in promotions.

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K O V I E W

Economy In Dire Straits

Kashmir economy is battling multiple headwinds triggered by withdrawal of Article 370 in August last. The first to be hit is the tourism sector. Valley has not only been evacuated of all the tourists but the fresh arrivals also are drastically down. The image of the Valley as a deeply troubled place has stuck so much that few holiday-makers think of visiting. That too, during a winter when the Valley has received snowfall in abundance. And which should normally have been a bone for tourism.

Second, the communication clampdown that was enforced to purportedly maintain peace too has impacted the businesses hard, especially the IT sector which almost stopped functioning altogether during the five months after August 5 move. Though the Information Technology industry got some relief after the internet lease lines were restored for this sector but the overall situation of trade in Kashmir continues to be dismal. Third, the lingering shutdown in the Valley against New Delhi's move that continued almost for four months also set back the shopkeepers and public transport. Fourth, Kashmir's famed handicraft sector was left reeling and staring at an estimated 50,000-60,000 job cuts. The artisans did not get any fresh orders in the absence of communication facilities. As a result, even, the highly skilled artisans have been forced to look for odd jobs to meet their daily needs. The total loss to economy so far, could be in the range of around Rs fifteen to twenty thousand crore, according to the estimate by trading organizations.

Similarly, according to estimates, the hotel and restaurant industry has seen more than 30,000 people losing their jobs. The e-commerce sector, which includes courier services for purchases made online, has also seen 10,000 people losing their jobs. This paints a picture of a completely wrecked economy.

Winter saw a significant amount of commercial activity disappear. So, people in Kashmir are naturally upset with New Delhi for revoking Article 370 in the middle of a peak business season in summer. The prevailing despair has been heightened by the receding hope of an improvement in the situation in near future. Already people are uncertain about the upcoming spring and summer when while economic activity picks up in the Valley, the political activity does too. If the past fifteen years are any guide, all mass unrests in Kashmir have been triggered in warm season. Though the Valley has mercifully been uneasily calm over the past six months, it hardly offers guarantee of peace for the upcoming months. Here is hoping that the peace holds enabling the economy to get back on track.

O T H E R O P I N O N

A bizarre case

The grounds on which the government has invoked the draconian Public Safety Act against former chief ministers Omar Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti read like a fake WhatsApp forward. But the Union Home Ministry, no less, has peddled this misinformation to keep the two politicians in extended detention, raising serious questions about the bona fides of decisions taken by those in charge of the country's internal security.

The material on which the two chief ministers have been charged is essentially based on statements made on and off social media, and actions taken by the two former chief ministers, plucked out of context, and presented as proof of their separatist credentials.

For instance, Abdullah's ability "to convince his electorate to vote in huge numbers" is being held against him, for the purported reason that it shows he "enjoys the support of gullible masses". Leave aside the evident contempt for people who elect politicians to power, the government seems to forget that it was the National Conference and the PDP that provided credibility to India's decision, from 1996 onward, to demonstrate to the world that it could hold elections in J&K, even those that were flawed, as a snub to separatism and the designs of Pakistan.

The case against Mufti is as, if not even more, absurd, embellished with comparisons to a medieval queen for "her dangerous and insidious machinations and usurping profile and nature". Mufti's tweets and statements, conveying to the BJP, her then willing partner in the ruling coalition, that India would be left with no friends in Kashmir if Articles 370 and 35A were revoked, have also been twisted and taken out of their political context.

It increasingly appears that the government has no plan for Kashmir that can be democratically or transparently implemented, and that it is counting on "national security", or purported threats to it, to justify all actions. The J&K High Court has as good as abdicated its role by declaring last week it was "not a proper forum to scrutinise the merits of administrative decision to detain a person". With this, the court, which even earlier quashed PSA cases only on procedural grounds, has effectively removed itself as the main remedy.

Abdullah's sister has petitioned the Supreme Court on the PSA cases against the former chief minister, but the court's track record does not offer confidence. Pleas against a peaceful protest in Delhi on the grounds of traffic problems get a quicker hearing than habeas corpus petitions and those relating to Article 370. Five months after a petitioner from J&K approached the court, the bench went so far as to acknowledge fundamental rights violations in Kashmir, but puzzlingly did not strike down as illegal the actions causing those violations. The government must urgently release all those in custody in J&K, restore the Internet, and put its actions to an accountable, political test in Kashmir. Anything less will only set a troubling precedent for the entire country.

The Indian Express

What Does Delhi
Verdict Mean For India

SOUTIK BISWAS

In the early days of the campaign, BJP tried to puncture Kejriwal's claims of good governance without success. It then embarked on a coarse and polarising campaign around a controversial new citizenship law, the stripping of Kashmir's autonomy and building a grand new Hindu temple. Party leaders freely indulged in hate speech and were censured by poll authorities: a junior minister actually egged on a campaign meeting to shout slogans about "gunning down traitors", a not-so veiled reference to political rivals. BJP possibly felt this would work.

Arvind Kejriwal's Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has swept back to power for a third term in a row in India's capital Delhi. But it would be misleading to read this verdict as a vote against Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Here's why.

Rather than being seen as a vote against the BJP, Mr Kejriwal's comfortable win owes more to the triumph of welfarism and effective governance - revamping state-run schools and health clinics, and providing cheap water and electricity.

The BJP has been out of power in Delhi for more than two decades, and it was up against a party which had delivered on its promises. In the early days of the campaign, it tried to puncture Mr Kejriwal's claims of good governance without success. Mr Modi's party then embarked on a coarse and polarising campaign around a controversial new citizenship law, the stripping of Kashmir's autonomy and building a grand new Hindu temple. Party leaders freely indulged in hate speech and were censured by poll authorities: a junior minister actually egged on a campaign meeting to shout slogans about "gunning down traitors", a not-so veiled reference to political rivals.

Mr Modi's party possibly felt this would work. At the very least, the take-no-prisoners campaign would prevent a debacle in Delhi - like in 2015, when the BJP won just three seats. After all, a similar hardline campaign had helped the BJP sweep all seven Delhi seats in last year's general election, and pick up more than half of the popular vote.

But that didn't work this time.

So, was the verdict a rejection of the BJP's polarising politics? The answer is perhaps more nuanced. There's ample evidence to show that fervent supporters of Mr Modi and his policies can vote for a different party in their state if they feel that party has improved their lives.

A pre-election survey by the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), a respected Delhi-based think tank, also found that roughly 70% of the city respondents support Mr Modi's controversial citizenship law and oppose the protests against the law. One of the protests - by women in Shaheen Bagh, a Muslim-dominated neighbourhood in Delhi - was especially targeted by the BJP's campaign, which sought to show



the protesters as "traitors". Before the general elections in 2019, when the BJP trounced Mr Kejriwal's party in Delhi, a large number of supporters who voted for Mr Modi said they preferred Mr Kejriwal as the chief minister and might vote for the AAP in the Delhi polls.

"In Delhi, people have approved of the work done by Mr Kejriwal's government. It has nothing to do with [the] citizenship law or the countrywide protests against it or policies of the BJP," political scientist Sanjay Kumar of the CSDS told me. "This is really not indicative of a national mood against Mr Modi and the BJP."

Also, research by political scientists Rahul Verma and Pranav Gupta shows that when it comes to Delhi, the BJP has always gained impressively in general elections - 46% of the popular vote in 2014 and 56% of the vote in 2019. But it then slid back to its "core base" - some 32% of the vote - in state elections. The fact that the once-dominant Congress party has been eclipsed might also have helped Mr Kejriwal's party grow.

Put simply, what is happening in India today is that voters are making a distinction between state and federal elections. Barely six months after sweeping the general elections in the eastern state of Jharkhand last year, the BJP lost the state elections, with its vote share dropping by more than 17%.

The party faced a similar predicament in Haryana and Maharashtra states, where it failed to repeat its performance in the general election, cobbling together a government in Haryana, but failing to form one in Maharashtra. Clearly, even discerning supporters of the BJP, according to political scientist Suhas Palshikar, are "willing to switch to state parties during

state elections". Yogendra Yadav of Swaraj Abhiyan, calls it "ticket splitting" - a sign, he says, of "voters' sophistication". State battles, he adds, are "not [a] substitute for taking on the Modi regime at the level of national politics".

It's also becoming increasingly clear that Mr Modi's BJP and its belligerent politics can be countered in India's states. But in order to do so, popular local governments need a credible leader who seeks votes on governance, and not by countering BJP's Hindu nationalist plank. In other words, opposition parties have begun to fear - some of the fear is possibly imagined - that fighting the BJP on its pro-Hindu agenda could invite a backlash from the majority community. In Delhi, Mr Kejriwal astutely stood his ground on his record in government and refused to engage with the BJP's ideological campaign. He even refrained from attacking Mr Modi personally.

Will the Delhi election have a larger impact and hurt the BJP's prospects?

There is no clear evidence yet. Many believe the BJP's "single-track" muscular nationalist campaign is creating a climate of anxiety, insecurity and exhaustion at a time when India is actually a secure nation. They say this brand of stridently nationalist politics draws attention away from the serious economic slowdown in the country. But what's clear is that Mr Modi remains India's most popular leader and his base is still largely intact.

What Mr Kejriwal's victory does is offer a breather to a largely divided and demoralised opposition - and it proves that good governance wins votes.

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BBC NEWS

How Do Doctors' Biases
Affect Your Health Care?

DR HASAN ABBASDR HASAN ABBAS

While playing basketball, Damon Tweedy injured his knees. When the swelling didn't go down, he went to an urgent care clinic for treatment. It was his day off, and he was dressed in a T-shirt and sweatpants.

"The doctor never looked at me," he remembered. "He just had me stand up, looked at my knees and then said, You'll be OK. Take it easy."

He never even asked what kind of job he had. His job could be strenuous; making him prone to serious injuries. In a way, the information about his profession was important, as Damon Tweedy was a doctor himself! Everything changed when Tweedy made it clear to the doctor who was treating him. The doctor made eye contact and started asking him questions. He even took Tweedy to get an X-ray.

"So it was an example of two different levels of care. I was two different persons. The first time, I was Damon Tweedy, a random black guy, not to be taken seriously. In the second case I was Damon Tweedy, M.D., and worthy of the same care as anyone else," he said.

Tweedy told his story at the Decatur Book Festival in Georgia in September and has written a book that is part memoir and part discussion of bias in medicine called "Black Man in a White Coat."

The medical profession aspires for equal treatment of all patients irrespective of race, gender or other biases and disparities in health care

The medical profession aspires for equal treatment of all patients irrespective of race, gender or other biases and disparities in health care. We are all susceptible to biases, including physicians. But nobody likes to be labelled as biased. Once people

acquire a bias, it becomes very hard to dislodge it. Instead of changing them, most people will make a lot of effort to preserve their bias; often dismissing discomforting evidence.

With explicit or overt bias, individuals are aware of their biases and attitudes towards a certain person or a group. The person is very clear about his or her feelings and attitudes, and related behaviours are conducted with intent. This type of bias is processed neurologically at a conscious level. It is less common, but it is easy to overcome with logic and reasoning. Explicit bias can be expressed through physical and verbal harassment or more subtle means like exclusion. Overt racism and racist comments are examples of explicit biases.

Implicit biases are processed at the subconscious level, so the holder is unaware of their existence, even when they are contrary to one's conscious or espoused beliefs. Research suggests that the amygdala (considered the "emotional" centre of the brain) and the prefrontal cortex are involved in unconscious bias. A doctor may claim not to be biased towards a certain group, but his actions indicate that he is acting against his declared beliefs. For example, few physicians espouse racially discriminatory views, yet they tend to recommend less pain medication for black patients than for white patients with an identical injury.

A doctor's implicit bias may be conveyed by his body language. He is less likely to touch sympathetically

and stand close to his patient. His vocal tone, posture, and facial and body movements also reveal his bias. The use of favourable body language is a significant tool for establishing provider-patient trust and rapport. According to an article in the US News and World Report, doctors were asked to give the news to critically ill patients, who were portrayed by both black and white actors. While most doctors said the same words to each "patient," their body language differed depending on the patient's race. The use of negative stereotypes may lead to missed diagnoses, trust deficit, and delay in seeking curative and preventive treatment, such as flu shot. At the beginning of the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) epidemic, the high prevalence of HIV among gay men led to initial beliefs that the disease could not be transmitted beyond the gay community.

This association hampered the recognition of the disease in women, children, heterosexual men, and blood donor recipients.

Studies have demonstrated implicit bias against racial groups, genders, and other marginalized groups. Research suggests that implicit bias may contribute to healthcare disparities by shaping physician behaviour and producing differences in medical treatment along the lines of race, ethnicity, gender or other characteristics. Implicit bias can interfere with clinical assessment, decision-making, and provider-patient relationships such that the health goals that

the provider and patient are seeking are compromised. Disparities in healthcare may lead to increased morbidity and mortality.

In Pakistan, studies have not been conducted to determine the effects of doctor's biases in healthcare. Research is needed to understand the impact of biases in health care and to what degree these biases affect treatment choices and patient outcomes. However, it has been observed that the paying capacity of the patient, his education, language, race, and social class can influence the way a doctor prescribes treatment. Poor and illiterate patients, who generally visit public-sector hospitals, suffer the most, as, if they require stents, their names are placed on the waiting list.

Overcoming bias

Implicit bias in healthcare can be reduced if doctors are made aware of the biases they hold. Once recognised, it becomes easier to overcome them. The study by Green and associates provides an example of how simply increasing physicians' awareness of their susceptibility to implicit bias changes behaviour. Sharing interests and activities, and spending time with members of a group also can reduce unconscious negative bias towards that particular group. Instead of stereotyping their patients, the doctors should be trained to individualize them. The doctors should have a basic understanding of the cultures from which their patients come. To make them aware of the effects of bias in healthcare, the subject of bias may be included in the curriculum of medical colleges. Doctors may be encouraged to attend online courses designed to teach strategies to reduce implicit biases or at least the impact of such biases.

Daily Times

Indiscriminate Riverbed Mining Destroying Rivers In Jhelum Basin

VAQAR ZAKARIA

Is it possible to find a way out of this mess? Interestingly, it turns out that even with all our greed we use only a small part of the sand, gravel, and boulders that flow down our rivers, less than a fifth as reported in the Environmental Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) of Gulpur Hydropower Project located on Poonch river.

One are the days when a poor man would go down to the river with donkeys to load sand and gravel and then sell it by the roadside to feed his family.

The game is now of investment, political influence, permits, and destruction of riverbeds on a scale that has never been seen before.

River systems comprise not just the water flowing in it, but also the sediment, the silt, sand, gravel, cobbles, and boulders that flow with the river and are deposited along the river bed and banks.

Moving the sediments, the rivers maintain diversity of habitats upon which the river's living organisms depend.

Aquatic insects and algae that are the main sources of food for the fish breed and live in cobbles; the cobbles and boulders provide refuge for fish in winters and in floods and protect the young and smaller fish from predators.

Fish lay eggs on gravel beds and side channels in rivers formed by deposit of sediments in floods.

Ecosystems of rivers in the Jhelum basin are typical of the Himalayan river systems in which the sediments support life in the river, and livelihoods of people in floodplains and deltas downstream that rely on ecosystem services provided by the rivers.

The importance of sediments is such that the Indus Waters Treaty gives explicit recognition to the right of downstream riparian population to the sediments, just as it does for the water.

The trapping and release of sediments is regulated under the treaty, and has been a subject of frequent discussions and arbitration under the treaty.

Jhelum and its tributaries are rich in aquatic fauna. Take the example of the Kashmir catfish (Glyptothorax kashmirensis), which is very selective about where it lives and breeds, and requires just the right size of gravel for its home.

This fish is now on its way to extinction. Other species will follow. Like the already endangered mahaseer and a number of endemic species such as the Kashmir hill-stream loach, and long distance migratory species such as the vulnerable snow trout.

And whatever is left will be wiped out by the sewage and solid waste thrown into the rivers, turning them into sewers as cities grow.

Construction in the Jhelum basin – both in India and in Pakistan – has already irreversibly altered the flow and sediment regimes in the rivers.

As if this were not enough, the ongoing construction boom is being fed by indiscriminate mining of sand, gravel, and boulders from riverbeds, which are the cheapest source of construction materials for cities and villages along the rivers.

Mining in the river bed using heavy machinery is lucrative business, but think of the damage it causes.

Quite apart from destroying the river's ecosystem, stone crushing machines that proliferate on the banks spread fine dust all around. Incidences of lung diseases in the communities living nearby is on the rise.

The residents frequently complain of sleepless nights due to the noise from the vehicles and machines



Quite apart from destroying the river's ecosystem, stone crushing machines that proliferate on the banks spread fine dust all around. Incidences of lung diseases in the communities living nearby is on the rise.

that operate non-stop.

Complaints to environmental protection agencies, local authorities, and public interest litigation is of little use.

With loads of cash to spare, the contractors are able to buy their way through.

A way out

Is it possible to find a way out of this mess? Interestingly, it turns out that even with all our greed we use only a small part of the sand, gravel, and boulders that flow down our rivers, less than a fifth as reported in the Environmental Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) of Gulpur Hydropower Project located on Poonch river.

By scientifically planning and managing the mining operations, it is indeed possible to meet the needs of the communities and minimise the damage to aquatic habitats.

To make this work, however, requires a coordinated effort of the sediment experts, the geomorphologists, ecologists, hydrologists, mining regulators, and the mining community.

One such initiative now underway is preparation of a sediment mining plan for the Poonch river in Pakistan-administered Kashmir, where local and international experts will join to find solutions within the framework of sustainable development.

The effort will be based on a range of scientific studies and consultation with the stakeholders.

The expected outcome is a licensing and regulatory system which will be community-based, cognisant of local livelihoods, setting the limits on how much sand, gravel, and boulders can be extracted from which part of the river at what time of the year.

Part of the revenues generated from licensing will be retained by the local communities to manage the system, while the rest may be used for protecting the river ecosystems.

While this may sound like a pipedream, it is just possible that the initiative will provide an example of how to respect and live with our rivers. It may even become a model that others can follow.

The Thirdpole

Laugh, Play, Forgive To Help Your Children Become Wiser

BLAKE GRIFFIN EDWARDS



Show individualised affection

Affections are active ways that we show we care. In fact, they are an integral part of the way we literally provide care. Dr Gary Chapman has written about five ways that we show our love for one another: words of affirmation, acts of service, giving gifts, quality time, and physical touch. An affectionate parent nurtures the best inside their children to grow outward through providing affection in a variety of ways.

Offer genuine forgiveness

Forgiveness is about choosing peace in spite of a transgression. If we do not become a forgiving parent, we paralyse the depth of our bond as well as the effectiveness of our influence. We allow enduring stalemates that cycle into conflict, distance, resentments, and spite. We can actively demonstrate what forgiveness is for our children (and ourselves) when, inevitably, they frustrate or upset us.

Every parenting investment can result, for our kids, in more realistic and constructive thoughts, increased confidence, a more rich and resilient emo-

tional life, healthier social decision-making, better habits, less destructive problem behaviours, and a more positive and meaningful tone in family relationships.

Take courage to change what you can and receive peace to accept what we cannot

In the '30s and '40s, the American theologian Reinhold Niebuhr frequently recited a prayer that eventually integrated into our cultural consciousness as The Serenity Prayer. An early version printed in 1937 read, "Father, give us courage to change what must be altered, serenity to accept what cannot be helped, and the insight to know the one from the other."

As a sometimes stubborn, reactive father, I must learn to sit calmly within the anxiety of my own inclinations. As I do, I hear this prayer echo in the silence of my own frustration, shame, insecurity. I confess pride and reflex. As I do, I gain perspective. I am becoming a husband and a father. Becoming.

Yet I grieve over what I can't control. Economic storms and uncertainty. My children's emotions and reactions. The twists and turns of life. I find myself again and again wrestling with a compulsion to control on the outside what I have not yet mastered on the inside. As I come to understand the breadth and depth of that which I cannot change, I do change. I learn (again and again) that good parenting is not about gaining control of my children but growing wisdom as I parent.

-Psychology Today

When problems arise, we experience anxiety at work within us. For many parents, the immediate reflex toward problem behaviour is to rein it in by setting limits. Skillful parenting requires exerting appropriate control while simultaneously acting in loving ways that instil courage in our children to act in spite of their own anxieties and impulses. Here are some aspects of good parenting to consider

In families, nearly invisible forces stir thought, emotion, and behaviour into patterns. A sputtering flow of anxiety through years of conditioning sets in motion styles or ways in which we will tend to manage stress in life and relationships for years to come.

This chronic anxiety is passed along from generation to generation. We see its mark, among other places, in the ways that we parent, especially in the most difficult moments and trying times.

Developing awareness of our own anxieties and impulses allows us to grow beyond them, our beliefs and behaviour to become differentiated from them. As a parent, I find myself occasionally stuck in ruts of anxiety and impulse, becoming unduly controlling or simply reacting in ways that are unhelpful. Acknowledging the ways that we find ourselves acting at the whim of our own anxiety is fundamental to good parenting. Of course, that's not all.

There are two fundamental drives present throughout our lifespan: attachment and autonomy. As parents, we have a responsibility in relationship with our children to nurture safe and comfortable closeness (attachment) as well as safe and comfortable distance (autonomy) through our parenting behaviour.

When problems arise, we experience anxiety at work within us. For many parents, the immediate reflex toward problem behaviour is to rein it in by setting limits. Skillful parenting requires exerting appropriate control while simultaneously acting in loving ways that instil courage in our children to act in spite of their own anxieties and impulses. Here are some aspects of good parenting to consider:

Nurture attachment and nurture autonomy

When reactive emotion and impulsive behaviour define our parenting, destructive interactions may stunt our children's development of critical self-soothing skills. Knee-jerk parenting behaviours sabotage what may be good intentions to transfer values and vitality. Instead, we may simply transfer more-of-the-same cycles of conflict and distance.

Good parenting requires sufficient mindfulness during moments of stress and embattlement to act in spite of anxiety and impulse rather than at their whim. Our parenting behaviour should stir confidence, connection, and character. We should nurture both attachment (closeness and belonging) and autonomy (independence and significance).

Be emotionally responsive

The Harvard Family Research Project defined responsive parenting as "the use of warm and accepting behaviours to respond to children's needs and signals" and found this type of parenting critical to a child's development.



A DESKTOP PLANT Can Be A Workplace STRESSBUSTER

Agencies

Does office work make you feel anxious and burnt out? Do the fast-approaching deadlines and boss meetings strike terror in your heart and set your pulse shooting up through the roof? Surprisingly, a potted plant placed right by your desk might help to remedy your daily sufferings, at least to some extent.

According to CNN Health, a group of researchers from Japan carried out an experiment to study the stress-relieving effects that plants can potentially have on employees at a busy workplace. The experts conducted their study on the employees of a

Japanese electric company to figure out the variations in their stress levels, before and after a 3-minute long involvement with a plant.

The study which got published in the journal HortTechnology revealed a slight drop in the anxiety score of employees with anxiety and a considerable drop in the resting heart rates of the other 27 percent.

The previous research on this subject was mostly carried out in controlled settings involving indirect plant interaction.

This study is unique in the sense that it not only analysed the stress-busting effects of gazing at a plant in actual office environment, but also the effects emanating from actively

taking care of the plants.

A positive trend was observed in the mental well-being of the employees when they were encouraged to take "nature breaks" lasting for three minutes, told Dr. Masahiro Toyoda, lead author of the study and professor at the University of Hyogo, told CNN Health.

According to Dr. Charles Hall, Ellison Chair of International Floriculture at Texas A&M University this research is the "latest of those that continue to point out that plants are beneficial to humans."

He further added that "it's something we inherently knew but has suddenly been quantified. And so now, we're seeing the numbers behind the reasoning."

The methodology of this experiment involved the use of State-Trait Anxiety Inventory index (STAI) and heart rate measurements of the employees, both in the morning and night.

The first week of the study was the control phase during which the workers measured their pulse rates by hand at the time when they felt stressed and then once again after staring for three minutes at the computer screen instead of a plant.

Before the commencement of the control phase, the workers were taught about how to care for a plant and were asked to choose their favourite one.

During the following two weeks, the subjects first measured their pulse under stressful conditions but

the second reading was taken after gazing for three minutes at the plant kept on their desk.

A slight drop in STAI scores was observed during the two weeks, however, a drop in pulse rate was quite apparent in more than one-fourth of the workers.

A drop in resting heart rate indicates the suppression of the body's fight or flight mechanism that sets in when an individual is faced with a stressful situation.

The researchers pointed to a few reasons that might have contributed to the aforementioned outcomes.

From the point of view of the attention restoration theory, a positive correlation is seen between concentration levels and looking at nature.

Furthermore, the affection involved in caring for the plant might have also played an instrumental role.

However, it was noted that this approach didn't suit everyone and in some cases, led to a further increase in anxiety.

Hall explained to CNN Health: "I think the anxiety among those in the study where their anxiety increased, it was because of that particular phenomenon that all of a sudden they're responsible for taking care of a plant and then all of a sudden the plant's not doing well and they have some anxieties from that."

While on the other hand, there were people who gradually got accustomed to the presence of plants

and stopped responding to their stress-reducing effects.

The study took 63 employees under its ambit who were aged between 24 and 60 and spent an average of 40 working hours in the office.

Amid the rising cases of work pressure-induced mental disorders, the authors stated that "the adoption of greenery into the office environment is becoming widespread as the need for improving mental health becomes greater."

If by chance, keeping a plant on your desk is not possible, the experts suggest that gazing outside the window for three minutes or taking brief strolls outside the office building can induce similar positive effects.

Excess Smartphone Use Linked To Mental Distress, Suicidality

Agencies

Using smartphone for long hours every day may do you more harm than you can probably think of. Researchers have found that spending a lot of time with the device and on social media may lead to mental distress and suicidality among adolescents.

The findings, published in the journal CMAJ (Canadian Medical Association Journal) contains guidance for physicians, parents and teachers on how to help teenagers manage smartphone and social media use for a healthy balance between sleep, academic work, social activity, interpersonal relationships and online activity.

"Physicians, teachers and families need to work together with youth to decrease possible harmful effects of smartphones and social media on their relationships, sense of self, sleep, academic performance, and emotional well-being," said lead author of the study Elia Abi-Jaoude from Toronto Western Hospital in Canada.

This review of evidence, led by the Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids), focuses on smartphone use and does



not consider online gaming.

"For adolescents today, who have not known a world without social media, digital interactions are the norm, and the potential benefits of online access to productive mental health information -- including media literacy, creativity, self-expression, sense of belonging and civic engagement -- as well as low barriers to resources such as crisis lines and Internet-based talking therapies cannot be discounted," the authors wrote.

The researchers recommend that doctors should ask teenagers to reduce social media use rather than eradicate

it completely and encourage parents to be part of the conversations.

Parents should discuss appropriate smartphone use with teenagers to determine together how to reduce risks and set boundaries.

A recent poll from the US indicates that 54 per cent of teenagers think they spend too much time on their smartphones and about half said they were cutting back on usage.

"Encouragingly, youth are increasingly recognising the negative impact of social media on their lives and starting to take steps to mitigate it," the authors wrote.

Foreign Language Learners May Continue To Make Same Mistakes They Point Out In Peers

Learners of foreign languages can hear the errors in pronunciation that fellow learners tend to make, but may continue to make the same mistakes themselves despite years of practice, according to a study which may lead to better ways of providing external feedback in language courses.

The researchers, including those from Ludwig Maximilian University (LMU) of Munich in Germany, said one of the hurdles in learning a foreign language is knowing the right way to pronounce words, in which learners are typically prone to specific sets of errors.

In their study, published in the journal PLOS One, they revealed that people laugh at these mistakes in pronunciation made by their peers, even though they make the same mistakes themselves. This reaction, the researchers said, points to a paradox in which learners register errors when made by others, but find it virtually impossible to eliminate the same typical errors in their own pronunciation even after years of practice.

"Learners have a tendency to overestimate the quality of their own pronunciation," said Eva Reinisch, study co-author from LMU. "As a rule, they believe that their English is better than that spoken by their fellow students at language schools, although they make the same set of errors," Reinisch said.

According to the study, this exaggerated assessment of one's own ability is a significant factor explaining why it is difficult to learn the sounds of a foreign language.

In the study, the scientists asked 24 female German learners of English to read out 60 short sentences like "The family bought a house", "The jug is on the shelf", and "They heard a funny noise". Weeks later, the same learners were invited to the lab again, and asked to listen to recordings of four learners -- three from others, and one of their own -- and were asked to grade the pronunciation of each sentence. The



recordings were manipulated in such a way that the female speakers sounded like male speakers to ensure that participants would not recognise their own productions, the study noted.

"This element of the experimental design is crucial. It was essential that none of listeners would be aware that their own productions were included in the test sample, otherwise their assessments couldn't be taken as unbiased," said Holger Mitterer, another co-author of the study from the University of Malta in Malta. In all cases, the listeners rated their own pronunciation as better than others did, even when they were unable to recognise that it was their own recording.

The researchers said the results could be due to familiar accents being easier to understand than accents that are less commonly spoken. "One is best acquainted with the sound of one's own voice, and has no difficulty understanding it," Reinisch said. "Perhaps this familiarity leads us to regard our pronunciation as being better than it actually is," she said. Another possible factor contributing to the finding, the scientists said, is known as the 'mere exposure' effect in which

people rate things which they are more familiar with -- such as the sound of our own voice -- as more congenial.

According to the researchers, the findings emphasise the importance of external feedback in language courses, since it increases the learners' awareness of deficits in language production and comprehension. A lack of feedback, according to the study, increases the risk of learners feeling that they have already mastered the unfamiliar articulation patterns in the new language, while that may not be the case. "As long as we believe that we are already pretty good, we are not going to put in more effort to improve," Reinisch said.

Daily Exposure To Ozone Pollution Linked To Higher Early Death Risk: Study

Press Trust Of India

Daily exposure to ground level ozone in cities worldwide is associated with an increased risk of premature death, according to a study based on data from over 400 cities in 20 countries across the world.

The study, published in The BMJ journal, show that over 6,000 early deaths each year would have been avoided in the selected cities if countries had implemented stricter air quality standards.

Researchers, including those from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine in the UK, noted that ground level ozone is a highly reactive gas commonly found in urban and suburban environments, formed

when pollutants react in sunlight.

Ozone is made up of three atoms of oxygen, and is a highly reactive gas.

Recent reviews suggest that 80 per cent of the world's population in urban areas are exposed to air pollution levels above the World Health Organization (WHO) threshold of 100 microgrammes per cubic metre (g/m3), they said.

Most previous studies have found positive associations between ground level ozone and mortality, but differences in study design and quality make it difficult to draw consistent conclusions across different regions.

The team analysed deaths and environmental measures -- weather and air pollutants -- in 406 cities in 20 countries, with overlapping periods between 1985 and 2015.

The researchers derived daily average ozone levels -- above a maximum background level of 70 g/m3 -- particulate matter, temperature, and relative humidity at each location to estimate the daily number of extra deaths attributable to ozone.

A total of 45,165,171 deaths were analysed in the 406 cities.

On average, a 10 g/m3 increase in ozone during the current and previous day was associated with a 0.18 per cent increased risk of death, suggesting evidence of a potential direct association.

This equates to 6,262 extra deaths each year in the 406 cities that could potentially have been avoided if countries had implemented stricter air quality standards in line with the WHO guideline, the researchers said.

Centre to raise Rs 46Kcrore as interest on late filing of GST



Agencies

NEW DELHI: The government has discovered a new revenue stream to make up for the shortfall in GST collection and is looking to collect Rs 46,000 crore as interest on late payment of tax.

Tax experts disputed the number saying government had promised to hand-hold the taxpayers at the time of migration to the new indirect tax regime by waiving off interest and penalties for filing their tax returns. Further, it has now resorted to extremely harsh measures to boost its tax kitty.

Moreover, the levying of interest would trigger huge litigations with taxpayers challenging the demand.

A.K. Pandey, Special Secretary and Member, Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs in a letter to all the principal chief commissioners and central tax commissioners has said that the law cast liability on the taxpayers to assess and pay the interest on delayed payment of tax.

"Further, interest payable on such delayed payment of tax can be recovered under the provisions of section 79 of the CGST Act read with section 75 (12) which provides for various methods by which the proper officer shall proceed to recover any amount which is payable to the government," Pandey said in his letter seen by IANS.

As per the letter, the Principal ADG (systems) on Feb 1, 2020 generated and shared the GSTIN wise list of the registered persons who have not discharged the due interest liability while filing their GSTR 3B returns belatedly. On perusal of said report, it was observed that the interest amounting to Rs 45,996 crores remains unpaid to the government on account of delayed payment of tax.

The report has been shared on SFTP portal for initiating the process of recovery of such unpaid interest as per the provisions of section 79 read with section 75 (12) of the CGST Act.

But, in the meantime, doubts have been raised by the field formations whether the interest has to be paid on the gross tax liability or on the net cash liability.

"In this regard, the provisions of Section of Section 50 are very clear that interest liability is required to be paid on the tax liability that is paid belatedly, either through cash or through utilization of input tax credit (ITC). In other words, interest is required to be paid on total tax amount of tax liability as shown in Form GSTR 3B," the CBIC letter said.

"In view of the above, you are requested to look into the issue personally and to urge field formations under your jurisdiction for making recovery of applicable interest from identified taxpayers and to furnish weekly report of GSTIN wise recovery of interest made in this regard," it directed.

Rajat Mohan, Senior Partner, AMRG & Associates said that that the move is against the taxpayers who had been promised hand-holding and support at the time of roll-out of the GST.

"It is demotivating for the taxpayers. If at all, the government wants to levy interest on delayed payment of tax it should be on net tax liability and not the gross tax liability," he said.

A senior state GST officer said that the letter had been received but expressed reservations over the way the amount of interest on late payment of tax has been arrived.

Income Tax team detains man after recovering cash from him

SRINAGAR: Income Tax sleuths detained a man at Srinagar Airport after they recovered Rs 3 lakh from him.

Official sources told Kashmir News Trust that a man coming from Delhi to Srinagar was stopped at Srinagar Airport and during frisking, Rs 3 lakh were recovered from his possession.

Income Tax sleuths detained him for questioning. Police sources identified the man as Imtiyaz Ahmed Dar, a resident of Rangpora Srinagar. (KNT)



LPG Price Hiked By Rs 144.5 Per Cylinder

Agencies

NEW DELHI: Cooking gas LPG price on Wednesday was hiked by a steep Rs 144.5 per cylinder due to spurt in benchmark global rates of the fuel.

But to insulate domestic users, the government almost doubled the subsidy it provides on the fuel to keep per cylinder outgo almost unchanged.

LPG price was increased to Rs 858.50 per 14.2 kg cylinder from Rs 714 previously, according to a price notification of state-owned oil firms.

This is the steepest hike in rates since January 2014 when prices had

gone up by Rs 220 per cylinder to Rs 1,241.

Domestic LPG users, who are entitled to buy 12 bottles of 14.2-kg each at subsidised rates in a year, will get more subsidy.

The government subsidy payout to domestic users has been increased from Rs 153.86 per cylinder to Rs 291.48, industry officials said.

For Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) beneficiaries, the subsidy has increased from Rs 174.86 to Rs 312.48 per cylinder.

After accounting for the subsidy that is paid directly into the bank accounts of LPG users, a 14.2-kg cylinder would cost Rs 567.02 for

domestic users and Rs 546.02 for PMUY users.

The government gave out 8 crore free LPG connections to poor women under PMUY to increase coverage of environment-friendly fuel in kitchens.

Normally, LPG rates are revised on 1st of every month but this time it took almost two weeks for the revision to take place - a phenomenon which industry officials said was due to approvals needed for such a big jump in subsidy outgo.

Others said the decision to defer the increase could have been because of assembly elections in Delhi. Delhi voted on February 8.

Farmers without soil testing labs in different areas of Kashmir

SRINAGAR: Even as much of the state economy is based on agriculture, the government is yet to fulfill the basic needs of farmers in Kashmir.

In most of the areas farmers associated with agriculture fails to test their soil due to lack of soil testing laboratory in their areas.

Officials at agriculture department said that despite the department collecting soil samples from both irrigated as well as non irrigated grids. The soil testing results do not come quickly and take months together due to overload on the single soil testing laboratory in the districts.

A source from the agriculture department said that thousands of farmers even never test their soil due to lack of nearest soil testing facility. He said that the farmers feel it difficult to complete the documentation process, registration and eventually bring soil samples to the nearest agriculture office. The samples are taken to single and overburdened laboratory where soil samples are examined analysed and the results are conveyed to farmers after several months.

Farmers on the other hand complained that concerned authorities have failed to issue soil health cards to them. "There is no move from the government either to provide soil testing lab for our area or to provide us the soil health cards," said Aijaz Ahmad Parry, a farmer of Kupwara, adding, "I have many acres of land but I never received soil testing card due to which I never tested the soil."

South Kashmir's Pulwama district is also known as largest rice produc-



er of Kashmir after Kulgam district. However, the government has done nothing substantial in developing the agriculture setup of the district.

"I am associated with farming since past many decades but I never heard about soil testing. Most of the farmers have no idea about soil testing," said Abdul Rashid a farmer who claims to have 12 kanals of paddy land in Awantipora.

Another farmer Ghulam Mohammad of Tral said that he has to travel almost 20 kilometers to take sample to district soil testing center Pulwama. "Every farmer in our area cannot travel long distance to test the soil of his paddy land. It becomes hectic and expensive exercise," he added.

According to official data, Jammu and Kashmir has almost six technical controlled soil testing laboratories at various districts—Baramulla, Pulwama, Anantnag, Budgam and one direct controlled soil testing laboratory at Lalmandi, Srinagar.

Most of these laboratories are providing soil testing results in respect of major nutrients only. These laboratories lack sophisticated facilities for analysing micro-nutrients.

Soil testing methods were started in India in 1955-56 but the J&K Union Territory is yet to introduce it at various areas, affecting the agriculture production. Farmers complained that they are unaware of the soil testing methods which could have helped them use their land more judiciously. The farmers complained that concerned authorities have failed to generate awareness among them.

Farmers face a lot of difficulties in the absence of awareness. "Despite that we have got five soil testing laboratories in Kashmir, there is no concept of soil testing in our fields. Hence, the concerned departments must be proactive to inform farmers about the soil testing methods across Kashmir," a farmer Mohammad Ayoub said.

India's industrial output slips by 0.3% in Dec

Agencies

NEW DELHI: Decline in manufacturing activity contracted India's December factory output by 0.3 per cent from a rise of 1.82 per cent in November and 2.5 per cent during the corresponding period of the previous year.

"The 'Quick Estimates of Index of Industrial Production' with base 2011-12 for the month of December 2019 stands at 133.5, which is 0.3 per cent lower as compared to the level in the month of December 2018," the Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation said.

"The cumulative growth for the period April-December 2019 over the corresponding period of the previous year stands at 0.5 per cent."

As per the data, the output rate of the manufacturing sector contracted by minus 1.2 per cent in December from a YoY rise of 2.9 per cent.

The output of other notable sector such as mining rose, whereas electricity slipped during the month under review.

According to the data, mining activity grew by 5.4 per cent from a YoY decline of (-) 1 per cent and the sub-index of electricity generation was lower by (-)1 per cent from a rise of 4.5 per cent.

Among the six use-based classification groups, the output of primary goods, which has the highest weightage of 34.04, rose by 2.2 per cent.

The output of intermediate goods, which has the second highest weightage, zoomed 12.5 per cent.

While consumer non-durables output fell by (-) 3.7 per cent, similarly, the consumer durables declined (-)6.7 per cent.

Output of infrastructure or construction goods decreased by (-) 2.6 per cent, similarly, capital goods' production receded by (-)18.2 per cent.

In terms of industries, 16 out of the 23 industry groups in the manufacturing sector showed negative growth during the month under review as compared to the corresponding period of the previous year.

"The industry group 'manufacture of computer, electronic and optical products' has shown the highest negative growth of (-) 24.9 per cent followed by (-) 20.3 per cent in 'manufacture of machinery and equipment n.e.c.' and (-) 15.5 per cent in 'printing and reproduction of recorded media'," the Ministry said.

"On the other hand, the industry group 'manufacture of basic metals' has shown the highest positive growth of 14.2 per cent followed by 13.2 per cent in 'manufacture of wood and products of wood and cork, except furniture; manufacture of articles of straw and plaiting materials' and 5.9 per cent in 'manufacture of leather and related products'."

High food, fuel prices push Jan retail inflation to 7.59%

Agencies

NEW DELHI: Retail inflation jumped to over five-and-a-half-year high of 7.59 per cent in January on persistently high prices of vegetables, pulses and protein-rich meat and fish, government data showed on Wednesday.

The Consumer Price Index (CPI)-based inflation was 7.35 per cent in December 2019. It had stood at 1.97 per cent in January 2019.

The earlier high was in May 2014 when the CPI-based inflation was 8.33 per cent.

The overall food inflation during January this year stood at 13.63 per cent, slightly lower than 14.19 per cent in the previous month, showed the data released by the National Statistical Office under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.

Food inflation, however, had contracted in January 2019 with a print of (-)2.24 per cent.

Inflation in vegetables spurt to 50.19 per cent in January this year, while that for pulses and products, it rose to 16.71 per cent. Among protein-rich items, prices of meat and fish went up by 10.50 per cent during the month, while egg prices were higher by 10.41 per cent against the year-ago period. The food and beverages category showed an inflation print of 11.79 per cent, according to the data.

Housing turned costlier by 4.20 per cent in January 2020,

while for fuel and light, the inflation print was 3.66 per cent.

"The internals of the food inflation are worrying, given a broad-based uptick across categories that tend to be sticky, such as proteins, and a narrower-than-expected reduction in inflation for vegetables."

"Moreover, the fairly broad-based rise in the core inflation to 4.1 per cent in January 2020, driven by various services, is a cause for concern," said Aditi



Nayar, principal economist, ICRA. Nayar added that regardless of the level of retail inflation, the stance of the RBI for the monetary policy is likely to be retained as accommodative, for as long as the MPC considers the output gap to be negative. "The timing and magnitude of the next rate cut will depend on how quickly inflation appears to be reverting back towards 4 per cent," Rahul Gupta, head of research (currency), Emkay Global Financial Services, said, "It is the consecutive second month that the CPI has breached upper band of the RBI's inflation target."

NEWS MAKERS

Coronavirus: Indian Electronics Staring at Shutdown Over Virus Outbreak, Says ICEA

Agencies

NEW DELHI: Pankaj Mohindroo, Chairman of Indian Cellular And Electronics Association (ICEA) on Wednesday said that the Indian electronics industry is staring at a shutdown due to the outbreak of the coronavirus in China and its eventual impact on trade.

Speaking at an event, Mohindroo said that although some factories in China have opened, it needs to be seen whether workers actually turn up.

There have been concerns over the impact of the spread of the virus across sectors in India including aviation and electronics.

China plays a major role in the Indian electronics industry as India imports a major part of the components from its



northern neighbour. In the case of smartphones too, majority of the components are imported from China.

The outbreak of coronavirus in Wuhan, China has impacted trade and several in-

dustries across many countries.

The death toll due to novel coronavirus infection rose to 1,113 as of Tuesday and the overall confirmed cases on the Chinese mainland has touched 44,653 cases.

JK Tourism Deptt promotional campaign reaches Pune, Bangalore

Houseboat owners offer 30% discount for tourists as goodwill gesture

SRINAGAR: To popularize its snow capped mountains, scenic destinations and host of adventure activities, Jammu and Kashmir Tourism Department continued its promotional campaign in major metropolitan cities of Pune and Bangalore.

Scores of tourism players from Karnataka attended the road show and linked with their counterparts from J&K to create business opportunities for themselves in the tourism sector.

While highlighting

the unmatched tourism products of Jammu and Kashmir, Additional Secretary Tourism Naresh Kumar urged tourism players present on the occasion to take advantage of the business opportunity and collaborate and partner with the tourism players of J&K.

"Jammu and Kashmir is completely safe for tourism and especially for female tourists," he emphasized and added that thousands of the tourists both domestic and foreign continue to visit J&K and are at the mo-

ment enjoying their stay at world-famous winter and ski destination of Gulmarg. Also speaking on the occasion, Chairman Houseboat Owners Association Abdul Hamid Wangnoo gave a detailed presentation on the historical background of the houseboats of Kashmir, their unique charm and art and craft that set them apart from the rest.

He said tourists intending to visit Kashmir and staying in beautiful and comfortable houseboats will be given 30 percent discount as a goodwill

gesture.

At Pune, Director SKICC Javed Bakshi drew attention of the tourism players to the varied tourism products of Jammu and Kashmir including the immense potential in Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE) Tourism, Golf and Adventure Tourism.

The roadshow at Pune was organized by the J&K Tourism Department in collaboration with Pahalgam Hotel and Restaurant Owners Association (PHAROA).

10 Arrested In Connection With Molestation Of Women In Gargi College

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: Ten people were arrested on Wednesday in connection with the alleged molestation of students during a cultural festival at the all-women Gargi College here last week, police said.

The accused are between 18 and 25 years of age, they added.

Over 11 police teams were looking into the technical details available and also visiting various sites in NCR to identify

the suspects and investigate the case, the police said.

Many people are being questioned and multiple suspects have been identified, they added.

According to the police, the accused persons were outside the college when the fest was underway.

A senior police official said the accused are students of various colleges in Delhi and NCR areas. They gathered outside the gate of the college,

vandalised a car and then broke in, he added.

Police said the accused jumped over the barricades placed by the college security staff, outnumbered them and then misbehaved with the women students.

Officials said the investigation was on and more people could be arrested.

Students of Gargi College have been boycotting classes, demanding that the fact finding committee constituted fol-

lowing the incident show its findings.

A case was registered on February 10 at the Hauz Khas police station under IPC sections 452 (House-trespass after preparation for hurt, assault or wrongful restraint), 354 (Assault or criminal force to woman with intent to outrage her modesty), 509 (Word, gesture or act intended to insult the modesty of a woman) and 34 (Acts done by several persons in furtherance of

common intention).

A group of men had broken into the institute during the "Riverie" fest on February 6 and allegedly groped, harassed and molested the attendees.

The incident came to light after some students took to Instagram to narrate their ordeal. Students and teachers also posted on other social media websites about the incident.

Over 100 students held a protest on February 10 outside Gargi College.

Chidambaram To Address JNU Students On CAA On Thursday

Agencies

NEW DELHI: Former Home Minister and senior Congress leader P. Chidambaram will be addressing the students of Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) on Thursday regarding CAA and NRC, Chidambaram said on micro-blogging site, Twitter, on Wednesday.

"I will address a gathering of students at JNU on Thursday, 13th February at 5 p.m. on "Why we oppose NPR-

CAA-NRC"," Chidambaram tweeted.

Earlier in the day, the Jawaharlal Nehru University Students' Union (JNUSU) cancelled an anti-CAA march citing "unavoidable circumstances".

"JNUSU will take up the issue of NRC, CAA, NPR and the witch hunting of political voices of dissent by building larger solidarity across campuses and give an immediate call shortly," a message by JNUSU read.

SC To Hear Plea Challenging Omar's

1978, saying the order of detention is "manifestly illegal" and there is no question of him being a "threat to the maintenance of public order".

The plea has sought quashing of the February 5 order detaining Abdullah, former chief minister of erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir, under the PSA and also sought his production before the court.

Sara has said that exercise of powers by authorities under the CrPC to detain individuals, including political leaders, was "clearly mala fide to ensure that the opposition to the abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution is silenced".

Her plea said the intent of exercise of power was to "incarcerate not just him but the entire leadership of the National Conference, as well as the leadership of other political parties, who were similarly dealt with including Farooq Abdullah, who has served the state and the union over several years... stood by India whenever the situation so demanded."

It said that on the intervening night of August 4-5, 2019, Abdullah was put under house arrest and it was later learnt that section 107 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), 1973 was invoked to justify such arrest.

"There has been a grave violation of Articles 14, 21 and 22 of the Constitution," the plea said, adding, "similar orders of detention have been issued by respondents (authorities of union territory of Jammu and Kashmir) over the last seven months in a wholly mechanical manner to other detenues, which suggest that there has been a consistent and concerted effort to muzzle all political rivals".

It said there could be no material available to detain a person who has already been detained for previous six months and the "grounds for the detention order are wholly lacking any material facts or particulars which are imperative for an order of detention".

"In fact, a reference to all public statements and messages posted by the detainee during the period up to his first detention would reveal that he has kept calling for peace and cooperation - messages which in Gandhi's India cannot remotely affect public order," it said.

The plea said Abdullah was not even served with the material that formed the basis of the detention order and its non-supply vitiates the detention, which is liable to be quashed.

It said that at no point of time in his "prolific political career", he has resorted to or indulged in conduct unbecoming of a "conscientious public figure".

The grounds of detention against Abdullah, chief minister of the state from 2009-14, claims that on the eve of reorganisation of the state he had allegedly made attempts to provoke general masses against the revocation of Articles 370 and 35-A.

Abdullah, who has been junior foreign minister and commerce minister in the Atal Bihari Vajpayee-led Cabinet in 2000, was served with a three-page dossier in which he was alleged to have made statements in the past which were "subversive" in nature.

Third Batch Of Foreign Envoys

with an aim to make them see the efforts to bring back normalcy in Kashmir Valley. A number of opposition parties called it a "guided tour".

In New Delhi, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said that the group would meet representatives of the civil society, including youths, political leaders, local businessmen during their visit to the union territory.

After announcing reorganisation of Jammu and Kashmir and withdrawal of its special powers, India imposed severe curbs including on movement of people as well as on mobile telephone and internet connectivity. The crackdown drew international criticism with several countries expressing concerns over the situation in Kashmir.

"As a part of the outreach efforts, visit of a second group of foreign heads of mission is being organised to the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir on February 12-13," the MEA said.

It said the group is visiting Baramulla, Srinagar and Jammu and would meet representatives of the civil society, including youth from different ethnic, religious and socio-economic communities, local businessmen and political leaders.

"They will also be briefed about the development programmes being implemented, get assessment of the security situation, and witness for themselves the progressive normalisation of the situation," the MEA said.

The group comprises envoys from

Afghanistan, Austria, Bulgaria, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, the European Union, France, Germany, Republic of Guinea, Hungary, Italy and Kenya.

Envoys from Kyrgyztan, Mexico, Namibia, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, Rwanda, Slovakia, Tajikistan, Uganda and Uzbekistan are also part of it.

A visiting envoy told reporters that he was in Kashmir "as a tourist".

"Upon our arrival, we enjoyed a #Shikara ride on Dal Lake in Srinagar, Kashmir. Beautiful lake and hospitable people. I bought a beautiful Kashmiri ring from a boat serving as a shop. @MEAIndia," Afghanistan's envoy to India Tahir Qadiri tweeted.

He also praised the Kashmiris for their hospitality.

"We Afghans claim that we are Mehman-Navaz (Hospitable), but the Kashmiris are definitely so too. Interacted with a bunch of young people here. This girl is a gold-medalist in basketball with very high hopes. Wishing this beautiful valley & its people lots of good wishes!" he said in another tweet.

On their meeting with journalists, Qadiri said, "In our interaction with the Kashmiri media outlets, the media people seriously urged the govt to restore the internet broadband as it is causing them so much problems to report and broadcast."

The first group to visit Kashmir comprised envoys from the US, South Korea, Vietnam, Bangladesh, Fiji, Maldives, Norway, Philippines, Morocco, Argentina, Peru, Niger, Nigeria, Guyana and Tog

Orchestrated Diplomacy: Iltija

She was reacting to tweets by Afghanistan's envoy to India Tahir Qadiri, showcasing the beauty of Dal Lake here.

A batch of 25 foreign envoys arrived here on Wednesday as part of a Union government-facilitated trip to assess ground situation.

The envoys arrived at the Srinagar airport around 11 am but could not go ahead with their scheduled visit to Baramulla in north Kashmir due to inclement weather, officials said.

The foreign dignitaries instead went for a Shikara (boat) ride in the famous Dal Lake.

Iltija also questioned how the Afghan envoy was able to access Twitter as the social media sites were banned in Kashmir.

"Your excellency please do enlighten us Kashmiris about which VPN you are using to tweet? We will also download and tweet freely," she said.

Iltija hoped that the envoys would question the authorities here about the internet shutdown and detention of political leaders under the Public Safety Act.

"Hope you & @EU_in_India question GOI about Internet ban since 5th August & economic losses suffered GOI muzzling local media in Kashmir release of detainees inc 3 ex CMs slapped with draconian PSA troop deployment to create fear amongst people. Normalcy's an illusion," she added.

3 Protesters Detained By Police

in the Union territory. The envoys are from the European Union, South America and the Gulf countries, officials said.

"The government should stop wasting money on these events. The money saved should be spent on the development of Kashmir," one of the youths said while being whisked away by the police.

They were taken to the nearby police station, the officials said.

Nothing to Hide, Says Saroori

Saroori nor linked to my family. The NIA needs to probe the conspiracy why Saroori was added to his codename after 2014 although previously he was only known in police records by the alias Jehangir," the Congress vice president and three-time legislator from Indermal constituency of Kishtwar told reporters here.

The 67-year-old leader said the National Investigation Agency served him a notice under section 160 CrPC and has not made any allegations against him.

"The agency had served this notice to over 300 persons and being a prominent public figure, I too was called by it. I have nothing to hide and I have no issue to present myself before the agency 10 times more," he said.

Saroori said he is visiting the NIA office again on Wednesday to sign his statement.

Condemning the circulation of "fabricated and baseless" stories about his alleged militant links, he said he never faced an

allegation in the past.

"The NIA questioned me about Bhat... I do not know him and he is not related to my family. In fact, he is not Saroori and he belongs to a village which falls in Saroor panchayat, while my ancestral village is in Sarthal and we migrated to Kishtwar town in 1992-93 during the peak of militancy in the region," he said.

The Congress leader said he has never seen Bhat in his life.

"I am a secular leader affiliated with a secular party and a strong believer in the Constitution of our country. I do not need a certificate from anyone. The people of my area know me very well," he said, adding that he was among the leaders who condemned militancy unequivocally and worked for the unity and integrity during his long political career.

He also demanded a thorough probe into past communal riots in the district by NIA.

Day Chill Intensifies In Valley

in the city was 1.4 degree, which is about 3 degree above normal. However, people woke up to a chilly Wednesday morning in the city, where overcast conditions continued throughout the day. People could be seen wearing jackets, sweaters and pheran (traditional Kashmiri cloak), to evade chilly weather conditions in the city. The skies at world famous health resort of Pahalgam, about 100 km from here in south Kashmir, remained cloudy throughout the day on Wednesday, resulting in dip in the day temperature.

But, the night temperature at the health resort improved about 5 degree from Tuesday and settled at minus 0.6 degree, which is several degrees above normal.

Due to overcast night conduction, the mercury at Qazigund, gateway to the valley, Kupwara in north Kashmir and tourist resort of Kokernag also improved and settled at 1 degree, minus 0.6 degree and minus 0.1 degree, respectively.

Hafiz Saeed Gets 11 Years In Jail

in terror financing. Saeed pleaded "not guilty" in both the cases.

The Counter Terrorism Department had registered 23 FIRs against Saeed and his accomplices on the charges of terror financing in different cities of Punjab province.

The cases were registered against Saeed and others in Lahore, Gujranwala and Multan for collection of funds for terrorism financing through assets/properties made and held in the names of Trusts/Non Profit Organisations including Al-Anfaal Trust, Dawatul Irshad Trust, Muaz Bin Jabal Trust, etc.

According to the CTD, investigation launched into financing matters of proscribed organisations - JuD and Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) - in connection with implementation of UN Sanctions against these Designated Entities and Persons as directed by NSC (National Security Committee) in its meeting of January 1, 2019 chaired by Prime Minister Imran Khan for implementing the National Action Plan.

"These suspects made assets from funds of terrorism financing. They held and used these assets to raise more funds for further terrorism financing. Hence, they committed multiple offences of terrorism financing and money laundering under Anti Terrorism Act 1997. They will be prosecuted in ATCs (Anti Terrorism Courts) for commission of these offences," the CTD said.

The crackdown on Saeed's outfit last year followed a warning by the Paris-based Financial Action Task Force to Pakistan to deliver on its commitments to curb terror financing and money laundering.

Saeed-led JuD is the front organisation for the Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) which is responsible for carrying out the 2008 Mumbai attack that killed 166 people, including six Americans.

The US Department of the Treasury has designated Saeed as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist, and the US, since 2012, has offered a USD 10 million reward for information that brings Saeed to justice. He was listed under the UN Security Council Resolution 1267 in December 2008.

5 Killed After Vehicle

districts must be a grave concern for the JK administration.

"It is a situation which demands immediate measures and attention of all of us, especially the officers of transport, traffic police, National Highway Authorities and Border Roads Organisation to put forward their departmental specific assignment of the causes responsible for causing accidents in these hilly districts, he said.

Building Collapses In Jammu,

, who is supervising the rescue operation, said.

He said the fire department rushed fire fighters after receiving a distress call at 4.48 am and were making efforts to put out the blaze when suddenly the building collapsed at 5.30 am.

"It is believed that none of the civilians were trapped under the debris. We have rescued four civilians in the morning while two of our personnel suffered injuries. All the rescued persons were evacuated and taken to a hospital," Singh said.

He said while one of the firemen is being treated for serious burn injuries, the other is undergoing treatment for head injuries.

"There was a huge stock of timber in the saw mill and a gas cylinder also exploded during the fire as a result of which the building collapsed due to intense heat," the DG said.

Soon after the building collapsed, the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) along with police parties were rushed to the spot and a rescue operation was launched, he said.

A team of NDRF was mobilized from Pathankot and is assisting in the ongoing rescue operation, he said.

Meanwhile, Lieutenant Governor, Girish Chandra Murmu expressed grief over the loss of lives and expressed his condolences to the bereaved families of the firemen.

He directed the administration to provide best possible medical treatment to the injured.

Geelani Stable, Rumours

social networking website Twitter and Facebook.

"Geelani Sahab is doing fine. He had chest congestion but he is recovering now," Geelani's son Naseem told Kashmir Observer.

The ailing leader's health condition has deteriorated since past six months and he was admitted in SKIMS recently. The Hurriyat Chairman has been under house arrest for a longer time.

Union Ministers Submit Reports

the issues on which the Centre and the Union territory administration should focus on for optimum results, the official added.

The reports were given in a proforma so that action could be taken on the basis of the feedback.

The central ministers visited Jammu and Kashmir following a directive of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who wanted an honest assessment of the various welfare schemes being implemented in the newly-created Union territory.

Among those who visited Jammu and Kashmir were Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad, Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju, ministers of state for home G Kishan Reddy and Nityanand Rai.

The ministers only spoke about the development initiatives and there was no reference to political issues, the official said.

Interacting with the locals, they got first-hand information about the roads, healthcare facilities, power situation, functioning of academic institutions etc. in the Union territory.

There were two sets of feedback -- one on the initiatives taken by the UT administration and the other on the Centre's initiatives -- another official said.

Most of the central ministers stayed overnight at their respective places of visit such as Baramulla, Ganderbal, Doda, besides others.

In August last year, the Centre abrogated Article 370 of the Constitution, which gave a special status to the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir, and bifurcated it into Union territories.

Since then, the Centre has been closely monitoring the on-the-ground implementation of various development programmes there.

Jammu and Kashmir is currently under the President's rule.

No Upper Age Relaxation For JK

of reservation applicable to such candidates, among others, it said.

The UPSC will recruit officers of Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Indian Foreign Service (IFS), Indian Police Service (IPS), Indian Railway Traffic Service (IRTS), Indian Railway Accounts Service (IRAS) and Indian Railway Personnel Service (IRPS), among

others through the civil services examination 2020, the notification said.

This is probably the last time that the officers of IRTS, IRAS and IRPS are being recruited through the civil services examination after the amalgamation of the existing eight railway services into the one -- Indian Railways Management Service (IRMS), officials said.

The commission may recruit IRMS officers from the next years onward, they said.

The number of vacancies to be filled through the examination is expected to be approximately 796 which include 24 posts reserved for persons with benchmark disability category, i.e. three for candidates of blindness and low vision; nine for deaf and hard of hearing; eight for locomotor disability including cerebral palsy, leprosy cured, dwarfism, acid attack victims and muscular dystrophy, among others, according to the notification.

"Reservation will be made for candidates belonging to scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, other backward classes, the economically weaker sections and persons with benchmark disability in respect of vacancies as may be fixed by the government," it said.

The civil services examination is conducted annually by the UPSC in three phases -- preliminary, main and interview.

The facility of withdrawal of application is available for those candidates who do not want to appear for civil services (preliminary) examination.

"UPSC has no provision to refund any fee amount paid by candidates, so in case of successful withdrawal of application the fees will not be refunded," the notification said.

Candidates are required to apply online. The deadline is March 3 till 6:00 P.M. after which the link will be disabled, the UPSC said.

NIA Charges 4 Alleged Jaish

charge sheet against Sajjad Ahmad Khan (27), Bilal Ahmad Mir (23), Ishfaq Ahmad Bhat (24) and Mehraj-ud-Din Chopan (22), all residents of Pulwama in Jammu and Kashmir.

"Investigation has established that the accused persons are members of proscribed militant organisation JeM, who were planning to carry out attacks and propagating the activities of JeM," the NIA said.

"The slain militant Mudassir Ahmad Khan was the mastermind behind this conspiracy. He was one of the main conspirators in Pulwama attack as well and was killed in encounter with police and security forces in Tral area of district Pulwama J&K on March 10, last year," the National Investigation Agency (NIA) said.

Charges were abated against Mudassir after he was killed in an encounter with the security forces in March, 2019, the NIA said in the final report.

According to the agency, Sajjad was directly in touch with Mudassir while Ishfaq was involved in transportation of Arms and ammunition for strengthening JeM in Kashmir and further harboured the operatives of JeM.

One hand grenade was recovered from possession of Mehraj-ud-din Chopan and it was procured with the intention of using the same against the security forces in Jammu and Kashmir for snatching their weapons.

This case pertains to a criminal conspiracy hatched by senior commanders of JeM to carry out attacks in different parts of India including Delhi-NCR.

ISJK Module Busted in Budgam,

in providing shelter and logistic support to militants.

"A case under relevant sections of the law has been registered against the accused and further investigation is on," the police said.

The police identified the alleged militant associates as Shahnawaz Ahmad Wani, Nasir Ahmad Wani, Bilal Ahmad Khan and Irfan Ahmad Pathan, all residents of Gundipora Beerwah, and Ali Mohd Bhat, a resident of Warihama Beerwah.

Firing Creates Panic In Awantipora

the signal and fled away, local newsgathering agency KNT reported today. The gun shots created panic in the area, the report added. A police official said that efforts are on to trace the driver.

Wild Life Department

were responsible for attacks on humans and cattle.



PSL MATCHES: People residing around Gaddafi Stadium to get mobility cards



LAHORE: The city police will issue special cards to residents living in the vicinity of Gaddafi Stadium to ensure their uninterrupted mobility during the matches of the upcoming PSL cricket tournament.

The decision was taken at a meeting chaired by CCPO Zulfiqar Hameed to review the security plan for the PSL matches on Tuesday.

DIG Operations Rai Babar Saeed, CTO Malik Liaquat, SSP Operations Mohammad Naveed, SP Headquarters Malik Jamil, SP Security Bilal Zafar and PCB officials were present.

The officials discussed measures to ensure security for practice matches and other activities of cricketers.

The CCPO instructed the CTO to develop a comprehensive traffic and parking plan during the PSL and to ensure that citizens suffer the least hassle. "Residency cards will be issued to people in nearby areas of the stadium during the PSL," said the CCPO.

Mr Hameed said the Lahore police were taking every step to promote international sports. "The

contribution of the Lahorites is commendable in every respect," he said.

DIG Operations Mr Saeed asked the PCB officials to provide guest lists of the events for security clearance process to complete it before time. The meeting also agreed to continue communication between the police and the PCB officials.

POLICE STATION: The CCPO visited the under-construction building of the Gulshan-i-Iqbal police station.

Iqbal Town SP retired Capt Ajmal and officers of the Buildings Department gave briefing on the project. A triple-storey building is being constructed for the police station over a two-acre area at a cost of Rs55 million.

The CCPO directed the officials that a spacious room be provided for the malkhana of police station and directed the contractor to ensure security of the building. He expressed satisfaction over building of kitchen and gym in the new building which would be handed over to the department by the end of March.

MCC team to visit Pakistan from Feb 13-19 in first tour in 48 years



LAHORE: Kumar Sangakkara will captain the Marylebone Cricket Club team, scheduled to arrive for its week-long tour of Lahore on February 13.

A team of the prestigious Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) will arrive in Pakistan on February 13 for a week-long tour — its first in 48 years — during which it will play four matches at Lahore's Gaddafi Stadium and Aitchison College.

Led by former Sri Lanka captain Kumar Sangakkara, who is also the current president of the club, the team will play their first 20-over match against the Lahore Qalandars on Feb 14, a press release issued by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said on Tuesday.

According to the schedule released by the PCB, the club will play both 20 and 50-over match fixtures against four teams — Lahore Qalandars, Pakistan Shaheens, Northern, and Multan Sultans — in its week-long tour, ending on Feb 19. All the matches will be held in Lahore.

Other members of the visiting team include Ravi Bopara, Micheal Burgess, Oliver Hannon-Dalby, Fred Klaassen, Michael Leask, Arron Lilley, Imran Qayyum, Will Rhodes, Safyaan Sharif, Roelof van der Merwe, Ross Whiteley, Liam Dawson, Samit Patel and Phil Salt.

The MCC had agreed to send its team to play in Pakistan in December 2019.

PCB says AKMAL misconduct during fitness test was 'misunderstanding'



KARACHI: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) reprimanded Umar Akmal after concluding proceedings into his alleged misconduct during a fitness test earlier this month.

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Wednesday concluded an inquiry into alleged misconduct by Umar Akmal during a fitness test earlier this month,

saying the incident happened due to a misunderstanding. According to a report published by ESPNcricinfo, earlier this month, Akmal had exposed himself to a trainer during his fitness test out of frustration and asked him, "Where is the fat?". The player's brother, cricketer Kamran Akmal said that Umar had done it out of mischief. The PCB, in a

statement given to ESPNcricinfo said it was "fully aware of the matter and was looking into punishments in the context of bringing the game into disrepute".

The cricket board in its inquiry heard all parties concerned and concluded that the incident happened due to a "misunderstanding", a press release issued by the board said.

"After Akmal offered his regrets for the matter, the PCB reprimanded him and reminded the player of his responsibilities as a senior cricketer," it said, adding that "the matter is now closed".

"The PCB and Umar Akmal will offer no further comments," the press release said.

THE MORE INDIA PLAY PAKISTAN, THE BETTER FOR CRICKET: YUVRAJ

NEW DELHI: Former India all-rounder Yuvraj Singh and Pakistan's ex-big hitter Shahid Afridi believe that the two countries playing each other will be good for the sport.

"We play cricket for the love of the sport. We cannot choose which country to play against ourselves. But what I can say is that the more India versus Pakistan cricket there is, the better it is for the sport," he said.

Yuvraj feels the more the arch-rivals play in bilateral cricket series, the better it is for the sport.

"I remember playing against Pakistan in 2004, 2006 and 2008 in bilateral series. These days yeah, there has not been enough of that. But these things are not in our hands," Yuvraj told Sports360.

Afridi also batted for resumption of bilateral ties between the two countries.

Both Yuvraj and Afridi still play in franchise-based T20 leagues after retiring from international cricket.

"I think, if India and Pakistan were to have a series, it will be something bigger than the Ashes. However, we don't seem to get it. We are letting politics get in the way of people's love for this sport and their wish to come together," Afridi said.

"I think we need to put a few things behind us as well and so does India. We need to sit down together at a table and talk things out."



EAST LONDON: Experienced South African Dale Steyn has his eye on the ICC Twenty20 World Cup in Australia this year as he takes on added responsibility as mentor to his team's young fast bowlers.

OLD GUARD STEYN EYES NEW ROLE IN YOUNG SA SIDE

Steyn is regarded as one of the greatest quick bowlers to play the game, but has been laid low by injury for long periods in the last three years.

The 36-year-old is set to play his

first Twenty20 International since March 2019 when South Africa host England in the first match of a three-game series at Buffalo Park on Wednesday.

Steyn, who ended his Test career in August having taken 439 wickets in 93 matches, says his only goal for now is to play in the T20 World Cup in October.

"With Test cricket, the workload was too much as I want to extend my career for as long as I can," Steyn told reporters on Tuesday. "In Test cricket you can bowl 20 overs in a day, that is five T20s, so it was a smart decision."

"I love playing cricket, right now I wake up every morning and I can't see myself doing anything else."

"As long as the desire is still there to play at the highest level, to get batters out and out-smart them once I have decided I don't want that I will walk away."

Steyn admits he has had to adapt his game after chronic shoulder problems reduced his once blistering pace, but has enjoyed challenging himself to find new ways to get batsmen out.

"I want to keep experimenting and trying to change my game," he said. "If I'm only going to play one more match I want to take a wicket with every ball, not try and defend a boundary."

Steyn spent most of his career in the same team as current South Africa coach Mark Boucher and director of cricket Graeme Smith, and now that he is one of the few senior statesmen left in a young squad, has added responsibility on the pitch.

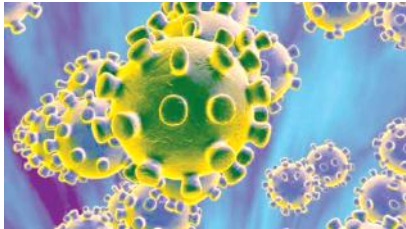
"This is a young group of players and my role is to orchestrate the bowling attack a little bit," Steyn said. "I want to stand at mid-off and say to the bowler, what are you thinking? and hopefully they can learn and get better."

"You want to win every game, obviously, but right now it is more about learning. If we win the World Cup, nobody is going to care if we lost to England in February."

Steyn said that he planned to play in T20 leagues in Pakistan and India in the coming months. "After that it will be the Proteas and I will give it everything I've got until the World Cup."



No case of coronavirus in Kashmir, but swine flu threat looms large



SRINAGAR: Even though no case of coronavirus has been detected in Kashmir so far, but the threat of H1N1 virus also known as swine flu continues to pose a big challenge and threat. The authorities, however, claim that situation is under control but state that 14 cases of swine flu patients have been admitted in SKIMS hospital Soura.

According to wire service—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Medical Superintendent of Sher-e-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS) said that so far over 700 people have been tested for H1N1 influenza at the hospital since September last year, adding that 14 among them were tested positive.

He added that eleven of the patients including five males and one children are admitted in the hospital for necessary treatment.

"Due to a drop in temperature, the possibility in increase in the number of cases may go up," he said, adding that such a situation is possible as it is 'a seasonal flu'.

However, he said that the situation is under control and the institute is ready to tackle any exigency, saying that the hospital has adequate number of vaccines, medicines, isolation kits and personal protection gear available to deal with H1N1 virus.

Earlier, reports said that in the past five years, at least 87 people died due to swine flu in Jammu Kashmir, with 2019 witnessing the highest number of deaths.

As per the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, which maintains the records of swine flu cases across India under its Integrated Diseases Surveillance Programme (IDSP), at least 27 people died of swine flu in Jammu Kashmir in 2019.

Twenty people died of swine flu in 2015, the year 495 people were detected positive for the seasonal virus. However, in 2016, only few cases were detected positive and there was no death.

Transport Deptt issues clarification on Road/ token tax on old vehicles

JAMMU: The Transport Department today issued a clarification regarding levying of the road/token tax on old vehicles.

According to the clarification, for vehicles involving life extension beyond 15 years, written down value method shall be adopted to work out the residual value of the vehicles at the end of their registration period as prescribed in the relevant Act/ Regulation for ascertaining the token tax payable at the time of registration of such vehicle.

With regard to average Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation as the discounting factor, subject to the condition that the registration of old vehicles shall take into account directions, if any, of NGT/CPCB/SPCB before authorizing registration of old vehicles in J&K in respect of non-attainment cities in respect of air pollution. "In case of vehicles below 15 years of age in whose case part token tax stands realized at pre revised rates, the token tax shall be calculated at revised rate on the value so arrived at as per the method at the time the instalment of token tax has become due and the instalment so worked out shall remain fixed for the remaining period of registration maximum up to 15 years inclusive of the earlier period for which the Road/ token tax has been paid at pre-revised rate," states the order. Similarly, vehicles involving body fabrication shall be registered only after body fabrication and sum total of cost of the chassis plus GST thereon and cost of body fabrication plus GST are taken together for levying of road tax, the order said.



Tulip Garden To House 1.3 Million Flowers This Year With 55 Varieties: Govt

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Commissioner Secretary, Department of Floriculture, Parks and Gardens, Shiekh Fayaz Ahmad today said that Government is mulling to establish theme-based gardens in twin capital cities of Jammu and Kashmir.

Speaking to delegations at Public Grievances Camp at Banquet Hall, Srinagar, the Commissioner Secretary said that Government was mulling to establish theme-based gardens and the process in this regard has been initiated at all levels. He said that the Government was all set to identify land for these gardens in Srinagar and Jammu cities. He said that the gardens would be developed on scientific basis—which would help Government to attract huge influx of tourists. He said that this would give impetus to the local entrepreneurship and help them to avail benefits. He said that Government was also maintaining 499 gardens, besides

upgrading the heritage gardens, including Mughal gardens across Kashmir region.

He said, making uniquely different gardens do not necessarily mean huge expenditure. "Just one little change and the City could well be on its way to be called the paradise in the world of gardens," he said.

Ahmad said that on regular basis, the Department deputed its officials and workers for the Model Training Course (MTC) on advances in Floriculture and Landscaping held across several centres of the country. He said besides this, training of farmers on plant propagation and nursery management is also carried out by the Department.

The Commissioner Secretary said that several initiatives are taken to strengthen the existing network, which boosts the floriculture sector and makes it more focussed and research oriented.

"We are making sure that this vital sector gets its due priority," he said.

The Commissioner Secretary said that

the famous tulip garden in Jammu and Kashmir's Srinagar this year would be open for visitors with several new varieties. He said that Government was also mulling to extend the garden with Sakura gardens (early blooming cherry gardens), for which DPRs have been already prepared.

Meanwhile, Director, Floriculture, Kashmir, Farooq Ahmad Rather said that known as Asia's largest tulip garden, it would house 1.3 million flowers this year with 55 variety flowers.

Rather, said that in addition to tulips, flowers of other varieties like daffodils, hyacinths and ranunculus are also grown in the garden. He informed this year some five new varieties have been added, which would add to the breath-taking view of famed garden.

The garden, which is spread over 30 hectares of land, is situated in the mesmerizing foothills of the Zabarwan hills on the banks of the Dal Lake.

Who is to blame for growing man-animal conflict in Kashmir?

Agencies

SRINAGAR: As humankind continues to breach nature's borders to encroach into the habitat of wildlife species, more and more incidents of man-animal conflict are occurring across the Kashmir Valley.

Just two days back, a leopard and a mother bear with cubs were rescued in time by the officials of the wildlife protection department from a heavily populated area of south Kashmir.

"After rescue, these animals were set free in the forest area so that they return to their natural territory", said an official of the wildlife protection department.

Ironically, instead of helping the rescue effort, dozens of locals were seen clicking mobile phone pictures of these wild animals as they remained dazed after being surrounded by so many people.

Environmentalists say the problem is much bigger and of greater consequence than it appears to the common man.

"Fast growing human population has pushed the boundaries of the wild animals far deeper into the forests and other habitats of these species.

"Look at any forest area of the Valley and you will find that humans have done serious encroachments there. Felling for-

ests for timber and fuel, or claiming forest land for cultivation is a common phenomenon in J&K. "This forces the wildlife species to move down into populated areas for food and sometimes in sheer bewilderment and fear",



said a local environmentalist.

Another important reason for man-animal conflict is the increasing numbers of wildlife species because poaching and unauthorised killing of animals for fur etc has almost stopped due to the presence of the security forces in forest areas.

"Poachers hardly dare to venture into the forests. Security forces deployed on counter insurgency duties dominate forest areas to check infiltration of militants. This has discouraged

poaching and hunting in these forests", said a police officer.

Srinagar city has an entire range of Zabarwan hills those have been declared as protected areas for wildlife species.

Areas overlooking the Raj

only in Kashmir and nowhere else in the World.

As construction of houses etc continues in areas surrounding the Dachigam national park, this has caused stress on various species living inside the park.

A government sheep farm which existed inside the park for decades was re-located two years back to avoid competition between sheep and other grazers among the wildlife species.

"There are pastures those overlap into the Dachigam park and flocks of sheep, goats and cattle are taken up into these pastures by nomadic goatherds during the summer months.

"This is another grey area that needs immediate attention to ensure that the population of Hangul and other species remains unaffected", said Bashir Ahmad, a veterinarian who headed the sheep farm inside the national park for three years in the past.

Thousands of migratory birds come each year to spend the winter months in bird reserves and other lakes and water bodies of the Valley.

Vast areas of these bird reserves like the Hokarsar, Mirgund, Hygam and Shallabugh have been encroached as houses and other structures including shops and godowns have come up in these areas.

Over 12,500 vacant Panchayat Halqas soon to elect Sarpanches, Panches in J&K

JAMMU: Aiming to restore democracy fully at the grass-roots level, over 12,500 vacant Panchayat Halqas will soon elect Sarpanches and Panches in the Union Territory as the Government has decided to hold elections.

Secretary Jammu and Kashmir Rural Development Department, Sheetal Nanda on Tuesday issued notification that the Government in consultation with Election Authority under Rule 7 of J&K Panchayati Raj Rule 1996 has called

upon the vacant Panchayat Halqas to elect Sarpanches and Panches on the dates to be appointed by the Election Authority.

With the announcement of number of vacant seats by the Secretary RDD, the election process has set in motion.

"We have identified a total of 12,653 vacancies in Panchayats including 1,014 Sarpanchs and 11,639 Panchs in all 20 districts of the Union Territory-10 each in Jammu and Kashmir divisions. Ma-

jority of vacancies were in Kashmir division," official sources here said on Wednesday.

They said that the elections to the over 12,500 vacant posts of Panch and Sarpanch in Gram Panchayats in Jammu and Kashmir will be held on the dates to be appointed by the Election Authority.

The schedule for holding the elections is being worked out and dates shall be announced by the Chief Electoral Officer soon, they added and said, "The Election

Authority might begin the poll process from plain areas and hold elections in higher reaches in last couple of phases in March taking into account the winter weather conditions."

The notification revealed that in Kashmir division, maximum number of vacancies were in Baramulla district (2311) followed by South Kashmir's Anantnag district (2130), Budgam (2098), Pulwama (1588) and Kulgam (1071).

Vacancies in other Valley districts in-

cluded 648 in Bandipora, 726 in Ganderbal, 796 in Kupwara, 815 in Shopian and 164 in Srinagar.

However, the vacancies were negligible in Jammu division with highest 42 in Rajouri district followed by 40 in Jammu, 38 in Kathua, 33 in Doda, 31 in Udhampur, 29 in Ramban district, 26 in Poonch, 25 in Samba, 23 in Reasi and 19 in Kishtwar.

On January 21, Jammu and Kashmir Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Shailen-

dra Kumar had called on Lt Governor C C Murmu and informed him about the preparations for the elections to vacant seats of Panchayats in the Union Territory.

Mr Kumar had briefed the Lt Governor about the various activities undertaken by the Election Commission in Jammu and Kashmir for generating awareness of the electoral process and sensitising the voters especially newly eligible young voters towards their voting rights.

SHORT TAKES

Class 11th results: 64 per cent students pass exams

SRINAGAR: Authorities in Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education (BOSE) on Wednesday declared the result of Higher Secondary Part-I examination for Kashmir division with 64 per cent students being declared successful.

In total, 49749 students were declared successful. According to the wire service—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), officials in the JKBOSE said that a total of 49749 students appeared in the examinations last year while 36956 out of them passed the examinations as per the result declared today.

They said the pass percentage of boy students has been recorded as 73 per cent while as the overall pass percentage of girl students is 76 per cent.

The officials told KNO added that 9896 students out of over 40000 students including boys and girls got distinction in the test. They further stated that 12105 students got reappear and 688 students have failed to qualify any of the subjects in their stream.

Pertinently, the Class 11th examinations started in the month of November and culminated in the month of December last year.

Notably, in wake of the internet gag in the Valley, the BOSE has switched to the manual procedure and has declared the results through gazettes.

Pertinently, the class 10th and 12th results were also declared via gazettes, SMS in view of internet clampdown in Kashmir.

After 12 year hunt, J&K Crime Branch arrests absconder from Delhi

JAMMU: The Crime Branch of Jammu and Kashmir police on Wednesday arrested an absconder after a long hunt of 12 years from Delhi, a spokesman of the investigating agency said.

Tariq Arafat, a resident of Uttarakhand, was arrested from the national capital for his alleged involvement in a case registered in Crime Branch, Jammu in 2005 under various sections of the Ranbir Penal Code, the spokesman said.

"The accused is involved in the case for impersonation of candidates appearing in Common Entrance Tests conducted by the Board of Professional Entrance Examination in 2005 for selection in different professional courses including MBBS and BDS," the spokesman said.

He said the investigation of the case was closed as proved and the chargesheet was filed before the court of law against the six accused persons on June 27, 2008.

"Arafat had gone underground to evade arrest since November 2008 and the court had issued an arrest warrant against him under Section 512 CrPC for his arrest after production of the chargesheet," the spokesman added.

He said the case was registered after revelation of facts surfaced during the investigation of an FIR that some candidates appearing in CET conducted in 2005 had managed their selection in different professional courses by impersonation and fraud.

Nocturnal raids in Pulwama, 3 youth detained

SRINAGAR: At least three youth were detained during night raids in Litter village of South Kashmir's Pulwama district.

According to wire service—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), three youth were arrested during the nocturnal raid late on Tuesday night.

Officials confirmed the raid and detention of three youth stating that they were picked up for questioning. "One of the detained youth is the brother of a slain militant," they said.