

JKPDC- Rs 1276 Cr Works Plan for Yr 2020-21 Gets Nod

SRINAGAR, AUGUST 26: In the 75th Board of Directors meeting of J&K State Power Development Corporation (JK-SPDC) chaired by Advisor to Lieutenant Governor, Baseer Ahmad Khan a works plan of Rs 1276.69 crore has been approved today.

The members who participated in the meeting include Financial Commissioner Finance, Dr Arun Kumar Mehta; Principal Secretary Power Development and Information Departments, Rohit Kansal; Director General Budget, Mohammad Yaqoob Itoo besides other corporation officers and officials.

The Board consented for an ambitious working plan for the year 2020-21 with an outlay of Rs 1276.69 crores for creation, renovation and maintenance of assets of the Corporation.

The Board decided that from here onwards the directors would meet every three months. They further decided that all the accounting issues should be cleared within a month and balance sheets prepared and tabled in the next meeting.

The BoD further maintained that hydropower is the most promising revenue generating sector of J&K and exploiting it optimally could address many of the woes of UT of J&K. They asked the Corporation that works on all the ongoing projects should be expedited besides putting their best to take other projects in hand forthwith.

The ongoing Hydro Electric Projects (HEP) for which funds have been proposed in this work plan include 37.50 MW Parnai HEP (Rs 155.36 crore), 12 MW New Karnah HEP (Rs 44.59 crores), Dah-Hanu transmission line (Rs 70.20 crore), 9 MW Dah HEP (Rs 11.86 crore), and 9 MW Hanu HEP (Rs 11.81 crore). These projects are going to help in tiding over the energy crisis in the UT's of J&K and Ladakh to a larger extent.

The BoD also approved capital works to the tune of Rs 172.45 crore for Renovation Modernization & Uprating (RMU) of many operational HEPs. It includes Baglihar-II HEP (Rs 24.90 crores), Sewa-III (21.53 crores), Lower Jehlum HEP (Rs 16.53 crore), Upper Sind HEP-II (Rs 18.34

crores), Chenani-I HEP (Rs 9.98 crore), Chenani-III HEP (Rs 9.35 crores). Besides funds for the same purpose have been assigned for 11 other HEPs.

Further an amount of Rs. 333.81 crore has been proposed for new projects to be taken in hand in the current work plan. These include New Ganderbal HEP (Rs 80.00 crore), Kirthal-I HEP (Rs 31.84 crore), Kirthal-II HEP (Rs 33.90 crore), Lower Kalnai HEP (Rs 38.06 crore). Besides, an amount of Rs 150.00 crore for PMDP projects is also part of this plan.

The plan has also kept an amount of Rs 269.22 crore for meeting the operation & maintenance (O&M) costs of its already created assets and projects. These include Rs 132.80 crore for BHEP-I and Rs 111.60 crore for BHEP-II. Funds for some 18 other HEPs has also been proposed under this head.

The Corporation is anticipated to generate a revenue of Rs 2676.31 crores from different activities and loans. An amount of Rs 1368.98 crores is expected to be realized from the sale of power by the Corporation.

The same amount has also been contemplated to be expended on different activities including on works programme (2020-21) and repayment of loans and interest servicing.

Under Corporate Social Responsibility the Board has earlier provided a bus to a school in Ladakh and renovated another school building at Basholi incurring a total cost of about Rs 19 lakhs.

In this meeting the Board confirmed the insurance cover for Rs 2050 crore of Baglihar HEP stage I & II at a premium of Rs 37.14 crores for the year 2020-21. It also discussed the action taken report on the decisions made in its 74th Board meeting.

The meeting also deliberated upon framing of important committees like Management & Finance Committee, Audit Committee and CSR Committee for running the affairs of the Corporation smoothly. On the occasion new members were inducted into the Chenab Valley Power Projects Corporation Limited for bringing in more professionalism and diversity in the Board.

Asia's Biggest Handmade Carpet Show Concludes

NEW DELHI, AUGUST 26: The first Virtual Edition of 40th Indian Carpet Expo, an exclusive trade fair for Handmade carpets and other floor-coverings, organized by Carpet Export Promotion Council concluded here today.

This initiative of CEPC was aimed at to bridge the gap between Indian products and demand of Handmade Carpets and floor coverings across the globe in the post pandemic era. The 1st Virtual Edition of 40th India Carpet Expo has received overwhelming response from around 364 overseas buyers from 61 countries and 191 Buying Representatives from across the world.

During the Expo, Council orga-

nized 2 Webinars for the benefit of the participants and Member-Exporters. First Webinar was held on 14th August, 2020 on New Techniques of Packaging for Carpet Industry in association with Indian Institute of Packaging, Mumbai keeping in view the fact that in the changing scenario of world business packaging of product is an important segment for the quality business.

Dr. Tanweer Alam, Director (I/c), Indian Institute of Packaging, Mumbai made a presentation on "New Techniques of Packaging for Carpet Industry". Nowadays packaging is a combination of Science and Art & Technology and can increase the brand value of the

product and is considered as a silent salesman of any product.

Praveen Kumar, Director, Department was the chief guest on the first Webinar.

Meanwhile, the second Webinar was conducted on 19th August, 2020 on Colour, Design & Trends Forecast in association with National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT), National Institute of Design (NID) & Buying Agents Association (BAA) keeping in view the fact that Colour and Design forecast plays an important role in the present market scenario and help the manufacturers and Exporters to assess the requirement of the consumers/market and their taste.

Gen (Retd) Ata chairs 6th CUK Court meeting

Ganderbal, Aug 26: The 6th meeting of the Court of Central University of Kashmir (CUK) was held in both offline and online mode on Wednesday with Chancellor, Lt Gen (Retd) Syed Ata Hasnain in chair. Addressing the participants, Chancellor, Lt Gen (Retd) Syed Ata Hasnain, said that despite pandemic, the university has been successful in managing the academic affairs and conducting the offline examinations of student at their respective district headquarters across the Jammu and Kashmir and the Vice Chancellor and his whole team need to be applauded for upholding the excellence in academics despite torrid times. He said that although the university is doing reasonably well in academics but it is always open and welcome to the suggestions and advice from the members of the Court who are great intellectuals and educationists from across the country, for further improvements.

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

PRAYERS
FAJR 4: 30
ZUHR 12: 33
ASR 5:14
Magrib 7:09
ISHA 8:33
HIJRI CALENDAR
07 Muharram 1442

This Day In History

- 663 - Battle of Baekgang: Tang Chinese and Silla Korean forces defeat Korean Baekje forces and their Yamato Japanese allies on the Geum River in Korea. Last Japanese invasion of Korea for 900 years.
1799 - British invasion army lands in North Holland
1813 - Battle of Dresden; Napoleon defeats Austrians
1828 - Uruguay gains independence during Brazil-Argentina peace talks
1828 - The Russians defeat the Turks at the Battle of Akhalzic.
1883 - Krakatoa volcano, west of Java in Indonesia, erupts with a force of 1,300 megatons and kills approximately 40,000 people.
1900 - Battle of Bergendal: General Buller defeats the Boer under general Louis Botha
1913 - Swedish engineer Gideon Sundback of Hoboken applies to patent all-purpose zipper
1916 - Romania declares war on Austria-Hungary
1928 - Kellogg-Briand Pact, 60 nations agree to condemn 'recourse to war for the solution of international controversies'.
1941 - Shah of Iran Reza Shah Pahlavi abdicates throne in favour of his son Mohammad Reza Pahlavi
1942 - Cuba declares war on Germany, Japan & Italy
1945 - US troops land in Japan after Japanese surrender
1955 - "Guinness Book of World Records" 1st published
1958 - USSR launches Sputnik 3 with two dogs aboard
1962 - Mariner 2 launched; first probe to fly by Venus
1962 - USSR performs nuclear test at Novaya Zemlya USSR
1979 - 1st Earl Mountbatten of Burma, cousin of Queen Elizabeth II and last Viceroy of India, is killed along with three companions, two of them children by the IRA when his boat is blown up near Sligo, Ireland
1982 - Soyuz T-7 returns to Earth
1984 - USSR performs underground nuclear test
1984 - War Against Indiscipline is launched by the Buhari regime in Nigeria
1985 - 20th Space Shuttle Mission (51-I)-Discovery 6-launched
1985 - General Ibrahim Babangida overthrows Major General Muhammadu Buhari's regime in Nigeria
1990 - Market prices plunge as OPEC nears informal agreement to increase output to cover shortfall due to invasion; cash market trading experiences abrupt decline.
1991 - Moldavia declares independence from USSR
2003 - Mars makes its closest approach to Earth in nearly 60,000 years, passing 34,646,418 miles (55,758,005 km) distant.
2006 - Comair Flight 5191 crashes on takeoff from Blue Grass Airport in Lexington, Kentucky, bound for Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport in Atlanta, Georgia killing 49 of 50 on board
the first African-American to be nominated by a major political party for President of the United States
2012 - First interplanetary human voice recording is broadcast from the Mars Rover Curiosity
2018 - UN releases report saying Myanmar military leaders should face genocide and crimes against humanity charges for violence against Rohingya

رَفِیقِ اَحْمَد ڈار انتقال کر گئے
پیر جمعہ صبح کو ڈار اسی کے ساتھ ہی انتقال کر گئے اور ان کے انتقال کے بعد ان کے گھر پر سوگواروں کی بے شمار جمعیت نظر آئی۔

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT REGIONAL TRANSPORT OFFICER BUDGAM KASHMIR
NOTICE
Whereas an application has been received from one. Shri : Ahmad Ali Bhat S/o: Mohammad Abdullah Bhat R/o: Karipora Budgam owner of vehicle bearing Registration No: JK04E-4063 for cancellation of hire purchase agreement with M/S J&K Bank Ltd B/u Budgam..

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URBAN ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER S&D DIVISION Srinagar
Notice Inviting Tender
Bid Identification
Deadline for submission of Bids: to 1800 Hours
Executive Engineer S&D Division (on behalf of Lt. Governor of J&K State, invite tenders by e treatment of wastewater flowing in drains/nallahs out Organization/Company's/Firms/ Technology providers having license/tie up/collaboration with institutes like IITs, CSIR and Govt. Institutes, for technologies in the field of water of nallahs/drains wastewater/ sewage successful execution of same technology in India along with License/Collaboration certificates/enlistment certificate from NMCG's

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cover system) are invited from approved and eligible contractors whose cards are valid up to 31 state/central Govt. departments for the following work:
Addition, Alteration of Existing Hall of L.P.T of Construction of Bricks Masonary counters, tile flooring SKUAST
Construction of Main Entrance Gate Complex including Security Hut and other allied works at Faculty of Fisheries Rangil
Construction of Tin Shed for Housing Machinery to Division of Food Science &
The Bidding document consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, set of terms and conditions other details can be downloaded from the departmental website
Date of issue of Tender Notice
Date of start of downloading
Further information can be had from the Office of the undersigned
DIPK-NB-1999/20

From KO Archives
Officer shifted for 7th time, goes on leave
Observer News Service
Srinagar - The principal secretary, revenue, Sonali Kumar, has proceeded on leave following the recent transfers and postings in the state administration.
The high-ranking bureaucrat has been transferred for the seventh time in the changes announced yesterday.
During the two-and-a-half year tenure of the coalition government, Kumar has been shifted six times from her posts.
Before the coalition government 'came to power, Sonali Kumar had been made the commissioner secretary, education, on May 1, 2002.
Soon after the new government took over, she was transferred to the technical education department as commissioner secretary in November
2003. In February the next year, she was transferred to industries and commerce, and four months later, in July 2003, to the higher and technical education department
After serving on that post for one year, she was transferred again in July 2004, and made the principal secretary of the forest department. The government shifted her again in April 2005, this time to the health and medical education department.
Yesterday's revamp, which made her the principal secretary of the revenue department, was the sixth time she was transferred in 2-and-a-half years.
Fed up with the repeated transfers and postings, Sonali Kumar, has gone on leave in protest, sources told the KNS. She has asked the government to grant her leave till October.
Kashmir Observer, August 27, 2000

KASHMIR
OBSERVER

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Fraught regional environment

The deepening of alliance between China and Pakistan has become a cause of some concern in India. More so, at a time when China has staged incursions along the Line of Actual Control in Ladakh and is refusing to vacate the area occupied by it. Earlier last week, the "iron brother" issued a joint statement following their second annual strategic dialogue in which Chinese side reiterated that the Kashmir issue is a dispute left over from history and called for its peaceful resolution according to "the UN Charter, relevant Security Council resolutions and bilateral agreements". China also opposed any unilateral actions that complicated the situation. In response, India "categorically" rejected the reference made to Jammu and Kashmir. Spokesperson in the Ministry of External Affairs Anurag Srivastava said the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir is an "integral and inalienable" part of India and that it expected the parties concerned not to interfere in the country's internal matters. Pakistani reaction was also predictable: it termed India's statement that Kashmir is its integral part as a "laughable fiction".

If anything, this bitter exchange reflects the abysmal state of the prevailing relations of New Delhi with its two neighbours. With Islamabad, the relations have been in freefall since the revocation of Article 370 in August last year. And Beijing at the time had also taken exception to change of status of Ladakh. Going forward, it looks unlikely that the ties with Pakistan and China can be improved anytime soon. What is more, New Delhi has also suffered reverses in its relations with Nepal and Bangladesh. But it is the relationship with Pakistan and China that is of critical importance to India. They are our biggest neighbours and we share two-third of our border with them. Any further deterioration in the ties with the two hardly bodes well for the regional peace.

In response, however, India has taken countermeasures by bolstering its defences along the LAC and LoC. The country has also received the first batch of Rafale fighter jets from France. But while military preparedness is paramount for a country to counter the aggression, a state of no war and no peace with neighbours can be more detrimental to the interests of a country in the long term. So a serious and meaningful engagement with Pakistan and China is the urgent need of the hour. To start with, it is important that India and Pakistan get back to dialogue and pick up thread from where they left off in 2008. This could go a long way to reduce the prevailing state of uncertainty in the region and open up some possibility of peace in future.

OTHER OPINION

UAE-Israel deal

Two months ago, Yousef Al Otaiba, the UAE's ambassador to Washington, laid out for Israelis a vision for a more peaceful Middle East. "Greater security. Direct links. Expanded markets. Growing acceptance," he wrote in an opinion piece for a daily newspaper in Tel Aviv. "This is what normal could be."

It is a very different path from the one Israel had been heading down since its March election, in which the government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed to mount an illegal annexation of occupied Palestinian territory.

Annexation, as Mr Al Otaiba pointed out, would be the opposite of normal; it would be a provocation for large sections of the Arab world that yearn for a more stable and prosperous future. Israel's response to these aspirations "would be an unmistakable signal of whether it sees it the same way".

This evening, Israel made its decision. In a landmark agreement between the UAE, Israel and the US, the Netanyahu government agreed to halt its annexation plans in exchange for the establishment of bilateral ties with the Emirates.

Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, confirmed that "the UAE and Israel also agreed to co-operation and setting a roadmap towards establishing a bilateral relationship".

Provided the Israeli government upholds the agreement, the end result will be the establishment of a multitude of ties, including diplomatic outposts, trade and co-operation in technology sectors. The two nations will also work together in addressing food security and climate change - areas that will have far-reaching consequences for quality of life throughout the region.

The deal is an historic moment in decades of diplomatic efforts to preserve the contours of a future Palestinian state through a negotiated, two-state solution. It is also a moment of which the Emirates, which has long sought to ensure the dignity of Palestinians, can be exceptionally proud. The spectre of annexation, which remains illegal under international law, was not only an affront to that dignity in the present moment; it was a negation of all that a Palestinian state could be. The suffering Palestinians have endured over the past seven decades is immeasurable, but equally limitless is the potential that Palestinians have to build for themselves a country that could be the envy of the Middle East. A deal that seeks to protect their resources and territorial integrity is a crucial starting point from which that future can begin.

"Fundamentally, our initiative is not to solve the Arab-Israeli conflict," UAE Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Dr Anwar Gargash said of the announcement. "This is left to the Palestinian and Israelis - rather it is to contribute to defusing a time bomb that was threatening the two-state solution".

With good faith from the Israeli side, it could also be a starting point for a new chapter in history. The Middle East is a region with too many fractures in too many places. With this agreement, one of its deepest may soon begin to heal.

The National

Their Kamala, Not Ours

The comparison to Kamala Harris's political rise in the US has to be with the shrinking space today for Muslim politicians in India, and the lack of all kinds of diversity in non-political arenas as well.

Nirupama Subramanian

Senator Harris's Indian Tamil mother and her dad, a black Jamaican, both foreigners in the US, met as participants during the Civil Rights Movement that was sweeping the country in the 1950s and 1960s. Leave aside the counter-factual that had they been deported to their respective countries for participating in a protest, as a German student at IIT-Madras was last year for marching with others in the campus against the Citizenship Amendment Act, there would have been no Kamala Harris to

The nomination of Kamala Harris for vice-president on the Democratic ticket in the US presidential elections has sent India into raptures. Indians, Tamils, Tamil Brahmins, even AIADMK party men, have gone wild with joy. In their book, she has won already. Chitthis of the world are ecstatic at being under the spotlight. Soon, even the Beasant Nagar A-block Residents Welfare Association may pass a resolution that all ex-residents of this south Chennai neighbourhood, now in the US, must stand with her.

The predominant sentiment is of pride in "our girl". Even the strategic community believes she is going to be "good for India", for H1B visas, for trade, and generally for India-US relations, never mind that the elections are still ahead. As for Joe Biden, the presidential candidate, he is a footnote in all the debate about Harris and her Indian family.

What will certainly not be discussed at all, or as much, are the home truths about India that Senator Harris's nomination and her extraordinary journey serve to highlight. For one, a majoritarian democracy like the one India has become in the 21st century could not have produced a Kamala Harris.

As a woman, and a member of a racial and ethnic minority in the US, Harris's rise to the top levels of the American polity, like President Barack Obama's, was possible because of a system that recognises and accepts diversity. True, the recent protests in the United States have demonstrated that America's oldest fault line is not just alive, it has grown wider and deeper in many respects. But the country's democratic instincts run deep too. What has also been evident over the last few months is an acute awareness about the dangers of white supremacy, and the institutional, political, media and civil society pushback to prevent its rise, and President Donald Trump's own attempts to fan it.

Black political representation is not a rarity. Data on the Pew Research Centre site shows that despite uneven progress, Black political leadership in the US has risen over the last 50 years, and is today at par with the share of blacks in the population. In 2019, there were 52 black representatives, the highest number since 1965, comprising 12 per cent of the House - about the percentage of blacks, the largest racial minority in the US, whose share in the population is about 13.5 per cent. While there are only three black senators (including Harris) and no black governors, overall, the trend is more representative than less. This is the ecosystem in which Harris grew as a politician. Notwithstanding her Tamil Brahmin ancestry, the comparison to Harris's political rise in the US has to be with the shrinking space today for Muslim politicians in India, and the lack of all kinds of diversity in non-political arenas as well.

In India, Muslims, who are the largest religious minority and form about 15 per cent of the population, are comparable in size to the black community in the US. But their political representation has been sliding over the decades, since the highest tally of 49 Muslim Members of Parliament elected in 1980. In 2019, 27 Muslim members were elected to the Lok Sabha,



ha, 4.97 per cent of the total 543 elected. The BJP fielded just six Muslim candidates. All of them lost. The 16th Lok Sabha had 23 Muslims. None of them were from the BJP. The party, the political vehicle of Hindutva and Hindu majoritarianism, has fielded a total of 20 candidates over the last 40 years and only three of them have won (Christopher Jaffrelot and Gilles Verniers, IE, July 30, 2018). As of date, the 242-member Rajya Sabha has 16 Muslims, or 6.6 per cent. Non-Hindutva political parties are also increasingly fielding fewer Muslim candidates as they play catch up with the BJP.

Senator Harris's Indian Tamil mother and her dad, a black Jamaican, both foreigners in the US, met as participants during the Civil Rights Movement that was sweeping the country in the 1950s and 1960s. Leave aside the counter-factual that had they been deported to their respective countries for participating in a protest, as a German student at IIT-Madras was last year for marching with others in the campus against the Citizenship Amendment Act, there would have been no Kamala Harris to celebrate from Chennai to Delhi. Marriages between Indians and black Americans are rare, frowned upon by Indian parents. Mississippi Masala, the Mira Nair film, is nearly 30 years old. While attitudes to interracial marriages across groups in the US have loosened much over this time, among Indians, marriage to a black person continues to be discouraged and looked down upon by family and community. To understand this, check how black people are treated in India, not just those who self-identify as black, but also those who are dark-skinned. Marrying a Dalit or a Muslim is enough to set off group violence.

Communalism is now so normalised in India that all too many people no longer deem it necessary to hide their bigotry, and even the lynching of Muslim men in the name of Ram and cows has not provoked the outrage it deserved. Communal "othering" is so pervasive that most Indians seem to have no problem with the Centre's use of authoritarian tactics, including the longest internet ban in the world, to roll out constitutional changes in the Muslim-majority Jammu & Kashmir, without giving the people there a chance to express themselves on these

dramatic changes that includes changing the rules to enable demographic change. Kamala Harris, on the other hand, is the Other and represents the othered, identifying herself primarily as a black person, so much that few in the US knew she was half-Indian until last year.

Her nomination speaks to the recent Black Lives Matter campaign. Despite the divide between black and brown in the US, the participation of Indians in the protests over George Floyd's murder by a policeman was a development noted for its potential for blurring the constructed political separateness of the two. In India, many see police brutality as a necessity to rein in lawlessness, never mind if the police themselves break every law in the book while doing so. The policemen who killed the alleged rapists of a woman in Telangana were showered with flower petals. The UP chief minister has been seen to encourage "encounters" such as the one in which the dacoit Vikas Dubey was killed last month. Movies are made about so-called "encounter-specialists", making heroes of them.

In her speech accepting her nomination on August 19, Harris spoke about the "the promise of equality, liberty, and justice for all", and how her mother Shyamala Gopalan had taught her two daughters "to be conscious and compassionate about the struggles of all people. To believe public service is a noble cause and the fight for justice is a shared responsibility".

She spoke of "a vision of our nation as a Beloved Community - where all are welcome, no matter what we look like, where we come from, or who we love. A country where we may not agree on every detail, but we are united by the fundamental belief that every human being is of infinite worth, deserving of compassion, dignity and respect. A country where we look out for one another, where we rise and fall as one, where we face our challenges, and celebrate our triumphs - together. Today... that country feels distant." She might as well have been referring to India, where a nomination of a person like her would have been swiftly denounced as minority "appeasement" and her party accused of "minorityism".

OBSERVER MAIL

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

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Covid-19: Some Recommendations

The novel Coronavirus has impacted the whole world in one way or the other. In South-Asia the average death rate is approximately 1.14% (Afghanistan 3.54%, India 2.03%, Bangladesh 1.31%, Sri Lanka 0.38%, Nepal 0.32%, Maldives 0.39% and Bhutan 0%). As per the government, with around 1400 diagnostic labs at place, the systematic and coordinated implementation of 3-T strategy (Test, Track and Treat) by the Centre, states and Union Territories has proven effective. India has also recorded the lowest, 30 deaths per million compared to the global, 91 deaths per million.

In Kashmir, there are approximately 24,000 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Jammu and Kashmir, among which 30% are active, 67% have recovered and 1.87% have deceased, as per the government data. These figures are in synergy with the overall situation in India. Compared with the population level, the situation seems to be under control but at the ground level,

the situation appears to be worsening. While, quarantine centres have been a subject of criticism since the beginning; health facilities are also facing shortage of beds, ventilators and supplies. There has also been constant criticism about faulty data vis a vis true/actual number of COVID-19 cases in Jammu and Kashmir.

Therefore, while our health care is already overburdened, we do not even know the true estimate of the situation and the potential of it worsening. With so much ambiguity, we as a community must stay prepared and alert to avert the dangers of this disease. The most important factor in preventing the spread of the virus locally is to empower citizens with the right information and taking precautions as per the advisories being issued by the ministries and public health directorates.

Due to continuous coverage and reporting of COVID-19 related updates, an inundation has been caused. In such a case, getting our facts right is

extremely important. Since COVID-19 is a new disease with many unknown inferences, it is causing a bizarre stigma against COVID-19 in the community which is in turn driving people towards hiding their illnesses and delaying seeking treatment. Therefore, it is also extremely pertinent to destigmatise COVID-19 workers and recovered patients.

Now is the time to build trust in reliable health services, show empathy to those who are affected and adopt effective behavioural measures. Healthcare workers spend hours in a single piece of protective gear, because there's scarcity of PPEs. As a result, they can't leave the infected area for hours. There are visuals of health workers leaving the hospitals dehydrated and exhausted. They are always on-call and are doing their best to de-escalate the situation with the limited resources they have. So, the wit lies in cooperating with them and amplifying their voices. Awareness and appreciation can

be also achieved through the involvement of religious leaders, celebrities, politicians in the campaign against COVID-19 and to promote preventive measures and discourage gatherings. Moreover, these desperate times also call for "ethical journalism" which encourages recommended practices, runs case narratives on COVID-19 warriors and promotes content around basic infection prevention practices, symptoms and the information to know when to seek medical assistance.

In addition to the obvious threat to health and life, Covid-19 has also brought with it other humanitarian issues such as poverty and domestic violence. Therefore, we must encourage young people to volunteer in every aspect. The involvement of youth is needed now more than ever. This war can only be won with unity and cooperation on all sides.

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Kashmir's 'War on Drugs' Sends Out a Clear Message: 'No Hope in Dope'

Swati Joshi

Efforts are being made behind the scenes in the valley today to save young and restless from becoming victims of substance abuse. But even as the syndicate of Samaritans is working tirelessly, the deep influx of drugs is only making it a tough task at hand.

Mood turned militant in the backand winding alleys of Downtown Srinagar's MakhdoomSahab locality last year when the community members doubled as street vigilantes. Armed with sticks, they fortified theirlanesto keep the sneaky drug-peddlers at bay. The self-styled street patrolling was perhaps one of the first conspicuous community mobilization efforts in the recent years and a shot in the arm in Kashmir's 'war on drugs'drive.

For years, the unruffled path passing through their residences would be frequented by unassuming addicts and 'dope-men'. The alleged "drug cartel"—purportedly used as a votebank by some local unionists—nearby has remained a "pain in the neck" for locals and the civil society members.

The vigilantes acted on "credible reports" that felons come in luxurious vehicles after sundown to supply drugs like heroin, brown sugar, cannabis and recreational drugs like Diazepam, Alprax and among others.

"Some people living in Sheikh Colony have been identified who are part of the deep-rooted nexus," Syed BasharatAndrabi, general secretary of MohallaMakhdoomSahab welfare committee—that decided to go for social boycott of these families—had alleged.

Surging drug menace in the area had enforced a new order. In nearby schools, the girl students were quietly dropping out. "Due to presence of drug addicts, movement of people especially females is hindered," Andrabi said. "If some elderly persons try to stop youth from consuming drugs, it results in a scuffle."

Efforts are being made behind the scenes in the valley today to save young and restless from becoming victims of substance abuse. But even as the syndicate of Samaritans is working tirelessly, the deep influx of drugs is only making it a tough task at hand.

Streets to Surveys

The community campaign came when cops are everyday seizing contrabands and sending the peddlers behind the bar across the valley.

Reports say the number of addicts visiting Drug De-addiction Centre of Government Medical College in Srinagar has gone up to 5000, from earlier 500, patients annually.

According to a survey conducted by the United Nations Drug Control Program (UNDCP), around 70,000 people in Kashmir consume drugs.

Another survey done by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE) in February 2019 found out that 600,000 people of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir use opioid drugs,



while 80 percent of the drug addicts in Kashmir use heroin and morphine.

A study done by the Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (IMHANS) found out that the number of drug addicts in Srinagar and Anantnag districts has increased to 17,000. Roughly, the study says, Rs 3.7 crore is spent every day on drugs by addicts in these two districts.

Of late, these growing numbers and cases have prompted the community response, to "separate the grain from the chaff". This approach has already activated multiple counseling centres in the valley today.

Inside Counselling Centre

Mir Zubair could clearly tell an upsurge in dope cases in Kashmir when even 9-year-old Kashmiri child walks in for an emergency counseling session along with his distraught family members. He terms such cases as an 'innocence gone wrong'.

As a counselor at Concerned About Universal Social Empowerment (CAUSE), the non-government organization "working for the betterment of society", Zubair along with his welfare body has been organizing drug de-addiction awareness programs at Srinagar's Central Jail for four years.

"When we started working around 2010, there was denial at the administration as well as ground level on drug de-

addiction," Zubair told Kashmir Observer. "But now the scenario has changed. There's more awareness amongst people in Kashmir."

The holistic reason for drug addiction in the valley is the social-political disturbance. "I usually receive patients in the age group of 12 and 25 years," he continued. "But at times, when a nine-year-old walks in for counseling, it takes everybody by surprise."

Why do they Drug

For Arif, it all started with peer pressure. The trader taking trips to other cities would take heroin with his friends until one day his daughter saw him consuming it. She was shattered and started crying which triggered him to visit a drug de-addiction centre in Srinagar.

He was admitted for two months there, and started showing improvement, AatiraAhad, who was interning at the centre that time, told Kashmir Observer. "We provided him medication and emotional therapy which motivated him to leave heroin."

Like Arif, when Junaid, 23, started taking drugs, he didn't know that it would be difficult to give it up. He resorted to drugs due to peer pressure, and when he thought of quitting, the withdrawal symptoms didn't let him do it.

Unsuccessful in getting positive results from therapists in Kashmir, he went outside to seek help but there was no relief.

His parents lost hope and started suspecting him of finding reasons to use drugs, but the corporate employee was actually struggling with the withdrawal symptoms.

When Junaid finally visited Dr. ArifMaghribi, a Srinagar-based mental specialist, he first talked about his family's 'no drug history'.

Dr. Maghribi wasn't surprised by his statement, since for many people it's a stigma in the valley to talk about drug addiction. The mental specialist treated him and also talked to his family about the issue.

"He was quite reluctant to bring his family in the initial days," Dr. Maghribi told Kashmir Observer. But after some days when the family realized that Junaid was working hard to give up his addiction, they accompanied him to the mental specialist.

Currently, Junaid is working with a multinational company (MNC) and is living outside India. "His case makes it clear that family counseling is very important in a drug abuse case," Dr. Maghribi said.

But unfortunately, the mental specialist said, many parents lock their children in rooms with a religious book to de-addict them. The outcome of such steps, he warned, may adversely impact the addict and even result in his death.

"People may start drugs due to peer pressure, depression, loss of loved ones, but once they become addict it is very tough to get out of the cycle," the doctor said.

"It's like, first you consume drug, then the drug consumes you."

Beyond MakhdoomSahab

What started in MakhdoomSahab last year hasn't remained confined there only.

As awareness about drug and its destructive consequences is growing, many localities in Kashmir are reacting as community watchmen.

"As a community, we can't behave like ostriches that bury their heads in sand to avoid problems," said Ghulam-Hasan Khan, a resident of Galwanpora village in Budgam district.

A month before the abrogation of J&K's special status, Khan along with others held a massive protest against the rampant "drug trafficking" in their village. The protestors alleged that the drugs are being cultivated on over twenty kanals of land and is being sold out to even minors.

"We can't let drugs to devour our children," Khan said. "We must come together to spread the message that there's no hope in dope."

Today, there are various schools of thought each of which claims to represent the real Islam or the spirit of Islam. There is essentially nothing wrong with groups claiming to be the truest representatives of religion, as each is entitled to its own opinion and interpretation.

However, matters get problematic when adherents of violent philosophies, who resort to mass murder and bloodshed to impose their beliefs on others, start masquerading as the true representatives of Islam. And many ordinary Muslims, taken in by their frequent recourse to quoting scripture and other outward displays of faith, start accepting that these individuals and groups actually know Islam better than anyone else.

This is troublesome as it not only distorts the message of Islam, but also creates acceptance driven by fear and ignorance of militant schools of thought, as many ordinary people, as well as some of those who claim to be religious scholars, start condoning or justifying atrocities committed in the name of religion. The militant thus sanctifies his bloodshed under the cloak of religion.

However, in this writer's view there is a very simple way to avoid falling prey to such confusion. Those claiming to represent Islam must be judged by some criteria; without this, we open the door to allowing individuals to mislead the public and abuse religion. And perhaps the single most emphatic criterion cutting across sectarian and doctrinal boundaries to judge who is abiding by Islamic values and who is not is Karbala and the heroic struggle of Imam Husain bin Ali.

Centuries after Imam Husain took the field against the Syrian forces, Karbala is a byword for strength of character, bravery and steadfastness. And if these virtues are absent, one can easily differentiate between those who are inspired by faith, and those seeking purely worldly aims in the name of religion.

While many of us are familiar with the epic of Karbala—the sufferings of Imam Husain, his family and companions, the barbarity of the Syrian horde and the valour of Husain on the battlefield—we must ponder over what led him to leave his hometown of Madina and make his way with his family and small band of supporters to the desert of Karbala.

Some have argued that Imam Husain was motivated by political considerations to take the caliphate from Yazid. However, this appears to be a very superficial analysis. For if Husain's aim was conquest, he

The Criterion Of Karbala

Qasim A. Moini



Let us refer to Karbala as a criterion for what Islam and humanity is truly all about. For at Karbala, Husain took a stand for righteousness, braving hunger and thirst, sacrificing all that he held dear and prostrating before the Almighty as the ruthless Syrian horde fell upon him after he had been left alone in the field.

would not have taken the field with a force of under a hundred, which included women, children and the elderly. Instead, he would have gathered a large army to confront the Syrians.

Imam Husain's decision to confront the Yazidi force was motivated by much loftier aims. In Husain's

own words, as quoted by acclaimed scholar Ayatollah Murtaza Mutahhari, he sought to enjoy what is good and forbid what is evil and follow the traditions of my grandfather and my father. This was Karbala's mission statement.

Imam Husain further clarified his intentions in

a sermon at Mina, en route to Karbala: O God! You know that everything we did was not prompted by rivalry for political power, nor for a search for wealth and abundance; rather it was done to demonstrate to men the shining principles and values of Your religion, to reform the affairs of Your land, to protect and secure the indisputable rights of Your oppressed servants, and to act in accordance with the duties You have established and the norms, laws, and ordinances You have decreed.

In this passage, Husain beautifully encapsulated the core values of Islam. Obedience to Allah, reformation of society and struggle for the rights of the oppressed are the main features of religion as taught by Husain, and it was for the protection of these values that Husain faced the Syrians at Karbala.

On the other end of the spectrum, the Yazidi force was motivated by purely base concerns, i.e. pleasing the ruler of the day while casting aside all moral, spiritual and ethical ideals.

So today, when militants or extremists claim to fight for the glory of Islam, we must ask if they are living up to the Karbala ideals. The answer is self-evident. For at Mina, Imam Husain castigated the scholars saying they had neglected the rights of the oppressed and the lowly. Today's holy warriors care little for the oppressed and lowly, slaughtering them in bazaars, mosques, imambargahs and churches.

Let us not be fooled by outward appearances. Let us refer to Karbala as a criterion for what Islam and humanity is truly all about. For at Karbala, Husain took a stand for righteousness, braving hunger and thirst, sacrificing all that he held dear and prostrating before the Almighty as the ruthless Syrian horde fell upon him after he had been left alone in the field.

The name Husain is symbolic of liberation and freedom, and perhaps the divine plan is to rouse the conscience of all the world's oppressed through the retelling of Imam Husain's struggle year after year. In the words of renowned exegete of the Quran Abdullah Yusuf Ali, delivered at a Muharram majlis in London in 1931, Imam Husain's blameless and irreproachable life was in itself a reproach to those who had other standards. They sought to silence him, but he could not be silenced.

Perhaps that is why the tyrants of the day still brutally target all that symbolises Husain and his struggle.



THIS IS AN EXCITING FINDING, PARTICULARLY IN the context of COVID-19 as one of the big questions is why some people get severely sick, while others experience mild disease," said study co-author Daniel Utzschneider from the University of Melbourne.

Scientists Decode How Severe Viral Infection Causes Immune System 'Exhaustion'

Press Trust Of India
MELBOURNE: Scientists have identified mechanisms behind the deterioration of the immune system in response to severe viral infections, an advance that may lead to the development of novel therapeutics for diseases like COVID-19.

The study, published in the journal *Nature Immunology*, noted that severe viral infections cause impairments to some components of the immune system such as the T cells in a process called immune 'exhaustion'. According to the researchers, including those from the University of Melbourne in Australia, this

process has also been reported in patients with severe COVID-19. They said overcoming immune exhaustion is a major goal for the development of new therapies for severe viral infections. While earlier studies had shown that during severe infections, T cells lost their function slowly, and over long periods of time, the cur-

rent study found that they can be impaired within just a few days. In the research, the scientists also identified several new mediators of immune exhaustion that maybe targeted in new therapies. "This is an exciting finding, particularly in the context of COVID-19 as one of the big questions is why some people get severely

sick, while others experience mild disease," said study co-author Daniel Utzschneider from the University of Melbourne. "We looked at both mild and overwhelming Lymphocytic Choriomeningitis Virus infections in mice, which serves as a model for severe viral infections in humans, early after onset of disease, and

identified striking differences at the molecular and functional level," Utzschneider said. The researchers demonstrated that in response to overwhelming infections that are difficult to eliminate and may become chronic, T cells down-regulate their function within days. However, they said the T cells

responding to a weaker infection remained highly functional. "These findings are extremely exciting. Our data show that T cells could be manipulated during early stages of severe viral infection to improve their activity," said Axel Kallies, another co-author of the study from the University of Melbourne.

Chemotherapy May Accelerate Aging Process In Young Cancer Survivors

Agencies
A new study examines the effects of cancer and its treatment on the aging process and finds that the expression of a gene associated with aging is higher in young patients with cancer after treatment with chemotherapy and in young cancer survivors who are frail. The findings are published early online in *CANCER*, a peer-reviewed journal of the American Cancer Society (ACS). Previous research has shown that a protein called p16INK4a, which slows cell division, is produced at higher levels by cells as a person ages. Using the expression of the gene that codes for p16INK4a as a marker of age, Andrew Smitherman, MD, MSc, of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center, and his colleagues examined immune cells circulating in the blood of young adult survivors of childhood cancers and of children and adolescents newly diagnosed with cancer. The team first analyzed cells from 60 survivors and compared them with cells from 29 age-matched individuals without a history of cancer. Expression of the gene that codes for p16INK4a



was higher in survivors than in controls, representing a 25-year age acceleration. Nine survivors were frail, and they had a higher level of expression compared with survivors who were not frail, representing a 35-year age acceleration. The researchers also found that in the nine children and adolescents in the study who had a new diagnosis of cancer, expression was higher after treatment with chemotherapy than before treatment. "Higher expression of p16INK4a in peripheral blood lymphocytes has been described in older adults following chemotherapy, but prior to this study,

not in young adult survivors," said Dr. Smitherman. "This study is important as we try to understand the biological mechanisms underlying the manifestations of early aging in this population," added Smitherman. Dr. Smitherman noted that elevated p16INK4a expression as a marker of aging may help identify cancer survivors at risk for developing frailty and functional disability. "Additionally, expression of p16INK4a may prove useful as a measure to study treatments aimed at mitigating the early aging effects of cancer treatment," he said.

**Government of Jammu and Kashmir
Office of the Executive Engineer,
Floriculture Department Srinagar Kashmir.**

**GIST OF SHORT TENDER NOTICE NO. (27) of 2020-21
Dated: 26 .08.2020.**

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor of Jammu and Kashmir, Sealed tenders affixed with Rupee Sixrevenue stamps are invited for below mentioned work from approved contractors class of whom shown which should reach to the office of the undersigned through registered post/courier/speed post by or before **03.09.2020 upto 02:00 PM** on the prescribed tender documents which can be obtained from the office of the undersigned up to **01.09.2020 upto 04.00 PM**. In case of holiday etc. the tenders will be received on next working day up to **12.00 PM**.

	Providing protection Shelter to Panel Board of fountain system at Polo ground Srinagar								

- Note:
1. The card holder who is interested to participate in the tendering process should attend the office personally along with GST Regd/Pan Card and Latest GST clearance certificate along with CDR of required amount without which the tender documents cannot be issued.
 2. Tenderer before applying for obtaining the tender documents should read carefully the detailed tender notice in the office of the undersigned.
 3. The CDR/FDR of unsuccessful/un-casted contractors will be released after 15 days from the date of opening of tenders or issuance of allotment order which is earliest.
 4. If during the course of execution any new item (s) of work felt necessary to be executed, the same shall be paid as per J&K SSR of 2012 with contractor, depreciation / appreciation.

DIPK-4604/20
No: EE/FD/900

Sd/-
Executive Engineer,
Department of Floriculture
Srinagar

Dated: 26 /08/2020

Study Links Living At Higher Altitudes To Higher Levels Of Child Stunting

Agencies
Children living at high altitudes are found to be more stunted, on average, than peers residing at lower altitudes, according to a new study. Residing at higher altitudes is associated with greater rates of stunting, even for children living in "ideal-home environments" according to a new study from researchers at the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and Addis Ababa University.

The study provides new insight into the relationship between altitude and undernutrition and the additional efforts needed to ensure policy interventions are appropriately tailored to high altitude contexts. "More than 800 million people live at 1,500 meters above sea level or higher, with two-thirds of them in Sub-Saharan Africa, and Asia. These two regions host most of the world's stunted children so it is important to understand the role that altitude plays in growth" said IFPRI Senior Re-

search Fellow and co-author of the study, Kalle Hirvonen. "If children living at altitude are, on average, more stunted than their peers at sea level, then a more significant effort to address high altitude stunting is needed," Hirvonen added. The study, "Evaluation of Linear Growth at Higher Altitudes," co-authored by Hirvonen and Addis Ababa University Associate Professor Kaleab Baye, was published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA), Pediatrics*. The study

analyzed height-for-age data of more than 950,000 children from 59 countries. The data were compiled through the Advancing Research on Nutrition and Agriculture (ARENA) project funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Children were classified as having lived in an ideal-home environment if they were born to highly educated mothers, had good health-service coverage and high living conditions. Global tracking of growth rates relies on the assumption that

children living in such environments have the same growth potential, irrespective of genetic makeup or geographic location. "The data clearly indicated that those residing in ideal-home environments grew at the same rate as the median child in the growth standard developed by the World Health Organization (WHO), but only until about 500 meters above sea level (masl). After 500 masl, average child height-for-age significantly deviated from the growth curve of the median child in



the reference population," said Hirvonen. The research further shows that these estimated growth deficits are unlikely to be due to common risk factors such as poor diet and disease.

