





# 2020 saw environment bounce back to its glory, even if temporarily

The Covid-19 pandemic battered and bruised the world in 2020, teaching the value of human life, but an evident positive impact was that it helped the environment bounce back to its glory, even if temporarily.

While schools, workplaces, transport and industry remained closed for a large part of the year as people stayed put in their houses, the grey skies started turning blue and pollutants in the air began to settle.

According to the Central Pollution Control Board, there was a significant improvement in air quality during lockdown (from March 22 to May 18) as PM2.5 in Delhi reduced by almost 50 per cent as compared to levels observed during 2019.

The pollution level in India's five most-polluted cities - Ghaziabad, Delhi, Noida, Greater Noida and Gurgaon - which are also in the top 10 globally, came down by over 50 per cent during the first 10 days of the lockdown imposed to combat Covid-19 outbreak, said Greenpeace India.

Besides the air quality, there was improvement in water quality of seven rivers - Yamuna, Brahmani, Godavari, Cauvery, Krishna, Tapi and Brahmaputra - which was attributed to minimal industrial effluent discharges in view of closure of almost all industries, no human activities involving disposal of worshipped puja materials and garbage, no anthropogenic activities such as outdoor bathing, washing of clothes, vehicle washing and cattle washing, no pilgrimage activities etc. during lockdown phase, the CPCB had said.

The panic caused by the pandemic came as a blessing in

disguise for animals as the government kept humans away from them and their habitats. Swinging into action after a tiger at a US zoo tested positive for Covid-19, the environment ministry had asked all states and union territories to restrict the movement of people in various national parks and sanctuaries to avoid any human-animal contact.

However, as per a study conducted by wildlife trade monitoring network TRAFFIC, incidents of wildlife poaching in India more than doubled during the Covid-19 lockdown with 88 animals being killed for meat and trade during this time compared to 35 in the pre-lockdown days.

The brutal killing of a pregnant elephant in Kerala, after she was fed firecrackers-filled pineapple, took social media by the storm, prompting the government to investigate the matter. The fear of the pandemic also led people to believe at one point that migratory birds were spreading the disease. However, the government busted the myth saying that "fear psychosis" was being created by people and that there was no connection of coronavirus with migratory birds.

The year gone by also saw India taking the presidency of the 13th Conference of Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS COP 13) which was held in Gujarat in February, just a month before the coronavirus began wreaking its havoc in the country. During the conference, the countries adopted an accord, the Gandhinagar Declaration that maintaining and restoring ecological connectivity is one of the top priorities for CMS. Three migratory birds - Great Indian Bustard, Asian Elephant and Bengal Florican - were also classified as "endangered migratory

species" by a UN body, paving the way for trans-boundary conservation efforts.

The conference saw participation from over 100 countries except China as it opted out of it due to travel restrictions in the wake of coronavirus outbreak, which began from a single case in its city of Wuhan.

Fear of the impact of Covid-19 on the world economy also caused the government to worry about achieving the climate goals under the Paris Agreement making Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar ask people not to get "too romantic" about the blue skies, fresh air and the green earth.

Noting there was a direct link between Covid-19 and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) of wellbeing and health, which is a part of the SDGs set in 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly and intended to be achieved by 2030, the minister had said that the economic consequences of the pandemic may lead to weakening India's commitment to climate action.

However, few months later, the minister announced that India was the only G20 country in compliance with the Paris Agreement targets and that none of the developed nations are compliant.

The government remained on its toes in tackling waste generated due to the coronavirus cases in the country with the central pollution watchdog CPCB repeatedly issuing guidelines on waste disposal.

As the cases continued to rise, the CPCB directed all health care centres across the country to keep separate colour-coded bins or containers in wards and maintain proper segregation of waste as per the Bio-Medical Waste (BMW)

Management Rules 2016 as amended. It said the biomedical waste, if any, generated from quarantine centres or camps should be collected separately in yellow coloured bags and bins. The Environment Ministry also expedited clearances to bulk drug projects to fight coronavirus by issuing a notification which said the expeditious environmental clearances given to units involving active pharmaceutical ingredients (API) and bulk drug intermediates will ensure overall preparedness and availability of drugs to reduce the impact of the outbreak.

The year 2020 also saw a huge tussle between the Centre and environmentalists over the amendments to the environment impact assessment (EIA) with the latter alleging that it intended to bring in controversial amendments such as post-facto grant of approval, exemption of several large industries from public hearings, permission for industries to submit just one compliance report a year rather than two, increased validity of the environment clearances for mining projects and river valley projects, and many more. While some students from universities and institutions across the country sought that the draft EIA be put on hold as it was published during the pandemic and people could not give their opinions, some sought withdrawal of the draft alleging it was controversial, but the government denied all allegations and responded in negative saying it had already extended the deadline by over a month.

Agencies

## 1 of 4 genetic conditions put people at autism risk: Study

New research has revealed that people with certain genetic conditions are likely to have significant symptoms of autism, even if they do not meet all diagnostic criteria.

More than half of individuals with one of four genetic conditions had significant autistic symptoms, despite not qualifying for formal diagnosis, said researchers from Cardiff University.

The findings, published in The American Journal of Psychiatry, show clinical services need to adapt so that people diagnosed with autism-linked genetic conditions are not denied access to vital support and interventions.

"Although many of those who were included in this study would not have met all of the criteria which define someone as having autism, more than half of those with these genetic conditions had significant symptoms associated with it—such as social and communication difficulties or repetitive behaviours," explained Dr. Samuel Chawner, based at Cardiff University's MRC Centre for Neuropsychiatric Genetics and Genomic.

The international study analysed data from 547 people who had been diagnosed with one of four genetic conditions, also known as copy number variants (CNVs), associated with a high chance of autism.

The results showed a high prevalence of autism in individuals with these four genetic conditions, ranging from 23 per cent to 58 per cent.

Using clinical cut-offs, the team also found 54 per cent of people with these genetic conditions who did not meet full autism diagnostic criteria nonetheless had elevated levels of autistic symptoms.

"There was also considerable variability in symptoms of autism between those who had the same genetic condition".

"Sadly, many families we have met through doing this research describe long-standing struggles in accessing autism support for their child. This is often due to a lack of integration between genetic testing services and autism diagnosis services," Chawner noted.

Agencies

## 'In social media safety messages, the pictures should match the words'

When using social media to nudge people toward safe and healthy behaviour, it's critical to make sure the words match the pictures, according to a new study.

After looking at social media posts, parents of young children were better able to recall safety messages such as how to put a baby safely to sleep when the images in the posts aligned with the messages in the text, the researchers found.

The study appears in the Journal of Health Communication.

"Many times, scientists and safety experts aren't involved in decisions about social media for health agencies and other organizations, and we end up seeing images that have nothing to do with the safety message or, worse, images that contradict the guidance," said lead author Liz Klein, an associate professor of public health at The Ohio State University.

Take the safe sleep example, for instance. The researchers found posts that advocated a bumper-free crib for baby but used an image of an infant in a crib with bumpers.

They saw posts about preventing head injury with bike helmets illustrated by pictures of kids without bike helmets.

"In this study, we were trying to understand how much those mismatches matter -- do people understand the message even if the picture isn't right? Does the picture really matter?" Klein said.

Their answers came from research using eye-tracking technology to gauge the attention young parents paid to various posts, and subsequent tests to see what they recalled about the safety messages.

When the 150 parents in the study were shown a trio of posts with matched imagery and text and three other posts with mismatched visual and written messages, they spent far longer on the matched posts -- 5.3 seconds, compared to

the 3.3 seconds their eyes lingered on the mismatched posts.

Further, the matched messages appeared to make a difference in understanding and recall of safety messages. After accounting for differences in health literacy and social media use among participants, the researchers found that each second of viewing time on matched posts was associated with a 2.8 percent increase in a safety knowledge score.

"With nearly 70 percent of adults reporting use of social media, and many parents using social media and other internet sources to keep current on injury prevention strategies, social media is a great opportunity to broadcast safety and injury prevention messages," said study co-author Lara McKenzie, a principal investigator in the Center for Injury Research and Policy at Nationwide Children's Hospital in Columbus.

"As more health organizations and public health agencies use social media to share health information with the public, the findings of our study underscore the need to ensure that the imagery and text in social media posts are aligned," added McKenzie.

Klein said she understands that those managing social media accounts may be drawn to images that are the most attention-grabbing. But when it comes to health and safety, this study suggests that making sure the image and the text are sending the same message is more important.

"If you want people to put their medicine up and out of reach of children, kids to wear their bike helmets or new parents to remember that babies should always go to sleep on their backs, alone and in a crib -- that's where matching matters. Maybe save the eye-grabbing stuff and the humorous posts for different purposes," Klein said.

Agencies

OFFICE OF THE COMMANDANT ;  
87 BN BSF : HANDWARA (J&K) C/O 56 APO

AUCTION NOTICE

The Commandant 87 Bn BSF will dispose off the following un-serviceable stores by public auction at Bn Headquarter 87 Bn BSF Handwara, District Kupwara (J&K) on 25th -Jan' 2021 at 1000 Hrs by detailing a Board of Officers.

a) Communication Stores  
b) Provisioning Stores  
c) Motor Transport Stores  
d) Magazine Stores.  
e) Ration/Misc packing material  
f) Hard ware/Sanitary/Water Supply & Elect Store  
g) Newspaper/ Magazines

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. All interested bidders are requested to, present themselves on the date and time of auction as mentioned above.

2. All interested bidders will register their names by depositing Rs. 10,000/- (Rupees Ten thousand) only as earnest money which will be returned/adjusted soon after the auction is over.

3. The successful bidder will have to lift the U/S stores as and when auction is over by depositing bid money of auctioned U/S stores within 24 hrs. No cheques will be accepted, no Gov't, transport will be provided to lift the stores from BSF Campus.

4. Each bidder must be in possession of their PAN cards in original along with proof of last income tax return, which will be seen by Board of Officer at least one hour before the auction.

5. All bidders will be register their names with the Board of Officer at least one hour before the auction.

6. VAT & others taxes will be levied on final auction value as per rules.

7. In case the highest bidder fails to deposit the amount of find bid of U/S stores on the spot, his earnest money will be forfeited.

8. Commandant 87 BN BSF reserves all rights to accept or reject the final bid without assigning any reasons.

9. The U/S stores will be auctioned on "AS IS WHERE IS" basis.

10. Other terms and conditions, if any, shall be announced at the time of auction

(KS BARLA, DC/QM)  
FOR COMMANDANT 87 BN BSF

davp 19110/11/0045/2021

IV- 18013/1/ Stitching of Uniform / Tender /  
2020-21/ SHQ (Ldk) (2020- 797

Office of the Dy. Inspector General

SHQ (Ldk), Indo Tibetan Border Police Force

MHA/ Govt of India

C/O 56 APO

DATED : 21-12-2020

NOTICE INVITING c- TENDER

For and on behalf of the President of India, DIG SHQ (Ladakh), ITB Police Force, PO-Choglamsar, Leh-Ladakh (UT) invites on line tender under two bid system (Technical and Commercial Bids) on the prescribed form for works of stitching of uniforms in the schedule of tender form for the SHQ(Ldk) and its under command Units 51h/16lh/24"/47h ITB Police Force deployed at Distt-Leh-Ladakh in (UT) for one year from the date of issue of acceptance of tender letter. Estimated amount of works can be increased/decreased by 25%.

Tender Estimated Cost: 8,00,000/-  
Bid Security Money(EMD): 24,000/-

S.I.	Details of Keys Dates	Date	Time
1.	Date of online publication	22.12.2020	1100 hrs
2.	Document download start date	22.12.2020	1200 hrs
3.	Bid submission start date	23.12.2020	1300 hrs
4.	Bid submission end date	14.01.2021	1600 hrs
5.	Last date for Physical submission of Earnest Money Deposit fee at DIG, SHQ (Leh), Choglamsar, Leh-Ladakh 194104	14.01.2021	1700 hrs
6.	Date of Technical Bid opening	15.01.2021	1200 hrs

a) The complete tender document containing terms etc has been published on ITBPF website (www.itbp.gov.in and CPP Portal (Central Public Procurement Portal) website: http://eprocure.gov.in which can be downloaded by the interested firms/registered bidder and after filling the require details same can be submitted through CPP Portal(On line Bid submission process on CPP Portal).

b) The firms/bidders will also submit the original document in respect of Bid Security Money (Earnest Money deposit), Bank guarantee and other relevant documents etc in the office of the DIG SHQ (Ldk), ITB Police, PO-Choglamsar, Leh-Ladakh ( UT) on 14/01/2021 up to 1700 hrs, otherwise bid will not be considered.

Note:-

1. Tender rate should not be more than prescribed Govt, rate on line BOQ(in PDF).

2. Tcnns & conditions/instructions given in bid document be read carefully before submitting bid

3. For more information firms/bidders may contact on under mentioned telephone numbers or send letter on email IDs given below:-

Designated Authority	Telephone No.	Email ID
a) DIG (Ladakh) ITBP	01982-264410	digldk@itbp.gov.in
b) The Commandant (Staff), ITBP	01982 -264 617 Ext.3003	itcelldk@itbp.gov.in

Dy Inspector General  
SHQ (Ldk) ITB Police

Davp .19112/11/0174/2021

J&K SERVICES SELECTION BOARD,  
Hema Complex, Adjacent to Gauri Shanker Mandir,  
ChanniHimmat, Sect 03, Jammu.

(www.jksb.nic.in)

NOTIFICATION

Subject:-Provisional Shortlisting of candidates for District Cadre Posts of Accounts Assistant (Panchayat) in Department of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj , Advertised Vide Advertisement Notice No 02 of 2020 dated 06-07-2020.

1. J&K Services Selection Board, conducted OMR Based Written Tests for the posts of District Cadre Posts of Accounts Assistant (Panchayat) in Department of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj , Advertised Vide Advertisement Notice No 02 of 2020 dated 06-07-2020, on 10th of November 2020, (Tuesday).

2. The J&K Services Selection Board notified the result/score obtained by the candidates who appeared in the OMR Based Written Test vide notification NoSSB/Secy/Sel/2020/5145-55 dated 25-12-2020.

3. Now, therefore:-

i. The candidates figuring in Annexure "A" to this notice have been provisionally shortlisted for counselling cum document verification on the basis of merit acquired in the written test. It may be noted that mere figuring in Provisional shortlist will not entitle any candidates to be included in the selection list/wait list.

ii. The candidates figuring in the provisional shortlist be called, in the numbers as will be deemed necessary, to appear before the Counselling Cum Document Verification Committee, on the dates which shall be notified, separately, by the J&K Services Selection Board, with the following documents in original:-

a) Copy of Online Application form.

b) D.O.B Certificate.

c) Reservation category certificate, if applicable.

d) Domicile certificate.

e) Other documents as per the advertisement.

f) Bonafide certificate on the format prescribed by the Board duly issued by the Controller /Registrar of the concerned University in respect of candidates, who have obtained degrees from the Universities/ Colleges outside the State of J&K, other than Central Universities.

iii. Additionally the candidates are also required to produce a self-attested photocopy of each documents/ certificates/ bonafide/Online application form on the day of counselling and document verification.

iv. Candidates are figuring in reserve categories, purely on the basis of details they have incorporated in their data i.e online application form. Their respective claims on this account are further subject to production of valid reserve category certificate at the time of counselling and document verification, in addition to the normal process of verification indicated at para03(ii).

v. The shortlisting and subsequent selection is subject to outcome of any writ petition pending before the Hon'ble Court.

Note:-

1. The shortlisting of the candidates under Persons with Disabilities (PwD) and Ex-Servicemen) categories shall be notified separately.

2. Subject to fulfilment of conditions mentioned hereinabove and notified earlier, the Provisional Short List shall be utilized for the purpose of filling up vacancies of Accounts Assistant (Panchayat) as advertised vide Advertisement Notification No 02 of 2020 dated 06-07-2020.

(Musheer Ahmed Mirza)KAS,  
Controller of Examination,  
J&K Services Selection Board,  
Jammu.

DIPK-11317/20

No. SSB/Secy/Sel/2021/12-17

Dated:- 01-01.2021



# CUK Holds 12th AC, Takes Decision On Important Academic Matters

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** The 12th Meeting of the Academic Council (AC) of the Central University of Kashmir (CUK) was held in the Varsity's Green Campus with Vice Chancellor, Prof. Mehraj ud Din Mir in chair.

Addressing the participants, both in offline and online mode, Vice Chancellor, Prof. Mehraj ud Din Mir informed the members about the achievements of the University despite lockdowns, during the last one year. He said, "The abrogation of Article 370 and subsequent COVID-19 lockdown did not have much impact on the academics as the university successfully conducted the End Semester Examinations in offline mode, by establishing centres at various places within and outside Kashmir. The results of the examinations conducted were also declared within the stipulated time, thus saving the precious time of the students."

Prof. Mir, said that some of the departments also started offline classes after the easing of Covid restrictions. "We have not gone for any winter break during the current session but owing to harsh winter, the departments have shifted to online teaching mode." He said the CUK has become a preferred choice of



students because the degrees are completed without any delay and teacher taught relationship is excellent, adding the CUK has better student strength as compared to the other Central Universities established with it. This year all the schools started students structured induction programmes for the freshers to orient them with the institution and the teaching learning process. Prof. Mir informed that the university has bagged a prestigious Design and Innovation Centre project from the Ministry of Education and recently an MoU was signed with Institute of Company Secretaries of India. He said that through the project, the university is trying to revive the

dying art and crafts of the J&K. Prof. Mir said the university is starting programmes in Kashmiri from the upcoming academic session and is also establishing Hindi department very soon.

Prof. Mir said the university has started implementing the recently approved National Education Policy in a phased manner, for which a task force is being constituted. We have also adopted Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) of SWAYAM from the current academic session. Prof. Mehraj ud Din Mir confessed that despite marching ahead on academics, the university has faced huge challenges on the infrastructural front as the executing agencies have failed

to complete the structures at the designated campus in Tulmulla for reasons beyond our control.

Welcoming the guests, Registrar, Prof. M Afzal Zargar, said that despite all odds, during 2020, the varsity has been quite successful in maintaining the teaching-learning process through the online mode. "Following the lockdown in March 2020, and in spite of the 2G internet, the faculty members used different online platforms to teach the students of respective classes and completed their syllabus, thus enabling the university to adhere to the academic calendar," Prof Zargar added that the faculty members of every department were constantly in touch with the students and used every possible method to prepare them for the End Semester Examinations. He informed that the e-governance project has been taken up and would be implemented fully by year 2022.

Among others, the meeting was also attended by Hemavati Nandan Bahuguna Garhwal University, Vice Chancellor, Prof. Annpurna Nautiyal, former Vice Chancellor, IUST, Prof. Siddique Wahid, former Vice Chancellor, University of Kerala, Prof. P K Radhakrishnan, Principal, Government College for Women, M.A Road, Prof. Yasmin Ashai, Professor and HoD Electronics, and Communication Engineer-

ing, NIT Srinagar, Prof. A H Mir, Center of Women's Studies and Research, Prof. Tabassum Firdous, Prof. Department of Music Daulat Ram College, Dr. Sapna Raina Kachroo. The members from outside the University complimented the university for adhering to the academic calendar despite trying times.

The meeting was also attended by the Heads of Departments and Deans from within the institution including, Dean School of Social Sciences, Prof. G M Bhat, Dean School of Business Studies, Prof. Farooq A Shah, Dean School of Physical and Chemical Sciences, Prof. Wali M Shah, Controller of Examinations, Prof. Parveen Pandit, Sr. Professor Prof. Abdul Gani, Dean School of Religious Studies, Prof. Hamiduallah Marazi, Dean School of Languages, Md. Gayas ud Din, Dean School of Animal Sciences, Prof. Muhammad Yousuf, Dean School of Legal Studies, Prof. Farooq Ahmadi, and the Dean School of Media Studies, Prof. Shahid Rasool.

Prof. Afzal Zargar presented the agenda items for discussion, in which all the members actively participated and made valuable comments. The Finance Officer and DIC Director, Prof. Fayaz A Nikka, gave a detailed report about the DIC and proposed the vote of thanks.

## ...DIV COM VISITS SRINAGAR HOSPITALS

# Takes Stock Of Healthcare Functioning During Snowfall

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Amid snowfall, the Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir Pandurang K Pole today visited different hospitals to take on spot stock of functioning and healthcare facilities being provided to patients in Srinagar.

Taking on spot stock of functioning of hospital during snowfall , the Div Com visited to SMSH, Chest Disease and Lal Ded Maternity hospital. He was accompanied by ADC Srikanth Balasahb Suse, Principal GMC Srinagar, concerned Medical Superintendents and other concerned.

During visit, the Div Com inspected various blocks and wards including OPD, Operation Theatres, Gynaec wards, general wards, parking facilities and interacted with a number of patients to have first-hand feedback from them about the quality of services being provided.

While taking stock of availability of medicine including life saving drugs, Div Com stressed on better patient care, including facilities like heating arrangements are available to patients at all hospitals.

He also took stock of snow clearance work of roads, parking spaces, lawns and other premises of Srinagar Hospitals and directed concerned to ensure roads connecting hospitals are not blocked and essential services in case hampered at any hospital is restored on priority.

The Div Com directed concerned to ensure doctors and other staff including paramedics remain punctual and the duty roster is followed properly. He warned that dereliction of duties by anyone shall not be tolerated.

Emphasizing on proper hygiene, sanitation and cleanliness, the Div Com instructed concerned to ensure prompt lifting of waste from hospitals and its proper disposal.

# Khan Asks Tourism Officials To Tap Tourist Potential Along IB

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Advisor to Lieutenant Governor, Baseer Ahmad Khan, has lined up a series of activities for the tourism department with a view to promote border tourism along the International Border (IB). He directed the officers for identification of certain locations along the IB to be covered under the ambit of border tourism.

Advisor issued these directions while chairing a meeting held with the officers from tourism and Border Security Force (BSF) for identification and development of certain locations for promotion of border tourism in Suchetgarh, Samba and other places.

The meeting was attended by Commissioner Secretary Tourism, Sarmad Hafeez; Inspector General, BSF Jammu, N S Jamwal; DIG, BSF, S S Sekhon; Commandant BSF Ajay Suryavanshi, Director Tourism, Jammu Raj Kumar Katoh and other officers.

Advisor directed the tourism department to gear up efforts for development of border tourism. He directed them to prepare a Detailed Project Report (DPR) of projects after taking inputs from all the stakeholders for the development of tourist spots in Suchetgarh, Baba Chamliyal and other areas in a time bound manner. He said that the DPR shall encompass all the facilities which would attract tourists.

Advisor said that Jammu region has tremendous border tourist potential as numerous scenic spots dot the landscape. "We need to tap the potential that has remained untapped so far and enhance our facilities for the tourists at Suchetgarh and other places," he said.

Advisor said that Suchetgarh, which is a border meeting post, should come up as a wonderful attraction for tourists. The other places of historical and cultural importance including Baba Chamliyal and Gharana Wetland

would be included in tour circuits for promoting tourism in the Union Territory with the twin aim to boost the economy of border dwellers besides increasing the footfall of tourists, he added.

He said that Gharana wetland in R S Pura will be developed for 'bird watching' where a lot of migratory birds visit especially during winters, after obtaining permission from wildlife department. Another point of major attraction for border tourism will be creating selfie points at the zero line that will be identified by BSF and developed by tourism department, he asserted. He said that the inputs received from BSF should be incorporated in the DPR.

I G BSF, N S Jamwal, while speaking on the occasion, said that Suchetgarh has vast potential to be developed as a vital tourist destination adding that Baba Chamliyal in Samba along the IB holds a lot of potential for promoting religious tourism.

# DC Srinagar, Budgam Review Snow Clearance, Response System

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Shahid Choudhary along with Chief Engineer, Mechanical Engineering Department, Abdul Rashid Dar monitored the progress of snow clearance and visited the central control room and workshop to assess response system for snow clearance in the district.

The machinery and equipment deployed more than 1250KM main roads in District Srinagar includes 30 snow ploughs, 13 Snow cats, 23 truck mounted machines , 6 tippers / dumpers and a fleet of smaller vehicles. The MED is entrusted with snow clearance from all main roads in the district. The Deptt also deputed two Hydraulic / LRV cranes for recovering any damaged machines during the operation.

The DC sanctioned Rs 15 Lakh for better facilities , heating and food arrangements as well as protective equipment for staff deployed at central control room and round the clock duty of snow clearance as per roster. He also visited the workshop of the department , control room and staff accommodation to assess the facilities. The district administration is augmenting the resources for effective support to field staff for snow clearance and ensuring better facilities.

He appreciated the engineers, staff and field workers of MED for their exemplary response system and putting in best efforts for timely and effective snow clearance.

Chief Engineer MED Abdul Rashid Dar informed that Pre-positioning of machines at vital locations and early start of operations helped in timely clearance of snow from all areas. He also have the details of staff deployed and further requirements for effective operations.

Meanwhile , PMGSY machinery was deployed in snow clearance from respective rural roads. The PMGSY work plan is restricted to departmental roads while all PWD roads are being cleared through MED.

Earlier, the DC reviewed the snow clearance response system with Superintending Engineers and Executive Engineers of PWD and PMGSY. ADC Syed Hanief Balkhi and Jt Director Planning Mohammad Yaseen Lone were also present.

Pertinently the lanes and by lanes are



cleared of snow by Srinagar Municipal Corporation in the city area , covering around 900KM cumulative length of lanes /by lanes while MED is entrusted with all major roads.

Meanwhile, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Shahbaz Ahmed Mirza, today conducted an extensive inspection of the snow affected areas of the district and took stock of snow clearance, restoration of power and water supply and other essential services.

He visited Kremshore, Budgam, Ichgam, Bugroo, Khansahib and other adjoining areas of the district.

During the inspection, the DC interacted with locals and took stock of the snow clearance operation and availability of essential commodities besides restoration of power and water supply.

The DC instructed line departments to remain alert, work in coordination and ensure that snow clearance work is completed at an earliest.

He also visited District Hospital Budgam and took stock of availability of patient care facilities. On the occasion, DC interacted with patients, attendants and directed the concerned to ensure uninterrupted power and water supply besides heating facilities at the health care institution.

Mirza emphasized on cleanliness and regular supply of essential medicines to the needy patients.

The DC directed the concerned officers to remain available for public grievance redressal and not to leave their headquarters in view of inclement weather.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

I have lost my wallet while travelling from Batmaloo to Habba Kadal . If anybody has found please contact on 9419364338

Mehraj Ul Din Gujri  
S/o Aashur Gujri  
R/o Sheshyar, Habba Kadal  
-190001

JKO

**SAD DEMISE**

We inform you the sad demise of Musmat Khati Wife of Late Ghulam Ahmad Wani who died on 04-01-21. Now her Rashme Chahrum will be observed on Thursday 07-01-21 at 10.pm at their Residence, Gangbugh bypass Srinagar

BEREAVED  
Abdul Rashid Wani , Ghulam Rasool Wani  
Mohd Yousuf Wani , Bashir Ahmad Mir

INF

**OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN**  
**MADINA PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL BALIHARAN, PATTAN.**  
**RESOLUTION**

In pursuance to the meeting of the Managing Body dated on 10-12-2020 elections were held for the Managing Body through secret ballot 26-12-2020.

The following have been elected for the Managing Body of Madina Public High School Baliharan, Pattan.

01 Mr. Syed Mukhtar Hussain	02. Mr. Gh. Nabi Mir
03. Mr. Gh. Hassan Rather	04. Mr. Ali Mohammad Joo
05. Mr. Reyaz Ahmad Khawaja	06. Mr. Muzaffar Hussain Dar
07. Mtr. Ruhee jan	08. Mr. Gh. Hassan Sofi
09. Mtr. Rizwana Akhter	

S.NO.	Name	Parentage	Residence	Qual.	Occupation	Designation
01	Mr. Syed Mukhtar Hussain	Syed Sadiq Razvi	Baliharan	B.A	Business.	Chairman
02	Mr. Gh. Nabi Mir	Ali Mohammad Mir	Hanjiweera	B.A. B.Ed.	Rtd. Employee	Secretary
03	Mr. Ali Mohammad Joo	Gh. Mohammad Joo	Dever (Parhaspora)	M.A. B.Ed.	Principal of School	Member
04	Mr. Gh. Hassan Rather	Ali Mohammad Rather	Mattipora	12 <sup>th</sup> .	Pvt. Service	Member
05	Mr. Reyaz Ahmad Khawaja	Ali Mohammad Khawaja	Baliharan	10+02	Business	Parent Member
06	Mr. Muzaffar Hussain Dar	Gh. Mohammad Dar	Bonichakal	M.A. B. Ed	Pvt. Service	Member
07	Mtr. Ruhee jan	Gh. Mustafa Malik	Baliharan Mirgund	B.A. B.Ed.	Pvt. Service	Member
08	Mr. Gh. Hassan Sofi	Mohammad Zaman Sofi	Baliharan	10+02	Pvt. Service	Parent Member
09	Mtr. Rizwana Akhter	Fida Hussain Malik	Mirgund	B.A. B.Ed.	Staff-representative	Member

The Managing Body resolved to approach the worthy Director School Education Kashmir for the approval of above cited Body.

**CHAIRMAN**  
**MADINA PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL**  
**BALIHARAN, PATTAN.**

## DIAL-EMMA



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

## AIRPORTS

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311



## RAILWAYS



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

## HIGHWAY STATUS

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

## This Day in History

- 1477 - Battle of Nancy, Burgundy vs Switzerland, 7000 + killed including their leader Charles Duke of Burgundy
- 1809 - Treaty of Dardanelles concluded between Britain & France18921st successful auroral photograph made
- 1861 - Alabama troops seize Forts Morgan & Gaines at Mobile Bay1909 - Colombia recognizes Panama's independence
- 1941 - British Australian troops conquer Bardia, Libya
- 1943 - Teams agrees to start season later due to WW II
- 1944 - The Daily Mail becomes the first transoceanic newspaper.
- 1949 - General Spoor orders cease-fire on Sumatra.
- 1952 - British Prime Minister Winston Churchill makes an official visit to the US.
- 1957 - US President Eisenhower asks Congress to send troops to the Mid East.
- 1964 - Pope Paul VI visits Jordan & Israel.
- 1969 - USSR Venera 5 launched for 1st successful planet landing (Venus).
- 1971 - 1st one-day international, Australia v England at the MCG.
- 1972 - President of Bangladesh Sheikh Mujibur Rahman freed by the newly elected President of Pakistan Zulfikar Ali Bhutto
- Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.
- 1973 - Mali & Niger break diplomatic relations with Israel
- 1975 - Salyut 4 with crew of 2 is launched for 30 days.
- 1976 - In retaliation for the Reavey and O'Dowd killings, the South Armagh Republican Action Force shoot dead 10 Protestant civilians after stopping their minibus in County Armagh.
- 1978 - Bülent Ecevit becomes Prime Minister of Turkey for the 3rd time.
- 1985 - Discovery moves to launch pad for STS51-Cmission.
- 1985 - Thousands of Jewish refugees are airlifted from Sudan to Israel.
- 1989 - 2 French TV newsmen arrested for trying to plant fake bombs on 3 airlines at JFK airport in security test.
- 1995 - Lockheed C-140 Jetstar crashes at Isfahan, Iran, killing 18.
- 1996 - Hamas operative Yahya Ayyash is killed by an Israeli-planted booby-trapped cell phone.
- 2001 A report reveals that former General Practioner Harold Shipman has potentially killed hundreds of patients



HIJRI  
CALENDAR

20

JAMADI

-UL-

AWWAL

1442

## PRAYERS

FAJR

6: 08

ZUHR

12: 35

ASR

3:57

MAGRIB

5:39

ISHA

7:04

## From KO Archives

# 7 Hurriyat Men Sit For 7 Hours, Remain Undecided

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:**The APHC executive today raised suspense several notches higher as it failed to arrive at a consensus on choosing a delegation for its proposed visit to Pakistan, and concluded its seven-hoar long session by authorising its chairman to nominate the team. Unanimity eluded the apex council of the conglomerate of some twenty political, religious and social organisations on this issue as well; there were two dissenting votes when the proposal to authorise the chairman, moved by Abdul Ghani Lone, was put to vote in the 7-memeber chamber.

The apparently straight forward task of picking a delegation from a professedly cohesive group, was according to the executive members, spiked by passports (or, rather the lack of them) and procedural niceties - though variation in perceptions, toe Hurriyet euphemism for the irreconcilable differences within its executive, is the more likely cause The APHC chairman, Professor Abdul Ghani Bhat, inadvertently gave an inkling 'of this in a cryptic remark that he made to Kashmir Observer. "Choices would have gone against certain members," he said when asked why the Hurriyet executive was unable to unanimously select a team.

He however skirted the issue when pressed and said that a decision had been taken in a previous meeting that the Hurriyet would announce the delegation on January 2, and later an executive member had suggested that the entire council should take the trip. "Now Mr. Abdul Ghani Lone has said that he won't go, and a decision taken in a meeting cannot be reversed in the subsequent one."

"When considering a team, you cannot be biased. You have to be fair, honest and ..."after a long pause - "pragmatic." He said he would announce the team well in time for the January 15 deadline.

Neither Prof. Bhat, nor Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and neither Abdul Ghani Lone (the three leaders who were available on phone) had a convincing answer as to why they should make the announcement of the team contingent upon the government of India issuing passports to the Hurriyet's executive members, apart from the excuse, "don't have passport, can't travel".

The Hurriyat cannot give the government of India or anyone else the privilege to influence the APHC decisions, said Lone in reply to the same question. PTI adds. Today's meeting was attended by Bhat, Lone, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, Syed Ali Shah Geelani, Yasin Malik, Maula mi Abass Ansari and Sheikh Abdul Aziz amidst tight security at the Hurriyat headquarters at Rajbagh in Srinagar.

A similar meeting on December 17 at the same venue had witnessed violent clashes between the supporters of pro-Pakistan and pro-independence factions of the amalgam in which 12 people were injured.

The centre is understood to -have given, clearance for issuance of travel documents to only four hurriyat leaders - Bhat, Lone, Malik and Ansari, Umar Farooq already possesses travel documents.

With regard to Geelani, who represents the powerful Jamaa't-e-Islami in the Hurriyat, the centre has stated that no application, written or verbal, had been received from him, which he has contested.

Pro-Pakistan constituents of the hurriyat have been pressing for Geelani's inclusion in the team to Pakistan

Hisbul Mujahideen has also asserted that the visit by Hurriyat delegation no including Geelani would be fruitless

(KASHMIR OBSERVER, 05 January, 2001)



KASHMIR  
OBSERVER

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K O V I E W

New beginning

If anything the continuing violence in Kashmir underlines yet again that the lingering turmoil in the region is not about the numbers. No matter how many militants are killed in a year, it is unlikely to wipe out the militancy. The violence over the last year and the recent killings testify to this fact. This has also been made clear by the existing number of the active militants in Kashmir which is by and large same as that in the beginning of the last year. So killing ones way out of the problem in Kashmir is just not the option. And this is a reality that is borne out by the trajectory of the militancy over the past three decades. Though relentless counter-insurgency operations have succeeded in reigning it in intermittently, it has not been controlled. Nor is there a prospect of such a situation materializing in near future.

The reason for this is that the factors underpinning the turmoil in the state remain unaddressed. And to this end, there is little that has been done. A sustained engagement between India and Pakistan which could have contributed to the improvement in the situation remains suspended for the last more than a decade. Things have become only more vexed following the repeal in August 2019 of Article 370 that granted J&K its semi-autonomous status under the constitution. India and Pakistan have further drifted apart. The situation has also become complicated with China staging incursions along the Line of Actual Control in Spring last year. So far, the recurrent diplomatic efforts to end the stand-off have not succeeded, nor does it appear possible in near future.

At the same time, the situation in Kashmir is only getting worse as the contentious killing of the three youth by the security forces at Lawaypora shows. Or for that matter, the killing of a jeweller at Hari Singh High Street. Truth is that Kashmir needs a serious political outreach from New Delhi and more importantly a dialogue between India and Pakistan. And to start with we can do with a dialogue between the NSAs of the two countries as was the case in 2015. It were these interactions which were said to have led the Prime Minister Narendra Modi landing in Lahore for an impromptu meeting with the then Pakistan PM Nawaz Sharif. The two countries need a similar dramatic gesture to resume the engagement. Here is hoping that 2021 sees the two countries to return to dialogue as that is the only sure way to progress towards solution of the festering issues which alone will lead to lasting peace in the region.

O T H E R O P I N O N

Turning point

On Sunday, the country took a much-awaited step towards kickstarting its inoculation drive against COVID-19. The Drugs Controller General of India approved two vaccines — the indigenously developed Covaxin, and Covishield, the vaccine incubated in the laboratories of Oxford University and Swedish-British pharma firm, AstraZeneca, and manufactured in India by the Pune-based Serum Institute of India. The drug regulator's sanction follows the greenlight given by a Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation expert panel. The emergency use approval is conditional on the vaccine developers submitting details of any adverse effect to the drug regulator, every 15 days. A factsheet with safety details will also be provided to those receiving the first lot of vaccines. These are crucial steps because, as the regulator pointed out, the approvals were expedited in view of the public health emergency and the vaccinations will be conducted in a "clinical trial mode". The dry runs conducted by the Centre in different parts of the country on January 2 also provided a glimpse of the government's efforts to acquaint people with the vaccine, and its effects. These, as the Union health ministry has acknowledged, are initial steps. Protecting the country against a notoriously unpredictable virus could throw up unforeseen challenges. The health authorities will need to remain alert to such possibilities.

In the first phase, three crore healthcare and frontline workers will be administered the jab. The government has begun registering the first list of beneficiaries. In the coming weeks, it will have to decide how to allocate the two vaccines amongst people in this list. In spite of broad similarities — Covaxin and Covishield use an attenuated version of the coronavirus — the two vaccines could present different efficacy and safety challenges. Their immunogenicity could vary, and adverse effects might need to be understood differently. Besides, authorities can't afford to lose sight of the fact that the final phase trials of the two vaccines are still on. Surveillance and monitoring systems will, therefore, need to be tweaked accordingly and vaccinators educated on the finer details of the two vaccines.

The government plans to inoculate 27-crore people — those with comorbidities and above the age of 50 — in the next phase. This will require a big data drive unprecedented in the country's public health history. The dry-runs have indicated that a cooperation mechanism between the Centre, states and district authorities is in place for vaccine distribution and administration. With the country attempting to inoculate more than a fourth of its population in the next six to eight months, cooperation will have to be scaled up, systems made more robust. The onus will, of course, be on healthcare and administrative agencies to ensure rules-based immunisation. But the coming months will also demand responsibility and restraint from actors beyond the government system — from civil society and political parties. Public health history is witness to misinformation being the Achilles' heel of inoculation drives. Statements such as the one by Samajwadi Party chief and former UP chief minister, Akhilesh Yadav, describing the anti-COVID jab as a "BJP vaccine", are irresponsible and unwelcome at a time when the need, above all, is to follow the science and for public communication messages to be framed accordingly.

Indian Express

JK PSC: The Habitual  
RTI Law Violator

Inspite of clear directions to provide copies of answer scripts, PSC again in denial mode



Dr Raja Muzaffar Bhat

Section 22 of the Right To Information Act (RTI Act 2005) says that, RTI law has an overriding effect. The relevant section reads as

"The provisions of this Act shall have effect notwithstanding anything inconsistent therewith contained in the Official Secrets Act, 1923 (19 of 1923), and any other law for the time being in force or in any instrument having effect by virtue of any law other than this Act".

The J&K RTI Act 2009 also had a similar provision under section 19. This provision clearly indicates that RTI law has to be respected by the public authorities in letter and spirit even if their own laws, circulars, rules, regulations, standing orders go against this act.

The Official Secrets Act of 1923 is still applicable and inspite of the enactment of RTI Act, this law is yet to be repealed. Under the provisions of the Official Secrets Act 1923 no official document or record can be shared with the public, but the RTI Act says the public can have access to information of Govt records / files etc. The provision of overriding effect of RTI Act 2005 is basically kept to address these kinds of legal issues. If RTI has an overriding effect on different laws, circulars and internal orders which override it, I fail to understand why J&K Public Service Commission (PSC) continues to deny information, especially providing the certified copies of answer scripts sought by the information seekers under RTI Act 2005.

Inspite of several judgments passed by Central Information Commission (CIC) and State Information Commission's (SIC) including erstwhile JK State Information Commission (JKSIC), the J&K Public Service Commission (PSC) continues to violate the RTI Act by denying photocopies of answer books to information seekers / aggrieved persons. The PSC raises a point that its official rules disallow providing xerox copies of answer papers. It seems PSC authorities are not well versed with the RTI Act 2005. Pertinently, the Supreme Court of India has also given a historical direction in this regard several years back in the case of CBSE v/s Bandopdhyaya wherein it has observed that providing information under the RTI Act is a general rule and denying the information on account of exemption or as provided under section 8 is an exception.

GR Sufi's direction

Former State Chief Information Commissioner G R Sufi while hearing an appeal against JK-PSC in 2016 directly issued a penalty show-cause notice to the Public Information Officer (PIO) of the commission. The officer had denied to share photocopies of answer papers to a civil service aspirant. The Information Commission further directed PSC authorities to provide photocopies of answer papers to the information seeker. The JK PSC had earlier denied to provide this information saying its rules don't allow it to provide copies of answer papers to information seekers. The Information seeker Narinder Singh a resident

PSC is an institution which makes selection of civil servants, police officers officers, college teachers, doctors and engineers and if they start behaving like habitual offenders, what can we expect from other Government institutions?

Chenani Udhampur had filed an application under J&K RTI Act 2009 before J&K Public Service Commission in August 2015 seeking copies of english answer papers of civil services Mains Examination 2013. As the RTI applicant did not receive any response from the PIO (Deputy Secretary) and the Secretar (First Appellate Authority), the information seeker filed a second appeal in the J&K State Information Commission (SIC). The Information Commission finally decided the case wherein PSC was directed to provide certified copies of answer papers and the PIO was served with penalty show cause notice as well.

CIC's direction 2016

Central Information Commission (CIC) also issued a similar direction in 2016 in the case of Swati Babbar v/s Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University (GGSIU) Delhi. RTI applicant namely Swati Babbar an architecture student of GGSIU Delhi had sought copies of answer sheets (external exam) of some subjects in B.Arch course from the aforesaid University. The PIO had denied the information. The First Appellate Authority (FAA) also upheld the PIOs order. The aggrieved filed a second appeal before Central Information Commission (CIC) New Delhi. The then Information Commissioner Yashovardhan Azad while disposing off the case directed for disclosure of the information and issued penalty notice to the PIO of University for withholding information.

The fresh case

Mohammad Ramzan Khan, father of an aggrieved J&K civil service aspirant had filed an application under RTI Act 2005 before the designated Public Information Officers (PIO) of JKPSK. In his reply dated 21.12.2020 the Deputy Secretary of J&K PSC Vinay Samotra who is the designated PIO told information seeker that PSC does not provide evaluated answer scripts of the candidates. He, however, asked the applicant that he could inspect the papers as per record retention schedule. Mr Khan alleges that his son Irfan Khan

had qualified J&K Combined Civil Services mains exam and appeared for interview, but could not find his name in the list of qualifying candidates. He told me that Irfan fared well in the anthropology paper, but got less marks and thus wanted to know whether the evaluation has been made correctly or not? This is his right as in the past also PSC has provided such information on the direction of J&K State Information Commission. How can they deny the same when they have already provided it on several occasions? This is a complete violation of the orders of the Supreme Court, CIC and JK SIC as well.

Yashovardhan Azad criticizes PSC order

Yashovardhan Azad, former Indian Police Service (IPS) officer who served as Information Commissioner at Central Information Commission (CIC) New Delhi between 2013 to 2018 while commenting on my tweet made critical remarks against J&K Public Service Commission for denying the copies of answer scripts. As mentioned above, Mr Azad had pronounced the famous judgement in the matter of Swati Babbar v/s GGSI University. Mr Yashovardhan Azad without even quoting his own order and instead referring to the Supreme Court order tweeted

"Strange, J&K PSC is willing to show answer sheets to RTI queries but not provide copies. Are they so poor that they don't have facilities or they comply only with 50 % of the Supreme Court Order to assert their residual autonomy!"

Conclusion

There are almost one dozen other judgments pronounced by former State Chief Information Commissioners G R Sufi, Khurshid Ahmad Ganai and Information Commissioner's Mohammad Ashraf Mir and Prof S K Sharma wherein Jammu & Kashmir Public Service Commission (JKPSC) has been given clear orders to provide copies of answer scripts to information seekers. Then we have orders from the Central Information Commission and above all the Supreme Court's ruling on this issue. If PSC is adamant to follow its own orders and business rules and sideline the law of the land, I question its credibility and trustworthiness. PSC is an institution which makes selection of civil servants, police officers officers, college teachers, doctors and engineers and if they start behaving like habitual offenders, what can we expect from other Government institutions? I appeal Hon'ble Chairperson of JKPSK to take a strong notice of this issue otherwise Jammu & Kashmir RTI Movement will bring the matter into the notice of the judiciary as well as Central Information Commission.

The views expressed in this article are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer

Dr Raja Muzaffar Bhat is Founder & Chairman of Jammu & Kashmir RTI Movement. For Feedback bhatrajamuzaffar@gmail.com



OBSERVER  
MAIL

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Stop crime against women

It is appalling to note that The National Commission for Women (NCW) has received 23,722 complaints of crimes committed against women in 2020. These complaints are the highest in the last six years. According to the NCW data, most of the grievances were linked

to domestic violence, harassment of married women or dowry harassment, police apathy towards women, cyber-crime; and sexual molestation. The system under the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act had not been identified as an essential service during the lockdown. The Centre

and State Government have also constituted several grievance redressal forums for women at the District level like women's police stations, family counseling centers, helplines, and courts, but all are failing to get justice for women. The need of the hour is that all concerned authorities should

initiate strong action against crimes related to women at the primary level and ensure the dignified life of women by justice on time.

Amit Singh Kushwaha  
amitsk68@gmail.com



# Being a ‘Social Worker’ in Kashmir

Zahra Sajaud

“The need of the hour is that we change the narration and fasten the appeal for establishment of a proper Professional Association body of Social Workers to regulate and control the trend. To ensure that the rights of Social Worker are protected and their space reserved

“What are you upto these days?”, my aunt enquired one day.  
“Pursuing master’s degree in Social Work”, I answered haughtily.  
Surprisingly, she reverted, “why would you need a degree for that! What’s the big deal about rendering help to a needy! A person’s conscience is enough for Social Work.”  
“How bad you wasted two precious years of life! I wish you had better utilised the time for civil service preparations!”  
And I was short of explanation. Totally baffled by how I justify a two-year tiring professional course when there is every second person claiming to be a Social Worker without any required academic qualification.  
How many of us agree with the fact that a chemist, no matter how good he/she may be at curing ails, can never qualify to be called a doctor, because of the simple truth that a chemist doesn’t hold an MBBS degree.  
Similarly, no person from whatever academic background can claim to be a Social Worker at any cost, if that person doesn’t hold a degree in MSW (Masters in Social Work) or least BSW (Bachelors in Social Work).  
The misuse of terms ‘Social Work’ and ‘Social Worker’ is quite common in India and without a doubt in Kashmir as well. If we track the roots of this misconception, it seems to evolve from the idea that people often tend to relate Social Work with social and moral obligations that religion preaches and philanthropy demands.  
However, as far as professionalism is concerned, Social Work is still striving to emphasize its professional status because its emergence as an academic discipline is very recent compared to other professional courses. The Western countries have given the discipline the professional recognition it demands, but India seems to be still in a dilemma.  
In Kashmir, this path isn’t even treaded. Hence, it is very easy to claim a title of Social Worker here. One has to just click a fancy picture while hand-



ing over the packed relief to needy ones and, the next day you become an admired Social Worker, a star of social media and award shows, people already eager to follow and attend your Instagram live sessions.  
The fault totally doesn’t lie with the common masses. They often tend to confuse Social Work with Social Service or Social Welfare and likewise, Social Worker with Humanitarian or Philanthropist. Therefore, it has become an urgent necessity to draw a line between what people term as Social Work and what actually professional Social Work means.  
People are trapped in this misconception that having sympathy for a particular cause and giving immediate help is all a Social Worker does. But, when it comes to actual Professional Social Work, the worker has to undertake an extended work where while taking due care of ethics and principles of professionalism, they apply different methods suited to ensure sustainability and better functioning of the client in the long run.  
Simply saying, a Social Worker will prefer to enrol clients (what they call needy) in some skill development course rather than giving them free rashan, so that when the rashan is out of stock he may not have to ask for it again. Skill development will make them perpetually independent. This

kind technicality and sustainability is what a professional Social Worker will always take care of, distinguishing him from other so called Social Workers.  
MSW is a full-fledged academic course with a diverse and rich body of knowledge, literature and set of theories. The curriculum ensures that the enroller has a good hold on knowledge building and practical experience to approach the social issues scientifically.  
Due weightage is given to the field exposure where a student is encouraged to imbibe the skills and methods required to deal with different clients, situations and problems. The enroller is trained to work in community, emergency, adversity, advocacy, research, legislation, mass grievances, NGO, etc. Thus, a professional Social Worker has to undergo a lot of comprehension building, field experience, and skill learning to be really called a Social Worker.  
However, when a trained Social Worker steps into the field, there is already a rush of non-Social Workers who mercilessly await to snatch the opportunity and recognition which is actually meant for the former. The degree of Social Work hardly adds value to the resume. The profile that any set-up demands could be easily filled by any person belonging to a random background.  
“It’s common for a professional worker to face rejection while applying for a certain post, Social Workers

are easily replaceable. We often find ourselves in dilemma and frustration when we see people of other disciplines supervising or working at par with us in places that are actually meant for us. We have plenty of ‘Civil Society personalities’ who are actually doctors, engineers, business graduates heading Social Welfare Organisations and claiming to be Social Workers”, one of the Social Worker said.  
I staunchly believe that it’s high time for the already established Social Workers to push for the draft known as NATIONAL COUNCIL OF SOCIAL WORK (EDUCATION AND PRACTICE) BILL, 2020 and, turn it into a law.  
The draft clearly states: ‘Professional Social Worker means a person who holds a Professional Social Work Qualification and includes Social Work Educators and Social Work Practitioners’.  
“The positions identified for Social Workers be filled only by those having Professional Social Work Qualifications.”  
“Imposition of fine not less than 1 lakh and three-years imprisonment as the punishment for the offence which is cognizable and non-bailable.”  
By saying all this, I’m not raising a finger on those who have contributed immensely to the cause of humanity. They deserve to be honoured for every bit of tireless work they have done for the betterment of people.  
But, the need of the hour is that we change the narration and fasten the appeal for establishment of a proper Professional Association body of Social Workers to regulate and control the trend. To ensure that the rights of Social Worker are protected and their space reserved. This will further help in building a society where social problems and delinquency are dealt scientifically rather than just subsidising problems by rendering temporary help out of sympathy.

The author is an aspiring Social Worker, pursuing Masters in Social Work from University of Kashmir. You can reach her at [sajaudzahra@gmail.com](mailto:sajaudzahra@gmail.com)

The UK has become the first country to authorise the Oxford-AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine for public use, with roll-out to start in the first week of 2021. This vaccine is the second to be authorised in the UK – following the Pfizer vaccine.  
The British government has ordered 100 million doses of the Oxford vaccine, enough to vaccinate 50 million people. Other countries will be watching closely: Australia has ordered over 50 million doses, Canada 20 million, and worldwide over 2.5 billion doses have been preordered. AstraZeneca expects to be able to supply large numbers of doses within the first quarter of 2021.  
Notably, British people will receive two full doses of the vaccine, which in trials prevented people from falling ill with COVID-19 62% of the time. This is despite trials initially suggesting that an alternative dosing strategy – using half a dose followed by a full dose – could be much more effective, preventing illness with 90% efficacy.  
What is the significance of the Oxford vaccine now being available? The Conversation asked Michael Head, an expert in global health at the University of Southampton, some key questions about why its authorisation is important.  
**Why is this vaccine needed?**  
The least merry Christmas in recent memory has at least had the silver lining of a highly effective vaccine – Pfizer’s – being available and licensed for use in the UK. But despite the brilliance of this magic bullet, there are limiting factors – particularly around the scale of production required to meet demand.  
The multi-country demand for the Pfizer vaccine is akin to a highly intense hour where the local supermarket has just released some new delivery slots during lockdown, and you’re racing to get the order booked before any of your neighbours notice. Everyone wants to get in first to ensure delivery of that last pack of toilet roll – or in this case, that next batch of vaccines.  
The difficult logistics of storing and transporting the Pfizer vaccine at ultra-low temperatures are also restricting the speed of the national vaccine roll-out.  
So we need multiple vaccine candidates to get anywhere near meeting demand, and we need them fast. Having the Oxford vaccine available could be seriously helpful for accelerating coverage – particularly as in the UK, priority has shifted to getting a first vaccine dose to as many people as possible.  
However, there are still gaps in our knowledge, for example around the effectiveness of this vaccine in the elderly, and also whether leaving a longer gap between

## The Oxford-AstraZeneca COVID-19 Vaccine

Oxford COVID vaccine authorised in the UK – global health expert on why this is a key moment

Michael Head



“At US\$2-3 per shot, the cost per dose of the Oxford vaccine is much cheaper than the other leading vaccines, making it a potential long-term option for governments when the world is past the point of spending whatever it takes to get the coronavirus under control

the doses increases overall effectiveness, as has been suggested.  
**How is this vaccine different?**  
The three leading vaccines all deliver part of the coronavirus’s genetic material into the body’s cells, leading the cells to produce copies of part of the virus – the spike protein – that the body can then mount an immune response against. The

Oxford vaccine makes this delivery using an adenovirus vector, whereas vaccines from Pfizer and Moderna use an mRNA platform.  
Data published previously indicated an overall efficacy of 62% if two doses of the Oxford vaccine are given, which is lower than the 94% of Moderna’s vaccine and 95% of Pfizer’s. But it was thought that administering a small dose first up

and then a full second dose could be more effective. Using this dosing strategy, limited data from the phase 3 trial indicated an efficacy in younger populations of around 90%.  
However, the UK Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency has said the results of this half-dose full-dose regimen were “not borne out by full analysis” when it conducted its review, so

further investigation of this regimen will be needed.  
But the UK’s Commission on Human Medicines is now suggesting that one dose gives 70% protection after 21 days, and that a second dose potentially increases effectiveness to around 80% – but that the second dose needs to be given 12 weeks after the first. However, the data showing this has yet to be released.  
As has been documented, the Oxford vaccine only needs to be kept at a chilled temperature, whereas Pfizer’s requires -75°C storage and Moderna’s to be kept at around -20°C. This would make it easier for all countries to manage and distribute, but particularly for low- and middle-income nations. Across sub-Saharan Africa or South-east Asia, healthcare colleagues are very adept at taking vaccines to hard-to-reach populations but simply don’t have existing infrastructure to ensure ultra-low temperatures can be maintained.  
**What does this mean for the world?**  
At US\$2-3 per shot, the cost per dose of the Oxford vaccine is much cheaper than the other leading vaccines, making it a potential long-term option for governments when the world is past the point of spending whatever it takes to get the coronavirus under control. Global orders for this vaccine far outstrip those for the others.  
The Oxford vaccine is being manufactured in Europe and also in large numbers in India, and is part of the COVAX initiative – led by Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance – so it may be the first western-developed vaccine that is rolled out in large numbers in low- and middle-income countries at some point in 2021.  
However, it will be interesting to see how vaccines developed by Russia and China are distributed internationally. China has provided huge amounts of investment for healthcare assistance across the African continent, with the balance of altruism or opportunism being unclear.  
While we’d love to see this global public health problem treated purely as a public health problem, we may well see vaccines being used as capital to develop new or reaffirm existing political relationships. Certain vaccines may be favoured ahead of others in some parts of the world due to political influence.  
Global vaccine roll-out will be incredibly complex, with a variety of factors inevitably contributing to the extent of its success. To know the impact of the Oxford vaccine, we’ll have to wait and see. However, amid the intense doom and gloom of 2020, having multiple effective vaccine candidates available bodes well for 2021.  
....  
By arrangements with  
The Conversation



## Mother can't be denied child's custody on entering new relation without divorce: HC

Allahabad, Jan 4 (PTI) A woman can't be denied the custody of her minor child on the ground that she has entered a new relationship without securing a divorce, the Allahabad High Court has held.

The court gave the decision disposing of a habeas corpus petition last month.

Justice JJ Munir observed, "The fact that the mother has walked away from her husband's home without securing a divorce and entered into a new relationship with another person, which she ostensibly believes to be a second marriage, may be something that the law and the society frown upon, but, in itself, is something not so depraved or immoral as to deprive the mother of her special place in the minor's life."

The court further observed,

Depriving the minor of his mother's company might have an adverse impact on his overall development. This in turn would derogate from the minor's welfare.

In the petition, Ram Kumar Gupta had stated that due to his wife Sanyogita's second marriage without obtaining a divorce, she has lost her right over their son Anmol's custody.

According to the petitioner, the minor's life in the stranger's home is at risk.

It is the minor's welfare that he may be placed in his father's custody, who is his natural guardian, in preference to the mother, who has walked out on her lawfully wedded husband without a divorce, and staying in a live-in relationship with a stranger, the plea said.

During the court proceedings, Sanyogita indicated that

Gupta is an unkind father. Further, she was treated with cruelty by him and that is why she walked out on him.

On this, the court said this is its concern to determine whether the minor would be safe and his welfare ensured in his mother's new home.

After interacting with Sanyogita and her minor child Anmol, the court said, The way the minor's mother has detailed her circumstances in new home, this court feels that the minor, for the present, is well adapted into his mother's new family.

So far, as dominant and substantial part of the minor's custody and care are concerned, this court is of opinion that these would be better secured in the mother's hands in comparison to the father, remarked the court.

## JK govt seeks detailed report on development of border tourism in Jammu

Jammu, Jan 4 (PTI) The Jammu and Kashmir administration has directed officials to prepare a detailed project report for the development of tourism along the International Border (IB) in Jammu district, officials said.

Advisor to Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, Baseer Ahmad Khan, has lined up a series of activities for the tourism department with a view to promote border tourism along the IB, they said.

Khan has directed officers to identify certain locations along the IB that could be covered under the ambit of border tourism.

He has directed the tourism department to gear up efforts for development of border tourism, the officials said. Khan directed them to prepare a detailed project report after taking inputs from all stakeholders for the development of tourist spots in Suchetgarh, Baba Chamliyal and other areas in a time-bound

manner. Khan said the report shall encompass all the facilities which would attract tourists. He said Jammu region has tremendous border tourism potential as numerous scenic spots dot the landscape.

"We need to tap the potential that has remained untapped so far and enhance our facilities for the tourists at Suchetgarh and other places," the Advisor to the LG said. He issued these directions while chairing a meeting held with officers from the tourism department and the Border Security Force (BSF) for identification and development of certain locations for promotion of border tourism in Suchetgarh, Samba and other places.

Khan said Suchetgarh, which is a border meeting post, should come up as a wonderful attraction for tourists. The other places of historical and cultural importance including Baba Chamliyal and Gharana Wetland would be included in tour circuits for promoting tourism in

the Union Territory with the twin aim of boosting the economy of border dwellers besides increasing the footfall of tourists, he added.

He said that Gharana wetland in R S Pura will be developed for bird watching, as a lot of migratory birds visit there especially during winters, after obtaining permission from the wildlife department. Another point of major attraction for border tourism will be creating selfie points at the zero line that will be identified by the BSF and developed by the tourism department, he said.

Khan said the inputs received from the BSF should be incorporated in the report. JG BSF, N S Janwal, while speaking at the meeting, said Suchetgarh has vast potential to be developed as a vital tourist destination, adding that Baba Chamliyal in Samba along the IB holds a lot of potential for promoting religious tourism, the officials said.

## Missing Natipora Youth Joins Militancy

SRINAGAR: A youth from Natipora locality of Srinagar has reportedly joined militant ranks, over a fortnight after he went missing.

Bilal Manzoor Bhat of Natipora who along with his friend Irfan Ahmad Sofi went missing on December 14, 2020, on Monday purportedly released an audio message on social media announcing his decision to join militant ranks, a local news agency KDC reported.

In the audio message that has gone viral on social media, Bhat is heard saying to his parents that should not be searched since he has chosen "the way of Allah and is safe."

His family, the report says, had filed a missing complaint with the police.

The report also quoted an unnamed police officer as saying that the authenticity of the audio was being verified.

Pertinently, Bhat and his friend went missing on the day when militants shot dead a security guard of a PDP leader in Natipora.

### CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

#### Aasiyeh's Son ...

India last month. Andrabi's group generally campaigns against perceived acts of immorality in Kashmir, India's only Muslim-majority state.

On Monday, her son — who is studying in Pakistan — and Mazari criticized Indian forces for committing "human rights violations" in Kashmir and asked human rights organizations to work for Andrabi's release and the release of other women jailed in India. Qasim said his mother suffers from asthma and in need of medical care.

Qasim's father, Ashiq Hussain Faktoo, was a militant commander and Indian authorities convicted him of murder in the death of a human rights activist in Kashmir.

Pakistan wants India to drop charges against Andrabi and her husband and release them. (AP)

#### Poor Visibility ...

He said the flight operations would resume if the visibility improved later in the day.

Flight operations had to be cancelled on Sunday due to snowfall across the valley. The weather Office here has said moderate to heavy snowfall, with isolated very heavy snowfall, was most likely to take place over two days from Monday. PTI

#### Avalanche Warning ...

Medium level avalanche warning has been issued for upper reaches of Poonch, Rajouri, Ramban, Jawahar Tunnel, Doda, Kishtwar, Anantnag, Kulgam, Kupwara and Tangdhar, an official spokesperson said.

Similarly, low level avalanche warning has been issued for upper reaches of Gulmarg, Gurez, Kanzalwan, and Sonmarg.

"People living in these avalanche prone areas are advise not to venture out to avoid loss of lives," he added.

#### Board, University ...

All Kashmir University undergraduate examinations which were scheduled to be held Monday are postponed in view of the inclement weather conditions, Controller of Examinations Prof Irshad A Nawchoo said in a statement.

The new dates for the deferred examinations will be notified separately later, he said. The KU had also postponed all examinations on Sunday.

The controller examination CUS, Mir Khurshid Ahmad said examinations scheduled to be held today have been postponed due to inclement weather conditions. He said the new dates for the postponed examinations will be notified separately later.

The BOSE also postponed all Monday examinations. The board also postponed yesterdays examinations due to inclement weather. However, Jammu and Kashmir Bank (JKB) conducted examinations on Sunday as per schedule. The Kashmir valley, including summer capital, Srinagar, experienced moderate to heavy snowfall during the past 24 hours.

#### 4500 Vehicles ...

snowfall but still stayed below the freezing point, the officials said.

Srinagar city recorded a low of minus 0.9 degrees Celsius — up from the previous night's minus 1.5 degrees Celsius, they said. The minimum temperature in Gulmarg tourist resort remained unchanged at minus 5 degrees Celsius on Sunday night compared to a night earlier.

Pahalgam tourist resort, in south Kashmir, recorded a low of minus 6.7 degrees Celsius — plunging from minus 1.45 degrees Celsius on the previous night, the officials said.

Qazigund recorded a minimum of minus 0.3 degrees Celsius, Kupwara, in the north, minus 0.3 degrees Celsius and Kokernag, minus 1.4 degrees Celsius.

The MET Office said moderate to heavy snowfall, with isolated very heavy snowfall, was most likely to take place, especially in south Kashmir, Gulmarg, Banihal-Ramban, Poonch, Rajouri, Kistawar and Zanskar, Drass as well as on the higher reaches of Ladakh UT, over two days from Monday.

"Overall, the snowfall will continue from Sunday to Tuesday forenoon with

the occasional break. This may lead to the disruption of surface and air transportation, water-logging in plains of Jammu and Srinagar cities," the MET Office said.

Kashmir is currently under the grip of "Chillai-Kalan" — the 40-day harshest winter period when a cold wave grips the region and the temperature drops considerably leading to the freezing of water bodies including the famous Dal Lake here as well as the water supply lines in several parts of the valley.

The chances of snowfall are the most frequent and maximum during this period and most areas, especially in the higher reaches, receive heavy snowfall.

While "Chillai-Kalan" — which began on December 21 — will end on January 31, the cold wave continues even after that in Kashmir with a 20-day-long "Chillai-Khurd" (small cold) and a 10-day-long "Chillai-Bachha" (baby cold), PTI

#### Return Us Their Bodies ...

kin killed in encounter. "My son was just 16 years old, either give me his body or bury me there," Mushtaq Wani, father of one the "militant" Athar Mushtaq told reporters amid tears and sobs.

The video and pictures of wailing father and other famous people went viral on social media with citizens joining the families in demanding the handing over of bodies and a probe.

At the same time, a picture written with snow and captioned 'Return the bodies, somewhere in Kashmir broke the internet with people demanding return of bodies of the killed militants with hashtag #returnthebodies

The bodies of the militants killed were usually handed over to the families for the last rides. However, since April last year, citing the spread of COVID-19, the authorities have stopped giving bodies of militants to their families. The militant funerals usually witness participation of thousands of Kashmiris.

The locals accuse officials of using COVID-19 as an excuse to prevent them from attending funerals and returning bodies of their kin.

An intelligence report from Jammu and Kashmir police said the "glamorous funerals of killed militants glorify militancy," and must be "prevented" to avoid Kashmiri youth from joining the insurgency ranks.

Rights activists have called that a violation of the Geneva Convention dealing with the "Return of the Remains and Personal Effects of the Dead" in wartime or armed conflict.

The controversial encounter has set the political commotions in Kashmir. For the first time, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) also joined the list of politicians who are demanding a probe into the alleged fake encounter.

BJP's General Secretary (Organisation) Ashok Koul on Sunday said they had urged the J&K government to investigate the Lawaypora encounter and to find out whether any wrong has been committed.

"If there is any wrong, that will come to fore. If there isn't, then it's fine," he said. "Police have already stated that it was investigating the case. Let's see what comes out." Koul was quoted by a local news agency.

The party usually sides with the Army and police version in these matters and most of the time prefers to remain silent.

Earlier, National Conference MP on January 1 claimed that Lt Governor Manoj Sinha has assured an impartial enquiry into the encounter after family members of slain youth alleged that it was a stage managed encounter as their sons were not associated with militancy.

A NC spokesman said party MP from Anantnag (south Kashmir) constituency Justice (ret'd) Hasnain Masoodi spoke to Sinha and expressed his anguish over the reports surrounding Wednesday's encounter at Hokersar in the city outskirts in which three militants were killed.

Former Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, who is also vice president of the NC has also demanded an inquiry into the encounter.

On Friday, PDP president Mehbooba Mufti also sought an impartial

investigation into the killing and demanded that the bodies be returned to their families.

In a letter to Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, Mufti said such incidents brought "disrepute" to the armed forces and are "a grave violation" of human rights.

The incident comes days after the police admitted that an army officer was involved in the killing of three civilians in July 2020 in a "staged gunfight" in South Kashmir's Shopian and were buried far away from homes as unidentified militants.

Soon after the families stage protest in Srinagar's Press enclave, the Jammu and Kashmir Police released a video in which army personnel can be heard offering surrender to "trapped militants" inside a house at Hokersar Lawaypora here on December 29 last.

"On 29/12/20 evening after the cordon at #Hokersar, troops are repeatedly #appealing the trapped #(militants) to come out and #surrender with assurances that they will not be harmed," police said in the tweet.

In the 27-second a drone can be seen outside hovering around the house while an army man makes an offer of surrender: "You are given a chance to surrender. Leave weapons and come out."

Amid the massive outrage, the Jammu and Kashmir Police on December 31, accepted that the three "militants" killed in a gunfight were not on its list of militants, they however, said that two of them were "hardcore associates" (OGWs) of militants while third one might have joined very recently."

In a statement issued here, a police spokesperson, said that parents are generally not aware about the activities of youngsters involved in militancy. The police spokesperson said that three men were given two chances Tuesday night and another chance on Wednesday but they did not surrender.

Jammu and Kashmir's Director General of Police (DGP) Dilbag Singh on Thursday said that he has no reason to dispute what a senior army official has stated about Lawaypora encounter in which three "militants were killed", but added that police will "still investigate the claims made by families of slain trio."

However, the families of the trio contested the claims of the police chief and said if their kin were militants/OGW's why didn't police inform them or detained their kin.

"If my brother was a militant or OGW as police claims, why didn't they inform us ever and why weren't our houses raided and why wasn't Zubair ever called to the police station," Mohammad Irfan, brother of Zubair told Kashmir Observer.

The government forces in Kashmir usually contact the family members when any youth joins militant ranks and many a times they call the parents to the encounter site to persuade the militants for surrender. However, the family members of the trio claimed that they weren't informed until they received the call after the encounter.

"We just want a last glimpse and bury them with respect." Said another Irfan, also a cop.

#### MeT Issues Severe ...

According to a MeT spokesman, Srinagar recorded 13.4 cm snowfall till 08:00 am while Qazigund received snowfall of 51.7cm, adding that Pahalgam, Kupwara, Kokernag and Gulmarg received 21.0 cm, 3.5 cm, 32 cm and 3.8 cm snowfall respectively till 8:00am today. He said from morning 8:00am till 5:00pm, Qazigund and Gulmarg received 0.8 cm and 1.5cm snowfall respectively.

He added that Drass was coldest where temperature settled at minus 15.0 degree Celsius, adding that Srinagar, the summer capital of J&K recorded temperature of minus 0.9 degree Celsius last night.

Meanwhile, the melting of snow later inundated the roads, lanes and bi-lanes across Srinagar and other areas of the Valley, thus leaving the commuters as well as pedestrians to suffer at large. The slippery conditions of the roads triggered by the fresh snowfall added to

the miseries commuters today, eyewitnesses said.

People especially in Old City areas had to face hardships today as the melting of snow inundated almost every lane and bylane in the residential areas, locals said.

Meanwhile, Mayor Srinagar Municipal Corporation Junaid Azim Mattu held a meeting to take stock of the post snowfall work mechanism from various line departments to assess the situation in the Srinagar city on various fronts.

During the meeting, Commissioner SMC Gazanfar Ali informed Mayor that atleast 3000 sanitation workers are on job since yesterday early morning to clear up the snow from lanes and bylanes in the city, besides snow clearance drive is being taken up in Hospitals, Religious places, Ration Depots, vital roads, Major Markets, city centre and other important stretches.

Besides utilisation of manpower, twenty JCBs, Roberts and on the snow clearance machines were put on job, a statement issued to KNO reads. While taking review of Drainage wing, it was informed that all the 85 permanent de-watering stations were fully functional and 32 mobile pumps were deputed in low lying / vulnerable spots in Srinagar City.

Besides, the fresh snowfall also affected the electricity in many areas across Kashmir, thus leaving forcing the people to face hardships.

Chief Engineer, Power Development Department (PDD), Aijaz Ahmad Dar said that a total of 80 transformers got damaged due to the snowfall while many among them have been lifted from the spot. "We have adequate stock available and the damaged transformers will be replaced soon," he said.

He also said since this morning a total of 427 feeders remain affected due to snowfall while the men and machinery already pressed managed to repair 382 feeders, adding that 20-25 feeders will be restored till late evening.

"In case the snowfall stops, all the remaining feeders will be repaired till tomorrow," he said, adding that the electricity across the Valley will be restored till tomorrow.

Dar also said that minor damages to electricity poles were also reported. He further said that a call centre has also been established recently by the Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, which helped the department to get complaints from the ground. He appealed people to contact on 6006613506, 6006613507, 6006613508, 6006613509, 6006613510 numbers in case of any complaint-Agencies

#### NC Leader Arrested ...

not allowed media personnel to enter the NC office, infuriating Mir.

Quoting eyewitnesses, a local news agency KNT reported that the scuffle broke out when Mir manhandled the cop when the latter barred media persons from entering NC district office located at Mujahid Manzil Pulwama.

The report further says that the cop brought the incident into the issue of his seniors following which action was taken against the NC leader.

A police official confirmed that NC district president Mir has been arrested and a formal case vide FIR number 3/2020 under section 323, 353 has been registered against him.

#### Vaccine To Reach ...

said. The meeting was convened to review the arrangements for smooth implementation of Covid-19 vaccination plan in J&K.

The meeting was attended by Financial Commissioner Health and Medical Education, Atal Dulloo; Mission Director NHM, Bhupinder Kumar; Managing Director JK Medical Supplies Corporation, Dr.Yashpal Sharma; Director Health Services Jammu, Dr.Renu Sharma and other concerned officials of the department while as State Immunization Officer, Dr.Qazi Haroon and other officials participated in the meeting through video conferencing.

Speaking during the meeting, the official spokesperson said, Advisor Bhatnagar directed the officials for

effective planning beforehand, and compile the database of potential vaccinators, prioritized groups of beneficiaries to be administered the vaccine in its initial stages well in advance so that no bottlenecks are faced during vaccination drives.

The Advisor, he said, directed the officials that robust mechanism should be put in place for smooth transportation of vaccines and asked them to prioritize the transportation arrangements for hilly as well as snow bound areas.

"To effectively deliver the vaccines at the grass-root level, Advisor Bhatnagar impressed upon the officers that inter-sectoral convergence between the frontline workers of various departments including health, social welfare, school education, rural development, and housing and urban development is must for the successful implementation of COVID-19 vaccination plan," he said.

Highlighting the need for maintaining an open and transparent communication with the public to curb misinformation and rumours, Bhatnagar, as per the official spokesperson asked the officials to launch Information, Education and Communication (IEC) activities on mass scale so that timely and effective information reaches out to public.

He also asked the department to develop a robust database to assess auxiliary requirements such as additional cold chain equipment and waste bags for bio-medical waste management and prepare plans for cold chain installation sites.

In the meeting, the official spokesperson said, Financial Commissioner Health and Medical Education informed that vaccine will be available in next 10 days besides communication strategy as per the MoHFW guidelines has already been finalized.

"He further informed the Advisor that district level trainings have already been imparted and required workforce has been prepared for effective implementation of the vaccination plan," he said.

Giving detailed presentation on the occasion, Director Health Services Jammu, as per the official spokesperson, informed the meeting that under phase-1 around 28 lakh persons will be vaccinated starting from healthcare workers both in government and private establishments, frontline workers including revenue officials, Anganwadi workers, armed forces, home guards, police, volunteers, municipal workers, etc, prioritized age group of persons above the age of 50 years and persons with co-morbidities.

"Director Health Services further informed the meeting that 586 cold chain points have been established for vaccine storage besides sufficient vaccine carriers have been made available for transportation of vaccines for first phase," he said.

#### India To Start ...

massive inoculation drive. Addressing scientists at the National Metrology Conclave, Modi said it must be ensured that 'Made in India' products not only have global demand but also global acceptance.

"Quality is as much important as quantity, our standards should rise with our scale in our quest for Aatmanirbhar Bharat," he said.

The prime minister said in any progressive society, research is key and effective and its effects are commercial and social. They also help widen approach and thinking.

"Past teaches us that more a country concentrates on science, the more its technology gets strengthened. This technology in turn helps new industries and promotes research. This cycle takes the country ahead," he said.

"We do not want to fill the world with Indian products, but we must win the hearts of every customer of Indian products in every corner of the world," he said.

Quality of services in our country and products, both public or private sector, will determine India's strength in the world, he stressed.

#### Hopeless' Pak ...

Sarpanchs and Panchs," they said. Bushra, one among the Pak origin women asked why was her nomination form accepted when she had done anything

wrong.

"We want justice and want the government here to deport us back to Pak as we are not being considered as the citizens here," she said.

The other women present during the presser also expressed their sufferings and demanded the government of India and Pakistan to take immediate steps for deporting them—(KNO)

#### NC, PDP Up The Ante ...

radicalised and two of them had links with the Lashkar-e Taiba.

Abdullah said that the encounter should be probed in a fair and transparent manner.

"It is very important that the probe into this encounter be concluded at the earliest. Only a fair & transparent probe, already promised by @manojsinha, will satisfy the families who have lost their loved ones who they insist were innocent," he tweeted.

The former chief minister said the union territory administration should, in the interim, hand over the bodies to their families.

"The LG has promised a fair & speedy probe into this encounter when @JKNC\_Lok sabha member @masoodi.hasnain spoke to him about it recently. In the interim we hope the LG will order the handing over of the bodies to the families," he added.

Speaking in the same vein, PDP president Mehbooba Mufti said the Centre and the Union Territory administration should review the policy of not handing over the bodies of those killed in encounters with security forces.

The former chief minister claimed that during her tenure at the helm, she was also told not to return the bodies of the slain militants.

"I refused it as it is against humanity and our religious beliefs," she said.

She claimed that it was not even clear if those killed were militants and urged Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha to intervene.

"How long are you going to enforce the peace at gunpoint? How are you going to win the hearts of the people here," she added.

Earlier, a social activist and lawyer from Rafiabab area of Baramulla district, Advocate Inayat, joined the PDP. He was welcomed into the party by Mehbooba Mufti. PTI

#### IT Towers To ...

Technology sector and last year alone, Rs.156 crore was provided to make substantial investment for effective penetration of digital technology in the entire Jammu and Kashmir," Sinha said.

He said that many of our youngsters, who are working in cities like Bangalore and Gurugram may also like to return and contribute to our efforts of promoting innovation entrepreneurship culture. The UT government is working with a vision to promote the latest scientific and technology driven innovations to make J&K self-reliant, he added. "Now, this infrastructure is expected to significantly increase Jammu and Kashmir appeal to top national investors in the field of Information Technology and Enabled Services", said the LG.

He also set deadlines of 15 months and 17 months for completion of the IT Towers at Jammu and Srinagar, respectively, against the time period of 24 months which was earlier set for completion of the projects.

Detailed presentations were given on establishment of IT Towers in J&K, proposed sites and future plans thereof.

It was informed that the proposed amenities in IT Towers, Jammu and Srinagar include Raw Incubation space; Raw Office space; Plug and Play; Data room; Conference hall; Finishing school; Work-station; Cafeteria; Gymnasium/yoga room; Electrical room; HVAC, BMS,CCTV, Fire-fighting; Parking, STP, Sub-station; Landscaping & Horticulture.

#### Justice Mithal ...

Advisors to the Lt Governor; Chief Secretary; Administrative Secretaries; Senior officers of Judiciary; Civil Administration; Police; family members and friends of Justice Mithal were also present on the occasion.



## Scotland Must Wait A Generation For New Vote, Says Johnson



Agencies

**LONDON:** Another Scottish independence referendum should not take place for a generation, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said on Sunday, as Scotland's leader renewed calls for a fresh vote in the wake of Brexit.

"Referendums in my experience, direct experience, in this country are not particularly jolly events," the prime minister told BBC's Andrew Marr Show.

"They don't have a notably unifying force in the national mood, they should be only once in a generation." Scotland voted to remain part of the United Kingdom in 2014.

Scottish National Party leader Nicola Sturgeon at the time called it a once-in-a-generation vote, but now argues that Britain's departure from the European

Union, which a majority of Scots opposed, has changed the game.

Recent polls have shown consistent support for independence, boosted by rows between London and the devolved governments over the handling of the coronavirus pandemic.

"For too long, successive UK governments have taken Scotland in the wrong direction, culminating in Brexit. It's no wonder so many people in Scotland have had enough," she wrote on her party's website on Saturday.

"We didn't want to leave and we hope to join you again soon as an equal partner," she added, in a message to the EU. Johnson has ruled out holding another vote, but Sturgeon will likely claim a mandate and heap pressure on the prime minister should her party perform well in upcoming local elections.

## Saudi Arabia Reopens Borders, Resumes International Flights



Agencies

**Saudi Arabia** has announced it will reopen its borders and resume international flights after a two-week suspension aimed at containing the spread of the new COVID-19 strain.

The kingdom ordered the lifting of "precautionary measures related to the spread of a new variant of coronavirus," the ministry of interior said in a statement carried by the official Saudi Press Agency on Sunday.

Authorities in the kingdom have to date recorded more than 363,000 cases, including at least 6,200 deaths – the highest among Gulf Arab states. But the country has also reported a high recovery rate.

Riyadh suspended international flights and access through land crossings and ports on De-

cember 21.

Other Gulf countries, Oman and Kuwait, who had taken similar measures, have also lifted them in recent days.

But travellers returning from Britain, South Africa or "any country where the new variant of the coronavirus is spreading" are subject to more restrictions, the statement added.

Foreigners coming from those countries must spend 14 days in another country before entering Saudi Arabia, and show a negative test.

Saudi nationals returning from those countries will be able to enter directly, but must then spend two weeks in quarantine on arrival and be subject to tests.

Last month, Saudi Arabia was one of the first Gulf countries to launch a nationwide inoculation campaign using the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine.



IN THIS FILE PHOTO, US President Donald Trump speaks to reporters after he participated in a Thanksgiving video teleconference with members of the military forces at the White House on Nov 26, 2020. — Reuters

## Extraordinary Warning To Trump By 10 Former Pentagon Chiefs

Agencies

**I**n an extraordinary rebuke of United States President Donald Trump, all 10 living former secretaries of defence cautioned Sunday against any move to involve the military in pursuing claims of election fraud, arguing that it would take the country into "dangerous, unlawful and unconstitutional territory".

The 10 men, both Democrats and Republicans, signed on to an opinion article published in The Washington Post that implicitly questioned Trump's willingness to follow his constitutional duty to peacefully relinquish power on Jan 20. Following the Nov 3 election and subsequent recounts in some states, as well as unsuccessful court challenges, the outcome is clear, they wrote, while not specifying Trump in the article.

"The time for questioning the results has passed; the time for the formal counting of the electoral college votes, as prescribed in the constitution and statute, has arrived," they wrote.

The former Pentagon chiefs warned against use of the military in any effort to change the outcome.

"Efforts to involve the US armed forces in resolving election disputes would take us into dangerous, unlawful and unconstitutional territory," they wrote. "Civilian and military officials who direct or carry out such measures would be accountable, including potentially facing criminal penalties, for the grave consequences of their actions on our republic."

A number of senior military officers, including Gen Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, have said publicly in recent weeks that the military has no role in determining the outcome of US elections and that their loyalty is to the constitution, not to an individual leader or a political party.

The 10 former Pentagon leaders also warned in their Post article of the dangers of impeding a full and smooth transition at the Defence Department prior to Inauguration Day as part of a transfer of power to President-elect Joe Biden. Biden has complained of efforts by Trump-appointed Pentagon officials to obstruct the transition.

Without mentioning a specific example, the former defense secretaries wrote that transfers of power "often occur at times of international uncertainty about US national security pol-

icy and posture," adding, "they can be a moment when the nation is vulnerable to actions by adversaries seeking to take advantage of the situation."

Tensions with Iran represent just such a moment. Sunday marked one year since the US killing of Qassem Soleimani, the top Iranian general; Iran has vowed to avenge the killing, and US officials said in recent days that they are on heightened alert for a potential Iranian attack on US forces or interests in the Middle East.

In a further sign of US-Iranian tension, the acting secretary of defence, Christopher Miller, announced Sunday evening that he has changed his mind about sending the Navy aircraft carrier, the USS Nimitz, home from the Middle East and instead will keep the vessel on duty. Just last week, Miller announced that he was sending the Nimitz home, a decision that had been opposed by senior military officers.

In reversing himself, Miller cited "recent threats issued by Iranian leaders against President Trump and other US government officials." He did not elaborate, and the Pentagon did not respond to questions.

## Protests Across Balochistan Over Attack On Coal Miners In Machh

Agencies

**P**M. Khan assures Shia Hazara victims' families that they will not be abandoned by the government.

The Shia Hazara community, as well as several political parties and activists, on Sunday took to the streets to protest the massacre of 11 coal miners in Balochistan's Bolan district, blocking several major thoroughfares in provincial capital Quetta.

On Sunday morning, 11 coal miners were shot dead, and four others seriously injured, after armed men stormed the Machh coalfield. According to police, the terrorists entered the rooms where the miners were living, forced them to march to nearby mountains, tied their hands and feet together, and opened fire on them.

An official of the paramilitary Levies Force claimed the attackers had specifically identified members of the Hazara community, separating them from others, who were left unharmed.

The bodies of the deceased were later shifted to Hazara Town near Quetta. Reuters has claimed that the Islamic State militant group has claimed responsibility for the attack, but this has yet to be independently verified.

In their protest at Quetta's Western Bypass, the Majlis Wahdat-e-Muslimeen (MWM) demanded the Balochistan government either arrest the people responsible for the Machh massacre or resign. The political organization's leader, Syed Muhammad Agha Raza, said Prime Minister Imran Khan should personally visit Quetta to condole with the bereaved families of the victims. The MWM was also jointed by members of the Hazara community, who demanded the government ensure protection for their people.

**Government response**

As reports of the massacre emerged, the Balochistan government sought to dismiss allegations of security lapses. Spokesperson Liaquat Shahwani

told local media that the law and order situation in the area "was satisfactory" and the attack had been "unexpected." He said the government was assessing the situation, and would, if needed, increase security in the area.

Balochistan Chief Minister Jam Kamal also took notice of the Machh massacre, expressing sorrow over the loss of life and seeking a report from the authorities concerned. He ordered authorities to ensure those responsible were placed under arrest, adding that the elements involved in such terrorist incidents would be brought to justice.

Prime Minister Imran Khan, in a posting on Twitter, condemned the "cowardly inhumane act of terrorism." He said he had advised the Frontier Corps personnel deployed in the region "to use all resources to apprehend these killers and bring them to justice." He also assured the families of the victims that they would "not be left abandoned by the government."

## Iraqis Demand US Troops Pull Out On Soleimani Killing Anniversary



Agencies

**T**housands of Iraqi mourners have condemned the "American occupiers", a year after a United States drone strike killed Iran's revered general Qassem Soleimani and Iraqi militia commander, Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis.

The anniversary of their deaths in Baghdad – which brought arch enemies the US and Iran to the brink of war – was also marked on Sunday in Iran and by supporters in Syria, Lebanon, Yemen and elsewhere in the Middle East.

Streets leading to central Baghdad's Tahrir Square were packed with thousands of protesters who had converged on the site since early Sunday morning.

The protesters raised pictures of Soleimani and al-Muhandis, and flags of Iraq, the Hashd al-Shaabi or Popular Mobilisation Forces (PMF), of which al-Muhandis was a leader, and other Iraqi factions.

They also carried banners with slogans demanding the withdrawal of US troops from Iraq and chanted for retaliation against those who carried out the assassination.

Addressing the protesters, the head of Hashd al-Shaabi, Faleh al-Fayyad, vowed retaliation against those who carried out the crime and called for the US troops to leave Iraq.

Al Jazeera's Charles Stratford, reporting from Baghdad's Tahrir Square, said the Iraqi protesters were demanding the immediate, swift withdrawal of all remaining US troops in Iraq.

"They are also demanding a continuation of the kind of heated rhetoric that we've heard in a couple of days around the anniversary of the assassination of the leader of the Revolutionary Guards,

Qassem Soleimani. They are demanding and promising revenge," he said.

Dorsa Jabbari, reporting from Tehran, said the mood was similar in Iran where the head of the country's judiciary, Ebrahim Raisi, as well as the head of the Revolutionary Guard, Major General Hossein Salami, said Tehran was not finished with avenging Soleimani's death.

"That will come in due time. It's something that we have heard from the supreme leader as well as the president earlier in December," she said.

The powerful pro-Iranian Hashd al-Shaabi paramilitary network in Iraq which al-Muhandis commanded has led the sombre and angry vigils for him and Soleimani, who headed the elite foreign operations arm of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

**'Great Satan'**

The commemorations started on Saturday night when thousands of black-clad mourners converged at the spot near Baghdad's international airport where the US hit the two vehicles and killed Soleimani, al-Muhandis and eight other men.

By candlelight, they honoured their "martyrs" and condemned the American "great Satan" at the site where nearby walls are still pockmarked by shrapnel.

"We tell America and the enemies of Islam that they can inflict the greatest sacrifices on us, but we will continue to resist despite the bloodshed," said Hashd supporter Batul Najjar.

The Hashd – factions of which Washington has blamed for rocket attacks against its embassy and troops in Iraq – has increasingly challenged Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi, who it accuses of having helped plot the drone strikes.

## Soleimani Assassination 'Nail In The Coffin Of International Law': UN Rapporteur

Agencies

**A** top UN human rights investigator has termed the US assassination of General Qassem Soleimani as "unlawful", pointing out that the attack was a "nail in the coffin of international law".

Agnes Callamard, the UN special rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, wrote in a series of tweets on Sunday that while the reckless attack did not lead to an international war, many paid the highest price and many continue to risk the same in the aftermath.

General Soleimani, the commander of Iran's Quds Force, was assassinated along with his old friend Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the second-in-command of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), and a group of their companions in a drone attack near Baghdad International Airport on January 3, 2020.

Iran retaliated five days after the attack by firing dozens of missiles at two US bases in Iraq, declaring that it was part of its pledged "tough revenge" and that the full revenge will be the ultimate expulsion of all American forces from the region.

"One year ago, the US targeted killing of #Iran's #GeneralSoleimani in #Iraq became the first known in-



cident outside the context of a declared conflict in which a State invoked self-defence as justification for an attack against a State-actor," Callamard wrote.

She said the UN assassination of Gen. Soleimani, as a state official, failed to meet the standards of "necessity" and "proportionality".

Callamard argued that the act set a dangerous precedent based on which countries may opt to strategically eliminate high-ranking officials of their rivals outside the context of a known war, after classifying them as a "terrorist" who posed an undefined, future threat.

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### NEWS MAKERS

## UK Court Blocks Julian Assange Extradition To US

Agencies

**A** British judge has ruled that Julian Assange should not be extradited to the United States to face espionage charges, saying that such a move would be "oppressive" because of the WikiLeaks founder's mental health.

District Judge Vanessa Baraitser delivered the decision against the US authorities' request on Monday, at the Old Bailey court in London.

Assange, 49, appeared in court wearing a navy suit and a mask, and showed little emotion at the ruling, simply wiping his brow.

His fiancée Stella Moris, with



whom he has two sons, burst into tears and was embraced by WikiLeaks editor-in-chief Kristinn Hrafnsson.

Baraitser said he was "a depressed and sometimes despairing man" who had the "intellect and determination" to circumvent any suicide prevention measures taken by prison authorities.

If imprisoned in the US, Australian-born Assange "faces the

bleak prospect of severely restrictive detention conditions designed to remove physical contact and reduce social interaction and contact with the outside world to a bare minimum", she said.

"He faces these prospects as someone with a diagnosis of clinical depression and persistent thoughts of suicide.

"I am satisfied that the risk that Mr Assange will commit suicide is a substantial one."

The US government, which is attempting to prosecute Assange, reacted quickly as expected, saying it would appeal the decision.

Assange's lawyers said they would ask for his release from Belmarsh, a maximum-security

London prison where he has been held for almost two years, at a bail hearing on Wednesday.

In court, they argued that the case was political and an assault on journalism and freedom of speech.

Baraitser rejected that, however, saying there was insufficient evidence that prosecutors had been pressured by Donald Trump's team and there was little evidence of hostility from the US president towards him.

She said there was no evidence that Assange would not get a fair trial in the US nor that prosecutors were seeking to punish him, and said his actions had gone beyond investigative journalism.

## Democrat Nancy Pelosi Narrowly Re-Elected As US House Speaker

Agencies

**WASHINGTON, UNITED STATES:**

Nancy Pelosi, the only female US Speaker of the House, was narrowly re-elected to the position Sunday in a deeply divided new Congress that convened in the final weeks of Donald Trump's presidency.

Pelosi, 80, faced a scare when five fellow Democrats defected and voted "present" or for someone else during the floor vote.

But the woman who is third in line to the presidency secured her fourth – and perhaps final – non-consecutive term as

House speaker by earning 216 votes versus 209 for Republican leader Kevin McCarthy.

In a symbolic gesture, McCarthy formally handed over the gavel to Pelosi.

"We begin the new Congress during a time of extraordinary difficulty," Pelosi told the chamber, noting the toll of 350,000 dead and 20 million infected by Covid-19.

"Our most urgent priority will continue to be defeating the coronavirus," a masked Pelosi said. "And defeat it, we will."

The vote took hours, as lawmakers were required



to vote in groups of several dozen due to social distancing rules imposed during the

coronavirus pandemic.

Pelosi has been Trump's chief nemesis in Congress, and the two clashed bitterly over the past two years, particularly as she leveled impeachment charges against the president.

Trump was impeached in December 2019, but the Senate acquitted him early in 2020. His successor, Joe Biden, takes office on January 20.

With Pelosi scrambling to keep her post, it was a handful of progressive lawmakers or members-elect who have been critical of her leadership but ultimately voted for her on Sunday.



## Crowd Capacity Limited To 25% For Third India-Australia Test

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**SYDNEY:** The crowd limit for the third Test between India and Australia, beginning here from Thursday, has been reduced to 25 per cent of the SCG's seating capacity on advice of the New South Wales government after fresh COVID-19 cases were recorded in the city.

Approximately 9500 people would be allowed to watch the game with the series currently locked at 1-1 following India's remarkable comeback in Melbourne. The SCG has a seating capacity of about 38,000.

"Reducing the capacity of the venue is crucial in achieving social distancing requirements, and we sincerely thank ticket-holders for their patience, as we process refunds today, reconfigure the SCG seating plan to deliver these social distancing measures and go back on sale," Cricket Australia CEO Nick Hockley said in a statement.

The SCG had hosted two ODIs and as many T20s during the limited overs leg of India's tour.

The first three games were held in front of a limited 18000 crowd before restrictions were lifted for the final T20 on December 8 with more than 30000 attending the game.

The match will now have to be

re-ticketed with the existing holders getting an exclusive window to re-buy the tickets from 5 pm local time on Monday through to 12pm on Tuesday. All remaining public tickets will be released at 12pm on Tuesday.

"In response to the public health situation in NSW, we are working closely with Venues NSW and NSW Health to put appropriate bio-security measures in place for our staff, players, match officials, broadcasters and fans to ensure we play the third Test at the SCG safely,"

Tony Shepherd, Venues NSW Chair, said that the SCG has taken significant measures to ensure fans' safety.

"There are extensive protocols being enacted for the upcoming Test, including increased cleaning, customer service and security staff, along with dedicated social distancing marshals, Sheppard said.

"The SCG is registered as a COVID Safe business with the NSW Government which allows exhaustive record keeping and QR code check-in protocols that will ensure the safety of our fans.

"We have a very safe stadium and will be doing everything we can to deliver this event safely, as we have at our venues in NSW for the entire year, he said.

## Team India And Support Staff Negative In Latest COVID-19 Tests, Says BCCI

File Photo



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**MELBOURNE:** The Indian cricket team and its support staff have returned negative in the latest COVID-19 tests conducted here

ahead of the third Test against Australia in Sydney, the BCCI said on Monday. The match is due to start on January 7.

"Playing members of the Indian Cricket Team and support staff

underwent an RT-PCR Test for COVID-19 on January 3, 2021. All tests have returned negative results," the BCCI said in a short statement.

The statement comes a couple of days after five Indian players -- vice-captain Rohit Sharma, opener Shubman Gill, stumper Rishabh Pant, pacer Navdeep Saini and batsman Prithvi Shaw -- were placed in isolation after a video of them at an indoor restaurant was posted by a fan on Twitter.

Cricket Australia had announced that a joint investigation with the BCCI was on to determine whether it amounted to a breach of bio-security protocol for the series.

The five were, however, allowed to train and travel with the team for the match in Sydney.

The series is currently locked 1-1 after India fought back for an eight-wicket triumph in the Melbourne Test following a humiliating loss in the opener in Adelaide.



**Playing members** of the Indian Cricket Team and support staff underwent an RT-PCR Test for COVID-19 on January 3, 2021. All tests have returned negative results"

## Pattinson Ruled Out Of Third Test Against India With Bruised Ribs

File Photo



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**SYDNEY:** Australian pacer James Pattinson was on Monday ruled out of the third Test against India due to bruised ribs, the home team's cricket board said in a statement.

The match is scheduled to be held at the Sydney Cricket Ground from January 7-11.

"Fast bowler James Pattinson has been ruled out of our Australian squad for the third Australia vs India Test with bruised ribs," Cricket Australia (CA) said in a statement. A replacement has not been named for Pattinson, who got injured after a fall at home.

"He will not be replaced in the squad and will be assessed further ahead of the Brisbane Test match," CA added.

With Pattinson ruled out of

the penultimate Test of the four-match series, Michael Neser has only Sean Abbott to compete with for a spot in the playing XI. The all-rounder was seen doing duty quite a few times as a substitute during the second Test in Melbourne.

Pattinson last played against India in a tour match in the lead-up to the opening Test of the series, picking up three wickets. He has taken 81 wickets in 21 outings for Australia at an average of 26.33 and last featured in a Test against New Zealand last January.

The 30-year-old Pattinson was not included in the playing XI in the first two Tests and was unlikely to be a part of the third match as well, with Mitchell Starc, Josh Hazlewood, Pat Cummins and Nathan Lyon forming a four-pronged bowling attack.

## ISL Season 7: ATK Mohun Bagan Defeats NorthEast United 2-0, Move To Top Spot

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**GOA:** ATK Mohun Bagan's talismanic Fijian forward Roy Krishna regained his scoring touch to help them defeat NorthEast United FC 2-0 in their ISL match at the J. L. Nehru Stadium in Goa on Sunday.

Roy Krishna broke a first-half deadlock in the 51st minute before Benjamin Lambot (58') doubled the Mariners' lead with an own goal to see the Kolkata heavyweights climb to the top of the 11-team standings, one

point clear of Mumbai FC. The Highlanders, on the other hand, remained winless from three matches as they missed a chance to be back in top four to remain at sixth place with 11 points from nine matches.

After scoring five off the eight goals for the Mariners so far, Krishna struggled to find the back of the net in the last two games, but the Fijian returned among goals with a diving header that resulted from an Edu Garcia corner.

The Spaniard delivered a perfect

corner from the right that curled in and found Tiri in the middle of the box as he flicked it to the far post where the Fijian beat Gurmeet with a perfect header.

The second goal too resulted from Garcia's corner that swung in from the right as Sandesh Jhingan tried to shoot it from a goalmouth melee, but the ball took a deflection of the NEUFC captain to find the back of the net, much to the joy of the Mariners.

ATKMB started off slowly and there were not many clear cut chances from both the teams.

## NZ vs Pak 2nd Test: Azhar Ali Rues Missing Out On Hundred After Battling Testing Conditions

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**KARACHI:** Pakistan's senior batsman Azhar Ali has expressed disappointment at missing out on a hundred on the first day of the second Test against New Zealand in Christchurch on Sunday.

Azhar, who was dismissed seven runs short of his 18th Test century, said he was keen to get to the three-figure mark.

"Have not got a hundred as yet in New Zealand, but overall, I think it is one of my better innings as the conditions were good for bowlers

and it was a challenge batting out there," he said. Former skipper Azhar, a veteran of 83 Tests, said despite the difficult conditions it was pleasing to see Pakistan post a good total and play positive cricket.

"We feel we have enough runs on the board as the pitch is still good for bowlers," Azhar, talking about his innings, said he knew beforehand the first couple of hours would be difficult for the batsmen.

"With so much grass on the pitch I knew I had to apply myself and focus for a long stay at the wicket." "The good thing was

that we were positive today and when the ball was in the zone to be scored from we took advantage of that. This approach is necessary because on this sort of pitch you know you are going to get one good ball sooner or later."

Azhar, who stepped down as Test captain before the New Zealand tour, said the pitch also had runs for the batsmen if one applied himself and picked the right shots to play.

Azhar also praised the batting of Rizwan Ali and the lower-order pair of Faheem Ashraf and

debutant Zafar Gohar, saying they all batted positively in testing conditions. He said Zafar made an impressive debut and hoped he would get many more runs and wickets for Pakistan in future. Azhar faced 37 balls from the 6'8" Kyle Jamieson, scoring 26 runs, including five fours. Jamieson finished with a five wicket haul.

"He is quite tall and he is constantly good line and lengths and moves the ball both ways plus he can get a disconcerting bounce But I was ready to hit the ball when it was there to be hit."

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