

Maximum : 06°C
Minimum : -3°C
Humidity : 77%SUNSET
Today 05:40 PM
SUNRISE
Tomorrow 07:37 AM

News Digest

CRPF Man Dies Of Cardiac Arrest

Srinagar: A Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personal on Saturday died of cardiac arrest in Sopore town of Baramulla district. Head Constable Kuldeep Singh of CRPF 215 battalion was performing his duty at the ITI Rohama when he suffered a cardiac arrest and collapsed on the ground, news agency KNS reported Saturday. Singh, the report said, was taken to 177 battalion headquarter at Sopore and later to Srinagar for advanced treatment. ● PIO

5 Held For Looting Banihal Shops

Banihal: Five people have been arrested for allegedly looting over a dozen of shops in Jammu and Kashmir's Banihal town, police said on Saturday. The group of thieves committed the crime on Thursday night, sparking protests by the locals. Acting swiftly, police arrested five gang members, including their leader, Senior Superintendent of Police, Ramban, Haseeb-ur-Rehman told reporters. He said the thieves were ● PIO

Police Claims Arrest Of Five OGWs

Srinagar: Police on Saturday claimed to have arrested five alleged over-ground workers (OGWs) of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) in Sopore town of Baramulla district. Acting on specific human, technical inputs, police and other security forces arrested five OGWs of Lashkar outfit along with incriminating materials, a police spokesperson said Saturday. He identified the alleged militant associates as Khursheed Ahmad Lone, Bashir Ahmad Zargar. ● PIO



A BOATMAN CLEANING his Shikara inside the snow-covered Dal Lake on Saturday. KO Photo, Abid Bhat

Fresh Snowfall Blocks Highway, Dips Mercury

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: Parts of Kashmir Valley on Saturday received fresh snowfall leading to the closure of strategic Srinagar-Jammu highway, disrupting flight operations and leading to a drop in minimum temperature, officials said.

The fresh snowfall began early in the morning, they said.

The valley had received snowfall for four consecutive days earlier in the week, draping everything in white.

The officials said Srinagar recorded four inches of snow till 8.30 am. In south Kashmir, Kulgam recorded five inches of snow, An-

antnag three, Shopian three and Pulwama four. Bandipora, in the north, received two inches of snow and central Kashmir's Budgam and Ganderbal districts recorded three inches each, the officials said.

There were no reports of snowfall at the famous ski-resort of Gulmarg in north Kashmir, and Pahalgam tourist resort in the south, the officials added.

Some other areas in the valley received rainfall, they said.

The Met Office had forecast very light rains or snowfall at isolated places in Jammu and Kashmir on Saturday, even as it had said there was no forecast of any ●PAGE 10

Air Traffic Disrupted At Srinagar Airport

Air traffic to and from Kashmir was affected on Saturday as several flights were cancelled due to fresh snowfall in Srinagar and other parts of the Valley, officials said. They said snow accumulated on the runway of the Srinagar airport which hampered the ● PIO

J&K Logs 2 More Corona Deaths, 122 Cases

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir reported on Saturday two more deaths due to coronavirus, while 122 fresh cases of infection, including two United Kingdom (UK) returnees were detected across the Union Territory during the last 24 hours.

Both the victims, officials said, were from Jammu division—a man from Ploura area of the winter capital of J&K and woman from Gandya area of Kathua. With their deaths, the total fatality count since the outbreak of virus in J&K has reached 1909.

Meanwhile, 122 fresh cases of coronavirus were detected across the Union Territory during the last 24 hours, including two people from Srinagar, who have recently returned from UK.

Giving a district wise break-up, the officials said Srinagar reported 25, Baramulla 8, Budgam 5, Kupwara 7, Pulwama 6, ● PIO

Samples Of UK Returnees Sent To Delhi For Genome Sequencing

SRINAGAR: Two people with travel history to the United Kingdom and Italy have tested positive for Covid-19 infection prompting the officials to send their samples to New Delhi for Genome Sequencing.

Nodal Officer for Covid-19 at JLN, Dr. Bilquees Shah told Kashmir Observer Saturday that two suspected men with travel history to UK were brought to hospital on Saturday with one of them confirmed coronavirus positive.

"One of them was found Covid-19 positive, while his co-traveller tested negative for ● PIO

Army Captures Chinese Soldier In Ladakh

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: In a second such incident in nearly three months, a Chinese soldier was apprehended by the Indian Army at the southern bank of Pangong Tso in eastern Ladakh on Friday morning after he transgressed across the Indian side of the Line of Actual Control (LAC), official sources said on Saturday.

The capture of the soldier comes amid a massive deployment of troops by the Indian Army and the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) in eastern Ladakh in view of the tense border standoff that erupted following a clash between the two sides in the Pangong lake area in early May.

The PLA soldier had transgressed into the Indian side of

the LAC and was taken into custody by Indian troops deployed in the area, the sources said.

The Chinese soldier is being dealt with as per laid down procedures and the circumstances under which he had crossed the LAC are being investigated, they added.

"The PLA soldier had transgressed across the LAC and was taken into custody by Indian troops deployed in this area.

Troops from either side are deployed along the LAC since friction erupted last year due to unprecedented mobilisation and forward concentration by Chinese troops," said a source.

Indian troops had captured Corporal Wang Ya Long of the PLA on October 19 last year after he "strayed" across the LAC in the Demchok sector ●PAGE 10

THE PLA SOLDIER HAD transgressed across the LAC and was taken into custody by Indian troops deployed in this area.

...FISSURES IN PAGD

Imran Questions Lone's Decision To Stay In Alliance

'Sajad Sahib You Have To Be Ready To Answer Questions That We All Have'

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Peoples Conference General Secretary Imran Raza Ansari Saturday accused the leadership of Peoples Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) of fielding proxy candidates in

recently held DDC elections and asked his party chief Sajad Gani Lone to go for introspection for trusting PAGD.

Imran Ansari in a letter to Sajad Lone wrote: "I am writing to you in reference to the recent statements made by ●PAGE 10

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Incorporating Unhealthy Food To Healthy Diet Diminishes Positive Effects: Study

Eating a healthy diet, such as the Mediterranean diet, has a positive impact on health, but little is known about the effects of including unhealthy foods in an otherwise healthy diet. Now researchers have reported diminished benefits of a Mediterranean diet among those with a high frequency of eating unhealthy foods.

The results of their study led by researchers from Rush University Medical Center were published in Alzheimer's & Dementia: The Journal of the Alzheimer's Association.

"Eating a diet that emphasizes vegetables, fruit, fish, and whole grains may positively affect a person's health," said Pujia Agarwal, PhD, a nutritional epidemiologist and assistant professor in the Department of Internal Medicine at Rush Medical College.

"But when it is combined with fried food, sweets, refined grains, red meat, and processed meat, we observed that the benefits of eating the Mediterranean part of the diet seem to be diminished."

A Mediterranean diet is associated with slower rates of cognitive decline in older adults.

The observational study included 5,001 older adults living in Chicago who were part of the Chicago Health and Aging Project, an evaluation of cognitive health in adults over the age of 65 conducted from 1993 to 2012. Every three years, the study participants completed a cognitive assessment questionnaire that tested basic information-processing skills and memory, and they filled out a questionnaire about the frequency with which they consumed 144 food items.



The researchers analyzed how closely each of the study participants adhered to a Mediterranean diet, which includes daily consumption of fruit, vegetables, legumes, olive oil, fish, potatoes, and unrefined cereals, plus moderate wine consumption. They also assessed how much each participant followed a Western diet, which included fried foods, refined grains, sweets, red and processed meats, full-fat dairy products, and pizza. They assigned scores of zero to five for each food item to compile a total Mediterranean diet score for each participant along with a range from zero to 55.

The researchers then examined the association between Mediterranean diet scores and changes in participants' global

cognitive function, episodic memory, and perceptual speed. Participants with slower cognitive decline over the years of follow-up were those who adhered closest to the Mediterranean diet, along with limiting foods that are part of the Western diet, whereas participants who ate more of the Western diet had no beneficial effect of healthy food components in slowing cognitive decline.

There was no significant interaction between age, sex, race, or education and the association with cognitive decline in either high or low levels of Western diet foods. The study also included models for smoking status, body mass index, and other potential variables such as cardiovascular conditions, and findings remained the same.

"Western diets may adversely affect cognitive health," Agarwal said. "Individuals who had a high Mediterranean diet score compared to those who had the lowest score were equivalent to being 5.8 years younger in age cognitively."

Agarwal said that the results complement other studies showing that a Mediterranean diet reduces the risk of heart disease, certain cancers, and diabetes and also support previous studies on Mediterranean diet and cognition. The study also notes that most of the dietary patterns that have shown improvement in cognitive function among older adults, including the Mediterranean, MIND, and DASH diets, have a unique scoring matrix based on the number of servings consumed for each diet component.

"The more we can incorporate green leafy vegetables, other vegetables, berries, olive oil, and fish into our diets, the better it is for our ageing brains and bodies. Other studies show that red and processed meat, fried food, and low whole grains intake are associated with higher inflammation and faster cognitive decline in older ages," Agarwal said.

"To benefit from diets such as the Mediterranean diet, or MIND diet, we would have to limit our consumption of processed foods and other unhealthy foods such as fried foods and sweets."

The study and its findings cannot be readily generalized. Future longitudinal studies on diet and cognition among the middle-aged population are needed to extend these findings.

Agencies

Jammu And Kashmir Public Service Commission

RESHAM GHAR Colony BAKSHI NAGAR, JAMMU - 180001

website: <http://jkpsc.nic.in>
Email: jkpscsecretary@gmail.com

Jammu: 0191-2566528 (F) 2566530
Srinagar: 0194-2312629 (F) 2312631

Press Release Dated: 06.01.2021

The Health & Medical Education Department vide its communication No. HME/HRM/162/2018 Dated **10.06.2020** and **21.07.2020** referred Nine hundred (900) posts of Medical Officer (Allopathic) in H&FW, to the J&K Public Service Commission, for being filled up in terms of the Jammu and Kashmir Probationer (Condition of Service, Pay and allowances) and Fixation of Tenure Rules, 2020, as per the following breakup;

Item No.	Name of the Discipline	OM	RBA	SC	ST	ALC/IB	Social Caste	EWS	PSP	Total
01	Medical Officer	450	90	72	90	36	36	90	36	900

2. In addition, 29 backlog vacancies (RBA:15, SC:01, ST:03 & ALC:10) were also to be filled up.

3. The J&K Public Service Commission, accordingly, notified these 929 posts, vide Notification No.01-PSC(DR-P) of 2020 dated:30.07.2020.

4. In accordance with the provisions of **SRO 388 dated:10.09.2018**, these 929 vacancies were to be filled up solely on the basis of a written test without viva-voce/interview:

".... the posts of Medical Officer shall be filled on the basis of written test only to be conducted by the J&K Public Service Commission."

5. It was specified in the above said notification that the candidates who are domiciled in the Union Territory of J&K and possessing the prescribed academic and professional qualification and age for the said post alone are eligible for applying. It was also specified that the last date of receipt of online applications provided in the notification (i.e. 04.09.2020) shall be the cutoff date for determining the eligibility as regards education & professional qualification.

6. In response to the above said advertisement notification, a total of 2584 applications were received. 2508 candidates were found to be provisionally eligible to appear in the written test.

7. The written examination was held on 01.11.2020. 2122 candidates (1505 in Srinagar & 617 in Jammu) appeared in the said examination. The examination was held at 10 venues; 7 in Srinagar and 3 in Jammu.

8. It is pertinent to mention here that in order to ensure transparency and fair play, each candidate was allowed to carry back Carbon Copy of Answer Sheet (OMR) for his/ her perusal and records.

9. The provisional answer key was released on 01.11.2020 for claims and objections, if any, by the candidates. The official answer key was finalized only after examining all the representations submitted by the candidates and after obtaining the opinion of the experts of the subject.

10. The result of written test was declared on 10.11.2020. 965 candidates who had cleared the benchmark eligibility criteria were directed to get their documents verified at J&K Public Service Commission offices at Jammu & Srinagar w.e.f. 17.11.2020 to 28.11.2020.

11. To begin with, the Commission had recommended 459 candidates for appointment as Medical Officer on 14.12.2020 in whose case the documents were complete in all respect. The Commission had similarly recommended 168 candidates in the waiting list.

12. The recommendations with reference to 183 candidates from the select list & 64 candidates from the wait list were kept withheld due to deficiency of various documents.

13. In pursuance of Commission's Decision No. 11.3 dated: 18.12.2020, a Committee of the Members of the Commission was constituted to look into the cases of candidates in whose case the recommendations have been kept withheld on grounds that the candidates have submitted documents viz. Domicile/Registration certificates etc. which have been issued/obtained after the cutoff date and that the Committee shall scrutinize these cases and make appropriate recommendations for consideration of the Commission.

14. A notice was also issued and the candidates were conveyed that if he/she wishes to make any representation before said Committee of Members the same may be done within five days positively.

15. The Committee after detailed examinations and deliberations and keeping in view the exemptions/ relaxations granted by various Government Departments recommended **"acceptance of these deficient documents as one time exemption because of COVID-19 and not treated as matter of course in future."**

16. The above recommendations of the Committee were adopted by the Commission and the recommendations w.r.t. 151 candidates from the select list and the 48 candidates from the wait list were released today on 06.01.2021. The decision w.r.t. remaining 32 candidates from Select List and 16 candidates from the waiting list will be notified in due course of time.

17. 258 posts of Medical Officers, as per the break up given below, could not be filled up as the candidates belonging to the respective categories were either not available or they could not cross the benchmark eligibility criteria prescribed under rules:-

Category	SC	ST	ALC/IB	Social Caste	EWS	PSP	Total
No of posts	37	59	23	26	31	82	258

18. It is important to mention here that the Commission has in order to check impersonation introduced, for the first time, the system of Photography of the individual candidate at the entry of examination halls and also during verification of documents.

19. It is also important to mention here that despite the disruptions caused due to COVID-19 restriction, the recruitment of Medical Officer (Allopathic) was conducted on a fast track basis and completed within a period of less than five months from the date of referral of vacancies.

(Rajesh Sharma) KAS
Secretary
J&K Public Service Commission

DIPK-11459/20

OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL GOVERNMENT MEDICAL COLLEGE, ANANTNAG J&K

(CAMP OFFICE: MMAB District Hospital Anntnnc)

Phone No; 01932-227624 EMAIL gmcantnag2018@gmail.com

e- Tender Notice No: 02. GMCA of 2021 Dated: 8 .01.2021

On behalf of Lieutenant Governor, Union Territory of J&K, online tenders (through www.iktenders.gov.in), under two bid system are invited from eligible bidders for supply of Instruments/equipments for Up-gradation of Blood Bank of Govt. Medical College, Anantnag to Blood Component & Separation Unit (BCSU) under NHM. The schedule of requirements is given in Annexure "A" to the tender document and schedule of events given hereunder:-\

S. No	Particulars	Date and time	
1.	Date & Time of floating of bid	09.01.2021	04: 30 PM
2.	Date & time of online bid submission.(Any query to clear can be done through e-mail Id on gmcantnag2018@gmail.com from 10.01.2021 to 12.01.2021	Start Date & Time 13.01.2021 10: 30 AM	End Date & Time 31.01.2021 4:30PM
3	Date & time of online Technical bid opening	02.02.2021	2:00 PM
4.	Earnest Money Deposit	Rs. 50,000/= (Rupees Fifty Thousands Only/)	
5.	Cost of tender document	Rs. 500/= (Rupees five hundred only)	

The bid document with all information relating to the bidding process including Schedule of Requirement and terms and Conditions are available on the website: www.gmcantnag.net and www.jkendres.gov.in.

The competent authority reserves the right to accept or reject the tenders received without assigning any reason thereof.

The items which shall be available with JKMSCL shall not be procured through this tender

No: GMCA/Plg/62/4182-85

Dated: 8-1-2021

DIPK-11506/20

Principal
Dean Govt.
Medical College, Anantnag

Government of Jammu & Kashmir

Directorate of Tourism, Kashmir

e-mail: ddtreg123@gmail.com

Subject: - Renewal & Change of Location of the Travel unit under the name & style M/s Hamara Trip.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Whereas, Mr. Irshad Ahmed S/oMr. Bashir Ahmed R/o Baran Pather, Haft Chinari, SrinagarKashmir has approached to this office for renewal and change of location of his TravelUnit running under the name and style "M/s Hamara Trip"from Kursoo, Rajbagh, Srinagarto Baran Pather, Haft Chinari, Srinagar under Tourist Trade Act 1978/82/2011-12.

Whereas the unit is registered with this department under Registration No.- Reg/T/1604/483/DTK/L-12/P-20 dated 07-05-2016 and is renewed upto 31-03-2020.

Whereas, the applicant has submitted Original Registration Certificate, Bank statement, Site Plan of new location, Rent Deed Registration, NOC from the bank, Photographs of new location in support of his claim. The Travel unit was inspected on 09-12-2020.

Now therefore, in exercise of powers conferred on me under section 39 of Registrationof Tourist Trade Act 1978/82/2011/12, before the request of the applicant is considered for change of location of the unit, the matter is hereby notified for information of general Public/ Financial Institutions/Bank/Organization, etc for objection if any. The same should reach this office within a period of 7 days from the publication of this notice in the local newspaper. No objections beyond period of 7 days will be entertained and request of the applicant will be considered as per rules.

No: Reg/T/1604/1139/DTK
Dated:- 07-01-2021.

DIPK-11454/20

Sd/-
Deputy Director Tourism,
Registration (Kashmir)

Fit India School Week Celebrations 2020

J&K Ranks No 1 In India Wide Fitness Test

Observer News Service

JAMMU: J&K has topped the list of participating schools amongst all the States and UT's of India followed by Gujarat and Odisha in 'Fit India School Week Celebrations 2020'.

As many as 20052 schools of Jammu division participated through online and offline activities in 'Fit India School Week Celebrations 2020' launched by the Ministry of Education (School Education & Literacy) and Ministry of Sports, Government of India w.e.f 1st December to 31st December 2020.

A total of 17611 registrations from the UT of J&K were recognized, out of which 10206 came from Jammu division alone, while Gujrat ranked 2nd with 10163 entries and Odisha stood 3rd with 7448.

Director School Education Jammu, Anuradha Gupta, in the assessment meeting held today, divulged that more than 2.5 Lakh students and teachers (2,52,043) participated in the campaign covering 20052 schools.

In her congratulatory message to the students, teachers and staff members, Anuradha Gupta, recognising the efforts put in, thanked everyone for

the overwhelming response despite COVID-19 pandemic restrictions and asked them to continue working diligently so as to achieve the motto of the initiative in letter and spirit. "It is a moment of pride for all of us to be number one in the country with maximum entries coming from Jammu division. It is also a moment to introspect how important it is to adopt some fitness routine as a lifelong habit", she added. She said that the slogan of Fit India School Week celebrations, Ek Ghanta Roz Fitness ki dose shall be adopted by Jammu schools on a continuous basis. She called upon all Government and private schools to take the Fit India movement forward.

To make students, teachers and others stakeholders aware about the registration process and to meet the necessary conditions laid down by the Union Government Of India, the Directorate of School Education Jammu started a month long campaign through various activities in the month of December 2020 using both online as well as offline mode across all the 10 districts of division Jammu, covering both winter and summer zone schools.

Govt Transfers Additional Land to CUK

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir Government has transferred 94 kanals and 6 marlas of additional land at Watlar, Tehsil Lar of Ganderbal to the Central University of Kashmir (CUK) for establishment of residential and other utility quarters.

The land is in addition to the 503 acres of land already given to the varsity for the establishment of the university at Tulumulla. Vice Chancellor,

Prof. Mehraj ud Din Mir has thanked the Lieutenant Governor, Mr. Manoj Sinha, Advisors, Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir, District Development Commissioner, Ganderbal, Assistant Commissioner Revenue, for their full support and cooperation in this regard.

Vice Chancellor, Prof. Mehraj ud Din Mir has convened a special meeting of the Campus Development wing of the university on Sunday to chalk out modalities in this regard.

Arrangements In Place For Foreign Travellers Testing Positive: DDMA DC Srinagar chairs meeting

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR, JANUARY 9: District Disaster Management Authority, Srinagar has put in place arrangements as per ICMR guidelines pursuant to foreign travellers testing positive for Covid-19 on arrival at Srinagar which includes institutional quarantine and other logistics arrangements. Guidelines have been notified for Covid-19 containment in view of new cases.

Chairman District Health Society and DDMA chaired meeting to finalise arrangements to be put in place as per Ministry of Health and Family Welfare guidelines issued on 1st January 2021. Addl Commissioner, Kashmir Dr Srikant Suse, Addl Deputy Commissioners Dr Syed Hanief Balkhi, Syed Khurshed Ahmed and Harvinder Singh, Divisional Nodal officer Dr Talat, HoD SPM Dr Saleem Khan,

CMO Dr Jahangir Bakhshi, Epidemiologist Dr Tasadunq Shafi and other officers attended the meeting.

District Administration in coordination with the Department of Health has earmarked institutional quarantine and health-care arrangements for contacts of Covid-19 travellers as per guidelines issued by the Ministry meanwhile UK travellers testing positive for Covid-19 are admitted for hospital isolation. It was informed that contrary to some reports appearing in the media two cases of foreign travellers tested positive are yet to be confirmed for UK strain as the samples have to be sent to and tested at Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium (INSACOG) Lab for genome study. A total of 21 passengers travelling from the UK have been tested so far and two cases testing positive for Covid-19 have travelled from Italy and UK respec-

tively. Meanwhile, a robust public health Surveillance and contact tracing has been initiated for the same. The Covid Positive patients have been shifted in Hospital Isolation and their contacts are identified and are being quarantined for observation and to be tested accordingly.

DC Srinagar emphasised that in view of research and studies about COVID variant strains still at an early or emerging state precautions shall be taken for all foreign travellers to avoid any risk to the local population. Logistic and infrastructure support is accordingly extended to the health department.

As per the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, if the report of sequencing is inconsistent with the current SARS-CoV-2 virus genome circulating in the country, the ongoing treatment protocol including home isolation/treatment

at facility as per case severity is to be followed. In confirmed cases of genomic sequencing indicative of new SARS-Cov-2 variants the patients will continue in a separate isolation unit and shall be tested on the 14th day. Hospitals have been notified by the Government already.

DDMA has put in place required arrangements in view of fresh guidelines of ministry in view of returnees from UK and European countries. Meanwhile public appeal has been issued for ensuring covid containment SOPs including wearing masks mandatory at public places, maintaining physical distance and personal hygiene. It is pertinent to mention here that as per provisions of DM act the district administration has authorised officers including Magistrates, Police officers, Medical officer, SMC officers and others under the Act for imposing and recovering fine.

10 Employees, Including DAK President Found Absent from Duty

Baramulla: Sub-District Magistrate made a surprise visit to Trauma Hospital located in Pattan town of North Kashmir's Baramulla district and found at least ten staffers including five doctors absent from duties.

Among those who were found absent were President of one of the factions of Doctors Association Kashmir Dr Suhail Nayak, Dr Asim Rather (USG) Dr Zeeza (Dentist) , Dr Mehmooda (Dentist) , Dr Arshid Hussain (Physician) and others.

During the inspection SDM Pattan also found NRHM, Dental, RNTCP, USG Sections locked.

SDM Pattan Syed Faheem

said that he made the surprise visit at around 1:15 PM after receiving complaints that in absence of doctors and para-medical staff, patients are suffering immensely. "I was told most of the patients who visit the Trauma Hospital from far flung areas return back, when they find doctors absent. This is unacceptable and during my visit I found ten employees absent," he said.

Syed Faheem added that he has recommended their suspension before Deputy Commissioner Baramulla till then Block Medical Officer has been asked to withhold the salaries of these employees. KNT

4 Of A Family Found Unconscious, Hospitalized

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Four members of a family were rushed to hospital in a village in Shopian after they were found unconscious this morning.

According to reports, Javed Ahmed Thokar, his wife and two children were found mysteriously unconscious in their own house in Nasipura, Keegam.

The locals informed the police and they were shifted to a hospital in Rajpura.

According to reports, the condition of all the four members is stable.

Loss Of J&K Pharmacy Council Registration & Renewal

I Have Lost My J & K Pharmacy Council Registration & Renewal Bearing Registration No.413 Dated 17/06/2004 Through J & K Pharmacy Council Jammu. Now I Applied For Its Duplicate If Anybody Has Any Objection In This Regard May File At Drug Controller Officer Anantnag/President J & K Pharmacy Council Patoli,Mangotrain Jammu Within Seven (7) Days After That No Objection Shall Be Entertained

Name:-Mohammad Ashraf Shah
S/O Gulla Mohammad Shah
R/O Akingam Anantnag

DEMISE

With profound grief, we inform the demise of **Sheikh Ghulam Rasool** S/o Sheikh Ghulam Mohammad R/o Botshah Mohallah Green Lane H. No. 28, Lal Bazar Near Jamia Masjid on 6th January 2021 (Wednesday) in a tragic road accident. Congregational Fateh Khawani will be held on **Sunday the 10th of January 2021** at our ancestral graveyard **Syed Sahib Rajouri Kadal** Near Masjid Shareef at **11:00 am**.

Ladies are requested not to bring any kind of eatables with them.

Bereaved: Sheikh & Dar Family

9018558687, 9906499502, 9906869999

انتقال پر ملال

یہ خبر انتہائی دکھ کے ساتھ دی جاتی ہے کہ نذیر احمد تیلی / ولد مرحوم غلام رسول تیلی ساکنہ پتھان محلہ حضرت بل سرینگر مورخہ 8 جنوری کو اس دارفانی سے رحلت کر گئے اِنَّا لِلّٰہِ وَاِنَّا اِلَیْہِ رَاجِعُوْنَ۔ مرحوم نیک سیرت ، بخوش اخلاق کے ساتھ ساتھ منسار، شریف النفس اور رحم دل کے کے حامل تھے اللہ تعالیٰ مرحوم کو جنت الفردوس عطا کریں آمین اور ساتھ ہی ان کے غمزدہ لواحقین کو یہ نا قابل تلافی صدمہ برداشت کرنے کی توفیق عطا کریں آمین۔ اس سلسلے میں مرحوم کی اجتماعی فاتحہ خوانی 10 جنوری بروز اتوار کو ان کے آبائی مقبرہ واقعہ نزدیکی لال بازار بس سٹاپ حضرت بل میں صبح 11 بجے انجام دی جائے گی۔ سوگواران:- تیلی خاندان

9906478644 9469681052

نوٹ:- مسطرات سے گزارش ہے کہ وہ اپنے ساتھ میوہ وغیرہ نہ لائے

Up-skilling of IUST Engineering Students IUST Signs MoU with Directorate of Skill Development J&K

Observer News Service

Awantipora: Islamic University of Science & Technology (IUST) through its School of Engineering & Technology (SoE&T) entered into a MoU with Centre for Invention, Innovation, Incubation & Training (CIIT), Govt. Polytechnic College Baramulla under Directorate of Skill Development, UT of J&K here on Friday. CIIT has been established by Tata Technologies Ltd, Pune for conducting integrated training on technical and skill development conforming to the standards and requirements of industry 4.0.

The MoU shall facilitate up-skilling of Engineering undergraduates and polytechnic diploma students of IUST in the domain of manufacturing technology and automobile engineering at CIIT. The

experiential learnings during the skill training to be conducted in the state-of-the-art infrastructure facilities shall enable competency development in modern Engineering tools necessary for product design, development and manufacturing. It will provide students to gain insights of industry 4.0 and other disruptive technologies.

The event was as an outcome of the understanding reached between Vice Chancellor IUST, Prof. Mushtaq A. Siddiqi and Principal Secretary, Skill Development Department, Govt. of J&K Dr. Asgar Hassan Sammoon towards implementing industry oriented skill training programs to produce employable workforce for the industry. The MoU was signed by Dean SoE&T, Prof. A. H. Moon and Principal Govt. Polytechnic College, Er. Imtiyaz Ahmad Shaw in presence of Vice Chan-

cellor IUST, Director Skill Development Department UT of J&K, Sajad Hussain Ganai (KAS) and Registrar IUST, Prof. Naseer Iqbal. On the occasion, Director Skill Development Department, Sajad Hussain Ganai was briefed about various upcoming plans of IUST related to promotion of innovation, incubation and start-ups at IUST.

It was also decided that IUST plans to train initially 200 of its Engineering students at CIIT through various training programs like Innovation Design and Incubation, Mechatronics and IoT, Digital Manufacturing, CAD Engineering. IUST intern shall also collaborate with the Department of Skill Development to offer training to various 3 year Engineering Diploma students studying in Govt. Polytechnic Colleges across UT of J&K in different Engineering domains.

Missing Elderly Man Found Dead in Mosque Washroom

Agencies

Srinagar: A middle-aged man who was missing for a day was found dead inside the washroom of a mosque in Sheribhat area of Zaidal in Srinagar on Saturday.

Police officials who identified the deceased as Abdul Qayoom Khan son of late Abdul Rehman of Gilli Kadal Zoonimar said that the elderly man was missing for the last one day. "The family of the deceased lodged a missing report after which we started searches. However on Saturday morning when people gathered at the mosque to offer Fajr prayers, they heard a mobile continuously buzzing inside the mosque washroom. People present approached and knocked at the door but when there was no response they opened the door only to find a man lying dead", police said.

Establish Exam Centre for AIBE Aspirants at Srinagar: Bukhari

SRINAGAR: Apni Party President Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari on Saturday urged the Bar Council of India to establish its examination centre at Srinagar so as to enable the law professionals to appear in the upcoming All India Bar Examination (AIBE) without any difficulties.

In a statement issued here, Bukhari expressed deep concern over the helplessness of hundreds of legal professionals who for multiple reasons can't afford to go outside Valley for this mandatory examination.

"Hundreds of law professionals from across the Kashmir division who want to avail permanent license are unable to go outside the valley because of inclement weather, closure of national highway and unaffordable air fares. I would request the Bar Council of India and ministry of law and justice government of India to intervene into the matter and resolve the grievances of AIBE candidates of Kashmir," Bukhari pleaded.

He said like the recently estab-



lished examination centers at Gwalior and Indore the BCI should find no hiccups in establishing a permanent examination centre for law professionals in the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir.

"The inclement weather has already wreaked havoc here and it will save the travel charges of hundreds of aspirants who desire to appear in AIBE examination if an exclusive examination centre is set up at Srinagar."

Bukhari appealed to the Bar Council of India to reflect over the request of the law aspirants of Kashmir division and relieve them by addressing their genuine grievances.

DIAL-EMMA



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

AIRPORTS

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311



RAILWAYS

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



HIGHWAY STATUS



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



HIJRI
CALENDAR
25 Jumada al-Awwal
1442

PRAYERS

FAJR	6: 08
ZUHR	12: 37
ASR	4: 01
Magrib	5: 45
ISHA	7: 08

This Day In History

- 1475 - Stephen III of Moldavia defeats the Ottoman Empire at the Battle of Vaslui.
- 1514 - Complutensian New Testament in Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek & Latin finished
- 1861 - US forts & property seized by Mississippi
- 1861 - Florida secedes from the Union (US Civil War)
- 1906 - The British and French begin consultations on military and naval issues
- 1912 - World's 1st flying boat's maiden flight. (Glen Curtiss in NY)
- 1914 - Yuan Shih-k'ai, president of the new Chinese republic, dissolves parliament and prepares a constitution of his own design; he will set himself up as dictator, preparatory to an attempt to make himself emperor
- 1916 - Russian offensive in Caucasus
- 1916 - In retaliation for President Woodrow Wilson's recognition of the Carranza government, members of Pancho Villa's revolutionary army take 17 US mining engineers from a train and shoot 16 of them in cold blood
- 1917 - The Allied Governments respond to US President Woodrow Wilson's December 1916 note, giving their terms for ending the war
- 1923 - Last US troops leave Rhineland (Germany)
- 1923 - Lithuania seizes & annexes country of Memel
- 1925 - Allies refuse to evacuate the Cologne area of Germany as agreed
- 1928 - Soviet Union orders exile of Leon Trotsky
- 1944 - British troops conquer Maungdaw, Burma
- 1946 - UN General Assembly meets for 1st time in London
- 1951 - UN headquarters opens in Manhattan NY
- 1954 - A Comet jet airliner crashes in the Mediterranean; 35 people are missing
- 1966 - India & Pakistan sign Tashkent Declaration peace accord
- 1968 - US Surveyor 7 lands near lunar crater Tycho
- 1969 - USSR's Venera 6 launched for parachute landing on Venus
- 1972 - Sheikh Mujibur Rahman arrives in Dacca, East-Pakistan
- 1978 - Soyuz 27 carrying 2 cosmonauts to Salyut 6 space station, launched
- 1984 - US re-establishes full diplomatic relations with Vatican after almost 117 years
- 1986 - NASA's STS-61-C mission scrubbed T -9m because of bad weather at Florida's Kennedy Space Center
- 1990 - China lifts martial law (imposed after Tiananmen Square massacre)
- 1994 - Uzbekistan & Kazakhstan agrees to abolish trade tariffs.
- 1996 - King Hussein of Jordan visits Israel
- 1997 - 1st Comet of 1997 Discovered: Comet 1997 AI

From KO Archives

Nazla bar uzw-e-za'eef Drastic 11-hr power cut in valley ordered

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR - The power development department (PDD) today revised its curtailment schedule to deliver yet another rude shock to the valley consumers by reducing availability of the direly essential commodity to a little over 12 hours per twenty-four hours. Depending upon the whims and caprices of its underlings to enforce irritating unscheduled cuts, power supply would now be something like the proverbial 'once in a blue moon'.

According to the revised schedule effective from today, load shedding will be enforced during mornings, evenings, day and night. During a week, there will be three evening cuts of 4.5 hours each from 5.30 to 10; four night cuts of 6.5 hours each from 11 p.m. to 5.30 a.m. and two morning cuts of two hours each from 5.30 to 7.30. A day cut of five hours will be enforced in two groups all of seven days. The total duration of the 'night-mare' aggregates to 78 and a half hours, or 11 hours and 13 minutes a day.

Power supply to essential services like hospitals, water supply, telecommunications, besides the security force camps and VIP installations, as usual, will be unaffected. According to the chief engineer, maintenance and rural electrification, Qazi Muhammad Syed, supply to the organised industrial units at Khonmoh, Rangreth, Zainakot, Bagh-e-Ali Mardan Khan and other places would be main-tained.

Sources told Kashmir Observer the recent northern grid failure which had plunged several northern states into dark-ness, disrupted essential supplies and services and, on top of it all, embarrassed the centre, served as an immediate provocation for the drastic measure. The northern grid authorities attributed the failure to over-drawal of engery by all the states in the northern region.

Obviously, as the Persian saying, Nazla bar uzw-e-za'eef (wrath on the weak), goes, the axe fell on Jammu and Kashmir On Thursday evening, the northern grid authorities directed the deputy general manager of the Power Grid Corporation of India based at Wagoor grid station to switch off the 220-KV Wagoor, Zainakot transmission line to stop valley's power imports to the extent of 240 megawatts. Similar steps are understood to have been taken in Jammu region.

Following the massive brakes from northern grid, sources said, the valley's imports have been more than halved, from 400 mw to a mere 160 mw. With the generation of around 40 mw from local power stations - Uri, lower Jhelum, Upper Sindh, phase I and II, and Ganderbal - the total avail-ability adds up to 200 mw against the peak requirement of 700 to750 mw.

Caught in a desperate situation, the PDD authorities are going to come down heavily against defaulters. The chief engineer asked the consumers to clear their arrears to avoid disconnection. Power supply to Zainakot-based central public peptor Hindustan Machine Tools was cut off today. Supply to various flour mills and units owing more than Rs one lakh in tariff is being snatched early. Qazi said power supply to various central and state government departments in the red would also be stopped immediately.

(KASHMIR OBSERVER, 10 January, 2001)

A Farewell To @realDonaldTrump, Gone After 57,000 Tweets



Agencies

The provocative handle was given birth by a New York real estate tycoon who used it to help him become the 45th US president. It began with a May 4, 2009, tweet promoting Donald Trump's upcoming appearance on David Letterman's show.

@realDonaldTrump, the Twitter feed that grew from the random musings of a reality TV star into the cudgel of an American president, died Friday. It was not quite 12 years old.

The provocative handle was given birth by a New York real estate tycoon who used it to help him become the 45th US president. It began with a May 4, 2009, tweet promoting Donald Trump's upcoming appearance on David Letterman's show.

It died more than 57,000 tweets later, with Trump using some of his final postings on the powerful platform to commiserate with a pro-Trump mob that besieged the halls of Congress as lawmakers were set to certify his defeat.

The account met its demise when Twitter announced Friday it was pulling the plug permanently on @realDonaldTrump, citing concern that Trump would use it for "further incitement of violence." Trump retorted that he'd be "building out our own platform in the near future. We will not be SILENCED!"

Trump, a novice politician but seasoned salesman, realized the power of social media in ways that few other politicians did. And he wielded it with never-before-seen power to diminish his opponents, shape elections and mold reality — at least in the eyes of his supporters.

Early on, @realDonaldTrump

seemed innocent enough. Its owner, who had prolific experience in marketing casinos, real estate and even Oreos, used the platform mostly to promote his books, media appearances and give friendly plugs to friends.

But as Trump began seriously toying with a White House run, it became a tool to scorch opponents and give shape to his nationalist, "America First" philosophy.

He deployed its venom equally, whether insulting celebrity enemies (Rosie O'Donnell was "crude, rude, obnoxious and dumb") or entire countries (Britain is "trying hard to disguise their massive Muslim problem").

Peter Costanzo, then an online marketing director for the publishing company putting out Trump's book, "Think Like a Champion," helped bring Trump to the platform.

Twitter was still in its infancy at the time. But Costanzo, who later came to work for The Associated Press, saw the then-140-character-per-message platform as a new tool that the real estate mogul could use to boost sales and reach a broader audience.

Costanzo was given seven minutes to make his pitch to Trump — "Not five minutes, not 10," he recalled in a 2016 interview.

Trump liked what he heard.

"I said, 'Let's call you @realDonaldTrump — you're the real Donald Trump,'" recalled Costanzo. "He thought about it for a minute and said: 'I like it. Let's do it.'" Other than Trump's family, no one seemed off limits from his Twitter wrath. Trump attacked Senate Republicans, Senate Democrats, 2016 political rivals, current administration staffers, former administration staffers, the Republican Party and cable networks.

Foreign Firms Not Allowed To Test Covid Vaccines On Iranians: President



Agencies

DUBAI: Foreign companies will not be allowed to test COVID-19 vaccines on the Iranian people, President Hassan Rouhani said on Saturday, a day after Iran's Supreme Leader banned vaccine imports from the United States and Britain.

"Foreign companies wanted to give us vaccines so they would be tested on the Iranian people. But the health ministry prevented it," Rouhani said in televised remarks, without naming the companies or giving further details.

"Our people will not be a testing device for vaccine manufacturing companies," he added. "We shall purchase safe foreign vaccines."

Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's highest authority, said on Friday the U.S. and Britain were "untrustworthy" and possibly

sought to spread the infection to other countries.

Iran could obtain vaccines from other reliable places, he added, without giving details. China and Russia are both allies of Iran, the Middle East country hardest hit by the coronavirus.

Khamenei repeated the accusations in a tweet that was removed by Twitter along with a message saying it violated the platform's rules against misinformation.

Iran launched human trials of its first domestic COVID-19 vaccine candidate late last month, saying it could help the country defeat the pandemic despite U.S. sanctions that affect its ability to import vaccines.

Tensions between Washington and Tehran have been on the rise since 2018, when President Donald Trump abandoned a 2015 nuclear deal and re-imposed sanctions.



US PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP gives an address, a day after his supporters stormed the US Capitol in Washington, US, in this still image taken from video provided on social media on January 8, 2021 Reuters

Pelosi Says Spoke With Military Chief On Preventing Trump Nuclear Strike

Agencies

US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said Friday she spoke with the nation's top military leader about ensuring that an "unhinged" President Donald Trump does not launch a nuclear attack in his final days in office.

The top Democrat also warned that Congress would swiftly take action to impeach the president if he does not resign, although the effort is receiving push back from Republican leadership.

Pelosi said she talked with Joint Chiefs Chairman Mark Milley "to discuss available precautions for preventing an unstable president from initiating military hostilities or accessing the launch codes and ordering a nuclear strike."

The extraordinary acknowledgement that Pelosi has spoken with military brass about restricting the president's powers came in a letter to her Democratic colleagues, and highlighted tensions over Trump's remaining days in the White House.

Democrats and some Republicans have accused Trump of fomenting an insurrection when a pro-Trump mob stormed and ransacked the US

Capitol on Wednesday.

"The situation of this unhinged president could not be more dangerous, and we must do everything that we can to protect the American people from his unbalanced assault on our country and our democracy," Pelosi wrote.

Military spokesman Colonel Dave Butler said Pelosi did call the joint chiefs chairman but would not provide specifics other than to say Milley "answered her questions regarding the process of nuclear command authority."

Pelosi in her letter also said she was prepared to launch impeachment proceedings against Trump if he does not voluntarily resign or if Vice President Mike Pence does not begin a process laid out in the 25th Amendment that allows him and the cabinet to remove the president.

"If the president does not leave office imminently and willingly, the Congress will proceed with our action," she said. "Incitement of insurrection?"

Articles of impeachment have been drafted but they have yet to be introduced. Support is growing among Democrats on Capitol Hill for ousting Trump after his supporters stormed the US Capitol

seeking to prevent lawmakers from certifying Joe Biden's November election win.

Democratic and Republican lawmakers alike described the mayhem, in which five people died including a US Capitol Police officer, as an insurrection.

"There is growing momentum around the invocation of the 25th Amendment, which would allow the vice president and a majority of the cabinet to remove the president for his incitement of insurrection and the danger he still poses," Pelosi wrote.

Democrat Jackie Speier, a member of the House Intelligence Committee, said "all options" remain on the table.

"There is a group of us that feel very strongly that we need to move forward with the impeachment article for insurrection by the president," she told CNN.

"If we are not willing to state that the acts by the president of the United States to incite domestic terrorism and insurrection is an impeachable offense, then nothing is an impeachable offense."

But House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, the chamber's top Republican, pushed back.

"Impeaching the president with just 12 days left in his term will only divide our country more," he said.

Pakistani Shia End Protests; Hold Funerals For Slain 11 Miners

Agencies

Hundreds of Shia Pakistanis gathered on Saturday to bury 11 coal miners from the Hazara community killed by the armed group ISIL (ISIS), ending a week of protests that sought to highlight the minority's plight.

Protesters staged a sit-in after ISIL fighters captured and shot the miners last Sunday in Machh, an area 17km (30 miles) east of Quetta, capital of Pakistan's troubled Balochistan province.

Shia across the country joined in the demonstrations — including blocking roads in major cities — demanding that Prime Minister Imran Khan visit the grieving community in Quetta and assure their protection.

Ethnic Hazaras make up most of the Shia population in Quetta. Balochistan is the country's largest and poorest region, rife with ethnic, sectarian and separatist insurgencies.

Their Central Asian features make them easy targets for Sunni attackers who consider them heretics.

Deal reached

Authorities on Friday promised



the arrest of the attackers, payment of compensation to the bereaved families and better security for the Hazara.

More than 4,000 people attended the last rites of the dead miners whose bodies were laid to rest amid tight security six days after their deaths.

"The provincial government will form a joint investigation team to recommend action against those found guilty of negligence leading to the incident," said an agreement, a copy of which was obtained by AFP news agency.

The deal also called for setting up a high-level commission headed by Balochistan's home minister to investigate attacks against the Hazara community in the past 22 years.

On Friday, Khan appealed to the protesters not to link the burial of the coal miners to his visit to Quetta, vowing he would come afterwards. Under Islamic tradition, burials take place as quickly as possible after death.

"No premier of any country should be blackmailed like this," Khan said in televised remarks.

Sri Lanka Sticks To Cremate Covid-19 Muslim Victims



Agencies

Sri Lanka's government insisted on Friday on the cremation of all coronavirus victims, rejecting international pleas and recommendations from its own experts to allow the Muslim minority to bury their dead in line with Islamic custom.

The government first banned burials in April amid concerns — which experts say are baseless — by influential Buddhist monks that burying bodies could contaminate groundwater and spread the virus.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has said that there is no such risk, recommending both burials and cremations of virus victims, but the Sri Lankan government has refused.

"This decision will not be changed for social, religious, political or any other personal reason," Health Minister Pavithra Wanniarachchi said, according to ministry officials.

The announcement came despite a government-appointed expert committee noting this week that while it felt cremations were safest, burials could be allowed under strict conditions.

Traditionally, Muslims bury their dead facing Mecca. Sri Lanka's majority Buddhists, who are strong backers of the current government, are typically cremated, as are Hindus.

Last month, authorities ordered the forced cremation of at least 19 Muslim Covid-19 victims, including a baby, after their families refused to claim their bodies from a hospital morgue.

This stoked dismay and anger among the Muslim community, mod-

erates and abroad, with the 57-member Organization of Islamic Cooperation repeatedly expressing concern.

Sri Lanka's Muslim Council (SLMC) accused the government of trying to provoke Muslim youths into doing "something rash" with its decision on cremations, a claim echoed by Justice Minister Ali Sabry, a Muslim.

There have been ongoing tensions between Muslims and the majority Sinhalese — who are mostly Buddhists — since the deadly 2019 Easter bombings carried out by local jihadists.

The SLMC said more than half of Sri Lanka's 222 Covid-19 victims were from the Muslim minority which accounts for just 10% of the 21 million population.

"We have a disproportionate number of fatalities because Muslims don't seek treatment fearing that they will be cremated if they are diagnosed with the virus after going to hospital," SLMC spokesman Hilmy Ahmed told AFP.

The Maldives, Sri Lanka's Muslim neighbour, announced last month that Sri Lanka had sought permission to send bodies of Muslims there for burial, a claim denied by Colombo.

Maldives speaker Mohamed Nasheed went on to suggest that they could allow Sri Lankan Muslims to be buried in a cemetery for Maldivians in the Sri Lankan capital.

There has been no response from Colombo to that proposal.

Sri Lanka has experienced a surge in Covid-19 cases, with the number of infections soaring to nearly 46,800 from 3,300 in October and deaths rising to 222 from 13.

Pakistan Removes All Visa Restrictions For Bangladesh Nationals

Agencies

Pakistan has removed all restrictions on visas for citizens of Bangladesh.

The matter was confirmed in a statement by the Pakistan High Commission in Bangladesh, reports Al Jazeera.

"Pakistan has already removed all restrictions on Pakistani visas for Bangladeshi citizens," said the statement issued after a meeting between State Minister for Foreign Affairs Md Shahriar Alam and Pakistani High Commissioner Imran Ahmed Siddiqui on Thursday.

"The two sides agreed to intensify bilateral contact at all levels," it added.

Now, Pakistan is awaiting a similar response from Bangladesh, Siddiqui told Anadolu Agency after the meeting.

"Bangladesh's restrictions on Pakistan nationals are still in place, and that is why I informed the state minister that we have already lifted all bars from our side," he said.

Bangladesh — formerly East Pakistan — gained independence after the nine-month-long Liberation War in 1971. Bilateral relations between the two South Asian countries have remained cold since Pakistan forces based in West Pakistan launched a planned military operation to restrain the Bangladeshi nationalist movement.

In 2009, a tribunal was established by Bangladesh to prosecute people accused of war crimes during the Liberation War.

Notably, Bangladesh had India's support in its war for independence. Due to India's recent "partial attitude" regarding control over



shared rivers, border killings of Bangladeshi civilians and the passing of the contentious Citizenship Amendment Act, Bangladesh began seeking closer ties with Pakistan, according to analysts.

In a rare event, Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan made a phone call to Bangladeshi counterpart Sheikh Hasina last July, as Dhaka had declared that it would pursue a foreign policy of "friendship to all and malice to none".

On Thursday, the Pakistani ambassador called on PM Hasina and Foreign Minister Dr AK Abdul Momen in Dhaka and reportedly discussed numerous issues of mutual interest.

State Minister Shahriar Alam, in a separate statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was quoted as saying: "We look forward to engaging with Pakistan."

Both Dhaka and Islamabad agreed that they need to hold long-pending foreign office consultations which were last held in 2010, the statement added.

The state minister also requested Pakistan to allow access to more Bangladeshi products by expanding the provisions of the South Asia Free Trade Agreement.

NEWS MAKERS

Gargantuan Trove Of Stolen Antiquities Uncovered During Raids In Israel

Agencies

Thousands of stolen archaeological artifacts, including gold coins, bronze statues as well as Egyptian sarcophagi, have been retrieved during a coordinated set of raids across the Israeli-occupied territories.

According to a report published by the Haaretz daily newspaper, the archaeological artifacts were recovered earlier this week in a collaborative swoop by the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA), the Israeli police and the tax authority at three sites after a months-long investigation into the illegal antiquities trade.

The regained finds were apparently looted from graves and sites all around the Mediterranean, the Middle East, Africa and even South America.

The stolen artifacts were hidden in storage rooms in private homes. There were coins from the Seleucid Empire, stone statuettes, red-and-black pottery from Greece and Italy, Roman-era oil lamps, jewelry, Egyptian sarcophagi lids and painted wooden boxes, and a striking green glass vessel decorated with faces among them.

Some of the stolen artifacts were museum-quality, according to the IAA. Amir Ganor, head of the so-called theft prevention unit at the IAA, told that the Haaretz that investigators have not yet quantified the recovered artifacts.

"We haven't counted them yet. We made lists. It's a gargantuan find — hundreds of coins, pottery from a lot of periods, statues and bronze items, stone items, and glass as well," he said.



Ganor highlighted that Israel is famous as a market for antiquities, where the law enables antiquities merchants to obtain a license to sell.

"At the moment, there are 47 licensed antiquities dealers. So, if one has illegal antiquities and slips them into the inventory of a licensed trader, they're effectively whitewashed. Then one can market them around the world

under the guise of artifacts legally traded in Israel," he said.

None of the detainees were licensed traders, Ganor added, but at least some were in contact with licensed traders.

The report comes as the cultural heritage of Syria and Iraq is suffering collateral damage from years of war and deliberate assaults from Daesh and other foreign-sponsored Takfiri terrorist groups.

Back in April 2019, Washington-based analyst Ahed al-Hendi pointed to the damage Daesh has inflicted on religious and archaeological sites in Syria, saying most of the stolen Christian artifacts were sold outside the war-ravaged Arab country.

"There were businessmen and mafia lords who would pay Daesh and other terrorist groups millions of dollars to buy those stolen relics," he said at the time.

Saudi Arabia's King Salman Gets Coronavirus Vaccine Dose

Agencies

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's King Salman on Thursday received a Covid-19 vaccine jab, more than three weeks after the kingdom kicked off a three-phase inoculation programme, official media said.

King Salman, 85, "received the first dose of the coronavirus vaccine," in the futuristic Red Sea city of Neom, the Saudi Press Agency said.

The health ministry said the programme would roll out in three phases, starting with people over 65 and



coronavirus vaccination campaign on December 17 after receiving the first shipment of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine.

The health ministry said the programme would roll out in three phases, starting with people over 65 and

those with chronic ailments or at high risk of infection.

People over 50 would be vaccinated next, with everyone else included in the third stage, the ministry said, adding that the vaccine would be free for citizens and residents.

Saudi Arabia has recorded more than 363,000 novel coronavirus cases, including more than 6,000 deaths — the highest among the Gulf Arab states.

But the kingdom has also reported a high recovery rate. Saudi Arabia has a population of more than 34 million, according to official figures.

Implementation Of Forest Rights Act, 2006

PCCF Reviews Preparedness Of Forest Department

JAMMU: A meeting to review preparedness of Forest Department for implementation of Forest Rights Act, 2006 was conducted today here under the chairmanship of, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF) (HoFF), J&K Dr. Mohit Gera,

The meeting was attended by all officers of the Forest Department up to the level of Divisional Forest Officers (Territorial).

Speaking at the meeting, the PCCF emphasized the role of the Forest Department in smooth conduct of different processes and procedures involved in Implementation of FRA at the level of Gram Sabha, Sub-Divisional Level Committee and District Level Committee.

As per the act, the role of frontline staff of the Forest Department is crucial in provisioning of the records and maps to the Forest Rights Committee and its field verification, he said.

He said that the forest Officers at the level of Range Officers being members of Sub-Divisional Level Committee have to play an important role in the consolidation of maps along with examination of resolution provided by the Gram Sabha, and prepare Block or Tehsil wise draft record of the proposed Forest Rights after reconciliation of the Government records etc.

At the district level, the Divisional Forest Officers being the important member of District Level Committee have to participate in consideration and deciding on the claims and records of forest rights prepared by the Sub-Divisional Level Committee, the PCCF informed.

The Forest Rights Act provides a framework for recording forest rights so vested and the nature of evidence required for such recognition and vesting in respect of forest land. The Act also gives the forest rights holder, the responsibility and authority for

sustainable use, conservation of biodiversity and maintenance of ecological balance.

The Act is expected to strengthen the conservation regime of the forests of Jammu & Kashmir while ensuring livelihood and food security of Forest Dwelling Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers. The Forest Department has been gearing up for providing its full support for the smooth implementation of the Forest Rights Act in the UT of Jammu & Kashmir. The department has been conducting the trainings of the Divisional Forest Officer & Range Officer level with the involvement of resource persons and experts of national repute and who have implemented the Act in different states of the country. The trainings of frontline staff also have been conducted in practical knowledge of the Act and the processes involved at Gram Sabha level. The staff is also being trained in GPS handling as well as in the matters related to records and maps.

The preparedness of the department on availability of forest records such as compartment maps, beat maps & demarcation records with all the Divisions/Ranges & Blocks in sufficient number was also reviewed. These records will be made available as and when required by the Forest Rights Committee.

The meeting was attended by Sarvesh Rai, APCCF/ CEO CAMPA; F. A. Gillani, Addl. Pr. Chief Conservator of Forests (Kashmir); K. Ramesh Kumar, Chief Conservator of Forests (Jammu); Shally Ranjan, Chief Conservator of Forests (S&D); Dr. B. Balaji, Conservator of Forests; Irfan Ali Shah, Conservator of Forests, Working Plan, all Conservator of Forests (Territorial), and other Senior Officers of the Department.



Wooden Constructions Suit Kashmir In View Of Seismicity: Prof Talat

Irfan Mushtaq

SRINAGAR: Internationally-acclaimed earth scientist and Vice-Chancellor of University of Kashmir Prof Talat Ahmad on Saturday urged inhabitants and policy-planners of the Himalayan region, including Kashmir, to do away with constructing heavy concrete houses and buildings to minimise casualties during earthquakes.

Addressing the technical session of the ongoing two-week refresher course by Kashmir University's UGC-HRDC, Prof Talat said that wooden houses are best suited for a place like Kashmir since the Himalayan region falls in a high seismic zone.

He said houses and buildings in Japan, which experiences high magnitude earthquakes, are largely wooden which gives these structures flexibility to withstand ground-shaking which concrete buildings of heavy marbles and limestone cannot do.

"This is why Japan sees fewer casualties during earthquakes," he said.

Prof Talat said people must learn the ways and techniques to survive properly and not disturb the ecosystem.

"That will be my message to the people," he said.

He said that greenery and vegetation on mountains were

crucial to prevent flooding.

"In Zabarwan and all mountains around Kashmir, if you have greenery, it's going to reduce the soil erosion. When you have less vegetation, it's going to just erode the mountains and everything eventually will go into the Dal Lake and other rivers. With the result, all these water bodies will become shallow and will be filled with sediments eroded from the mountains. And because of that even if there is a normal rainfall, there will be a scare of flooding," he said.

Prof Talat said Kashmir's river system has narrowed because houses and structures have come up in flood plains and on the way of the rivers.

"When the nature gets disturbed by this sort of encroachment, then events like flooding wash off everything. So when you are staying in the Himalayas, you have to be careful in constructing houses," he said.

He said it is important for States and UTs along the Himalayan region to minimise production of Carbon Dioxide and other gases which lead to rise in temperatures, melting of glaciers and increase in ocean levels. "In that case, there could be flooding all the time," he said.

"Whatever we do, we have to make sure there's enough vegetation on land to pull Carbon

Dioxide and release Oxygen. If we leave the Earth system alone, it is going to be fine. But with our own activities, we are disturbing the ecosystem and this disturbance needs to be plugged," he said.

Prof Talat later took several questions from the participants.

Asked whether small quakes could avert big ones, he said: "There are gap areas where you have had no earthquakes for the last 500 years or so. But if there is a quake in such an area, that's going to hit all. It is difficult to predict quakes, but we can hope that with these small quakes, there's a possibility of big quakes not happening very soon."

About predicting earthquakes with accuracy, he said: "There's a lot of research going on about predicting earthquakes. There are quakes one can predict, like those connected with volcanoes. Researchers are able to predict the hot material (magma) which comes from deeper portions of the Earth and its movement which helps them to predict the resultant earthquakes."

"But with the big systems, like the Himalayas, this is not the case. Though people are working on the prediction dimension, at present it is impossible to predict quakes given the science and technology that is available," he said.

Bird Flu Confirmed In 7 States; Samples From Delhi, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh Sent For Testing

Agencies

NEW DELHI: The Centre on Saturday said the outbreak of bird flu or avian influenza has been reported in Uttar Pradesh, taking the total number of affected states to seven.

However, the confirmation of bird flu in Delhi, Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra, is awaited as the samples have been sent for testing, it said. Besides Uttar Pradesh, the other six states where bird flu is confirmed are Kerala, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana and Gujarat.

"So far, the disease has been confirmed from seven states. ...The Department has issued advisory to the affected states so as to avoid further spread of the disease,"

the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying said in a statement.

In Chhattisgarh, reports of unusual mortality of birds in poultry and wild birds in Balod district were reported on Friday night and Saturday morning. The samples



have been sent to the labs concerned.

In Delhi, reports of unusual mortality in ducks were received from Sanjay lake and the samples have been sent for testing, it said.

Similarly in Maharashtra, the samples of dead crows from Mumbai, Thane, Dapoli, Parbhani and Beed districts have been sent to Bhopal-based ICAR-National Institute of High Security Animal Diseases (ICAR-NIHSAD), it added.

"After confirmation of Avian Influenza positive samples from ICAR-NIHSAD in poultry (two poultry farms) of Panchkula dis-

trict, Haryana, positive cases of Avian Influenza in migratory birds were reported in Shivpuri, Rajgarh, Shajapur, Agar, Vidisha district of Madhya Pradesh, Zoological Park, Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh and Pratapgarh and Dausa districts of Rajasthan," the ministry said.

On the status of culling operation, the ministry said it has been completed in two affected districts of Kerala. Central teams have reached Kerala, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh for monitoring/epidemiological investigation.

The Centre has also asked state governments to ensure effective communication and coordination with health authorities for close vigilance on the outbreak and to avoid any chances of spreading of the disease to humans.

States have been asked to increase surveillance around water bodies, live bird markets, zoos and poultry farms and also to ensure proper disposal of carcass, and strengthening of bio-security in poultry farms.

URTC Discusses Release Of Eligible Prisoners



JAMMU: In compliance to the directions of the Supreme Court of India and as per the protocol (SoP) prepared by the National Legal Services Authority, the Under-Trial Review Committee (URTC) Jammu, comprising Sanjeev Gupta, Chairman, District Legal Services Authority (Pr. District and Sessions Judge) Jammu, Naushad Ahmed Khan, Secretary, District Legal Services Authority, Jammu, Ghan Shyam, Addl. Dy. Commissioner (Nodal Officer, DLSA), Jammu, Shridhar Patil, Sr. Superintendent of Police, Jammu, on Saturday met through video conferencing for identifying and gathering of the information of all the eligible prisoners presently lodged in the District Jail, Amphalla and Central Jail, Kot Bhalwal Jammu who are covered under the section 436 & 436-A of Cr.P.C.

The committee sought detailed information from the Superintendents of the concerned jails with respect to all the eligible prisoners who had been identified and ordered to be released on the direction of the

High Power Committee.

The committee was apprised by the concerned jail authorities about the precautionary measures being adopted by their prisons with respect to the prevention of covid-19 infection. The committee was also told that at present there are no Covid positive cases in the prisons.

The Committee also sought reports of any difficulties being faced by the Jail Authorities regarding implementation of the precautionary measures.

The committee also asked the jail authorities to regularly apprise the prisoners about the virus, self hygiene requirements and all recent information regarding the COVID-19 infection, besides collecting the information of the quality of all basic necessities available in the jails such as clean drinking water, food,

medical care, sanitation, proper warm clothing, warm bedding, heating system, hygiene w.r.t. to the keeping of jail kitchens, toilets and barracks. The wellbeing of the jail inmates both male and female, were discussed.

Pleas On Farm Laws: Farmers' Body Moves SC Seeking Impleadment, Says Reforms Are Beneficial

NEW DELHI: A farmers' body on Saturday moved the Supreme Court seeking impleadment in the pending matters pertaining to new farm laws, against which several farmer unions are staging protests at Delhi borders, saying these reforms are "beneficial" to enable increased income and growth of agriculture.

In a letter petition sent to the apex court, Consortium of Indian Farmers Associations (CIFA) has urged the top court to also give opportunity to other farmer associations representing various crops to present their views in the matter.

A bench headed by Chief Justice S A Bobde is scheduled to hear on January 11 a batch of pleas challenging the new farm laws as also the ones raising issues related to the ongoing farmers' protest at Delhi borders.

CIFA, in its plea filed by its chief adviser P Chengal Reddy, has said that the Centre should be directed to also hold consultation with other farmer associations of the country before changing any provisions of these laws.

"We wish (to) submit that farm reforms are beneficial to enable increased income to farmers and growth of agriculture," the plea said while re-

ferring to the benefits of these farm reforms.

The Centre on January 6 had informed the top court that "healthy discussions" were going on between the government and farmers over these issues.

The apex court had earlier issued notice and sought the Centre's response on a batch of pleas against the three contentious farm laws -- Farmers' (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020, Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020 and The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020.

While hearing the pleas on the issue of farmers' protest, the top court on December 17 last year had said that the agitation should be allowed to continue "without impediment" and this court would not "interfere" with it as the right to protest is a fundamental right.

While acknowledging the right to non-violent protest of farmers, the apex court was also of the view that their right to protest should not infringe the fundamental rights of others to move freely and in getting essential food and other supplies as right to protest cannot mean blockade of the entire city. PTI

NEWS MAKERS

Media Foundation Invites Nominations For Chameli Devi Jain Awards

NEW DELHI: The Media Foundation has invited nominations for the 2020 edition of its Chameli Devi Jain Awards.

The award is given annually to an outstanding woman mediaperson.

It was first awarded in 1982 to an outstanding woman mediaperson who had made a difference through writing with depth, dedication, courage and compassion.

Chameli Devi Jain awardees include some of the best known and respected names in Indian journalism.

"They have pioneered and popularised a new journalism in terms of themes and values such as social development,



excellence, analytical skill, social concern, insights, style, innovation, courage and compassion.

"Other things being equal, preference will be given to small town/rural, Indian language journalists and those who have not been awarded before in their careers. Entries can be sent in English, Hindi or any other Indian language. The entries will be evaluated by an independent panel of jurists whose verdict shall be final," it said.

Journalists in the print, digital, broadcast and current affairs documentary film media are eligible for the award, including photographers, cartoonists and

newspaper designers.

The foundation has invited nominations by January 30 along with samples of work done during the period from January 1 to December 31, 2020 in the form of links or clippings/tapes/CDs.

"Nominations should have the nominee's bio-data with complete postal address, telephone, fax numbers and email address for facility of communication. These should be accompanied by a brief explanation of why the candidate is especially deserving of recognition. Mediapersons sending their entries in regional languages are also requested to send a translation of their work in English," it said. PTI

NIA Court Grants Bail To PDP Youth Leader

JAMMU: PDP youth president Waheed Para was on Saturday granted bail by an NIA court here after remaining in custody for one-and-a-half months for his alleged links with militants of Hizbul Mujahideen.

Para, who recently won district development council (DDC) elections from his home town Pulwama district of south Kashmir, was produced in the NIA court, which granted him the relief on a surety of Rs one lakh, officials said.

He was arrested by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) on November 25 last year, a few days after filing nomination papers as a People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) candidate.

The NIA had said Para was arrested in connection with



the Naveed Babu-Davinder Singh case for supporting Hizbul Mujahideen in conspiracy with the other accused persons, a charge denied by PDP which had termed his arrest as "politically motivated".

Para was considered to be a key motivator for youth to join mainstream politics in Pulwama and adjoining Shop-

ian district of south Kashmir when militancy was raising its head there again. As secretary of J&K Sports Council from 2016 to 2018, Para played a major role in organising sporting events in nook and corner of the erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir state which included the Ladakh region.

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NO HOLDS BARRED



Hazaras are pawns in a bloody game that instrumentalises brutalised Baloch and Pashtun populations too. Step outside Balochistan and sectarianism is fanned time and again in Gilgit-Baltistan too, especially when the Shia, Sunni and Ismaili masses unite to demand that they stop being treated as colonial subjects.

In the Land of Pure Children of Lesser God

ASIM SAJJAD AKHTAR

BALOCHISTAN bleeds again. Yet another episode of gruesome brutality against Hazaras — coal miners no less — has brought yet another protest movement into existence. Yesterday it was the death of a Baloch daughter of the soil on foreign shores, tomorrow it will be a Pashtun man falling prey to the Taliban or their makers.

Khurram Husain reminded us yesterday that the Hazaras have been brutalised many times before, with the current prime minister mimicking the elected leaders he called out in 2013 for failing to show respect to the dead and those who mourn them by making a trip to Quetta.

There was of course another Hazara sit-in in 2018 which was only called off when the army chief went personally to the protestors and assured them that responsible officials would be punished, their killers identified, and their future security guaranteed.

Truth be told, even if PM Imran Khan finally relents and meets the protestors, he doesn't call the shots. The establishment and its ideologues have already set the tone in the aftermath of the Mach attack with the standard sloganeering about the 'enemy' fomenting 'terrorism' on our shores, and the fact that Pakistan's 'sovereignty' will never be compromised.

Who cares that these slogans are like rubbing salt in the Hazaras' and Balochistan's other ethnic nations' wounds, most of which have already bled dry? When the 'sovereign' state does not ask for sacrifice in blood, it takes copper from Saindak, gold from Reko Diq, Gwadar's coastline, gas from Sui, coal and innumerable more minerals, not to mention virgin lands for real estate bonanzas.

Baloch resistance to all of this has always rendered them 'suspicious', the Pashtuns a little higher up the official loyalty ladder. The mood of those on



the streets of Quetta this time suggests a deepening consciousness amongst Hazaras too that they are but citizens in name.

The ill-fated miners were undoubtedly targeted on the basis of their Shia faith and butchered to death under the pretext of being children of a lesser God. But the placard-bearing protestors know that their suffering has in the past been used to give mandate to indiscriminate military force. There is a growing sense that the Hazaras now perceive themselves to be in the same boat as the 'Sunni' Baloch and Pakhtun peoples that they might otherwise be goaded into blaming.

What about the 'conspirators' operating from Afghanistan and India presumably responsible for these attacks? It is not rocket science that there are Muslims aplenty in both of those countries; Hazaras have in fact been regularly butchered in Afghanistan by the very

What about the 'conspirators' operating from Afghanistan and India presumably responsible for these attacks? It is not rocket science that there are Muslims aplenty in both of those countries; Hazaras have in fact been regularly butchered in Afghanistan by the very same Taliban that our state champions as 'allies'.

same Taliban that our state champions as 'allies'.

What our powers that we refer to as 'strategic interests' has little to do with what might genuinely be called the public interest, and especially those segments of the Pakistani public that have been left behind economically, or deliberately suppressed.

Hazaras are pawns in a bloody game that instrumentalises brutalised Baloch and Pashtun populations too. Step outside Balochistan and sectarianism is fanned time and again in Gilgit-Baltistan too, especially when the Shia, Sunni and Ismaili masses unite to demand that they stop being treated as colonial subjects. Don't forget the Kurram agency where two decades of the so-called 'war on terror' hasn't generated peace for the majority Shia or minority Sunni innocents alike.

Even where the machinations of

the establishment are not as prominent, children of a lesser God can be found. In the Punjabi heartland, both Christians and low caste-Muslims, begging children on the streets, daily wage workers and katchi abadi dwellers are all considered scarcely human.

Across what is drilled into our head as 'enemy lines' in Afghanistan and India, one finds innumerable killing fields. In the former, almost daily bomb blasts can take the lives of Tajiks and Uzbeks (many of them Shia) as well as Pashtuns (mostly Sunni).

Meanwhile, in Modi's India, a special place in hell is reserved for Muslims, but Dalits, tribals, ethnic nations like the Assamese and Nagas, not to mention hundreds of millions of working people across religious, ethnic and caste lines, are certainly also children of a lesser God.

But forget other countries and rulers. Let's come back to the land of the pure. The current PM can certainly demonstrate some urgency by going to Quetta, just like opposition leaders have been forced to do after considerable coaxing.

But the very fact that the ruling party and the PDM have been slow to react suggests that they have no answer to the question: who are the 'namaloom afraad' (unnamed persons) that continue to wreak havoc against the Hazaras, their ethnic brethren in Balochistan, and so many others across this long-suffering land?

There remains no will to make these brutalised subjects into equal citizens. The plan is to keep them in their place, divided and ruled.

The writer teaches at Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad. The article first appeared in Pakistan's national daily Dawn.

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

JKSSB and Contrasting Principles On Finance Accounts Assistants

AFRIDI MUSHTAQ

Understandably, only those trained in the sciences can do justice to these posts. Then why hasn't the same reasoning been applied to the posts related to those from the commerce backgrounds? If IQ is the only test of merit, then one can be eligible for any post if one goes by the logic of JKSSB.

For the recruitment of Finance Account's Assistants recently, JKSSB released a notification notice No. 4 2020 in which they have set the eligibility criteria for the posts as any (plain) graduate. The post requires the knowledge of Accounting which is being taught in Commerce stream, hence, the jobs should be reserved for Commerce graduates only. Moreover, JKSSB has framed a faulty syllabus for the job. It not only leans towards the Science and Maths professionals but also, leaves little scope for Accounting knowing graduates and professionals. As the latter are well versed with the pros and cons of the job, they should have been given precedence as far as syllabus for the posts was concerned.

Contrarily, the syllabus framed by JKSSB provides only 15 marks out of 120 for the Accountancy portion. That's a very meagre sum.

My contention is that any job that needs professional qualification should be left to its experts; rather than bringing in every tom, dick and harry into the profession. That way, neither the morale of professionals would suffer a blow, nor would we have to suffer because of unskilful hands.

As in the other states, the eligibility for any Accounting post is graduation in commerce. The same used to be followed not too long ago in Kashmir as well. Only students belonging to commerce, economics, maths and statistics were eligible for the post, referring to Government order 515-F 2018 Dated



30-11-2018. There are many other notifications by JKSSB, allowing only the professionals to apply for certain posts.

Even most State boards set a special eligibility for the posts like Account Assistants. Recently, Uttar Pradesh Power Corporation Ltd. (UPPCL) UPPCL gave out an advertisement for account's assistant vide no. 05/VSO/2020/AA/ Backlog in which eligibility is B. Com. Indian Institute of Management Jammu and others as well made only commerce graduates eligible for the post of accountant. The Uttarakhand Subordinate Service Selection Commission (UKSSSC), recently advertised the post

of Account's Assistant for which the eligibility that they have set is graduation in B. Com and BBA. Not going too far for examples, even IUST recruits only commerce graduates for the post of Accounts Assistant and even the University of Kashmir recruits commerce graduates for the post.

After abolishing the criteria of Commerce graduates, the JKSSB has advertised some posts in which they have made only students with science background eligible for posts like Laboratory attendant, Laboratory Assistant, Beekeeper and for several other posts only students having graduation

or 10+2 in science were made eligible for these posts.

Understandably, only those trained in the sciences can do justice to these posts. Then why hasn't the same reasoning been applied to the posts related to those from the commerce backgrounds? If IQ is the only test of merit, then one can be eligible for any post if one goes by the logic of JKSSB.

JKSSB, hence, is playing a double game. Giving precedence to special qualification in certain posts and removing the same for others is unjust. Such double standards should be done away with, so that students would not suffer after toiling for years for a certain degree to get a suitable job. T

This double standard of JKSSB is worrying. If the jobs that should have been reserved for Accounting professionals continued to slip away, it would discourage prospective new comers in the stream.

Government should immediately intervene and fix eligibility criteria for various posts. This partiality and favoritism is not only unfair but also regressive. We need to treat all disciplines with dignity and must come out of obsolete mindsets that privilege the sciences.

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

The author is a student at Aligarh Muslim University



Horror in the Hamlet South Kashmir's Witch of Winters

Reality check of Horror noises of South Kashmir

JAVEED ALI

On a note not touched by many, it's a very alarming situation especially for children. While elders can very well dismiss this as a joke and can go about their business as per usual; children do not have the cognitive strength to distinguish between what is real and unreal.

What we think in our subconscious mind seems real to us. Particularly, when inimical elements make scary noises using modern gadgets and propagate rumours that some kind of witch or what in Kashmiri is called a Raantas is roaming around. We should do our best not to spread such kinds of canards. There can be multiple reasons why they are doing so. Conventionally, the major reason could be that someone wanted to loot your belongings including your cattle. Additionally, there are many wild animals who make different sounds as per their living

adaptations. During winters, they come near our dwelling places in search of food. When our subconscious mind is already fed with these concocted stories of Waiwoph (a witch of winters according to Kashmiri oral storytelling) and Raantas/withces, it jumps to mistake the sounds that animals make as the sounds of the supernatural ghosts. As if these stories on social media weren't enough, a local channel broadcasted this rumour as a news piece. Truly, a gala time for those of us interested in exploring the blurring lines between truth and untruth in today's day and age. Nonetheless, the absurdity of this "news" piece is quite embarrassing.

On a note not touched by many, it's a very alarming situation especially for children. While elders can very well dismiss this as a joke and can go about their business as per usual; children do not have the cognitive strength to distinguish between what is real and unreal. Please inform your children that these are only pranks being pulled for reasons unknown. Let them know these threatening cries are being created by miscreants using Mobile applications or software for reasons best known to them.

The author can be reached at javeedaliofkashmir@gmail.com

Horror Fiction to Read in Winters

TANIA SYED

Winter's isolating nature pushes us into a solitude that's often craving for more. Sometimes its dreariness also makes us yearn for some adventure and the outside world only compliments tales of a certain kind. Following is a list of stories you can read to satiate your winter cravings for all things horror. If you've run out of the excitement created by the rumours of haunted beings making scary noises in Kashmir neighborhoods amidst inundating snowfall, you can grab a couple of these.

"The Shining", by Stephen King

"Monsters are real. Ghosts are too. They live inside of us, and sometimes, they win." This book is a must-read by the very popular and canonical Stephen King. Defined by many as a classic and one of the scariest books written. The book is set in winters and the snow is important to the plot. Grab this one for a horror inducing reading ride.

"The Turn of the Screw" by Henry James

This 1898 Gothic Novella is filled with horror induced by the ambiguous and the mundane. It first appeared in Collier's weekly in a serialised form. If you've read Bronte's, especially Jane Eyre; you'd love the vibe of this short book. For someone who's on-the-go in winters, the length of the book will seem less daunting but the literary dexterity is top-notch.

"Beloved" by Toni Morrison

This brilliant book is more than just a page-turner or a book that you can gorge on for cheap thrills. It is a masterpiece and has rightfully won the Pulitzer. Taking on much from the gothic tradition, the book employs it to open up layers of issues especially those related to slavery and racism. If you've not read this book, you are truly missing out on most.

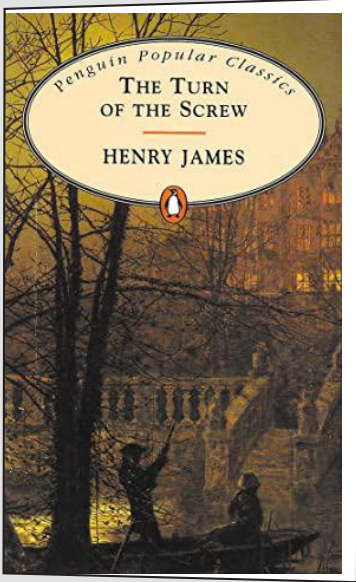
"Frankenstein: The 1818 Text" by Mary Shelly

Frankenstein is often considered as the first book of science fiction. However, the elements of horror are unmissable in this classic. The book is so popular that the word "Frankenstein" is often interchangeably used to mention anything supernatural, gothic or larger than yourself. The language of the book is quite gripping and the story is one which everyone comes back to and so must you!

"Gothic Tales" by Elizabeth Gaskell

This book treads the path between the real and the unreal quite marvellously and induces a sense of suspense and horror that is unparalleled. All the stories in this volume form a stark contrast to the social realism of Gaskell's novels, revealing a darker and more unsettling style of writing.

The author is a student of Literature at University of Kashmir



Why We All Need A Fright On A Winter's Night

SUSAN HILL

Do you believe in ghosts?" they always ask me in interviews. I reply: "I keep an open mind." The new physics allows for them; it is all to do with time. I don't understand it, but quantum physicists are not gullible souls. JB Priestley was fascinated by the subject of time and the way it might shift about. He wrote plays and fiction about it, but, so far as I know, he did not write a ghost story. I wish he had. The genre has attracted some fine writers but it is often dismissed as mere "entertainment". Literary snobs might heed the American writer Tom Wolfe. He gives another definition: "Entertainment enables people to pass the time pleasantly, and any writing should first entertain. It's a very recent thing that there is a premium put on making writing so difficult that only a charmed aristocracy is capable of understanding it." Dickens's first readers were far from being "a charmed aristocracy", yet he, one of the greatest of novelists, delighted in the ghost story and may claim to have written the most famous one. A Christmas Carol is magnificent literature, a serious moral tale – and a first-rate entertainment. It is spooky, moving and funny by turns, and the characters have entered worlds in which they are known and understood outside the context of the book. The existence of ghosts might yet be proven by quantum physics, but in fiction they should not be rationalised or explained away by natural causes: that shadow moving across the window as a tree shifting in the breeze; the woman who saw the ghostly child as suffering from puerperal psychosis. Ghostly children are especially troubling, of course. The boy and girl in Henry James' The Turn of the Screw are not ghosts, they are victims – but are Quint and Miss Jessel real, or ghostly figures of the children's imagination? Rudyard Kipling's story "They" is both disturbing and beautiful, with its ghost-children in a garden. Literary scholars tell us that the ghost story originated with the gothic novel in the 18th century, or with Dickens in the 19th, but we forget how relatively small our fictional culture is. In countries such as Japan and India, tales of the supernatural have ancient origins. It is a near universal form of storytelling – indeed, I often think that cavemen must have told ghost stories to explain away shadows cast by the fire in



side their caves. The play of my novel The Woman in Black has had an extraordinary welcome in countries where the genre is traditional – Mexico, Japan and India – but failed in what one might describe as "rational" countries; Germany has never understood it. It is not entirely true that a ghost story must frighten if it is to succeed. AS Byatt's "The July Ghost" is set in a London summer garden and is almost unbearably moving, but not in the least bit scary. However, with the darkness of winter comes the longing for a ghost story – to be read when alone or perhaps aloud to a small group – and, if it is to satisfy, that ghost story must frighten delightfully. It is a basic human need. Fear of the real and dangerous plays a part in every human life and if we can ever prepare for it, and learn how to overcome it, we must do so through stories. Horror is ever popular too, and I am often accused of writing it. Not so. A ghost story may be horrifying, but

However, with the darkness of winter comes the longing for a ghost story – to be read when alone or perhaps aloud to a small group – and, if it is to satisfy, that ghost story must frighten delightfully. It is a basic human need. Fear of the real and dangerous plays a part in every human life and if we can ever prepare for it, and learn how to overcome it, we must do so through stories.

the genres are different. A ghost story must contain a ghost; a horror story need not. Gothic is different again, and it has changed slightly since its (probable) origin in the 18th century, when it contained, almost perforce, an ivy-clad castle or monastic ruins. Shirley Jackson's The Haunting of Hill House (1959) is a wonderful and terrifying gothic/ghost story. The Turn of the Screw, perhaps the greatest ghost story ever written, is gothic – but so much more besides. There is not much good literary criticism in the field. If you want the best background reading and careful analysis, read Night Visitors by the late Julia Briggs. (It's out of print, which is a disgrace, and rather hard to obtain but try an inter-library loan.) Michael Cox's introduction to The Oxford Book of Ghost Stories and his biographical study of MR James are both essential and enjoyable reading. The ghost story has more often been short – it is hard to sustain beyond about 50,000 words without any slackening of tension – but recently, several writers have successfully written them at full length. Sarah Waters and Michelle Paver are especially good. If you prefer a short, sharp shock, then MR James is for you, as are LP Hartley, Edith Wharton, EF Benson and Elizabeth Bowen, whose The Demon Lover is one of the most chilling I know, and which improves with familiarity. E Nesbit, author of jolly good children's books, including The Treasure Seekers, also wrote some short and deadly ghost stories. Inevitably, in such a popular fictional form, there is an awful lot of rubbish, but the best rises to the surface, as with most things. If a story or a novel, let alone the complete works of a writer, have stood the test of time – say 100 years – and are still in print and being read, they are reliable providers of damn good narrative and ghosts that clutch at your heart. Do I frighten myself when writing a ghost story, is another question I'm often asked. No, because I am in control. But when reading one, especially in perfect circumstances, I am often scared, even when I know the story well. I never fail to be chilled by MR James's masterpiece, "Casting the Runes", or to feel uneasy as I get a few pages into Edith Wharton's "Mr Jones". Which, of course, is precisely what I want, sitting beside the fire in a room full of odd shadows cast by the lamp, on a cold winter's night.

The Guardian

WhatsApp New Privacy Terms: What Do New Rules Really Mean For You?

The announcement that WhatsApp will be getting new rules – and forcing users to agree to them – has spread fear among the people who rely on the messaging app to stay in touch with friends and family. WhatsApp has long prided itself on its commitment to security and privacy, with encrypted conversations and other important technologies integrated into the app. But the new announcement has sparked fears of the exact opposite: that people's information is not being kept secret but instead shared with Facebook.

But what is the truth over the changes, and how concerned should people be? The event that kicked off the changes are WhatsApp's new terms, and a requirement that users commit to them. Users are, in the last couple of days, being asked to assent to those changes – for now they can choose to leave it until later, but eventually users will no longer be able to keep using the app unless they assent to the new rules. Those new rules include a summary of how WhatsApp will share information with Facebook, and how any shared



information might be used. “As part of the Facebook family of companies, WhatsApp receives information from, and shares information with, this family of companies,” the new privacy policy states. “We may use the information we receive from them, and they may use the information we share with them, to help operate, provide, improve, understand, customize, support, and market our Services and their offerings.” It is that summary that has led to the concerns, and fears that people's WhatsApp data

might not be protected. One thing to note is that the “information” collected by WhatsApp is not chats, since those are encrypted and therefore can't be seen by the company even if it wanted to. Rather, the information is personal data such as the phone number of users and their contacts, profile names and pictures, and diagnostic data. As such, there is no concern – at least yet – that private WhatsApp conversations will be harvested to use for ads or other purposes by Facebook, for instance. What's more, WhatsApp

insists that European users will not see any changes to the use of their data, even if they agree to the terms. “There are no changes to WhatsApp's data sharing practices in the European region (including UK) arising from the updated Terms of Service and Privacy Policy,” a spokesperson said. “For the avoidance of any doubt, it is still the case that WhatsApp does not share European region WhatsApp user data with Facebook for the purpose of Facebook using this data to improve its products or advertisements.”

WhatsApp's director of public policy in Europe, Middle East and Africa shared a Twitter thread making much the same argument. “It remains the case that WhatsApp does not share European Region WhatsApp user data with Facebook for the purpose of Facebook using this data to improve its products or ads,” she wrote. The really significant recent update is that WhatsApp has added new features to allow people to communicate with businesses – and those businesses could be hosted by Facebook. When speaking to those contacts, messages might be stored and managed by Facebook, and so those conversations could be shared with the company more generally. Users should be informed if that happens, however. When speaking to a business who has decided to have its messages managed by Facebook, a message should appear – and users should stop talking to them if they would prefer that information is not shared. ... Aгенices



Scholarships This Week

Kashmir Observer in association with Buddy4Study.com presents scholarships available for the meritorious students of Jammu and Kashmir.

Scholarship Name 1: ICAR-IVRI Division of Livestock Products Technology Junior Research Fellowship 2020
Description: Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and Indian Veterinary Research Institute are inviting applications for ICAR-IVRI Division of Livestock Products Technology Junior Research Fellowship 2020 from Graduate/Postgraduate degree holders. The fellowship is meant for a project on, “Development of enzyme-based biomarkers for rapid differentiation of fresh and frozen-thawed meat with special reference to poultry meat”.
Eligibility: The fellowship is open for candidates who hold a postgraduate degree in basic science or graduate/postgraduate degree in professional course. They must be CSIR-UGC-NET/GATE qualified.
Prizes & Rewards: INR 31,000 per month plus HRA
Last Date to Apply: 20-01-2021
Application mode: Via email only
Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/IDL2

Scholarship Name 2: Raman Research Institute QuMiX Lab Research Assistantship 2020
Description: Raman Research Institute invites applications for Raman Research Institute QuMiX Lab Research Assistantship 2020 from postgraduate degree holders. The assistantship is meant for the project titled, "To assist in the experiments involving Laser cooling and trapping of neutral atoms".
Eligibility: The assistantship is open for candidates below 35 years of age who hold a postgraduate degree in Physics. They must also hold a BE/BTech in Engineering Physics/Electronics with a minimum of 70 % marks or 7.0 CGPA.
Prizes & Rewards: INR 23,500 per month plus 24% HRA
Last Date to Apply: 22-01-2021
Application mode: Via email and by post to the Co-Ordinator, Light And Matter Physics Group, Raman Research Institute, C.V Raman Avenue, Sadashivanagar, Bangalore – 560080
Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/RQA4

Scholarship Name 3: NIT Meghalaya Department of Electrical Engineering Junior Research Fellowship 2020
Description: National Institute of Technology, Meghalaya invites applications for NIT Meghalaya Department of Electrical Engineering Junior Research Fellowship 2020 from MTech/ME degree holders. The fellowship is meant for the project titled, "Design & Development of High frequency Multilevel Resonant Inverter based New Generation Induction Heated Autoclave System for Sterilization of Surgical Instruments".
Eligibility: The fellowship is open for candidates below 28 years of age who hold an MTech/ME degree in Electrical Engineering / Electrical and Electronics Engineering with specialization in Power & Energy/Power Electronics and Drives/ Power System or any other equivalent specialization. They must be GATE qualified.
Prizes & Rewards: INR 31,000 per month
Last Date to Apply: 20-01-2021
Application mode: Via email
Short Url: www.b4s.in/observer/NTM7

AI algorithms detect diabetic eye disease inconsistently

A new study looks at the effectiveness of seven artificial intelligence-based screening algorithms to diagnose diabetic retinopathy, the most common diabetic eye disease leading to vision loss. In a paper in Diabetes Care, researchers compared the algorithms against the diagnostic expertise of retina specialists. Five companies produced the tested algorithms - two in the United States (Eyenuk, Retina-AI Health), one in China (Airdoc), one in Portugal (Retmarker), and one in France (OphtAI). The researchers deployed the algorithm-based technologies on retinal images from nearly 24,000 veterans who sought diabetic retinopathy screening at the Veterans Affairs Puget Sound Health Care System and the Atlanta VA Health Care System from 2006 to 2018. The researchers found that the algorithms don't perform as well as they claim. Many of these companies are reporting excellent results in clinical studies. But their performance in a real-world setting was unknown. Researchers conducted a test in which the performance of each algorithm and the performance of the human screeners who work in the VA teleretinal screening system were all compared to the diagnoses that expert ophthalmologists gave when looking at the same images.

Agencies

Bone fracture risk may increase when critical enzymatic processes decline

A new study suggests that a loss of enzymatic processes within the body can increase a person's risk of bone fracture. This new insight was recently published in eLife by an international team of scientists and engineers led by Deepak Vashishth, the director of the Center for Biotechnology and Interdisciplinary Studies (CBIS) at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. Enzymatic processes are essential to any number of chemical reactions that occur within the body, including the production of the extracellular matrix within bone that is critical for mechanical support. Phosphorylation -- one of those key enzymatic processes -- is the attachment of a phosphoryl to a protein, and is critical for cellular regulation. This process plays a role in many diseases, but until now, researchers didn't know if it altered tissue integrity and organ function. In this paper, researchers looked at a protein known as osteopontin, which plays a vital role in holding the matrix together. The researchers developed a process by which they could induce phosphorylation -- or its counterpart, dephosphorylation -- in bones from genetically modified mice, some that had osteo-

pontin and others that did not. By comparing results from the two groups, researchers found that fracture toughness, a measure of bone's mechanical strength, increased with osteopontin phosphorylation and declined with dephosphorylation. More specifically, phosphorylation enhanced crosslinks and increased the attraction between the charged groups on osteopontin and bone mineral, making bone stronger and its fracture more difficult. “This is the first study that lays down that phosphorylation in bone matters, particularly how it assists bone in releasing energy, and that loss of this modification is bad for bone,” Vashishth said. The team also studied the effect of osteopontin phosphorylation levels in the rare bone diseases hypophosphatemia and hyperphosphatemia, which are associated with skeletal deformities. In both diseases, Vashishth said, osteopontin phosphorylation levels decreased, a finding that lays the groundwork for further exploration. “Another promising discovery was that these levels do change with diseases in bone. Is phosphorylation directly affecting the fracture propensity of bones in these diseased conditions? And what therapeutic

tools can we use to fix this? These are the questions that we want to investigate,” Vashishth said. In the spirit of the New Polytechnic, the model that drives research and education at Rensselaer, this research was highly collaborative across multiple disciplines. Vashishth and his lab worked with researchers at McGill University in Canada, the University of Southampton in the United Kingdom, the University of Patras in Greece, Aarhus University in Denmark, and Vienna University of Technology in Austria. Each research team brought a different expertise and piece of this puzzle to the work. The team's findings may also be applied to similar processes within other connective tissues and possible therapeutics to counteract abnormal osteopontin phosphorylation levels. “This is not just specific to bone, because phosphorylation is a more ubiquitous change in other tissues in the body. Osteopontin is not only in bone, it's in other tissues in our body, like our kidneys and several other places. This research can also shed light on other things that can happen throughout the body,” Vashishth said. Aгенices

Government of Jammu and Kashmir

Mechanical Engineering Department Kashmir. Mechanical Division Anantnag.

Gist of short term tender Notice No MDA/TS/Tender/06 of 2020-21 dated: 09-01-2021.

For and on behalf of Lieutenant Governor of UT J&K, sealed Tenders affixed with Rs.6/= revenue stamps are invited from the registered suppliers /contractors having valid GST registration for Providing and fabrication of cutting edge bolts of size (2.5"x18mm) for various snow clearance machinery of snow clearance of MED Anantnag.

S.NO	Particulars of work	Estimated cost (RS)	Earnest Money (RS)	Sale of tender documents from.	Last date of Submission of tender.	Date of opening.	Position of funds.
01	Providing and fabrication of cutting edge bolts of size (2.5"x18mm) as per sample for various snow clearance machinery of MED Anantnag	88000.00	1760.00	10-01-2021 to 16-01-2021.	18-01-2021	18-01-2021	Available

The detailed tender documents containing complete specifications, terms and conditions of this tender notice can be had from the office of the undersigned on any working day during office hours from 10-01-2021 to 16-01-2021 upto 2:00 PM against the cash payment of Rs:-200.00 (Non-refundable).The documents shall be issued after production of following certificates.
01. Original valid registration certificate from competent authority.
02. PAN card.
03. GST clearance of previous quarter
The tenders should be accompanied with the earnest money in the shape of CDR/FDR worth Rs 1760.00 pledged to The Executive Engineer Mechanical Division Anantnag Without which no tender shall be entertained and are submitted to The Executive Engineer Mechanical Division Anantnag on or before 18-01-2021 up to 2.00 PM and shall be opened on the same day or any other working day convenient to The Executive Engineer Mechanical Division Anantnag.
The tenderer who wish to participate in the bidding process shall remain present at the time of opening of tenders. The Executive Engineer Mechanical Division Anantnag reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason thereof.
No:-MDA/TS – 730 /2819
Dated:- 09-01-2021

s/d
Executive Engineer,
Mechanical Division Anantnag.

DIPK-11529/20

Jammu & Kashmir (UT)

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER,JAL SHAKTI (PHE) MECHANICAL DIVISION SOUTH AWANTIPORA

GIST NIT (Short Term)
JSD/PHE/MDSA/ e-NIT No:87 of 2020-21
DATE:09-01-2021

For and on behalf of the Lieutenant Governor of Union Territory Jammu and Kashmir online e-tenders are invited in Single Cover System, (Technical and Financial) from Registered SSI Unit Holders/ workshop holders in similar field as works contractor as mentioned below for execution of the following Works:

S.No	Name of Work	Est. Cost Rs.Lacs	Cost of T/Doc.(Rs)	E/M(Rs)	Time of Comp	Class of contractor	Programme/Funds
1	Repairs to Horizontal motor at water supply scheme Chandgam wasoora.	0.16	50.00	2% of Adv Cost	05 days	Registered SSI Unit Holders/ workshop holders	M&R
2	Repairs to Voltage Stabilizer at water supply scheme Wuyan Quarry.	0.12	50.00	2% of Adv Cost	05 days	Registered SSI Unit Holders/ workshop holders	M&R
3	Repairs to be carried out for Submersible motor at WSS Zantrag.	0.18	50.00	2% of Adv Cost	05 days	Registered SSI Unit Holders/ workshop holders	M&R
4	Electric repairs to 30 HP submersible motor at water supply scheme K Kilan	0.21	50.00	2% of Adv Cost	05 days	Registered SSI Unit Holders/ workshop holders	M&R

The Bidding document consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, and bill of quantities (B.O.Q)s set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen /downloaded from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in and www.phekashmir.com as per schedule of dates given below:-

01	Publish Date	09-01-2021 (04:00 PM)		
02	Start of downloading of tender documents	09-01-2021 (04:00 PM)		
03	On line bid uploading start date	09-01-2021 (04:00 PM)		
04	Last date of uploading of bid	16-01-2021 (04:00 PM)		
05	Date and time of opening of Tech bids (online)	18-01-2021 (11:00 AM)		
06	Date and time of opening of Price bid	To be notified		

Note :- CDR & Treasury Receipt/e-Challan mentioning NIT No and Work shall be pledged to Executive Engineer Jal Shakti (PHE) Mechanical Division South Awantipora as per the format annexed. Head 0215 – Revenue & Miscellaneous. All other details can be had from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in and www.phekashmir.com
No: JSD/PHE/MDSA/2783
Date: 09-01-2021

Sd/
Executive Engineer
Jal Shakti PHE Mechanical Division

Udhampur-Baramulla Rail Link To Be Completed By Dec 2022



File Pic

SRINAGAR: Terming the year 2020 as the "Year of Grit and Victories" for Indian Railways, the Union Ministry of Railways in its annual review report said the much-awaited Udhampur-Baramulla railway line would be completed by December 2022.

In the annual review report the Union Railway Ministry said that the plan (NRP) 2030 has been developed with a view to develop infrastructure by 2030 to cater to the traffic requirements up to 2050.

"Based on the NRP, a vision 2024 document has been prepared to develop infrastructure by 2024 to enhance the modal share of Railways in freight transportation to more than 40 per cent and to cater to the traffic requirements up to 2030," the report said.

"Vision 2024 document lists all priority projects with target dates of completion and allocation of resources. Multi tracking of 14,000 km route, electrification of entire Railway network, upgrading the speed potential of important routes to 130 KMPH and 160 KMPH (present speed potential 110 KMPH), completion of important coal connectivity and port connectivity projects have been planned as part of vision 2024," it said.

"The capital expenditure in Railways has been vastly scaled up after 2014 (almost double the previous level) to address the accumulated backlog of infrastructure deficiency in the Railways. Along with stepped up fund allocation, supercritical (58) and critical projects (68) have

been identified and prioritized. Altogether, 146 projects have been identified as crucial from the point of view of freight traffic and these have been provided with prioritized fund allocation for time-bound completion, after root cause analysis," the report reads.

"The Udhampur-Baramulla rail project will be completed by December 2022 besides that all northern state capitals except Shillong to be connected by March 2023," It said.

"Electrification has been accorded high priority as a part of the national goal to transform India into a green nation. 66% of track length has been electrified by November 2020. Railways aim to complete electrification of its entire broad-gauge network by 2023", the report reads, adding that "Indian Railways have fixed itself a stiff target of being a net-zero emitter of carbon by 2030. This includes an ambitious target for complete electrification of IR network by 2023 and an equally ambitious target for generation of renewable energy using Railway's assets."

"8 Kisan rail services have been started to enable our farmers to send their products across the nation with enhanced speed & reduced cost", it further adds.

"Accidents progressively reduced from 107 in 2015-16 to 55 in 2019-20, (up to December 2020) and 893 railway stations are now provided with improved illumination levels similar to Airport Standards," report further adds

SBI Announces Up To 30 Bps Discount On Home Loans



MUMBAI: State Bank of India on Friday announced an interest concession of up to 30 basis points on home loans and a 100% waiver on processing fees.

The new home loan interest rates are linked to CIBIL score and start from 6.80% for loans up to Rs 30 lakh and 6.95% for loans above Rs 30 lakh, a bank release said. Women borrowers will get a concession of 5

bps, it said.

"With an aim to offer attractive concessions to the home buyers, country's largest lender SBI announces further interest concession of up to 30 bps on home loans and 100% waiver on processing fees," it said.

The bank said interest concession is also available in eight metro cities for loans up to Rs 5 crore. — PTI



Hyundai Recalls 471,000 More SUVs, Tells Owners To Park Outside

Hundai on Friday said that the company is adding about 471,000 SUVs to a September US recall. This is because of an electrical short in a computer that could result in fires, warning the owners to park the SUVs outdoors until they are repaired.

Explaining the cause that could lead to fire, the company said it recalls will be for certain model-year 2016 through 2018,

and additional 2020 through 2021, Hyundai Tucson SUVs. These vehicles have antilock brake system computers which can malfunction internally and cause an electrical short.

Hyundai further said that notifications to take the SUVs to the dealer will be sent to the owners in late February. It further clarified that the recall is a part of the continuing investigation into the problem and

that no injuries related to the vehicles recalled have been reported so far.

In September the South Korean automaker recalled about 180,000 Tucson SUVs in the US from 2019 through 2021 to fix the same problem. The company says corrosion can cause a short circuit in defective anti-lock brake circuit boards that can cause a fire even if engines. (AP)

Whatsapp New Privacy Terms: What Do New Rules Really Mean For You?

Agencies

The announcement that WhatsApp will be getting new rules – and forcing users to agree to them – has spread fear among the people who rely on the messaging app to stay in touch with friends and family.

WhatsApp has long prided itself on its commitment to security and privacy, with encrypted conversations and other important technologies integrated into the app.

But the new announcement has sparked fears of the exact opposite: that people's information is not being kept secret but instead shared with Facebook.

But what is the truth over the changes, and how concerned should people be?

The event that kicked off the changes are WhatsApp's new terms, and a requirement that users commit to them. Users are, in the last couple of days, being asked to assent to those changes – for now they can choose to leave it until later, but eventually users will no longer be able to keep using the app unless they assent to the new rules.

Those new rules include a summary of how WhatsApp will share information with Facebook, and how any shared information might be used.

"As part of the Facebook family of companies, WhatsApp receives information from, and shares information with, this family of companies," the new privacy policy states.



"We may use the information we receive from them, and they may use the information we share with them, to help operate, provide, improve, understand, customize, support, and market our Services and their offerings."

It is that summary that has led to the concerns, and fears that people's WhatsApp data might not be protected.

One thing to note is that the "information" collected by WhatsApp is not chats, since those are encrypted and therefore can't be seen by the company even if it wanted to. Rather, the information is personal data such as the phone number of users and their contacts, profile names and pictures, and diagnostic data.

As such, there is no concern – at least yet – that private WhatsApp conversations will be harvested to use for ads or other purposes by Facebook, for instance.

What's more, WhatsApp insists that European users will not see any changes to the use of their data, even if they agree to the terms.

"There are no changes to WhatsApp's data sharing practices in the European region (including UK) arising from the updated Terms of Service and Privacy Policy," a spokesperson said.

"For the avoidance of any doubt, it is still the case that WhatsApp does not share European region WhatsApp user data with Facebook for the purpose of Facebook using this data to improve its products or advertisements."

WhatsApp's director of public policy in Europe, Middle East and Africa shared a Twitter thread making much the same argument. "It remains the case that WhatsApp does not share European Region WhatsApp user data with Facebook for the purpose of Facebook using this data to improve its products or ads," she wrote.

The really significant recent update is that WhatsApp has added new features to allow people to communicate with businesses – and those businesses could be hosted by Facebook. When speaking to those contacts, messages might be stored and managed by Facebook, and so those conversations could be shared with the company more generally.

Users should be informed if that happens, however. When speaking to a business who has decided to have its messages managed by Facebook, a message should appear – and users should stop talking to them if they would prefer that information is not shared.

Reliance Infra Completes Stake Sale In Power Transmission Project To India Grid For Rs 900 Cr



Reliance Infrastructure Limited (RInfra) on Saturday announced the successful completion of sale of its entire 74 per cent equity stake in Parbati Koldam Transmission Company Limited (PKTCL) to India Grid Trust (IndiGrid) for an enterprise value of Rs 900 crore.

RInfra owns 74 per cent in PKTCL located in the state of Himachal Pradesh and Punjab in joint venture with the Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (PGCIL).

The deal was announced in November 2020 with the signing of a definitive binding agreement between RInfra

and IndiGrid and has now been completed with transfer of shares of PKTCL, and receipt of sale consideration.

IndiGrid is India's first power sector Infrastructure Investment Trust, owning AAA rated power transmission assets in India.

With this acquisition, IndiGrid owns 12 operating power transmission assets with a total AUM of over Rs 14,500 crore.

The total transaction value is Rs 900 crore. The entire sale proceeds are being utilised for debt reduction.

RInfra has reduced its total debt liabilities by 6 per cent from the deal proceeds. **IANs**

Forex Reserves Swell By USD 4.483 Billion To Record USD 585.324 Billion



Agencies

The country's foreign exchange reserves surged by USD 4.483 billion to touch a record high of USD 585.324 billion in the week ended January 1, RBI data showed on Friday.

In the previous week ended December 25, the reserves had declined by USD 290 million to USD 580.841 billion.

In the reporting week, the increase in reserves was on account of a rise in foreign currency assets (FCAs), a major component of the overall reserves.

FCAs climbed by USD 4.168 billion to USD 541.642 billion,

weekly data by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) showed. Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.

Gold reserves rose by USD 315 million to USD 37,026 billion in the week ended January 1, as per the data. The special drawing rights (SDRs) with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) remained unchanged at USD 1,510 billion. The country's reserve position with the IMF stood at USD 5,145 billion, same as the previous week.

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NEWS MAKERS

Gold Plunges Rs614, Silver Tanks Rs1,609

NEW DELHI: Gold prices fell Rs 614 to Rs 49,763 per 10 gram in the national capital on Friday, tracking a weak global trend, according to HDFC Securities. In the previous trade, the precious metal had closed at Rs 50,377 per 10 gram.

Silver prices also plunged Rs 1,609 to Rs 67,518 per kilogram from Rs 69,127 per kilogram in the previous trade.

In the international market, gold was trading lower at \$1,889 per ounce, while silver was quoting flat at \$26.68 per ounce. — PTI



Death Of Bhopal Volunteer Not Due To Vaccine, Says Bharat Biotech

Agencies

Bharat BioTech said on Saturday that the death of 42-year-old volunteer from Bhopal, who was allegedly administered a dose of its COVID vaccine, Covaxin, in a clinical trial, was "not related" to the vaccine or placebo.

In a statement, the company noted that "with regard to reports of a death in Phase III trials, we would like to state that a volunteer passed away on December 21, 2020 and the death was reported to the People's College of Medical Sciences & Research Centre by the son of the deceased. The volunteer, at the time of enrolment, had fulfilled all the inclusion and exclusion criteria to be accepted as a participant in the

Phase III trial and was reported to be healthy in all the site follow up calls post seven days of his dosing and no AE's were observed or reported."

"As per the post-mortem report issued by the Gandhi Medical College, Bhopal that the site received from the Bhopal Police, the probable cause of death was due to cardio respiratory failure as a result of suspected poisoning and the case is under police investigation as well," said the statement.

It added that the volunteer passed away nine days after the dosing and preliminary reviews by the site indicate that the death is unrelated to the study dosing. "We cannot confirm if the volunteer received the study vaccine or a placebo as the study is blinded," the statement said.



The company further said that in accordance with the provisions of the New Drugs & Clinical Trials Rules, (NDCT rules 2019) the serious adverse event was reported by

the site team to the Institutional Ethics Committee, the Central Drugs Control Standards Organization (CDSCO) and the Data Safety Monitoring Board (DSMB) in accordance

to all the required guidelines.

"There are several factors that can cause an adverse event during a clinical trial, including the patient's underlying disease, other pre-existing conditions or any other unrelated occurrence like an accident," Bharat BioTech said.

Rules mandate that all adverse events (AE) and serious adverse events (SAE) be reported, whether related to the trial medication or not.

"This SAE has been thoroughly investigated and has been found not related to vaccine or placebo. All data and reports on this SAE have been submitted to Site Ethics Committee, CDSCO and DSMB. We are also continuing to cooperate with the investigation requirements from the Madhya Pradesh Police in Bhopal," the company claimed.

DC Srinagar Monitors Snow Clearance Work Rs 30 Lakh Compensation, Medical Aid Sanctioned

SRINAGAR: District administration Srinagar pressed on essential services manpower and machinery for ensuring restoration of services in view of fresh snowfall. DC Srinagar monitored the restoration work and visited several areas. Mechanical Engineering Department deputed 14 machines for snow clearance in main roads and link roads in designated Zones including airport roads , Rambagh, Baghe Mehtab, Rawalpura, Chanpora, Rajbagh , Jawahar Nagar , Bypass, MA Road,

Dalgate, Shalteng, Boulevard-Nishat, Sanat Nagar, Soura, Sonwar and Khanyar among other zones. ExEn MED Abdul Rashid Bhât supervised operations. Machinery of Circular Road Project PWD was deployed for clearance of inner link roads and lanes in areas including Shehr-e-Khas, north city and western areas. Machinery deployed from three divisions Right River Division, Left River Division and City Roads division was tasked to cover 194 links and lanes which was supervised

by Superintending Engineer CRP Abdul Qayoom Kirmani. SE PWD, M A Nain deputed machinery in City Division I & II for snow clearance and also covered inner links and lanes. Meanwhile, power department teams restored damages at several locations and replaced damaged transformers in different locations. Superintending Engineers and ExEns visited the areas and reviewed restoration. Water supply remained normal in most of there areas and dis-

ruptions reported at three locations were restored by field staff. Deputy Commissioner, Srinagar, accompanied by Addl Deputy Commissioner , Jt Director Planning, Superintending Engineers and other senior officers visited several places to monitor the restoration work and first-hand assessment. The team of officers visited different areas in Barzula, Rajbagh, Jawahar Nagar, Sonwar, Dalgate, Khanyar, Hazratbal, Eidgah, Noorbagh, Karan Nagar, areas adjoining 90ft road

, Soura, Anchar, Bemina, Shalteng and other areas. A meeting of Revenue officers was convened in the evening to review the damages cases reported. More than Rs 30 Lakh immediate compensation was approved by the Deputy Commissioner to be disbursed in favour of families who have suffered loss to houses during snowfall. Meanwhile medical aid was also sanctioned in favour of more than 60 patients suffering from chronic ailments.

Militants, Robbers May Have Joined Farmers' Stir: BJP MLA

KOTA (RAJ): BJP's Kota MLA Madan Dilawar on Saturday triggered a controversy, suggesting that militants and robbers wanting to destroy the country may have joined the farmers' agitation against the Centre's farm laws at the Delhi borders. The MLA further alleged that the so-called farmers are not worried about the country, enjoying picnic and luxuries besides relishing delicacies. In a video statement released here, he suggested that the agitators are "conspiring" to spread bird flu by consuming chicken at the protest sites. The ruling Congress in the state reacted sharply to the remarks by the Kota's Ramganjmandi MLA, terming his statement as shameful , which reflects the BJP's ideology. In his video, Dilawar lashed at the protesters and said, The so-called farmers involved in the agitation are not worried about the country. They are not protesting but enjoying picnic, relishing chicken, biryani, cashew, almonds and are availing all sorts of luxuries.

There may be militants, robbers and thieves among them and they may also be enemies of farmers and all these people want to ruin the country, Dilawar alleged. The BJP MLA claimed that by consuming chicken and biryani at the agitation sites, they are conspiring to spread bird flu in the country. If the government does not remove them by persuasion or force in the next few days, I can clearly anticipate bird flu assuming a terrible form in the country, Dilawar said. The BJP MLA said he has urged the Union government to stop these people from assembling on roads and if they don't agree, the government should take stern step to disperse them. Reacting to the MLA's remarks, Rajasthan Congress chief Govind Singh Dotasra said his statement reflects the BJP's ideology. It is shameful for Rajasthan BJP MLA Madan Dilawar to use words like militant, robber for farmers, Dotasra said in a tweet. **PTI**

Over 1,200 Birds Found Dead Across India; UP Becomes 7Th State To Report Avian Influenza

NEW DELHI: Over 1,200 birds were found dead across the country on Saturday, including 900 in a poultry farm in Maharashtra, with the Centre saying that the outbreak of avian influenza has been reported in Uttar Pradesh, taking the total number of affected states to seven. The Centre said confirmation of bird flu in Delhi, Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra, is awaited as the samples have been sent for testing, it said. Besides Uttar Pradesh, the other six states where bird flu is confirmed are Kerala, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana and Gujarat. Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal announced a ban on import of live birds in the national capital and closure of Ghazipur poultry market, the biggest in the city, for the next 10 days in view of bird flu scare. Noting that there is no confirmed case of avian influenza in Delhi so far, the chief minister said samples have been sent to Jalandhar laboratory. He also said that a 24-hour helpline has been set up for assistance of people. He said the Delhi government is following all guidelines and directions issued by the central government with regards to bird flu. "Rapid response teams have been formed in every district to contain the spread and conduct proper surveillance, and they will function under the district magistrates. Our veterinary officers are conducting proper surveys in all bird markets, wildlife establishments and water bodies across Delhi. "The special focus of the teams are poultry market Ghazipur, Shakti Sthal Lake, Bhalswa Lake, Sanjay Lake, Delhi Zoo, DDA Parks, situated at Hauz Khas

village, Pashchim Vihar and Dwarka," Kejriwal added. At least 24 crows have been found dead at a district park in south Delhi's Jasola in the past three days and 10 ducks have died at the famous Sanjay Lake, officials said. "The samples of ducks found dead have been taken by the veterinary department authorities to ascertain if the cause of death was bird flu or not," a senior DDA official said. On the death of crows, the DDA has informed the Delhi government's forest department, he said. Three recreational parks and famous Sanjay Lake in Delhi were closed by authorities amid an avian flu scare in the city as several birds were found dead on their premises in the last couple of days, officials said. Besides, the popular Hauz Khas Park in south Delhi, which is a huge water body and attracts a large number of crowd every day, has also been shut, they said. As many as 900 hens have died at a poultry farm in Murumba village in Parbhani district of Maharashtra, a senior official said. Their samples have been sent for investigation to identify the exact cause of the death, Parbhani district collector Deepak Mulgikar told PTI. He said the poultry farm where the death of birds was reported is run by a Self Help Group (SHG). Prima facie, the death of hens could be related to nutrition, the collector said, adding that the test results are awaited. Over 350 birds were reported dead in Rajasthan, taking the death count to 2,512, an official said. Of the 356 birds reported dead on Saturday, 257 were crows, 29 pigeons, 16 peacocks and 54 others.

Even as Gujarat recorded its first confirmed cases of bird flu, four crows were found dead at a village in Mangrol taluka in the state's Junagadh district. The state on Friday recorded its first cases of bird flu after samples taken from two dead lapwings recovered in the district tested positive for the infection. "We found carcasses of four crows at Loej village on Friday evening. The remains will be sent to a laboratory in Bhopal to ascertain the cause of death," said Ashok Kumbhani, veterinary officer of Mangrol veterinary dispensary in the district. Out of 10 birds found in the area, four were dead at the spot and six are currently under treatment, the official said. Six crows were found dead in Dakshina Kannada, bordering Kerala and samples have been sent for testing to ascertain the cause of death. Five crows were found dead in a drain in the Sitabpur area in Uttarakhand's Pauri Garhwal district. Samples of the dead birds have been sent to a laboratory in Bhopal for testing, Veterinary Officer BM Gupta said. A response team headed by a doctor and four health workers has been formed at the district level to keep a track on the death of birds and chickens and taking the samples for testing, Chief Veterinary Officer in Pauri SK Bartwal said. A drive to cull over 1.60 lakh poultry birds at five poultry farms commenced in Haryana's Panchkula district on Saturday, officials said. The move comes after samples of some birds in two poultry farms at Kheri and Ganauli villages in Panchkula tested positive for the H5N8 strain of avian flu on Friday.

Support For Right To Free Speech Cannot Depend Upon Religion Of A Person: Omar

SRINAGAR: Support for the right to free speech cannot depend upon the religion of a person, National Conference (NC) vice-president Omar Abdullah said on Saturday after many criticised the suspension of US President Donald Trump's social media accounts following the storming of the US Capitol by his supporters. "Will all those crying themselves hoarse about Trump & his right to free speech please extend the same courtesy to #MunawarFaruqui & his friends. You either support the right to free speech or you don't. It can't depend upon the religion of the person speaking/tweeting," Abdullah said on Twitter, referring to the arrested stand-up comedian from Gujarat.

Faruqui was arrested, along with four others, in Indore in Madhya Pradesh on January 2 after the son of a BJP MLA filed a complaint accusing them of passing indecent remarks about Hindu deities and Union Home Minister Amit Shah during a show. Abdullah's remarks came after various social media users, including some BJP leaders, expressed concern on Saturday over the suspension of Trump's Twitter account. Days after Trump's supporters stormed the US Capitol and caused the deaths of four civilians and a police officer, Twitter suspended his account due to the "risk of further incitement of violence". Facebook and Instagram had earlier suspended Trump's accounts.**PTI**

Days After Participating In Vaccine Trial, Man Dies In Bhopal

BHOPAL: A 42-year-old man who had taken part in the trial of Covaxin, the indigenous coronavirus vaccine developed by Bharat Biotech, died nine days later in Bhopal, officials said. While doctors suspect that poisoning could be the cause, Bharat Biotech said in a statement that "preliminary reviews" indicate that the death was unrelated to the vaccine trial. Dr Rajesh Kapur, Vice Chancellor, People's Medical College and Hospital where the trial was conducted, told PTI that Deepak Marawi, the deceased, had participated in the Covaxin trial on December 12. He died nine days later. Bharat Biotech said in a statement that Marawi had fulfilled "all the inclusion and exclusion criteria to be accepted as a participant in the Phase III trial". He was reported to be healthy in follow-up calls post seven days of his dosing and no adverse reaction was observed or reported, the Hyderabad-based company said. "The volunteer passed away nine days after the dosing and preliminary reviews by the site indicate that the death is unrelated to the study dosing. We cannot confirm if the volunteer received the study vaccine or a placebo as

the study is blinded," it added. Madhya Pradesh Medical Legal Institute Director Dr Ashok Sharma said the doctor who performed autopsy suspected that he died of poisoning. However, the exact cause of the death would be known from his viscera test, he added. "After Marawi's death on December 21, we informed the Drug Controller General of India and Bharat Biotech, which is the producer and sponsor of the trial," Dr Kapur said. He said Marawi, a tribal labourer, had volunteered for the trial and was examined. "All protocols were followed and Marawi's consent was taken before allowing him to participate," he claimed. Dr Kapur too said he cannot confirm whether Marawi was administered the vaccine shot or was given a placebo. "It (the vaccine vial) comes covered and coded. During the trial, 50 per cent people get the actual injection while the rest are given saline," he said. Kapur said Marawi was kept under observation for 30 minutes after the trial as per guidelines before he was allowed to go. "We monitored his health for 7 to 8 days," he added.

THE MLA FURTHER ALLEGED THAT THE so-called farmers are not worried about the country, enjoying picnic and luxuries besides relishing delicacies.

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From Front page...

Fresh Snowfall Blocks...

major snowfall and the weather was likely to stay mainly dry till January 14. The fresh snowfall affected the air traffic to and fro the Kashmir valley as no flight operations took place at the Srinagar airport, the officials said. The Srinagar-Jammu national highway remained closed for traffic on the seventh day on Saturday, the officials said. They said the 260 kilometre-long highway -- the only all-weather road connecting Kashmir with the rest of the country -- was blocked by the accumulation of snow and landslides and shooting stones due to the heavy snowfall earlier this week. The officials said while the highway was cleared on Friday and stranded traffic was allowed, no fresh vehicle movement has been allowed yet. The Mughal Road -- the alternate road-link which connects the valley to the Jammu division through Shopian-Rajouri axis was closed for traffic due to heavy snowfall in the region, the officials said. The Met Office said the minimum temperature went down across the valley. Srinagar city recorded a low of minus 4.0 degrees Celsius -- down from minus 0.4 degrees Celsius the previous night, the officials said. The minimum temperature in Gulmarg tourist resort settled at minus 10.0 degrees Celsius -- same as the night earlier. Pahalgam tourist resort, in south Kashmir, recorded a low of minus 5.1 degrees Celsius -- down from minus 3.3 degrees Celsius. Qazigund recorded a minimum of minus 2.8 degrees Celsius, Kupwara, in the north, minus 5.4 degrees Celsius and Kokernag minus 4.5 degrees Celsius. 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-Khur'd' (small cold) and a 10-day-long 'Chillai-Bachha' (baby cold) following it.

Air Traffic Disrupted At...

flight operations. No flight operations have taken place at Srinagar airport so far. At least seven flights have been cancelled, an official of the Airports Authority of India said Saturday morning. Some flights have been delayed, he added. However, later in the evening air traffic was restored after the runway was cleared off the snow. "The flight operations resumed at the airport late afternoon and many flights arrived and then departed from here," an official said. He said air traffic was restored after weather improved in Kashmir valley and the runway at the airport was cleared off the snow.

Air traffic to and from the valley was restored on Thursday after remaining suspended for four days in the wake of heavy snowfall which began on Sunday. Many parts of the valley, including the summer capital, received fresh snowfall Saturday morning. (PTI)

J&K Logs 2 More Corona...

Bandipora 2, Ganderbal 2, Kulgam 3, Jammu 47, Udhampur 5, Doda 5, Kathua 4, Kishtwar 2 and Reasi one new case of Covid-19. Moreover, they said, 267 more patients have recovered and were discharged from various hospitals--116 from Jammu Division and 151 from Kashmir Valley.

Samples Of UK Returnees Sent...

the infection. Both of them have been brought to JINM for isolation. It is suspected that they may be containing new strain but we aren't sure as of now," she said. "Their samples have been taken at SKIMS and will be sent to New Delhi for Genome Sequencing to determine if they are infected by new UK strain or not," she added. She said that an Italy returned person has also tested Covid-19 positive. Taking extra precautions, Bilquees said, some of the coronavirus patients at JINM hospital have either been sent to home for isolation and some to Covid-19 centre Chanpora. "We can't take them as normal Covid-19 patients. There's a guideline that the people with UK strain Covid-19 can't be kept with other coronavirus patients. These travellers have tested coronavirus positive but whether they are positive for UK strain will only be clear when their reports come from New Delhi," she said. She strongly rejected the media reports that the two UK returnees, from Habak and Soura localities, have been found positive for the newly-discovered UK-strain. Dr. Manhas, ADS State surveillance Officer IDSP Jammu said that samples of two persons in Jammu, one of which was a traveller from UK and another his contact, were found negative for the newly-discovered strain. "We have ten more people admitted at a Jammu hospital whose tests have been sent to Delhi for Genome Sequencing", the official said adding "All these tests are being conducted as per the guidelines of central government to avert any exigency." (With GNS inputs)

Army Captures Chinese...

of Ladakh. The corporal was handed back to China at Chushul-Moldo border point in eastern Ladakh following laid down protocols. Nearly 50,000 troops of the Indian Army are currently deployed in a high state of combat readiness in various mountainous locations in eastern Ladakh in sub-zero temperatures as multiple rounds of talks between the two sides have not yielded concrete outcome to resolve the standoff. China has also deployed an equal number of troops, according to officials. Last month, India and China had held another round of diplomatic talks under the framework of Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination (WMCC) on India-China border affairs. The eighth and last round of military talks between the two sides had taken place on November 6 during which both sides broadly discussed disengagement of troops from specific friction points. India has all along been maintaining that the onus is on China to

carry forward the process of disengagement and de-escalation at the friction points in the mountainous region. Following the sixth round of military talks, the two sides had announced a slew of decisions including not to send more troops to the frontline, refrain from unilaterally changing the situation on the ground and avoid taking any actions that may further complicate matters. This round was held with a specific agenda of exploring ways to implement a five-point agreement reached between External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi at a meeting in Moscow on September 10 on the sidelines of a Shanghai Cooperation Organisation(SCO) conclave. The pact included measures like quick disengagement of troops, avoiding action that could escalate tensions, adherence to all agreements and protocols on border management and steps to restore peace along the LAC.

Imran Questions Lone's...

Mr. Abdul Gani Vakil. From the outset, I would strongly urge you to take this letter of mine in the proper spirit and not in any manner think that this is a letter challenging your decisions and authority in the party". Imran shot the letter to his party boss a day after Apni Party leader Syed Altaf Bukhari said the PAGD lacked sincerity of purpose and was an alliance of opportunists. Imran urged Lone that the call of introspection made by Vakil (Another leader of PAGD) must be taken in the "proper spirit" in which it has been made. "It does not mean that we are against the spirit of PAGD or the objectives of the PAGD. But in wake of the deceitful behavior shown by our allies by fielding proxy candidates in almost all DDC constituencies, we need to seriously think whether PAGD collectively possesses the sincerity that the people of J&K deserve", Imran said. "In the context of proxy candidates, I will narrate my own personal experience. Pattan had two DDC segments and both were allotted to Peoples Conference and we fielded two candidates on behalf of the PAGD. Would Sajad sahib care to explain why did the NC leaders including the current Parliament Member of NC, and their constituency head held indoor meetings and campaigned against these two candidates of PAGD? Their involvement in Pattan was so much that the MP fared very badly in his own Assembly constituency because he was solely focused on defeating the Peoples Conference candidate fighting on the PAGD mandate", reads the letter. "Now let me bring to your kind notice the other facet of deceit. We were allotted seats to fight in the neighboring Sonawari Assembly segment but NC put up candidates and not by proxy but on proper NC mandate. You would know better sir that the party nomination form is signed by the party president. The president of PAGD Dr Farooq Abdullah signed the mandate for a particular DDC segment in our favor and then Dr Farooq Abdullah as the president of NC also signed the nomination form of a NC candidate in the same DDC segment. So what are we up against? This is not gossip or something unverifiable. This is a documented fact. You can check the records. This has happened with other parties too", Imran's letter further revealed. "Now let me draw your attention to our bastion district Kupwara. May I ask you who did we fight against in the DDC seats allotted to us? The BJP candidates got hardly a few hundred votes.

Who voted against us? Sajad sahib is it not time to tell the truth to the people. Our cadres know it, NC cadres know it. We were fighting the NC. It was a typical NC vs PC fight. When you went out to campaign who were you campaigning for and who were you campaigning against? Our senior leader and ex MLA Bashir Ahmed Dar sahib openly named the top NC leaders of the area on the stage in a large public gathering where you were also present. Did you not promise the people in your speech that you will ensure that action is taken against those who fielded proxy candidates? I am just asking, "Where is the action against those leaders who defied PAGD and fielded proxy candidates against PAGD?" he asks in the letter. "You served a notice to me when I met the Lieutenant Governor. Why was I prohibited from going when today an official delegation of the NC and Mr. Yusuf Tarigami have gone to meet the LG? I don't for a moment challenge your authority and your leadership but I am saying that too much simplicity and taking people on face value may do a lot of damage to the party". "Sir, let me also draw your attention to the political aspects. Mr. Omar Abdullah said that these elections were a referendum on August 5. Our party position is clear. We are against August 5 and will do what it takes to fight for the restoration of our rights. I have a simple question for Mr. Omar Abdullah. If indeed it was a referendum who did the NC cadres vote for or against in the referendum. It is simple. A vote for PAGD was a vote against August 5. But in many constituencies NC voted against PAGD through their proxies. So NC in Pattan, Singpora, Ramhall, Chowkibal etc segments voted against PAGD thereby voting in favor of August 5. Isn't this cheating? How can you keep quiet on such issues? Imran Ansari also said that the past two months have shown that there is no sincerity in PAGD and has asked Sajad Lone to be ready to answer questions. "I implore upon you to convene a meeting of the working committee and also of the newly elected DDC members. With all humility Sajad Sahib you have to be ready to answer questions that we all have." (With inputs from KNS)

CRPF Man Dies Of Cardiac...

However, he breathed his last at a hospital here, the report said. Quoting unnamed officials, the report said that Singh was a native of Madhya Pradesh.

5 Held For Looting Banihal...

active in Ramban, Banihal and Batote in Ramban district and Qazigund in Kulgam district of south Kashmir and were arrested within 24 hours of committing the crime in Banihal town. Some more gang members are still at large and efforts are on to nab them, the officer said, adding a large quantity of stolen items and Rs 33,000 cash were seized from them.

Police Claims Arrest Of Five...

Javid Ahmad Pandith, Waseem Ahmad Lone and Arif Ahmad Khanday. As per the police spokesperson, all of these men were involved in providing logistics and other assistance and transportation to LeT militants and were also in constant contact with the active militants of the outfit to carry out subversive activities within the jurisdiction of Police District Sopore.

'Couldn't Have Done Anything Better Than What I Was Doing,' Pujara Defends Miserly Knock

Press Trust of India

SYDNEY: "I couldn't have done anything better than what I was doing," senior batsman Cheteshwar Pujara said, putting up a stout defence of his ultra-defensive batting that came in for heavy criticism on the third day of the third Test against Australia here.

Pujara said it was some brilliant bowling by the Australians which forced him to crawl to his slowest ever Test half-century.

Pujara scored 50 off 176 balls as his slow batting helped Australia gain complete control of the third Test with an overall lead of 197 runs.

"I was batting well and got a good ball. I just have to accept it. I couldn't have done anything better than what I was doing. I feel I just have to bat the way, I know," Pujara said during the day-end media conference.

According to Pujara, his nemesis Pat Cummins bowled the "ball of the series" about which he couldn't do anything.

"He bowls unplayable deliveries. I felt that was the best ball of this series. I don't think I could have done anything about that ball which kicked from back of length. I had to play that ball as there was extra bounce. When it's not your day, the margin of error is very little," he explained.

He also didn't pay much credence to theories that a finger injury sustained during nets at the MCG was the reason for not being able to play freely.

"Not really, I think. I don't think it put any trouble as far as my batting is concerned. It's not easy and I am not hundred per cent (fit). I won't say I am completely normal. This was something that was expected and I can manage this little bit of pain. It's an important game so I can't miss out," said Pujara.

Asked why he didn't bring out the hook or pull shot when Australian bowlers employed

the three-man leg side trap, Pujara effectively dodged the question.

"They bowled good line and lengths. They had fair idea of this pitch. I think we should give credit to the way they bowled. They didn't give too many loose balls," he said.

In fact he felt that difference in this Test match has been the relative inexperience of the bowling attack.

"If you look at our fast bowling line-up, they are slightly inexperienced but they are improving day by day, they will get better. It's a good opportunity for them to learn and I am sure we have good bunch of fast bowlers



I was batting well and got a good ball. I just have to accept it. I couldn't have done anything better than what I was doing. I feel I just have to bat the way, I know

who can learn from best and get better as they play more games," he said.

He termed Rishabh Pant's dismissal as the turning point of the Indian innings.

"If you look at the way our innings was progressing, we were in trouble only when Rishabh got out. Till then we were in a comfortable position. We were 180 for 4, and we were doing well. Things turned around when Rishabh got out and then I got out. We didn't score many after that. Losing Rishabh was a turnaround.

Jadeja Out Of 4th Test With Thumb Fracture; Pant Likely To Bat In 2nd Innings

Press Trust of India

SYDNEY: Depleted India's injury woes worsened on Saturday with senior all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja sustaining a left thumb dislocation and fracture which is likely to rule him out of the final Test in Brisbane, starting January 15.

However, there is some

Pant as per a recent amendment in the ICC playing conditions.

"Rishabh Pant was hit on the left elbow while batting in the second session on Saturday. He has been taken for scans," the BCCI had earlier stated in a release.

Pant, who looked good during his 36 off 67 balls on the



good news for India as wicketkeeper-batsman Rishabh Pant's elbow injury is not serious and he will probably be available when India bat to save the Test match.

Both players underwent scans after being hit by short balls from Australian pacers on third day of the Test match.

"Ravindra Jadeja has suffered a dislocation and fracture on his left thumb. It will be very difficult for him to wear those gloves and bat," a senior BCCI source told PTI on Saturday.

"In any case, he will be out of action for at least two to three weeks which rules him out of the final Test. Pant will be able to bat as his injury isn't that serious."

The visitors' first jolt came when Pant sustained an elbow injury after being hit by a Pat Cummins delivery.

Reserve wicketkeeper Wriddhiman Saha replaced

third day of the match, was hit while trying to pull a short ball from Cummins.

He was in pain immediately and after on-field treatment that included strapping a bandage, he was back in action but lost the flow due to hindered movement as Josh Hazlewood had him caught behind.

If that was not enough, the Australian fast bowlers inflicted further pain on the Indians with Jadeja suffering a nasty blow to his left thumb.

Jadeja's 28-run knock allowed India to limit Australia's first-innings lead to less than 100 but towards the end, a short ball from Mitchell Starc hit him on the gloves and he needed immediate medical attention.

"Ravindra Jadeja suffered a blow to his left thumb while batting. He has been taken for scans," the visiting team's board stated in another media release after the injury.



AUS Vs IND 3rd Test Day 3

India Falter While Labuschagne, Smith Hold Fort To Give Australia 197-Run Lead

Press Trust of India

SYDNEY: Cheteshwar Pujara's lack of intent pushed an injury-ravaged India deep into a hole as Australia tightened the noose with a substantial 197-run lead on a forgettable Saturday for the visitors in the third Test here.

Pujara's slowest Test half-century, a painstaking 50 off 176 balls, was soon followed by India being bowled out for 244 on the third day with the other batsmen feeling tremendous pressure of a dormant scoreboard.

A first-innings lead of 94 runs provided by the bowlers and some good fielding did help Australia's cause.

By stumps, Steve Smith (29 batting) and Marnus Labuschagne (47 batting) gave an exhibition of how to bat on slow tracks with Australia reaching 103/2.

Labuschagne, in particular, showed how to bat positively on a dead track hitting six boundaries in 67 balls.

As Shane Warne pointed out during commentary, it would be very difficult to chase any score in excess of 250 with variable bounce and the odd balls keeping low.

Pat Cummins (4/29 in 21.4 overs) was brilliant on an unresponsive track with some effective short-pitched bowling and got good support from Josh Hazlewood (2/43 in 21 overs) and Mitchell Starc (1/61 in 19 overs), having set up a leg-side trap.

To make matters worse for In-

dia, there were run-outs and two batsmen - Rishabh Pant and Ravindra Jadeja - were hit on the left elbow and left thumb respectively.

While both might come into bat in the second innings, Jadeja, with a swollen left thumb, will find it difficult to even grip the ball.

Defensive Approach

Earlier, Pujara's ultra-defensive approach put tremendous pressure on his colleagues and India never quite got the momentum going as Cummins, Hazlewood and Starc continuously attacked the batsmen - first with a leg-side field and short-ball strategy and then on the corridor of uncertainty.

Pujara doesn't play the pull or hook shot well and he wasn't allowed room to either cut or drive.

"I don't think it was the right approach (by Pujara), I think he needed to be a bit more proactive with his scoring rate because I felt it was putting too much pressure on his batting partners," former Australian captain Ricky Ponting wrote on Twitter.

While he never tried to rotate the strike, the likes of Ajinkya Rahane (22 off 70 balls) and Rishabh Pant (36 off 67 balls) felt the urge to break the shackles in the absence of any such intention from the other end.

"It may have looked like a flat pitch but it wasn't easy to score runs," Pujara told host broadcasters Channel 7 during post match snap interview.

The defensive approach also

resulted in three run-outs including the one of Hanuma Vihari (4 off 38 balls), who fell short while going for a quick but non-existent single.

It was then left to Ravindra Jadeja (28), who had to throw his bat around to bring the lead down to less than 100 runs, but that is of little comfort considering that India would now have to bat fourth to save the match.

A total of 84 runs from 34 overs in the first session, with lack of intent especially from Pujara, didn't help India's cause and Rahane's dismissal was purely due to the scoreboard pressure.

The Indian captain failed to get a move-on initially on a slow track where bounce became variable as the session session progressed.

He did hit a cover drive and then tried to take on Nathan Lyon by lofting him for a six over long on.

However, Cummins bowled one where he got extra bounce in his off-cutter, cramping Rahane for room and he was played on. The duo added 32 runs in 22.3 overs and it didn't help the team in any way.

Had KL Rahul been fit, there could have been a case of Vihari getting dropped as he didn't show in any way that he was in control during his half an hour stay at the crease.

Pant got into the groove quickly but a nasty blow on the forearm did affect his shot-making and the result was a caught behind off Hazlewood, after a 53-run stand in a little over 20 overs.

BCCI Lodges Complaint After Bumrah And Siraj Allege Racial Abuse By Fan At SCG

Press Trust of India

SYDNEY: The BCCI on Saturday lodged a formal complaint with ICC match referee David Boon after Indian team players, Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Siraj, were allegedly racially abused by a drunk spectator at the Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG) during the third day of third Test against Australia.

According to BCCI sources, Siraj was allegedly referred to as a 'monkey' by a drunk spectator in one of stands at the Sydney Cricket Ground, reliving the infamous Monkeygate episode of the Indian team's tour of Australia in 2007-08.

"BCCI lodged a formal complaint with ICC match referee David Boon about two of their players Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Siraj being abused by a drunk spectator," a Cricket Board source told PTI.

Incidentally, the Monkeygate episode also took place during the Sydney Test when Andrew Symonds claimed

spectator in one of stands at the Sydney Cricket Ground, reliving the infamous Monkeygate episode of the Indian team's tour of Australia in 2007-08.

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Incidentally, the Monkeygate episode also took place during the Sydney Test when Andrew Symonds claimed

Harbhajan Singh called him a monkey multiple times. But the Indian off-spinner was cleared after a hearing on the matter.

It is learnt that a long discussion was held between the senior players of the visiting contingent, including captain Ajinkya Rahane, the umpires and security officers at the end of the day's play.

The abuses were directed at the Indian duo while they were fielding during the Australian second innings.

'We wanted to make it as hard as possible for Pujara,' Says Aussie Pacer Pat Cummins

Press Trust of India

SYDNEY: Australia entered the four-match Test series against India determined to make it "as hard as possible" for Cheteshwar Pujara to score, the home team's pace spearhead Pat Cummins said after his terrific display in the third Test on Saturday.

Pujara has been criticised for his ultra-defensive approach in the series so far and instead of propping up his team's response to Australia's first innings total of 338 all out, his painstakingly slow 50 off 176 balls on the third day of the third Test here derailed India's momentum.

"Today I got a bit of assistance from the pitch. But he (Pujara) is someone you know you are going to have to bowl a lot at," Cummins said during the virtual post-day press conference.

The world's number one bowler returned fine figures of 4/29 and dismissed Pujara, who had been a thorn in Australia's flesh during the 2018-19 series, for the fourth time in the ongoing rubber.

"We got our head around that this series, for him to score runs, we are going to make it as hard as possible, and whether he bats for 200-300 balls, we would just try and bowl good ball after good ball, challenge both sides of his bat, and fortunately, so far it has worked."

Cummins was asked about Pujara's slow scoring rate and the pressure it puts on other batsmen. "It's one of those things. You know he (Pujara) is going to hang around. As long as you are controlling the scoreboard. At one stage he had been out there for 200 balls or 150 balls and I looked up there thinking they are still 200 away from our first-innings total.

"So, that fell a long way away and if we continue bowling well, you're not overly bothered."

"I think having Greeny (Chris Green) in there as a bowling option as well helps so we're not having those big 20-over days," he said.

After posting 338 in their first innings, Australia bowled out the visitors for 244 to take a substantial 94-run lead.

T10 Can Propel Cricket Popularity The Same Way T20 Did, Feels Dwayne Bravo

Press Trust of India

ABU DHABI: West Indies' all-rounder Dwayne Bravo feels the T10 format can bring about a revolution similar to the one that was seen following the advent of T20 cricket more than 15 years ago.



Bravo is gearing up to take part in the upcoming Abu Dhabi T10.

Speaking about the game's newest avatar, he said, "T10 is an exciting tournament and it's a competition that is just the way T20 started a few years ago - being the hottest thing in the market, and attracting so many people around the world.

"I think T10 definitely can do something similar. I believe it can also help players prolong their careers, and as a bowler, I use it as an opportunity to challenge myself because it's not a bowler-friendly tournament, and you come up against the best players in the world.

"So I use it as an opportunity to work on my skills and challenge and see how I can still compete at the highest level."

He was one of the standout performers in the previous edition of Abu Dhabi T10 as he led his former team Maratha Ara-

bians to their first-ever title after defeating Deccan Gladiators in the final.

The flamboyant cricketer has now switched sides for the upcoming season of Abu Dhabi T10, and has again been joined by coach Andy Flower, who has also made the switch from the

I-League: Mohammedan Sporting Beat Sudeva Delhi FC In Season Opener

Press Trust of India

KOLKATA: Newly-promoted Mohammedan Sporting defeated debutants Sudeva Delhi FC 1-0 thanks to Ali Faisal's second-half strike, as the I-League season got underway in Kolkata on Saturday.

Faisal's 58th-minute goal proved to be the difference between the two sides in a match that could have gone either way at the VYBK Stadium.

In a cagey first half, both teams appeared to be gauging each other's strengths without exposing themselves to counter-attacks.

Sudeva Delhi FC, the first club from the national capital to play in the I-League, had the first shot on target in the seventh minute when Kean Lewis cut inside from the left flank only to force the opposition custodian into an easy save.



Playing with an all Indian squad, Sudeva Delhi FC tried to unlock the defence of the Black Panthers by long balls.

Mohammedan Sporting had an opportunity to move ahead in

the 17th minute but Raphael Onwrebe missed a sitter in front of goal after Suraj Rawat unleashed a fine low cross into the box from the right flank.

With neither team commit-

ting men in attack and both sides playing with a deep backline, chances were few and far between. Kean Lewis, on occasion, tried to waltz past the Mohammedan defence but was kept at bay.

Sudeva Delhi FC started to press in the second half, looking for leaks in Mohammedan's defence. Ajay Singh, however, was left isolated at times playing as a lone striker upfront.

The breakthrough came much against the run of play in the 58th minute when Faisal pounced onto a defensive error by the Sudeva backline and slotted it into the back of the net.

The sheer power of the strike beat custodian Rakshit Dagar, despite him getting a hand on the shot.

Sudeva Delhi FC went on the offensive thereafter and searched for the equalizer, committing bodies in attack to salvage points off the match.

Although half-chances came in plenty for the Delhi outfit, a clear goal-scoring opportunity eluded them.

New Covid-19 Variant Found In 8 US States



Agencies

A new, more infectious variant of the coronavirus has now spread to at least eight US states, official data showed on Friday, as the country logged a record new daily virus caseload.

The B117 coronavirus variant, which emerged in Britain late last year, has been shown to be between 40 and 70 percent more contagious than variants which have spread previously.

Data from the US Centres for Disease Control (CDC) showed on Friday that the variant -- first reported in the US last week -- has been detected in eight states, with California and Florida the worst affected.

The variant has also been found in Colorado, Texas, New York, Georgia, Connecticut and Pennsylvania, in a total of 63 cases.

Top US infectious disease expert Anthony Fauci told Newsweek on Wednesday that the variant may be "more widespread in the United States than we are currently detecting it to be".

"I'm certain it's here, we just haven't detected it yet. And I think it's pretty clear that if it's in places like California, and New York and Colorado... that pretty soon it's going to be in several more states," he said.

The spread of B117 and another more infectious variant from South Africa, known as B1351, has sparked fears of a similar new variant emerging in the US.

But US officials on Friday denied reports that one had been detected so far.

"Researchers have been monitoring US variants since the pandemic began, including 5,700 samples collected in November and December," CDC spokesman Jason McDonald told CNBC.

...BIRD FLU SCARE Many Crows Die Mysteriously Across Jammu

JAMMU: Amid Bird Flu scare, authorities have asked all the allied government departments to stay alert in Jammu and Kashmir after reports of death of birds from various districts of Jammu province poured in.

Officials said that reports of death of crows were received from Jammu, Rajouri and Udhampur districts following which field staff has been asked to remain vigilant.

"We are keeping close vigil on the situation and 24 hours surveillance is being kept at Gharana wetland where migratory birds visit," Anil Atri, Wildlife warden Jammu said.

He added that after reports of death of birds in Udhampur, Rajouri, Jammu areas, the expert teams were pressed and samples were collected which have been sent to laboratories outside Jammu and Kashmir also.

Pertinently, the Jammu and

Kashmir government on Thursday had announced a complete ban on import of poultry items into the Union Territory till January 14.

"In the wake of spread of bird flu in neighbouring states of J&K as a measure of abundant precaution and in view of declaration of whole J&K as "Controlled Area" for bird flu disease. Government of UT J&K imposes complete ban on import of live birds including poultry and unprocessed poultry meet for any purpose into the union territory of J&K with immediate effect," the order issued by Navin K Choudhary, Principal Secretary to the government read.

It had further said that the decision on the import ban will be reviewed based on the evolving situation. The order on banning poultry imports come a day after government had said that no cases of bird flu or avian influenza have been detected in the union territory. --(With KNO inputs)



SNOW LAND: A man walks along the deserted banks of Dal side waters near Dalgate- KO Photo Abid Bhat

We Stick To Demand Of Kargil-Kashmir Unification: KDA

KARGIL: The Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA), Saturday distanced itself from the agenda of Apex Body and stated both are working on two different directions while KDA is clear about the restoration of Article 370, 35A and full-fledged state for Ladakh.

The KDA said that they have two common points with Peoples' Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) and "our discussion with their visiting delegation was result-oriented and KDA became part (Party) of the case filed before the Supreme Court of India."

Addressing a news conference in Kargil, the regions senior leader and former minister, Qamar Ali Akhnoon said that the Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) in its initial agenda has mentioned the restoration of Article 370 and 35A and a full-fledged statehood for Ladakh.

He said that "We've already discussed our agenda with the delegation of Gupkar Alliance and at two points both the groups have cooperated and decided to go further together. The two common points include the restoration of Article 370, 35A and to be a party at the Supreme Court", he said.

Akhnoon said that the Apex Body formed in Leh also discussed the agenda with them and "We told them about our demand of full-fledged state to Ladakh while they've met the Union Home Minister and made the decision and discussion of meeting public which is known

to all."

Maintaining that only Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) will do the true representation of Kargil, Qamar Ali said that the KDA managed to evoke a response from all sides including all the stakeholders and people who have joined us who know about the agenda KDA works for.

He said that both Apex Body and KDA have been formed who work on two separate agenda's and KDA will continue to fight for the rights of Ladakh.

Refuting the allegations leveled by the BIP Kargil unit about observing the first anniversary of bifurcation as Black Day, Asgar Karbalai said that the letter addressed to the BJP unit had an invitation-only and there was no mention about the Black Day rather only future course of action was scheduled to be discussed given the situation in the region.

He maintained that the people wanted the day to be observed as Black Day, adding that the strength of KDA got visible since not only political but students, social and religious including other bodies have joined hands with them.

Reacting over the meeting of the Apex Body with the Union Minister Amit Shah, he said that the meeting was only Leh centric and the government has formed a committee to look into the demands. "Now in case Kargil Democratic Alliance receives an invitation it would love to talk to the Home Minister and present

the agenda before him", he said.

To a query about the rotational basis for the LG office of Ladakh, he said for all such issues and rights KDA has been formed and everything will be raised well on time.

It may be recalled that the Apex Body was formed in Leh days ahead of the LAH-DC elections which called for the complete poll boycott demanding the 6th schedule for the region to protect the region's culture, land, jobs, language, and other significance it holds including the rich tradition. The Apex Body later withdrew the boycott call after meeting the home minister Amit Shah in Delhi last year and were assured about another meeting soon after the elections in the region ended. The Apex Body earlier on January 06 met the home minister in New Delhi who ordered the formation of a committee led by GK Reddy to look into the inclusion of Ladakh into the 6th schedule.

While the Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA), formed in Kargil ever since the formation demanded the restoration of Article 370, 35A and a full-fledged state for Ladakh and also joined the PAGD led by former Chief Minister of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir, Farooq Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti.

The BJP led Union government bifurcated the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir into two separate union territories of which Ladakh was carved as a separate Union Territory on August 05 in 2019--(KNO)

US Capitol Violence: Google Suspends Parler From Play Store; Apple Threatens To Ban It

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Internet giant Google has suspended US-based microblogging platform Parler--where most of the supporters of outgoing President Donald Trump are shifting their base--from its app store, citing posts inciting violence and demanding "robust" moderation for "egregious" content from the social networking service.

Simultaneously, Apple also warned Parler on Friday that it will ban the service from its app store if it doesn't start to moderate its content better.

The move by the two Silicon Valley companies came the day when Twitter permanently suspended Trump's account due to "risk of further incitement of violence". "In order to protect user safety on Google Play, our long-standing policies require that apps displaying user-generated content have moderation policies and enforcement that removes egregious content like spots that incite violence. All developers agree to these terms and we have reminded Parler of this clear policy in recent months," Google said in a statement.

"We recognise that there can

be reasonable debate about content policies and that it can be difficult for apps to immediately remove all violative content, but for us to distribute an app through Google Play, we



do require that apps implement robust moderation for egregious content," it said.

"In light of this ongoing and urgent public safety threat, we are suspending the app from the Play Store until it addresses these issues," said Google, whose software powers Android phones.

Parler has a significant user base of Trump supporters and conservatives.

Apple in a statement said it has received numerous complaints regarding objectionable content in Parler service, accusations that the app was used to plan, coordinate and facilitate the illegal activities in Washington DC on January 6 that led (among other things) to loss of life, numerous injuries and the destruction of property.

Guns Roar Along LoC, IB

JAMMU: The armies of India and Pakistan on Saturday exchanged heavy gunfire, including mortars along the Line of Control (LoC) and International Border (IB) in Rajouri and Kathua districts of Jammu and Kashmir.

Pakistani troops, officials said, violated ceasefire by resorting to unprovoked firing and mortar shelling on forward posts and villages along the LoC and IB in twin districts of Rajouri and Kathua on Saturday.

There was, however, no report of damage on the Indian side, the officials said.

"At about 12.30 pm (Saturday), Pakistan initiated unprovoked ceasefire violation

by firing with small arms and shelling mortars along the LoC in Nowshera sector of Rajouri. Indian Army retaliates befittingly," a defence spokesperson said.

The officials said the cross-border firing between the two sides was going on when last reports were received.

In another ceasefire violation, Pakistani Rangers fired on forward posts and villages along the IB in Gurnam border outpost area in Hira Nagar sector of Kathua district, they said.

The firing from the Pakistan side started around 11 pm on Friday and continued till 12.30 am on Saturday, the officials said. (With PTI inputs)

BSF Hands Over To Pakistan 6 Youths Who Crossed Border Inadvertently

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

The Border Security Force, on Saturday, handed over six Pakistani youths, who had "inadvertently" crossed over to the Indian side from along the international border in Punjab, to the Pakistan Rangers.

A protest was lodged with the Pakistan Rangers over the incident and the youngsters were sent back at around 5:30pm, the border guarding force said.

The six youths, in the age group of 14-25 years and residents of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, were nabbed by a BSF patrol from near the Pul Moran border post in Amritsar around 5 pm on Friday.

"During questioning, it came to notice that they had crossed over to the Indian territory inadvertently. Nothing objectionable was recovered from them," the force



said in a statement.

The Border Security Force (BSF) said as the youths were "inadvertent border crossers", it was decided to hand them to the Pakistani au-

thorities on "humanitarian grounds".

The border force, local police and central intelligence agencies had earlier grilled the youths.

NEWS MAKER

Pak Court Seeks Arrest of Masood Azhar

LAHORE: Masood Azhar, chief of the banned Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), should be arrested by January 18 in connection with a militant financing case, an anti-terrorism court in Pakistan has asked the Punjab Police, a court official said on Saturday.

The Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) Gujranwala issued an arrest warrant against Azhar in the militant financing case instituted by the CTD in the previous hearing on Thursday.

ATC Gujranwala judge Natasha Nas-eem Supra during the case hearing on Friday directed the CTD to arrest JeM chief Masood Azhar by January 18 and present him in the court. In case of failure (to arrest him), the court may begin proceedings to declare him a proclaimed offender, a court official told PTI on Saturday.

Azhar is facing charges of terror financing and selling jihadi literature.

Following the Pulwama militant attack in February 2019, Pakistan's Punjab police had launched a crackdown on militancy financing and arrested six militants of the JeM in Gujranwala, some 130 kms from Lahore. Azhar is facing the trial in this case.

Following the immense international pressure after the Pulwama attack, the

Pakistan government arrested over 100 members of the banned militant outfits including the JeM chief's son and brother.

The government also took control of the JeM, Mumbai attack mastermind Hafiz Saeed's Jamaat-ud-Dawah (JuD) and Falahai Insaniat Foundation (FIF) properties including seminaries and mosques across the country.

The JeM had claimed responsibility for the Pulwama attack in which 40 CRPF soldiers were killed.

Pakistan's Punjab government claimed to have taken over the administrative control of the JeM headquarters comprising Madressatul Sabir and Jama-e-Masjid Subhanallah in Bahawalpur.

In May 2019, the United Nations designated Azhar as a "global terrorist" after China lifted its hold on a proposal to blacklist the Pakistan-based JeM chief, a decade after New Delhi approached the world body for the first time on the issue.

The UN committee listed Azhar on May 1, 2019 as being associated with al-Qaeda for "participating in the financing, planning, facilitating, preparing, or perpetrating of acts or activities by, in conjunction with, under the name of, on behalf of, or in support of", "supplying, selling or transferring arms and

related material to", "recruiting for", "otherwise supporting acts or activities of", and "other acts or activities indicating association with" the JeM.

Azhar was released by India in exchange of passengers of the hijacked Indian Airlines plane IC-814 in 1999. After his release, Azhar formed the JeM and scripted many militant attacks in India.

The FATF placed Pakistan on the Grey List in June 2018 and asked Islamabad to implement a plan of action to curb money laundering and terror financing by the end of 2019 but the deadline was extended later on due to COVID-19 pandemic.

Reacting to the jail sentence handed out to Mumbai attack mastermind and UN proscribed Lashkar-e-Taiba commander Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi and the issuance of an arrest warrant against JeM chief Azhar, India on Friday scoffed at Pakistan, saying it has become a routine for Islamabad to come up with "farfical actions" prior to key international meetings.

Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) Spokesperson Anurag Srivastava said the timing clearly suggests the intention of conveying a sense of compliance ahead of APG (Asia-Pacific Group) meet and the next FATF plenary meet in February 2021.



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