



Maximum : 5.2°
Minum : -2.0°
Humidity : 93%

SUNSET
Today 05:58 PM
SUNRISE
Tomorrow 07:31 AM



P3 NEWS

SMART METERS INSTALLATION IN SRINAGAR UNDERWAY; MD KPDC

MD KPDC, Mr. Mohammad Aijaz IAS, today convened a meeting to review the progress of Smart Metering of Srinagar City. The Nodal Officer Smart Metering...

P4 WORLD

GLOBAL ICE SHEETS MELTING AT 'WORST-CASE' RATES: UK SCIENTISTS

The rate at which ice is disappearing across the world matches "worst-case climate warming scenarios", UK scientists have warned in new research...



P11 SPORTS

CRISTIANO RONALDO REFUSES £5.3 MILLION-A-YEAR OFFER TO PROMOTE SAUDI TOURISM: REPORTS

Members of the England cricket team including captain Joe Root arrived in the city on Wednesday for the ...



Quote!

It is never too late to be what you might have been.

— George Eliot

NEWS DIGEST

MERC Holds Mudasir Ali Memorial Session

SRINAGAR: The Media Education Research Centre (MERC) on Wednesday organized Mudasir Ali Online Memorial Session in which the invited speakers discussed the 'Journalism during pandemic: Opportunities & Challenges'. A galaxy of media professionals working for local, national and international media besides the faculty and the students of the department marked the occasion, according to a statement. Mudasir Ali was a pass out of MERC, • More On P10

Cop Falls From Escort Vehicle, Injured

SRINAGAR: A policeman was on Wednesday injured in a road accident in Soura area of Srinagar. Officials said that a Selection Grade Constable (Sgct) identified as Nazir Ahmad of Police Station Soura fell down from a running police vehicle (Rakshak) when he was performing escort duty in the area. They said after the incident, the injured cop was taken to SKIMS hospital where he is undergoing treatment.

3 Officials Reinstated, 2 Suspended

SRINAGAR: The Government of Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday placed two officials under suspension citing their 'conduct' as reason. The office of the Lieutenant Governor issued a formal order in this regard. "Pending inquiry into their conduct, the two officials are hereby placed under suspension, with immediate effect." The officials are Muhammad Omran, Section Officer, Higher Education Department and Vijay Kumar, Section • More On P10

Budgam Teen Dies Of Cardiac Arrest

SRINAGAR: A teenage girl student from central Kashmir's Budgam district on Wednesday died of cardiac arrest plunging her native village in mourning. Khushboo Jan, daughter of Parvaiz Ahmad Bhat suffered a cardiac arrest at her home in Budran Beerwah on Wednesday evening, news agency KNS reported. The teenage girl was a matriculation student. A pale of gloom descended in the area after the • More On P10

Active Covid-19 Cases In Ladakh Drop To 51

LEH: The number of active COVID-19 cases dropped to 51 in the Union Territory of Ladakh after recovery of four more patients, while 490 healthcare workers have been vaccinated against the infection till date, officials said on Wednesday. A new coronavirus case was detected in Leh, taking the total number of cases in the union territory to 9,687. Ladakh has so • More On P10

IED Blast in Kulgam; Soldier Killed, 3 Injured

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Suspected militants on Wednesday triggered an improvised explosive device (IED) blast in south Kashmir's Kulgam district leaving a soldier dead and three others injured, officials said.

A Road opening party (ROP) of 24 Rashtriya Rifles were passing through government middle school building in Subhanpora area of Kulgam district on Wednesday morning when an IED exploded with a huge bang leaving at least four soldiers injured, officials said. All the injured soldiers were shifted to army hospital in Srinagar for treatment, officials said, adding one among them succumbed to his serious injuries.

In a statement issued here this evening, a police spokesperson said that the preliminary investigation have revealed that a rudimentary IED with a low powered explosive and ball bearings was planted in an abandoned building inside the school premises, where the soldiers used to



Soldiers inspect the site of IED explosion in Subhanpora area of Kulgam district on Wednesday. Photo: PTI

visit on routinely.

"The IED was planted by militants probably during the night hours. In this incident, 4 soldiers of 24RR sustained injuries and were evacuated to nearby hospital for the treatment of their injuries. Among the injured, one jawan succumbed to his injuries," he said. Accordingly, the police spokesperson said, a case FIR No. 05/2021 under relevant

sections of law has been registered in Police Station Qaimoh.

"Investigation is in progress and officers continue to work to establish the full circumstances of this crime. Area has been cordoned and search in the area is going on," he added. Earlier in the day, Srinagar based defence spokesperson Col. Rajesh Kalia said that army's ROP were attacked with a grenade by • More On P10

Youth Injured In Militant Firing Succumbs

Observer Monitoring Desk

A youth shot at and injured by suspected militants nearly two months ago in Soura area of the city, succumbed to his injuries at the SK institute of medical sciences (SKIMS) here on Wednesday. 24-year-old Nadif Hanief Khan of Soura died at the SKIMS on

Tuesday night, where he was being treated for grievous wounds sustained in a militant attack near his residence in Bilal Colony, Soura on December 1, reports said. Medical Superintendent SKIMS Dr. Farooq Jan said that Nadif had a firearm injury in the head and died at the hospital overnight. Police have already registered a case in this regard. (With GNS inputs)

...PENSION **NOT EX-GRATIA**

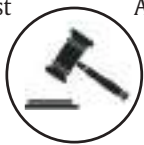
HC Holds 389 JKSRTC Workers Entitled To Retiral Benefits

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Observing pension is not an ex-gratia but a payment for the past service rendered by an employee, Jammu and Kashmir High Court on Wednesday held entitled to retiral benefits 389 members of Jammu and Kashmir Road Transport Corporation Association.

The petition was filed by the members comprising Sweepers, Helpers, Cleaners, Bus Washers, Assistant Fitters, Fitters, Conductors and Drivers through association's Coordinator.

The petitioner sought a direction to the administration to treat them as Government employees and, consequently, entitled to • More On P10



Lt Governor Manoj Sinha held the 4th run of LG's Mulaqaat with applicants through videoconferencing on Wednesday. Grievances were redressed on the spot during two-hour long Live Public Grievance Hearing.

➔ Full Report on Page 5

Dry Weather Conditions To Continue Till January 31: MeT

Observer Monitoring Desk

SRINAGAR: Dry weather conditions will persist in Jammu and Kashmir till January 31 and there's a possibility of a Western Disturbance hitting the region on February 2, the meteorological department said Wednesday.

"There are least chances of precipitation over the next few days and weather shall remain dry till 31st January 2021. We are expecting a substantial drop in minimum temperatures in the upcoming days, one can expect sunlight in the afternoons," a MeT department official said.

According to the official, the minimum temperatures are expected to remain below freezing point for the next week due to the possibility of a Western Disturbance on February 2.

Meanwhile, the minimum temperature in Kashmir



KO Photo: Abid Bhat

stayed below freezing point on Wednesday and is expected to remain so till the next week, the official said.

Srinagar city recorded a low of minus 2 degrees Celsius, up from minus 2.4 degrees Celsius the previous night, the officials said.

Qazigund recorded a minimum of 4.4 degrees Celsius down from minus 2.8 degree

Celsius the previous night, they said.

The minimum temperature at the Gulmarg skiing resort, in north Kashmir's Baramulla district, settled at minus 12 degrees Celsius.

Pahalgam tourist resort in south Kashmir, recorded a low of minus 7.7 degrees Celsius marginally down from previous • More On P10

Key Farmer Leaders Blamed for Violence, Booked



Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: As many as 37 farmer leaders, including Rakesh Tikait, Yogendra Yadav, Darshan Pal and Gurnam Singh Chaduni, have been named in an FIR in connection with the violence during the tractor parade that left 300 police personnel injured even as two farmer unions on Wednesday withdrew from the agitation against the farm laws.

Delhi Police said that 22

FIRs have been filed and around 200 people detained. Multiple videos and CCTV footage are being scanned to identify those involved in the violence and strict action will be taken against the culprits.

The FIR registered at Samaypur Badli names 37 farmer leaders including Tikait, Yadav, Darshan Pal and Chaduni and their role will be probed, the police said.

The FIR has been registered under various sections of IPC • More On P10

Who Is Deep Sidhu?

Actor-turned-activist Deep Sidhu is in the eye of a storm for being among the protesters who put up a religious flag atop the Red Fort on Republic Day. Many farmers' bodies blamed him for inciting protesters to head towards the Red Fort during the farmers' tractor parade on Tuesday. They also accused 36-year-old Sidhu of allegedly trying to defame the farmers' peaceful agitation against the agri reforms introduced by the central government. Sidhu, since he joined the farmers' agitation against the new farm legislation last • More On P10

BJP Notice To Local Leader Over Misconduct

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: The BJP on Wednesday issued a show cause notice to party activist Wasim Kohli for anti-party activities during the District Development Council (DDC) elections in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district.

J-K BJP disciplinary committee chairman Sunil Sethi served the notice to Kohli, who is the BJP leader from Kalakote, based upon the complaints by local BJP leaders regarding anti-party activities in his assembly constituency.

The leaders alleged that Kohli supported candidates from other parties and hence the party's disciplinary committee served the notice to Kohli, Sethi said.

In the notice, Kohli has been given seven days' time to clarify his stand before the party, he added.

Sethi said that the disciplinary committee received a complaint against Kohli about gross indiscipline in the recently concluded DDC elections, along with an audio clip allegedly containing his confession of indiscipline and of helping other candidates win elections, besides not supporting official party candidates.

The matter has been • More On P10

Faith Healer Who Lost His 'RTI Amulet' In J&K's Reorganization

Umer Ahmad

MUJHPATHER, Budgam – Sitting on a wooden seat and surrounded by scattered sheets, a faith-healer sporting skull-cap and flowing beard is scribing on a white paper as countless eyes are gazing him—as if seeking salvation—in stillness.

His meditative silence is keeping his audience captive inside a crowded room. After done writing an amulet, he tells his followers, "You've to just use the old method with new rules."

As a spiritual leader and "superhero" of Gujjar Community, Peer Sheikh Ghulam Mohi-Ud-Din dedicates Saturdays and Sundays every

week to get his tribe's work done through RTIs.

Over the years, he has raised a cadre of about 20,000 "information warriors" and earned a unique name for himself: RTI-Amulet Peer.

His grass-root information campaign helped Budgam in central Kashmir to become a "RTI district", where hundreds of activists brought the information to the public getting benefited from government schemes.

But since the abrogation of the Article 370, Mohi-Ud-Din's cadre is not able to file RTIs, as they remain oblivious of new rules.

The faith-healer is now training all the activists again and teaching them



how to file RTIs under the Central RTI (Right to Information) Act 2005—he

terms less powerful than the abolished Jammu and Kashmir Right to

Information Act 2009.

Before August 5, 2019, the information peer would write a J&K RTI amulet to his adherents. But after the scrapping of the Article 370 and subsequent nullifying of the other laws including the JK RTI Act 2009, he saw his years of hard labour getting wasted to his chagrin.

"Almost 80 per cent RTI work has stopped now," Peer Mohi-Ud-Din sighs inside his room where he attends people every weekend.

"When we file RTI in any government offices now, they don't respond to common man's applications, because they know that the Information Commission in Kashmir is dysfunctional, and people cannot

take a further step."

Only those people can file RTI and get the information who have really good command over the Central RTI Act and other tactics of getting the information from government offices, he says.

"J&K RTI Act was more efficient than Central RTI Act," the faith-healer reiterates, "because government officials were bound to provide information with a fixed time period under it."

One of the justifications given behind the abrogation of Article 370 was to make Jammu and Kashmir a corruption-free state.

"But if New Delhi really wanted to end corruption • More On P10



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**BAZAR
OBSERVER**

Thursday|28-01-2021

Study Reveals Abusive Bosses 'Fake Nice' Instead Of 'Make Nice'



Agencies

Abusive bosses may retain their positions by taking superficial steps to repair their social images following outbursts, without acting meaningfully to change their behaviours, according to new research.

The new research led by a University of Wyoming business management expert was published in the journal Personnel Psychology.

Shawn McClean, an assistant professor in UW's College of Business, joined colleagues from the University of Iowa, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and Texas A&M University in conducting the research. Their study also was featured in Harvard Business Review, a preeminent business magazine.

"Our study shows that supervisors are often driven by simply repairing their social image rather than making genuine amends and changing their behaviour," said McClean.

"As a result, employees may seemingly forgive abusive supervisors who try to 'fake nice' after abusive behaviour, thus reinforcing the cycle of abuse."

The researchers surveyed 79 bosses who volunteered to participate in the study from fields including education, healthcare, retail and consulting. The study gathered information about how the bosses acted following incidents in which they told their subordinates they were incompetent, invaded their privacy or made negative comments about them to others.

Rather than take steps to genuinely repair damage caused by their abusive behaviour, such as offering sincere apologies, many of the bosses were more concerned about repairing their social images, the researchers found.

The bosses did small favours for employees with the express purpose of getting employees to view them more favourably, while also engaging in self-promoting behaviours, such as highlighting how hard they work or showcasing past successes.

"Consequently, even though abusive bosses may appear on the surface to be considerate to their victims following one of their abusive episodes, the bosses in our study reported behaviour that was instead a superficial attempt at impression management," the researchers wrote in their Harvard

Business Review article.

"As a result, toxic bosses were not likely to change their ways, mainly because their focus was on covering up their bad behaviour through manipulative ingratiation and self-promotion behaviours, not on actually changing their toxic behaviours."

The researchers suggest that breaking the cycle of self-centred, manipulative and uncivil behaviour by bosses requires organisational leaders to implement zero-tolerance policies for toxic supervisory behaviour – and adhere to those policies, even when bosses appear to strive to make up for their bad behaviours. Sanctions, rather than forgiveness, are more likely to change behaviours.

"That said, a boss' behaviour can never be fully regulated by the organisational policy; in the end, whether a boss fails to exhibit common decency and civil behaviour to his employees is ultimately up to them," the researchers wrote.

"Sincere apologies and reconciliations on the part of the offending boss are the only sustainable way of regaining credibility and moving forward from a lapse in civil behaviour."

Google Maps improves discoverability in Indian languages

Agencies

Google Maps on Wednesday said it has incorporated an ensemble of learning models that automatically transliterate the names of points of interest (POIs) to 10 prominent local languages, making it easier for Indian language users to find the things they look for at Maps.

This new feature will enable millions to issue queries in their own language and find information on Maps such as restaurants, petrol pumps, hospitals, grocery stores, banks, bus stops, train stations, and numerous other services, Google said.

By using automatic transliteration from the Latin script (English) name of

points of interest, Maps now displays their names in Hindi, Bengali, Marathi, Telugu, Tamil, Gujarati, Kannada, Malayalam, Punjabi, and Odia.

"To make Google Maps as helpful as possible for millions of Indian language users, we've introduced an updated automatic transliteration system that enables us to deliver more accurate results when users search for POIs in their preferred language," Cibu Johny, Software Engineer, Google Maps, said in a statement.

"In a country where names of establishments are written with words from multiple languages and acronyms, phonetically mapping these words into their native language will help us more accurately surface the results that local language users are

looking for."

Explaining how the feature works, he added, "Common English words are frequently used in names of places in India, even when written in the native script. How the name is written in these scripts is largely driven by its pronunciation.

For example, NIT written in Hindi is pronounced "en-aye-tee", not as the English word "nit".

Therefore, by understanding that NIT is a common acronym from the region, Maps can derive the correct transliteration.

In the past when Maps could not understand the context of NIT when written in Hindi, it would instead show a related entity that might be farther away from the user.

Office of the Executive Engineer, Mechanical Division

**J&K Lakes & Waterways Development Authority,
Dockyard Complex Ishber Nishat**

Northern Foreshore Road Srinagar – 191121 Tel: 01942462881 email: xenmechlda@gmail.com

Gist of Fresh e-NIT NO. 25 OF 2020-21 Dated. 23-01-2021

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor of Jammu & Kashmir UT, Executive Engineer, Mechanical, J&K LDA, Srinagar, invites online e-bids in two (02) cover System from Original Equipment Manufacturer / Authorized Service Centre of OEM/ Registered firms / Contractors / Mechanical workshop Holders/ SSI unit holders having relevant experience as detailed in the tender document for the following works:

S#	Name of the Work	Estimated Cost (Lacs.)
1.	Overhauling of dredge pump and allied works of Crawl Cat Dredger Hazratbal.	5.80/-

The complete tender document is available at website <http://jktenders.gov.in> Interested bidders/tenderers may view, download the e-bid document, seek clarifications and submit their bids online up to the date and time mentioned in the table below. Tender Document contains qualifying criteria for bidders. Specifications, Bills of Quantities, & Terms and conditions of the contract and other relevant details.

1.	Date of publication of tender Notice.	25-01-2021
2.	Bid downloading start date	25-01-2021
3.	Bid uploading start date	30-01-2021
4.	Bid downloading / uploading end date	13-02-2021
5.	Pre-bid meeting	29-01-2021
6.	Date and time of opening of bids (Technical & Financial) on line.	15-02-2021 at 11 AM in the Office of Executive Engineer, J&K LDA, Dockyard Complex, Nishat
7.	Deadline for receiving hard copies of scanned uploaded documents along with original Tender fee, Earnest money deposit and other required documents.	The successful bidder shall have to deposit Hard copy of EMD before issuance of LOI/ Allotment Order, in the Office of the Executive Engineer JK LDA, Srinagar.
8.	Tender Inviting Authority.	Executive Engineer, Mechanical, J&K LDA, Srinagar
9.	Tender opening/receiving authority.	Executive Engineer, Mechanical J&K LDA, Srinagar
10.	Earnest Money (CDR/FDR) for an amount mentioned above pledged to	In favor of Executive Engineer Mechanical Division JK LDA,
11.	Tender fee in the shape e- challan.	In Bank in favor of Executive Engineer Mechanical Division JK LDA, Srinagar, Account No.: 0115010100000883 Name of Bank: J&K Bank Branch: Shalimar IFSC Code: JAKAQSALMAR Administrative Approval accorded
12.	Position of AAA	

DIPK-NB-5299/20
No:-MD/LDA/3817-25
Date: 23-01-2021

Executive Engineer,
Mechanical Division, J&K LDA, Sgr

SRINAGAR MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

PUBLIC NOTICE

As a part of "SWACHH BHARAT MISSION" and guidelines received from higher authority from time to time to declare Srinagar Municipal Corporation Open Defecation Free +, this office have initiated a step to declare Srinagar Municipal Corporation Open Defecation Free + and accordingly concerned ward members have submitted there declaration and have passed preliminary resolution declaring SMC (All wards 1-35) as open defecation free +.

The SMC invites written suggestions and/or objections/feedback on the resolution passed by the SMC. The written suggestions and/or objections/feedback should carry name, address and should be sent on or before 31-01-2021 to SMC. The written suggestions and/or objections/feedback received after 31-01-2021 will not be considered.

Hearing on written suggestions and/or objections received, if any, will be held on 01-02-2021 at 11:00 am in the Office of CSO SMC for which no separate notice will be given

**Mudasir Hussain Bandy
Nodal Officer (SBM)
Srinagar Municipal Corporation**

DIPK-NB-5286/20

Office Of The Assistant Regional Transport Officer Budgam Kashmir NOTICE

Whereas an application has been recieved from one. Shri : Gulam Nabi Wani S/o: Abdul Rehman Wani R/o: Gundipora Beerwah owner of vehicle bearing Registration No: JK04D-7135 for cancellation of hire purchase agreement with M/S J&K Bank B/U Beerwah .

Now therefore it is notified for the information of the general public that objections if any to the proposed cancellation of hire purchase Agreement shall be filed in writing in the office of the Assistant Regional Transport office ARTO Budgam within a period of 12 days from the date of publication of this notice in the daily newspaper .

No. ARTO/ BUDGAM.10616
Dated 12/12/2018

Assistant Regional Transport
officer Budgam Kashmir

MQB

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have applied to the issuance of Pesticides license for my business unit . If anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection int he office Agricultural Officer Lal Mandi Srinagar within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

**Mohammad Jaffar Dar
S/o Khurshed Ahmad Dar
R/o Noorpora Kalandar Baramulla AMS**

PUBLIC NOTICE

We are in urgent need of a home cook who knows how to prepare different dishes. It's a full-time job and the desired candidate will be suitably paid.

Interested persons can call on 9906878030

**Syed Mohammad Yousuf
R/o Model Town Sopore AMS**

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have applied to the issuance of Pesticides license for my business unit under name and style "Thoker Pesticides". If anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection int he office Agricultural Officer Lal Mandi Srinagar within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

**Aamir Aziz Thoker
S/o Abdul Aziz Thoker
R/o Nadigam Shopian AS**

((Government of Union Territory Jammu & Kashmir))

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER MUFFASIL (R&B) DIVISION BUDGAM

NOTICE INVITING e-TENDERS

(Modified as per Circular No. A/Misc(2018)-III-895/J Dt.22-12-2020

Issued by Finance Department).

NIT No.186/e-tendering /MDB/2020-21/11544-64 DATED. 25-01-2021

For and on behalf of the President, of India, e-tenders (In Single cover system) are invited on Percentage basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with J&K UT Govt. CPWD, Railways and other State/UT/Central Government Departments for the following works:-

S.No	Name of Work	Adv. Cost (In rupees)	Cost of T/ Doc. (In Rs)	Time (calendar days)	Class of Contract	Major Head of Account
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Construction of Bypass road from Hanifa Jamia Majid to Ichikote Crossing by way of P/L of WBM G-III and Construction of B/wall	7.16 Lacs	300/-	30 days	DEE/CEE	District sector
2	Construction of tile path and retaining wall at Chan Mohalla near Chinara tree towards crafting machine ward NO: 5 MC Budgam	0.99 Lacs	200/-	10 days	DEE	District Capex Budget
3	Construction of RCC culvert from Gate of Markize Imambara Yagipora Magam Ward NO: 3	0.65 Lacs	200/-	10 days	DEE	IDMT
4	Improvements /Upgradation of link road at sector-A lane No: 5 (B) near Masjid Abutrab Hamdania colony Bund road side by way of GSB filling and WBM G-II in stretches.	1.04 Lacs	200/-	10 days	DEE	3054-M&R

1. Position of AAA/TS:- Accorded
2. Position of Funds:- Available.

1.	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	25.01.2021 4.00 AM
2.	Period of downloading of bidding documents	26 .01.2021 10:00 4.00 P.M.
3.	Bid submission Start Date	25.01.2021 from 4.00 P.M
4.	Bid Submission End Date	05.02.2021 upto 4.00 P.M
5.	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	06.02.2021 at 11:00 AM in the Office of the Executive Engineer, Muffasil (R&B) Division Budgam

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

Note :- The Bidders are advised to read all conditions laid down in the NIT carefully before uploading softcopy any short fall found in the soft copy the tender shall be rejected.
Note: As per Circular issued by the Government of Jammu and Kashmir CivilSecteriart Finance department vide No.OM No.A/24(2017)-651 dtd.07-06-2018 which reads as under :-

a) Furnishing of Hard Copies of bids immediately after submission of e-tenders is dispensed with. The same should be obtained only from the Bidder who's declared Ist Lowest (L-1) after opening of financial bids.
b) The Cost of tenders should be collected by introducing E-challan/ or simply uploading a copy of necessary Treasury Challan/Receipt. Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in shape of Treasury Challan/ in favour of Executive Engineer Muffasil (R&B) Division Budgam (tender inviting authority).

1. All Bidders has to submit Bid Security Declaration Form instead of Earnest money deposit (EMD) as per the circular of Finance Department (Bid Security Declaration Form is as per Annexure 'A' below).
2. The 1st lowest Bidder has to produce an amount equal to 3% of contract as performance security in shape of CDR/FDR within 02 days before fixation of contract and shall be released after successful completion of work.
3. The date and time of opening of Bids shall be notified on Web Site www.jktenders.gov.in and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The bids of Responsive bidders shall be opened online on same Web Site in the Office of Executive Engineer Muffasil (R&B) Division Budgam (tender receiving authority).
4. The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of bids.

Sd/-
Executive Engineer,
Muffasil (R&B) Division Budgam

No. 11544-64

DATED. 25.01.2021

DIPK-12161/20

Many Houses In Wanabal Burgled, Residents Seek Police Action



SRINAGAR: The residents of Wanabal area in Rawalpura quarter of the city have alleged the police of inaction in dealing with the increasing menace of thefts in the area.

Scores of residents particularly from Shaheen colony Wanabal which has been at the receiving end of buglers said that from more than one month, thieves have let loose a reign of terror in the area by burgling several houses during night hours & decamping with valuables.

"The masked men could be seen roaming at night in CCTV footage which is in possession

of some of the victims. They could be seen snapping the main power supply before entering any particular house. They burgled two houses in two consecutive days in Shaheen colony recently," residents said.

The residents accused police of inaction despite bringing into their notice.

"Nothing concrete has been done," said Zahoor Ahmad-one of the victims whose house was burgled recently.

Residents of the area have urged the higher police officials to take cognizance of the matter and put an end to the frequent burglaries in the area.

THE MASKED MEN COULD BE SEEN roaming at night in CCTV footage which is in possession of some of the victims. They could be seen snapping the main power supply before entering any particular house. They burgled two houses in two consecutive days in Shaheen colony recently."



TWO VENDORS selling Kashmiri firepots (Kangri) on a roadside in Batamloo area of the city on Wednesday. KO Photo, Abid Bhat

Smart Meters Installation In Srinagar Underway; MD KPDC

SRINAGAR: MD KPDC, Mr. Mohammad Aijaz IAS, today convened a meeting to review the progress of Smart Metering of Srinagar City. The Nodal Officer Smart Metering briefed the chair about the progress achieved in this regard.

DGM, RECPDCL informed that 200 smart meters stand installed at Peerbagh locality of Srinagar. The DGM further informed that the installed smart meters will be integrated with the Data Centre servers at Bemina, which have already been installed.



The DGM further informed that a second lot of 1000 smart meters are in the pipeline of being supplied and are expected to reach Srinagar by 29th Jan 2021. MD KP-

DCL directed the DGM to speed up the process of integration of smart meters and operationalisation of communication head end systems at data centre Srinagar, so that remote meter reading and switching control is possible in respect of consumers migrating to smart metering systems.

The MD KPDC further directed the Project Implementation Agency to expedite the process of procurement of Smart Meters to ensure installation without break and achievement of target of complete smart metering of Srinagar City by June 2021.

Srinagar Police Distributes Covid-19 Safety Kits

SSP Srinagar Dr Haseeb Mughal-JKPS along with other senior officers held the distribution function. Covid-19 safety kits comprising of Oximeter, Digital Thermometer, Masks, Sanitizer, Hand Gloves, Face shields, etc were distributed among 93 Below Poverty Line (BPL) families of South Zone Srinagar.

While speaking on the occasion, SSP Srinagar requested the general public to adopt all precau-

tionary measures to save their families from Covid-19 pandemic.

SP South City Shri Sajad Ahmad Shah-JKPS was the convener of the programme. Besides, SDPO Sadler, SDPO Shaheed Gunj, SHO PS Rajbagh and SHO PS Shergarhi were also present on the occasion.

General public of the area have appreciated the role of police while tackling pandemic COVID-19 from initial stage till now.

Srinagar Deprived Of Basic Amenities: NC

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir National Conference on Wednesday said the Srinagar city has become a byword for failed governance, and mismanagement and underdevelopment, saying the city is at the brink due to absence of any holistic renewal mission.

The comments were made by YNC Provincial President and former Mayor Salman Ali Sagar while touring areas in Soura including Housing Colony, Ellahi Bagh, Hamzah Colony, Owanta Bhawan, Mir Mohalla, Dar Mohalla, 90 Feet Road today.

Sagar traversed the areas by foot and made stopovers at various places, where he comprehended the issues confronting the locals. On the occasion he was accompanied by various concerned officials, whom he implored to ensure early mitigation of issues confronting the people. The locals, while interacting with him expressed satisfaction over the prompt measures undertaken by him to tackle with the snow aftermath and mitigation of other exigencies which had surfaced post snowfall across the ward.

Expressing concern over the

urban blight in terms of unavailability of basic civic amenities to people, Sagar said notwithstanding the lackluster attitude of concerned authorities in coping with the exigencies, which had surfaced post snowfall, the locals dealt with the situation on their own.

"There is no accountability on ground in Srinagar, the poor response of administration towards the snowfall aftermath reveals it all. Situation in Soura is no different. People, wherever I went today rued neglect by the government since 2015. I could make out challenges, people are fraught with on account of paucity of basic civic facilities including water and electricity," he said.

Interacting with the people, Sagar said the successive governments after 2015 failed to make future-proof plans for the sprawling urban population of the city. He said it was only during the successive NC led governments, marked by various effective policy measures that the city infrastructure received augmentation. He said the issue wasn't the lack of money but lack of vision, and policy framework.

Govt Suspends Two Section Officers



SRINAGAR: Government on Wednesday suspended two Section Officers with immediate effect.

In an order the officials suspended include Mohd. Omran, Section Officer, Higher Education Department, and Vijay Kumar, Section Officer, Animal and Sheep Husbandry Department.

Pending enquiry into their conduct, the two officials are hereby placed under suspension with immediate effect, in terms of Rule 31 Jammu and Kashmir Civil Services (Classification, control and Appeal) Rules 1956 reads the order.

Rehber-e-Khel

Reduce probation period to 2 years: Khan

SRINAGAR: Former Minister and Vice President Apni Party Aijaz Ahmed Khan today urged the Govt to reduce the probation period of Rehber-e-Khel and enhance their wages.

Khan was addressing a delegation of Rehber-e-Khel when it called on him and they highlighted their demands.

After hearing their concerns, Aijaz Ahmed Khan said that it was injustice with Rehber-e-Khel in J&K who have been compelled to work on Rs 100 per day (Rs 3000 per month).

Khan expressed shock as to why the probation period has not been reduced even after so many representations to the Govt.

"The 7 years probation period is the exploitation of the employees employed in the Rehber-e-Khel. The Govt should reduce the probation period to 2 years and regularize those who have completed the compulsory 2 years of probation like it is done in other Govt services," he said.

He said that "It is a violation of the rights of the Rehber-e-Khel



teachers to be treated equally at par with other Govt servants."

He appealed for the intervention of Lt Governor Manoj Sinha into the matter and demanded immediate reduction of probation period to 2 years, regularization of all those completed probation of 2 years, and enhancement of their wages.

"These teachers left no stone unturned while performing their duties and they stood shoulder to shoulder with the Government in fighting the deadly coronavi-

rus which has consumed many lives," said Khan.

He said that "These teachers are highly qualified possessing BPed, MPed, MPhil, and Phd degree and it is very unfortunate that a Phd scholar is being paid Rs 100 a day while labourers earn more than Rs 600 a day."

Khan said that it is not possible to fulfill the basic needs in Rs 100 especially when the majority of teachers are married and have families and they are not able to pay free in the schools of their children.

He reminded that the Lt Governor had constituted a high level committee comprising five members headed by Chief Secretary as its chairman on February 27, 2020 for re-examining the issues related to various schemes including Rehber-e-Khel scheme which was launched by previous Govt. "Unfortunately that committee has not submitted its report and appealed to the LG to seek a report from the committee on the Rehber-e-Khel," he added, expressing surprise over the poor response from the officials.

PUBLIC NOTICE

My Fathers and Mothers name in School Records has been wrongly entered as Shahban Mansoori and Bibi Mehru while my Correct Fathers and Mothers name is Shahbaj Mansuri and Meharun Nisha. Now I want the same to be corrected if anybody has any objection in this regard He/ She may file his/ Her objection in the Office of the Headmaster Government Boys Middle School Qazi Mohalla Anantnag within a period of seven (7) days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Name: Khushdari
D/O Shahbaj Mansuri

mja



The National Institute Of Health And Family Welfare
Baba Gangnath Marg, Munirka
New Delhi-110067

VACANCY NOTICE

The National Institute of Health and Family Welfare, an autonomous Institute under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, is an apex technical Institute for promoting health and family welfare programmes in the country through Education and Training, Research and Evaluation, Consultancy, Advisory and Specialized Services.

Applications are invited by the Director, NIHF, from the citizens of India, for the following posts:

I. Group 'B'				
Sl. No.	Name of Post	No. of post	Pay Matrix Level	Reservation
1.	Steno Gr.II	02	Level - 6	1 UR (OH)* 1 EWS
2.	Librarian	01	Level - 7	UR
3.	Staff Nurse	01	Level - 6	UR
4.	Technical Assistant Lab)	01	Level - 6	UR
5.	Senior Technical Assistant (Documentation)	01	Level - 6	UR
6.	Assistant Research Officer (Humanity Group)	01	Level - 7	1 UR
7.	Technical Assistant (Press)	01	Level - 6	UR
II. Group 'C', MTS and erstwhile Group 'D' Posts				
1.	Pharmacist	01	Level - 5	UR
2.	Receptionist	01	Level - 4	UR
3.	Stenographer Grade III	09	Level - 4	1 UR (OH)* 1 UR SC-02 ST-01 OBC-03 EWS-01
4.	Assistant Store Keeper	01	Level - 2	UR
5.	Copy Holder	01	Level - 2	UR
6.	Feeder	01	Level - 2	UR
7.	Laboratory Attendant	01	Level - 1	OBC
8.	Animal Attendant	01	Level - 1	OBC
9.	Multitasking Staff	04	Level - 1	01 UR(OH)* SC-01 OBC-01 EWS-01

* OH - Persons with Benchmark Disability (Divyangjan) - Locomotor Disability - OA/OB/BL/OAL.

For details, including Hindi version of the advertisement, please visit Institute's website: www.nihfw.org. Completed applications should reach Dy. Director (Admn.), NIHF, at the above address before 8.3.2021.

davo/17153/11/0011/2021

Director

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
- PAMPOR: 01933-294132
- PATTAN: 01954-293507
- QAZIGUND: 01951-296153

HIGHWAY STATUS



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

This Day in History

- 1077 -German King Henry IV is absolved by Holy Roman Emperor Pope Gregory VII and invited back to the Church after his penitent Walk to Canossa
- 1099 -1st Crusaders begins siege of Hosen-el-Akrad Syria
- 1495 -Pope Alexander VI (Roderic Lançoli de Borgia) gives his son Cesare as hostage to Charles VIII of France
- 1521- Emperor Charles V opens the Diet of Worms in Worms, Germany which lasts until May 25th. Produced the "Edict of Worms" which denounced Martin Luther
- 1573 -Articles of Warsaw Confederation are signed, sanctioning freedom of religion in Poland.
- 1671- British pirate Henry Morgan captures Panama City from its Spanish defenders.
- 1689- English parliament resolves that the throne is vacant
- 1724 -The Russian Academy of Sciences founded in St. Petersburg by Peter the Great, and implemented in a Senate decree. Called St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences until 1917.
- 1846- Battle of Allwal, British beat Sikhs in Punjab
- 1855- The first locomotive runs from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean on the Panama Railway
- 1860 -Britain formally returns Mosquito Coast to Nicaragua
- 1864- Battle of New Bern, North Carolina
- 1887- Work begins on the Eiffel Tower in Paris
- 1909 -US military forces leave Cuba for 2nd time
- 1915 -1st US ship lost in WW I, William P Frye (carrying wheat to UK)
- 1915- The United States Coast Guard is created by merging the US Life Saving Service & the US Revenue Cutter Service
- 1915 -US President Woodrow Wilson refuses to prohibit immigration of illiterates
- 1916- Louis Brandeis is appointed to the Supreme Court of the United States after being nominated by President Woodrow Wilson
- 1916- German colony of Cameroon surrenders to Britain & France
- 1932- Japanese forces attack Shanghai.
- 1933 -French government of Paul Boncour falls
- 1933 -German government of Von Schleicher falls
- 1933 -The name "Pakistan" is coined by Choudhry Rahmat Ali and gradually accepted by Muslims in the Indian sub-continent who use it to push for a separate Muslim homeland in South Asia
- 1935- Iceland becomes 1st western country to legalize abortion
- 1941- French-Thai War: Final air battle of the conflict. Japanese-mediated armistice goes into effect later in the day.
- 1942- Soviet troops under General Timoshenko's troops move into Ukraine
- 1942 -German troops occupy Benghazi Libya
- 1942- WW II Navy flier Don Mason sends message "Sighted sub sank same"
- 1944 -683 British bombers attack Berlin
- 1944- U-271 & U-571 sunk off Ireland
- 1948- President Manuel Roxas granted full amnesty to all so-called Philippine collaborators
- 1949 -UN Security council convicts Dutch aggression in Indonesia
- 1958- Construction began on 1st private thorium-uranium nuclear reactor
- 1959 -Soviet Union wins 62-37 for 1st international basketball loss by US
- 19600 1st photograph bounced off Moon, Washington, D.C.
- 1961- Republic of Rwanda proclaimed
- 1980- USCGC Blackthorn (WLB-391) collides with the tanker Capricorn while leaving Tampa Florida and capsizes killing 23 Coast Guard crewmembers.
- 1986- Space Shuttle Challenger explodes 73 seconds after liftoff from Cape Canaveral, with all 7 crew members killed, including Christa McAuliffe who was to be the first teacher in space.
- 1988- Canada's Supreme court declares anti-abortion law unconstitutional

From KO Archives

SHOES WILL GREET APHC TEAM IN PAK: OMAR

NEW DELHI- Minister of state for commerce and industry Omar Farooq has said that people of Jammu and Kashmir have not given man-date to the Hurriyat Conference to represent them but Hurriyat leaders should be allowed to visit Pakistan and get exposed. By all means give passports, but who has given, them the mandate to represent the people of the state of Jammu and Kashmir in Pakistan, he asked participating in Star TVs 'Janata Ki Adalat' programme. Asked whether the Hurriyat leaders would be welcomed in Pakistan, Omar said ask the Hurriyat people. I suspect they will not only be unwelcome, they will be greeted with shoes.

If Hurriyat Conference represents some segment of Kashmir, we also represent some segment. And what about the representation of Jammu and Ladakh, a press release from the television channel quoted Omar as saying.

Sounding a note of caution on the extension of cease-fire, he said, that National Conference was only saying extend the cease-fire by all means, but plug the loopholes that the militants are taking advantage of as they move from rural areas to urban areas.

(Kashmir Observer, 28 January, 2001)

US Exploring New Bases In Saudi Arabia Amid Iran Tensions



DUBAI: The US military is exploring the possibility of using a Red Sea port in Saudi Arabia and additional two airfields in the kingdom amid heightened tensions with Iran, the military said Tuesday.

While describing the work as "contingency" planning, the US military said it already had tested unloading and shipping cargo overland from Saudi Arabia's port at Yanbu, a crucial terminal for oil pipelines in the kingdom.

Using Yanbu, as well as air bases at Tabuk and Taif along the Red Sea, would give the American military more options along a crucial waterway that has come under increased attack from suspected mine and drone boat attacks by Yemen's Iranian-backed Houthi rebels.

However, the announcement comes as Saudi-American relations remain strained by the 2018 killing of Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi and the kingdom's ongoing war in Yemen in the first days of President Joe Biden's administration.

Deploying — even temporarily — American troops to bases in the kingdom, which is home to the Muslim holy city of Mecca, could reignite anger among extremists.

US Navy Capt Bill Urban, a spokesman for Central Command,

said the evaluation of the sites had been going on for over a year, sparked by the September 2019 drone-and-missile attack on the heart of the Saudi oil industry.

Saudi Arabia and the US have blamed that attack, which temporarily halved Saudi oil production and saw a spike in oil prices, on Iran. Tehran has denied being involved and the Houthis claimed the assault, though the drones involved appear to be Iranian-made.

"These are prudent military planning measures that allow for temporary or conditional access of facilities in the event of a contingency, and are not provocative in any way, nor are they an expansion of the U.S. footprint in the region, in general, or in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in particular," Urban wrote.

US Marine Gen Frank McKenzie, the head of US Central Command, visited Yanbu on Monday. Defense One and the Wall Street Journal, which travelled with McKenzie to Yanbu, first reported on the American planning. Saudi officials did not respond to request for comment on Tuesday.

Already, Saudi Arabia paid for improvements at the sites and are considering more, Urban said. Tabuk is home to King Faisal Air Base, while Taif is home to King Fahd Air Base. **AP**



USING SATELLITE DATA, the experts found the Earth lost 28 trillion tonnes of ice between 1994 and 2017 [File: Carlos Garcia Rawlins/Reuters]

Global Ice Sheets Melting At 'Worst-Case' Rates: UK Scientists

Agencies

The rate at which ice is disappearing across the world matches "worst-case climate warming scenarios", UK scientists have warned in new research.

A team from the universities of Edinburgh, Leeds and University College London said the rate at which ice is melting across the world's polar regions and mountains has increased markedly in the last 30 years.

Using satellite data, the experts found the Earth lost 28 trillion tonnes of ice between 1994 and 2017.

The rate of loss has risen from 0.8 trillion tonnes per year in the 1990s to 1.3 trillion tonnes per year by 2017, with potentially disastrous consequences for people living in coastal areas, they said.

"The ice sheets are now following the worst-case climate warming scenarios set out by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)," said Thomas Slater, a research fellow at Leeds University's Centre for Polar Observation and Modelling. "Sea level rise on this scale will have very serious impacts on coastal communities this century."

Input from the United Nations' IPCC has been critical to

forming international climate change strategies, including the 2015 Paris Agreement under which the majority of greenhouse-gas emitting nations agreed to take steps to mitigate the effect of global warming.

The universities' research, published in the European Geosciences Union's journal The Cryosphere, was the first of its kind to use satellite data.

It surveyed 215,000 mountain glaciers around the globe, polar ice sheets in Greenland and Antarctica, ice shelves floating around Antarctica and sea ice drifting in the Arctic and Southern Oceans.

Losses in Arctic, Antarctic The survey found the largest losses in the last three decades were from Arctic Sea ice and Antarctic ice shelves, both of which float on the polar oceans. While such ice loss does not directly contribute to sea rises, its destruction does stop the ice sheets reflecting solar radiation and thus indirectly contributes to rising sea levels.

"As the sea ice shrinks, more solar energy is being absorbed by the oceans and atmosphere, causing the Arctic to warm faster than anywhere else on the planet," said Isobel Lawrence, a research fellow at the University of Leeds

"Not only is this speeding up sea ice melt, it's also exacerbating the melting of glaciers and ice sheets which causes sea levels to rise," she added.

An earlier study published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences journal based in the United States estimated that global sea levels could rise by two metres (6.5 feet) by the end of this century due to global warming and greenhouse emissions.

The report also said that in the worst-case scenario, global temperatures would warm by more than five degrees Celsius (nine degrees Fahrenheit), causing the water to rise, displacing millions of people living in coastal areas.

Another study, published in 2019 by the US-based Climate Central said that up to 300 million people may be affected by devastating flooding by 2050, about three times more than previously estimated. The number could go up to 630 million by 2100.

The study warned that key coastal cities such as India's Mumbai, China's Shanghai and Thailand's Bangkok could be submerged over the next 30 years.

An estimated 237 million people threatened by rising sea waters live in Asia alone, the research said.

UN Rights Chief Seeks Sanctions Against Sri Lankan Generals: AFP



Agencies

The United Nations human rights chief has called for an International Criminal Court investigation into Sri Lanka's Tamil separatist conflict and sanctions on military officials accused of war crimes, according to a report obtained by the AFP news agency.

Michelle Bachelet accused Sri Lanka of reneging on promises to ensure justice for thousands of civilians killed in the final stages of the 37-year separatist war that ended 10 years ago.

"Domestic initiatives for accountability and reconciliation have repeatedly failed to produce results, more deeply entrenching impunity, and exacerbating victims' distrust in the system," she said in the report obtained before its official release.

The government of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa has reversed some advances made under previous administrations in protecting human rights, the report said. Surveillance of rights activists and dissidents has increased and a climate of self-censorship has emerged, it added.

Rajapaksa won the 2019 presidential election on a nationalist agenda which included a promise

that troops who crushed Tamil rebels would not be prosecuted.

Rajapaksa was the top defence official when government forces crushed the rebel fighters in a military campaign that ended in May 2009. His brother Mahinda was president then and is currently the prime minister.

UN reports have accused Sri Lankan troops of shelling hospitals and indiscriminate aerial bombardments, executing surrendering rebels and causing the disappearance of thousands of minority Tamils.

At least 100,000 people were killed in the war and allegations were made that 40,000 Tamil civilians were killed in the final onslaught.

The president, a retired army lieutenant colonel, threatened last year to withdraw from the UN rights council if it pursued allegations against his troops.

Sri Lanka has not signed up to the ICC, and so it is outside its jurisdiction. But while another state cannot refer a non-signatory to the ICC, the UN can.

In her latest assessment, Bachelet recommended for the first time that the ICC look into Sri Lanka's case, and said action should be taken against war criminals, including Tamil rebels.

Indian-Origin Youth In Singapore Detained For Planning To Attack Muslims At 2 Mosques

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

SINGAPORE: A 16-year-old Singaporean boy, a Protestant Christian of Indian ethnicity, was detained last month under the Internal Security Act (ISA) after planning to use a machete to attack Muslims at two mosques in March, on the anniversary of New Zealand's Christchurch attacks.

The teenager, who was not named, is the youngest person to be dealt with under the ISA for terrorism-related activities, the Internal Security Department (ISD) said in a media release on Wednesday.

He is the first detainee in the city-state to be inspired by far-right extremist ideology, the Channel News Asia reported, citing the ISD release.

The ISD stated that the teen was influenced by the 2019 terror attacks at two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand in which 51 people were killed.

The teen had planned to carry out his attacks on March 15 this year, on the anniversary of the Christchurch attacks.

"He was self-radicalised, motivated by a strong antipathy towards Islam and a fascination with violence," the ISD said.

He watched the livestream video of the terrorist attack on the two mosques in Christchurch on March 15, 2019, and read the manifesto of the attacker, Brenton Tarrant, a white supremacist, it said.

"He had also watched Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) propaganda videos, and came to the erroneous conclusion that ISIS represented Islam, and that Islam called on its followers to kill non-believers," it said.

Before the attack in March 2019, Tarrant, an Australian, had put up online posts that contained anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim and Right Wing extremist views. He had mounted a camera on his head, and live-streamed the attack. He received a life sentence in August 2020.

The ISD said it was "clear" from the teen's attack plans and preparation that he was influenced by Tarrant's actions and manifesto.

First, he planned to carry out his attacks on March 15 this year, the anniversary of the Christchurch attacks, it said.

He chose Assyafah Mosque and Yusuf Ishak Mosque as his targets because they were near his home, the ISD said, adding that he conducted online reconnaissance and research using Google Maps and Street View on both mosques to prepare for the attacks.

Israel Military Revising Operational Plans Against Iran: General



Agencies

Israel's top general warned attack plans against Iran were being revised and said any US return to the 2015 nuclear accord with Tehran would be "wrong".

Israeli Lieutenant-General Aviv Kochavi made the remarks on Tuesday in an address to Tel Aviv University's Institute for National Security Studies. He said the move was made after Iran began restarting its nuclear programme in recent months.

"In light of this fundamental analysis, I have instructed the Israel Defense Forces to prepare a number of operational plans, in addition to those already in place," Kochavi said.

"It will be up to the political leadership, of course, to decide on implementation but these plans need to be on the table."

The comments were an apparent signal to US President Joe Biden to tread cautiously in any diplomatic engagement

with Iran.

"A return to the 2015 nuclear agreement, or even if it is a similar accord with several improvements, is bad and wrong from an operational and strategic point of view," said Kochavi.

Such remarks by Israel's military chief of staff on American policy-making are rare and likely would have been pre-approved by the Israeli government.

Biden's predecessor, Donald Trump, abandoned the nuclear agreement in 2018 — a move welcomed by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who criticised the sanctions relief it offered and warned of the likelihood of Iranian nuclear arms development after its expiration.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken said last week the United States was "a long way" from deciding whether to rejoin the nuclear deal with Iran and it would need to see what Tehran actually did to resume complying with the historic pact.

US Senate Opens Former President Trump's Second Impeachment Trial; Arguments To Begin On February 9

The US Senate formally opened the second impeachment trial for former President Donald Trump on Tuesday with the swearing-in of Senate President Pro-Tempore Patrick Leahy to preside over the process and the swearing-in of the senators to serve as jurors.

On Monday, the House of Representatives delivered the article of impeachment against Trump, accusing him of inciting an insurrection at the US Capitol building on January 6 to stop Congress from verifying President Joe Biden's win in the 2020 election.

The impeachment trial arguments will begin on February 9.



After the swearing-in of senators, the Senate rejected Republican Senator Rand Paul's attempt to declare the Trump impeachment trial unconstitutional. The Senate voted 55-45

to block Paul's constitutional point of order.

Paul said in a statement the vote count shows Trump will be acquitted in the impeachment trial. **ANI**

NEWS MAKERS

'Crazy And Evil': Bill Gates Surprised By Pandemic Conspiracies

LONDON: Microsoft co-founder turned philanthropist Bill Gates says he has been taken aback by the volume of "crazy" and "evil" conspiracy theories about him spreading on social media during the COVID-19 pandemic, but said on Wednesday he would like to explore what is behind them.

In an interview with Reuters, Gates said the millions of online posts and "crazy conspiracy theories" about him and about top U.S. infectious disease expert Anthony Fauci had likely taken hold in part because of the combination of a frightening viral pandemic and the rise of social media.

"Nobody would have predicted that I and Dr. Fauci would be so prominent in these really evil theories," Gates said.

"I'm very surprised by that. I hope it goes away," Gates, a billionaire



who stepped down as chairman of Microsoft Corp in 2014, has through his philanthropic Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation committed at least \$1.75 billion to the global re-

sponse to the COVID-19 pandemic. That includes support for some makers of vaccines, diagnostics and potential treatments.

Since the pandemic began a year ago, millions of conspiracies have spread over the Internet, fuelling misinformation about the coronavirus, its origins and the motives of those working to fight it.

They include claims that Fauci and Gates created the pandemic to try and control people, that they want to profit from the virus spread, and that they want to use vaccines to insert trackable microchips into people.

"But do people really believe that stuff?" Gates asked.

"We're really going to have to get educated about this over the next year and understand .. how does it change peoples' behaviour and how should we have minimized this?"

EXCITED ABOUT BIDEN Gates praised Fauci and Francis Collins, head of the U.S.

National Institutes of Health, as "smart" and "wonderful people", and said he looked forward to seeing them able to work effectively and speak the truth under the new administration of President Joe Biden.

During former President Donald Trump's handling of the pandemic, Gates said, it had "sometimes felt like they were the only sane people in the U.S. government." "I'm excited about the team that Biden has picked" to tackle the health crisis, Gates said.

Gates said he was also pleased that under Biden, the United States has rejoined the World Health Organization, and "that he's appointed smart people and the fact that Dr. Fauci won't be suppressed." —**Reuters**

Owner Of Raj Kapoor's Ancestral Home In Pakistan Refuses To Sell It At 1.5 Crore

PESHAWAR: The owner of Indian film legend Raj Kapoor's ancestral home in Peshawar has refused to sell the building at the rate fixed by the provincial Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government, saying the prime-location property has been severely undervalued.

Earlier in the month, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government had approved the release of 1.5 crore for Kapoor's ancestral home, with the aim to turn it into a museum in honour of the movie star. Haji Ali Sabir, the present owner of the haveli, in a chat with a private news channel on Wednesday, flatly refused to sell the property at 1.5 crore. "Even half a Marla land in the area is not available for 1.5 crore. How can I sell the six-marla property for 1.5 crore?" he said.

Marla, a traditional unit of area used in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, is considered as equal to 272.25 square feet or 25.2929 square metres. Mr Sabir said the right valuation of the property is 200 crore.

YouTube Suspends Trump's Account Indefinitely: Report

SAN FRANCISCO: YouTube has suspended Donald Trump indefinitely from the platform and said it will also prevent the former president's lawyer Rudy Giuliani from being able to monetize his clips, US media reported. It comes a week after the social media giant confirmed it would extend a ban on Trump's channel — which has just under three million subscribers — joining other social media platforms in banning his accounts following the deadly January 6 Capitol riot. The Google-owned firm has faced some criticism over its slow response following the violence in Washington, as well as the proliferation of conspiracy theories on the platform. "In light of concerns about the ongoing potential for violence, the Donald J Trump channel will remain suspended," a YouTube spokesperson told Politico. The company said separately that Giuliani's account would be barred from the Partner Program — which allows creators to make money off their videos — after repeatedly violating its policy against posting misleading information about the US election.

LT Governor Holds 4Th Run Of LG's Mulaqaat

UT Govt Making System Transparent & Accountable: LG

JAMMU: Continuing J&K Government's initiative to bring reforms in public grievance redressal mechanism making it more robust and responsive, Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha today held the 4th run of LG's Mulaqaat- Live Public Grievance Hearing here at Civil Secretariat.

During the two-hour long live interactive programme, the Lt Governor interacted with as many as 22 applicants, randomly selected from across the UT, through videoconferencing, and took firsthand appraisal of their issues and grievances.

Today's interaction was the latest in the series of LG's Mulaqaat programme under which, every month, the Lt Governor meets individuals from across the UT, listens to their issues/concerns for resolving them on the spot, thus making the grievance redressal mechanism robust,

responsive and more efficient, besides monitoring the performance efficiency of on-line Grievance Redressal System JK-IGRAMS.

The interaction proved to be fruitful for some of the applicants as, with the intervention of Lt Governor, their issues got resolved on the spot, while timelines were set by the Lt Governor for redressal of the remaining issues being raised during the programme.

"Grievance redressal system has been institutionalized for prompt and speedy disposal of public grievances. UT Government is making the administrative system transparent, responsible and accountable to the people", observed the Lt Governor.

The Lt Governor said that the objective behind holding the one-on-one interaction with the public is to reform the service delivery structure of the governmental process-



es, making it more efficient and responsive.

While taking the feedback from the people on online Grievance Redressal System JK-IGRAM, the Lt Governor asked the officers to be more sensitive and responsive to the issues of the public and take requisite measures to minimize the difficulties of common people.

The Lt Governor sought de-

tails of the status of the grievances put forth during the interaction from the concerned officers who, in turn briefed the Lt Governor on measures taken for the redressal of the grievances received and their present status.

Expressing satisfaction over the constant increase in the rate of disposal of grievances since the 1st session of LG's Mulaqa-

at, the Lt Governor asked the officers to focus more on the quality of disposal of public issues. He further directed the officers to ensure quick disposal of files in Government departments treading the path of accountability and transparency.

The Lt Governor also assessed the implementation of directions passed during the previous interactions.

GRIEVANCE redressal system has been institutionalized for prompt and speedy disposal of public grievances. UT Government is making the administrative system transparent, responsible and accountable to the people",

In one case, an applicant apprised the Lt Governor about his grievance of facing shortage of raw material for making pottery and saving his ancestral trade, on which, the Lt Governor directed the concerned Deputy Commissioner to resolve the issue on priority and assured the potter that all necessary support would be given to him from the government.

Similarly, a Public Health entrepreneur who has established a hospital raised the issues of extension of benefits

under related schemes. The Lt Governor, while lauding the efforts of the applicant, assured him all possible assistance under the UT Government's initiatives like J&K Healthcare Investment Policy and New Industrial scheme.

In another case, the Lt Governor, on being apprised about the issue of allotment of land for establishing Composite Regional Centre by a social activist, directed the concerned Divisional Commissioner to identify the land for the same. He further assured the applicant that the matter would be taken up with the Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment for its early redressal.

Earlier, Secretary, Public Grievances, Simrandeep Singh briefed the Lt Governor on the status of grievances and measures taken to improve the efficiency of the grievance redressal system.

Police Arrests Driver For Stealing Blood Samples In Baramulla



SRINAGAR: A driver from South Kashmir was arrested by Police in Pattan for stealing blood samples which were going to be tested at a private diagnostic centre.

Police sources said that acting upon a complaint received from GK Private Laboratory about misappropriation of blood samples, a driver was arrested by police and taken into custody. The vehicle bearing registration number JK01N- 6658, was also seized.

Sources identified the accused driver as Sajad Ahmad Sheikh, a resident of Pampore area of Southern Kashmir.

"The police had been searching for Sajad for hours when he allegedly fled away along with 30 blood specimens which were supposed to get tested at GK Private Laboratory Srinagar," they added.

Meanwhile, police have registered a case under FIR number 10/2021 under section 407 IPC at Police Station Pattan and the accused driver has been sent for judicial remand till 30 January by a local court.

Station House Officer Pattan, Nissar Ahmad, refused to share the details pertaining to the incident.

Asking Farmers To Pay Waived Off Water Taxes Since 2015 Injustice: Tarigami

'How Can Chief Er Overturn Decision Of Elected Govt?'

SRINAGAR: While terming the decision of J&K government to annul the March 2015 announcement of then Finance Minister of waiving off water tax on agricultural land as arbitrary and against the interests of farmers, CPI (M) leader Mohammad Yousuf Tarigami Wednesday demanded the immediate revocation of the order issued by Chief Engineer Irrigation and Flood Control.

In the said order issued on 11 August 2020, the Chief Engineer has directed the Numberdars to collect water taxes from the farmers from March 2015 onwards failing which they have been warned of action under Jammu and Kashmir Water Resources Regulation and Management Act-2010.

The decision to waive off water tax from the farmers was taken by the then state government and announced in the Assembly.



How can a Chief Engineer issue an order to overturn the decision of an elected government now?

Also some of the agricultural land on which the Chief Engineer has passed directions to collect water tax has been changed for other purposes since then. It is sheer injustice with the farmers to force them to pay now when they had been given some relief by then government.

He demanded immediate revocation of the order issued by the Chief Engineer.

Fake Scholarship Case: JK Police Arrests Bengal Resident

SRINAGAR: Crime Branch Kashmir on Wednesday claimed to have arrested a non local in connection with an FIR registered against him by PS Crime Kashmir.

Crime Branch in a statement said "A team of Crime Branch Kashmir headed by Deputy Superintendent of Police proceeded to West Bengal and arrested one accused person namely Selim Sekh Son of Chiyasuddin Miya resident of village Tinsatabighi Berabad, Malda, West Bengal in connection with the case FIR No. 04/2020 U/S 420, 468, 120-B-RPC, 66 (D) IT Act, 5(2) PC Act of Crime Branch Kashmir."

They said "The accused in criminal conspiracy with the other accused persons uploaded fake application forms on National Scholarship Portal for Merit Cum Means Scholarship under Minority Quota for J&K students during the year 2018-19 for district Kulgam."



"Subsequently, fake verifications were conducted from the institutes which did not exist in the states mentioned in the application forms. The accused in-concivance with other accused persons have shown the fake beneficiaries to be the residents of district Kulgam and got deceitfully verified by the district social welfare officer Kulgam and managed to transfer the amount of RS. 1.34 crores from the Ministry of Minor-

ity Affairs, Govt. of India into the Bank accounts of 463 fake beneficiaries of District Malda, West Bengal maintained in various branches of State Bank of India, Bank of Baroda, United Bank of India (Now PNB), Allahabad Bank, IDFC Bank and Bangiya Vikas Gramin Bank situated in different districts of West Bengal. The arrested accused is being questioned for further investigation, the statement added.

DGP Grants Rs 2.36 Cr Medical Relief For NoKs Of Deceased Cops

JAMMU: Continuing with its endeavour to provide financial assistance to the families of the police personnel who have passed away while in service, Director General of Police (DGP) Dilbag Singh Wednesday sanctioned rupees 2.36 Crore as special welfare relief/medical relief.

As per a statement the special welfare relief of rupees 20 lakh each has been sanctioned in favour of NoKs of dependents/legal heirs of deceased SPOs Bodh Raj, Rajinder Singh and Lalit Kumar who died during the course of their engagement.

DGP has also sanctioned

Gopal Sharma, HC Dewakar Nath, Sgts. Mohammad Jahangir, Janak Raj, Vinod Kumar, Bashir Ahmad and Follower Subash Chander who expired due to illness while in service. Ropes 20 lakh has been sanctioned in favour of NoKs of Sgts. Manzoor Ahmad.

Meanwhile, special relief of rupees five lakh each has been sanctioned in favour of NoKs of dependents/legal heirs of deceased SPOs Bodh Raj, Rajinder Singh and Lalit Kumar who died during the course of their engagement.

DGP has also sanctioned

rupees 50 thousand as medical relief in favour of SPO Sanjay Kumar to defray the expenses in connection with self-treatment and treatment of spouse/child who were injured in a road accident. The medical relief has been sanctioned out of the Contributory Police Welfare Fund of SPOs.

To support and assist the families of martyrs/deceased police personnel, various welfare schemes are already functional and more welfare measures are being taken in near future, police said.

We're Disliked By J&K People & Punished By GOI: Mehbooba



SRINAGAR: Peoples Democratic Party President and former chief minister Mehbooba Mufti on Wednesday alleged that continuous harassment of PDP youth president Waheed ur Rehman Parra is an example of persecution who are refusing to toe its line.

It is pertinent to mention that Para was arrested on November 25, 2020 in connection with the Naveed Babu-DySP Davinder Singh case for allegedly supporting the Hizbul Mujahideen militant group.

Although, he was granted bail by an NIA court earlier this month but has been taken into custody by Counter Insurgency Kashmir (CIK) wing of Jammu and Kashmir police.

Mehbooba Mufti in a series of tweets mentioned "Disliked & mistrusted by people in J&K for their faith in Indian constitution on one hand & punished by GOI for not toeing their line on the other."

Mehbooba recalled about the

childhood of Parra and said "As a child he'd visit the local MLA's house & listen to political conversations with rapt attention. His mother was scared that one fine day he'd pursue this passion for politics & become a target for militants. Sadly this fear consumed her & she died when Waheed was a teenager".

She lamented that the very same system in which Parra placed his trust is taking revenge from him. She also alleged that Waheed despite being in 'illegal' detention fought & won DDC elections from jail. Even after a strong bail order by NIA court he was rearrested by CIK on unknown charges.

She ended that they GOI is not having any proof to substantiate these charges against him. GOI is on a spree where Waheed is arrested by one agency after another.

"It is sheer political vendetta & an attempt to sabotage the life of a young & promising 32 year old man," she added.

Power Shutdown

SRINAGAR: According to the Power Controller, Kashmir Province, in order to carry out shifting of the Transmission line, 133KV DC Delina-Amargarh

Transmission line Circuit 1st shall remain shutdown on January 28 from 10am to 4pm.

The power supply to the area fed from the line shall remain affected.

NEWS MAKERS

Villagers Damage Electric Meters, Stage Protest

BARAMULLA: Villagers here in North Kashmir's Barmulla district damaged electric meters after officials declined to pay heed to their grievances about the inflated bills and non-availability of electricity.

Eyewitnesses said that over 200 protesting locals from village Shrakwara Baramulla hit to road and blocked it from Wagoora to Puthkha. The protesters disrupted traffic, raised slogans against Power Development Department alleging that despite not getting electricity, they receive inflated bills.

"There are pesky power cuts. PDD doesn't follow electricity schedule and never dispatches bills in line with the electric meters," the protesters said.

The commuters faced a lot of problem due to protest while in a bid to restore the traffic, Assistant Executive Engineer, Tehsildar Wagoora and BDO Wagoora rushed to spot.

They pacify the protesters with the assurance that matter will be taken up with the Department. The locals demanded reduction in electric bills but the officers didn't oblige to their demand asked them to give an application that will be forwarded to the Department.

Visibly angry protesters rushed back to the village and damaged electric meters.



Representational photo

Over 45 Lac Revenue Documents Digitized In Ang, Pul, Shopian

SRINAGAR: Under Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme, over 45 lac revenue documents, pertaining to Anantnag, Pulwama and Shopian districts, have been digitized so far while remaining work will be completed by February 5, 2021.

This information was given

to Regional Director Survey and Land Records, Dr. Abdul Hafiz Shah at a meeting convened to review the status of the digitization process of revenue documents of Anantnag, Pulwama and Shopian districts.

It was given out that out of total 4562970 documents, 2680470

pertain to Anantnag district, 1382500 to Pulwama district and 5 lac to Shopian district.

The Nodal Officers of district scanning centers were asked to complete the pending work before February 5, 2021 so that 2nd phase of digitization of jamabandi is started in these districts.

Urs Celebration At Zati Shahwali Shrine

KUPWARA: Deputy Commissioner Kupwara, Imam Din today along with a team of officers visited shrine of Zati Shahwali at Drugmulla to take stock of on-ground arrangements made for annual Urs celebrations.

He was accompanied by Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC), Mohammed Ashraf Bhat and other officers.

Meanwhile, the Deputy Commissioner paid obeisance at the shrine and prayed for prosperity and good health of the nation.



Public Interaction At Khansahab

BUDGAM: Taking a unique initiative launched by Govt of J&K relating to public outreach programme in all blocks, the DDC Budgam Shahbaz Ahmed Mirza in this connection today convened a public outreach interaction programme at SDM Khansahab.

While interacting with the public, the DDC said that the aim and objective of this programme is to take a firsthand appraisal of all issues at gross root level.

On the occasion, SDM Khansahab, Syed Ahnadh Kataria detailed the steps taken to ensure basic amenities to the public.

PP Immunization From Jan 31 In Karnah

KUPWARA: Block Task Force Committee, today, met under the chair of Tehsildar Tangdar in which arrangements for conduct of Pulse Polio (PP) Immunization programme was reviewed.

It was given out that Pulse Polio Immunization Programme will commence from January 31st up to February 02, 2021 in 66 Polio booths of Karnah sub division to cover all 8945 children from zero to five year age group in the border area.

For this purpose, 277 employees, 78 Health workers, 69 ASHAs, 115 AWWs and 02 Volunteers have been deployed to carry out the programme, the meeting was told.



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KO VIEW

Listen To Farmers

New Delhi witnessed chaotic scenes on Republic Day as farmers protesting against the “unjust” farm laws entered the capital on tractors. They clashed with the police, broke barricades and stormed the Red Fort, raising even a religious flag on the 17th century Mughal monument. The police responded with tear gases and lathi charge. One protester was killed in what the police called an accident. But the farmers alleged the deceased was hit by a police bullet.

It was an unprecedented show of strength by the farmers who have been camping on the borders of New Delhi for the past two months. And so far they had held their calm. But a part of the Republic Day tractor parade went off-track. However, the farmers union Samyukt Kisan Morcha blamed the “anti-social elements” for the violence. The union dissociated itself from all such elements that have violated our discipline. Morcha also called off the tractor parade and appealed to participants to immediately return to their respective protest sites.

The violence during the protest prompted the union Home ministry to call meet. It remains to be seen how the government responds to the escalating protest by the farmers. So far, the government has offered to suspend the three controversial farming laws for 18 months, but the farmers want a complete repeal of the laws. The farmers argue that the laws will only hurt their livelihoods and will only benefit large corporations. The situation remains deadlocked. The farmers, meanwhile, continue their siege to New Delhi, blocking its main entry points. The government, it seems, has now fewer options left but to accede to farmers’ demands. If this happens this will be the first time that the Modi government will be forced to withdraw any of the laws it has passed so far.

One of the biggest charge against the BJP-led union government is that it is unilaterally passing the far-reaching laws with a bearing on the lives of the millions of people. This started with sudden demonitisation of Rs 1000 and Rs 500 notes in November 2016 that plunged the country into a virtual chaos. People thronged the banks to either exchange or deposit their old currency. Long queues of people, a significant number of them senior citizens, appeared outside the banks and ATMs to deposit their cash. Scores lost their lives in the process. Then followed the GST reform which crushed the small businesses. This was followed by the revocation of Article 370 that granted J&K its semi-autonomous status within Indian Union. The move’s disruptive fallout is still playing out in J&K and Ladakh, the former parts of J&K state, now downgraded into two union territories. Following this, the centre came up with Citizenship Amendment Act that ensured that only non-Muslim refugees from the neighbouring countries are entitled to Indian citizenship. Though the CAA was also resisted by people, the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic ended the protest. Now the farmers protest is taking place despite the pandemic. The best course for the government is to address the anxieties of the farmers and do everything to assure them that their livelihoods will not be threatened

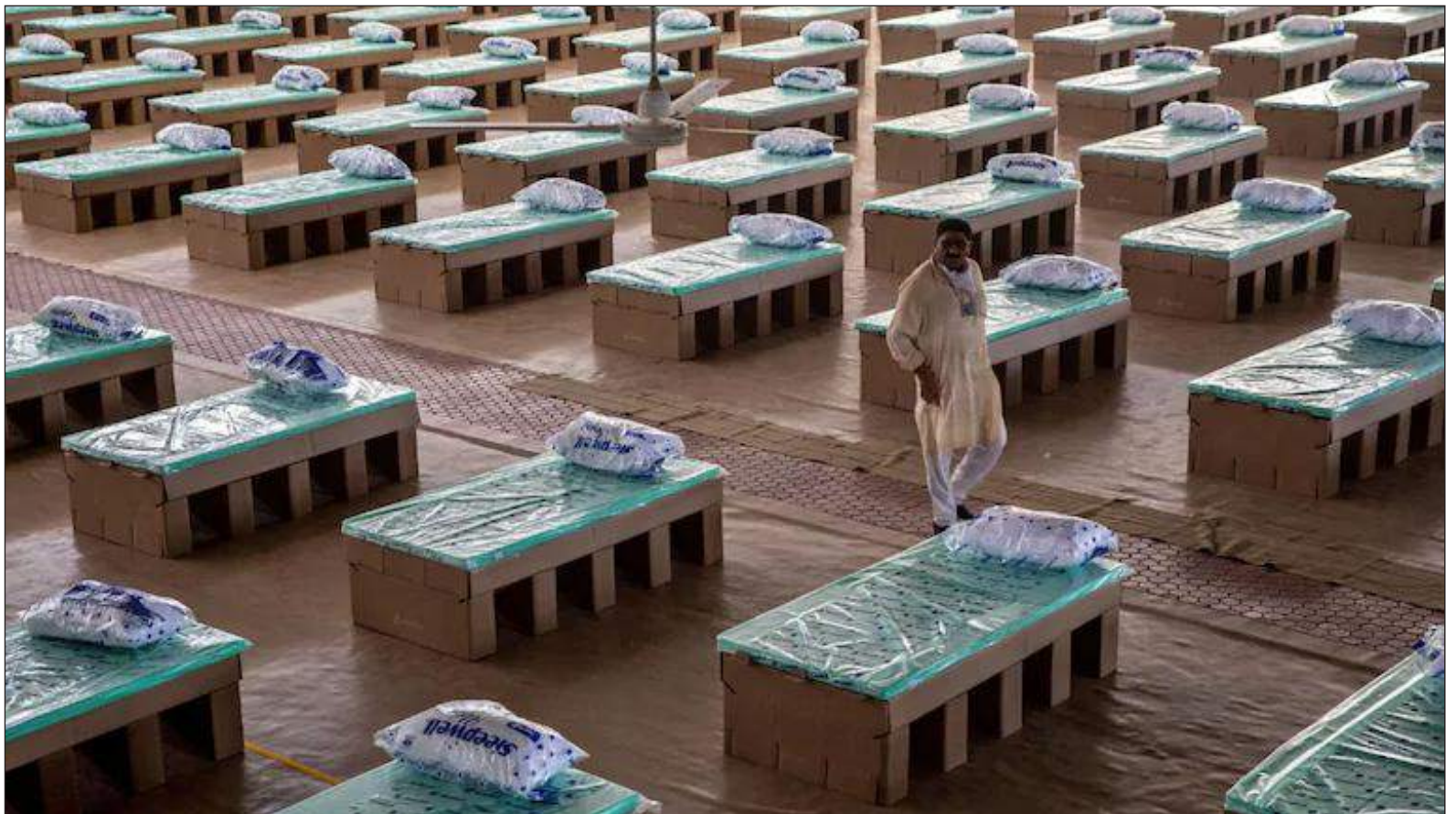
OTHER OPINION

Women in conflict

“WHEN the guns fall silent, it does not mean the suffering of women and girls stops. The suffering and abuse that women and girls are exposed to is long-term,” said UNFPA Regional Director for Arab States Luay Shabaneh, as she described the plight of women and girls in Syria last year. In fact, Ms Shabaneh’s words can be applied to the at least 630m women and children, who, according to a new study published in The Lancet, face serious health risks as the indirect effect of living in or near a conflict zone. The four-paper series of the medical journal, released over the weekend, provides compelling evidence that more women and children die from the indirect consequences of warfare — malnutrition, easily preventable infectious diseases, inaccessibility to proper reproductive health services, sexual violence and poor mental health — rather than the violence itself. The report explains through the data it has gathered over a decade that the risk of dying from non-violent causes increases drastically when people live in the vicinity of an ongoing conflict.

Citing one case study, the study maintains that between 1995 and 2015, at least 6.7m infants and more than 10m children under the age of five years born within 50 km of an active armed conflict died from the indirect consequences of fighting across Africa, Asia and the Americas. Moreover, according to the research, more than half the world’s women and children reside in countries that are in the throes of active conflict. In 2017, around 10pc of women and 16pc of children around the world were either living close to the site of conflict or had been displaced by the latter. Surprisingly, around a third of these women and children lived only in three countries: Pakistan, Nigeria and India, states that can hardly be described as active war zones but that continue to experience intermittent bouts of violence. These findings, as well as others contained in the report, have led researchers to call for a “radical rethink” of the world’s response to situations involving insecurity, and the logistics of high-priority interventions for women and children who live in or close to politically unstable environments. As Ms Shabaneh indicated, violence goes beyond the conventional meaning of the word where women and children are concerned. Already vulnerable because of unfair gendered norms, they are the ones who bear the brunt of the conflict.

Dawn



Failure Of Education

R. RAJ RAO

“The survey can be faulted on many counts. One may ask whether in a nation of 140 crore people, 12,000+ respondents is a representative enough sample. Besides, does the profile of those interviewed include people from different segments of society, in terms of education, gender, caste, class and religion?”

The India Today Group, along with an agency known as Karvy Insights, recently conducted its bi-annual Mood of the Nation Survey. The survey was intended to find out that if general elections were held today, what would the results be? In order to investigate this, 12,132 Indians were randomly interviewed across 19 states, representing 97 parliamentary and 194 assembly constituencies.

The results of the survey, conducted between 3rd and 13th January this year, showed, predictably, that the BJP’s and Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s approval ratings stood at 74%, with 44% of those interviewed rating Modi as good, and another 30% rating him as outstanding. Only a small number rated him as average or poor.

Principal among Modi’s achievements, according to the respondents, was the favourable Ram temple verdict that he had managed to elicit from the Supreme Court. 27% of the interviewees voted in favour of this, while another 20% lauded him for revoking Article 370 that gave special status to Jammu & Kashmir. Overall, the nation also seemed to be satisfied with the Prime Minister’s handling of the Covid 19 pandemic.

There were things that were regarded as Modi’s failures too; among them, unemployment, cited by 29% of the respondents, and inflation, cited by another 13%. Only 10% of the people interviewed called demonetisation a failure, and, shockingly, just 9% regarded the ongoing farmer agitation as an indication of the Modi government’s inability to deliver.

The final result was that if general elections were held today, the BJP would win 291 Lok Sabha seats, while the NDA would win 321. Impressed by this, India Today put Modi on the cover of its latest issue.

The survey can be faulted on many counts. One may ask whether in a nation of 140 crore people, 12,000+ respondents is a representative enough sample. Besides, does the profile of those interviewed include people from different segments of society, in terms of education, gender, caste, class and religion? This is not known.

Assuming, however, that the sample size and the nature of the sample are okay, the verdict proves how “illiterate” Indians are.

First, the handling of the covid-19 pandemic. People are unable to see that, among other things, a stringent lockdown at four hours notice led to job losses (although 29% of the respondents cite unemployment as the government’s chief failure), destroyed the economy, caused the migrant labour cri-

sis, and gave the police a free hand to unleash terror on citizens, exemplified, at its worst, by the murder of the father-and-son mobile store owners in Tamil Nadu. Now, with the arrival of vaccines, there is further displeasure at the way Bharat Biotech’s Covaxin is being thrust on people while still in the clinical trials stage, with the company itself issuing an advisory as to who should not be taking the vaccine for reasons of safety.

Secondly, if almost half the number of interviewees thinks of the Ram temple judgment and the revoking of Article 370 a good thing, it shows how insensitive they are to the feelings of minorities, Muslims in this case, and especially to the feelings of the people of Jammu & Kashmir. The Citizen Amendment Bill (CAB) and National Register of Citizens (NRC) that are hostile to Muslims do not seem to have come up in the survey, but if they had, it is clear that here too the respondents would be on the side of the government, rather than on the side of the protestors at Shaheen Bagh and various Indian universities.

All this proves that now on-

“The secularism, then, envisioned by the founding fathers of our Constitution has gone for a toss, and Islamophobia, xenophobia, homophobia and other phobias have become the order of the day.

wards, the Hindu majority will be blind to the government’s faults as long as it is convinced that the government is aggressively pursuing its Hindutva agenda. This is further proved by the survey showing that it is Yogi Adityanath, UP’s ‘Love Jihad’ man who is seen as Modi’s successor, rather than even Amit Shah. The secularism, then, envisioned by the founding fathers of our Constitution has gone for a toss, and Islamophobia, xenophobia, homophobia and other phobias have become the order of the day.

But the insensitivity isn’t just with regard to Muslims. India’s farmers have been protesting against the new farm laws for over two months now. As many as 150 of them have died of hunger and exposure to the cold. All talks between the government and the farmers have come to nought. On Republic Day, the farmers’ tractor rally in the capital ended in violent clashes between the farmers and the police, with casualties on both sides. Yet, it is only a paltry 9% of India Today’s respondents who are critical of the government’s handling of the farmer issue.

Then there is the recent BARC-

TRP scam that revealed, through WhatsApp chats, how Arnab Goswami had direct access to the PMO, which should really be a source of embarrassment to the government and bring down its score. But this question did not even figure in the India Today survey.

How different Indians as a race are from the Americans, who were able to see through President Donald Trump’s white supremacist policies, and voted him out of power. And it isn’t enough to say, as analysts often argue, that the only reason the ruling dispensation seems to be invincible is because there isn’t an alternative to Modi thrown up by the opposition. Joe Biden wasn’t seen as an alternative to Trump till the elections drew near. And yet he won the elections. Likewise, at the appropriate time, an alternative to Modi shall automatically emerge. No democracy can use this as an excuse to invest in just one man, for this is how autocracies are born. It is—or should be—our collective responsibility to scout for new leaders, just as new captains are chosen for cricket matches.

What purpose do absurd sur-

veys of this kind serve, other than boosting the ruling party’s ego and giving them the feeling they are indispensable, come what may? Or are they paid surveys, with the government itself providing the list of respondents?

As an educationist, I can only conclude that the lopsided, bigoted, ill-informed thinking of Indians proves one thing. It proves the failure of education. And it suits the government to cash in on this failure. Small wonder, then, that higher education, especially in the Liberal Arts and Humanities, is accorded such low priority by the powers that be.

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

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“Highway of Hardships”

This is in reference to an opinion piece, “The highway of hardships” by Dr Raja Muzaffar Bhat published in your newspaper, Kashmir Observer. The author has highlighted important public grievances which are making

the Kashmiris suffer for more than seventy years now.

Srinagar-Jammu highway is in a pathetic condition right now. It is much worse than what it used to be 30 or 35 years back. Instead of getting relief from traffic jams the four laning

work from Qazigund to Ramban has further deteriorated. It is only a highway in name now.

There are constant landslides taking place at many spots and the motor vehicle accidents have become frequent now. I hope the Government

will blacklist the company which is undertaking road widening work. National Highways Authority of India also needs to be made answerable.

*Raashed Ashraf
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Road Rash

BILAL AHMAD PARRAY



Recently, upon seeing an accident, people were engaged with video shooting, photos and some with news items. Nobody was ready to assist or provide first aid. People were only interested in sensationalising the accident

duced in a number of ways. A majority of accidents are caused due to the following reasons :

Condition of Vehicle

A well-designed and well-maintained vehicle, with good brakes, tyres, functional speedometer, adjusted side mirrors and well-adjusted suspension will be more controllable in an emergency and thus be better equipped to avoid collisions. The design of vehicles has also evolved to improve protection after collision, both for vehicle occupants and for those outside of the vehicle. Speeding also increases the risk of collision . Failure of brakes or steering, tyre burst, insufficient headlights, overloading, projecting loads being the main causes of collision. This can be prevented by Vehicle engineering, which comprises regular inspection and fitting safety equipment such as seat belts.

Condition of Roads

This factor includes road design, pot-holes, damaged roads, eroded road merging of rural roads with highways, diversions, illegal speed breakers, blind curves. Crashes are common in areas of high vehicle congestion but fatal crashes occur disproportionately on rural roads at night when traffic is relatively light. The preventive measures includes road or smart traffic engineering which comprises; the design of new roads, separating opposing traffic flows, elimination of cross traffic, existing road improvement, resurfacing of slippery areas, installing traffic signals, road markings, and regulatory signs such as “stop” and “give way” signs; and assisting the driver with warning and destination signs to avoid danger and confusion.

Human Interference

This includes all factors related to drivers and other road users such as pedestrian carelessness, illiteracy, poor eyesight or physical impairment, crossing at wrong places, moving on carriageway, waiting passengers, passengers projecting their body outside vehicle, by talking to drivers, alighting and boarding vehicle from wrong side travelling on footboards, catching a running bus etc. that may contribute to a collision. This causes many accidents when the vehicle is at high speed. Today literate & responsible passengers force the driver for wrong driving , this all makes the driver habitual and incites other drivers to attempt it. Some drivers lose patience which leads to accidents.

Behavior of Driver

Driver's behavior led to the realization that signs and regulations had an adverse effect on a driver's ability to interact safely with other road users. A number of factors contribute to the risk of collision, including driver's skill, impairment due to alcohol or drugs, eye teasing, over smartness, over-speeding, rash driving, violation of rules, failure to understand signs, fatigue and street racing. Apart from alcohol many drugs, medicines also affect the skills and concentration necessary for driving. A red light jumper not only jeopardizes his life but also the safety of other road users. This act by one driver incites other drivers to attempt it and finally causes chaos at crossings.

Casual Driving

Though distractions while driving could be minor but they can cause major accidents. Distractions could be outside or inside the vehicle. The major distraction nowadays is talking on mobile phones, updating Facebook pages, sharing WhatsApp messages, chatting while driving.

This becomes one of the reasons of collision. One should not attend phone calls while driving. Avoid stereo or radio and LCDs while driving. Preventive measures comprise enforcement by adopting reasonable and enforceable traffic laws which, at the same time, are best designed to prevent accidents.

Traffic cops can't alone control and manage traffic with omnipresence but other pipeline departments can also play their positive role in reducing traffic accidents. All the concerned departments need to work in unison to end this menace. Parents should avoid offering of motor bikes, cars, high speedy vehicles to their wards at a very young age. Educated people and senior citizens also support this cause. The main approaches to preventing accidents includes education and training of children in schools by road-traffic instructors & school teachers and by means of print and electronic media and other publicity to draw the attention of all road users both to dangers and to safe practices on the road.

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Are You A Good Parent?

SANJIDA ALAM RIA

Mistakes and failures play a vital role in making a person successful. Parents need to allow their child to make mistakes, allow their child to fail on their own, and trust in their ability to surely get up one day

Giving birth to a child doesn't make anyone a parent in the truest sense. Parenting a child is much more difficult than pregnancy and labour.

In most cases, the future of a child is in the hands of parents. I do not wish to talk about those exceptionally brutal and horrible parents who use their children in illegal activities; such as in human trafficking or even prostitution just to get money. In my opinion, they're beyond any kind of civil discussion.

This is for those parents who really wish their children to prosper in life, but somehow fail to ensure that prosperity due to their lack of knowledge about parenting.

This is to make them understand why, sometimes, everything might be in vain, even after all the hard work.

Unexpressed love

You're a parent, you undoubtedly love your child, you know that and somehow you expect your teen girl or boy to be mature enough to understand your love for them, which you never expressed. And that is illogical.

How could they possibly know that you love them? You never told them directly. You never even bothered supporting them in small ways. Rather, you scolded them when they did something wrong.

Maybe you never even appreciated it when they passed with a good grade, rather shown it off to your neighbours behind their back, because you thought they might slow down if you let them know that you're proud of them.

Now, your justification behind all this is: "All I want is success for my child," but have you ever thought that you're being selfish?

Mistakes and failures play a vital role in making a person successful. Parents need to allow their child to make mistakes

You define the term "success" in your own way, and expect your child to understand your vision and so you pressure her/him to pursue it when you don't even know whether she/he wants it or not.

He might have become a successful cricketer like Shakib Al Hasan, if you hadn't pressured him to become a doctor.

Their happiness is priceless



One day, when the right time comes, when in your eyes, your child is ready to take over life from your control, how do you think she/he will be able to do so, without any real-life experiences? Mistakes and failures play a vital role in making a person successful. Parents need to allow their child to make mistakes

Another perilous mistake parents make is that they spend almost all they have on their children, but the kid also gets a free speech on "how hard it is for them to manage the money and how that kid is spending it without showing any empathy towards their parents' hard-work" - every time the child asks for some money.

I've asked my parents about this, and they said they really think that's how you make your child realise how much you're doing for them, but alas, this is where they're wrong.

Parents ought to pay for their child's basic needs.

But that extra amount they might be spending for his guitar lessons (without making him feel guilty for having an interest in learning a musical instrument) is something that makes him grateful to them.

Without making us feel guilty of our existence, our parents can manage to have that respect they ought to get.

Respect doesn't come in the form of fear, it comes in the form of admiration.

I've seen my friends lie to their parents every now and then, and it horrifies me.

Lies, fear, and no communication

In most cases, I can't blame my friends either, because if parents impose a curfew on a 22-year-old guy, what else could he do other than lie about group studies to go to the movies?

What can be the logic behind such curfew impositions?

The answer is: Parents want to ensure the safety of their children. But for how long will they be able to be in control of their children's lives?

One day, when the right time comes, when in your eyes, your child

is ready to take over life from your control, how do you think she/he will be able to do so, without any real-life experiences?

Mistakes and failures play a vital role in making a person successful. Parents need to allow their child to make mistakes, allow their child to fail on their own, and trust in their ability to surely get up one day.

Trust your child, trust in their upbringing. Don't be afraid to let them make decisions and choices on their own, and when one fails in life -- that's when you pick them up and make them feel that you're always there for them.

Be your child's friend. Because you might be the best friend they really need.

Dhaka Tribune

'Govt May Announce Steps In Budget 2021 To Promote E-Commerce Exports, Imports'



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

The government in the budget next week is expected to announce measures such as extending the facility of bulk clearance for e-commerce imports and exports with a view to promoting the growth of this fast-growing segment in the country, sources said.

They said as there is a multi-fold increase in the e-commerce sector in the country, a significant volume of products is imported into and exported out of India through this platform and there is a need to find a balance between control and facilitation for the sector.

Currently, importers and exporters are required to submit individual/separate clearance documents for each package with the Indian customs department, which adds cost for traders to conduct business through e-commerce.

"With an aim to support the

growth of the e-commerce sector in India, the facility for bulk clearance of import and export is required for e-commerce import and exports. Additionally, a simplified process in case of return of e-commerce shipments would also help in promoting the growth," one of the sources said.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will unveil the Budget for 2021-22 on February 1.

According to exporters, easing of processes for the sector would further help in boosting the country's outbound shipments.

"Extending the facility of bulk clearance is a good idea. Globally this facility is there. It will help in reducing transaction cost. If it is permitted, it would hugely benefit the e-commerce trade," Federation of Indian Export Organisations director General Ajay Sahai said.

A leather exporter said the move if announced in the Budget would help promote exports through e-commerce medium.



Investors' Wealth Plunge Over Rs 8 Lakh Cr In Just Four Days

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Investors' wealth eroded by more than Rs 8 lakh crore in four consecutive sessions of stock market loss.

Recordings its fourth straight session of loss on Wednesday, the Sensex tumbled 937.66 points or 1.94 per cent to close at 47,409.93. In the four straight sessions, the benchmark has fallen by 2,382.19 points or 4.78 per cent.

Tracking the muted sentiment, the market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms declined by Rs 8,07,025.09 crore to Rs 1,89,63,547.48 crore in

these four days.

"Volatility is normally higher on the last two days of monthly expiry but this time the fall with higher volatility show cautiousness amongst market participants before the Budget event.

"Earnings are coming out better-than-expected but profit-booking is seen in most companies that have declared results so far barring a few cases," according to Rasmusik Oza, Executive Vice President and Head of Fundamental Research at Kotak Securities.

Axis Bank, Titan, IndusInd Bank, HDFC Bank, Dr Reddy's,

HDFC and Asian Paint were the major laggards among the 30-share frontline companies' list, falling up to 4 per cent.

In the broader market, the smallcap and midcap indices fell up to 1.38 per cent. Sectorally, banking stocks declined 2.93 per cent, followed by finance (2.72 per cent), metal (2.54 per cent), realty (2.28 per cent) and auto (2.11 per cent).

"Caution ahead of the Union Budget and scheduled derivatives expiry also added to the pressure," Ajit Mishra, VP - Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said.

EARNINGS ARE COMING OUT BETTER-THAN-EXPECTED but profit-booking is seen in most companies that have declared results so far barring a few cases," according to Rasmusik Oza, Executive Vice President and Head of Fundamental Research at Kotak Securities

MIDH To Set-Up PEQ Facility On 440 Kanals In Shopian

Dir Horticulture Chairs Meeting To Finalize PEQ Facilities For Plant, Seed Import



SRINAGAR: Director Horticulture Kashmir, Ajaz Ahmad Bhat, who is also Mission Director, MIDH-J&K on Wednesday convened a meeting at Directorate of Horticulture Kashmir to finalize the modalities in respect of creation of Post Entry Quarantine (PEQ) facilities for import of elite horticulture plant material and seeds in Advanced Centre for Horticulture Development (ACHD), Zainapora, Shopian.

On the occasion, Mission Director, MIDH said National Seed Corporation (NSC) in collaboration with Horticulture department would set up a PEQ facility at ACHD, Zainapora Shopian over an area of 22 hectare (440 kanals) for im-

port high value Horticulture planting material/seeds.

He further said that the planting material will include the latest varieties of almond, walnut etc for production of huge planting material.

During the meeting, a detailed discussion was held on possession of earmarked land at ACHD, Zainapora, Shopian for creation of Post entry quarantine (PEQ) facilities for import of elite Horticulture plant material ANDseeds.

It was informed that the Government of India has sought assistance from the National Seed Corporation (NSC) for revamping the horticulture sector of Jammu and Kashmir. It was given that The NSC will import exotic quality plant material from developed countries for its distribution to farmers.

The meeting was attended by the officers of National Seeds Corporation (NSC) New Delhi including Kuldeep Singh, SGM (Prod.), R.K. KASwan, DGM (Engg.), Nanu Ram Yadav, RM, Chandigrah, Dr. VS Pandey, AGM (Prod.), AnandRawat, AO (Finance) and Chief Horticulture Officer, Srinagar, Scientists from SKUAST-Kashmir, CITH and Private Entrepreneurs empanelled for establishment of High Density Orchards in J&K.

IMF Projects Impressive 11.5 Pc Growth Rate For India In 2021

WASHINGTON: The IMF on Tuesday projected an impressive 11.5 per cent growth rate for India in 2021, making the country the only major economy of the world to register a double-digit growth this year amidst the coronavirus pandemic.

The International Monetary Fund's growth projections for India in its latest World Economic Outlook Update released on Tuesday reflected a strong rebound in the economy, which is estimated to have contracted by 8 per cent in 2020 due to the pandemic.

In its latest update, the IMF projected a 11.5 per cent growth rate for India in 2021. This makes India the only major economy of the world to register a double-digit growth in 2021, it said.

China is next with 8.1 per cent growth in 2021 followed by Spain (5.9 per cent) and France (5.5 per cent).

Revising its figures, the IMF said in 2020, the Indian economy is estimated to have contracted by 8 per cent. China is the only major country which registered a positive growth rate of 2.3 per cent in 2020.

India's economy, the IMF said, is projected to grow by 6.8 per cent in 2022 and that of China by 5.6 per cent.

With the latest projections, India



regains the tag of the fastest developing economies of the world.

Early this month, IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva had said that India "actually has taken very decisive action, very decisive steps to deal with the pandemic and to deal with the economic consequences of it".

India, she said, went for a very dramatic lockdown for a country of this size of population with people clustered so closely together. And then India moved to more targeted restrictions and lockdowns.

"What we see is that transition, combined with policy support, seems to have worked well. Why? Because if you look at mobility

indicators, we are almost where we were before COVID in India, meaning that economic activities have been revitalized quite significantly," the IMF chief said.

Commending the steps being taken by the Indian government on the monetary policy and the fiscal policy side, she said it is actually slightly above the average for emerging markets.

"Emerging markets on average have provided six per cent of GDP. In India this is slightly above that. Good for India is that there is still space to do more," she said, adding that she is impressed by the appetite for structural reforms that India is retaining. PTI

Budget 2021: Centre Likely To Increase Customs Duty On Certain Components



Agencies

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will present Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led NDA government's eighth budget on February 1 amid the COVID-19 pandemic and under the unprecedented economic crisis triggered by it. This time, the Central Government may increase the customs duty on certain components, sources told ANI on Wednesday.

According to the sources, to boost the Make in India initiative, the Centre is considering increasing customs duty on certain parts of various components. Sources added that discussion and deliberations on various proposals are still going on, but no final decision had been taken yet.

Last year while presenting her second Budget, Sitharaman had announced customs duty hike on a range of items including toys, furniture, electronic goods, footwear, freezers, refrigerating equipments, grinders and mixers, headphones and earphones, colour TV and chargers.

Customs duty on footwear was hiked from 25 per cent

to 35 per cent, toys have seen an increase in duty from 20 per cent to 60 per cent, while customs duty was doubled on freezers, grinders and mixers.

Announcing the customs duty hike on February 1, 2020, Sitharaman had said, Centre's policy of Make in India has started giving dividends. India is now making world-class goods and exporting such products.

"Customs duty is being reduced on certain inputs and raw materials while being revised upward on certain goods, which are being made domestically," Sitharaman had said.

Talking to ANI, Rajat Bose, Partner, Shardul Amarchand Mangaldas and Company said trend has been that the central government usually in the last four-five years is increasing the customs duty on certain items.

However, he added that the imports did not reduce as such.

"So, I think that it will be there at the back of mind of the government. I believe that they would still continue to increase customs duty on raw material components. They might look at sectors such as automobile, consumer electronics and fast moving consumer goods," Bose added.

Ito Convenes Review Meeting Of The Tourism Department

SRINAGAR: Director, Tourism, Kashmir, Dr. G.N. Itoo Wednesday convened an extensive review meeting with senior officers of the Department including senior officers, resort officers and other employees to review the overall functioning of the department.

The Director Tourism observed that Kashmir is an all season destination offering visitors not only mesmerising beauty of its natural landscape, its perennial revisers and lakes, gardens and meadows, mountains and valleys, forests and wildlife but also diversity of tourism products with its adventure potential, cuisine, heritage, pilgrimage circuits and plenty of leisure tourism.

Dr. Itoo said tourism is an important sector which is directly linked to common masses and provides immediate employment opportunities and livelihood to lakhs of local people. He said tourists visiting Kashmir should leave with beautiful memories and in this regard

instructed all resort officers to work with zeal and zest to ensure tourists feel comfortable while holidaying here.

He also directed the resort officers to submit the directorate office the daily updates on the tourists arrivals and other developments related to tourism in their territories.

The Director Tourism Kashmir said J&K is blessed with abundant natural beauty and splendour which needs to be explored to its fullest.

He also urged the officers to focus on maintaining existing infrastructural facilities at all the tourist destinations. He also asked them to work on attracting travellers to lesser known destinations and also identify new places which can be promoted and developed so that the rush at the major destinations can be eased to their carrying capacity.

He said all the employees of the department should work hard towards making J&K the best tourist destination of the country.

KASHMIR IS AN ALL SEASON destination offering visitors not only mesmerising beauty of its natural landscape, its perennial revisers and lakes, gardens and meadows, mountains and valleys, forests and wildlife but also diversity of tourism products with its adventure potential, cuisine, heritage, pilgrimage circuits and plenty of leisure tourism"

NEWS MAKERS

FCA Drives In New Jeep Compass At Rs 16.99 Lakh

NEW DELHI: Auto major Fiat Chrysler Automobiles (FCA) aims to expand its product portfolio in India and utilise its manufacturing base in the country to boost export to right-hand markets across the globe, a senior company official said on Wednesday.

The company, which on Wednesday launched the new version of its premium SUV Jeep Compass priced between Rs 16.99 lakh and Rs 28.29 lakh (ex-showroom Delhi), also plans to completely localise Jeep lineup in India.

"The new Compass launched today is going to spearhead impressive lineup of new model launches in the very near future in India...it is our intention to introduce completely localised Jeep lineup to our Indian customers while supporting local industry and suppliers," FCA Asia Pacific Vice President (Sales and Marketing) Billy Hayes told reporters in a virtual press conference.



India will also continue as a manufacturing hub for right-hand export markets, he added.

"The new Made in India Compass will launch shortly in Japan, Australia and New Zealand," Hayes said.

FCA India manufactures the Jeep Compass at its joint venture manufacturing facility in Ranjangaon near Pune. Hayes noted that its expansion in one of the world's largest markets like India continues to fuel the company's growth.

"India is an incredibly important

market for FCA globally and within the Asia Pacific region the market is where we have invested the most," he said.

In December, FCA had announced to invest USD 150 million (around Rs 1,103 crore) to set up a global digital hub in Hyderabad to help the group develop new technologies to cater to its automotive operations across the globe.

The facility, which is FCA's largest digital hub outside of North America, would create nearly 1,000 jobs by the end of this year.

"So to summarise, more new products, increased localisation, right-hand drive manufacturing hub and 150 million USD investment, FCA will be stronger than ever before in India and we are here to stay," Hayes noted.

FCA India also announced the launch of the 80th-anniversary limited edition of the model, priced between Rs 22.96 lakh and Rs 26.76 lakh.

The company said its dealerships will commence customer test drives and deliveries of the new Jeep Compass from February 2, 2021.

"The sophisticated package of the new Jeep Compass includes feedback from our customers and incorporates their suggestions. We have designed the new Compass to be more premium and customer-centric with a plethora of convenience and connected features," FCA India Managing Director Partha Datta said. PTI

ED Arrests Yes Bank Co-Founder Rana Kapoor In Fresh Money Laundering Case

NEW DELHI: The Enforcement Directorate has arrested Yes Bank co-promoter Rana Kapoor in a fresh money laundering case linked to an alleged Rs 4,300 crore fraud at the PMC Bank in Maharashtra, official sources said on Wednesday.

Kapoor, 63, was already in judicial custody after he was arrested by the central probe agency in March last year in connection with alleged financial irregularities and purported kick backs paid to him and his family members in lieu of certain loans provided by the Yes Bank to a number of high-profile borrowers.

In the latest case, sources said, Kapoor was placed under arrest in jail as per provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

He was later produced before a special PMLA court that sent him to ED custody till January 30 in the second money laundering case filed against him, they said.

The latest case pertains to the alleged loan fraud in the PMC Bank where the ED raided the



premises of the Viva Group promoted by Maharashtra MLA and Bahujan Vikas Agadhi (BVA) party chief Hitendra Thakur in the Vasai-Virar areas of Palghar district and Mumbai last week.

The central agency filed a criminal case of money laundering in October, 2019 to probe alleged loan fraud in the Punjab and Maharashtra Co-operative (PMC) Bank, against Housing Development Infrastructure Ltd (HDIL), its promoters Rakesh Kumar Wadhawan, his son Sarang Wadhawan, the bank's former chairman Waryam Singh and ex-managing director Joy Thomas. PTI

Two-Day Long Literary Gala 'Jashn-E-Jamhuri' Begins At Jammu University

J&K Is Witnessing A New Dawn Of Change, Plethora Of Opportunities Being Provided To Youth: LG

JAMMU: As a part of 72nd Republic Day celebrations, a two-day long literary gala 'Jashn-e-Jamhuri' began with Kul Hind Urdu Mushaira at Zorawar Singh Auditorium, University of Jammu. Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha was the Chief Guest on the occasion.

Organized by Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages (JKAACL), in collaboration with Radio Mirchi FM, the event witnessed the participation of acclaimed poets like Manzoor Bhopali, Prof. Waseem Bareilvi, Irshad Kamil, Ana Dehlavi, Prof. Raza Abbas Nayyar, Khushboo Sharma and Kunwar Javed, who were the guest poets for the evening, received huge rounds of applause from the jam-packed audience for their enthralling recitation of Urdu poetry.

While addressing the gathering, the Lt Governor expressed gratitude to the renowned poets from across the country for spreading the fragrance of their literary talent in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

Reciting poems of various veteran poets, the Lt Governor observed that the poetry is in the essence of J&K's glorious history.

"By bringing a pool of renowned, veteran and young poets under one roof, the initiative is aimed at nurturing and



showcasing the capabilities of the talent of J&K", observed the Lt Governor.

Speaking on the present scenario of the UT, the Lt Governor remarked that "J&K is witnessing a new dawn of change, change towards betterment, and prosperity with plethora of opportunities being provided to Youth for transforming the socio-economic landscape of the UT".

The Lt Governor said that the UT Administration at all levels is working

towards growth and equitable development of the UT and welfare of its people. More such initiatives to explore the literary and other artistic talents of J&K would be taken in the coming days, he added.

The great display of talent from the youth of J&K in recently held National Youth Festival, besides two of the UT's achievers from Art and Literature & Education have been conferred with this year's prestigious Padma Shri awards, itself speaks about the kind

of ability and talent the people of J&K possesses, the Lt Governor said.

On the occasion, the Lt Governor felicitated the participating poets including new found talent, and asked the young and aspiring poets to reap maximum benefits of the opportunity and inspire others with their creativity.

In his welcome address, Secretary, JKAACL, Munir-ul-Islam, underscored the significance of the event. He

informed that 450 entries from youth of Jammu and Kashmir were received during a poetry competition organized across the UT. After adjudging each entry, 10 best young poets from J&K, 5 each from Urdu and Hindi poetry category were chosen by adjudicators to recite their poetry during the events, besides providing them with an opportunity to interact with the veteran poets.

Prominent Poets from J&K

including Dr. Liyaqat Jaffri, Dr. Nazeer Azad, Balraj Bakshi, Rukhsana Jabeen, Dr. Shafaq Sopori and Pritpal Singh Betab, besides young poets from the UT - Mohammad Akram, Nadiya Riyaz, Umar-bin-Abdul Aziz, Yamin-bin-Yousuf and Basit Ayoub who were selected from talent hunt competition also recited their pieces of poetry, attracting huge applause from the audience.

Sh. Kewal Kumar Sharma, State Election Commissioner; Sh. Farooq Khan and Sh. Rajeev Rai Bhatnagar-Advisors to the Lt Governor; Sh. BVR Subrahmanyam, Chief Secretary; Prof. Manoj Kumar Dhar, Vice Chancellor, University of Jammu; Prof. (Dr) Ravindra Kumar Sinha, Vice Chancellor, SMVDU; Sh. Rohit Kansal, Principal Secretary, Power Development Department and Information Department; Sh. Nitishwar Kumar, Principal Secretary to the Lt Governor; Sh. Sanjeev Verma, Divisional Commissioner, Jammu; Sh. Mukesh Singh, IGP Jammu; Sh. Sarmad Hafeez, Secretary to the Government, Tourism And Culture Department, besides scores of prominent and renowned artists, senior officers of Civil Administration and a large number of literary enthusiasts attended the evening.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

IED Blast in

militants when they were carrying out sanitization drill in the area.

He said that four soldiers sustained splinter injuries. "They were provided with first aid and have been evacuated to 92 base hospital. Further details will follow," he said.

Pattan Woman

with 454 deaths tops the list followed by Jammu (370), Baramulla (174), Budgam (117), Kupwara (95), Pulwama (88), Anantnag (84), Doda (64), Bandipora (61), Udhampur (57), Kulgam (54), Rajouri (55), Kathua (51), Ganderbal (46), Shopian (39), Samba (39), Poonch (24), Ramban (21), Kishtwar (22), and Reasi (15).

Meanwhile, 77 fresh cases of coronavirus were reported from J&K during the last 24 hours, officials said.

While 18 fresh cases were reported from Jammu division, the remaining 59 were confirmed Covid-19 positive by the officials in Kashmir division.

Giving district-wise details, officials said, Srinagar reported 23, Baramulla 8, Budgam 4, Pulwama 6, Kupwara 1, Anantnag 6, Ganderbal 7, Kulgam 2, Shopian 2, Jammu 16, and Udhampur and Kathua one each new case of Covid-19.

Moreover, they said, 129 more patients have recovered and were discharged from various hospitals— 55 from Jammu Division and 74 from Kashmir Valley. (With GNS inputs)

CBI Grills

and his wife Kanta Andotra, former deputy commissioner of Kathua Ajay Singh Jamwal and former tehsildar of Marheon Avatar Singh.

Besides them, then Naib Tehsildar Chann Rorian (Marheon Tehsil) Des Raj, then Girdawar Ram Pal, then Patwari Sudesh Kumar and other unidentified persons have been booked.

The trust runs a school, B.Ed (Bachelor of Education) and nursing colleges on the land, the officials said.

The CBI had in September last year conducted searches at the premises of the educational trust, its chairperson and residential premises of other accused in 10 locations, including Jammu and Kathua, which had led to the recovery of documents related to movable and immovable property, etc.

The probe agency had in June 2020 registered a preliminary enquiry (PE) on the allegations of encroachment on a huge tract of public/government/forest land in Kathua by certain persons in violation of the Jammu and Kashmir Agrarian Reforms Act in connivance with revenue and forest officials, the CBI had said in a statement issued earlier.

"It was further alleged that the accused were involved in the conspiracy with the said educational trust through its chairperson to allow the trust to retain the land beyond the permissible ceiling limit of 100 standard kanal fixed in the Agrarian Reforms Act by deliberately giving the wrong exemption of 32 kanals of grazing land as per said Act and showing the land as orchard" which was not an orchard as per revenue record, it said.

It was also alleged that the educational trust, in connivance with the other accused, got done wrong calculation of standard kanal of the land measuring 316 Kanal and 17 Marlas to escape the ceiling imposed by the J&K Agrarian Reforms Act, the statement said. Kanal and Marlas are traditional land measurement units.

Key Farmer

including 147, 148 (related to rioting), 307 (attempt to murder) and 120B (punishment of criminal conspiracy).

Even as the farmer unions continued to allege that "anti-social" elements had perpetrated the violence to "torpedo" their peaceful agitation against the farm laws, Tuesday's incidents that have been widely condemned started taking a toll with Bharatiya Kisan Union (Bhanu) and All India Kisan Sangharsh Coordination Committee withdrawing from the protests on the Delhi's borders.

The protesting farmer leaders are now considering postponement of their foot march to Parliament on February 1 against the three farm laws in the wake of the violence during the Republic Day.

A senior farmer leader said that Samkyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM), which is an umbrella body of 41 protesting unions, will take a final

call on the postponement of the February 1 foot march.

Union Culture and Tourism Minister Prahlaad Patel visited the Red Fort on Wednesday to take stock of the damage caused by a section of farmers who stormed the monument and hoisted the Nishan Sahib, the Sikh religious flag, there after deviating from the rally route. The minister has sought a report on the incident.

Vandalised metal detector gate and ticket counter, and shards of glass were seen on the premises of the Red Fort during the visit by the minister who was accompanied by the secretary of culture ministry and the ASI Director-General.

Security has been beefed up in several places across the national capital, especially at the Red Fort and farmer protest sites, with the deployment of additional paramilitary forces.

Delhi Metro authorities shut the Lal Quila station and restricted entry to the Jama Masjid station.

The tractor parade on Republic Day that was to highlight the demands of the farmer unions to repeal three new agri laws dissolved into anarchy on the streets of the city as tens of thousands of protesters broke through barriers, fought with police, and overturned vehicles.

Farmers' body Samyukta Kisan Morcha alleged "antisocial" elements like actor Deep Sidhu attempted to "torpedo" their peaceful agitation under a conspiracy but asserted they won't allow "the government and other forces inimical to the peaceful movement to break this struggle".

In a statement, the Morcha said, "The Union government has been severely shaken by this peasant agitation. Therefore, a dirty conspiracy was hatched with Kisan Mazdoor Sangharsh Committee and others."

It alleged that these outfits had set up their own separate protest site after 15 days of the beginning of this farmers' agitation. "They were not part of the organisations which jointly undertook the struggle," the statement claimed.

Talking to reporters, Bharatiya Kisan Union (Bhanu) president Thakur Bhanu Pratap Singh said he was deeply pained by whatever happened during the tractor parade in the national capital, adding that his union was ending its protest.

The union was staging the protest at the Chilla border.

VM Singh of All India Kisan Sangharsh Coordination Committee said that it is withdrawing from the ongoing agitation as they cannot carry forward a protest with someone "whose direction is something else".

Meanwhile, two pleas were filed in the Supreme Court over the tractor rally violence with one seeking setting up of a commission, headed by a retired apex court judge, to inquire into the incident while the other urged it to direct the media not to declare farmers as "terrorist" without any evidence.

Who Is Deep

year, has been considered by several farm bodies as an "agent" of the government.

However, Sidhu has sought to defend the action of the protesters at the Red Fort, saying they did not remove the national flag and had put up the "Nishan Sahib" flag as a symbolic protest.

"Deep Sidhu is an agent of the government and he did it at the behest of the Centre to defame the farmers' agitation," alleged Bharti Kisan Union (Ekta Ugrahan) general secretary Sukhdev Singh Kokrikalan on Wednesday.

"He took youth towards the Red Fort by misleading them. We never allowed people like Deep Sidhu at our stage. We knew that he could bring disrepute to the agitation. We never trusted him," he further said.

Bhartiya Kisan Union (Chaduni) leader Gurnam Singh Chaduni also condemned the action of Deep Sidhu, saying there was no plan of the farmers to go to the Red Fort.

"Whatever Deep Sidhu has done, we condemn it in the strongest possible words and we feel that he was an agent of the government. He always speaks against the farmer leaders and incites people against them," said Chaduni in a video message, stressing that farmers did not have any plan to go to the Red Fort.

Before associating himself with the farmers' agitation, Sidhu, hailing from Punjab's Muktsar district, had acted in a few Punjabi films. He has also studied law.

The model-turned-actor made his debut in Punjabi romantic film "Ramta Jogi", which was directed by Guddu Dhanoa in 2015. He has also acted in Punjabi movies "Jora Dus Numbaria", "Saade Aale" and "Jora the second chapter".

He got into the limelight when he joined a dharna at Shambhu near Haryana border in support of the protesting farmers last year. The dharna received massive support from farmers especially the youth who favoured the demand for roll-back of the three new agri laws introduced by the central government.

Sidhu was also a close aide of BJP MP Sunny Deol, who contested from the Gurdaspur seat in Punjab during the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. He remained with Deol during the poll campaigning.

Deol had distanced himself from Sidhu in December last year after he joined the farmers' agitation.

Amid a massive outrage over protesters hoisting a religious flag at the Red Fort during the tractor rally on Republic Day, Sidhu had defended their action, saying they did not remove the national flag and had put up the "Nishan Sahib" as a symbolic protest.

The "Nishan Sahib" flag, a symbol of Sikh religion, is seen at all gurdwara complexes.

In a video posted on Facebook on Tuesday evening, Sidhu had claimed that it was not a planned move and that they should not be given any communal colour or dubbed as fundamentalists or hardliners.

"To symbolically register our protest against the new farm legislation, we put up "Nishan Sahib" and a farmer flag and also raised the slogan of Kisan Mazdoor Ekta," Sidhu had said.

He had also stated that the national flag was not removed from the flagpole at the Red Fort and that nobody raised a question over the country's unity and integrity.

Sidhu, who had been associated with the farmers' agitation for the last many months, said "anger flares up" in a mass movement like this when the genuine rights of people are ignored.

The Samkyukt Kisan Morcha, an umbrella body of 41 farmer unions that is leading the protest against the three central farm laws, had also disassociated itself from those who indulged in violence during the tractor parade and alleged that some "antisocial elements" infiltrated their otherwise peaceful movement.

HC Holds 389

retiral benefits, including gratuity, pension etc. as extended to employees who were earlier working in the erstwhile Government Transport Undertaking etc.

"...pension is not an ex gratia payment but it is a payment for the past service rendered and it is a social welfare measure rendering socio-economic justice to those who in the heyday of their life ceaselessly toiled for employers with a legitimate expectation that in their ripe old age they would not be left in lurch," a bench of Justice Ali Mohammad Magrey said while quashing an order by virtue of which the concerned authorities had rejected a representation filed by these employees seeking their entitlement to pension and other retiral benefits.

After hearing both the parties, the court also allowed petition and quashed the order of General Manager (Admn), JKSRCT dated 29.10.2016.

"The petitioners are held entitled to all the retiral benefits, including pension, gratuity etc. on par and on the analogy of the section of the employees of the Corporation who were employees of the erstwhile Government Transport Undertaking (GTU) and had opted for the service of the Corporation, and also on the analogy of their counter parts in the JKI and other Corporations," the court said, adding, "the petitioners shall be paid the arrears of necessary dues as may be payable to them from the date of their retirement." (GNS)

Dry Weather Conditions

night's minus 7.1 degrees Celsius. Kupwara recorded a low of minus 2 degrees Celsius, while Kokernag in the south recorded minus 8.3 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.

The chances of snowfall are the most

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

Man Claims Funds

Giyasuddin Miya of Tinsatabighi Berabad village in, Malda, West Bengal was arrested by a team of Crime Branch headed by Deputy Superintendent of Police in connection with the case FIR No. 04/2020 U/S 420, 468, 120-B-RPC, 66 (D) IT Act, 5(2) PC Act of Crime Branch Kashmir, officials said Wednesday.

The accused, according to the officials, had hatched a criminal conspiracy with his aides and uploaded fake application forms on National Scholarship Portal for Merit Cum Means Scholarship under Minority Quota for J&K students during the year 2018-19 for district Kulgam.

"Subsequently, fake verifications were conducted from the institutes which did not exist in the states mentioned in the application forms," the officials said.

The accused, they said, in connivance with others have shown the fake beneficiaries to be the residents of district Kulgam and got deceitfully verified by the district social welfare officer Kulgam and managed to transfer the amount of RS. 1.34 crores from the Ministry of Minority Affairs, Government of India into the Bank accounts of 463 fake beneficiaries of District Malda, West Bengal maintained in various branches of State Bank of India, Bank of Baroda, United Bank of India (Now PNB), Allahabad Bank, IDFC Bank and Bangiya Vikas Gramin Bank.

"The accused is being questioned for further investigation," the officials said.

BJP Notice To

referred to the disciplinary committee for appropriate proceedings by president of the Jammu Kashmir Bharatiya Janata Party, he said.

"You (Kohli) are directed to submit your reply to the above allegations and complaint within 7 days positively to the disciplinary committee, either online or physical in party headquarters. In case of no reply within the period mentioned above, it will taken that you have accepted the allegations to be true," Sethi said.

Faith Healer Who

in Jammu and Kashmir," the faith-healer says, "this act (J&K RTI) should not have been removed, as it was doing a fantastic job by empowering masses in the valley."

Earlier, an activist in the faith-healer was born when he saw his tribe getting ignored in government offices.

"To get a ration card or other basic papers done, they had to visit the government offices for months and months," the faith-healer says.

Anxious about this step-motherly treatment, people started visiting Mohi-ud-Din and ask him for amulets so that the officer-in-charge would listen to them and get their work done.

"I was feeling helpless as I knew that my amulets wouldn't strike a sweeping change around," the faith-healer says. "So, I thought that there must be something which could be used to help my tribe."

In 2007, Mohi-ud-Din sensed the opportunity when he heard about RTI Act. His curt meeting with the foremost RTI activist of the valley, Sheikh Ghulam Rasool, helped his tribe's cause.

"As I started giving RTI applications as amulets," the faith healer says, "I started feeling relieved by empowering people."

His huge following only helped his information cause. People visited him in droves to get benefitted from his "new magic amulet".

"But since most of the tribal people aren't educated, it was a bit difficult to teach them how to file and use RTI," he recounts his journey. "I told them to send a few educated people from each area, so that I can teach them how to use this Act for their welfare."

This engagement, he adds, proved to be a grassroot game-changer.

"After people started filling RTIs, we suddenly saw a lot of developmental work taking place in our area," he says.

To upgrade his proficiency as an RTI activist, Mohi-ud-Din participated in many workshops across India, where his work was immensely appreciated.

"In 2014, Transparency International awarded me for my RTI contribution," the faith-healer, who's now vice chairperson of the J&K RTI Movement in the valley, says. "It encouraged more people like me to serve the people in a

better way."

Today, even the activist who changed his life is full of praises for the faith-healer.

"Peer sahib had strengthened the RTI movement at the grassroots in Budgam," Sheikh Ghulam Rasool, Chairman, J&K RTI Movement, told Kashmir Observer.

"He formed a huge number of RTI activists in his home district and empowered his tribe. If someone really deserves credit for using RTI in Budgam, it has to be Peer sahib."

Seeing his active involvement and enthusiasm for public welfare, the faith-healer's followers insisted him to take part in Panchayat polls.

He couldn't turn down the request, and today, the Information Peer is also a Samaritan Sarpanch of his village.

MERC Holds

batch 2005. He worked as Senior Editor at 'Greater Kashmir' besides contributing to 'The Wire' news portal. Riyaz Masroor, J&K BBC Correspondent, Mehmood ur Rashid, Op-ed Editor Greater Kashmir and Zafar Iqbal, Associate Editor MOJO, were the invited speakers while Dr Nisar Ahmad Mir Registrar KU was the guest of honour on the occasion.

In his remarks, the Registrar KU complimented the department for conducting the session and conveyed the appreciation of the Vice Chancellor for the same.

Zafar Iqbal in his presentation described the pandemic as a mixed bag for journalists where there are concerns for ensuring the safety while reporting the story from the ground.

Describing pandemic as the biggest story of our times, Mehmood-ur-Rashid opined, "Pandemic is still unfolding itself and we don't know in how many ways it may affect us. Riyaz Masroor talked about the changes journalism as a profession had undergone recently. "Do not consider change as a challenge. The challenge is how to adapt to the change," he observed.

Jehangir Ali, journalist brother of Mudasir Ali, was the special invitee on the occasion. He thanked the department for organising an event in memory of Mudasir Ali. Others who spoke on the occasion included Masood Hussain, Editor, Kashmir Life, Sameer Yasir, Correspondent New York Times besides Dr. Muslim Jan, formerly Sr. Editor at MERC. Showkat Shafi, Dy. Registrar KU and Suhail Akram, Correspondent The National were present on the occasion.

Emotional scenes were witnessed during the session when condolences were conveyed to Ali Muhammad Wazir, father of late Mudasir Ali who watched the proceedings online.

The proceedings of the memorial session were conducted by senior faculty and former HoD MERC Nasir Mirza. "Mudasir has become immortal as he lives in our memories", he said while highlighting the objectives of the session.

Earlier Dr. Aaliya Ahmed, HoD MERC, talked about Mudasir Ali's journey from being a hard-working and dedicated student to an inspiring journalist. She also expressed her gratitude to the media experts for gracing the occasion.

Webinar co-ordinator Dr. Syeda Afshana, Associate Professor MERC, presented the vote of thanks. Participants prayed for the eternal peace to the departed soul and strength and courage to the bereaved family—(KNO)

3 Officials

Officer, Animal and Sheep Husbandry Department. Meanwhile, the General Administration Department issued another order reinstating 3 officials.

The order reads that in the interest of administration, the three officers under orders of deputation to the Union Territory of Ladakh, are reinstated, with immediate effect.

These include Kamal Kumar Sharma, the then CPO, Reasi. Shama-un-Ahmad, the then CPO, Rajouri and Mohammad Irfan, the then Junior Engineer, Hydraulic, Ramban.

Budgam Teen Dies

news broke out, the report added.

Active Covid-19

far recorded 129 coronavirus-related deaths -- 85 in Leh district and 44 in Kargil district. A total of 9,504 patients have recovered from the disease so far, they said. Officials said the recovered patients included four persons who were discharged by the chief medical officer of Leh. With the recovery of these patients, the number of active cases in Ladakh dropped to 51 -- two in Kargil and 49 in Leh.(PTI)

Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma Retain Top 2 Spots In ICC ODI Rankings

Press Trust of India

DUBAI: India captain Virat Kohli and senior batsman Rohit Sharma retained their number one and two positions respectively in the ICC rankings for ODI batsmen, while pacer Jasprit Bumrah remained at the third spot in the bowler's list.

Kohli, who had scored 89 and 63 against Australia in his last two ODI appearances, has 870 points to his kitty.

Rohit, who missed the tour of Australia due to an injury and has not featured in any one-day game since the COVID-19 pandemic began, remained at the second spot, five points ahead of Pakistan skipper Babar Azam (837).

New Zealand's Ross Taylor (818) and Australia skipper Aaron Finch (791) round up the top five in the batsmen's list.

Ireland all-rounder Paul Stirling gained eight slots to reach 20th place after scoring 285 runs against Afghanistan which included centuries in the second and third matches.

Afghanistan's Hashmatullah Shahidi (70th to 66th), Rashid Khan

(96th to 89th) and Javed Ahmadi (103rd to 99th) have also gained in the rankings for batsmen.

Among the bowlers, Bumrah remained the best-placed Indian, occupying the third spot with 700 points. New Zealand pacer Trent Boult (722) and Afghan spinner Mujeeb Ur Rahman (701) occupy the top two spots.

Bangladesh spinner Mehidy Hasan Miraz, who was the most successful bowler in the recently concluded series against the West Indies, has progressed nine spots to take the fourth position after grabbing seven wickets, including a haul of four for 25 in the second ODI that won him the player of the match award.

Bangladesh pacer Mustafizur Rahman's six wickets in the series has lifted him from 19th to the eighth position.

Other Bangladesh players to gain in the latest rankings update include Shakib Al Hasan (up 15 places to 13th among bowlers) and Mushfiqur Rahim (up one place to 15th among batsmen) after their player of the match performances in the first and third matches respectively.

Pant, Ashwin Nominated To New ICC Player Of Month Awards For January



Press Trust of India

DUBAI: India's senior off-spinner R Ashwin and swash-buckling wicketkeeper-batsman Rishabh Pant would be in contention for the newly-introduced player of the month awards announced by the International Cricket Council on Wednesday.

Besides Ashwin and Pant, two other Indians -- Mohammed Siraj and T Natarajan -- are also in the fray. All of them played a stellar role in India's recent historic Test series win against Australia.

The world body said the awards will recognise the best performances of both male and female cricketers across all forms of international cricket throughout the year.

Other players named for the awards for January are England captain Joe Root, star Australia batsman Steve Smith, Rahmanullah Gurbaz of Afghanistan, Marizanne Kapp and Nadine de Klerk of South Africa and Nida Dar of Pakistan.

Fans are invited to vote online every month to award their favourite male and female cricketers across all formats of international cricket played in that month, the ICC said in a release.

An independent ICC Voting Academy comprising

former players, broadcasters and journalists from around the world will team up with fans to vote for the winners.

Geoff Allardice, ICC General Manager Cricket said: "The ICC Player of the Month is a great way to connect with fans of the sport and celebrate performances of their favourite players through the year."

"It gives us all an opportunity to acknowledge world class performances on the field by male and female cricketers and they have been in abundance throughout January."

The three nominees for each of the categories will be determined by the ICC Awards Nominations Committee based on on-field performances and overall achievements during the period of that month (the first to the last day of each calendar month.)

The Voting Academy will submit its votes by email and will retain a 90 per cent share of the vote. Subsequently, on the first day of each month, fans registered with the ICC will be able to submit votes via the ICC website and will have a 10 per cent share of the vote.

Winners will be announced every second Monday of the month on the ICC's digital channels.



England Squad Arrives In Chennai For First Two Tests Against India

Press Trust of India

CHENNAI: Members of the England cricket team including captain Joe Root arrived in the city on Wednesday for the four-match series against India with the first two Tests to be played here.

Some of the Indian players and members of the support staff also landed in this southern city, airport sources said.

Root and Co flew in from Sri Lanka at around 10.30 AM and headed to the hotel where members of the two teams will be put up as part of the bio-bubble, a Tamil Nadu Cricket Association official said.

The England team had on Mon-

day completed a 2-0 series sweep of the Tests against Sri Lanka with Root slamming two big centuries.

Star all-rounder Ben Stokes and Jofra Archer had arrived in the city on Sunday and are in quarantine.

While a few Indian players including star batsman Rohit Sharma and Test vice-captain Ajinkya Rahane arrived on Tuesday night, some others like Cheteshwar Pujara, Jasprit Bumrah and Rishabh Pant, star of the series clinching victory in the Brisbane Test, reached on Wednesday morning.

Team coach Ravi Shastri flew in from Mumbai as did several other players from destinations across the country.

Skipper Virat Kohli is scheduled to arrive later on Wednesday.

The players of the two teams will be staying at Hotel Leela Palace in a bio-bubble as part of quarantine protocols and will undergo testing for COVID-19, the TNCA official said.

"They will be in quarantine for six days and are set to start practising from February 2," the official added.

The first Test will be played at the M A Chidambaram stadium from February 5 and the second from February 13.

Chennai had last hosted a Test match in December 2016 against England.

Fawad Alam Ton Helps Pakistan Take A Lead Of 88-Runs Against South Africa

Agencies

KARACHI: Fawad Alam scored his third test century to put Pakistan in charge on the second day of the first test against South Africa on Wednesday.

The 35-year-old Alam hit nine fours and two sixes in a patient 109 off 245 balls, compiled in just under six hours, to help his team reach 308-8 at stumps.

Faheem Ashraf also scored a fluent 64 off 84 balls as Pakistan opened up a first-innings lead of 88 runs on a slow wicket. He and Alam shared a stand of 102 for the seventh wicket.

Debutant Nauman Ali was 6 not out and Hasan Ali, who was bowled by Keshav Maharaj off a no-ball late in the day, was unbeaten on 11.

Alam, who bats in an unorthodox style and exposes all three stumps to the bowler, was out in the last session when he flicked a ball from Lungi Ngidi (2-55) straight to

PAKISTAN VS SOUTH AFRICA 1ST TEST NATIONAL STADIUM, KARACHI			
SOUTH AFRICA (1st innings)		220-30	
DEAN ELGAR	58 (104)	YOUSUF SHAH	3-68
KEVIN LINDSEY	26 (54)	FAWAD ALAM	2-88
PAKISTAN (1st innings)		308-8	
FAWAD ALAM	109 (245)	HAZAR DABHA	2-46
FAHEEM ASHRAF	64 (84)	LUNGI NGIDI	2-55

mid-wicket.

"I am feeling out of this world at the moment, it was a very good innings because the team needed it the most," Alam said. "I think we can put South Af-

rica under more pressure if we manage to add 20-30 more runs tomorrow because the pitch looks like quite slow and double-paced." Pakistan was in trouble overnight on 33-4 after South

Africa had been skittled out for 220 on an eventful first day when 14 wickets fell on an uneven wicket.

But Alam showed lots of determination to keep the Proteas at bay. The home team went close to dismissing him for 35 just before lunch when Dean Elgar failed to hold onto a sharp low catch in the slips.

Alam had long been ignored by Pakistan after scoring a debut test hundred against Sri Lanka in 2009.

He finally got his chance against England last year and the left-handed batsman made his second test century, 11 years after his first, against New Zealand last month.

On Wednesday, Alam shared a 94-run, fifth-wicket stand with Azhar Ali (51) before his partner was caught behind off left-arm spinner Maharaj (2-71). Mohammad Rizwan then made 33 until he was removed by Ngidi.



CRISTIANO RONALDO

Refuses £5.3 Million-A-Year Offer To Promote Saudi Tourism: Reports

Agencies

Portugal Captain and football star, Cristiano Ronaldo, has reportedly rejected a £5.3 million-a-year deal to promote Saudi Arabia tourism.

According to a report published in The Telegraph, the Juventus star rejected an offer that would see his image be used for commercial campaigns by the Saudi government.

The deal also included having Cristiano Ronaldo, 35, visit the Gulf country once a week.

However, the Juventus striker decided to "pass" on the offer.

The report further states that Saudi Arabia has also approached Barcelona legend Lionel Messi with an identical deal. The Barcelona star's position on the Saudi proposal is not yet known, the newspaper said.

The offer is in line with Saudi's ambition of strengthening its tourism prospects by 2030. Many

Rights activists, including Amnesty International, have called the efforts as "sports-washing" of Saudi Arabia's poor human rights record.

This is not the first time that a celebrity has rejected Saudi Arabia's offer. In 2019, renowned rapper Nicki Minaj cancelled her performance from the Jeddah World Festival in Saudi Arabia.

"After careful reflection, I have decided to no longer move forward with my scheduled concert at Jeddah World Fest," she said.

Nicki Minaj said that the decision was due to her support for the rights of women, the LGBTQ community and freedom of expression, all of which Saudi Arabia is routinely criticized for.

However, earlier this month, FIFA President Gianni Infantino starred in a promotional video for the Saudi Arabian government.

"It's an amazing scenery, it's an incredible history," Infantino says in the video. "This is something that the world should come and see."

34-Year-Old Nauman Ali Opens Up About His Debut For Pakistan Team



Press Trust of India

KARACHI: For left-arm spinner Nauman Ali, it was a dream come true when he made his Test debut for Pakistan on Tuesday against South Africa at the National Stadium.

Coming from a small town 'Khipro', a subdivision of the Sanghar division in Pakistan's southern Sindh province, Nauman is among a handful of players from the rural areas of the province to get a chance to play for the national team.

"I was hopeful of getting a call-up after bowling well and taking wickets in the last two seasons of first-class cricket," the 34-year-old Nauman, who became the fourth oldest Test cricketer to debut for Pakistan, said in a virtual conference.

Nauman finished with two wickets in the South African first innings total of 220 but impressed everyone with his disciplined line and length.

"It has been a long journey. I was born and studied in Khipro but moved to Hyderabad to pursue a career as a professional cricketer with my uncle," he said.

Khipro is around 285 kilometres from Karachi and Nauman said it had not been easy for him to move to a big city as he belonged to a modest background.

"My father works in the clerical staff of an oil factory in Hyderabad now," he said.

Pakistan has been very confident in playing left-arm spinners and after 2016 they had picked all-rounder Zafar Gohar to play against New Zealand in the second Test at Christchurch last month.

However, he didn't have a very memorable match which led to him being dropped for the home series against South Africa.

Nauman was among nine uncapped players who got the selectors nod when the Pakistan squad was revamped for the home series. Nauman said he is confident of having a long career for Pakistan as he is ready for the challenge of bowling in any cricket playing nation.

"If they show confidence I am ready to deliver anywhere not only in home series," he said.

Man City Go Top Of PL Table After 5-0 Routing Of West Brom



Agencies

LONDON: Fuelled by a sparkling attacking display, Manchester City's players powered to the top of the Premier League for the first time this season — and even the opposition are stopping to admire their work.

In a comical exhibit for VAR's ever-lengthening highlights reel, West Bromwich Albion's defenders virtually stopped in their tracks and looked on as Joao Cancelo curled a shot into the top corner for the second of City's goals in a 5-0 rout on Tuesday.

After all, the assistant referee had raised the flag for offside moments earlier but City, unlike West Brom, played on as Bernardo Silva collected the ball and fed Cancelo, who — unchallenged — picked his spot from the edge of the area.

A video review showed Silva was actually onside and the goal was allowed to stand. City was on course to match its biggest league win of the season and, on the evidence of this game and the last couple of months, Pep Guardiola's team is going to be hard to stop.

"Now, with VAR in these situations, we have to follow the actions until the end because you

never know what is going to happen," Guardiola said.

"Is the goal allowed or disallowed? Nobody knows. So you have to continue until the end of the action."

Make it seven straight wins in the league — and 11 in all competitions — for City in an ominous run of results. City became the ninth side to finish a day in first place this season, the most within a single top-flight campaign since 1986-87.

Even if Manchester United reclaims the lead on Wednesday by beating Sheffield United, City — on its longest winning run in more than three years — looks to be the team to beat.

Ilkay Gundogan netted twice to make it seven goals in the last eight league games for a midfielder who has never been a prolific scorer in his career but has hit a rich vein of form. Riyad Mahrez and Raheem Sterling set each other up for the final two goals.

HAMMERS IN FOURTH

Another central midfielder in scoring form is Tomas Soucek, who netted twice for West Ham in its 3-2 win at Crystal Palace that lifted the team to fourth place.

The Czech Republic international is proving a solid source of goals for West Ham, having scored seven times in his last 13 league matches.

In a tweet, he dedicated his double to his wife.

"The most beautiful feeling in football is when you realize you have helped your team," Soucek wrote. "But this time I want to dedicate the win and my two goals to my wife. It's really tough time for her as she can't see anyone from the family. Thank you for taking care of me and our daughter!"

MISERY FOR BRUCE

Newcastle's win-less run extended to 11 games in all competitions with a 2-1 home defeat to Leeds, piling the pressure on manager Steve Bruce.

Jack Harrison clinched three points with a swerving 61st-minute strike with the outside of his left foot, four minutes after Miguel Almiron cancelled out Raphinha's first-half opener for Leeds.

Leeds ended its three-game losing streak in all competitions.

Newcastle has taken only two points from the last 27 in the league and has dropped to 16th.



LIFE IS UNPREDICTABLE,
KEEP YOURSELF PREPARED



One Policy, A World Of Protection
Mukammal Hifazat