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Humidity : 91%

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P3 NEWS SDA TO RESERVE 25% COMMERCIAL SPACE AT MECHANISED PARKING FOR WOMEN

P7 THINK MINDFUL FRIDAYS WOMEN'S MENTAL HEALTH Perpetually spoken common statement 'zou aur te jahan aur' which is in vogue in our society signifies the importance...



P11 SPORTS MEET PULWAMA WRESTLER RASHIDA SIMNANI WHO WANTS TO TEACH KASHMIR WOMEN SELF-DEFENSE



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Healthy citizens are the greatest asset any country can have. - Winston S. Churchill

NEWS DIGEST

Jammu Bans Bovine Transportation

JAMMU: The district authorities here on Thursday ordered a ban on transportation of bovine animals from the winter capital city without permission over fears of disturbance of peace and tranquility.

Cops Recover Stolen Pistol, Arrest Thief

JAMMU: Police on Thursday claimed to have recovered stolen service weapon in Jammu and arrested a burglar involved in the act.

CASO Held In South Kashmir Villages

SRINAGAR: Amid severe cold, joint forces launched a cordon and search operation (CASO) in two villages in south Kashmir's Pulwama and Shopian districts, reports said Thursday.

Two Teens Injured In Scuffle, One Critical

SRINAGAR: Two teenage boys were injured during a scuffle at Malbagh Ummar Colony in Lal Bazar area of Srinagar, officials said on Thursday.

School Building Guttled In Shopian Blaze

SRINAGAR: A Government School building was gutted in a fire mishap at Amarbugh village of Imamsahib in South Kashmir's Shopian district on Thursday evening.

Intense Cold Wave Grips Kashmir Valley

Gulmarg Shivers At Minus 13.4 Degrees Celsius



KO Photo: Abid Bhat

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: The mercury plunged by several degrees across Kashmir as the valley was gripped by intense cold wave conditions on Thursday, officials said here.

low of minus 5.6 degrees Celsius, plunging more than three degrees from minus 2 degrees Celsius the previous night, the officials said.

Budget Session Set To Be Stormy

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: The Budget session of Parliament beginning Friday is poised to be stormy with the Opposition set to attack the government over the three new farm legislations, amid an ongoing agitation by farmers.

The session will begin with the address of the President to the joint sitting of the two Houses on Friday morning followed by the presentation of the Union Budget on February 1.

A total of 16 Opposition parties have announced a boycott of the President's address in solidarity with the farmers protesting the new farm laws, senior Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad said on Thursday.

14-Days Old Militant Held In Bandipora: Police

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Police on Thursday claimed to have arrested a Jaish-e-Muhammad militant from Patushahi area of north Kashmir's Bandipora district.

Imtiyaz Ahmad Khan of Panzgang was arrested at a checkpoint established by government forces at Patushahi following credible information about the movement of militants from Sopore to Bandipora, a police spokesperson said Thursday.

Police Issue Lookout Notices Against Farmer Leaders

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: Delhi Police on Thursday issued lookout notices against farmer leaders named in an FIR in connection with the violence during the farmers' tractor parade on Republic Day and invoked sedition charges in a case of the Red Fort incident as the force intensified its investigation.

It also asked the farmer leaders to submit their response within three days, explaining why legal action should not be taken against them as they did not follow conditions set for the parade.



Sources said that around nine crack teams have been formed to locate all the culprits, even as there was no official

confirmation from the police yet. The move comes a day after Police Commissioner S N Shrivastava said

'No Arrests Will Happen, Will Hang Myself'

Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) spokesperson Rakesh Tikait was seen giving a fiery speech as police arrived at the Ghazipur border. "Police will be responsible if something happens here," he said.

Indo-Pak Troops Trade Fire, Teenager Hurt

Observer Monitoring Desk

SRINAGAR: A teenager on Thursday was injured as India and Pakistani troops exchanged heavy gunfire and mortar shells along the Line of Control (LoC) in Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir.

18-year-old Ikhlag Ahmad of Shahpur village along the LoC was injured on Thursday evening after receiving splinter

injuries in Pakistani shelling, officials said. The injured teen, they said, was removed to the district hospital for treatment.

Earlier, the officials said, Pakistani troops violated ceasefire agreement and resorted to firing and mortar shelling in Shahpur sector. The Indian army, he said, were responding effectively to the unprovoked ceasefire violation by Pak troops.

Pak Officials Return Poonch Woman

A 36-year old woman, who had inadvertently crossed over to Pakistan controlled Kashmir (PcK) from Poonch, was returned by Pakistani authorities at the cross-LoC point on Thursday, officials said.

J&K Records 63 New Covid-19 Cases

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday recorded 63 new coronavirus cases that raised its tally to 1,24,297, while one person died due to the infection in the past 24 hours, officials said.

The number of active cases in the union territory fell below the 1,000-mark for the first time in the past eight months, they said.

Of the fresh cases, 18 were reported from the

Mehbooba Alleges BJP Hand In Jan-26 Violence

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti on Thursday demanded immediate withdrawal of the three farm laws saying these were enacted without consulting farmers.

Mehbooba, who arrived in Jammu on Wednesday on a week-long tour of the region to hold threadbare discussions with senior PDP leaders on party affairs and future strategy, made these remarks at Gandhi Nagar here.

"I feel that the government should take back these laws immediately," she told reporters in reply to a question on the violence on Republic Day in New Delhi.

Colleges, Universities In Valley To Reopen From February 15

Govt Issues Covid-19 Guidelines To Resume Academic Activities

Observer News Service

JAMMU: The Jammu and Kashmir Government on Thursday announced reopening of colleges and Universities in Jammu division from February 1 and in Kashmir Valley from February 15 while issuing a set of Covid-19 guidelines for the higher education institutions to resume academic activities.

The higher education institutions in summer zone areas of Jammu division will re-open from February 01, an official spokesperson said here Thursday, adding while as in



Kashmir Valley and winter zone areas of Jammu, the institutions will open on 15th February after winter vacations.

He said that the order issued here by the Higher Education Department has urged the institutions, staff

Vested Interests In Admin Harassing KP Employees: APMCC



Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: All Parties Migrants Coordination Committee (APMCC) on Thursday called on Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha here and alleged that there are vested interests in the union territory administration who are creating unnecessary hurdles in the working of migrant employees in the Valley.

It also raised with the Lt Governor other issues being faced by the Prime Minister's Package employees, including harassment, promotion, transfer and accommodation, spokesperson, APMCC, King C Bharati said.

"The Kashmiri Migrant PM Package Employees are working in Kashmir valley on a special package created exclusively for them and are



KD Sethi: 'Epitome of Brotherhood' Is No More

As a stalwart of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir, Sethi had witnessed many important political events of J&K, be it communal riots during 1947 Indo-Pak partition, Quit Kashmir movement and his trysts with powers of the day. His death was condoled widely and across the borders.

Auqib Javed

When partition was bleeding subcontinent in 1947, many Samaritans were going out of their ways to save people from the mad-frenzy of violence. Among them was a young man from Jammu.

"As a right-minded person, Krishen Dev Sethi saved lives of many Muslims and non-Muslims in Mirpur and Jammu during the 1947 bloodcurdling fall," says Mohammad Sayeed Malik, a veteran journalist.

"Sethi sahib saw the entire madness unfolding in front of his eyes and

tried his best to play a fireman among arsonists."

Sethi breathed his last after prolonged illness on January 28, at his home in Jammu's Mohalla Dulpatian at the ripe age of 93.

Born in 1927, at Mirpur, now part of Pakistan-administered Kashmir, Sethi started his political career before 1947. As a 15-year-old political activist, he fought feudalism, landlordism, money-lenders and repression by both British and autocratic rulers of Kashmir.

He eventually became a member of the first constituent assembly in 1951 and a member of the first legislative

assembly in 1957. Sethi represented Nowshera assembly constituency twice as MLA.

"Despite our ideological differences we shared a very close bond as friends. He was the man who had deep respect for any human irrespective of caste, religion, race and creed," Malik told Kashmir Observer.

As an active participant in the "Quit Kashmir Movement", Sethi faced two-year imprisonment during Bakshshi Gulam Mohammad's regime. He remained underground for eight years during the 1960s for propagating peace with China.

"Sethi was a politician of higher stature and played a key role in formation of J&K's own constitution," Malik said. "He was the face of the National Conference in Mirpur and Jammu."

Despite Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah appointing him provincial general secretary of his party, Sethi openly criticised the populist leader's policies.

In 1953—the year Abdullah was arrested in "Kashmir Conspiracy Case"—Sethi joined ultra-left politics and formed Democratic National Conference. His outfit was joined by NC deserters like Gulam Mohammed Sadiq, Mir Qasim, and DP Dhar.



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# Study Sheds Light On How Blood Stem Cells Maintain Their Lifelong Potential For Self-Renewal



A team of scientists has discovered that cells in the so-called "stem cell niche" are responsible for the lifelong self-renewal capacity.

The study on mice stem cells suggested that the blood vessel cells of the niche produce a factor that stimulates blood stem cells and thus maintains their self-renewal capacity. However, during aging, the production of this factor ceases and blood stem cells begin to age.

The study led by scientists at the German Cancer Research Center (DKFZ) and the Heidelberg Institute for Stem Cell Technology and Experimental Medicine\* (HI-STEM) was published in the journal Nature Communications.

Throughout life, blood stem cells in the bone marrow ensure that our body is adequately supplied with mature blood cells. If there is no current need for cell replenishment, the blood stem cells remain in a deep sleep to protect themselves from damage to the genome, which can lead to cancer. Blood loss, infections, and inflammations act like an alarm clock: immediately, the blood stem cells begin

to divide and produce new cells - for example, to provide immune cells to fight viruses or to compensate for a loss of red blood cells or platelets. With each cell division, the stem cells always regenerate themselves as well, so that the stem cell pool is maintained. This is what scientists call self-renewal.

"The dormancy is the prerequisite for this unique ability of stem cells," explained Andreas Trumpp, a stem cell expert at DKFZ and HI-STEM.

"The almost unlimited self-renewal capacity is considered a key property of the very rare stem cells, which play a central role in the maintenance and repair of tissues and organs. However, cancer cells also possess this ability. They either derive directly from stem cells or acquire this ability through genetic modification. Without self-renewal, there is no cancer," Trumpp summed it up.

A team of researchers led by Andreas Trumpp now wanted to find out which molecular signals control the self-renewal ability. In their current analyses, they discovered in mice that dormant blood stem cells carry large amounts of the receptor protein neo-

genin-1 (Neo-1) on their surface.

In contrast, other blood cells do not produce this receptor. Further investigations revealed Neo-1 to be a key molecule for self-renewal: if the researchers genetically switched off the receptor in mice, the stem cells no longer slept, thus losing their ability to self-renew, and the animals' hematopoietic system exhausted prematurely.

Neo-1 is a receptor that enables the stem cell to receive external signals. But where do these important signals, which are essential for the self-renewal ability, come from? The researchers identified the signal molecule netrin-1 as the binding partner and activator of the Neo-1 receptor. Netrin-1 is produced by the endothelial cells that line the fine blood vessels in the bone marrow.

"We genetically knocked out netrin-1 in the stem cell niche of mouse bone marrow. The blood stem cells then lost the ability to self-renew. In contrast, when netrin-1 production was experimentally increased, they slept all the more deeply," said Simon Renders, first author of the study.

Scientists refer to the structures in the immediate vicinity of stem cells as

a stem cell niche. The niche can consist of cellular and non-cellular components and exerts a major influence on the functions and fate of blood stem cells. Netrin-1-bearing cells of blood capillaries are also part of the niche.

"Our results reconfirm the central role of the stem cell niche for stem cell function and thus for the regenerative capacity and health of our body," Trumpp explained.

The age-related depletion of the hematopoietic system could also be traced in the animals: With age, the bone marrow changes its structure, and the tiny blood vessels degenerate. Using older mice, the scientists were able to show that this is accompanied by a loss of netrin-1.

The blood stem cells initially try to compensate for this lack of their important signal generator by increasing the formation of Neo-1. However, with increasing age, this compensation is no longer sufficient, and the hematopoietic system increasingly loses its self-renewal capacity. The result of these changes is an increasingly weaker immune system in old age.

**از عدالت نائب تحصیلدار ایکویٹیو مجسٹریٹ درجہ اول نائب تحصیلدار ترہگام**  
عنوان: مضمون درخواست منجانب بی بی صلیبہ دختر پیر رحمت اللہ شاہ ساکنہ ترہگام براد عطا گئی ڈیپنڈنٹ سرٹیفکیٹ

اشہار براد آگاہی ہر خاص و عام  
معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں سائل نے ایک درخواست براد عطا گئی ڈیپنڈنٹ سرٹیفکیٹ پیش کی ہے۔ جو کہ فتر ہذا میں زیر کاروائی ہے اور اجراء کرنے مطلوب ہے بی بی صلیبہ کے والد پیر رحمت اللہ شاہ ایک سرکاری ملازم تھا۔ جو مورخہ 2014-12-22 کو فوت ہوئے سائل کبہ بذیل افتراء پر مشتمل ہے بی بی صلیبہ دختر پیر رحمت اللہ شاہ گھریلو کام 56 سال  
بی بی صلیبہ دختر 53 --  
بی بی فاطمہ دختر 52 --  
بی بی زبیدہ دختر 40 --  
بی بی نسیم دختر 42 --

اسکے علاوہ کوئی بھی افراد نہیں بتلایا گیا ہے سرٹیفکیٹ زیر بحث ادا کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص یا اشخاص کو کوئی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ اپنا عذر یا اعتراض ساتھ ہی ہم کے اندر پیش کریں۔ میعاد گزرنے کے بعد کوئی عذر یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔

نائب تحصیلدار ترہگام fnt

**از عدالت نائب تحصیلدار ایکویٹیو مجسٹریٹ درجہ اول نائب تحصیلدار ترہگام**  
عنوان: مضمون درخواست منجانب مشتاق احمد میر ولد غلام محمد میر ساکنہ ترہگام تحصیل ترہگام براد عطا گئی ڈیپنڈنٹ سرٹیفکیٹ

اشہار براد آگاہی ہر خاص و عام  
معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں سائل نے ایک درخواست براد عطا گئی ڈیپنڈنٹ سرٹیفکیٹ پیش کی ہے۔ جو کہ فتر ہذا میں زیر کاروائی ہے اور اجراء کرنے مطلوب ہے سائل کبہ بذیل افتراء پر مشتمل ہے سارہ بیگم زوجہ مشتاق احمد میر گھریلو کام 45 سال  
مشقت مشتاق پسر 20 زیر تعلیم  
محبور احمد پسر 18 زیر تعلیم  
شاہ خالد بیگم زوجہ محمد میر عمر رسیدہ 72

اسکے علاوہ کوئی بھی افراد نہیں بتلایا گیا ہے سائل سرٹیفکیٹ زیر بحث ادا کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص یا اشخاص کو کوئی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ اپنا عذر یا اعتراض ساتھ ہی ہم کے اندر پیش کریں۔ میعاد گزرنے کے بعد کوئی عذر یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔

نائب تحصیلدار ترہگام fnt

**از دفتر نائب تحصیلدار ایکویٹیو مجسٹریٹ درجہ اول آورہ کپورہ**  
عنوان: مضمون درخواست :- مدثر ریاض ولد ریاض احمد خان و قرآن العین زوجہ مدثر ریاض خان ساکنہ گلگام تحصیل کپورہ ہمدرد عطا گئی PSP سرٹیفکیٹ

اشہار براد آگاہی ہر خاص و عام  
معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں درخواست سائلان بعنوان بالا دفتر ہذا میں زیر کاروائی ہے اس بارے میں پجوری حلقہ سے بیانات بشمول مطلوبہ نقولات ریکارڈ طلب کیا گیا جس سے عیاں ہوتا ہے کہ سائل موصوع گلگام کاسکولت دار ہے۔ کنبہ کی تفصیل یوں ہے۔

نام	عمر	پیشہ	کیفیت
مدثر ریاض خان ولد ریاض احمد خان	33	ملازمت	
قرآن العین زوجہ مدثر ریاض خان	32	گھریلو کام	

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fnt

**از نیابت ماگام**  
عنوان: مضمون درخواست عرفان الحق بیروزادہ ولد غلام قادر بیروزادہ ساکنہ موضع ماگام براد عطا گئی بیکوارڈ ایریا سرٹیفکیٹ تحت SRO294

**اشہار براد آگاہی ہر خاص و عام**  
معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں سائل نے ایک درخواست براد بیکوارڈ ایریا سرٹیفکیٹ پیش کی ہے۔ جو کہ فتر ہذا میں زیر کاروائی ہے مزید کاروائی کرنے سے قبل بذریعہ اشہار ہر خاص و عام کو مطلع کیا جاتا ہے کہ اگر کسی شخص یا اشخاص کو کوئی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ اپنا عذر یا اعتراض ساتھ ہی ہم کے اندر پیش کریں۔ میعاد گزرنے کے بعد کوئی عذر یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔

نائب تحصیلدار ماگام fnt

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**Public Notice**  
My name and Date Of Birth has been wrongly written in school records as Shahzad Hussain Mir, DOB 02-04-1996 while my correct name and DOB is Shahzad Ahmad Mir And Correct DOB is 02-04-2000 which needs immediate correction if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file hi/her objection in the office of the Principal Govt Boys Higher Secondary School Braripora within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.  
Shahzad Ahmad Mir  
S/o Nazir Ahmad Mir R/o Braripora  
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I have applied for the issuance of Pesticides License for my business unit under name and style Thoker Pesticides Nadigam Shopian. If anybody having any objection may contact Plant Protection Officer Lal Mandi Srinagar within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.  
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as

**Public Notice**  
I have applied for the issuance of Fertilizers License for my business unit under name and style Thoker Fertilizers Nadigam Shopian. If anybody having any objection may contact Chief Agriculture Officer Shopian 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 JAMMU AND KASHMIR FINANCE DEPARTMENT**  
(www.jkdat.nic.in)

**Subject: Extension of date for submission of Life Certificate by Pensioners/ Family Pensioners.**

**CIRCULAR**

In pursuance of rules, the pensioners drawing pension through Treasury/Bank are required to produce life certificate once in a calendar year i.e, by ending November every year which was extended upto 31.12.2020 vide circular dated 26.11.2020 issued under endorsement No. DGAT/Comp-Try/DLC/01/208 dated 26.11.2020. However, it has been brought to the notice of the Finance Department by J&K Bank Ltd as well as pensioners that most of the pensioners have not produced their mandatory Life Certificate by the extended date due to ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and the vulnerability of elderly population to Corona Virus.

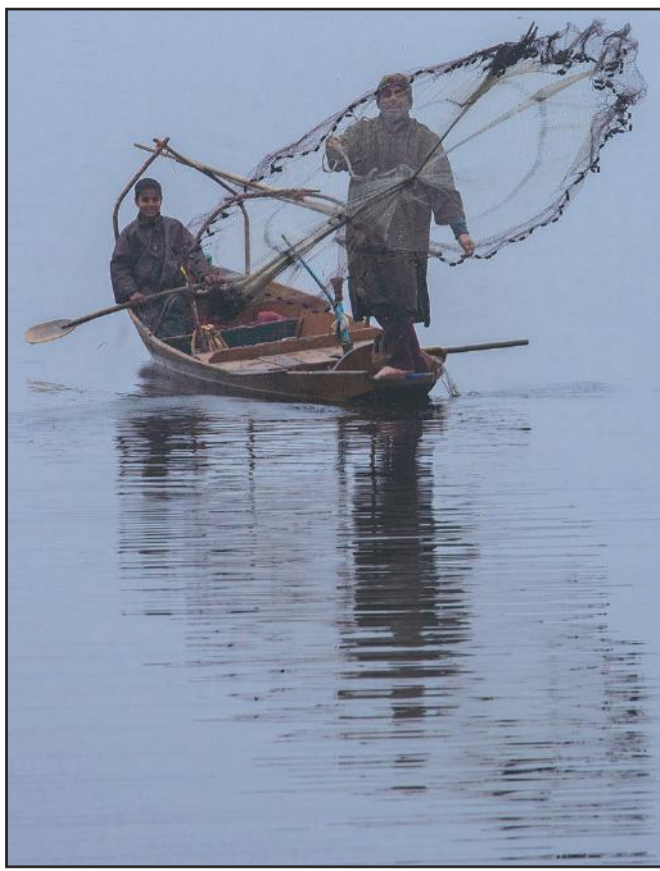
Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pension Department of Pension and Pensioners Welfare Govt. Of India vide OM dated 23.11.2020 has extended the existing timeline for submission of Life Certificate from 1st November, 2020 onward till 28th February, 2021. During this extended period, the pension will continue to be paid by the Pension Disbursing Authorities (PDAs) uninterrupted.

In view of above, to avoid rush at Bank /Treasury while maintaining social distance and to facilitate the elderly pensioners to furnish the mandatory Life Certificate to the concerned authority of Bank/Treasury, the date for submission of Life Certificate by the pensioners is hereby extended till 28th of February, 2021. All the pensioners shall, therefore, furnish their Life Certificate to the concerned Bank/Treasury by or before 28th of February, 2021, failing which their pension shall not be disbursed.

**DIPK-12216/20**  
No. DGAT/Comp-Try/DLC/01/PS/DDC/05  
Dated: 27/01.2021

Sd/- (Mahesh Dass),  
Director General,  
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IN ANOTHER BONE-NUMBING day in Kashmir on Thursday, life was caught between shiver and business as usual. KO Photo Abid Bhat

## SDA 79th BoD Meeting

# SDA To Reserve 25% Commercial Space At Mechanised Parking For Women

**SRINAGAR:** The 79th meeting of the Board of Directors of Srinagar Development Authority (SDA) was today chaired by Principal Secretary, Housing and Urban Development Department, Dheeraj Gupta at Civil Secretariat here.

The meeting was attended by Secretary Planning Development and Monitoring Department Simrandeep Singh; Vice Chairman Srinagar Development Authority Dr. Bashir Ahmad Lone; Chief Architect J&K; Special Secretary, Forest, Ecology and Environment; Additional Secretary, Finance and Additional Secretary, Revenue represented respective Board members in the meeting.

Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir; Deputy Commissioner, Srinagar; Commissioner, Srinagar Municipal Corporation;



Chief Engineer, R&B Kashmir; Chief Town Planner, Kashmir attended the meeting through video conferencing.

The Board decided to reserve 25% commercial space for wom-

en entrepreneurs in the commercial complex at mechanised car parking in Lal Chowk, Srinagar under ease of doing business.

The Board also approved development of a leisure zone on

the land strip opposite Sangarmal City Centre, availing of 'Vivad say Vishwas' scheme to end the litigations related to Income Tax amicably.

The Board gave its nod to

constitute a sub committee for working out modalities of disposal of SDA land adjacent to Sangarmal City Centre and land at Sambora, Pulwama.

The Board also decided to constitute fresh Establishment Committee and Finance Committee for examining matters related to Human Resource Management and Finance to be headed by Deputy Commissioner Srinagar and Director Finance, Housing and Urban Development Department respectively.

Vice Chairman SDA, presented before the Board an action taken report on the decisions taken in the 78th Board meeting. The Board also held threadbare discussions about all the 18 agenda items in which decisions were taken and directions issued accordingly.

## KU Joins National-Level Webinar On Access To Justice



**SRINAGAR:** Kashmir University's State Resource Centre (SRC) on Thursday participated in the national-level webinar on Access to Justice.

Acting Vice-Chancellor Prof Neelofar Khan and Registrar Dr Nisar Ahmad Mir, who is also Director of SRC, joined the webinar 'Access to Justice—Challenges and Solutions', organised by Department of Justice, Ministry of Law and Justice, Government of India.

Mr N K Gayagi, Joint Secretary, Legal Aid to Poor & Access to Jus-

tice, inaugurated the webinar, which was aimed at underlining key objectives of the Access to Justice (A2J-NE&JK) project. He said all the concerned SRCs must ensure timely completion of the project to enable vulnerable sections of the society to benefit from it.

In her remarks, Prof Neelofar Khan said that academic institutions must take a lead in raising awareness about legal remedies available to the marginalised sections of the society to seek access to justice.

"Lack of awareness appears to be one of the key impediments in the way of people's access to justice. Our SRC must continue with its sustained focus on this aspect and help raise this awareness at grassroots," she said.

In his remarks, Dr Nisar Ahmad Mir said the SRC is committed to develop innovative ways to address the legal needs of the marginalised and vulnerable sections of the society.

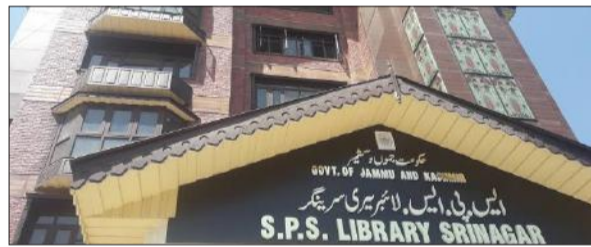
He said the SRC continues to focus on capacity building of common masses to ensure their easy access to rights and entitlements. "Enhancing legal awareness of the vulnerable populations is very important," he said.

Dr Shailash Srivastava, Director at Department of Justice, Government of India, highlighted key objectives of the A2J-NE&JK project.

Pertinently, the SRCs in Assam, Central University of Kashmir, Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya also participated in the important national-level webinar.

KU SRC officials including Mohammad Yousof, Manzoor Ahmad and Shumaila Shamim, also attended the webinar.

## Roaster About Using Library On Rotational Basis Withdrawn



**SRINAGAR:** Much relief to the students particularly those who are job aspirants, Government has withdrawn the current roaster regarding use of the Reading Area of SPS Library here in Kashmir capital Srinagar.

The Deputy Director Libraries and Research, Kashmir in its earlier order had asked the aspirants to use the library on a rotational basis. This decision had come under severe criticism while students were demanding free access to the library.

In a fresh order the roaster based on rotational basis

has been withdrawn.

Deputy Director Libraries and Research, Kashmir in a fresh order has said that on the directions of higher authorities and in the interest of smooth functioning of the SPS Library, the Roaster regarding the use of the Reading Area of the Library on rotational basis by the borrowers, has been withdrawn.

The users will be allowed to use the Reading Area of the SPS Library strictly on first-cum-first-serve basis as per the universal practice in vogue for the Public Libraries.

### DIAL-EMMA



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

### AIRPORTS

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311 ✈️

### RAILWAYS



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

### HIGHWAY STATUS



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

### This Day in History

- 661 - Rashidun Caliphate ends
- 1258 - Mongols defeated by Dai Viet at the battle of Dong Bo Dau
- 1523 - Sermon of Constanze: Zwingli defends 67 Schlussreden
- 1574 - Sea battle of Reimerswaal - Admiral Boisot beats Spanish fleet
- 1587 - Deventer and Zutphen surrender to Spain
- 1594 - Mathematician John Napier dedicates his "Plaine Discovery of the Whole Revelation of St. John" to King James VI, predicts end of the world in 1688 or 17001595 - William Shakespeare's play "Romeo and Juliet" is thought to have been first performed. Officially published early 1597.
- 1676 - Feodor III succeeds his father and becomes Tsar of Russia
- 1728 - John Gays' "Beggar's Opera" premieres in London [NS=Feb 9]
- 1732 - Paris churchyard of Saint-Medard closed after Jansenistic ritual Music release
- announcement, John Hancock resigns as Governor of Massachusetts, allegedly due to his failing health
- 1834 - President Jackson orders first use of US troops to suppress a labor dispute
- Treaty of InterestTreaty of Waitangi
- 1879 - Custer Battlefield National Monument established in Montana
- 1905 - Tsar Nicolas II of Russia, unsettled by the rising violence and protest, enacts reforms to improve the conditions of workers; these changes will do little to stop disorder throughout Russia in ensuing months.
- 1907 - Charles Curtis becomes U.S. Senator from Kansas, first Native American to become a Senator
- 1908 - Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, at Cornell University, incorporates
- 1912 - Martial law declared in textile strike in Lawrence, Massachusetts
- 1913 - Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, at Howard University, incorporates
- 1916 - 1st bombing of Paris by German Zeppelins takes place
- 1916 - 1st bombing of Paris by German Zeppelins takes place
- 1917 - British submarine K13 sank in Gaire Loch, Scotland; 32 of her crew died
- 1918 - Ukrainian-Soviet War: Battle of Kruty
- 1920 - Walt Disney starts work as an artist with KC Slide Co for \$40 a week
- 1921 - Hurricane hits Washington & Oregon
- 1922 - Union of Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador dissolved
- 1923 - 1st flight of autogiro (Juan de la Cierva, Madrid Spain)
- 1924 - Ice cream cone rolling machine patented by Carl Taylor, Cleveland
- 1924 - Swiss team of Denis Vaucher (C), Alfred Aufdenblatten, Antoine Julien & Alfons Julien win the military patrol gold medal at the Chamonix Winter Olympics; first version of the biathlon
- 1925 - British Liberal Party chooses David Lloyd George as leader
- 1941 - Alexandros Koryziz becomes Prime Minister of Greece
- 1942 - German & Italian troops occupy Benghazi, Libya
- 1942 - Peru and Ecuador sign Protocol of Rio (boundary determination)
- 1944 - USS Missouri, the last battleship commissioned by the US Navy, is launched
- 1944 - World War II: The Battle of Cisterna takes place in central Italy.
- 1944 - World War II: About 38 men, women, and children die in the Koniuchy massacre in Poland
- 1948 - Pakistan Socialist Party is founded
- 1949 - Great Britain, Belgium, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand and Switzerland recognize Israel
- 1964 - Unmanned Apollo 1 Saturn launcher test attains Earth orbit
- 1970 - USSR performs nuclear test at Eastern Kazakh/Sempilalinsk USSR



HIJRI CALENDAR

15

JAMADI

UL-SANI

1442

### PRAYERS

FAJR

6: 05

ZUHR

12: 43

ASR

4:19

MAGRIB

6:00

ISHA

7:23

## Empanelled ReT Aspirants Protest In Press Enclave

**SRINAGAR:** The empanelled ReT aspirants held a protest demonstration today, demanding immediate issuance of their appointment orders.

The protesters assembled in Press Enclave Srinagar and raised slogans in support of their demand and against the Government, particularly the Commissioner Secretary and Director Education.

The protest was led by one Mudasar Hasan, who castigated the government for halting appointment orders in favour of the aspirants, who were empanelled in 2015-16 as Rehbar-e-Taleem teachers.

"Our protest is against the Govern-

ment's dilly dally tactics in issuing our appointment orders," he said.

He said the High Court has issued clear cut direction in their favour but the Government was only giving hollow assurances. "We are left with no option other than to hit the streets as there is no other means to earn our livelihood and most of the candidates have crossed the upper age limit to get any other job," he added.

The protesters demanded implementation of court order and also sought the intervention of Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha for immediate issuance of their appointment orders.



## HURRAH AUTO GARAGE

- MECHANICAL | DENTING | PAINTING
- SCANNING & SPARE PARTS



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MAGAM (OPP. ROYAL MARBLES GULMARG ROAD)

## From KO Archives

### MISSING GARAGES CAR KEEPS COPS ON TOES

**SRINAGAR -** Hijacking of an Ambassador car belonging to State Motor Garages this afternoon has sent a wave of apprehension through police and various security agencies who fear that it might be used in a Fidayeen strike on or before Republic day.

According to a NAFA report unidentified militants in a stolen Ambassador car (JK01 1199) gunned down one Tariq Ahmad, allegedly a police informer hailing from Handwara, in Nowpora locality of the city at noon today. The gunman later abandoned the car at Fateh Kadal and hijacked a State Motor Garages Ambassador (JK02 M 3721) from the area, the report quoting police sources said. The incident prompted police and other security agencies to sound an alert for the vehicle. The police and intelligence agencies the report said remained clueless till late Wednesday despite widespread checking of vehicles.

(KASHMIR OBSERVER, 29 January, 2001)

## Don't Rush To Own Annihilation: Iran Fires Back At Israel Over Military Threat



Agencies

Iranian military officials have fired back at Israel after its top general threatened that attack plans against the Islamic Republic were being revised, saying the regime will only speed up its annihilation if it makes even the slightest mistake.

In a tweet on Wednesday, Hossein Dehqan, a military advisor to Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, downplayed the threats that the Tel Aviv regime issues against the Islamic Republic from time to time and said the Israelis "do not even dare to fire a bullet at dear Iran."

The remarks came one day after Israeli Army Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Aviv Kochavi warned the administration of US President Joe Biden against rejoining the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, adding that he had ordered his forces to step up preparations for possible offensive action against Iran.

"I instructed the army to prepare a number of operational plans in addition to the existing

ones," he said. "We are taking care of these plans and will develop them during the coming year. Those who decide on carrying them out, of course, are the political leaders. But these plans have to be on the table."

Additionally, the spokesperson for the Iranian Armed Forces described Kochavi's rhetoric as "nothing more than hallucinations."

He also said the Iranian Armed Forces have been strengthening their defensive capabilities day by day, and that the country is capable of carrying out strategic operations to level the enemy to the ground.

"Iran has a message for the countries of the world that the holy establishment of the Islamic Republic is not seeking to build nuclear weapons and will never move in this path — based on Ayatollah Khamenei's fatwa — as it considers such a measure forbidden regarding its defense policies and has nothing to hide," Shekarchi said.

The Zionists have already tested themselves against the resistance forces, said the Iranian general, describing the regime's military as "coward and weak."



## Pakistan's Supreme Court Upholds Acquittal In Daniel Pearl Murder Case

Agencies

Pakistan's Supreme Court on Thursday dismissed a series of appeals against the acquittal of the British-born militant convicted of murdering the US journalist Daniel Pearl, paving the way for his release.

"The court has come out to say that there is no offense that

he has committed in this case," Mahmood Sheikh, who represented Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh, told AFP.

The top court's ruling comes after an international outcry erupted last year when a lower court acquitted the 47-year-old of murder and reduced his conviction to a lesser charge of kidnap — overturning his death sentence and ordering his release after al-

most two decades in prison.

Pearl was the South Asia bureau chief for The Wall Street Journal when he was abducted in Karachi in January 2002 while researching a story about Islamist militants.

Nearly a month later, after a string of ransom demands were made, a graphic video showing his decapitation was delivered to the US consulate.

## China Warns Taiwan Independence 'Means War'



Agencies

China toughened its language towards Taiwan on Thursday, warning after recent stepped-up military activities near the island that "independence means war" and that their armed forces were taking action to respond to provocation and foreign interference.

Taiwan, claimed by China as its territory, reported multiple Chinese fighter jets and bombers entering the island's southwestern air defence identification zone over the weekend, prompting concern in Washington.

China believes that Taiwan's democratically-elected government is moving the island towards a declaration of formal independence, though President Tsai Ing-wen has repeatedly said they are already an independent country called the Republic of China, its formal name.

Asked at a monthly news briefing about the air forces' re-

cent activities, Chinese Defence Ministry spokesman Wu Qian said Taiwan was an inseparable part of China.

"The military activities carried out by the Chinese People's Liberation Army in the Taiwan Strait are necessary actions to address the current security situation in the Taiwan Strait and to safeguard national sovereignty and security," he said.

"They are a solemn response to external interference and provocations by 'Taiwan independence' forces," he added.

The Chinese incursions coincided with a US carrier battle group entering the disputed South China Sea to promote "freedom of the seas".

Wu said a "handful" of people in Taiwan were seeking the island's independence.

"We warn those 'Taiwan independence' elements: those who play with fire will burn themselves, and 'Taiwan independence' means war," he added.

## Brazil's Covid-19 Response Worst, New Zealand's Best: Study

Agencies

SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA: Brazil's handling of the coronavirus pandemic has been ranked the world's worst, while New Zealand topped the class, according to research published by a leading Australian think tank on Thursday.

Sydney's Lowy Institute assessed almost 100 countries on six criteria, including confirmed cases, deaths and testing metrics.

"Collectively, these indicators point to how well or poorly countries have managed the pandemic," according to the report by the independent body.

Aside from New Zealand — which has largely kept the virus at bay with border closures and "go early, go hard" lockdowns and testing regimes — Vietnam, Taiwan, Thailand, Cyprus, Rwanda, Iceland, Australia, Latvia and Sri Lanka made the top 10 for their responses.

In bottom place at number 98 was Brazil, closely followed by Mexico, Colombia, Iran and the United States.

Brazil has recorded more than 218,000 coronavirus deaths — a toll second only to that of the United States.

For much of the last year, the two most populous nations in the Americas have been led by nationalist leaders who have actively downplayed the threat of



Covid-19, ridiculed mask-wearing, opposed lockdowns and contracted the virus themselves.

China — where the virus first emerged — was not included in the rankings because of what the think tank described as a lack of publicly available data on testing.

Beijing has aggressively tried to manage public perceptions about its handling of the disease as it tries to show its authoritarian system is preferable to democracies, many of which have faltered badly in the crisis.

The Lowy Institute said that there was no clear winner when it came to which political system best handled the pandemic.

Instead, almost across the board, the response has been lacklustre.

"Some countries have managed the pandemic better than others — but most countries outperformed each other only by degrees of underperformance," the report said.

Smaller nations — with populations of fewer than 10 million people — did appear to have some advantages.

"In general, countries with smaller populations, cohesive societies, and capable institutions have a comparative advantage in dealing with a global crisis such as a pandemic," the report said.

Overall, cases have now topped 100 million worldwide and some 2.2 million people have died from the virus since the outbreak began in December 2019.

**COLLECTIVELY, THESE INDICATORS POINT TO HOW WELL or poorly countries have managed the pandemic,"** according to the report by the independent body.

## Biden Freezes Giant UAE Jet Package, Saudi Arms For Review



Agencies

Washington: US President Joe Biden's administration has temporarily frozen for review a massive package of F-35 jets to the United Arab Emirates and arms to Saudi Arabia, officials said Wednesday.

The nearly week-old administration has already signaled it plans to end support for the Saudi-led, UAE-backed offensive in Yemen, which is facing a humanitarian catastrophe.

A State Department spokesperson said the administration is "temporarily pausing the implementation" of a number of defense sales "to allow incoming leadership an opportunity to review."

"This is a routine administrative action typical to most any transition, and demonstrates the administration's commitment to transparency and good governance," the spokesperson said.

The move is also aimed at "ensuring US arms sales meet our strategic objectives of building stronger, interoperable and more capable security partners."

The most high-profile sale is a \$23 billion package of top-of-the-line F-35 jets to the United Arab Emirates.

Former president Donald Trump's administration agreed to the sale — the first of the stealth-capable planes to an Arab nation — after the United Arab Emirates agreed to recognize Israel.

A potential halt to the sale could raise questions about whether the United Arab Emirates will continue its normalization with Israel, which Trump saw as a key foreign policy achievement.

Lawmakers of Biden's Democratic Party had voiced misgivings over the deal, fearing it would set off an arms race, but failed in the Senate to block the sale while Trump was in office.

The package to the United Arab Emirates also included unarmed drones, while the United States has been preparing major sales of munitions to Saudi Arabia.

Trump had explicitly backed arms sales on commercial grounds, saying that the Saudis were creating US jobs by buying from US manufacturers.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken said during his confirmation hearing that the Saudi offensive against Yemen's Huthi rebels, who are backed by Iran, has contributed to the dire humanitarian situation in Yemen.

## Biden Revokes Trump Rule Ending Work Permit For H-1B Holders' Spouses

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington: A week after his inauguration, US President Joe Biden has withdrawn a Trump-era rule rescinding work authorisation for H4 visa holders, who are spouses of those possessing H-1B work visas, with majority being highly-skilled Indian women.

An H-4 visa is issued by the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to immediate family members (spouse and children under 21 years of age) of the H-1B visa holders, most of whom are Indian IT professionals.

The H-1B visa is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in specialty occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise. The technology companies depend on it to hire tens of thousands of employees each year from countries like India and China.

The H4 visa is normally issued to those who have already started the process of seeking employment-based lawful permanent resident status in the US.

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) on Monday said the proposed rule titled, "Removing H-4 Dependent Spouses from the Class of Aliens Eligible for Employment Authorisation," was being withdrawn.

Spouses of Indian professionals on H-1B visas, mostly women, are the biggest beneficiary of the Obama-era rule that gave employment authorisation cards.

Soon after coming to power, the Trump administration in 2017 announced that it would rescind that rule. However, the Republican Party-led Trump administration was not able to complete the process in the four year of its rule. During the presidential election, the Biden campaign had promised to withdraw the Trump administration's move.

Soon after his electoral victory, a group of 60 members of the US House of Representatives in a letter urged Biden, a Democrat, to "unilaterally extend" the expiration work authorisation documents for holders of H4 visas.

"We respectfully request that the Department of Homeland Security publish a Federal Register notice on day one of your administration that would extend the validity period of all expired H4 EADs (Employment Authorisation Document)," the members of Congress wrote to Biden in a letter on December 16.

In 2015, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) issued a rule allowing certain H4 dependent spouses of H-1B visa holders to legally seek employment in the US, the letter said.

### NEWS MAKERS

## Biden's Approval Rating In First Week Higher Than Trump's Ever Was

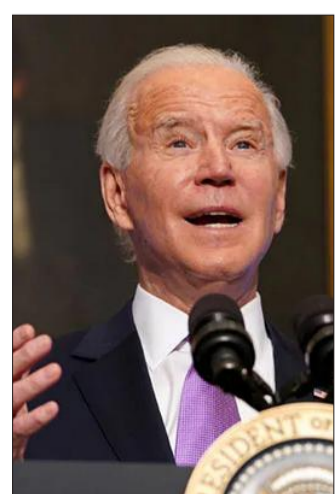
Agencies

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden has a higher approval rating after one week in office than Donald Trump did in his entire presidency, a new poll found Wednesday.

A Monmouth University poll showed 54 percent of Americans approving of Biden's performance and 30 percent disapproving.

Trump spent most of his presidency with ratings in the low 40s, and left office on January 20 with a Gallup poll approval of just 34 percent, a record low.

A Morning Consult tracking poll published Monday gave Biden 56 percent approval and 34 percent disapproval. Another poll released Monday, by Hill-HarrisX, showed Biden with 63



percent approval.

Despite the strong showing for the Democrat, the results also demonstrate severe polar-

ization in the United States after Trump's four-year term.

**OVERALL, there seems to be more goodwill for Biden than there was for Trump, but it really breaks down along partisan lines. Right now, more people identify as Democrats than Republicans,"**

In the Monmouth poll, Biden won 90 percent approval from Democrats but only 47 percent from independents and 15 percent from Republicans.

"Overall, there seems to be more goodwill for Biden than there was for Trump, but it really breaks down along partisan lines. Right now, more people identify as Democrats than Republicans," said Patrick Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute.

According to data from the fivethirtyeight.com site, Trump was the first president in half a century not to enjoy a honeymoon period with substantially better polling in the first six months.

Barack Obama had an average of 60 percent approval in his first half year and his predecessor George W. Bush had 53.9 percent.

Trump, by contrast, had an average approval rating of 41.4 percent in his first six months.

## Canada Lawmakers Voted To Grant Citizenship To Blogger Badawi

Members of Canada's House of Commons voted to grant citizenship to Saudi blogger Raif Badawi, who has been imprisoned in his home country for nine years and whose wife and three children live in Canada. The motion, which was unanimously voted on Wednesday, asks Immigration Minister Marco Mendicino to use his "discretionary power" to grant Canadian citizenship to Badawi, "in order to remedy a particular situation and unusual distress". Badawi was arrested in 2012 and sentenced to seven years in prison and 600 lashes and then sentenced to 10 years and 1,000 lashes in 2014 for blogging about free speech and "insulting Islam".

He received 50 of those beatings in January 2015, but the rest of the sessions, which were to be carried out weekly, were suspended after a global outcry. Before Saudi Arabia's Supreme Court abolished in late April flogging as a form of physical punishment, Badawi had been the most high-profile instance of flogging in the kingdom.

## Bernie Sanders Mitten Meme Raises Big Bucks For Charity

A viral photo of United States Senator Bernie Sanders wearing woolly mittens has helped nab \$1.8m for charity in his home state of Vermont. Sanders announced on Wednesday the money had been raised through merchandise inspired by the image of him sitting cross-legged in a casual jacket, his hands cosy in the brown and beige mittens at the inauguration of President Joe Biden. The image, taken by an AFP photographer, quickly caught the imagination of the internet, with many noting that Sanders looked more like he was running errands on the chilly Wednesday than attending the swearing-in of the 46th president of the US. Memes dropping the mittened Sanders into iconic art pieces, Ultimate Fighting Championship matches, classic album covers and popular television shows, to name a few, soon abounded on social media.

# Violations Found In Implementation Of Ujjwala Yojana In Pulwama

## DM Orders Registering Of FIR Against Erring LPG Agencies For Diversion Of Subsidy

Observer News Service

**PULWAMA:-** The District Administration Pulwama has founded discrepancies in implementation of PMUY-Ujjwala Yojana in the District. The preliminary scrutiny & verification for the same which was going on for last few months in the district, concluded by District Magistrate, Dr Raghav Langer today ordering AD Food Civil Supplies Pulwama to lodge FIR against erring 03 LPG agencies.

The tip of this scam caught eye of the administration when last year in the month of April-May-June, 2020 entitlement for 03 free cylinders for Ujjwala Yojana beneficiaries was announced by Govt of India amidst lockdown situation along with extra ration entitlement under PMGKAY.

Following this, the first LPG subsidy amount of Rs 851/- got credited into accounts of Ujjwala Yojana beneficiaries. Many of the naive Ujjwala beneficiaries who had not physically received any connection; got surprised with this credit

entry and some approached their Tehsil Supply Officers (TSO's) & bank branches to know the reason for such receipts.

On further enquiry, similar reports started pouring in from other areas as well as from public representatives that many of their SECC Ujjwala beneficiaries may be receiving LPG cylinder subsidy in their accounts but have not yet received any free connection, including LPG cylinder & gas stove.

As per the initial inputs that have been shared by administration; the modus operandi in this seems to be very well crafted. Ujjwala Yojana connections get online sanctioned to the entitled beneficiaries by the Oil Marketing/Gas Companies (OMC's) based on recommendation & submission of papers by concerned LPG agencies/dealers. The same requires a filled up gas connection form, bank passbook and aadhar card copies which are arranged by the local agents of these agencies from the entitled families included in the SECC survey list. In most of the



cases the Ujjwala beneficiary who is a female, doesn't even know that a LPG connection already stands issued in her favour by the LPG agency. Since the Aadhar no & linked bank accounts are correct; the beneficiaries start receiving credit of Rs 95-200 per refill in their account. Most of the times the beneficiary is unable to understand the reason for this receipt, as it is simply reflected as a ABPS credit entry similar to quarterly/

monthly receipt under other social security/pension schemes, PM-Kisan, scholarship schemes, State marriage assistance scheme etc.

Thus the gas refills keep on getting booked against the Ujjwala connections and these domestic gas cylinders go to the black market and most commonly are diverted for commercial use in hotels/restaurants/shops/dhabas/factories/heating purposes etc. The huge cost difference between

domestic & commercial LPG cylinders is a natural lure for its mass diversion. While unsuspecting PMUY-Ujjwala beneficiaries feel happy to receive subsidy in their accounts on each LPG cylinder purchased against their LPG ID, the Govt exchequer loses heavily due to such diversion of domestic cylinders into black market.

Worthwhile to mention that each Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana connection comes with provision of 12 LPG refills per year linked with back ended subsidy @ Rs 1600/year. A new Ujjwala connection consists of a free cylinder and gas stove and is sanctioned in the name of females of the households enlisted in the SECC-2011 survey list. The scheme was launched in the year 2016.

During the first round of verification of sample set of PMUY connections in district Pulwama; hundreds of instances were found where the beneficiaries of the district had not till date physically received any Ujjwala connection (LPG cylinder plus stove) despite connections being shown as active since year

2017/2018/2019 and LPG refills affected against such customer IDs. The same was corroborated by the administration through the Refill registry of the SDMS login accounts (Subscriber Dealer Management System) of concerned LPG agencies, which they were reluctant to provide in the beginning of investigation. Many beneficiaries confirmed receipt of only a free LPG cylinder without the gas stove. Also in several instances the addresses and phone nos of the beneficiaries were found incorrect in the database of the agency/dealer, most probably to make any verification process difficult.

The District Magistrate Pulwama has lauded the efforts of Asstt Director Food Civil Supplies, Pulwama Mr Sheikh Enayatullah KAS for thorough investigation in the matter leading to unearthing of the scam and his zeal to streamline the PDS in the district.

Sources confirmed that following sections are likely to be invoked in the FIR that is to be lodged viz; IPC sec 120-B Criminal conspiracy, sec 403 dishonest misappropriation of

property, sec 406 criminal breach of trust, sec 417/420/463/464 for forgery & cheating read with sec 34 IPC ie acts done in furtherance of common intention; sec 3/7 EC Act 1955; relevant provisions of Essential Commodities (display of prices & stocks and control of supply & distribution) Order, 1977; LPG (Regulation of supply & distribution) Order, 2000; Gas Cylinders Rules, 2016; The Aadhaar (Targeted delivery of financial & other subsidies, benefits & services) Act, 2016.

Meanwhile the administration will also be writing to the concerned OMC's (Oil Marketing Companies), Office of Dy. Chief Controller of Explosives Chandigarh, Petroleum & Explosives Safety Organisation Faridabad, Fire & Emergency Services Dept J&K, Legal Metrology Dept J&K; for initiating necessary action in view of gross violations, flouting of safety regulations, Weights & Measures Rules and non fulfilment of agreement conditions; found during surprise inspections of various LPG godowns carried out in the district on 20th Jan, 2021.

## DDC Reviews Progress Under Languishing Projects In Anantnag

**ANANTNAG:** District Development Commissioner Anantnag, Anshul Garg today chaired a meeting of the officers & Engineers of R&B, Health, Sports Council, Education, PDD, Health & Urban Development, Handicrafts and Industries and Commerce departments to review the progress made by them for various works taken up under Languishing Projects Programme approved by Finance Department's High Level Committee for funding through JKDFC Ltd. at DC Office Anantnag.

DC Garg stressed upon the concerned engineers & officers to expedite the pace of work and complete all the under construction projects within the stipulated time frame. He stressed to utilize all funds in the current financial year and make prompt financial & physical progress in all projects.

To address the land acquisition issues, he directed the officers to take up the cases with concerned revenue officials. He also directed the concerned to sort out all the issues of past contractors for timely completion of all the projects while adhering to the guidelines of the programme. He also stressed for meticulous e-tendering and allotment process in timely uploading of bills.

The meeting was informed that out of 83 projects, 40 stand completed, 42 are under construction and 01 project has not been taken up yet.

Among others, the meeting was attended by the SE R&B, SE PDD, CEO MC Anantnag, CMO, CEO, AD Planning, and other engineers & officers of these departments.

## Himayat Inks Mous With Leading Multi-National Companies For Placement Of Trained Candidates

Initiative To Create Further Employment Opportunities For JK Youth: Secy RDD

**JAMMU:** The Himayat Mission Management Unit (HMMU) today signed three Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with as many leading companies at Panchayat Bhanu Jammu for placement and industrial tie-ups.

The MoU between HMMU and Multi-National Companies like Sodexo India Services Pvt Ltd, ISS Facility Services India Pvt Ltd and ISS SDB Security Services Pvt Ltd was signed in presence of Secretary, Department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Sheetal Nanda, Chief Operating Officer (COO), Kapil Sharma, Vice President and Head HR Operations of ISS and Sodexo respectively.

Sodexo is a leading company offering a bouquet of services to Corporates, Health Care Institutions and Universities while ISS is one of the world's leading workplace services companies operating in over 74 countries and is a significant player in Facility Management and Professional Services industry in India.

Speaking on the occasion, Secretary said, "The objective of these MoUs is to create more opportunities of employment for the youth of J&K who are undergoing training or have completed their training under Himayat. These two leading



companies will help the PIAs to understand the requirements and demands of the Corporate sector." She also stated that these companies have committed to secure placement of as many as 30000 candidates trained under Himayat.

Earlier, Secretary chaired a meeting to review the performance of 13 Project Implementing Agencies (PIAs) of HMMU. She directed the implementing agencies to speed up the training and placement of youth enrolled under Himayat programme. She asked the PIAs to devise a strategy for timely achievement of targets. She stressed that PIAs should reach out to youth of J&K for providing them employment opportunities and career in the private sector.

Secretary stressed on expediting the mobilization activities, counseling sessions, filling up of the training centre by 50 per cent following the social distancing norms.

Himayat is Skill Development-cum-Placement programme for unemployed youth especially school and college drop-outs in Jammu and Kashmir with focus on placement of youth in a befitting manner commensurate with the level of education and aspiration of youth.

The COO highlighted achievements of the programme saying that more than 18000 candidates have been trained while about 7600 have been provided employment in the Corporate sector in various companies.

## Work On National Highway 44 In Full Swing: Govt

Navayuga Tunnel To Be Thrown Open For Public Use In March, 2021

**JAMMU:** The Chief Secretary, B V Subrahmanyam today chaired a review meeting to take stock of work progress on various sections of the National Highway-44 being executed through the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI).

Administrative Secretaries, of departments of Revenue, Public Works (R&B), Forest, Environment & Ecology, Principal Chief Conservator of Forest, Divisional Commissioners of Jammu and Kashmir, Managing Director, Kashmir Power Distribution Corporation Limited, Deputy Commissioner, Ramban among others participated in the meeting.

During the meeting, it was informed that works on the 3 sections of the National Highway-44 namely Udhampur-Ramban, Ramban-Banihal, and Banihal-Qazigund including double tube Navayuga tunnel are in full swing and progressing smoothly.

On Udhampur-Ramban section, it was informed that 70%

of physical work on the project has been completed, and the remaining work will be completed by September 2021.

Similarly, the work on the 8.4 km Navayuga Tunnel which will connect Banihal directly to Qazigund is nearing completion and the tunnel is expected to be inaugurated in the month of March 2021.

While reviewing the progress on Ramban-Banihal section of NH-44, it was informed that majority of the issues regarding land acquisition and utility shifting have been resolved and the work is progressing smoothly. The Deputy Commissioner, Ramban was directed to handover the possession of remaining land to the executing agency by 28th February 2021 and provide active support towards timely completion of the project.

Once completed, the project will reduce the travel time between Jammu and Srinagar, besides, providing secure connectivity between the two provinces of Jammu and Kashmir.

## DDC Shopian Approves Rent Cases Of Different Departments



**SHOPIAN:** District Development Commissioner, Shopian, Shrikant Suse today chaired a meeting of Rent Assessment Committee (RAC) during which 12 rent cases of different departments were approved.

On the occasion, DDC Shopian, who is also chairman of the Committee, held a detailed discussion with officers of different departments that have hired private accommodation for their offices.

A total of 16 cases came up for discussion pertaining to different govt departments functioning from private buildings in-

cluding FCS&CA, Social Welfare Department, ISM, Horticulture, Animal husbandry, Education department, Handicrafts department, Libraries and research department etc.

After detailed deliberation, the Committee approved 12 cases and deferred 4 cases due to pending verification.

The meeting was attended by Chief Planning Officer, Assistant Director Planning, District Social Welfare Officer, Assistant Director FCS&CA, CHO, besides other District and sectoral Officers of concerned departments.

## Migrants Delegation Calls On LG

**JAMMU:** A delegation of All Parties Migrants Coordination Committee (APMCC) today called on Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha here at Raj Bhavan.

The members of the delegation led by its Chairman, Vinod Pandit comprising K C. Bharati and Adv. Arun Kandroo apprised the Lt Governor about various concerning issues of Kashmiri Migrant employees working under Prime Minister's Special Employment Package and sought Lt Governor's intervention for their early redressal.

### NEWS MAKERS

## Land Allocation For Newly Established Degree Colleges

**JAMMU-** Advisor to Lieutenant Governor, Rajeev Rai Bhatnagar today chaired a meeting to review the progress on allocation of land for the newly established degree colleges across Jammu and Kashmir at Civil Secretariat here.

The meeting was attended by Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Sanjeev Sharma; Commissioner Secretary Higher Education Department (HED), Talat Parvez Rohella; Vice Chairman JDA, Babila Rakhwal; Director Colleges, Prof. M.Y Peerzada, Principles of newly established colleges and other concerned officials while as Deputy Commissioners of Jammu, Kathua, Samba, Budgam and Kupwara districts participated in the meeting through video conferencing.



Speaking during the meeting, Advisor Bhatnagar directed the officials to devise a proper plan of action for the newly established degree colleges so that the land can be acquired at the earliest and the required construction activities can be started.

The Advisor also directed the Deputy Commissioners and other officials to resolve all the issues related to land acquisition cases by 10th of February.

The Advisor asked the Commissioner Secretary to expedite the process of building infrastructure of quality level at the newly established degree colleges and directed him to monitor the progress on a regular basis.

Advisor Bhatnagar further asked Director Colleges to personally visit those sites which are facing hurdles in the land acquisition process.

## DDC Shopian Reviews Performance Of R&B Dept

**SHOPIAN:** District Development Commissioner, Shopian, Shrikant Suse today reviewed the progress of R&B department regarding the execution of developmental works including construction of roads, buildings, bridges and other infrastructure undertaken through CRF, NABARD, State sector and languishing projects.

At the outset, SE PWD, presented an overview of the ongoing developmental projects in the district. He shared details about the status of Central & State Sector Schemes presently being executed by the department.

While reviewing the project wise physical and financial progress, DDC directed concerned officers to gear up men and machinery for effective and timely completion of these developmental projects and utilization of 100% funds well before the end of financial year 2020-21.

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K O V I E W

## Reigning in virus

Chairing the 23rd meeting of Group of Ministers (GOM) on COVID-19 on Thursday, Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan said that 146 districts have reported no new case of the Covid-19 infection in the last seven days. Reviewing the pandemic situation in the country, Vardhan said 146 of India's 718 districts have recorded no new cases for a week, and that fewer than 12,000 cases were reported in the past 24 hours. Similarly, a meagre 0.46 per cent of the 1.73 lakh active COVID-19 cases is on ventilators, 2.20 per cent is in the ICU and 3.02 per cent is on oxygen support. This has prompted the minister to declare that "India has successfully contained the pandemic".

Ever since the virus broke out in March last year, India has come a long way in so far as its upgradation of the health infrastructure to tackle the disease. The current testing capacity is 12 lakh tests per day, and with everyday fresh infections are falling markedly. This has given the government confidence to allow cinema halls and theatres to seat more than 50 per cent of capacity and let all types of exhibition halls to operate. This is a huge recovery for a country that has recorded the highest number of cases in the world after the United States.

In Jammu and Kashmir too, the number of fresh infections has drastically reduced. On Wednesday, 77 fresh Covid cases in the union territory took the tally to 1,24,234 while one more fatality pushed the death toll to 1,931. However, Srinagar district recorded the highest number of fresh cases at 23, including 12 travellers, followed by 16 in Jammu district. Eight districts — Bandipora, Rajouri, Doda, Samba, Kishtwar, Poonch, Reasi and Ramban — did not report any fresh cases. Ten others recorded cases in single digits. Now the number of active cases in the former state stands at 1,050 while 1,21,253 patients have recovered. This has led health experts to surmise that the herd immunity might already have set in across parts of India and also in J&K.

The situation is getting further better with India commencing its vaccination drive against novel coronavirus on 16 January. So far 2 million health care workers have been inoculated, with the aim to reach 300 million people by July-August. This will go a long way to rid the country and the world of the pandemic that has wrought havoc with the economy, livelihoods and the lives of people. But alongside the vaccination people will need to continue observing precautions. With new Covid-19 strains emerging from nowhere, it is hardly the time to let the guard down.

OTHER OPINION

## Widening gulf

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to what has arguably been the most unequal recession in recent history, exacerbating inequalities along several axes. While millions of Indians, especially those in the informal sector, lost their jobs, and had to dip into whatever meagre savings they had to finance their consumption, the richest Indians have continued to prosper. According to a report by Oxfam, the wealth of billionaires in the country increased by 35 per cent during the lockdown. While this is an increase in wealth, not income, to put this in perspective, the increase in the wealth of India's top 100 billionaires would have been enough to give each of the country's 138 million poorest a transfer of Rs 94,045.

The corporate results also bear out this facet of the economic crisis. Firms have protected their bottom lines by drastically slashing expenditure, mainly through a combination of job and salary cuts. This implies that the distribution of income, which was already skewed in favour of capital, will get even more unbalanced. Even more worrying is the fact that despite economic activities largely reverting back to pre-COVID levels, labour market dislocations persist — demand for work under MGNREGA continues to outstrip that observed last year by a wide margin, suggesting continuing lack of absorptive capacity in both urban and rural areas. But, worsening labour market inequality is just one part of the larger socio-economic consequences of the pandemic. The pandemic has also impacted access to education, health, and has led to a worsening of gender disparities. As the Oxfam report notes, during the pandemic, as education shifted online, the digital divide widened inequalities. Considering that only 3 per cent of India's poorest 20 per cent households had access to a computer, and 9 per cent had access to the internet, the difficulties faced by the poor and the historically deprived in accessing education have worsened. The impact on the female workforce has been equally grim. Not only has the unemployment rate among women worsened, but 83 per cent of those who managed to retain their jobs, saw a salary cut, the report noted.

The full economic impact of the labour market scarring, the worsening of inequalities in access to education and health and the growing gender disparities will be visible over the medium-to-long term. But as evidence mounts of a K-shaped recovery, where the fortunes of those at the top and bottom end of the income distribution diverge, the government must unveil measures that address these issues in the upcoming budget.

Indian Express

## Cricket In Kashmir



GOWHAR GEELANI

Quite in tune with its 'reputation', Jammu and Kashmir cricket team has failed to qualify for the next round of Syed Mushtaq Ali trophy (SMA) in the Indian domestic Twenty20 competition this season as well. That has been the story for long.

Stronger opponents like Punjab and Karnataka thrashed J&K, raising some serious questions about the process of selection of the squad for the shorter version of the game.

But who will take the blame for this debacle?

Lack of accountability in Jammu and Kashmir Cricket Association (JKCA) is an irrefutable fact. There is absence of professionalism in the association and among those who run it on their whims and fancies. Favouritism is the hallmark of the people at the helm. Sadly, their bloated egos make matters worse.

Players are supposed to play on the ground and deliver, and let their bat do all the talking. But some seniors in their prolonged monologues sound self-righteous to avoid scrutiny of any kind. As if no one has the authority to ask them genuine questions about their alleged clout, conflict of interest and dubious role in selecting their favourites based on personal rapport, not merit.

Let's ask some questions: Why a player of Jatin Wadhwan's calibre was unceremoniously dropped from the T20 squad?

Wadhwan, aged 26, averages 35 with a healthy strike rate of 121 in T20s. He has amassed about 600 runs in only 21 T-20 matches in SMA competitions. Laced with five fifties, with unbeaten 70\* as his highest score, Wadhwan is known as a T-20 specialist. But he was not part of J&K squad.

Instead, players like Shubham Khajuria, Shubham Pundir and Qamran Iqbal were picked. In all fairness, the trio comprising Khajuria, Pundir and Iqbal has done well in the longer version of the game (First-class). But their brand of cricket is not suited for the shorter version (T-20).

At Ranji level, First-class format is four-day cricket which is played with the red ball while List-A is one-day cricket. T-20 is the shortest version of the game.

Qamran Iqbal, for instance, averages 31 in List-A and 27 in First-class (which is not great by any stretch of the imagination) but only 18.6 in T20s. To put it politely, his strike rate of 94.91 in T20s is dismal.

Same is the case with Shubham Khajuria and Shubham Pundir, both reasonably good players in First-class and List-A. Their strike rate (111 and 107 respectively) in T20s is below par. Strike rate below 120 in white ball cricket is unacceptable.

So why would you pick Khajuria, Pundir and Iqbal, and drop Jatin?

Jatin was not the only casualty, though. Other T-20 specialists from

## Straight Strokes

# Nepotism, Prejudice and No Accountability



Previously, J&K cricket has been marred by corruption of scandals, club clout, and petty politics. Now it is all about authoritarianism, nepotism, favouritism and lack of professionalism at all levels

the Kashmir Valley which include Jehangir Lone, Manzoor alias Pandav, Shabir Nengroo alias Shabir Lefty, Omar Alam, Owais Shah, Adil, Mehjoor Ali Sofi etc were also ignored.

In the recent past, careers of many a talented player like Abid Nabi, Adil Reshi, Sameer Ali, Zahoor Sofi etc have been ruined. Many former Ranji cricketers and current players have overtly slammed the selection process for all three formats of the game.

Ahmad Bandy is a fine opening batsman for J&K. His game is suited for First-class cricket. Bandy is stylish and can occupy the crease for longer periods. Strangely, he is ignored for the longer format and picked for the T20s. The story is very similar in the case of both Pundir and Khajuria. Their game is not suited for T20 cricket.

During the last one decade services of international players including legendary spinner Bishen Singh Bedi, former India players Ajay Jadeja, Sunil Joshi, Irfan Pathan and Suresh Raina, and even Ranji seniors like Mithun Manhas have been hired by the JKCA. The problem, however, is that the process of selecting coaches is as dubious and mysterious as is the selection of the playing squad. Mostly, it is a result of personal rapport with individual players that becomes decisive in selecting coaches and players. Earlier, it used to be the club clout. No transparent process was followed then. No explanation is given now.

To be fair, stints of Bedi and Jadeja did bring some results. Same cannot be said about the rest. Their involvement has mostly been limited to photo ops, melodrama and lofty statements.

In 2013-14 Ranji season (First-class) competition, J&K had qualified for the quarter finals for the first time in its cricketing history. This rare feat was achieved under the leadership of Abdul Qayoom, a former fast bowler and local coach. At the time, J&K had a battery of fast bowlers comprising Samiullah Beigh, Mudhasir, Ram Dayal etc. Samiullah with his five-fors and important contributions with the bat in the lower middle order was instrumental in team's success alongside some good performances from Parveez Rasool. Batsmen like Bhandeep Singh, Harddeep Singh, I D Singh and others had chipped in at the right moment. It was a well-oiled and well-balanced side which had a judicious mix of experience and youth.

Prior to the 2013-14 season, the farthest Jammu & Kashmir had progressed in the Ranji Trophy was the pre-quarterfinal against Odisha way back in 2000-01.

Again, in the last Ranji season (2019-2020), J&K reached quarter finals with a reasonably balanced side comprising Khajuria, Pundir, Suryansh Raina, Parveez Rasool, Abdul Samad, Mujtaba Yousuf and Umar Nazir Mir. However, selection of few blue-eyed boys in the squad had raised many eyebrows.

It was Karnataka that comprehensively beat J&K in the third quarterfinals in Ranji Trophy in February last year. Though Karnataka was reduced to paltry 206 in their first innings, J&K failed to take advantage and were bundled out for 192 runs. In their second innings, Karnataka posted 316, leaving an improbable target of 331 runs for J&K to chase. The team fell short by 167 runs after being bowled out for 163. In both innings, J&K failed to cross the 200-run mark. What is there to celebrate about?

Despite this, some people in J&K cricket team and JKCA indulge in self-congratulatory chatter. There is this mutual admiration club whose members live in an echo chamber. They do not want to hear any constructive criticism. They do not want to answer any questions. Obviously

the control freaks want to control cricketing affairs as authoritarians do. They only parrot the line that J&K is now in Elite-A group. Okay, fine. What next?

The word "elite" sounds nice to ears. But the story starts and ends there. The unpalatable truth for the proponents of this "elite narrative" is that Punjab beat J&K by 10 wickets and won the match inside 15 overs. And Karnataka beat J&K by 43 runs.

Is this 'feat' to be celebrated? Why is J&K's mediocrity being showcased as success?

Consolation wins against Railways and Uttar Pradesh are just fine. But when you beat the weaker opponent like Tripura you do not get complacent. The squad that was selected for SMA trophy was not suited for T20 format. Ram Dayal is past his prime. You need horses for courses.

Previously, J&K cricket has been marred by corruption of scandals, club clout, and petty politics. Now it is all authoritarianism, nepotism, favouritism and lack of professionalism at all levels. No serious competitions are held for three separate formats to ensure fair selection for First-class, List-A and T20. Those at the helm only play to the gallery by making big announcements about district level trials. That is all done with the aim to stifle criticism.

The lone Sher-i-Kashmir cricket stadium in Sonwar Srinagar is used more for political rallies and events than for cricket tournaments in various formats. If cricket's pride in J&K has to be salvaged the game should not be treated as an 'encounter'! Remember, it is a gentleman's game!

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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## The Holocaust and the killing of PwDs

27th January is The Holocaust Memorial Day

International Holocaust Remembrance Day is an international memorial day on 27 January commemorating the tragedy of the Holocaust that occurred during the Second World War. The word "Holocaust," with Greek roots meaning "destruction of life by fire" victims were people who were targeted by the government of Nazi Germany for various discriminatory practices due to their ethnicity, religion, political beliefs, or sexual orientation. These institutionalized practices came to be called The Holocaust, and they began with legalized social discrimination against specific groups and physically or mentally challenged persons. According to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum "The Holocaust was the murder of six million Jews and eleven million of others by the

Nazis during World War II"

Killing of people with disabilities: According to Hitler, the ability to be active and strong was a prerequisite for achieving value as a human being and those who do not want to fight in this world of eternal struggle, do not deserve to live". For him, there was a clear line between the strong and the weak. He said that people with congenital disabilities is a threat to the strong nation, which in turn signaled threat to these people. Between 1939 and 1945 the Nazi regime systematically murdered hundreds of thousands of children and adults with disabilities as part of its "euthanasia" programs - T4 programme. These programs were designed to eliminate all persons with disabilities who, according to Nazi ideology, threatened the health and purity of the German race. It begins with a description of the Nazis' Children's Killing Program, in which tens of

thousands of children with mental and physical disabilities were murdered. Six "killing centres" were established to speed up the process. At the Brandenburg centre thousands of disabled people were murdered in a gas chamber described as a shower room, and there were number of such infamous centres. Other disabled people were forcibly sterilized so their "tainted" genes would not affect the "pure" Aryan race. It has been estimated that between 1933 and 1939, 360,000 people were forcibly sterilised to prevent "hereditary disease offspring".

By the year 1940, Hitler, on the advice of Dr. Werner Heyde, suggested that carbon monoxide be used as the preferred means of killing. Experimental gassings were first carried out at Brandenburg Prison in 1939. At Brandenburg Prison, gas chambers were disguised as showers - complete with fake nozzles to deceive victims; proto-

types of killing centers' facilities built in occupied Poland later on in the war. In total, between 200,000 and 250,000 mentally and physically disabled people were murdered between 1939 and 1945 under the T-4 and other euthanasia programs

UNISON general secretary Dave Prentis, said "We must never forget that the Holocaust was a state programme designed to destroy particular groups, including disabled people, and we must remember all those affected." The Holocaust Memorial Day explains how it is a day to "work together to create a safer, better future".

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Perpetually spoken common statement 'zou aur te jahan aur' which is in vogue in our society signifies the importance of health in our life/world. The World Health Organisation defines health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Usually we see that the physical ailments are quite often recognised easily and then diagnosed. But mental health issues are very subtle and not easily recognised. They need a more detailed examination and investigation for their diagnosis. Even sometimes these subtle mental health issues remain hidden from the diagnostic eye and have detrimental consequences on the smooth living of the people. Such issues are not necessarily manifested as depression or anxiety but may present as distress, loss of happiness, heaviness of heart, vague pain, headache etc.

#### Why is studying mental health issues of women important?

Women and men differ not only in their noticeable physical appearances, but also in their psychological makeup. There are actual differences in the way they process information and react to events and stimuli. Women and men differ in the way they communicate, deal in relationships, express their feelings, and react to stress. Thus, the gender differences are based in physical, physiological, and psychological attributes.

For centuries, society has defined and distorted the differences between men and women through a lens of sexism in which men assumed superiority over women and maintained it through domination. This has led to underestimating the role a woman plays in the evolution of human society. In addition to all these social influences, the women are genetically wired in such a way that they are prone to some mental health issues more than men. All these discriminations and natural differences between men and women may quite understandably lead to some mental health issues.

It is therefore necessary to understand and discuss the challenges women face, especially with respect to their mental health so that they are helped to deal with them so that our society has a better evolutionary trajectory.

#### Depression, Anxiety and Somatization in Women

Studies have shown that gender differences affect the occurrence of common mental disorders (CMDs)-depression, anxiety, and somatic complaints wherein women predominate. E.g., Unipolar depression is twice as common in women. Women are more likely to present with atypical symptoms of depression such as increased appetite and weight gain (usually depression leads to weight loss and appetite loss). Furthermore, the lifetime risk of anxiety disorders (e.g., generalized anxiety disorder, GAD) is 2-3 times

## Mindful Fridays Women's Mental Health

WASIM KAKROO

higher in females as compared to males. Studies across the world have indicated that women are, on average, 2-3 times, at greater risk to be affected by Common Mental Disorders.

#### Now the question is what makes females apparently more vulnerable?

It has been hypothesized that hormonal factors related to the monthly cycle may play a role in women's increased vulnerability to depression. Other factors responsible for their vulnerability to various CMDs may be because of the disadvantages related to their gender. These include excessive partner substance use, sexual, and physical violence by the husband, being widowed or separated, having low autonomy in decision making, and having low levels of support from one's family. Furthermore, stressful life events have been seen to be closely associated with the occurrence of depression in vulnerable individuals. During their lifetimes, females are faced with various life stressors including childbirth and maternal roles, caring and nurturing the old and sick of the family. In addition, women are less empowered due to lesser opportunities of education and respectable employment.

#### Bipolar Affective Disorder

The clinical features of bipolar disorder differ between men and women; women have more frequent episodes of depression, and a seasonal pattern of mood disturbances.

#### Suicide and Deliberate Self Harm

Studies of suicide and deliberate self-harm have revealed a universally common trend of more female attempters and more male completers of suicide.

Common Mental Disorders, exposure to violence, etc. have been found to be strongest predictors of the attempted suicide cases. It has been found that a large degree of attempts is as a response to failures in life, difficulties in interpersonal relationships, and dowry-related harassment. Some of the precipitants for suicide among women compared to men include Dowry disputes; love affairs; and quarrels with spouse or parents-in-law.

Deliberate self-harm (DSH) can be defined as the intentional injuring of one's body without apparent suicidal intent. These acts are usually nonfatal and not intended to end life. DSH includes but is not restricted to acts such as self-cutting, burning, ingestion of a substance or medication in excess of its therapeutic/pre-

It has been hypothesized that hormonal factors related to the monthly cycle may play a role in women's increased vulnerability to depression. Other factors responsible for their vulnerability to various CMDs may be because of the disadvantages related to their gender. These include excessive partner substance use, sexual, and physical violence by the husband, being widowed or separated, having low autonomy in decision making, and having low levels of support from one's family

scribed dosage, ingesting a recreational or illicit compound in a bid to harm self, and consuming a non-ingestible compound, etc. Overall gender ratio studies about DSH have shown higher rates of DSH in females than in males possibly because of various emotional (biological) and social factors. Borderline Personality Disorder has been found to be one of the causal factors for DSH in women.

#### Violence and Abuse

According to one study, around two-third of married women in India were victims of domestic violence. The common forms of violence against Indian women include female feticide, domestic violence, dowry death or harassment, mental and physical torture, sexual trafficking etc. The reproductive roles of women, such as their expected role of bearing children, the consequences of infertility, and the failure to produce a male child have been linked to mental health issues and female suicide.

Common mental health problems reported by abused women include depression, anxiety, post traumatic stress, insomnia, and alcohol use disorders, as well as a range of somatic and psychological complaints. Abused women are much more likely to require psychiatric treatment and are much more likely to attempt suicide.

#### Reproductive Health

Mood and behavioral changes have

been observed to be associated with the monthly cycle. The symptoms such as irritability, restlessness, anxiety, tension, migraine, sleep disturbances, sadness, dysphoria, and the lack of concentration occur more frequently during the premenstrual and menstrual phase. A premenstrual dysphoric disorder consisting of extremely distressing emotional and behavioral symptoms is closely linked to menstrual cycle.

Mental disturbances frequently occur during late pregnancy and in the postpartum period. Postpartum blues is the most common illness affecting a good proportion of new mothers, whereas postpartum depression constitutes a major depressive episode with an onset within 6 weeks postpartum in a majority of cases. The risk is highest among the most socially and economically disadvantaged women. The other important risk factors include gender-based factors such as the bias against female babies; role restrictions regarding housework and infant care; especially in multi-generational households in which a daughter-in-law has little independence to take decisions regarding household and other affairs, and gender-based violence. Also, menopause has long been known to be accompanied by depression and other mental disturbances in women who have had genetic and socio-economic vulnerability.

Reproductive health factors, particularly gynecological complaints such as vaginal discharge and dyspareunia and Poly Cystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOD) are independently associated with the risk for various Common Mental Disorders.

#### Substance Use

Women who abuse alcohol or drugs are more likely to be sexually or physically abused than other women, when they were young. Alcoholism and Substance abuse may lead to major depression and anxiety disorders in females. In our valley, substance abuse among the female population is increasing day by day possibly because of untreated mental illnesses (such as Borderline Personality Disorder) among them.

#### Social Challenges of Women with respect to Mental Health

Women with mental health issues may have to face social consequences such as abandonment by marital families, homelessness, vulnerability to sexual abuse, and exposure to HIV; and other infections which can contribute to the difficulties in the recovery of such women.

Stigma has been reported to be more toward ill women than men.

#### What is the way forward?

It is clear from the whole discussion that women's mental health cannot be considered in isolation from social, political, and economic issues. In order to deliver effective help, women's health must incorporate mental and physical health across the life cycle in addition to reproductive health.

In order to understand the determinants of poor mental health of women, the focus needs to be shifted from individual and "lifestyle" risk factors to the recognition of the broader, social, economic, and legal factors that affect women's lives. It is essential to recognize how the socio-cultural, economic, legal, infrastructural, and environmental factors that affect women's mental health are taken care of in the given community setting.

Education, training, and interventions targeting the social and physical environment are crucial for addressing women's mental health. Identification of significant persons in government departments and other relevant groups in the community, to obtain and record data indicating the extent of women's problems and the burden associated with women's mental problems and the development of policies to protect and promote women's mental health are extremely crucial.

The primary care providers including Asha workers, social workers, general physicians working at various primary care centers etc. must be educated about the identification and assessment of major mental health problems affecting women, so that they routinely enquire women about their common mental health problems, provide the most appropriate intervention and support and provide education to the community on issues related to the mental health of women and refer more complex cases to various professionals including psychiatrists and clinical psychologists working in various facilities across state.

Criminal justice response to violence against women must be improved in order to get a timely help before any such legal issues leads to the development of any mental health issue.

In summary, combined efforts at social, political, economic, and legal levels can bring change in the lives of women and contribute to the improvement of the mental health of these women.

*Views expressed in the articles are the author's own responsibility. The content is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment and is strictly for educational/informative purposes only*

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## Managing Polycystic Ovary Syndrome Role of Physical and Psychological Interventions

DR. SHAHNAZ HAFEEZ KAWOOSA

Polycystic Ovary Syndrome is an endocrine disorder characterized by hyperandrogenism, polycystic ovaries and irregular menstruation. Certain metabolic derangements observed in PCOS include insulin resistance and compensatory hyperinsulinemia, which can further increase the risk of diabetes and cardiovascular diseases, amenorrhea, oligomenorrhea, hirsutism, acne and prolonged erratic menstrual bleeding are commonly observed in women with PCOS. A woman with a history of PCOS is at higher risk of developing PCOS. PCOS is a chronic disorder and therefore it is essential to consider other suitable first line interventions such as counselling,

exercise and weight management. Physical and psychological interventions can be helpful as well.

#### Physical exercise

Physical exercises are known to regulate cardiovascular function, the reproductive system (reproductive hormones and menstruation) and metabolic functions including insulin resistance and glucose metabolism. Physical exercises that target slower weight loss are usually more effective for improving insulin sensitivity and restoring ovulation in infertile obese women with PCOS. Slow weight loss of 2% - 5% of total body weight can be helpful in restoring ovulation and insulin sensitivity as well as decreasing visceral adiposity in obese women having PCOS.

Obesity is a crucial factor in pathogenesis of PCOS, weight loss is very essential for managing PCOS.

Homocysteine, a risk factor for heart disease, increases the risk of atherosclerosis in women with PCOS by inducing endothelial dysfunction through limited bioavailability of nitric oxide and altered blood vessel elasticity.

Adherence to physical exercises which are as simple as walking help increase the body's aerobic capacity and production of nitric oxide, which further reduces vascular shear stress. Physical exercises also help to reduce total plasma, homocysteine concentration in obese women with PCOS.

#### Psychological Treatment

It has been observed that patients with PCOS carry a psychological burden through their lives. Most women with PCOS fear infertility and loss of femininity and sexuality and lower self-worth which could lead to mental health problems.

Cognitive behavioral training (CBT) including individual sessions focused on comorbidity between physical illness and depression, positive thinking and cognitive restructuring can give effective results in adolescents with PCOS. Physiological comorbidities such as menstrual irregularity, higher percent of fat mass, hypertension and mid region adiposity associated with PCOS can also be reduced with the help of cognitive behavioral therapy.

At times women with PCOS have re-

duced sexual libido due to higher levels of androgenic hormones in the ovaries or adrenal glands as PCOS is a physical, psychological and social syndrome. A patient requires care beyond treating the physical symptoms.

*Views expressed in the articles are the author's own responsibility. The content is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment and is strictly for educational/informative purposes only.*

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# 1 in 3 adults anxious, depressed due to pandemic: Study

## Agencies

One in every three adults, particularly women, younger adults and those of lower socioeconomic status, are experiencing psychological distress related to Covid-19, a new study suggests.

The study, published in the journal PLOS ONE, indicates that women are more likely to experience psychological distress than men is consistent with other global studies that have shown that anxiety and depression are more common in women.

"The lower social status of women and less preferential access to healthcare compared to men could potentially be responsible for the exaggerated adverse psychosocial impact on women," according to the researchers, including Tazeen Jafar from the Duke-NUS in Singapore.

For the study, the team performed a meta-analysis of 68 studies conducted during the pandemic, encompassing 2,88,830 participants from 19 countries, to assess risk factors associated with anxiety and depression among the general population.

They found that, among the people most affected by Covid-19-related anxiety or depression, women, younger adults, individuals of lower socioeconomic status, those living in rural areas and those at high risk of Covid-19 infection were more likely to experience psychological distress.

Younger adults, aged 35 and under, were more likely to experience psychological distress than those over the age of 35.

Although the reasons for this are unclear, previous studies have suggested that it might be due to younger people's greater access to

Covid-19 information through the media.

This current study also confirmed that longer media exposure was associated with higher odds of anxiety and depression, the researchers said.

Other factors associated with psychological distress included living in rural areas; lower education, lower income or unemployment; and being at high risk of Covid-19 infection. However, having stronger family and social support and using positive coping strategies were shown to reduce the risk of psychological distress.

"Understanding these factors is crucial for designing preventive programmes and mental health resource planning during the rapidly evolving Covid-19 outbreak," Jafar said.



## To ward off cancer, other diseases we need to change lifestyle, by innovation

### Agencies

The key factor in preventing non-communicable diseases is lifestyle management at the individual level with a focus on such innovations, which can help increase the awareness of risk factors management in society, claim an international team of researchers.

The study was led by scientists from Kaunas University of Technology (KTU), Lithuania. According to them, the management of cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular and respiratory diseases require many strategies from several perspectives and on different levels.

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs), also known as chronic diseases, are medical conditions that are associated with long duration and slow progress. Most NCDs are non-infectious and are the result of several factors, including genetic, physiological, behavioural, and environmental.

According to the World Health Organization, NCDs are the leading cause of death worldwide, responsible for 71 per cent of the total number of deaths each year. The top four killers among NCDs are cardiovascular diseases (17.9 million deaths annually), cancers (9 million), respiratory diseases (3.9 million), and diabetes (1.6 million).

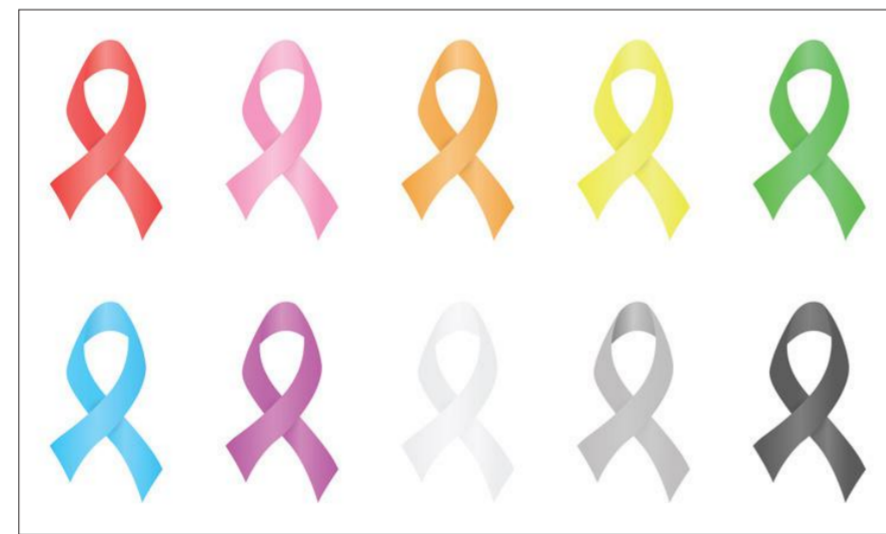
Although lifestyle factors, such as physical activity, nutrition habits, tobacco and alcohol consumption have been linked to the development of certain medical conditions for a long time, with this study the researchers attempt to draw the attention of policy-makers and medical professionals towards the complex nature of the problem and its possible solutions.

"It is important to combine modern scientific achievements and innovative decisions, concerning the rationality of nutrition and positive effects on human health. Governments and international organisations should make people aware of their health and their environment to make the world a safe and healthy place", states Dr Rimantas

Kodzius, Head of the research group behind the study, Professor at Panevezys Faculty of Technology and Business, KTU.

According to him, the support of research to find new techniques to improve food biotechnology or to develop rapid and sensitive diagnostic platforms to detect NCDs is crucial. The scientists

"In the past, infectious and parasitic diseases were the main causes of death, but in recent decades, NCDs have replaced them. Moreover, with the spreading of western lifestyle in low and middle-income countries, due to global population ageing and commercial pressures for unhealthy diets, non-communicable diseases are becoming prevalent



claim that in order to successfully address the growing crisis of non-communicable diseases, the innovation, focusing on the promotion of healthy eating behaviour, lifestyle change and cessation of smoking is crucial.

The management of NCDs requires many strategies from several perspectives on individual and country levels.

According to various data, there are modifiable (i.e. high blood pressure, smoking, physical inactivity, obesity) and non-modifiable (such as age, gender, genetic factors) risk factors that contribute to the development of NCDs.

However, although one cannot change their age or gender, there are modifying factors in the cultural or social environment of every person. Therefore, risk factor management is essential in preventing NCDs, researchers claim.

across all economic contexts", says Dr Aida Budreviciute, the first author of the study.

According to researchers, the main factors of illnesses are medications, blood pressure, lipids, glucose, viruses, obesity, stress. Various dietary factors, such as eating meat, sugar-sweetened beverage consumption, and iron-based diets or, on the other hand, using whole grain, natural, high-fibre products have been linked to the development of NCDs.

Moreover, researchers claim that the effects of the global Covid-19 pandemic on the development of NCDs can be devastating as people during lockdown and self-isolation tend to eat more and exercise less. In the future, when the battle with Covid-19 is won, the health system may be overwhelmed with the many occurrences of NCDs, say the team of researchers.

## 'Asthma can be prevented by consuming omega-3 fatty acids'

### Agencies

Researchers during a recent study have found that by higher dietary consumption of long chain omega-3 fatty acids during childhood, the risk of developing subsequent asthma reduces in children carrying a common gene variant.

The study, led by the Queen Mary University of London, is in collaboration with the University of Bristol and the University of Southampton, UK, and Karolinska Institutet, Sweden. In the UK, 1.1 million children (1 in 11) are currently receiving treatment for asthma and most adult asthma begins in childhood. The NHS spends around £1 billion a year treating and caring for people with asthma.

Senior author, Professor Seif Shaheen from the Queen Mary University of London, said: "Asthma is the most common chronic condition in childhood and we currently don't know how to prevent it. It is possible that a poor diet may increase the risk of developing asthma, but until now most studies have taken 'snap-shots', measuring diet and asthma over a short period of time. Instead, we measured diet and then followed up children over many years to see who developed asthma and who didn't."

"Whilst we cannot say for certain that eating more fish will prevent asthma in children, based on our findings, it would nevertheless be sensible for children in the UK to consume more fish, as few currently achieve recommended intake."

Fish is of particular interest because it is a rich source of the long chain omega-3 fatty acids, eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA), which have anti-inflammatory properties.

The study, published in the European Respiratory Journal, used data from a large UK birth cohort, Children of the 90s, which recruited mothers who were pregnant in the early 1990s and has been following up their offspring ever since. They analysed the association between intake of EPA and DHA from fish at 7 years of age (estimated by food frequency

questionnaires) and incidence of new cases of doctor-diagnosed asthma at 11-14 years of age.

Long chain omega-3 intake from fish was not associated with asthma in the cohort as a whole (4,543 people). However, the team looked in more detail at children with a particular genetic make-up. More than half of the children carried a common variant in the fatty acid desaturase (FADS) gene which is associated with lower levels of long chain omega-3 fatty acids in the blood. In these children, a higher dietary intake of long chain omega-3 fatty acids was associated with a lower risk of asthma. The risk was 51 per cent lower, comparing those in the top quartile of long chain omega-3 intake with those in the bottom quartile.

Furthermore, this finding was also found in an independent birth cohort



study in Sweden (BAMSE).

As they have only found an observational association, the researchers caution that they cannot say for certain that a higher intake of long chain omega-3 fatty acids in childhood can prevent the subsequent development of asthma. The next step is to see if higher intake is also associated with a lower risk of exacerbations in children who already have asthma.

The project was funded by the Rosetrees Trust and The Bloom Foundation. The UK Medical Research Council, Wellcome and the University of Bristol provide core support for Children of the 90s.

It is important to combine modern scientific achievements and innovative decisions, concerning the rationality of nutrition and positive effects on human health. Governments and international organisations should make people aware of their health and their environment to make the world a safe and healthy place



## Nation In Grip Of Corporates: Rahul Gandhi



**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM:** Congress leader and Wayanad MP Rahul Gandhi on Thursday alleged that "one or two corporates" are controlling the country and added that this is not good for democracy.

Gandhi said the farmers of the country have still not got a clear picture on the farm laws and the agitation could flare up again.

He was speaking at a public function in Wayanad.

The former Congress chief said that the Congress and UDF would sweep the upcoming Assembly polls in Kerala and added that several new faces will be contesting the election. Gandhi who is in the state

for the past couple of days had interacted with girl students on Wednesday and had even asked a schoolgirl to translate his speech. He had called upon the girls students to be independent and equal to boys and asked them to be active in all walks of life.

Gandhi was also involved in a series of discussions with senior state Congress leaders and its ally the Indian Union Muslim League regarding the sharing of seats. He is keen that a large number of women and youth contest the next election on Congress tickets.

With the Congress and the UDF on the backfoot following the recent Kerala local body elections, where the ruling LDF had swept the polls, the Congress is active with altering of strategies including bringing in former Chief Minister Oommen Chandy as the chairman of the election supervisory committee as well as Lok Sabha MP Shashi Tharoor as member of the election manifesto committee.

## 41st India Carpet Expo—Virtual Edition Takes Off

**Virtual Expo Will Provide Platform To Over 150 Indian Exporters, 300 Buyers Of Over 64 Countries**

**NEW DELHI:** Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), Ministry of Textiles, Government of India, Shantmanu has inaugurated five-day 41st India Carpet Expo – Virtual Edition.

Ms. Mudita Mishra, Additional Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), Sohan Kumar Jha, Sr. Director, Arun Yadav, Director were also present on the occasion.

Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), Siddh Nath Singh, Chairman, CEPC, Umesh Kumar Gupta, Members of Committee of Administration, CEPC, Executive Director, CEPC, CEO, Carpet & Handicrafts Sector Skill Council and other participants also attended the event. On the occasion, Union Minister for Textiles, Smriti Irani in a video message conveyed best wishes and invited everyone to explore the beautiful world of Indian Handmade Carpets.

Siddh Nath Singh, Chairman, CEPC in his welcome address conveyed gratitude to Shri Shantmanu, DC (Handicrafts) for his support and guidance without which Council may not be able to organize its activities.

Singh informed that approximately over 150 prominent Member-Exporters from major carpet belt of Bhadohi, Mirzapur, Varanasi, Agra, Jaipur, Panipat and Jammu & Kashmir have confirmed their participation. It was given out that CEPC has also received an overwhelming response from around 300 overseas buyers from over 64 countries.

Speaking on the inaugural address, Shantmanu mentioned that 41st ICE is a great opportunity for exhibitors as well as buyers and will be beneficial for the 20 lakh weavers and artisans associated with the Carpet Industry directly or indirectly.

He said that India's unique capability in adapting to any type of design, color, quality & size as per the provisions of the carpet buyers has made it a household name in the International market.

"Industry uses diverse raw materials from various parts of India i.e., wool, silk, man made fiber,

jute, cotton and various blends of different yarns, he said and added that the industry is having immense potential for growth both in production and exports.

Industry is environment friendly and does not use scarce & perishable energy resources which made the Expo an extremely popular destination worldwide on Handmade Carpets, he added.

Over the years, the India Carpet Expo has established itself as a great sourcing platform for the carpet buyers from all over the globe. It is the endeavour of the Council to provide an exclusive business environment to carpet importers as well as manufacturers and exporters. The committee of administration is expecting the Virtual-Expo to be a grand success, which will be a gateway to a new era of technology, and hence, will open the doors to the global market during Covid-pandemic era.

It was also given out that the session informed that Council had also instituted Design Awards and received 65 entries from the participants. The Jury is in the process for selecting the awardees and the Council will announce the Awards on 30th January, 2021.

It was further informed that Council is the process to make the Bhadohi Carpet Expo Mart fully functional and is organizing a Curtain Raiser Programme on 7th February, 2021 for the Member-Exporters/trade.

2021 marks the 3rd virtual edition of the long running tradition of exhibiting the rich cultural essence of the handmade Indian Carpets and Rugs for an international audience. This event is managed & organized by the Carpet Export Promotion Council.

The India Carpet Expo is an initiative to bridge the gap between Indian products and demand of Handmade Carpets and floor coverings across the globe in the post pandemic era. It is Asia's Largest Carpet Expo that offers a unique platform for the buyers & sellers to synergize in order to grow & strengthen the global carpet industry.

## Govt Enhances Rate Of Stipend For Handicrafts And Handloom Trainees In J&K

Observer News Service

**JAMMU:** In a significant and major development, Government of Jammu & Kashmir today enhanced the rate of stipend for trainees undergoing Elementary and Advanced level training courses in various training centres of Handicrafts and Handloom departments. The monthly stipend in Handicrafts sector has been enhanced from Rs. 500/- to Rs. 1000/- for Elementary course and from Rs. 700/- to Rs. 1500/- for Advanced Training Course. Similarly, in respect of Handloom Training Courses, the rate of monthly stipend has been increased from Rs. 500/- to Rs. 1000/- for Ready-Made Garments (RMG) and Weaving Training Courses.

The enhancement in stipend was long overdue after it was found that the meagre stipends in this sector was failing to attract artisans to pursue craft activity as their profession. The enhancement will not only encourage target groups to this vocation but will also encourage the school drop outs to join the training centres in order to learn skills for securing their future.

The move by the Government is seen to infuse a fresh lease of enthusiasm and motivation among the trainees. Close to 13000 artisans and weavers of Jammu and Kashmir in different crafts of Handicrafts and Handloom sector shall be benefited by this enhancement. It will further increase competition among the youth to seek



enable unemployed youth to start their own ventures and become job providers rather than job seekers. Currently there are 369 & 179 Elementary and Advanced Training Centres in the Handicrafts sector and 99 Ready-Made Garments, Weaving and Kani centres in the Handloom sector of Jammu and Kashmir providing training to unemployed youth in different trades/crafts. The enhancement in the stipend comes days after the Government conferred Padma and State Awards to Ghulam Rasool Khan and Sajad Hussain Dar in recognition of their role played in the promotion of Kashmir Handicrafts.

The enhancement in the stipend has been welcomed and termed as historic by the Apex trade bodies like KCCI, FCIK and PHD Chamber of Commerce. Appreciating the IG Administration, various associations concerned with the Kashmir Craft including TAHAFUZ have expressed their gratitude for taking this momentous decision to improve the lot of artisans.

The enhancement in the stipend has also been welcomed by various Associations of Handicrafts and Handloom of Jammu Division, especially by Jan Shakti Handicrafts Union Jammu & Jammu Province Handloom Cooperative Societies Federation, who have expressed their gratitude towards the momentous decision taken. This revision in the stipend has taken place after a long gap of 8 years.

## Collection Of Regn Fee: Govt Rolls Out JKGRAS

Observer News Service

**JAMMU:** Inspector General Registration, Dr Pawan Kotwal, today rolled out J&K Government Receipt Accounting System (JKGRAS) portal in Registration Department for easy payment of registration fee by the citizens for getting registration of documents done at the Sub Registrars offices from anywhere without visiting the treasuries or banks.

Dr Pawan Kotwal, later, convened a meeting cum training session of all the Registration Officers to acquaint them with JKGRAS module.

Additional Inspector General Registration, Jammu, Leena Padha, Tehsildar Headquarter, Rafiq Ahmad Jaral and all the Registrars, Sub Registrars of J&K participated through video conferencing.

Technical Director NIC, J&K, Rajesh Kumar gave a detailed presentation on GRAS module.

Pertinently, the Government has recently launched the Government Receipt Accounting System (GRAS) portal in the Union Territory. Dr Kotwal asked the developers to incorporate the features as per requirement of registration department and ought to be linked with NGDRS portal, so that the Sub Registrars can lock the e-registration challan smoothly. He also asked the scientists to use all the protection techniques, so that the e-Challan of payment once used, may not be used again by anyone.

While rolling out GRAS for



collection of registration fee, Dr Kotwal directed all the Sub Registrars to adopt the new mode of payment of registration fee mandatorily.

Responding to the queries of registration officers, Dr Kotwal said that the GRAS is at the evolutionary stage and lot of changes will be made as per the requirement of departments. He asked the registration officers to provide all the requirements through email at the earliest so that necessary customization can be made in the system.

It is pertinent to mention that the Department of Registration has adopted the online registration system by using the NGDRS system developed by Software Development Unit of NIC, Pune, since 18th September 2020, in five districts of Jammu, Samba, Kathua, Udhampur and Srinagar and with effect from 9th November, 2020 in rest of the 15 districts. Till date, 9695 documents have been registered online in 5 districts and 1114 documents in the remaining 15 districts. Further, the department has successfully adopted e-stamping in whole of the Union Territory of J&K in collaboration with Stock Holding Corporation of India Limited (SHCIL), which is the

Central Record Keeping agency.

Also, the SHCIL has set up about 400 Authorized Collection Centers (ACCs) including banks and stamp vendors, where the applicants deposit the stamp duty electronically. Till date, Rs. 97.87 crore have been collected through e-stamping since 18th September, 2020. By adopting e-stamping, the government has saved a huge amount of about Rs. 35 crore, which was earlier spent on printing of stamp papers besides plugging the leakage and ensuring efficiency and transparency in the stamp duty collection.

Now, with the introduction of e-Registration fee collection, the revenue collected on account of stamp duty and Registration fee would be foolproof, transparent and easily monitorable besides being citizen friendly reform. This would be one of the major reforms of e-governance in the UT of J&K.

The GRAS portal is accessible by logging onto www.jkgras.survey.gov.in. A user can generate e-Challan through this portal and deposit the registration fee either through internet banking service available 24x7 or over the counter in any branch of the J&K Bank in J&K as well as rest of the country.

## New Policy To Integrate Fishermen With Agri Farmers In J&K

Observer News Service

**JAMMU:** Principal Secretary Animal, Sheep Husbandry and Fisheries Department, Navin Kumar Choudhary, chaired a review meeting of Fisheries Department here today.

The meeting had a detailed review of implementation of Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana, PMMSY besides assessing status of release of funds by the Finance Department.

Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana is an initiative launched by the Government of India to establish a comprehensive framework and reduce infrastructural gaps in the fisheries sector. The policy envisages to integrate all the fishermen with agricultural farmers and provide all the facilities available through various farmer welfare schemes to the fishermen.

Choudhary directed the officers to identify potential areas of fish production and prioritise setting up of such units for better growth of the sector and welfare of those engaged in the trade. Assistance to existing units and their expansion should also be another priority, he added saying that with increased production, trade and export of the produce also needs to be exhilarated, he added.

Emphasis was laid, by the Principal Secretary, on generating awareness among the SC-ST people to start fisheries related businesses. The department was directed to utilise different media channels to advertise about the PMMSY and various other initiatives of the department, by the Principal Secretary. He also called for involving panchayat and BDC members to better deliver the benefits of these schemes.

Choudhary took detailed review about fish production works being done in various

districts and directed the senior officers to identify the variety of fish best suited to climatic conditions and water availability of each district. He said that the department and its officers must work diligently to deliver benefits of welfare and developmental schemes on ground. Give equal attention and efforts to all districts of both the provinces, he stressed upon the officers.

Reiterating the need for developing better marketing and export facilities, the Principal Secretary said that increasing the fish production two-fold is no good unless there is good fish processing, storage, packaging and logistics facilities. People need to be encouraged and assisted for starting entrepreneurial ventures in these sectors, he maintained.

Later, detailed project reports were sought by the Principal Secretary, in which he asked the department to furnish relevant details as to how and where such facilities could be established in both the provinces of the UT. He also assured support from the government's side to assist private players for venturing into the sector.

The Principal Secretary also directed the department to identify potential fish production in certain untapped water resources of the union territory. Later, the department's finances and status of pending projects was also discussed.

The meeting was attended by Director General Budget, Finance Department; Director Fisheries, Bashir Ahmad Bhat; Director Finance, Animal, Sheep Husbandry & Fisheries Department; Joint Director, Resources, Finance Department; all Joint Directors of Fisheries Department among other senior officers. Assistant Director, Fisheries from all districts also participated through virtual mode.

## Apiculture And Mushroom Schemes Reviewed

**DCTCs Will Be Upgraded During The Current Year To Serve As Model Training Centres : JD Apiculture & Mushrooms**

**SRINAGAR:** Joint Director (Agriculture) Apiculture and Mushrooms, Farooq Ahmad Shah today convened a meeting to review the Mushroom and Apiculture Schemes of Kashmir Division.

Speaking on the occasion, Farooq Ahmad Shah said that Joint Directorate for Apiculture and Mushroom has been created for development of these two sectors to new heights through introduction of new technologies.

Joint Director Agriculture informed the participants that all the Demonstration cum Training Centres (DCTCs) will be upgraded during the current year to serve as model training centres for the benefit of farmers associated with these sectors.

He said comprehensive plans have been formulated so that more and more young people are roped-in to adopt these highly remunerative enterprises.

It was emphasized on all the officers to prepare a training calendar so that necessary training to the interested farm-

ers are imparted in this regard. The chair was informed that necessary steps for making available readymade pasteurized compost and quality spawn have already been taken so that the same is provided to the mushroom growers at reasonable rates.

The respective Apiculture Development officers and Mushroom Development officers were directed to identify and register the beekeepers and mushroom growers so that incentives under different CSS Schemes are provided to these registered growers.

Earlier, the District Officers connected with these schemes gave detailed presentations of their respective districts with regard to production and income generation.

Apart from Mushroom Specialist Zaffar Ahmad Hakeem and Assistant Entomologist all the Apiculture Development Officers and Mushroom Development Officers of Kashmir Division participated in the meeting.

### NEWS MAKERS

#### Handicrafts Awareness Camp On Jan 30 At Bandipora

**BANDIPORA:** The District Handicrafts Department, Bandipora is organizing a day-long Awareness Camp for Artisans of the District on 30th January (Saturday).

According to Assistant Director Handicrafts the venue of awareness camp shall be the premises of conference hall, Mini secretariat Bandipora. He informed that apart from providing information to the artisan community about the activities, schemes and developmental programmes of the Handicrafts Department, representatives from various other departments will attend the camp to inform the artisans about schemes in place for the upliftment of the artisans.

The Assistant Director appealed all the artisans of the district to attend the awareness camp.

#### Industrial Associations Call On Dwivedi

**JAMMU:** In a series of interactive sessions Commissioner Secretary, Industries and Commerce, Manoj Kumar Dwivedi today met delegations of J&K Walnut Exporters Association, J&K Plywood Manufacturing Association and PHDCCI- Jammu at Civil Secretariat here.

All the Associations in one voice expressed gratitude to the Government for announcing the revised J&K Industrial Development Scheme 2021. The delegations expressed that the scheme will go a long way in boosting the Industrial Sector of Jammu and Kashmir.

On the occasion the delegates presented memorandum for consideration of the Government which included up-gradation of infrastructure in the Industrial Estates, Skill Development and Labour related incentives, Industrial benefits to hotels, Special Package of revival of Sick units, Rationalization of duty regime on walnut in-shell and Support to Wood based Industry.

#### HDFC Bank Partners With CSC For EMI Collection

**NEW DELHI:** HDFC Bank and CSC e-Governance Services India Ltd—a Special Purpose Vehicle (CSC SPV) under the Ministry of Electronics & IT (MeitY) – today jointly announced the EMI Collection Services for CSC-HDFC Bank's Business Correspondents across the country.

This will make payments convenient for customers, who can now visit their nearest CSC, to deposit overdues. The CSC-HDFC Bank Correspondent or Village Level Entrepreneur (VLE) will match the loan account with the customers' registered phone number to cross check the amount payable on the system. The VLE will then provide a receipt for the amount collected and deposit the amount in the prescribed form to the bank.

The announcement was made by Dr. Dinesh Kumar Tyagi, MD, CSC e-Governance Services India Ltd., Mr. Dinesh Luthra, National Head, CSC Channel at HDFC Bank and Mr. Debjyoti Datta, Head-Collection Process (Retail Portfolio Management) at HDFC Bank.

#### Dir Agriculture Holds Interaction With Technocrats

**SRINAGAR:** Director Agriculture Production and Farmers Welfare Department, Chowdhary Mohammad Iqbal today held an interaction with the Agriculture Technocrats and other officers of the Department.

While interacting with officers, the Director emphasized on the adoption of latest technology and innovations in the science of agriculture so as to reap its benefits at the grass root level of the farming community.

Chowdhary stressed on the workforce that they should focus on imparting glamour to the agriculture activities in the fields. While appreciating the efforts of the officers and officials who were recently awarded by the respective District Administrations during Republic Day celebrations, the Director advised them to work with more zeal and enthusiasm and continue with this endeavor in a much more proactive and synchronized way.

Speaking on the occasion Joint Director Apiculture and Mushrooms, Farooq Ahmad Shah advised the officers and officials to come out of the orthodox means of agriculture and apply the newer technology for upliftment of the farming community.





## India Today Takes Rajdeep Sardesai Off-Air for 2 Weeks, Cuts Pay



**Agencies**

In the aftermath of the farmer's Tractor Rally violence on Republic Day, leading news channel India Today on Thursday, 28 January decided to take TV anchor and consulting editor Rajdeep Sardesai off-air for two weeks. This decision is followed by his misinformed claims about the Delhi Police killing a farmer, which was broadcasted and tweeted. The news channel has also cut Sardesai's one-month salary, The Wire reported.

On 26 January, amid a rally demonstrating against the BJP government's three farm laws, clashes broke out between the protesters and the police. Sardesai incorrectly reported that Navneet Singh, a farmer was shot and

killed by the police. He had also tweeted this claim before the broadcast.

After his claims, a video footage was released by the Delhi police, which showed a tractor, reportedly being driven by Singh, crashing into police barricades and overturning. Singh succumbed to his injuries.

Soon after the video released, the TV anchor withdrew his statement, tweeting, "While the farm protesters claim that the deceased Navneet Singh was shot at by Delhi police while on a tractor, this video clearly shows that the tractor overturned while trying to break the police barricades."

"The police have shown great restraint despite grave provocation by the farm protesters," he added, expressing appreciation for the Delhi Police.

## Finalise Policy On Rare Diseases by March 31: HC to Centre

**Press Trust of India**

**New Delhi:** The Delhi High Court on Thursday directed the Centre to finalise by March 31 its new National Health Policy for Rare Diseases of 2020 and make operational the digital platform envisaged under it for crowd funding of the expensive medicines and treatment for rare illnesses.

The direction was issued by Justice Prathiba M Singh while hearing two pleas moved on behalf of two children who are suffering from a rare disease known as Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy (DMD).

Justice Singh said she was issuing the direction to finalise the policy and operationalise the digital platform by March 31 as an affidavit filed by the Health Ministry said that both things were only "likely" to be done by March 31.

The court also noted in its order that the earlier policy on rare diseases of 2017 was kept in abeyance from December 2018 onwards and the new policy was still awaiting comments from the public and other stakeholders.

The court also asked the min-



istry to write to the company — Sarepta Therapeutics in USA — which manufactures the experimental drug used for treatment of DMD, enquiring whether they would consider providing the medicine free of cost to the two children whose families cannot afford the exorbitantly priced drug.

With these directions, the court listed the matter for hearing on February 4.

During the hearing, the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) told the court that it does not have the funds required to procure the drug for the two children as crores of funds were to be released to it by the central government.



# BOLLYWOOD

## Big Banners in Kashmir To Explore Locations

**Observer News Service**

**SRINAGAR:** The big banners of Bollywood are on a 4-day visit to Kashmir to explore scenic backdrops for their future film projects.

The top names which have arrived here include Ajay Devgun Films, Sanjay Dutt Productions, Reliance Entertainment, Rohit Shetty Films, Zee Studios, Adhikari Brothers & SAB (Marathi), Endemol, Rajkumar Hirani, Excel Entertainment, etc besides representatives from Producers Guild, Mumbai.

Soon after their arrival here Wednesday, the 24-member delegation visited Gulmarg today. The team will stay in Srinagar on 29th January and also have interactive sessions with media, travel trade associations and Valley's film and

line producers. They will also be exploring the favourite backdrop locations at Pahalgam on 30th January before departing back to Mumbai.

Director, Tourism, Kashmir, Dr. G N Itoo said the top production houses are here and have visited various locations. "Kashmir has been receiving good response from the Bollywood filmmakers since opening of the tourism here in addition to the country's regional entertainment houses for shooting song sequences and commercial ads," said Dr. Itoo.

Dr Itoo said Kashmir is a natural backdrop for the filmmakers and the department has been making it easy for them to get permissions for shooting.

Kashmir has witnessed a steady increase in tourist footfall due to continuous snowfall since the onset of winter.

Celebrities who recently visited Kashmir include Singers Jubin Nautiyal, Guru Randhawa, Salman Ali, former Indian actress and model Sana Khan, Music Composer Salim Merchant, TV Host and Anchor Aditya Narayan, business tycoon Anil Ambani and most of whom visited Gulmarg. The ski resort also received 100 percent booking as most of the hotels are booked till February end owing to the huge tourist rush.

The Producers Guild praised the pristine beauty of the Gulmarg and expressed keen desire to shoot for their upcoming film projects at various locations in Kashmir.

Kashmir has been traditionally a favourite spot for the Bollywood who have shot scores of movies here at Dal Lake, Srinagar's Mughal Gardens, Gulmarg and Pahalgam.

## Suspension Of Scheduled International Passenger Flights Extended Till Feb 28

**Press Trust of India**

**NEW DELHI:** The coronavirus-induced suspension of scheduled international passenger flights has been extended till February 28, aviation regulator DGCA has said on Thursday.

"However, international scheduled flights may be allowed on selected routes by the competent authority on a case-to-case basis," the Directorate General of Civil Aviation added.

Scheduled international passenger services have been suspended in India since March 23 due to the coronavirus pandemic. But special international flights have been operating under the Vande Bharat Mission since May and under bilateral "air bubble" arrangements with selected countries since July.

India has formed air bubble pacts with around 24 countries including the US, the UK, the UAE, Kenya, Bhutan and



France. Under an air bubble pact between two countries, special international flights can be operated by their airlines between their territories.

The DGCA circular also said the suspension did not affect the operation of international all-cargo operations and flights specifically approved by it.

## Unzipping Pants, Holding Minor's Hand Not 'Sexual Assault': Bombay High Court



**Agencies**

**NAGPUR:** The Bombay High Court (Nagpur Bench) has ruled that "unzipping pants or holding a minor's hand" does not amount to 'sexual assault' under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012.

This came on the original complaint filed by a woman who came to her home one afternoon and found the accused with his pants unzipped flashing his private parts as he held the hand of her 5-year-old daughter and asked her to come to bed with him.

When she saw this, she hurled abuses at him after, which he released her daughter, who later informed her that the accused wanted her to get into bed and sleep with him.

The verdict by Justice Pushpa V. Ganediwala came in a criminal appeal against the conviction and imprisonment of one year and five-year jail plus fines under different laws, awarded to the 50-year-old man for molesting the 5-year-old girl, by the Special Judge of Special POCSO Court, Gadchiroli, in October 2020.

Partly allowing the appeal, the Bombay HC quashed aside the jail sentence of 5 years under the POCSO Act and modified the imprisonment as per the Indian Penal Code (IPC) to the extent the appellant-accused has already served as an undertrial.

While considering these aspects, the high court referred to the definition of 'sexual assault'

under Section 7 of the POCSO Act: "Whoever with sexual intent touches vagina, penis, anus or breast of the child or makes the child touch the vagina, penis, anus or breast of such person or any other person or does any other act with sexual intent which involves physical contact without penetration is said to commit sexual assault."

In the present case, since no actual touching of the private parts of the (girl's) body happened, the high court ruled it would come under the third part of the definition - "any other act with sexual which involves physical contact without penetration" Justice Ganediwala observed: "The acts of 'holding the hands of the prosecutrix', or 'opened zip of the pant' as has been allegedly witnessed by the (witness), in the opinion of this court, does not fit in the definition of 'sexual assault'."

However, the court ruled that the offence of sexual harassment under IPC Sec. 354(A)(1)(i) that deals with 'physical contact and advances involving unwelcome and explicit sexual overtures', is attracted.

Accordingly, the high court set aside the appellant-accused' conviction under the POCSO Act Sec. 8, 10, 12, but pronounced him guilty under the IPC Sec. 354(A)(1)(i) which attracts a maximum of 3 years jail term.

Justice Ganediwala said that since the appellant-accused had already undergone 5 months in jail, it was sufficient for the offence and directed him to be set free if not wanted in any other cases.

## PIA Pilots Spot UFO Over Karachi

**Agencies**

**Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) pilots** have reportedly spotted an Unidentified Flying Object (UFO) in the skies of Karachi during a Lahore-bound domestic flight (PK-304).

According to the details, the Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) aircraft was flying at an altitude of 35,000 feet when the captain spotted a white round object emitting light from the center. The flight crew immediately started filming the object and the video has gone viral on social media.

Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) spokesperson has confirmed that aircraft pilots reported a UFO

fighting during a Lahore-bound flight from Karachi.

"It cannot be said for certain whether it was a UFO or something else," the spokesperson said, adding that the captain of the flight had immediately reported the sighting back to the control room.

According to the pilot, the thing he spotted in the sky was not a planet but could be a "space station" or an "artificial planet" near Earth.

It is too early to say what that object was. In fact, we might not be able to tell what the object was at all," said the spokesperson. "However, something was spotted and it was reported in accordance with the required protocol."

**BREIF NEWS**

## CBSE Class 10, 12 Board Exam Date Sheet To Be Released On February 2: Ramesh Pokhriyal

**Agencies**

**NEW DELHI:** During his online interaction with CBSE school heads on Thursday, Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' announced that CBSE class and 12 board exam date sheet will be released on February 2. The exams will be held from May 4 to June 10.

The education minister interacted with presidents and secretaries of CBSE Sahodaya

School complexes to discuss changes in the CBSE curriculum for the year 2021-22. The virtual interaction saw a participation of over 1000 people heading CBSE-affiliated schools.

The board said that the orientation programmes to create awareness about National Education Policy 2020 will begin after the interactive session ends. The orientation programme will be conducted through its 250 active Sahodaya School Complexes in the country.

## MP High Court Rejects Comedian Munawar Faruqi's Bail Plea

**Press Trust of India**

**Indore:** The Madhya Pradesh High Court on Thursday refused bail to comedian Munawar Faruqi who is accused of passing "indecent" remarks about Hindu deities during a show, and noted that "promote harmony" is one of the constitutional duties. Liberty of a person has to be "balanced" with his duties towards other citizens, Justice Rohit Arya of the Indore bench of the high court said, citing a Supreme Court ruling.

The court also turned down the bail plea of Nalin Yadav, another accused in the case. Faruqi and four others were arrested on January 1 following a complaint by a BJP MLA's son that objectionable remarks about Hindu deities and Union Home Minister Amit Shah were passed during a comedy show at a cafe in Indore on New Year's day. One more person was arrested subsequently.

Faruqi and Yadav are in judicial remand and lodged in Indore Central Jail. A magistrate's court and a sessions court rejected their bail pleas, following which they moved the high court.

In its order, the high court said it would not comment on merits of the case, but based on the material seized, the witnesses' statements and considering the fact that probe was going on, no case is made out for grant of bail.

"The evidence/material collected so far suggests that in an organized public show under the garb of stand-up comedy at a public place on commercial lines, prima facie, scurrilous, disparaging utterances, outrageous religious feelings of a class of citizens of India with deliberate intent, were made by the applicant," it said.

"Liberty of an individual has to be balanced with his duties and obligations towards his fellow citizens," the order said, citing a past Supreme Court judgment.

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