



Maximum : 3.0° SUNSET Today 06:00 PM
Minimum : -7.7° SUNRISE Tomorrow 07:30 AM
Humidity : 91%

Contact: -0194-2502327 FOR SUBSCRIPTIONS & YOUR COPY OF



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P3 NEWS CALLIGRAPHY EXHIBITION ORGANISED IN SRINAGAR TO PROMOTE J-K'S RICH HERITAGE

P7 THINK GOOGLE'S GUINEA PIGS On January 13 the Australian Financial Review reported Google had removed some Australian news content from its search results for some local users.



P11 SPORTS 'REAL KASHMIR FC MATCH A LITMUS TEST FOR GOKULAM KERALA,' SAYS COACH ANNESE



Quote! It takes too much energy to be against something unless it's really important. — Madeleine L'Engle

NEWS DIGEST

BDS Diffuses IED in Baramulla

SRINAGAR: Bomb Disposal Squad on Friday diffused an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) in north Kashmir's Baramulla district, reports said.

3 Held With Heroin Like Substance

SRINAGAR: Police on Friday arrested 3 alleged drug peddlers in saffron town of Pampore in South Kashmir's Pulwama district.

NC Slams Govt Over Power Outages

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir National Conference on Friday said the erratic power supply is tormenting the people of Kashmir, saying the promise of ruling BJP that electricity supply for winters would be "far better than the previous year's" has fallen flat.

Ladakh Records 17 New COVID Cases

LEH: Ladakh reported 17 fresh COVID-19 cases, taking the tally to 9,704, officials said on Friday. All the new cases were detected in Leh on Sunday, they said.

3 Hizb Militants Killed In Tral Encounter: Police

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: In the first major encounter between militants and armed forces in the year 2021, three Hizbul Mujahideen members were killed in Tral town of south Kashmir's Pulwama district, police said on Friday.



File Photo: Abid Bhat

was put under cordon by the joint team of police, army and the CRPF. "The search operation was started on Friday afternoon and it was confirmed that three militants were hiding in a house. >>> More On P10

Another Encounter Rages, 2-3 Militants Trapped

At least two to three militants are trapped in an ongoing encounter that broke out in Kakapora area of south Kashmir's Pulwama district on Friday, reports said.

HC Quashes PSA Orders Of Two Pulwama Youth

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir High Court has quashed detention orders under Public Safety Act against two persons and ordered their released forthwith "if not otherwise required in any other case."



detention order, the Court need not go into other aspects of the case," a bench of Justice Puneet Gupta said while quashing PSA detention orders passed by Deputy Commissioner Pulwama against two local residents, Aijaz Ahmad Sheikh and Waqar Younis Sheikh respectively.

'It Could Be Disaster Of Unmitigated Proportion' UN Chief Warns Over India, Pakistan Military Confrontation

Says 'Absolutely Essential' For Two Countries To Seriously Discuss Their Problems

Press Trust Of India



that any military confrontation would be a disaster of unmitigated proportions for both countries and the whole world. Well, what I said in the

UNITED NATIONS: UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has said it is absolutely essential for India and Pakistan to be able to come together and seriously discuss their problems, cautioning

Cold Wave Persists, More Snow From Feb 2



File Photo: Abid Bhat

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR : Cold wave conditions intensified in Kashmir on Friday as mercury plunged by two degrees in Srinagar, while the minimum temperature elsewhere in the valley stayed mostly 10 degrees below freezing point, officials said.

The temperature plunged amid reports of a fresh Western Disturbance likely affecting the Western Himalayan region from January 31 and under its influence fresh pell of snowfall is likely during 1st to 3rd February, Meteorological Department (IMD) tweeted. Srinagar city >>> More On P10

One Way Traffic On Highway Today

Jammu-Srinagar highway shall reopen for one-way traffic on Saturday after a day's closure for maintenance on Friday, officials said.

LG Visits Late Sethi's Family

Observer News Service

JAMMU: Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha on Friday visited the family of Krishan Dev Sethi, the last surviving member of the Jammu and Kashmir Constituent Assembly, who passed away at his residence in Jammu on Thursday.

Tuition Centre Sealed Over Viral 'Punishment' Picture

AGENCIES

SRINAGAR: The district authorities in south Kashmir's Kulgam district on Friday sealed a coaching centre after a photo purportedly showing students punished for non-payment of fee took social media by storm evoking sharp condemnation from netizens.

in Pahloo village of Devsar was sealed by the authorities on Friday for allegedly serving corporal punishment to the students over non-payment of fee, reports said. The coaching centre allegedly forced the students to take off their shoes and made them stand bare feet on the frozen snow. The picture of the bare foot students went viral on popular >>> More On P10

INVESTIGATION IS GOING ON. We are checking the reason behind the incident, as why students were asked to stand barefoot on frozen snow."

Mehbooba's Fresh Jibe At BJP Govt 'Centre Using Kashmir Template In Other Parts Of Country'

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: PDP president Mehbooba Mufti accused the BJP-led Centre on Friday of using the template of "terrorising Kashmiris" into silence in other parts of the country as well, including in relation to farmer protests.



to quell these peaceful movements," she said in a tweet. The former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister, who has been vocal in her opposition to three new farm laws of the Centre, said the government should repeal the legislations.

Fall Of Knitting Culture Fading Wool And 'Warmth' In Kashmir

Asif Khan, Arbeena Shah

Crossing her baby bump, Rabiya wonders about the 'fading warmth' in Kashmir Valley. She had been dreaming of making woollen gloves, socks, and colourful sweaters for her baby since the day she received the good news.

her childhood, when long needles embedded in colourful wool balls would be found in almost every Kashmiri home. The knitting culture would assemble women for chitchats in the evenings. Back then, hand-knitted mufflers or sweaters would be exchanged as gifts. They were preserved like amulets by people as the interwoven threads were symbolic to the makers of love and affection.



mufflers and socks safely in my cupboard," she says. While affectionately holding a red muffler in her hand, she adds, "every time I see them, they fill me up with love for my Didi."

The lazy and dull wintry afternoons would often see Kashmiri women gather in their homes, carrying Kangris under their embroidered Pherans, humming verses of Habba Khatoon and LalDed. The group would share a collective laughter in reaction to jokes and satire cracked towards one another. The cold waves engulfing Kashmir and russet leaves swirling down from the trees would signal the suitable time for collective knitting.

and caps. Saima, a mother of three children, recalls being gifted a full suitcase of knitted clothes by her mother-in-law upon her delivery. "My mother-in-law had been knitting for more than a year for my first child," Saima says smilingly. "I could feel her love and warmth through the clothes she had sent," she adds nostalgically.



Study Says Children In Poor Quality Housing Associated With Poor Pediatric Health

Agencies

A new nationally representative study led by researchers at Nationwide Children's Hospital, has found poor-quality housing is independently associated with poorer pediatric health and suggests ways health care providers and housing programs may address the findings.

As per the findings published in the Journal of Child Health Care, holes in floors, cracks in walls, plumbing issues and/or problems with pests are linked with overall poorer pediatric health and higher health care use in a nationally representative study.

Housing instability and homelessness are widely understood to have an impact on health, and certain housing problems have been linked to specific childhood health conditions, such as mould with asthma. But it has not been clear how overall housing quality may affect children—especially those who are at risk from other social determinants of health such as food insecurity or poverty.

"We are really trying to pick apart the social determinants of health. What happens to a child's health if the child is hungry? What happens if a parent can't pay rent?" said Kelly Kelleher, MD, senior author of the study and vice president of Community Health at Nationwide Children's. "What we found in this study is that when housing quality is a problem, children suffer. And children are suffering now."

The authors based the study on the 2014 U.S. Census Survey of Income and Program Participation, ultimately considering 12,964 children 2-14 years of age across the country. As part of the survey, parents were asked about their children's overall health, the number of medical visits and number of hospitalizations. They were also asked about the quality of their housing in four specific categories: holes or cracks in walls or ceilings; holes in the floor "big enough to catch your foot on"; plumbing features (including



hot water heaters and toilets) that do not work; and problems with pests such as mice and roaches.

The study found each additional housing problem was associated with 43% greater odds of having a poorer health status.

"It was important, however, to account for other factors that are understood to impact health, and so the study used a modelling strategy that went beyond housing quality alone," said Samantha Boch, PhD, RN, the lead author of the study who completed it as a post-doctoral fellow in Nationwide Children's Patient-Centered Pediatric Research Program. She is now an assistant professor at the University Of Cincinnati College Of Nursing and an affiliate faculty member of the James M. Anderson Center for Health Systems Excellence at Cincinnati Children's

Hospital Medical Center.

"Even when you adjust for demographic factors like race, ethnicity and disability, and housing-related issues like inability to pay rent or neighbourhood safety, poor housing quality has an independent association with poorer health and higher health care use," said Dr Boch.

When demographic factors were considered, each additional housing problem was associated with 18% greater odds of poorer health; when other housing issues were considered, there were 16% greater odds.

The authors also found poor housing quality was independently associated with a greater number of medical visits for children (as were inability to pay utilities, rent or mortgage and living in a nonmetropolitan home).

Dr Kelleher says these findings reinforce the need for social determinants of health screening and suggest housing quality, not just homelessness or housing insecurity, should be part of those screens. The study also puts a national lens on the convergence of health and housing Nationwide Children's has long seen locally through its Healthy Neighborhoods Healthy Families initiative, which has now built or helped improve approximately 400 homes in traditionally disadvantaged Columbus neighbourhoods.

"We know anecdotally, from our experience in our own backyard, that housing quality impacts health," said Dr Kelleher. "We can now say it's true nationally, and new housing isn't the only thing that matters—improving existing housing may be just as important."

Public Notice

I have lost all documents of my Scooty bearing Regd No: JK01U-6380 Somewhere. Now I want apply for the duplicate of the said documents. If anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office RTO Sopore within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Mohd Rafi Najar
S/o Abdul Majeed Najar
R/o Nowpora Sopore

Ams

Public Notice

The Name of my father in school records has been wrongly written as Mohammad Ashraf Pushu While his correct name is Mohammad Ashraf Parray which needs immediate correction if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the Gulzar Memorial Educational Trust Nowpora Sopore within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Hafsah Ashraf
D/O Mohammad Ashraf Parray

Ams

Office Of The Assistant Regional Transport Officer Budgam Kashmir

NOTICE



Where a application for transfer of ownership has been received from one. Shri : Tariq Ahmad Hajam S/o: Ab Gani Hajam R/o: Narkara



Budgam (Transferor) of LMV Wagon R. Vehicle bearing registration number JK04C - 4400. Chasis number 69840 Engine no. 61847 Model 2014. in favour of Shri. Shenaz Iqbal S/o. Hissam ud din R/o Makhdoom Sahib Sgr. (Transferee)

Now therefore it is notified for the information of the general public that objections if any to the proposed transfer of ownership shall be filed in writing in the office of the Assistant Regional Transport office ARTO Budgam within a period of 7 days from the date of publication of this notice in the daily newspaper Kashmir Observer.

Assistant Regional Transport officer
Budgam Kashmir

No. ARTO/ BUDGAM.2348
Dated 29-01-2021

MCB

OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL GOVT DEGREE COLLEGE HANDWARA

e- Tender No: DCH/e-tender/20-21/1232
Date: 27-01-2021

For and on behalf of the Lieutenant Governor UT of J&K, Principal, Govt. Degree College Handwara invites item-wise e-tenders under two bid systems from registered Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEM) and/or from their Authorized/ Approved Dealers for the supply of Lab Equipment /Apparatus/ Charts/ Specimens/Glassware. List of items is mentioned in BoQ. The bids must be submitted through e-tendering mode available on www.jketenders.gov.in as per the schedule given below. The original copy of the EMD (DD/FDR/CDR), drawn on any nationalized bank, favouring Principal Govt. Degree College Handwara payable at Handwara (J&K), should reach the College on the scheduled date and time.

Downloading of Tender Document	02-02-2021 to 15-02-2021
Last date and time of submitting the e-Tender	15-02-2021 up to 04:00 pm
Last date for receiving original copy of EMD (DD/FDR/CDR)	22-02-2021 up to 02:00 pm
Date and Time of opening of e-Tenders	23-02-2021 at 12:00 Noon
Amount of EMD (INR)	10,000

Sd/
Principal

DIPK-12278/20

Government of Jammu and Kashmir

Department of Information, Kashmir Division.

CIRCULAR

Subject: Adherence to time lines in forwarding of Advertisements/Tender notices to Information Department

Attention of all Departments / Autonomous bodies is invited to Jammu and Kashmir Media Policy 2020 which clearly states that the requisition for advertisements from various departments / ministries / organization to the DIPR shall normally be submitted to Joint Directorate at least 02 days prior to date of release. There shall be no departure permitted in case of these timelines.

It has however been observed that advertisements such as e-tenders, notifications are sent to Joint Director Information, Kashmir either on the same date or after the dates on which bidders have to deposit their bids, thereby making advertising less effective and in such a situation advertisements may not reach the intended target audience well in time.

It is therefore requested that all advertisements should be forwarded to JDI Kashmir at least 02 days prior to date of release.

Assistant Director (Adv)
Kashmir

No:INF/K- 198-99 /2021
DIPK-12277/20

Dated: 29-1-2021

THE J&K BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL ENTRANCE EXAMINATIONS

Tel/Fax: 0194-2433590 - 2437647 (srinagar) : 0191-2479371, 2470102 (jammu) website: http://www.jakbopee.org, email: ceojakbopee@gmail.com

Subject:- Provisional merit list of the candidates for admission to 12th based Para-Medical Courses-2020 (Medical Assistant, Lab Assistant etc.) for objections, if any, thereof

Reference :- i. Notification No.030-BOPEE of 2020 dated 19.09.2020.
ii. Notice No.56-BOPEE of 2020 dated 07.10.2020.
iii. Notice No.59-BOPEE of 2020 dated 13.10.2020.

Notification No.013-BOPEE of 2021 Dated: 28-01-2021.

The Board wide Notification No. 030-BOPEE of 2020 dated 19.09.2020 read with Notice No.56-BOPEE of 2020 dated 07.10.2020 and Notice No.59-BOPEE of 2020 dated 13.10.2020, invited online applications from the eligible candidates of UT's of J&K/Ladakh for admission to 12th based Para-Medical- courses 2020 including (M.A, L. A, D.A, X-Ray Tech etc.) The provisional merit list in this regard is annexed as Annexure "A", with deficiencies and is available on official website of the Board (www.jkbopee.gov.in) only. The candidates, if any, who intend to submit representation and clear deficiency against his/her position, can do so up to 2nd February, 2021 (04:00 P.M) failing which no claim whatsoever shall be entertained under any circumstances. Also the interested candidates can clear the deficiency if any and deposit their representations at BOPEE Office, Jammu/Srinagar physically within the prescribed date, otherwise their candidature shall be treated as cancelled on their own risk and responsibility.

Note:-

- The representations / deficient documents, if any, shall not be entertained through e-mail.
- The provisional merit list of the candidates has been prepared on the basis of aggregate marks obtained in the qualifying examination. In case of tie between candidates, same have been resolved by taking into account marks obtained in Chemistry, then in Physics. In case of further tie, the same has been resolved by considering the date of birth of candidate i.e. candidate older in age is preferred first.
- The candidates must remain in touch with the official website of the Board, so as to be abreast of the final schedule of counselling which shall be held physically at BOPEE office, Jammu/Srinagar simultaneously and shall be notified separately after considering objections/documents, if any, received from intending candidates mentioned in the Annexure "A" to this notification available on the official website of the Board (www.jkbopee.gov.in) & there after final ranks shall be allotted to candidates.
- In case no objection(s) are received within the prescribed date and time by the Board, the provisional merit list shall be deemed to be treated as final.
- The candidates who have not submitted their Domicile Certificates as on date are advised to produce the same at the time of counselling.
- The other terms and conditions as laid down in the e-Information Brochure/Notifications/Notices shall remain same.

E&OE

(Dr. Sunil Gupta) Controller Of
Examination J&K Bopee

No: BOPEE/Exam-35(v) / 2020
Dated: 28-01-2021

DIPK-NB-5333/20

Government of Jammu and Kashmir

Directorate of Health Services, Kashmir

Bemina Bye pass , Near Hajj House 190018, Srinagar Kashmir

MESSAGE

While observing SPARSH Leprosy Awareness Campaign at the State , District , Block and Village levels w.e.f 30th January 2021 to 13th February 2021, let us know few facts about leprosy.

- Leprosy is caused by Mycobacterium Leprae and is not a hereditary disease.
- Leprosy is not due to past sins or evils.
- Its symptoms are development of hypo-pigmented patches on the skin with loss of sensation.
- If you come across people who are experiencing such symptoms, please refer them to the nearest health facility. Incentive will be paid to the community volunteer if the diagnosis for the leprosy is confirmed.
- Free treatment is available at all Government Hospitals.
- Leprosy is completely curable.
- Early consultation, timely treatment cures leprosy and prevents disability.

LET US OWN RESPONSIBILITY TO GUIDE SUCH PATIENTS IN THE INTEREST OF EARLY DIAGNOSIS AND CURE.

Issued in the public interest by
The Director of Health Services, Kashmir

DIPK-12235/20



AS KASHMIR shivers with escalating cold, Dal Lake has become a freeze frame for onlookers. KO Photo Abid Bhat

Calligraphy Exhibition Organised In Srinagar To Promote J-K's Rich Heritage

Agencies

The Jammu and Kashmir Tourism Development Corporation (JKTDC) under the Union Territory administration organised a calligraphy exhibition-cum-workshop in Srinagar to provide a platform for young artists in the Valley to showcase their talents as well as promote the region's rich heritage.

"The government has provided a platform to the students for who were keen to learn the calligraphic skills," said Safoora Hameed, a participant at the exhibition-cum-workshop. "It is good that we are trying to revive the art," she added.

Zuhaib Wahid, another participant at the event told ANI that most of those who participated were self-made artists.

These events will boost calligraphy and will motivate the calligraphers, he said.

"The event is a great initiative for the



youth of the valley as we all were facing a stressful life for last two years," another participant Aneez Noor said.

"At events like these youngsters showcase their skills as well as help in reviving the ancestral art forms," she added.

Apart from the calligraphy exhibition, JK-TDC also organised a several other events to promote the rich heritage of the Kashmir Valley, said Shafi Shaida, incharge of JK-TDC.

5 Of Family In SMHS After Consuming Forest Herbs

Agencies

KUPWARA: Five members of a family from Kupwara were admitted to SMHS Hospital here on Friday. Initial reports said the family developed complicity after consuming some dried forest herbs.

Media reports said that five patients were admitted at sub-district hospital (SDH) Kralpora at 2 am on Friday and as per the attendants they had taken some herb with 'Nishast'.

After consumption, all five members of the family felt unconscious.

"The patients were referred to DH Handwara," he said.



At district Hospital Handwara the patients were referred to SMHS in Srinagar.

"The patients were in a semi-conscious state when they were brought there, he said. Two minors vomited repeatedly, however after showing some improvement, all were shifted to SMHS Hospital Srinagar for further treatment," he said.

The official said that all the five members are safe and out

of danger as communicated by the health officials at SMHS Hospital and will be discharged by tomorrow accordingly.

The five members of a family were identified as Ab Guffar Khan S/o Ab Ahad Khan age 50 years, Javid Ahmad Khan S/o Ab Ahad Khan age 36 years, Masooda Begum w/o Javid Ahmad Khan age 35 years, Basit Majeed S/o Ab Majeed Khan age 12 years and Hamid Majeed S/o Ab Majeed Khan age 10 years all are resident of Meeyal Kralpora.

A police official also confirmed the incident and said that investigation into the circumstances of the incident is underway.

Physical, Financial Achievements Under Capex, CSS For Srinagar Reviewed

SRINAGAR: Director Agriculture Kashmir Chowdhary Mohammad Iqbal today reviewed the physical and financial achievements under Capex and different Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSSs) of district Srinagar during a meeting convened, here.

The Director reviewed the targets approved under various Centrally Sponsored Schemes and also emphasized to accomplish the targets in a time bound manner.

He also stressed for adoption of accountable and transparent mechanisms during the course of implementation of various State and Centrally Sponsored Schemes.

The Director said that the vegetable cultivation has a good potential for employment generation, and the unemployed youth of the district with the help of modern

technologies and suitable Agro climatic conditions for vegetable cultivation in the district can take the vegetable sector to new heights.

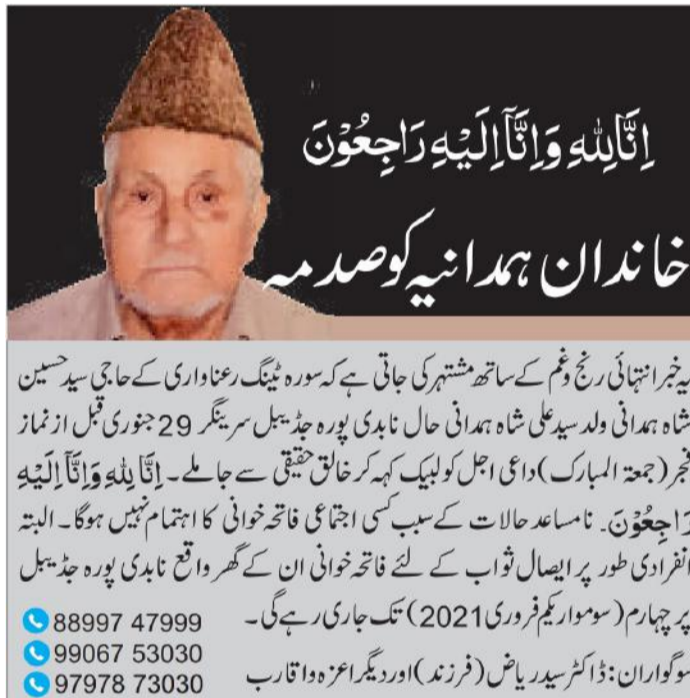
He further added that the vegetable production can be adopted for commercial purposes besides fulfilling the domestic requirement.

He stressed upon the officers to promote the cultivation of exotic and high value vegetables on priority for the economic prosperity of the farming community.

Deliberating on Mushroom and Apiculture Sector the Director reiterated that the sector is being taken as priority sector by the Department, which can generate additional income to the Apiculture and Mushroom Growers.

He said that the Department is committed to give all sorts of technical assistance to the interested entrepreneurs and emphasized on the officers to prepare a training calendar so that necessary training to the interested farmers are imparted.

The meeting was attended by Joint Director Agriculture (Extension) Mohammad Muzaffer, Joint Director Apiculture and Mushroom Farooq Ahmad, Joint Director Agriculture Inputs/Marketing/PHM Amir ud din. Chief Agriculture Officer Srinagar besides other officers/officials of the district.



پہ چہارم (سوموار) فروری 2021 تک جاری رہے گی۔

8997 47999

99067 53030

97978 73030

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT REGIONAL TRANSPORT OFFICER ANANTNAG NOTICE

Whereas an application has been received from one Mr. Farooq Ahmad Dar S/O Mohd Shaban Dar R/O Hassanpora Anantnag Owner of Vehicle No. JK03E-0756 for Hire Purchase Cancellation with JK Bank TP Anantnag. Now it is therefore notified for General information that objection if any to the proposed cancellation / Endorsement of Hire Purchase Agreement shall be filled in writing in the Office of ARTO Anantnag within a period of seven days from the publication of this notice in Daily Kashmir Observer News Paper.

No.101/4799/MVD/ANG

Date:-29/01/2021

Assistant Regional Transport Officer Anantnag

MJA

NOTICE

My name was mentioned in Metlife Policy bearing No.20325466 as PAIR SINGH instead of PAYAR SINGH and need to rectify the same. If anyone is having any objection regarding the above may please contact Pnb Metlife India Insurance Company Ltd. Hadiqa Complex, Baghat, Barzulla, Srinagar within the period of seven days from published date.

Name:-Payar Singh

R/O Moveltote District Ramban Sangaldhan

MJA

LOST OF DISCHARGE CERTIFICATE

I have lost my Discharge Certificate Bearing Examination Roll No.112216, File No. 04, Class 8th Session October 2005. Now I applied for its duplicate if anybody has any objection in this regard may file at Headmaster Government Middle School Audsoo Zone Shangus Anantnag within Seven (7) days after that no objection shall be entertained

Name:-Mohd Hussain Sheikh
S/O Bashir Ahmad Sheikh
R/O Trahapoo

MJA

LOST OF DRIVING LICENSE

I have lost my Driving License Bearing License No. JK0320130024828. Now I applied for its duplicate if anybody has any objection in this regard may file at ARTO Anantnag within Seven (7) days after that no objection shall be entertained

Name:-Shabir Ahmad Rather
S/O Mohd Shaban Rather
R/O Batkoot Pahalgam Anantnag

MJA

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

HIGHWAY STATUS

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

This Day in History

- 1018 - The Holy Roman Empire and Poland conclude the Peace of Bautzen
- 1077 - Pope Gregory VII pardons German emperor Henry IV
- 1349 - Gunther of Schwarzburg chosen German anti-king
- 1467 - Battle at Velke Kostolany; Hung king Matyas Corvinus beats Bratrics
- 1487 - Bell chimes invented
- 1522 - Duke of Albany takes captured French back to Scotland
- 1607 - Massive flooding in England destroys around 200 square miles of coastline and results in approximately 2,000 casualties
- 1648 - Spain & Netherlands sign Peace of Munster, ending the Thirty Years War
- 1713 - England & Netherlands sign 2nd anti-French boundary treaty
- 1815 - Burned US Library of Congress re-established with Thomas Jefferson's 6,500 volumes
- 1820 - British explorer Edward Bransfield aboard Williams sights Trinity Peninsula, Antarctica, claiming it for Britain
- 1826 - The Menai Suspension Bridge, considered the world's first modern suspension bridge, connecting the Isle of Anglesey to the north West coast of Wales is opened.
- 1862 - USS Monitor, the US Navy's 1st ironclad warship launched
- 1889 - Archduke Crown Prince Rudolf of Austria, heir to the Austro-Hungarian crown, is found dead with his mistress Baroness Mary Vetsera in Mayerling.
- 1894 - Pneumatic hammer patented by Charles King of Detroit
- 1895 - SS Elbe sinks after collision in North Sea, 332 killed
- 1902 - Britain and Japan sign a treaty after months of negotiating which commits each country to supporting an independent China and Korea, although it acknowledges Japan's 'special interest' in Korea
- 1911 - 1st rescue of an air passenger by a ship, near Havana, Cuba
- 1913 - UK House of Lords rejects Irish Home Rule Bill
- 1915 - German submarine attack on Le Havre
- 1922 - World Law Day 1st celebrated
- 1925 - Turkish government throws out Constantine VI of Constantinople
- 1928 - 1st radio telephone connection between Netherlands & US
- 1930 - The world's first radiosonde is launched in Pavlovsk, USSR.
- 1933 - President Paul von Hindenburg appoints Adolf Hitler as Reich Chancellor of Germany who forms a government with Franz von Papen
- 1934 - Hitler proclamation on German unified states
- Conference meeting Meeting of Interest
- 1935 - Ezra Pound meets Benito Mussolini, reads from a draft of "Cantos"
- 1937 - 2nd of Stalin's purge trials; Pyatkov & 16 others sentenced to death
- 1954 - Belgium ends trade agreement with USSR
- 1954 - Fanfani government of Italy resigns
- 1961 - KAET TV channel 8 in Phoenix, AZ (PBS) begins broadcasting
- 1964 - Military coup of Gen Nguyen Khanh in South Vietnam
- 1964 - Ranger 6 launched; makes perfect flight to Moon, but cameras fail
- 1972 - Pakistan withdraws from the Commonwealth of Nations



HIJRI CALENDAR

16

JAMADI -UL-SANI

1442

PRAYERS

FAJR

6:04

ZUHR

12:44

ASR

4:21

MAGRIB

6:02

ISHA

7:25

From KO Archives

INDIA NEEDS SMALL DOSE OF DICTATORSHIP: FAROOQ

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah today said his government has accepted the extension of cease-fire by another month with great difficulty in the face of militants continuing to kill innocent civilians.

Admitting that the borders were silent, Abdullah, who was a key-note speaker at a panel discussion on experiment with democracy organised by the International Press Institute (IPI) world Congress, said foreign, groups of Osama Bin Laden and Lashkar-e-Taiba were continuing with their explosions of IEDs and lobbing of grenades.

Taking a dig at Pakistan's desire for annexation of Kashmir, Abdullah wondered that what Islamabad could do for Kashmiri Muslims after it failed to accept Muslims from erstwhile East Pakistan (now Bangladesh).

Sounding a word of caution, the chief minister said the growing religious intolerance in the country is not a happy sign for the country's democracy and the need of the hour was to fight the growing fundamentalist elements from both—Hindu and Muslim communities.

Abdullah said that a small dose of dictatorship was needed to govern a huge population like that of India.

Responding to Abdullah's suggestion on dictatorship, he said it is better to have more discipline than dictatorship.

The panel discussion was chaired by N. Ram, editor the Hindu. Other panelists included Vinod Mehta and Mark Tully.

(KASHMIR OBSERVER, 30 January, 2001)

Iran Rejects Reversing Nuclear Steps Before US Lifts Sanctions



Agencies

Iran will not accept demands by the United States that it reverse acceleration of its nuclear programme before Washington lifts sanctions, foreign minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said.

The demand "is not practical and will not happen", he said at a joint news conference in Istanbul on Friday with his Turkish counterpart Mevlut Cavusoglu.

The new administration of US President Joe Biden has said Tehran must resume compliance with curbs on its nuclear activity under the world powers' 2015 deal before it can rejoin the pact formally known as The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Iran breached the terms of the accord in a step-by-step response to the decision by Biden's predecessor Donald Trump to abandon the deal in 2018 and re-impose sanctions on Tehran.

Earlier this month, Iran resumed enriching uranium to 20 percent at its underground Fordow nuclear plant - a level it achieved before the accord.

However, Iran has said it can quickly reverse those violations if US sanctions are removed.

"If the United States fulfils its obligations, we will fulfil our obligations in full," Zarif said.

On Thursday, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken rejected Iranian pressure for the US to act first. "Iran is out of compliance on a number of fronts," Blinken told a news conference in Washington, DC.

"And it would take some time, should it make the decision to do so, for it to come back into compliance and time for us then to assess whether it was meeting its obligations," Blinken told a news conference. Zarif quickly responded on Twitter, saying Iran had "abided by the JCPOA" and had only taken "foreseen remedial measures".

"Reality check for @SecBlinken: The US violated (the) JCPOA," Zarif tweeted.

Iran's parliament, dominated by hardliners, passed legislation last month that forces the government to harden its nuclear stance if US sanctions are not eased within two months.

Zarif also condemned US sanctions against Turkey over Ankara's decision to procure Russian S-400 defence systems. "The US government is addicted to sanctions... and this harms the world and the US itself," he said.



Beijing Warns Biden, Says Containing China Is 'Mission Impossible'

Agencies

Any attempt to contain China is "mission impossible", the country's defence ministry warned the US on Thursday.

The warning came as the Biden administration works to shore up its Asian alliances against Beijing.

Military tensions between the two superpowers worsened under former US President Donald Trump, who adopted an aggressive stance on regional flashpoints such as Taiwan and the South China Sea.

China at the same time poured billions into revamping its military, in line with President Xi Jinping's ambitions to transform the People's Liberation Army into a fully modernised, "world-class" fighting force by 2050.

The facts show that to contain China is mission impossible, and will only end up in shooting yourself in the foot," warned defence ministry spokesman Wu Qian on Thursday.

"Sino-US military relations are currently at a new historic starting point" with the arrival of the Biden administration, said Wu, urging the US to adopt a "non-confrontational, mutually respectful, win-win mentality."

Tensions between the two superpowers have shown no sign of abating under the Biden administration, which deployed groups of warships, including a US aircraft carrier, to the South China Sea over the weekend. China has increasingly asserted its presence in the disputed region in recent years, aggressively expanding its territory via man-made islands and reefs, much to the chagrin of Southeast Asian neighbours with rival claims.

Washington, to this end, has sought to firm up ties with Asian nations this week, with US President Joe Biden reaffirming his administration's "unwavering commitment" to defend Japan, including the disputed Senkaku Islands claimed by China, in a Wednesday call with the country's Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga.

The new US Defence Secretary, Lloyd Austin III, also discussed regional security threats in recent calls with counterparts in South Korea, Australia and India -- the latter two have seen deteriorating ties with China.

Edelman communications firm was also hired by state-owned Saudi Basic Industries in early 2020 to provide strategic communications in a \$5.6 million contract.

Additionally, the Riyadh regime struck deals with companies seen as close to the Republican Party. Just before the presidential vote, the Saudi Embassy in Washington hired Off Hill Strategies, a firm run by a couple with a long history in conservative politics, for \$75,000 to lobby for them through January 2021.

Saudi Arabia Hires Over Dozen Lobbying Firms In US To Launder Its Reputation

Agencies

Saudi authorities have reportedly hired more than a dozen lobbying firms to help boost relations with the United States and improve the Riyadh regime's image as new US President Joe Biden assumes office.

According to foreign agent registration filings with the US Justice Department, Riyadh has used at least 16 firms "to largely restore its influence machine in the capital [Washington] and in other parts of the country, and help boost US-Saudi trade relations."

The lobbying effort will be even more crucial during the term of new US President Joe Biden, whose administration decided on Wednesday to freeze arms sales to Riyadh pending a review, said a Foreign Policy report.

Saudi authorities are already in hot water over issues including Riyadh's devastating war on Yemen, its treatment of women and the murder of exiled dissident journalist Jamal Khashoggi inside the Saudi consulate in Istanbul in 2018.

Foreign agents hired to lobby on behalf of Saudi interests have apparently contributed almost \$2 million in political donations



to federal candidates, including Trump and new Democratic President Joe Biden, said the report.

Among these firms is the powerhouse Edelman, which heavily favors Democratic candidates in its political donations and signed a \$225,000 contract, after the November presidential election, to provide services to the controversial Neom megacity project that is planned to be constructed in Tabuk region of northwestern Saudi Arabia on the Red Sea in an area nearly the size of Belgium.

Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS) reportedly held a

secret meeting in Neom city in late November.

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Pakistan To Renovate Gurdwaras, Temples Across Country



LAHORE: The Pakistan government has decided to renovate several holy sites belonging to minorities across the country, in a bid to further strengthen its case of providing safety and security to the minorities living in the country.

As per details, several gurdwaras and temples will undergo renovation across Pakistan.

According to statistics, the total number of Sikh gurdwaras and Hindu temples in Pakistan are 1,830.

However, only 31 temples and gurdwaras are operational.

Official sources say that the meagre number of operational temples and gurdwaras has prompted the government to take action and renovate the minority holy sites.

The Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB), provincial governments along with the Sikh and Hindu community members will be part of the overall renovation process, which is likely to be completed this year.

In Punjab province, a Sikh mansion in Rawalpindi will be restored, while renovation in at least two churches and seven Hindu temples is in progress in Lahore. Moreover, the construction of

the Hindu temple in the capital Islamabad, is also likely to be completed in 2021.

"Karsewa of Gurdwara Dera Sahib in Lahore has been going on for many years. But the Indian members of the Karsewa Committee had to return home as their visas expired and it could not be renewed because of the pandemic. So this work was stalled and will be resumed soon," Sardar Ameer Sindh, Secretary General of Pakistan Sikh Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (PSGPC), said.

"Similarly, the restoration work at the Gurdwara Bali La, Nankani Sahib and Gurdwara Tanbo Sahib will also be completed soon," he added.

The ETPB has maintained that gurdwaras and Hindu temples across Pakistan will be renovated and restored, and will be made open to the communities in the coming days.

"A major temple and gurdwara are activated every year," said Ramesh Kumar Vankwani, head of the Pakistan Hindu Council.

"Apart from the ETPB, the provincial governments are also playing their part in the restoration of the ancient historical temples and gurdwaras," he added. IANS

WHO Team In Wuhan Visits Hospital That Treated Early COVID Cases

WUHAN: A World Health Organization-led team of experts investigating the origins of COVID-19 on Friday visited a hospital in the Chinese city of Wuhan that was one of the first to treat patients in the early days of the outbreak.



After meeting with Chinese scientists earlier in the day, the team went to the Hubei Provincial Hospital of Integrated Chinese and Western Medicine.

Zhang Jixian, director of the hospital's department of respiratory and critical care, has been cited by state media as the first to report the novel coronavirus, after treating an elderly couple in late 2019 whose CT scans showed differences from typical pneumonia.

"Extremely important 1st site visit. We are in the hospital that treated some of the first known cases of COVID-19, meeting with the actual clinicians & staff who did this work, having an open discussion about the details of their work," Peter Daszak, a member of the WHO-led team, wrote on Twitter.

The team was released from two weeks of quarantine on Thursday. It plans to visit labs, markets and hospitals during its remaining two weeks in

Wuhan, where the coronavirus was first identified in late 2019.

While an exact itinerary has not been announced, the WHO has said the team plans to visit the seafood market at the centre of the early outbreak as well as the Wuhan Institute of Virology.

One hypothesis, rejected by China, is that the outbreak was caused by a leak at the government lab.

The WHO-led probe in Wuhan has been plagued by delays, concern over access and bickering between China and the United States, which accused China of hiding the extent of the initial outbreak and criticised the terms of the visit, under which Chinese experts conducted the first phase of research. —Reuters

Thais Stage Mock Funerals To Restore Fortunes



BANGKOK: In a temple on the outskirts of Bangkok, participants at a daily ritual clutch a bunch of flowers and lie down in a coffin with a sheet pulled over them as monks chant.

The Wat Bangna Nai temple in the Thai capital draws more than 100 people a day, who choose to perform the ceremony in the hope it can improve their fortunes or give them a fresh start.

And for some at least, the pressures of life during the pandemic have made the ritual take on more importance.

"I have to admit that I'm stressed these days because I am earning less income because of the pandemic and I'm sure everyone here is feeling the same," said Nutsarang Siharad, a 52-year-old food stall owner, who took part in the ceremony.

Participants pay 100 baht (\$3.30) for the flowers, candles, and clothing that are part of the ceremony. They follow the instructions of

the monks, by at first lying in a coffin with their heads facing to the west, the direction bodies may be buried, before switching sides to symbolise rebirth.

"I felt like I was reborn, came back to life again and became a new person," said Nutsarang.

Another participant at the ceremony, Chonlathit Nimminwai, 23, said she attended because a fortune teller told her that her life was in danger.

"It made me feel stressed. That's why I'm here today because I want to feel better."

Many temples in Thailand hold similar ceremonies and Prakru Prapath Waranukij, a monk who performed this ceremony, said that while the ritual had received some criticism online he felt it was important to ponder death.

"It reminds people that one day we will die, so we must be careful about the way we live our lives," said Prakru. Reuters

NEWS MAKERS

Sandro Botticelli Portrait Sells For \$92 Million At US Auction

Agencies

NEW YORK: A portrait by Italian renaissance painter Sandro Botticelli sold for \$92 million at a Sotheby's auction in New York Thursday, smashing the record price for the artist.

"Young Man Holding a Roundel," believed to have been painted in the 1470s or 1480s, is considered one of Botticelli's finest portraits and is the highlight of Sotheby's Masters Week sale.

"This Botticelli is so much more spectacular in every way than anything we've seen coming to the market," Christopher Apostle, Sotheby's senior vice president, told AFP ahead of the auction.

The 23-inch by 15.5-inch (58-centimeter by 39-centimeter) painting shows a man in his late teenage years with long golden hair sitting holding a disc featuring a bearded saint.



The roundel, which depicts the saint with his right hand raised, is an original 14th-century artwork attributed to Siennese painter Bartolommeo Bulgarini.

Art historians suspect the Botticelli depicts a nobleman proudly showing off the earlier artwork.

"This image symbolizes and exemplifies the Renaissance in Florence. We haven't seen anything like it in my lifetime," said Apostle, describing it as "a masterpiece."

Sotheby's said the final price, including fees and commissions, was \$92.2 million after it sold under the hammer for \$80 million.

The price establishes the work as one of the most significant portraits to have ever sold at auction.

The sale ranks alongside Gustav Klimt's "Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer II," which sold for \$87.9 million in 2006 and Vincent Van Gogh's "Portrait of Dr Gachet," which fetched \$82.5 million in 1990.

The previous record for a Botticelli was set in 2013 when "Madonna and Child with Young Saint John the Baptist" sold for \$10.4 million.

"Young Man Holding a Roundel" was handed down through several generations of an aristocratic family in Wales for around 200 years.

Art scholars were unaware of the painting's existence until it first appeared on the market in the early 20th century.

It has spent much of the last 40 years on public display since its current owner acquired it in 1982 for just \$10,000 pounds (\$1.1 million at 2021 rates).

South African Army Allows Hijab As Part Of Uniform

Agencies

JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA: The South African military has amended its dress policy to allow Muslim women to wear headscarves as part of their uniform, an army spokesperson said Thursday.

In January last year, a military court dropped charges against an officer who had been indicted for wearing a hijab under her military beret.

Major Fatima Isaacs had been criminally charged in June 2018 with wilful defiance and failing to obey lawful instructions after her superior asked her to remove her headscarf when in uniform.

A military court at the Castle of Good Hope near Cape Town withdrew all charges in January 2020, allowing Isaacs to exceptionally wear a tight black head wrap on duty as long as it did not cover her ears.



But the military did not amend its dress policy, prompting Isaacs to mount a challenge in South Africa's equality court over regulations restricting religious wear.

The South African Defence Force (SANDF) eventually agreed to amend its policy this week and allow all Muslim women to cover their heads while on duty. "The SANDF dress regulation

was updated to allow the wearing of headscarves by Muslim (women) according to stipulations in the dress regulations," spokesman Mafi Mgoobzi told AFP via WhatsApp on Thursday.

The South Africa-based Legal Resources Centre, which represented Isaacs, welcomed the decision via Twitter on Wednesday and said it was withdrawing the equality court case.

NIA Challenges Parra's 'Bail Order' In High Court



JAMMU: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) filed an appeal in the High Court of Jammu & Kashmir challenging the bail order of NIA Court in favour of PDP leader Waheed Parra.

The appeal was heard by a Division Bench of J&K High Court comprising Justice Ali Mohammad Magrey and Justice Puneet Gupta after Additional Solicitor General of India, Vishal Sharma appeared for the National Investigation Agency. Court issued notice to respondent and further directed that grant of bail by trial court is subject matter of this appeal or pendency of appeal shall not form any impediment for investigating agency to

complete the investigation.

During the course of hearing, ASGI Vishal Sharma submitted before the Court that Trial Court has appreciated the evidence which is not the scope of grant of bail while the matter is still under investigation and further submitted that mere perusal of impugned order shows as if Special Judge is deciding matter on charge/discharge of final charge-sheet ignoring fact that case is still under investigation.

He further submitted that Special Judge has failed to appreciate that case against respondent/accused is still under investigation and the allegation/evidence is prima facie sufficient to suggest complicity of the accused under UA [P] Act, 1967 and investigating agency is still in process of collecting evidence against the respondent/accused relying upon a number of leads which surfaced during the course of further investigation.

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

Jammu To Have Tramway, Mini Train

Joyride From Bikram Chowk To R S Pura To Boost Heritage Railway Tourism

JAMMU: Advisor to Lieutenant Governor, Baseer Ahmad Khan, today visited the historic railway station Bikram Chowk, which used to exist before partition, and directed the officers to prepare a Detailed Project Report (DPR) for its recreation.

Advisor said that the government is exploring options for starting a tramway, mini train or joyride from Bikram Chowk to R S Pura to give a boost to Heritage Railway Tourism.

He said that the railway station has a historical and heritage significance and extraordinary efforts should be taken up for its recreation on the same lines as it had existed. He said that our heritage should have active use-

engaging people constantly and recreation of railway stations will give a fillip to Heritage Railway Tourism.

He directed the officers to go through the pictures available of the historic railway station as it had existed earlier, so that it is restored to its pristine glory.

He asked the officers to involve the Railways for technical support in preparation of DPR and said that recreation of such an asset will become a source of aspiration for the younger generation.

During the earlier days, the steam engine train used to cross through RS Pura station and reach its destination, the Bikram Chowk station.

Through 11 States, Sopore Cyclist Travels From Kashmir To Kanyakumari In 27 Days

SOPORE: With an aim to encourage the youth for their passion, a cyclist from north Kashmir's Sopore town has travelled from Kashmir to Kanyakumari on cycle despite a lot of hindrances and odds he suffered through during this journey.

Manan Hassan Wani, hailing from Sopore area of district Baramulla started his journey on 1st January with an aim that it will carry good things for the people as the whole world witnessed a lot of hardships in 2020.

"It took me two years to plan this journey and was finalised in December 2020. I covered the journey in 27 days starting from 1st of January to 27 January. I got the help and necessary suggestions from Sameer Ahmad, who has already travelled by bike from Kashmir to Kanyakumari."

He said that he travelled through

11 States which took him 24 days to travel and 3 days he had some rest at Delhi and Kanyakumari.

On being asked about support from administration, he said that the whole journey was self-sponsored along with the support of Sameer Ahmad who guided him in this journey and also supported him financially.

"I travelled on a broken cycle, which resulted in a lot of hardships during this journey as the cycle got punctured several times, rim was broken and snapped chain issue," he said.

He also said that he has not done anything so much that he should deliver any message but his message to youth is if you have any passion, go for it irrespective of hindrances and hardships because real meaning of passion is in your hard work and dedication.(KNS)



Kashmir Beauty Mesmerises Bollywood Filmmakers

Say Valley Has Potential Of Being International Film Destination

SRINAGAR: Mesmerised by the Kashmir's beauty, the Bollywood film producers who are on a visit to Valley expressed their desire to shoot here for upcoming films.

A 24-member delegation from big banners of Bollywood arrived here on January 27 and visited Gulmarg yesterday to explore the locations for the film shooting.

Speaking to the media here, they said Kashmir can easily be an international film shooting destination.

Popular film producer Aashish Singh who has already shot some movies like Jab Tak Hai Jaan in Kashmir said the Valley provides a perfect backdrop for the filmmakers and has the potential of becoming the shooting destination for the world. "We have so much potential here for filmmaking that not only Bollywood but filmmaker's from around the globe can shoot here."

He said many filmmakers want to visit Kashmir and capture breathtaking visuals.

He further said the connec-

tion of the Bollywood with Kashmir is very old and will be long lasting.

CEO of Producers Guild Nitin Ahuja said they want to revive old relations with Kashmir when Kashmir used to be the favourite backdrop for the filmmakers.

"We visited several locations and found them absolutely stunning. We also got overwhelming responses from the locals. The food is also amazing. The place is a complete package," he said.

CEO Ajay Devagan Productions Meena Ayer also praised the beauty of Kashmir saying the Valley possesses huge scope for the film tourism which needs to be tapped.

The popular Chef and host of the famous cooking show 'Khana Khazana' Sanjeev Kapoor said Kashmir can also be promoted for food tourism.

He said Kashmir is among the top three exotic food destinations in India. "I have tasted Kashmiri exotic food and will promote it throughout the world. There is a need of hav-

ing a national campaign to promote Kashmir's delicious food."

Many Film Production Houses have expressed their desire to shoot here in Kashmir.

Later a video conference was also held which was chaired by Principal Secretary to Lieutenant Governor Niteshwar Kumar. Kumar assured the visiting delegations that J&K government would provide all support and facilitate them for their upcoming films. He said the government is also making a policy which will facilitate and encourage filmmakers to shoot in Kashmir.

Secretary Tourism Sarmad Hafeez who was also present during the video conference assured full support to the Film Producers Guild. Director Tourism Kashmir Dr. G N Itoo also gave a detailed presentation on the popular and upcoming destinations in Kashmir and invited the Bollywood's attention to these locations for their upcoming films.

Senior Officers of the Tourism department were also present on the occasion.

LG Pays Homage to George Fernandes

JAMMU: Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha today paid floral tributes to the former Defence Minister, George Fernandes during his second death anniversary commemoration conclave organized by George Fernandes Foundation, in collaboration with Hind Mazdoor Kissan Panchayat, J&K Unit and Step India J&K Unit at Press Club.

Remembering the former Union Minister, the Lt Governor observed that George Fernandes ji was a fearless leader, who tirelessly worked for the upliftment of the underprivileged. He worked for multidimensional development of the society and will continue to inspire the nation with his courage and selflessness, said the Lt Governor.

The Lieutenant Governor, while addressing the gathering, shared his experiences of working with the former Union Minister and recalled the great leader as a well-wisher of the downtrodden. He was an extraordinary personality and able leader. He was instrumental in



the eradication of many social inequalities and always worked for the welfare and development of the people.

Throwing light on the working of the former Union Minister, the Lt Governor observed that while being the Minister for Railways, George Fernandes made Konkan railways a reality connecting Mumbai with Mangalore through many crisscrossing rivers, valleys and mountains.

The Lt Governor said that George Fernandes ji advocated transparency in the Government Systems and always stood firm for equal rights for every citizen of the country.

Underlining the importance of transparency and accountability, the Lt Governor said

that the present dispensation has laid a mechanism to make information of all Government works available in public space. He observed that people have equal responsibility in government decisions and their active participation is always sought by the UT Government.

Dr Arun Kumar, Former MP and President, George Fernandes Foundation gave a brief overview of the life of George Fernandes. He spoke in detail about his struggle and public service throughout his life. George Fernandes worked for making India a global leader, he added.

While speaking on the occasion, Ashutosh Pathak also shed light on the life and vision of George Fernandes. "The former Defence Minister, an inspiration for the young generation, was a symbol of simplicity. His work was focused on the welfare of the marginalized and underprivileged sections of the society", he said.

Restoration Of Article 370: J&K People Pin Hope On SC: Mir

SRINAGAR: Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) President and former Minister, Ghulam Ahmad Mir Friday asserted that restoration of Article 370 was the 'collective' demand of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Mir claimed that Supreme Court of India has also upheld the constitutional 'legitimacy' of Articles 370 and 35A which he said was 'annulled' through a 'unilateral' decision by BJP government on 5th of August 2019.

"Restoration of Article 370 is a collective demand of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. So far as statehood is concerned, every individual wants statehood to be restored at earliest," PCC president told the media on the sidelines of an event organized by Youth Congress at the party head office here.

He also appealed to people to repose their faith on the Supreme Court of India and wait for its verdict which he hoped will be in the favor of Jammu and Kashmir.

Mir said people in some parts of the erstwhile state were unaware of the implications of abrogation of Article 370, however their perception changed the moment it was repealed.

Mir said since various political parties of Jammu and Kashmir have challenged the centre's



decision in the apex court, there is no need to jump to conclusion unless the top judiciary announces its verdict.

"We should repose our faith on the apex court which has in past upheld constitutional legitimacy of Article 370. Various political parties also challenged the centre's decision in the Supreme Court given its stand on the issue, hence we should wait as the case has been listed for hearing in March," added PCC chief.

He also claimed that it was the Supreme Court which said that Article 370 is the strongest bridge connecting Jammu and Kashmir with the Union of India.

Mir also criticized the center for bringing farmers on roads as new agricultural laws have adversely affected millions of small farmers across India.

He asked the center to repeal anti-farmer laws or else Congress will launch a country wide protest against new agri-laws.

Arbitrary Transfer Of JK Bank Shareholding To Ladakh Unfair: Bukhari

'Unjust Distribution Of Assets Between J&K And UT Of Ladakh Be Reconsidered'

SRINAGAR: Apni Party President Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari on Friday expressed serious concern over the procedure adopted for transferring around 8.23 per cent shareholding of Jammu and Kashmir Bank to the Union Territory of Ladakh.

Addressing the media on the sidelines of a joining ceremony, Bukhari said the government of Jammu and Kashmir should have taken all the stakeholders on board while apportioning the assets and liabilities of Jammu and Kashmir.

Referring to the decision, Bukhari termed the administrative diktat as unilateral and arbitrary in nature. He said J&K Bank is a prized possession of the residents of Jammu and Kashmir whose asset division is being unfortunately carried out without taking the actual stakeholders on board.

"The J&K bank has remained the spine of our economy for decades. It has grown and flourished because of the support of locals who have always put their unflinching faith and trust into it," Bukhari remarked.

He said: "An arbitrary decision of transferring 4.583 crore shares to UT of Ladakh is creating a sense of gloom among the natives of Jammu and Kashmir. Government should revisit its decision and take all the stakeholders on board before taking any final decision in this regard."

Similarly, he said that the government has unfairly transferred assets of the J&K House Chanakyapuri to the UT of Ladakh resulting into discrimination with the residents of J&K.

"The decision with regard to transfer of JK House assets was also unfair for the reasons that the population of the UT of J&K is much larger than the population of UT of Ladakh.

Besides, the number of employees is also many times more in J&K than Ladakh. Similarly, the accommodation meant for the VIPs like Hon'ble legislators and Judges of J&K High Court has been transferred to the UT of Ladakh which has no legislative assembly," he added.

Such decisions, Bukhari observed, have been conceived without any formal consultation with the stakeholders from Jammu and Kashmir.

"Presently, the majority of the people from J&K feel alienated with the mode of governance. Even though having a cadre of resolute and highly efficient local officers, the prized positions in different administrative departments are being accorded to the non-resident officers in J&K" He said.

Bukhari urged the Lt. Governor led J&K government to halt the trend of capricious decision making and put serious efforts to win the trust and confidence of the locals in the region while respecting their wishes and aspirations.

"The people of J&K had yearned for a change. A change that would have addressed their long pending demands of fair representation in decision making. The developmental model projected by the government of India for J&K didn't envisage any indiscriminate with the majority community while upholding the interests of the minorities," he remarked.

Bukhari observed that if the measures with regard to the fair apportionment of assets and liabilities between J&K and UT of Ladakh were not taken on priority, the alienation among the residents of J&K will eventually grow and that is what the elements inimical to peace would desire for.

NEWS MAKERS

After An SoS To LG PMJAY Card Issued To A Women In Two Days

JAMMU: On the intervention of Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha office, a lady patient from Udhampur undergoing heart surgery got an Sehat card (Ayushman card) within two days after the women sought help by tagging the twitter handle-officeofLGJandK.

The lady is currently undergoing heart valve surgery at PGI Chandigarh. Radha Devi from Udhampur district had tagged an appeal to the LG Office on January 24.

"Heart surgery is costly. I can't afford it. Please issue me Ayushman card on humanitarian grounds. It is an emergency," she had tweeted tagging it to the twitter handle of 'OfficeofLGJandK'.

"We are thankful to Lt.Governor Manoj Sinha for ensuring that Ayushman Bharat Yojana (PMJAY) card was issued to my wife. She is in PGI, Chandigarh is under treatment. The immediate help from the Governor Administration and District Administration, Udhampur ensured the life of my wife is saved", Mohinder Singh, husband of the patient said.

Ayushman Bharat Yojana, also known as the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY), is a scheme that aims to



HEART SURGERY is costly. I can't afford it. Please issue me Ayushman card on humanitarian grounds. It is an emergency,"

After the launch of the Sehat scheme by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in December last year, PM-JAY SEHAT has extended health coverage to all residents of Jammu & Kashmir. Now one crore residents of J&K who were not eligible under Ayushman Bharat scheme to be benefitted.

Right now about 6 lakh families are getting the benefit of Ayushman Bharat Scheme. All 21 lakh families living in J&K will get the same benefit after the SEHAT scheme.

Another benefit of this scheme would be that treatment is not limited to government and private hospitals in Jammu and Kashmir only. Rather, treatment can be availed from thousands of hospitals empanelled under this scheme in the country, he added.

help economically vulnerable Indians who are in need of healthcare facilities. Under Ayushman Bharat - Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) provides financial protection of 5 lakhs per family and covers 6.13 lakh families in J&K. The State Health Agency of J&K is implementing PM-JAY in Insurance mode.

229 Hospitals are empanelled in J&K of which 126 are public hospitals. 68 Government hospitals and 35 are private.



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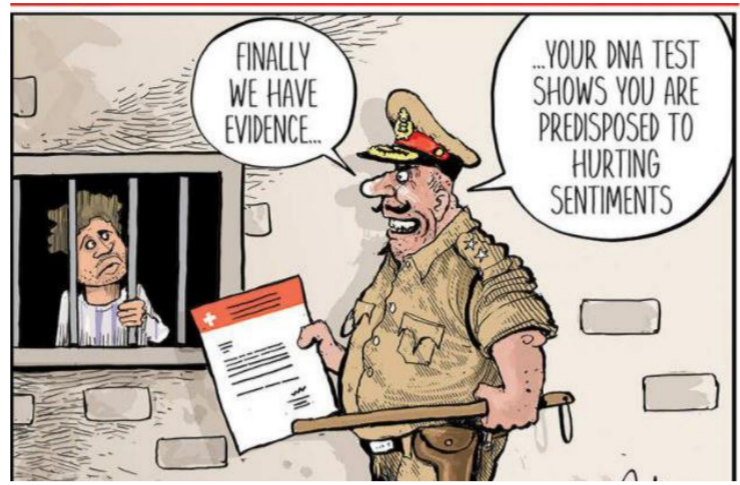
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NO HOLDS BARRED



The US under Trump had thrown its weight behind India, a policy whose continuation may look moot under Biden. It also depends on whether the Biden administration will continue Trump's confrontationalist approach towards China or prefer negotiation over their trading issues.

Biden and Kashmir

With democrats in power, US policies towards South Asia are expected to nuance a bit and may be in some areas go through a makeover



RIYAZ WANI

Shall the Biden administration now live up to these statements and raise the situation in Kashmir with New Delhi? This is quite possible. Broadly, the US policies towards South Asia are expected to nuance a bit and may in some areas go through a conspicuous makeover. But in so far as the US relations with India, and their growing closeness, this is unlikely to change

There has been some sense of relief in the world after Joe Biden took over as the US president, replacing Donald Trump who during his tumultuous four years polarized America, undermined global institutions and also encouraged dictatorial leaders in other countries. In Kashmir too, Biden has generated some hope. Sections of people expect him and his colleague Kamala Harris to be more sensitive to the situation in Kashmir. During their campaign, both Biden and Harris raised the then prevailing security lockdown and communication blockade in Kashmir and sought an end to it. In a policy paper last year, Biden campaign said that he wanted India to take necessary steps to restore the rights of Kashmiris. The paper also said that the restrictions on dissent, such as preventing peaceful protests or shutting or slowing down the internet, weakens democracy. According to the paper, Biden had expressed disappointment over the Citizenship (Amendment) Act and the implementation of the NRC in Assam as well.

Similarly, Harris called for international intervention "to remind Kashmiris that they are not alone in the world" soon after New Delhi revoked Kashmir's special autonomous status and split it into two Union Territories in August 2019.

So, shall the Biden administration now live up to these statements and raise the situation in Kashmir with New Delhi? This is quite possible. Broadly, the US policies towards South Asia are expected to nuance a bit and may in some areas go through a conspicuous makeover. But in so far as the US relations with India, and their growing closeness, this is unlikely to change.

Ever since the former US president Bill Clinton's visit to India in 2000, when the US decisively reached out to India, the relations between the two countries have moved to the next level. Economy apart, their cooperation across a broad



array of geo-political issues has intensified. Besides, regional dynamics have changed fast over the past two decades. The US-Pakistan relations have lost their old raison d'être. China's rise and expanding clout together with India's importance as a regional counterweight has redrawn the US priorities in the region. Such a shift has profoundly impacted the nature of issues like Kashmir. In the ongoing gradual shift from a unipolar to a bi-polar world, India is asserting itself as a global and regional power. This has now firmly ruled out the chances of outside mediation on Kashmir if ever there was one.

No doubt, new regional challenges have cropped up over the last year. China's incursions in Ladakh have created a possibility of a bigger confrontation between the two Asian giants. Fresh scuffle between the two armies, this time at settled Sikkim border underlines that the stand-off is likely to escalate in future. Fifteen hour long ninth round of

talks between the military commanders of the two countries held on January 24 has once again failed to yield an agreement on restoring the status quo ante. The US under Trump had thrown its weight behind India, a policy whose continuation may look moot under Biden. It also depends on whether the Biden administration will continue Trump's confrontationalist approach towards China or prefer negotiation over their trading issues. Any understanding between the two superpowers will nuance the US slant towards India. Democrats will be back to seeing mutual, shared democratic values of religious freedom, tolerance and democracy as underpinning the India-US relationship. A shared enemy in China alone will not be enough. This will make Kashmir occasionally a topic of discussion for the US with India, albeit that might make no difference to the ground situation in the former state.

Many observers also expect some accommodation of Pakistan in the new

US administration. In 2008, Pakistan had conferred Biden with the second highest civilian honor, 'Hilal-e-Pakistan'. Joe Biden and Senator Richard Lugar were behind the proposal to bring \$ 1.5 billion non-military aid to Pakistan. Biden will also want to withdraw troops from Afghanistan, but he'll be a steadier hand. In fact, the new US administration has already decided to review the Afghan peace accord. It will assess whether the Taliban is reducing violence in keeping with its side of the deal in the accord. But at the same time it is unlikely that the US would walk back on the agreement. It is just a matter of time before the Taliban would return to power in Afghanistan. And this will further redefine the regional geopolitics and unleash factors that could force some readjustment in the outlooks of the neighbouring countries. Some experts have talked about the prospect of the militancy in Kashmir receiving some fillip. And others have argued for the unlikelihood of such a prospect as the regional situation now is too transformed to allow a repeat of the nineties. But as of now there's no telling how the situation will play out in Kashmir and regionally too as the three major countries - India, China and Pakistan - seek to adjust their policies vis-a-vis one another and the US looks to safeguard its interests in the region.

Here's hoping that unlike Trump, whose approach was transactional in nature, Biden administration takes a more integrated view of the regional situation in his dealings. This alone will help promote the cause of regional peace than a disparate approach pursued by Trump

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

Rape Raj: Shrouded in Shadow

SHAHNAZ ISLAM

A frenzied attack or bouts of insanity; "rape is rape"! Every 30 minutes one rape is committed in India. A woman or a child, they are all prey of this heinous crime. The rape cases are shooting up in numbers each day. Bruises and injuries only leave scars, not recoveries. The victims sooner or later are succumbed or marked as grime. Sympathies don't lie in its supreme constituents.

The list of names flourishes each year — Nirbhaya case in 2012, Aruna Ramchandra case in 2015, Asifa Bano in 2018, Priyanka Reddy in 2019, Manisha Valmiki in 2020 and who's next in 2021? Why is it stated that 'she was raped'? Why not alleged 'he raped her'? This brutality is not just an android game in contemporary society, the cruelty had been breathing since centuries ago. The social responses, the laws and sections are very tedious to heal the wounds of the victims. Justice is just a dream.

According to a survey, 87 rape cases occurs every day, recorded in 2019, a 7.3 per cent increase in last year, and the victims are mostly in anguish. From 2018, 4.5 per cent rape cases ballooned up against children, were registered in 2019. Further, the government data reveals that of men in India, at least in their entire lives one out of 5 males are either groped or molested as a child or by the stronger men. Over 50 per cent of them are boys between the age of 5 and 15 only.

Any good society is formed with people's organization on uniting aspects and with their contributions towards universal human values. Unfortunately, we live



in a society which mainly boasts over caste, creed, class, religion, language, gender, and most importantly influences of politics and power is supreme overall.

One can calm oneself by acknowledging that every individual is not the same and these disgusting acts are committed by a few who are grounded in their

different characteristics or individual behaviours. But how can one repeatedly slaughter humanity and that too with the complicity of the state from top to bottom?

The Hathras incident from UP is an example in hand as to why is rape trending in India? Why the Rape Raj is not abolishing yet even after the harsh Constitutional amendment following the Nirbhaya incident in Delhi? We have to remember that rape has no caste, religion or identity. It is an act of hysteria, an act of madness against any sane society.

Blaming only the government is always not wise. The crime committed by the member is from this very society that we all live in. The government is not a pessimist or mind reader of the culprits or the rapists — what are their intentions or who they want to rape next. However, being complacent with the crimes or protecting the criminals like rapists and lynchers has been observed time and again from certain governments for their political interests. This is an additional bolt for all of us in India.

It's not enough to call rape just a rape alone. The act of rape devours humanity and undermines faith in human beings. Human beings have constituted laws, unlike animals, for the guidance of citizens and to protect humanity from falling apart.

Despite the harshness of these laws, an actual punishment falls less severe. Indifference and tolerance of sexual crimes are increasing. The agony and trauma the victim goes through is such that no brutality or punishment given to the rapist will justify. Rape does not cut or mark injuries on the intimate parts of the body of a victim but pierced into their psyche. Such wounds are often unseen but never washed off. No amount of guilt or worries will cure it. No functioning of NGOs or sys-

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tems run by the government or the law-makers can bestow the pride of justice. If we are in our senses and understand ourselves then we have failed humanity. It's high time we wake up from slumber and educate our minds and thoughts.

Instead of 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao', we should make our sons aware that raping a woman is raping the womb of every mother.

Google's Guinea Pigs

Google is leading a vast, covert human experiment. You may be one of the guinea pigs



DANIEL ANGUS

On January 13 the Australian Financial Review reported Google had removed some Australian news content from its search results for some local users. Speaking to the Guardian, a Google spokesperson confirmed the company was “running a few experiments that will each reach about 1% of Google Search users in Australia to measure the impacts of news businesses and Google Search on each other”. So what are these “experiments”? And how concerned should we be about Google’s actions?

Engineering our attention

Google’s experiment (which is supposed to run until early February) involves displaying an “alternative” news website ranking for certain Australian users — at least 160,000, according to The Guardian. A Google spokesperson told The Conversation the experiment didn’t prevent users (being experimented on) from accessing a news story. Rather, they would not discover the story through Search and would have to access it another way, such as directly on a publisher’s website. Google’s experiment is a form of “A/B testing”, which classically involves dividing a population randomly in half — into groups A and B — and subjecting each group to a different “stimulus”. For example, in the case of web design, the two groups may be served different web layouts. This could be done to test changes to layout, the colour scheme or any other element. Performance in A/B testing is judged on a range of factors, such as which links are clicked first, or the average time spent on a page. If group A perused the site longer than group B, the modification tested on group A may be considered favourable. In Google’s case, we don’t know the motivation behind the tests. But we do know a small subset of users received different results to the majority and were not alerted. The experiment has resulted in the promotion of dubious news sources over trusted ones, some of which have been known to publish disinformation (which intends to mislead) and misinformation (false claims that are spread regardless of intent). When asked about this ranking, Google’s spokesperson said it was a “single anecdotal screenshot” and the experiment didn’t “remove results that link



to official government departments and agencies”.

Intent to manipulate

A/B testing is a widespread practice. It can range from being fairly benign — such as to determine the best location for an advertisement banner — to much more invasive, such as Facebook’s infamous mood experiment. In January 2012, Facebook conducted an experiment on 700,000 users without their knowledge or explicit consent. It adjusted users’ feeds to artificially boost either positive or negative news content. One reported aim, according to Facebook’s own researchers, was to examine whether emotional states could spread from user to user on the platform. Results were reported in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. Following the report’s publication, Facebook’s “experiment” was widely condemned by academics, journalists and the public as ethically dubious. It had a specific objective to emotionally manipulate users and didn’t obtain informed consent. Similarly, it’s unlikely users caught in the midst of Google’s Australian news experiment would realise it. And while the direct risk to those being tested may seem lower than with Facebook’s mood experiment, tweaking news results on Google Search introduces its own set of risks. As research my colleagues and I has shown, platforms and news media both play a large role in spreading conspiracy theories.

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Google tried to downplay the significance of the experiment, noting that it conducts “tens of thousands of experiments in Google Search” each year. But this doesn’t excuse the company from scrutiny. If anything, it’s even more concerning. Imagine if a police officer pulled you over for speeding and you said: “Well, I speed thousands of times each year, so why should I pay a fine just this one time I’ve been caught?” If this is just one experiment among of tens of thousands, as Google has admitted, in what other ways have we been manipulated in the past? Without basic disclosures, it’s difficult to know.

A history of non-disclosure

This isn’t the first time Google has been caught experimenting on users without adequate disclosure. In 2018, the company released Google Duplex, a speech-enabled digital assistant that could purportedly make restaurant and other personal service bookings on a user’s behalf. In the Duplex demos, Google played audio of an AI-enabled speech agent making bookings via conversations with real service workers. What was missing from the calls, however, was a disclosure that the agent opening the call was a bot, not a human. Critics questioned the deceptiveness of the technology, given its mimicry of human speech. Google’s controversial dismissal in December of world-leading AI ethics researcher Timnit Gebru (former co-lead of its ethical AI team) cast further shade over the company’s internal culture.

What needs to change?

Digital media platforms including Google, Facebook, Netflix and Amazon (among others) exert enormous power over our lives. They also have vast political influence. It’s no coincidence Google’s news ranking experiment took place against the backdrop of the escalating news media bargaining code debate, wherein the federal government wants Google and Facebook to negotiate with Australian news providers to pay for using their content. Google’s spokesperson confirmed the experiment is “directly connected to the need to gather information for use in arbitration proceedings, should the code become law”. While users benefit from the services big tech provides, we need to appreciate we’re more than mere consumers of these services. The data we forfeit are essential input for the massive algorithmic machinery that runs at the core of enterprises such as Google. The result is what digital media scholars call an “algorithmic culture”. We feed these machines our data and in the process tune them towards our tastes. Meanwhile, they feed us back more things to consume, in a giant human-machine algorithmic loop. Until recently, we have been uncritical participants in these algorithmic loops and experiments, willing to use “free” services in exchange for our data. But we need to rethink our relationship with platforms and must hold them to a higher standard of accountability. Governments should mandate minimum standards of disclosure for platforms’ user testing. A/B testing by platforms can still be conducted properly with adequate disclosures, oversight and opt-in options. In the case of Google, to “do the right thing” would be to adopt a higher standard of ethical conduct when it comes to user testing.

By Arrangements with
The Conversation

Winds of Change in Education

MAHMUDUR RAHMAN

What skills will matter in the future? Unnoticed by many, one of the biggest casualties in the move towards a Fourth Industrial Revolution has been education. It is a revolution that squares on green technology, phasing out or reducing dependence on fossil fuel, recycling and indeed re-creating food from waste, and a far greater emphasis on artificial intelligence. That’s great as a policy towards making life more sustainable. The resultant impact on employment and agriculture the way it now is hasn’t been worked out. Tucked away in a remote area somewhere near the North Pole there is a controlled environment storing all forms of flora and edible greens and fruits. More is added to the growing list. How traditional farmers will have access to such agricultural techniques hasn’t been made known. These are just a few examples that suggest a major overhaul of education is on the cards. The pursuit of knowledge, methodology, and application will all change. It all seems far removed from the evocative, at times impassioned assertions that education is the backbone of all nations. A bat in blinkers will know this basic assertion hasn’t been reflected in resource allocation. To a major extent, scant resources have been targeted at infrastructure rather than quality of education. Likewise, the yawning gap in standards between urban and rural schools, colleges, and universities have led to a pursuit of certificates rather than knowledge. Developing countries struggle to find quality teachers and methods of making learning fun. Developed nations struggle to make education meaningful and forward-looking. It doesn’t help



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when different countries take different approaches to their curriculum. Japan has decided to close many liberal arts faculties given they want to focus on the priority area of science

and technology. Schools in the UK have advised teachers to go easy on spelling mistakes in order for passing-out rates to improve. The US has found out to their chagrin that their elementary students

are way behind when it comes to math and algebra compared to Russia. Australia is changing literary syllabi so as to exclude literature based on religious or colonial perspectives such as Chaucer.

And in our own Bangladesh, Rajshahi University, a couple of years ago, didn’t have a single student interested in urban planning. On the flip side, Scandinavian countries have begun to change science education from mere theory to more practical, by demonstrating the everyday examples of science in action. That’s no indication that elementary education will in any way become redundant. Literature and science both seek a truth — one that enriches mind and soul and refreshes the search for innovation based on the way the world itself evolves. If ever we needed a reminder, the ongoing pandemic has been a stark one. Lifestyle changes bereft of acquiescence of nature are not sustainable. The fundamentals are therefore essential to build and nurture the citizens of tomorrow, no matter which vocation they choose to pursue. Rounded individuals are what is sought by employers. That and new entrants who not only understand theory but also practically translate such theories. There will always be the need to segregate at some stage inquisitive minds towards their particular area of interest. That, as time has proven, can’t be decided through exams as we know them. How theory is perceived and approached or challenged is the key. Relevance of syllabi requires re-looking at to ensure that “minds,” and not “process” driven output, are obtained. The future will be about technical and vocational skills, but far ramped up from current practices. Economists are already changing the indices of development. Science will drive this further. Businesses will have to change and adapt beyond robotization. The new normal has to incorporate a “new” education system that is not only practical, but informed as well.

Dhaka Tribune

'Brain training' may help treat PTSD

Agencies

Brain training may be an effective treatment for individuals with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), researchers say. The study, published in the journal *NeuroImage: Clinical*, indicates that neurofeedback, also called 'brain training,'—consists of exercises where individuals regulate their own brain activity—was effective in reducing symptoms of PTSD. "Brain connectivity involves different parts of the brain communicating with each other and helps to regulate states of con-

sciousness, thought, mood and emotion," said researcher Ruth Lanius from the Western University in Canada. "Individuals with PTSD tend to have disrupted patterns of brain connectivity, but our research suggests they can exercise their brains to restore patterns to a healthy balance," Lanius added. Neurofeedback uses a system called a neurofeedback loop in which a person's brain activity is measured through sensors placed on the scalp and displayed back to them using a computer interface. This allows the individual to complete exercises and visually see the results.



For the study, the team tested neurofeedback with a total of 72 participants, including 36 participants with PTSD and 36 healthy control participants. Of those with PTSD, 18 were randomized to participate in neurofeedback treatment while the other 18 acted as a comparison group. The study found that the severity of PTSD symptoms decreased in participants randomized to receive neurofeedback treatment. After treatment, 61.1 per cent of participants no longer met the definition for PTSD. This remission rate is comparable to gold standard therapies like trauma-focused psy-

chotherapy. The research team also used functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) to capture brain scans of participants both before and after participation in the trial. They found that individuals with PTSD experienced positive changes in brain connectivity in the salience network and the default mode network following neurofeedback treatment. "Neurofeedback could offer an accessible and effective treatment option for individuals with PTSD. The treatment is easily scalable for implementation in rural areas and even at home," the researchers said.

WhatsApp adds additional security layer to link account to PCs

Agencies

As millions of people now access WhatsApp on their PCs and laptops, the Facebook-owned platform has announced to add an additional layer of security where users will be able to link their WhatsApp account on mobile phones to their computers. In order to link WhatsApp Web or Desktop to your WhatsApp account, you will now be asked to use your face or fingerprint unlock on your phone, before scanning a QR code from the phone to link your device. The new security update for linking devices will be rolling out, alongside a visual redesign to the WhatsApp Web page on phones, to users with compatible devices over the coming weeks. "We're putting even more security into WhatsApp Web and desktop, adding an additional layer of protection when you want to link your WhatsApp account to your computer," the company said in a statement. The move, said WhatsApp, will limit the chance that a housemate or office colleague can link devices to your WhatsApp account without you. "This builds on our existing secu-

urity measures today, which pop up a notice in your phone whenever a Web/Desktop login occurs, and the ability to unlink devices from your phone at any time," the company noted. WhatsApp said the face and fingerprint authentication takes place on your device in a privacy preserving manner—by design.

personal mobile numbers via indexing on Google Search. Independent cybersecurity researcher Rajshekar Rajaharia had shared some screenshots with IANS showing indexing of personal mobile numbers of WhatsApp users via Web version on Google Search. Concerned at private group



"WhatsApp cannot access the biometric information stored by your device's operating system". The move comes at a time when WhatsApp is facing immense backlash in India over its upcoming privacy policy. In mid-January, it was found that WhatsApp on Desktop (Web) application was allegedly exposing

chat links being available on Google Search, WhatsApp had earlier said that it asked Google not to index such chats and advised users not to share group chat links on publicly accessible websites. The indexed WhatsApp group chat links have now been removed from Google.

Government of Jammu and Kashmir
**OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FISHERIES
DISTRICT BUDGAM**

ADVERTISEMENT NOTICE

List of most deserving registered fishermen for allotment of low cost under under PMMSY/Blue Revolution Schemes during the year 2020-21, objections if any, thereof.

This office had received 113 No's of applications from registered fishermen of District Budgam against advertisement Notice No. JDF/K/2020/873-85 dated 03-09-2020 which was issued in daily leading newspapers. A committee was framed by this office vide order No. ADF/Bud/2021-21/677-80 Dated 29-09-2020 to ascertain most deserving beneficiaries who shall be covered under housing schemes, In this context, the said team shortlisted 55 No's of most deserving fishermen out of 113 applicants In the first instance, the Directorate of Fisheries had given a target of 41 housing units under PMMSY but later on again 14 No's of housing units have been given under Blue Revolution Scheme for the year 2020-21. In totality, 55 No's of housing units under these two schemes are now available, thereby all the shortlisted 55 applicants can be provided the housing units. In this backdrop, it's to intimate that if there is anyobjection regarding these shortlisted registered fishermen, it shall be entertained within a week's time only after which work orders shall be issued to them so that they can start construction work at an earliest.

Assistant Director Fisheries,
District Budgam

List of most deserving houseless registered fishermen (Circle wise) of District Budgam to be covered under Housing Scheme during the year 2020-21.

(Circle Beerwah)

SS.No	Name of Beneficiary	Parentage	Residence	Tehsil
01	Ab. Rashid Dar	WaliMohd Dar	Rathsun	Beerwah
02	MohdYousufShalbab	Gh. QadirShalbab	Beerwa	Beerwah
03	MohdAltafWani	Gh. MohdWani	Ohangam	Beerwah
04	Ab. Rashid Mir	KhazirMohd Mir	Aripathan	Beerwah
05	Mohd Amin Nakal	Gh. MohdNakal	Beerwa	Beerwah

(Circle Chadoora)

SS.No	Name of Beneficiary	Parentage	Residence	Tehsil
01	Gh. NabiBohroo	Ab. Rahim Bohroo	Golapora	Chadoora
02	Gh. Hussain Rather	Gh. Mohidin Rather	Shalina	Chadoora
03	Shahnaz Hussain Ganie	Gh. Hussain Ganie	Shalina	Chadoora
04	Mohd Abdullah dar	Ali Mohddar	Shalina	Chadoora
05	Wahid MohdGanie	Gh. MohdGanie	Shalina	Chadoora
06	Altaf Hussain Bhat	MohdMaqbool Bhat	Hanjigund	Chadoora
07	Ab. Rahim reshi	Ab. Samadreshi	Doulatpora	Chadoora
08	KhazirMohd Hanji	Habibullah Hanji	Shalina	Chadoora
09	Adil Rashid	Ab. Rashid Nawa Hanji	Summerbugh	Chadoora
110	Mohd Ibrahim Matto	Mohd Akbar Mattoo	Shalina	Chadoora
111	Gh. RasoolGanie	Gh. MohidinGanie	Shalina	Chadoora
112	Mohd Akbar Reshi	WaliMohdReshi	Doulatpora	Chadoora
113	Ab. Rashid Laway	Ab. Salam Laway	Lasjan	Chadoora

(Circle Narbal)

SS.No	Name of Beneficiary	Parentage	Residence	Tehsil
01	Bilal Ahmad Dar	Ali Mohd Dar	Narbal	Narbal
02	Ali Mohddar	Gh. Mohidin Dar	Wandakpora	Narbal
03	Bashir Ahmad Khanday	Late MohdShabanKhanday	GhatNarbal	Narbal
04	MohdAltafMarazi	Gh. MohdMarazi	GhatNarbal	Narbal
05	Ab. AhadKhanday	Gh. Ahmad Khanday	GhatNarbal	Narbal
06	Noor Mohd Bhat	Ab. Khaliq Bhat	GhatNarbal	Narbal
07	Manzoor Ahmad Kullo	Mohd Sultan Kullo	Alambal	Narbal
08	Imtiyaz Ahmad Tabardar	Gh. MohdTabardar	Wandakpora	Narbal
09	Ab. Rashid Dar	Gh. Mohidin Dar	Wandakpora	Narbal
110	Feroz Ah. Dar	Gul Mohddar	Sundrabad	Narbal
111	Ab. Satar Bhat	Ab. Khaliq Bhat	Alambal	Narbal
112	Aijaz Ahmad Bhat	Ali Mohd Bhat	Alambal	Narbal
113	Mohd Akbar Dar	Habibullah Dar	Wandakpora	Narbal
114	MohdRamzanGuroo	Ab. Aziz Guroo	GhatNarbal	Narbal
115	Bashir Ahmed Khan	Gh. Qadir Khan	Wandakpora	Narbal
116	Bilal Ahmad Bhat	Gh. Qadir Bhat	Alambal	Narbal
117	Gh. Ahmad Malla	Mohd Ismail Malla	Sundrabad	Narbal

(Circle Soibugh/Budgam)

SS.No	Name of Beneficiary	Parentage	Residence	Tehsil
01	Altaf Ah. Sheikh	MohdRamzan Sheikh	Hatharan	Budgam
02	Fayaz Ahmad Bhat	Ab. Samad Bhat	Hanjik	Budgam
03	Mohd Sultan Wani	Ab. SatarWani	Hanjik	Budgam
04	Farooq Ahmad Shah	Ab. Razak Shah	Soibugh	Budgam
05	Ishtyaq Ahmad Malik	MohdMaqbool Malik	Soibugh	Budgam
06	Majid Ahmad dar	MohdRamzan Dar	Bemina	Budgam
07	Mohd Sultan Malik	Ab. Rehman Malik	Soibugh	Budgam
08	Manzoor Ahmad Labroo	Ab. Rashid Labroo	Bemina	Budgam
09	Ab. Majid Malik	MohdAkram Malik	Hatharan	Budgam
110	Bilal Ahmad Mir	Habibullah Mir	Bonpora	Budgam
111	Ab. Majid Hajam	Ab. AhadHajam	Asthanpora	Budgam
112	Waseem Ahmad Wani	MohdAkramWani	Soibugh	Budgam
113	Mohd Ashraf Wani	MohdShabanWani	Soibugh	Budgam
114	Showkat Ahmad Khan	Gh. Mohd Khan	Soibugh	Budgam
115	Showkat Ahmad Shas	Ab. Rashid Shah	Soibugh	Budgam
116	Mohd Ashraf Dar	Ab. Satar Dar	Soibugh	Budgam
117	Ab. Ahad Shah	Gh. Mohd Shah	Hajibagh	Budgam
118	Bilal Ahmad Malik	Gh. Nabi Malik	Hatharan	Budgam
119	Ab. Hamid Mir	Mohd Akbar Mir	Soibugh	Budgam
220	Aashiq Ahmad Mir	MohdRamzan Mir	GurtengNarkara	Budgam

Assistant Director Fisheries,
District Budgam

DIPK-12232/20

Government of Jammu & Kashmir
**Office of the Executive Engineer
(R&B) Division Bandipora.**

Sub: - Construction of Fencing to Govt Degree College Bandipora..

CORRIGENDUM

Ref.: - This office NIT No.: E-NIT (89)/2020-21 Dt.: 18/01/2021 vide endorsement No R&B/Bpr/4703-14 Dated :18-01-2021. For the above subjected work issued under NIT referred above, kindly read Adv Cost as 231.00 lacs instead of 231.00 crore

All other terms and conditions shall remain same.

No.: EE/R&B/Bandi/4798-4802
Dated: 27-01-2021.

Executive Engineer
R&B Division Bandipora.
kaisu

Government of Jammu & Kashmir
**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE
ENGINEER R&B ELECTRIC DIVISION SGR**

NOTICE INVITING TENDERS

NIT No: 111/e-tendering of 2020-21/R&B DATED:- 25.01.2021

For and on behalf of the LT Governor of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, e-tenders (In Single cover system) are invited on item rate basis from approved and eligible Electrical Contractors registered with J&K State Govt.CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for the following works:-

S. No.	Name of Work	Est. Cost (In Rupees/lacs)	Cost of T/Doc. (In Rupees)	Time of completion	Time & Date of Opening of Bid	Class of Contractor	M.H. of Account
1	Electrification of sub Division office (R & B) Pampore Double Storied Building at Tanchibagh Pampore	2.75 lacs	200.00	20 days	04.02.2021	"A" Class Electrical	4059-NFB
2	Electrification of Class Room Block at Govt. Degree College Pampore (Ground Floor)	7.33lacs	300.00	25 days	04.02.2021	"A" Class Electrical	4202-Hr.Edu
4	Electrification of Class Room Block at Govt. Degree College Pampore (First Floor)	6.92 lacs	300.00	25 days	04.02.2021	"A" Class Electrical	4202-Hr.Edu

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

1.	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	27-01-2021
2.	Period of downloading of bidding documents	27/01/2021 12.00 A.M
3.	Bid submission Start Date	27/01/2021 from 12.00 A.M
4.	Bid Submission End Date	03/02/2021 up to 4.00 P.M.
5.	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	04/02/2021 at 10.00 A.M in the Office of the Executive Engineer R&B Electric Division Srinagar

1. Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in shape of Treasury Challan in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Electric Division, Srinagar (tender inviting authority) (The Date of Treasury Challan should be between the date of start of bid and Bid Submission End date) pledged to Executive Engineer R&B Electric Division, Srinagar (tender receiving authority).

2. All Bidders has to submit Bid Security Declaration Form instead of Earnest money as per the circular of Finance Department (Bid Security Declaration Form is as per Annexure "A"). The 1st lowest Bidder has to produce an amount equal to 3% of contract as performance security in shape of CDR/FDR/ within 02 Days before fixation of contract and shall be released after successful completion of work.

3. Bidder must read term/condition in tender document carefully.

AAA/TS = Accorded
Position of Funds = Available

Executive Engineer,
(R&B) Electric Division
Srinagar

DIPK-12281/20
No.111/e-tendering/ERB/3855-62

Awareness Workshop On Export Registration Concludes In Srinagar

SRINAGAR: A two-day long workshop on export promotion and related issues organised by the Directorate of Handicrafts & Handloom Kashmir concluded here today at SKICC Srinagar. About a hundred persons participated in the concluding session. The session was conducted by Joint Director General, Foreign Trade, Suvaidd Shah.

The speaker gave detailed information about various aspects of export trade like importance of exports in current scheme of things, issues related to the GST and more importantly how to find genuine buyers for handicraft products. The participants were made aware about the importance of the HS code in export business. Various incentives available from the Government to the exporters were also discussed. Through a detailed presentation participants

were guided through websites related to the exports.

Members from the apex trade bodies of Kashmir KCCI, FCIK and PHD Chamber of Commerce (Kashmir chapter) and other aspiring exporters were present in the concluding session of the programme.

Joint Director DGFT stressed upon the participants to regularly visit and check the websites of Ministry of Commerce Government of India, Director General of Foreign Trade, trademap.org and indiaportal.in for getting firsthand information about the export related issues.

Director Handicrafts & Handloom, Kashmir Mehmood Ahmad Shah thanked the visiting dignitary for sharing his knowledge of the subject with the target group. He emphasised the need to bring more people into export business which would also lead to increase in exports.

Gold Demand Drops To 11-Year-Low In 2020 On Weak Q4



Agencies

Global demand for gold plummeted 14 per cent in 2020 to an 11-year low of 3,759.6 tonne, showed the World Gold Council's latest 'Gold Demand Trends' report.

It was the first time since 2009 that gold demand plunged below the 4,000 tonne mark.

The decline in annual demand is largely attributed to the 28 per cent year-on-year (YoY) fall to 783.4 tonne in the fourth quarter of 2020, making it the weakest quarter since the midst of the global financial crisis in Q2, 2008.

Gold jewellery demand in Q4 fell 13 per cent Y-o-Y to 515.9 tonne, resulting in a full-year total of 1,411.6 tonne, 34 per cent lower than in 2019 and a new annual low for WGC's data series, said its statement.

While demand improved steadily from the severely depleted numbers in Q2, the coronavirus continued to impact consumer behaviour, it added.

On the other hand, increased uncertainty and policy response to the pandemic supported annual investment demand, which increased 40 per cent Y-o-Y to a new high of 1,773.2 tonne.

"Most of the growth came in the form of gold-backed ETFs (gold ETFs) but was aided by bar and coin demand growth in H2. In addition, evidence suggests that over-the-counter (OTC) activity was also robust throughout the year," said the World Gold Council's statement.

However, in Q4 there was a notable decline in investment

demand for gold ETFs with outflows at 130 tonne.

Total annual gold supply also took a hit and was 4 per cent lower y-o-y (4,633 tonne), the largest annual fall since 2013. The drop can be largely explained by coronavirus-related disruption to mine production, offset by a marginal 1 per cent increase in recycling to 1,297.4 tonne for 2020, as per the WGC.

Inflows into global gold ETFs reached an annual record of 877.1 tonne, valued at \$47.9 billion. An 11-month consecutive run of positive inflows starting in December 2019 came to a halt in November when a recovery in sentiment and gold price drop led to 130 tonne of outflows in Q4.

The US dollar gold price returned 25 per cent in 2020 supported by investor demand. After reaching a record high in August across most currencies, the LBMA Gold Price PM dropped back to \$1,762.55/oz at the end of November, before recovering to close the year at \$1,887.6/oz.

Demand for gold bars and coins grew 10 per cent in Q4. A recovery in China and India in the second half of 2020 added to continued strength in Western markets to lift annual demand to 896.1 tonne, up 3 per cent.

Further, 2020 marked a record low of 1,411.6 tonne for gold jewellery demand. Despite a quarterly recovery in Q4, demand was unable to overcome the continued challenges presented by COVID-19.

Gold buying by central banks slowed sharply in 2020, 59 per cent lower at 273 tonne.



International tourist arrivals fell by one billion, or 74 percent, in 2020. (Representational)

2020 "Worst Year" In Tourism History As Pandemic Cost \$1.3 Trillion: UN

Agencies

MADRID: The coronavirus crisis cost the global tourism sector \$1.3 trillion in lost revenue in 2020 as the number of people travelling plunged, the UN said Tuesday, calling it "the worst year in tourism history".

Revenue lost last year amounted to "more than 11 times the loss recorded during the 2009 global economic crisis," the Madrid-based World Tourism Organization said in a statement, warning that between 100 and 120 million direct tourism jobs were at risk.

International tourist arrivals fell by one billion, or 74 percent, in 2020 with Asia, the first region to feel the impact of Covid-19, seeing the steepest decline, it added.

"While much has been made in making safe international travel a possibility, we are aware that the crisis is far from over," WTO head Zurab Pololikashvili said in the statement.

While the rollout of Covid-19 vaccines is expected to "slowly normalise travel" in 2021, many countries are reintroducing stricter travel restrictions such as quarantines, mandatory test-

ing and complete border closures "due to the evolving nature of the pandemic", the UN body said.

International tourism arrivals rose by four percent in 2019 to 1.5 billion, with France the world's most visited country, followed by Spain and the United States.

The last time international tourist arrivals posted an annual decline was in 2009 when the global economic crisis led to a four percent drop.

The WTO said most experts do not see a return to pre-pandemic levels of tourism activity happening before 2023.

FM Tables Economic Survey 2020-21 In Lok Sabha

NEW DELHI: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday presented the Economic Survey that details the state of the economy ahead of the government's Budget for fiscal year beginning April 1, 2021.

The Economic Survey 2020-21, authored by a team led by Chief Economic Adviser Krishnamurthy Venkata Subramanian, details the state of different sectors of the economy as well as re-



forms that should be undertaken to accelerate growth.

The economy, which was battered by the coronavirus lock-

down, is expected to see a strong recovery in the 2021-22 fiscal year.

The gross domestic product (GDP) contracted by a record 23.9 per cent in April-June and by 7.5 per cent in the second quarter.

For the full fiscal, the survey projected a contraction of 7.7 per cent and V-shaped recovery in the next.

GDP growth is seen expanding by 11 per cent in the 2021-22 fiscal (April 2021 to March 2022). PTI

DDC Reviews Functioning Of ICDS At Anantnag

ANANTNAG: The District Development Commissioner (DDC) Anantnag, Anshul Garg today chaired a meeting of ICDS and Health officers to review the functioning of ICDS department, progress of Covid-19 vaccination programme at DC office here.

The DDC directed the ICDS officials to universalise the outreach of their schemes in the district. He also stressed for proper functioning of AWCs with provision of all basic facilities including safe drinking water.

While highlighting the government's commitment for education and empowerment of Girl Child, Garg laid special emphasis

on effective implementation of Ladli Beti, SAG and BBBP programmes.

The DDC applauded the AWWs for playing an important role in the fight against Covid, and stressed that all the AWWs must get vaccinated so that they become immune against the disease. He also directed the ICDS officials to provide human and logistic support for the upcoming Pulse Polio Day on 31 January, 2021.

The DDC also reviewed the status of the ongoing Covid-19 vaccination programme in the district which was started on 16 January across the country. He

informed that the Covid vaccine is safe and directed the officials to take appropriate steps for effective implementation of the vaccination programme.

The meeting was informed that 951 people have been vaccinated so far and the immunisation programme is going on smoothly at 11 Vaccination centres.

Among others, the meeting was attended by ADC(S), CMO, CDPOs and other concerned officials.

Meanwhile, several PRI members met the DDC and felicitated him for taking the reins of administration in the district.

GDP Growth Rate For 2019-20 Revised Downwards To 4 Pct



NEW DELHI: The government on Friday revised downwards the economic growth rate for 2019-20 to 4 per cent from 4.2 per cent estimated earlier, mainly due to contraction in secondary sectors like manufacturing and construction.

"Real GDP or GDP at constant (2011-12) prices for the years 2019-20 and 2018-19 stands at Rs 145.69 lakh crore and Rs 140.03 lakh crore, respectively, showing a growth of 4.0 per cent during 2019-20 and 6.5 per cent during 2018-19," National Statistical Office said in revised national account data.

Under the first revision released in January 2020, real GDP or GDP at constant (2011-12) prices for 2018-19 was pegged at Rs 139.81 lakh crore, showing a growth of 6.1 per cent.

"The growth in real GVA during 2019-20 has been lower than that in 2018-19 mainly due to relatively lower growth in 'Mining and Quarrying', 'Manufacturing', 'Electricity, Gas, Water Supply & Other Utility Services', 'Construction', 'Trade, repair, Hotels and Restaurants' and 'Financial Ser-

vices'," the data said.

During 2019-20, the growth rates of the primary sector (comprising agriculture, forestry, fishing and mining & quarrying), secondary sector (comprising manufacturing, electricity, gas, water supply & other utility services, and construction) and tertiary sector (services) have been estimated as 3.3 per cent, (-)1.1 per cent and 7.2 per cent against a growth of 2.2 per cent, 5.8 per cent and 7.2 per cent, respectively, in the previous year.

Nominal Net National Income or NNI at current prices for 2019-20 stands at Rs 179.94 lakh crore as against Rs 167.05 lakh crore in 2018-19, showing a growth of 7.7 per cent as against a rise of 10.3 per cent in the previous year.

Per capita income i.e. per capita net national income at current prices is estimated at Rs 1,25,883 and Rs 1,34,186, respectively, for 2018-19 and 2019-20.

Per Capita PFCE at current prices, for 2018-19 and 2019-20 is estimated at Rs 84,567 and Rs 91,790, respectively. PTI

Airtel Announces 5G Ready Network



NEW DELHI: In a major landmark, Bharti Airtel ("Airtel"), India's premier communications solutions provider, announced that it has become the country's first telco to successfully demonstrate & orchestrate LIVE 5G service over a commercial network in Hyderabad city.

Airtel did this over its existing liberalised spectrum in the 1800 MHz band through the NSA (Non Stand Alone) network technology. Using a first of its kind, dynamic spectrum sharing, Airtel seamlessly operated 5G and 4G concurrently within the same spectrum block. This demonstration has emphatically validated the 5G readiness of Airtel's network across all domains - Radio, Core and Transport.

Airtel 5G is capable of delivering 10x speeds, 10x latency and 100x concurrency when compared to existing technologies. Specifically, in Hyderabad, users were able to download a full length movie in a matter of seconds on a 5G phone. This demonstration has underlined the

company's technology capabilities. The full impact of the 5G experience, however, will be available to our customers, when adequate spectrum is available and government approvals received.

Gopal Vittal, MD & CEO, Bharti Airtel said: "I am very proud of our engineers who have worked tirelessly to showcase this incredible capability in Tech City, Hyderabad today. Every one of our investments is future proofed as this game changing test in Hyderabad proves. With Airtel being the first operator to demonstrate this capability, we have shown again that we have always been the first in India to pioneer new technologies in our quest for empowering Indians everywhere."

"We believe India has the potential to become a global hub for 5G innovation. To make that happen we need the eco system to come together - applications, devices and network innovation. We are more than ready to do our bit," added Gopal Vittal.

NEWS MAKERS

GM Aims To End Sale Of Gasoline, Diesel-Powered Cars, SUVs, Light Trucks By 2035

Agencies

WASHINGTON: General Motors Co said on Thursday that it was setting a goal to sell all its new cars, SUVs and light pickup trucks with zero tailpipe emissions by 2035, a dramatic shift by the largest US automaker away from gasoline and diesel engines.

GM, which also said it plans to become carbon neutral by 2040, made the dramatic announcement just over a week after President Joe Biden took office pledging to tackle greenhouse gas emissions and boost sales of electric vehicles (EVs).

GM sold 2.55 million vehicles in the United States last year but only about 20,000 were EVs, the Chevy Bolt hatchback.

It said in November that it was investing \$27 billion in electric and autonomous vehicles over the next five years, up from \$20 billion planned before the coronavirus pandemic.

GM's stock, which climbed as much as 7.4 per cent on Thursday, closed up 3.5 per cent.

Chief Executive Mary Barra has aggressively pushed GM to embrace electric vehicles and shift away from gasoline-powered vehicles.

She said in a statement the automaker had worked with the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF), an environmental advocacy group, to "develop a shared vision of an all-electric future and an aspiration to eliminate tailpipe emissions from new light-duty vehicles by 2035".

Morgan Stanley auto analyst Adam Jonas said the decision was "based principally on economic grounds...Would GM decide to wind down a business in under 15 years if it truly felt it would spin off cash and provide positive economic value?"

Jonas added that investors should look for most if not all automakers "to follow GM's precedent".

In September, California Governor Gavin Newsom said the state planned to ban the sale of new gasoline-powered passenger cars and trucks starting in 2035. Several states, includ-



ing Massachusetts, say they plan to follow suit. Newsom called GM's announcement a "gamechanger" but the California Air Resources Board said "if GM is serious about cleaning up the air our children breathe today, it must also drop its defense of the Trump administration's rollbacks of federal vehicle emissions standards".

GM and other major automakers sided with Trump last year in a legal challenge

to his rollback of federal vehicle emissions standards through 2026.

However, in November, GM withdrew from a separate legal case in which it had sided with the Trump administration effort to bar California from setting its own vehicle emissions rules.

Last week, Biden directed US agencies to reconsider the Trump emissions rollback and the revocation of California's emissions authority.

"GM is open to working with California and the Biden Administration to achieve agreement on a national standard and complementary policies to accelerate the electrification of the light-duty transportation sector," the company said in a separate statement.

However, in announcing the change, GM reaffirmed a commitment to producing zero-emission vehicles.

"We're taking actions so that we can eliminate tailpipe emissions by 2035," Dane Parker, GM's chief sustainability officer, said at the media briefing, adding: "Setting a goal for us 15 years from now is absolutely reachable."

FICCI Delegation Of Calls On LG

JAMMU: A delegation of FICCI J&K Council today called on Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha here at Raj Bhavan.

The office-bearers of FICCI J&K Council comprising its Chairman, Irfan Ahmed Guju and Co-Chairman, Rajesh Sharma submitted a roadmap for the promotion of economic activities in J&K and proposed several measures including the formulation of One District One Product (ODOP) scheme for the identified products of various districts; organizing physical/ virtual fairs on FICCI platform; conducting design intervention workshops for the entrepreneurs and businesses as per requirements; holding J&K Film Makers meet and GI Integration Products Summit.

They also made suggestions for organizing J&K Bird Watchers conclave for promoting UT as a fast emerging eco-tourism destination; Youth sensitization programme in sports and entertainment sectors; J&K IT Conclave and J&K Innovation Growth programme in line with the government's vision of 'Startup India, Standup India'.

While interacting with the members of the delegation, the Lt Governor reiterated the Government's commitment for the promotion of the business sector in J&K.

Kashmiri Food Among Top Three Exotic Cuisines Of India: Sanjeev Kapoor

Press Trust of India

SRINAGAR: Renowned chef Sanjeev Kapoor on Friday termed the Kashmiri food among the top three exotic cuisines of India and said it can be added to the scenic beauty to attract more tourists to the Valley. He said he will promote Kashmiri cuisine across the world.

"One cannot do much without food. Kashmiri food is among the top three exotic cuisines in India, Kapoor, the host of popular cookery show 'Khana Khazana', told reporters here.

I have tasted Kashmiri exotic food and will promote it throughout the world. There is a need of having a national campaign to promote Kashmir's delicious food," he said.

The famous chef is part of a 24-strong delegation from Bollywood which is on a familiarisation tour of the valley sponsored for them by the Tourism Department, Kashmir.

Representatives of various production houses expressed their desire to shoot for movies in Kashmir.

Some of the producers opined that Kashmir can easily be a shooting destination for not only domestic film industry but foreign movies as well.

Aashish Singh, who shot for Yashraj Films' Shah Rukh Khan starter 'Jab Tak Hai Jaan' in Kashmir, said the valley provides



a perfect backdrop for the filmmakers and has the potential of becoming the shooting destination for the world.

We have so much potential here for filmmaking that not only Bollywood but filmmaker's from around the globe can shoot here," Singh said.

He said many filmmakers want to visit Kashmir and capture breathtaking visuals.

Nitin Ahuja, CEO, Producers

Guild, Mumbai, said they want to revive old relations with Kashmir when the valley used to be the favourite backdrop for the filmmakers.

We visited several locations and found them absolutely stunning. We also got overwhelming responses from the locals. The food is also amazing. The place is a complete package, he said.

CEO of Ajay Devgn Productions Meena Ayer also

praised the beauty of Kashmir, saying the valley possesses a huge scope for the film tourism which needs to be tapped.

Later, the delegation interacted with Principal Secretary to Lieutenant Governor Niteshwar Kumar via video conferencing.

Kumar told the visiting delegation that J-K administration is making a policy which will facilitate and encourage filmmakers to shoot in Kashmir.

Vaccine Nationalism Will Prolong Pandemic: WHO Chief

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI/DAVOS: WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus on Friday said the vaccine nationalism will prolong the COVID-19 pandemic as he expressed concern that some countries are rolling out vaccine only for their own citizens while the world's least developed nations only wait and watch.

Speaking at the last day of the week-long online Davos Agenda Summit of the World Economic Forum, he said many countries are rolling out vaccines for their own people, but it is leaving the most vulnerable people of the world at a big risk.

Ghebreyesus said it would be exactly one year on Saturday since the WHO's emergency committee declared a public emergency of international level regarding COVID-19.

Incidentally, he was in Davos for the 2020 Annual Meeting of the WEF in January last year when he had to midway leave the summit for the emergency meeting.

"The pandemic has exposed and exploited the inequalities of our world, he said.

There is now the real danger that the very tools that could help to end the pandemic -- the vaccines -- may exacerbate those same inequalities," the WHO chief said.

He said, "Vaccine nationalism will only prolong the pandemic, the restrictions needed to contain it, and human and economic suffering... If we lose trust



in international collaboration through vaccine nationalism, we will all pay the price in terms of a protracted recovery."

He said the WHO is asking those governments that have already received deliveries of vaccines to vaccinate their health workers and older people, and share excess doses with COVAX (an alliance of vaccine makers for COVID-19) so other countries can do the same.

Speaking in the same session, Norway's Foreign Minister Ine Eriksen Soleide also called for global solidarity.

The only exit strategy from this pandemic is to work together, she said.

German Health Minister Jens Spahn said countries had to vaccinate their own populations to earn public support for international measures, and that if Germany started sending doses

elsewhere in the world while it had only vaccinated 3 per cent of its own people, it would not be accepted by Germans.

If you want a country like Germany to be engaged as we are investing in international vaccine programmes, of course we also need to vaccinate our own people. So it's about the right balance," Spahn said.

Pfizer CEO Albert Bourla said there were tensions as every country wanted to get the vaccines.

He said there had been a small bump: in supply in Europe for a few weeks while the company increased production capacity.

The quantities promised in the beginning of December we will catch up by March, he said, adding that supply this year would now increase from a previous estimate of 1.3 billion doses to more than 2 billion doses.

VACCINE NATIONALISM WILL ONLY PROLONG the pandemic, the restrictions needed to contain it, and human and economic suffering... If we lose trust in international collaboration through vaccine nationalism, we will all pay the price in terms of a protracted recovery."

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

3 Hizb Militants

As part of the SOPs, the militants were offered to surrender. However, they lobbed grenades from the house and opened fire at the joint team," Kumar said.

He said in the ensuing encounter, three local militants of Hizbul Mujahideen were killed and an AK 47 rifle, two pistols and four grenades were recovered from the encounter site.

"One of them had joined militant ranks in August last year, while two had taken up arms on January 1," IGP Kashmir said. He identified the trio as Arif Bashir of Mandoor, Waris Hassan of Naibugh and Syed Asif ul-Haq of Noorpora.

Kumar said that among the three militants, Arif Bashir was involved in the January 2 grenade attack on an SSB bunker in Tral town in which a CRPF man and eight civilians were injured.

"We had identified him shortly after the grenade attack," he said.

Replying to a question about the first encounter of the year, Kumar said that the modus operandi of police in 2021 will be focussed to ensure surrender of militants.

"As you may have seen, in Bandipora, Manzoora, a local militant was intercepted at a checkpoint by our party. He was given ample opportunity to surrender. He raised his hands and surrendered. We recovered five grenades and a pistol from him," Kumar said.

"We made an effort to make him surrender because it not only helps us extract information but also persuades others to surrender," he added.

The IGP further said that police will make every effort to newly joined local militants to lay down their arms. He said the police will also seek help from the parents of the militants to ensure their surrender.

"Sometimes, we don't know the parents of the local militants caught in the cordon. In around 80 percent cases, we get to know the details of parents of the hiding militants and we reach them out," he said.

When asked about Wednesday's IED blast in Kulgam in which a soldier was killed and three others injured, Kumar said that Jaish-e-Muhammad militant Mufti Altaf from Dooru and a foreign militant were involved in it.

"We will sooner arrest or neutralize them," he added.

Responding to another question, IGP Kashmir said that Pakistan tries to instigate Kashmiri youth and lure them towards militancy by using online portals and websites.

"To counter it, we will soon come up with an online portal where we will hold interactive sessions with parents and the misguided youth. Online counselling sessions will also be held on the portal and it will be a useful tool to de-radicalize the youth," Kumar said, while urging parents to keep a watch on their wards.

Regarding Lawaypora 'encounter', he said that whatever the families have said has turned out to be 'wrong'.

"They said the trio did not know each other but what transpired through investigation is that all three of them boarded the same vehicle at 2:30 p.m. and de-boarded just before the encounter site. In 2019, the policeman's son (one among the slain at Lawaypora) was brought to SOG camp and counseled (against joining militant ranks). Meta data also shows that two from Pulwama had IP addresses from Pakistan," Kumar said.

"Shopian boy, he used to talk to top Pakistani militant commanders through virtual numbers," he added.

"Whatever family is saying has proved to be wrong. The family should have stopped them. Does the father not know why his son was frequently called to SOG camp and what he was doing? Parents have a role. They must keep watch on their wards. Parental control is must and parents must discharge their duties," he said.

To a question, IGP Kashmir said that 5-10 percent are such militants killed in encounters whose complete biodata is not with police

Another Encounter

Quoting sources, the report said that two to three militants were believed to be trapped in the village.

A senior police officer also confirmed the exchange of fire between forces and militants.

India, Pak Troops

Indian Army, officials said. This comes a day after a 20-year-old man was injured in shelling by Pakistani troops along the LoC in Shahpur sector of Poonch district.

"At 1800 hours today (Friday), the Pakistan army initiated unprovoked ceasefire violation by firing with small arms and intense shelling with mortars along the LoC in Nowsheera sector of Rajouri," a defence spokesperson said.

The Indian Army retaliated befittingly, he said.

In 2020, over 5,400 instances of ceasefire violations by Pakistan, the highest in the past 19 years, were recorded along the LoC in Jammu and Kashmir. A total of 36 people were killed and over 130 injured in these ceasefire violations, according to the officials.

They said the shelling and firing by Pakistani troops last year was "very heavy", virtually making the 2003 India-Pakistan border truce redundant.

Blast Near

"We have registered a case and started investigation," Senior Superintendent of Police, Rajouri, Chandan Kohli said.

The Army and the police are carrying out searches in the area, he added.

Cold Wave Persists,

recorded a low of minus 7.7 degrees Celsius plunging more than two degrees from minus 5.6 degrees Celsius the previous night, the officials said.

Qazigund recorded a minimum of 10.8 degrees Celsius down from minus 10.5 degrees Celsius the previous night, they said.

The minimum temperature at the Gulmarg skiing resort, in north Kashmir's Baramulla district, settled at minus 11.3 degrees Celsius last night up from last night's minus 13.4 degrees Celsius.

Pahalgam tourist resort in south Kashmir, recorded a low of minus 12 degrees Celsius marginally up from previous night's minus 12.3 degrees Celsius.

Kupwara recorded a low of minus 3 degrees Celsius, while Kokernag, in the south, minus 11.4 degrees Celsius. The extreme subzero temperatures have resulted in freezing of water bodies and drinking water supply lines in many areas of the valley.

The minimum temperatures are expected to remain below freezing point for the next few days as the weatherman has forecast the possibility of a western disturbance hitting the valley on February 2.

Kashmir is currently under the grip of 'Chillai-Kalan' -- the 40-day harshest winter

period when a cold wave grips the region and the temperature drops considerably leading to the freezing of water bodies including the famous Dal Lake here.

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

One Way Traffic

perishable shall be allowed in the opposite direction," they added. Meanwhile, Mughal road, connecting Shopian and Poonch districts, also remained closed due to the snowfall.

Srinagar-Leh highway was officially closed on the orders of Divisional Commissioner Kashmir on December 30.

HC Quashes PSA

qualitatively different from punitive detention. The power of preventive detention is a precautionary power exercised in reasonable anticipation. It may or may not relate to an offence. It is not a parallel proceeding. It does not overlap with prosecution even if it relies on certain facts for which prosecution may be launched or may have been launched," the court said and referred to Haradhan Saha's case reported in 1975.

"An order of preventive detention may be made with or without prosecution and in anticipation or after discharge or even acquittal. The pendency of prosecution is no bar to an order of preventive detention. An order of preventive detention is also not a bar to prosecution."

Through separate judgments, the court ordered that the detainees be released forthwith if not otherwise required in any other case. (GNS)

UN Chief Warns

in August 2019 on the situation in Jammu and Kashmir where he had appealed for maximum restraint.

"I think it's absolutely essential for the two countries to be able to come together and seriously discuss their problems, and I think it's essential that human rights are fully respected in all territories that you mentioned, Guterres said during his press briefing on Thursday.

Now, things have not moved in the right direction. Our good offices are always available, and we will insist within it of finding peaceful solutions for problems that have no military solution. It is clear, when seeing Pakistan and India, any military confrontation between the two would be a disaster of unmitigated proportions for both countries and for the whole world, he said.

Tensions between India and Pakistan spiked after New Delhi abrogated provisions of Article 370 of the Constitution to withdraw Jammu and Kashmir's special status and bifurcated it into two Union Territories in 2019.

Pakistan downgraded its diplomatic relations with India and expelled the Indian high commissioner following the revocation of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir on August 5. India has asserted that the abrogation of Article 370 was its "internal matter".

LG Visits Late

to bear this irreparable loss.

During his visit, BVR Subrahmanyam, Chief Secretary; Nitishwar Kumar, Principal Secretary to the Lt Governor; Sanjeev Verma, Divisional Commissioner, Jammu; Mukesh Singh, IGP Jammu; Sushma Chauhan, Deputy Commissioner, Jammu; and Shridhar Patil, SSP Jammu accompanied the Lt Governor.

Woman Dies

Bandipora (61), Udhampur (57), Kulgam (54), Rajouri (55), Kathua (52), Ganderbal (46), Shopian (39), Samba (39), Poonch (24), Ramban (21), Kishtwar (22), and Reasi (15).

Meanwhile, J&K reported more recoveries than fresh cases of Covid-19 during the last 24 hours, officials said. They said 76 fresh Covid-19 cases were reported in the last 24 hours, while 215 more patients were discharged after recovery from various hospitals-- 115 from Jammu Division and 100 from Kashmir.

So far 121617 people have recovered while 1933 people have died, leaving the number of active cases in J&K at 823-- 198 in Jammu and 625.

Among the new cases, officials said that 60 were reported from Kashmir Valley and 16 from Jammu. In all, nine districts reported no fresh case.

Giving district wise details, they said, Srinagar reported 32, Baramulla 10, Budgam 5, Kupwara 7, Anantnag 4, Bandipora 1, Kulgam 1, Jammu 11, Udhampur 3 and Samba and Poonch one each new case of Covid-19.(With GNS inputs)

Tuition Centre

social networking websites Facebook and Twitter evoking sharp outrage.

Chief Education Officer (CEO) Kulgam, Mohammad Ashraf Rafter told a local news agency KNO that the coaching centre has been sealed.

"Investigation is going on. We are checking the reason behind the incident, as why students were asked to stand barefoot on frozen snow," he said.

However, teachers said that they asked students to stand on snow just for creating indiscipline.

The teachers alleged that few parents even beat their news.

A local news agency KNT reported that a few parents have filed a complaint at police station Devsar.

"We can't believe that any Coaching Centre can stoop so low as to force students to stand barefoot on snow in this bone chilling cold merely for not paying fee," they said.

The report also said that Police have taken cognizance of the matter while management of the Coaching Institute has tendered unconditional apology and given in writing that such incidents won't be repeated in future.

Fall Of Knitting

hardly gift without any occasion nowadays.

Knitting and other craft activities have confirmed the health benefits, both physical and mental, supported by different studies. It reduces the symptoms of anxiety and depression, delay the onset of dementia and help distract from chronic pain.

"The repetitive and rhythmic movements can trigger the release of serotonin which helps uplift one's mood or we can say induce a pleasant state of mind," says Isha Malik, a Clinical Psychologist.

Howbeit, now the stress busting culture of knitting is almost extinct as Kashmiri women have relentlessly given it up. Barring a few commercial knitted products available online for sale, knitting needles, many believe, are on the verge of becoming an artifact for the coming generations.

Earlier, a number of shops in Old Srinagar, the cultural cradle and erstwhile Vince of East, would earn their bread by selling yarns. Haggles between the sellers and buyers would rumble in the markets over the prices of yarn. But today

there is hardly any wool shop visible there.

"Our women don't have time these days," says Riyaz Ahmad Naqash, 60, the lone yarn seller in Lal Chowk. "They now prefer ready-made stuff."

Naqash earlier had additional wool shops in the Old City but, he had to switch over to other business due to dwindling demand of wool.

"Women tend to imbibe everything from West but, fail to cherish and preserve their local legacy," he adds.

Another shopkeeper, Lateef Ahmad, 45, had to shut down his wool shop due to lack of demand.

"I was unable to make my ends meet," he says.

The advancements in technology have indeed come as a helping hand for humanity. But, abandoning knitting, many say, is to kill the goose that lays the golden egg. Handmade clothes furnish benefits that machines cannot.

Even schools who earlier included knitting in the curriculum have given up on it.

"I learned knitting in my school but my cousin who studies there now doesn't know anything about it," Iflah Jan, 24, a former missionary school student currently studying Medicine, says.

"I feel bad not seeing the young generation acquainted with knitting so that they could carry it forward," Iflah adds soberly.

Although a whole lot of crafty works- calligraphy, pottery, origami, crocheting- have lately revived but, knitting is yet to make a comeback, gain popularity among youths, and trend on social media in Kashmir.

"Indeed," says Iflah, "in the rat race of being tech-savvy and exploiting the new technologies, we are losing out on our cultural patrimony."

BDS Diffuses

the BDS without causing any loss. Police in this regard have registered a case and set investigation into motion.

3 Held With

both residents of Nambalbal Pampore and Sahil Arshid Rather of Kadabal Pampore.

An FIR vide number 13/2021 under relevant sections was registered against them at police station Pampore

NC Slams Govt

expressing concern over the erratic power supply in Srinagar.

"Making electricity available to each household in Jammu and Kashmir was used as a prelude to the nullification of state's status. It was also promised to the people that the scenario of power would be far better than the previous years. The reality is before us. It goes without saying that the state of affairs of power this year has been most terrible, revealing the failure of ruling BJP's failed Vikas Model, if there was any at first place," she said.

"An electricity schedule was widely circulated by the concerned authorities but the concerned department has failed to abide by its own widely publicized schedule. The situation in the metered and non metered areas is no different. The power supply is playing hide and seek with the consumers in both areas. The announced power curtailment schedule according to which non-metered areas would face 4-hour and metered areas 3-hour curtailment per day has gone for a toss. On the other front, the administration also failed to ensure surplus supply of transformers to cater the need during the winter season," she said.

Pakistan Wins 1st Test Against South Africa By 7 Wickets



Agencies

KARACHI: Spinners Nauman Ali and Yasir Shah rattled South Africa to help Pakistan win the first test by seven wickets inside four days on Friday.

Nauman, a 34-year-old left-arm spinner making his test debut, returned 5-35 and Shah took 4-79 to dismiss South Africa for 245 in the second innings before lunch on day four.

It set up a small target of 88 and despite Anrich Nortje's (2-24) twin strike in one over, Pakistan reached 90-3 before tea in 22.5 overs.

Azhar Ali remained unbeaten on 31 while Fawad Alam raised the victory with a boundary off left-arm spinner Keshav Maharaj.

It was only Pakistan's fifth victory in 27 test matches against South Africa, which had won at the same venue when it last toured in 2007.

Nauman and Shah shared 14 wickets in the match as South African batsmen struggled against spinners in both innings.

The win also earned Babar Azam success in his first test as Pakistan skipper. Babar was due to lead the side in the last series in New Zealand but missed it due to a fractured thumb.

Nortje clean bowled Abid Ali (10) and then had Imran Butt (12), playing his first test, caught behind before Maharaj had Babar (30) trapped leg before wicket when only two needed for victory.

Pakistan had been in control since taking a 158-run first-innings lead, when its lower order rallied from 27-4 to reach 378, helped by Alam's gritty century.

South Africa resumed Friday on 187-4 and things immediately got worse for the tourists when fast bowler Hasan Ali bowled night-watchman Maharaj with the first delivery of day four.

Captain Quinton de Kock, who fell to a reckless shot in South Africa's first innings of 220, failed for the second time against the spinners. The tourists were just 34 runs ahead when de Kock offered a regulation catch in Shah's second over to give Abid Ali his third catch in the innings.

Nauman then got into the act by having George Linde (11) caught at leg slip as South Africa's lower order struggled to read the left-arm spinner on a turning track.

Nauman wrapped up the innings by claiming the last three wickets off his successive overs.

Temba Bavuma resisted for nearly two hours to score 40 off 93 balls before he was the last man dismissed when he attempted a sweep against Nauman and was adjudged lbw.

South Africa struggled against the spinners on the fourth day pitch, adding just 58 runs for the loss of six wickets as Nauman (34 years, 111 days old) became the oldest test bowler in 72 years to take a five-wicket haul in an innings on test debut.



'Real Kashmir FC Match A Litmus Test For Gokulam Kerala,' Says Coach Annese

Press Trust of India

KALYANI: Their confidence soaring high after the resounding 4-1 victory over NEROCA in their last match, Gokulam Kerala FC will aim to continue their winning streak when they face Real Kashmir FC in a Hero I-League match here on Saturday.

Vincenzo Annese's Gokulam produced a clinical performance against NEROCA to lie fourth on the I-League table, just four points adrift of leaders Churchill Brothers. The winner on Saturday could jump to second place.

Speaking at the official pre-match press conference, Annese termed Saturday's match against Real Kashmir as a "litmus test" for his side.

"We have improved a lot over the course of the season but now we have a litmus test in Real Kashmir FC. The match against them will be a tough challenge and it would also tell a lot about us as a team," he said.

"It is tough to score a lot of goals in India and although we played well against NEROCA, we can still improve our attacking phase. We have lot of potential and I want to harness it to its fullest."

The Italian coach said his side will have to be clinical in front of goal against Real Kashmir as the Snow Leopards play a lot of direct football.

Real Kashmir are fifth on the table on five points with a match in hand. A win could propel them higher up the table.

After being held to a 1-1 draw against Sudeva Delhi FC in their last match, David Robertson's side would be looking to get back to winning ways.

"We could have had a lot more points but we are happy with where we are as we still have a game in hand. It is a long way to go till the end of the season but we are ready and looking forward," Robertson said.

"Against Gokulam we will have to be on our toes. They are a strong opponent and they will test us to our limits. In this league, anyone can beat anyone on their day and we have to make sure that we do not drop points."

The match is scheduled to kick off on Saturday at 7 PM (IST).

Sourav Ganguly's Health Condition Stable After Undergoing Another Angioplasty

Press Trust of India

KOLKATA: Indian cricket board chief Sourav Ganguly's health condition is stable and he had a good sleep on Thursday night, while doctors are planning to carry out requisite medical examinations on him on Friday, a senior official of the hospital where he is admitted said.

The former India captain underwent another angioplasty on the previous day. Two more stents were implanted to clear his clogged coronary arteries.

"Sourav Ganguly's health condition is stable. He had a good sleep at night. All his vital parameters are normal," said the official.

Doctors will carry out necessary tests on him in the morning. "Senior doctors will carry out a thorough checkup following which a decision will be taken whether to move him to another ward," the hospital official told PTL.

The 48-year-old cricket icon was in the ICU on Thursday night following the angioplasty conducted by a team of doctors including noted cardiologist Dr Devi Shetty and Dr Ashwin Mehta.

His oxygen support has also been removed, the official said. Ganguly was hospitalised on Wednesday for the second time in a month due to his cardiac condition. He had suffered a mild heart attack earlier this month and was diagnosed with Triple Vessel Disease. He had undergone an angioplasty procedure during which a stent was inserted to clear a blocked artery.

'Soft Dismissals Cost Us Karachi Test,' Admits Proteas Skipper Quinton De Kock

Agencies

KARACHI: South Africa's captain Quinton de Kock on Friday put down his team's defeat in the first Test against Pakistan to soft dismissals, saying his players had enough time to adjust to the slow nature of the pitch in Karachi.

Spinners Nauman Ali and Yasir Shah bamboozled the South African batsmen to help Pakistan win the series opener by seven wickets inside four days.

"Obviously our first innings batting performance let us down, there were a couple of soft dismissals and it led to our losing the game," de Kock said after the match.

This is only Pakistan's fifth win over South Africa in 27 matches.

De Kock said his team had not taken too long to adjust to conditions in Pakistan despite the COVID-19 situation.

"We let ourselves down in the first innings. Obviously, when you bat first you need more than 220 and then we had them something like 40 for four, but we allowed them to come back into the game."

Talking about recent batting collapses by South Africa in Test cricket, he said the team was trying to work out why they were happening.

"Trust me if we knew it would not be happening." He said when the batsmen got



Pakistan spinner Yasir Shah, centre, and teammates celebrate the dismissal of South Africa's Quinton de Kock.

bogged down they tried to play shots, but on this pitch, playing patiently was the requirement.

Pakistan skipper Babar Azam said it is his ambition to see his team start winning overseas.

"I think, at home, you are expected to do well because conditions suit you, but we need to start

winning overseas as well.

"I think we need to show more trust in our players and our top performers. We can't discard players after just one or two bad performances, we need to have belief in them."

Babar said scoring runs abroad gave him more confidence than amassing big numbers at home.

He termed the win over South Africa as "very necessary for the team".

"I think this victory came through because all the 11 players contributed and especially the way Nouman Ali bowled in this match. It was his debut and there was pressure on him against a good team, but he delivered. We need to trust our players."

IND Vs ENG

India's Three ICC-Panelled Umpires Named For India-England Test Series

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: India's three ICC-panelled umpires will be up for their biggest assignment so far in next month's four-Test series against England during which Virender Sharma and Anil Chaudhary are set to make their on-field debut in the longest format.

While Chaudhary and Sharma are part of the ICC Emirates Panel, they will be joined by India's Elite Panel representative Nitin Menon, who has already officiated on-field in a previous Test match, a BCCI source told PTL.

Due to the travel restrictions with regards to COVID-19, the ICC approved home team's match officials for all the World Test Championship matches. The India-England series starts February 5 in Chennai.

The logic given was that with teams availing three Decision Review System (DRS) appeals and being able to retain them in case of Umpires' Call, the risk of wrong

decisions affecting a game has reduced considerably.

PTI had reported in November last year that due to restrictions, it could be a blessing in disguise for the Indian umpires, who hardly get a chance to officiate in the marquee Test series as most of the times, the country has only one representative in the Elite Panel.

Earlier, it was Tamil Nadu's Sundaram Ravi but he was dropped from the panel after consistent poor performances in the Test arena.

Menon is one of India's youngest umpires and considered a bright talent.

While Sharma has officiated in two ODIs and a single T20 International, Chaudhary has 20 ODIs and 28 T20 Internationals as on-field umpire in his kitty.

Menon has stood in three Test matches along with 24 ODIs and 16 T20 Internationals.

All three umpires have regularly featured as match officials in the Indian Premier League.



Dinesh Karthik Led Tamil Nadu Enters 2nd Successive Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy Final

Press Trust of India

AHMEDABAD: KB Arun Karthik helped Tamil Nadu reach their second successive Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy final with an unbeaten 89-run knock that shaped a seven-wicket victory over Rajasthan in the first semi-final in Ahmedabad on Friday.

Arun Karthik's 89-run partnership with skipper Dinesh Karthik (26 not out) meant that Tamil Nadu overhauled the 155-run target with eight balls to spare.

TN had lost the summit clash by just one run to Karnataka, last year.

Rajasthan's decision to bat first at the Sardar Patel stadium seem to be working well but Tamil Nadu restricted them to a sub-par 154 for nine despite skipper Ashok Menaria's 51 off 32 balls.

Rajasthan lost opener Bharat Sharma (0) in the first over, as Baba Aparajith took a diving catch off left-arm spinner R Sai Kishore (2/16).

Aditya Garhwal (29) took on medium pacer Aswin Crist, striking successive boundaries in the third over but he was unable to convert his start and perished in the fifth over.

Menaria launched into Crist, hammering three boundaries and a six, in the sixth over.

The left-handed Menaria, whose knock was laced with five fours and two sixes, took on the Tamil Nadu bowlers as he and Arjit Gupta (45 off 35 balls) raised a 83-run third wicket stand.

Tamil Nadu, initially, were sloppy in the field and dropped

three catches, including one of Menaria.

Tamil Nadu pegged back Rajasthan by taking two quick wickets. First Sai Kishore dismissed well-set Menaria and in-form Mahipal Lomror (3) also fell cheaply as Rajasthan slumped to 129 for four.

Rajasthan then suffered a collapse as the southern side stormed back into the contest by picking regular wickets and pacer M Mohammed (4/24) doing bulk of the damage. In the final five overs, Rajasthan lost five wickets and added only 24 runs as Tamil Nadu bowlers stamped their authority.

Chasing 155, TN lost C Hari Nishanth (4) early when he was trapped in front of the wicket by Tanveer-Ul-Haq (1/22). Tamil Nadu were in spot of bother at 17/2 after Aparajith (2) was caught in the slip cordon.

But a determined Narayan Jagadeesan (28) and Arun Karthik came to the rescue as they put together 52 runs for the third wicket and took the game away from Rajasthan.

Young Leggie Ravi Bishnoi (1/32) tried to bring Rajasthan back into the game by removing Jagadeesan, who holed out in the deep, as TN lost its third wicket on 69.

But then Tamil Nadu cruised as skipper Dinesh Karthik joined Arun and the duo tore apart the Rajasthan attack.

Arun Karthik hammered nine boundaries and three sixes, in his match-winning knock and fittingly finished the game with a boundary.

Liverpool Defeat Tottenham 3-1 To Revive Faltering PL Title Defense

Agencies

LONDON: Roberto Firmino ended Liverpool's 483-minute goal drought in the Premier League to set the champions on their way to a 3-1 win over Tottenham and revive their faltering title defense.

Trent Alexander-Arnold and Sadio Mane also netted as Liverpool ended a five-game winless run in a league it dominated so resoundingly last season. "We were really up for the game, everyone was at it," Alexander-Arnold said.

"No one put too much of a foot wrong and it was an unbelievable performance from the lads."

The victory, which lifts Liverpool into fourth place, started with VAR ruling out an opener for Tottenham when Son Heung-min was adjudged to be offside.

Pierre-Emile Höjbjerg reduced the deficit to 2-1 with a power-

ful strike shortly after Alexander-Arnold scored at the start of the second half, but the Liverpool right back set up Mane for the third that sealed the win.

While Liverpool moved within four points of leader Manchester City, Jose Mourinho's Tottenham is eight points adrift in sixth after its first defeat in 2021, albeit with a game in hand.

And Mourinho faces an anxious wait to discover the extent of Harry Kane's injury after the striker twice went down in the first half clutching his left ankle before being replaced at the interval.

"He is injured in both ankles," Mourinho said.

"He said to compete with one pain he probably could, but both it was very painful and very sore and he couldn't. He just couldn't."

"He is a guy with a good sacrifice spirit, he can fight against pain, but it was difficult for him."

There are problems at the back too for the north London club, which is in danger of failing to qualify for the Champions League

for a second consecutive season after reaching the final in 2019 losing to Liverpool.

Liverpool was forced to play midfielder Jordan Henderson at centre back due to injuries and also lost Joel Matip at half-time with ankle ligament damage.

But it was Tottenham's back three looking more fragile. "We were punished by our individual mistakes," Mourinho said. "It's nothing new for us."

How different, though, this game might have gone had Son not been marginally offside when he was released by Kane before scoring.

Liverpool was more threatening going forward after that, with Mane testing Hugo Lloris with tame shots before setting up the opener in the fourth minute of stoppage time at the end of the first half.

Firmino tapped in after Mane passed across the face of goal, scoring Liverpool's first league goal since Dec. 27.

It was clear from Mourinho's post-match comments that it was a tense atmosphere in the dressing room at halftime. "It is the mood of a team that is dif-

ficult to accept that you are losing," Mourinho said.

"It's a mood where people are not happy. But then we have to move on." But Liverpool doubled its lead two minutes into the second half when Lloris spilled Mane's shot into the path of Alexander-Arnold.

Tottenham threatened an immediate comeback when Höjbjerg powered in a shot from outside the area.

There was another break for Tottenham when Mohamed Salah's goal was ruled out because Firmino was adjudged to have handled in the build-up despite Eric Dier grappling the Brazilian.

But Liverpool restored its two-goal cushion in the 65th when Alexander-Arnold's long cross came off Joe Rodon and fell for Mane to strike into the roof of the net.



Why Can't UPSC Aspirants, Who Missed Last Attempt, Be Given Another Chance? – Supreme Court Asks Centre

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Friday asked the central government why one-time relaxation cannot be given to civil services aspirants who could not appear for their last attempt in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic by giving them an extra chance.

A bench of Justices AM Khanwilkar, BR Gavai and Krishna Murari asked Additional Solicitor General SV Raju to apprise it by February 1 on how many candidates would appear if one-time relaxation is given and how many times it has been done since the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) was established.

"It's just a one-time relaxation and if it has been done before then why not this time", the bench told Raju.

The top court asked Centre to not issue any notification for 2021 UPSC examination till February 1 and said that it was not asking to increase the age-limit of candidates but the request is being made that one-time concession be given to those who have exhausted all their attempts.

Senior advocate Shyam Divan and advocate Anushree Prashit Kapadia appeared for petitioner Rachna and others seeking grant of one more chance in the UPSC's civil services exam to those aspirants who could not appear in their last attempt in 2020 due to the pandemic.

On Thursday, the top court had questioned the Centre for filing an affidavit without specifying at whose level the decision was taken for not granting one more opportunity to UPSC civil services aspirants who could not appear in their last attempt in 2020 exam due to COVID-19 pandemic.

The top court had said that the affidavit filed before it was not clear about at whose level this decision was taken and observed that a "routine" affidavit has been filed before it by an under-secretary level officer.

On January 25, the Centre had told the apex court that allowing extra attempt in UPSC civil services exam to those who could not appear in their last chance in 2020 due to COVID-19 would create a "cascading effect", detrimental to the overall functioning and level playing field necessary for a public examination system.

In an affidavit filed in the apex court, the Centre had said that giving an additional attempt or relaxation in age for some candidates would amount to ex-

tending differential treatment to similarly placed aspirants at the examination.

"It is therefore respectfully submitted that accommodating the present petitioners would create a cascading effect detrimental to the overall functioning and level playing field necessary to be provided in any public examination system," said the affidavit, filed by an under-secretary in the Department of Personnel and Training.

The Centre said, "It may be noted that providing an extra attempt could further have a cascading effect by creating a ground for challenge on part of those candidates who have already appeared for the CS (Preliminary) Examination-2020." It had said a total of 4,86,952 candidates appeared in the October 4, last year examination and the UPSC had "left no stone unturned in their pursuit to accommodate for the means and interests of the candidates." "It is further submitted that the contention by the petitioners that their preparation was hampered due to the stress caused by the prevailing COVID-19 pandemic, does not hold weight as the UPSC had already given extra time to the candidates by postponing the CS (preliminary) examination-2020 from May 31, 2020 to October 4, 2020," it had said, adding that these conditions would have affected every candidate at the examination in a similar way.

The affidavit had said that other non-final attempt candidates, who undertook the examination "without any murmur of discontent", would be disadvantageously placed in future examinations if the relief prayed for by the petitioners is granted as it would enable vast number of experienced candidates to participate again, thereby making the future examination excessively competitive.

The top court on September 30 last year had refused to postpone the UPSC civil services preliminary exam, which was held on October 4, because of the COVID-19 pandemic and floods in several parts of the country.

However, it had directed the central government and the UPSC to consider granting an extra chance to candidates who otherwise have their last attempt in 2020, with corresponding extension of the upper age-limit.

Minor blast outside Israeli Embassy, no injuries reported

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: A minor IED blast took place outside the Israeli Embassy in the heart of Lutyens' Delhi on Friday evening, police said on Friday. No one was injured.

Some cars were damaged in the blast, an official said, adding that three fire tenders were rushed to the embassy on APJ Abdul Kalam Road.

"A very low intensity impro-

vised device went off... No injury to any person was reported and nor was there any damage to property except the glass panes of three vehicles parked nearby," Delhi Police Additional PRO Anil Mittal said.

He said initial impressions suggest it could be a mischievous attempt to create a sensation.

The fire department received the call at 5.11 pm, as the Beating Retreat ceremony was going on at Rajpath a few kilometres away.



Thousands Of Farmers Attend Mahapanchayat In Muzaffarnagar To Back BKU

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Tens of thousands of farmers gathered in Muzaffarnagar town on Friday to attend a mahapanchayat in support of the Bharatiya Kisan Union-led protest against the Centre's new farm laws in Ghazipur on the Delhi-Uttar Pradesh border.

A day after BKU leader Rakesh Tikait broke down at Ghazipur and tension spiralled amid fears that the farmers who had been camping there for two months would be forcibly removed by the local administration, all roads in western Uttar Pradesh it seemed led to Muzaffarnagar.

The GIC ground near Mahaveer Chowk was packed, a sea of people congregating to back the protesters at UP Gate in Ghazipur. Hundreds of

tractors with the tricolour and flags of farm unions were parked along city roads, disrupting traffic movement.

The GIC ground was the centre-stage and scores of regional farmer leaders took the mike to back the protesters at the UP Gate in Ghazipur.

As Muzaffarnagar became the meeting point for farmers from across the region, Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) chief Ajit Singh also announced support for the BKU and his son, party leader Jayant Chaudhary, participated in the mahapanchayat too.

Singh, RLD president and former Union minister, had spoken to BKU president Naresh Tikait and spokesperson Rakesh Tikait, party vice president Chaudhary said.

"It is a matter of life and death

for farmers, but do not worry. All have to stay together, united in this -- this is Chaudhary saahab's (Ajit Singh's) message," the RLD vice president said in a tweet in Hindi.

The Tikait brothers, sons of legendary farm leader Mahendra Singh Tikait, are leading the BKU.

Members of the group have been protesting at Ghazipur for more than two months to demand a rollback of the contentious farm laws brought by the Centre in September last year.

The RLD, which was virtually wiped out in the last Uttar Pradesh Assembly polls, was founded by Singh, son of former prime minister and farmer leader Chaudhary Charan Singh.

The mahapanchayat was called by BKU national president Naresh Tikait over the developments in Ghazipur.

Farmers' Protest: Singhu Turns Into Fortress; No One Allowed To Enter Protest Site

Agenceis

NEW DELHI: Multi-layered security arrangements, barricades put everywhere and all entry points sealed, Singhu border, the nerve-centre of the ongoing farmers protest with thousands of security personnel seen marching at the site, turned into a fortress on Friday.

The heightened security measures and restrictions have been brought into place after violence on Republic Day that left 394 policemen injured and one protester dead.

No one, even media personnel, are allowed to enter the protest site with area cordoned off by multiple concrete barricades and intermodal containers.

"These batons, tear gas shells and ammunition can't scare us. We won't budge, we won't leave till our demands of repealing three farm laws are met," said 26-year-old Manjeet Dhillon, from Haryana's Kaithal, while standing on the other side of the barricade.

While there was a sense of unease among some protesters, nothing changed at the respective stages of the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) and the Kisan Mazdoor Sangharsh Samiti



(KMSC), where decibel levels, courtesy the fiery speeches, were high like before.

The SKM, actor-turned-activist Deep Sidhu and the central government for the violence during the farmers' tractor parade in Delhi on January 26.

Ram Bhados, the only shop open at the whole stretch, said he opened it after being asked to do so by the security forces.

"I didn't want to open the shop. I am afraid things might get violent. They (the security personnel) asked me to open the tea-shop and serve them. They said they'll protect me," said the visibly-tensed 18-year-old.

The tractor parade on Tuesday that was to highlight the demand of the protesting farmer unions for a repeal of three new agriculture laws turned violent as the protesters deviated from the pre-designated routes, attacked police personnel, overturned vehicles and hoisted a religious flag on the ramparts of the iconic Red Fort.

The police issued lookout notices against farmer leaders on Thursday and announced a probe into the "conspiracy" behind the Republic Day violence.

The police have so far registered 33 FIRs in connection with the violence and issued lookout notices against 44 people, including most of the farmer leaders.

More Than Half Of World's Airline Pilots No Longer Flying: Survey

Agencies

More than half of the world's airline pilots are no longer flying for a living amid the plunge in demand during the coronavirus pandemic, according to a new survey, and those that are still flying feel less valued by their employers.

A poll of nearly 2,600 pilots by UK-based GOOSE Recruitment and industry publication FlightGlobal, released on Thursday, found only 43% were doing the job they had trained for, with 30% unemployed, 17% furloughed and 10% in non-flying roles.

their jobs, an increased number are planning to look for new roles this year as well as many feeling less valued by their employers."

For the unemployed pilots in the survey, 84% said it was due to the pandemic. Before COVID-19 hit, there had been widespread pilot shortages that had driven up demand for aviators and led to improving pay and conditions.

Now, 82% of unemployed pilots would take a pay cut for a new opportunity, the survey found.

For those that have kept their jobs, pilots in Europe reported being the most stressed by COVID-19, with respondents citing the



Many pilots that are still flying have faced deteriorating working conditions. Hong Kong's Cathay Pacific Airways Ltd, for example, instituted permanent pay cuts of up to 58%, and Turkish Airlines and Singapore Airlines Ltd have temporarily lowering salaries.

"We can see the effect the pandemic has had on employed pilots too," GOOSE Recruitment chief executive officer and founder Mark Charman said in a statement. "Large numbers are feeling insecure about

risk of catching the virus, disjointed rules and the possibility of being placed in quarantine during a rotation as among their concerns.

Forty percent of pilots said their mental health had been affected by the pandemic, with the figure higher among younger pilots.

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"The amount of stress and anxiety the pandemic has caused me has permanently scarred my outlook on life," one surveyed pilot said.

UK Bans Direct Flights From UAE, Shutting World's Busiest International Route

LONDON: Britain is banning direct passenger flights to and from the United Arab Emirates from Friday, shutting down the world's busiest international airline route from Dubai to London.

Britain said it was adding the United Arab Emirates, Burundi and Rwanda to its coronavirus travel ban list because of worries over the spread of a more contagious and potentially vaccine-resistant COVID-19 variant first identified in South Africa.

"This means people who have been in or transited through these countries will be denied entry, except British, Irish and third country nationals with residence rights who must self-isolate for ten days at home," UK Transport Minister Grant Shapps said on Twitter on Thursday.

Emirates and Etihad Airways said on their websites they would suspend all UK passenger flights from 1300 GMT on Friday when the ban takes effect. Dubai airport, in a statement, advised passengers booked on flights due to arrive in the UK after the ban comes into effect to not go to the airport and instead contact their airline.

The UK transport department advised British nationals currently in the United Arab Emirates to

make use of indirect commercial airline routes if they wished to return to Britain.

Due to border closures caused by COVID-19, Dubai to London was the world's busiest international route in January with 190,365 scheduled seats over the month, according to airline data provider OAG.

Emirates and Etihad normally carry large numbers of passengers connecting from Britain to destinations like Australia through their airport hubs, meaning the decision to cancel those flights will have far-reaching implications.

The Australian government said it will add more charter flights from Britain if needed as a result of the Emirates and Etihad cancellations.

Eran Ben-Avraham, an Australian stranded in Britain due to strict limits on the number of arrivals in Australia, said his options for getting home were continually shrinking.

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"Every day it is making it more difficult to get home. The flights back are anywhere from like 4,000 pounds (\$5,487)."

COVID-19 May Damage Sperm Quality, Reduce Fertility In Men: Study

Agenceis

PARIS: Covid-19 may damage sperm quality and reduce fertility in men, according to a new study based on experimental evidence.

The viral disease -- which has swept the globe, claiming nearly 2.2 million lives -- can cause increased sperm cell death, inflammation and so-called oxidative stress, researchers reported Friday in the journal *Reproduction*.

"These findings provide the first direct experimental evidence that the male reproductive system could be targeted and damaged by Covid-19," the authors concluded.

Experts commenting on the research, however, said the capacity of the virus to compromise fertility in men remains unproven.

Covid-19 causes respiratory illness, especially in older people and those with underlying medical problems.

The world has seen more than 100 million confirmed cases since the disease emerged in central China at the end of 2019.

Transmitted through respiratory droplets, the disease attacks the lungs, kidneys, intestines and heart.

It can also infect male reproductive organs, impairing sperm cell development and disrupting reproductive hormones, earlier studies have shown. The same receptors

the virus uses to access lung tissue are also found in the testicles.

But the effects of the virus on the ability of men to reproduce remained unclear.

Behzad Hajizadeh Maleki and Bakhtyar Tartibian from Justus-Liebig-University in Germany searched for biological markers that might indicate a negative impact on fertility.

Analysis done at 10-day intervals for 60 days in 84 men with Covid-19 was compared to data for 105 healthy men.

In the Covid-19 patients, sperm cells showed a significant increase in markers of inflammation and oxidative stress, a chemical imbalance that can damage DNA and proteins in the body.

"Strong note of caution" "These effects on sperm cells are associated with lower sperm quality and reduced fertility potential," said Maleki in a statement.

"Although these effects tended to improve over time, they remained significantly and abnormally higher in the Covid-19 patients."

The more severe the disease, the bigger the changes, he added.

The male reproductive system "should be considered a vulnerable route of Covid-19 infection and declared a high-risk organ by the World Health Organisation," Maleki said.

Experts not involved in the study welcomed the research, but cautioned that more was needed before drawing hard and fast conclusions.

"Men should not be unduly alarmed," noted Alison Campbell, director of embryology of the CARE Fertility Group in Britain.

"There is currently no definitive evidence of long-lasting damage caused by Covid-19, to sperm or male reproductive potential," she told the London-based Science Media Centre.

The results could have been skewed, she added, by the fact that men recovering from Covid were treated with corticosteroids and antiviral therapies, while the control group was not.

Allan Pacey, a specialist in male reproductive medicine at the University of Sheffield, raised a "strong note of caution" on how the data was interpreted.

Some of the indicators of decreased sperm quality could be due to factors besides Covid-19, he said, noting that more men in the Covid-19 group were overweight.

The simple fact that only one group was very sick -- no matter the cause -- also needed to be taken into account, he added.

"We already know that a febrile illness can impact on sperm production, regardless of what caused it."

B R E I F N E W S

Marine Heat Waves May Become More Intense, Frequent, Say Scientists

Press Trust of India

The mixed layer of the ocean which blankets the top 20 to 200 metres is becoming thinner each year, says a new study which warns that the continued loss of this buffer may lead to more frequent and destructive warming events such as marine heat waves.

Researchers from the University of Colorado at Boulder in the US said the thickness of this top layer of the ocean is responsible for marine heat events.

The thicker this mixed layer, they said the more it can act as a buffer to shield the waters below from incoming hot air.

According to the study, published in the journal *Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society*, the scientists found that this armour is thinning, causing the oceans to become more susceptible to rapid swings in temperature.

"Marine heatwaves will be more intense and happen more often in the future," said Dillon Amaya, lead author of the study.

"When the mixed layer is thin, it takes less heat to warm the ocean more," Amaya explained.

In the study, Amaya and his team used a combination of ocean observations and models to estimate the depth of the mixed layer back to 1980, and also project out into the future.

They found that over the last 40 years, the layer has thinned by nearly three metres in some regions of the North Pacific.

By 2100, they believe the mixed layer could be four metres thinner which is about 30 per cent less than what it is today.

According to the researchers, this thin mixed layer combined with warmer global temperatures could set the stage for drastic swings in ocean temperatures, leading to much more frequent and extreme heating events.

"Think of the mixed layer as boiling a pot of water. It will take no time at all for an inch of water to come to a boil, but much longer for a pot filled to the brim to heat through," Amaya said.

Researchers Invent Smartphone-Controlled Soft Brain Implant

Agencies

Scientists have built a soft brain implant that can be controlled by a smartphone.

A group of KAIST researchers and collaborators have engineered a tiny brain implant that can be wirelessly recharged from outside the body to control brain circuits for long periods of time without battery replacement.

The researchers believe this brain implant technology may lead to new opportunities for brain research and therapeutic intervention to treat diseases in the brain and other organs.

The device is constructed of ultra-soft and bio-compliant polymers to help provide long-term compatibility with tissue. Geared with micrometer-sized LEDs (equivalent to the size of a grain of salt) mounted on ultrathin probes (the thickness of a human hair), it can wirelessly manipulate target neurons in the deep brain using light.

This study, led by Professor Jae-Woong Jeong, and published in *Nature Communications*, is a step forward from the wireless head-mounted implant neural device he developed earlier. The 2019 version could indefinitely deliver multiple drugs and light stimulation treatment



wirelessly by using a smartphone.

The new wireless charging technology addresses the limitations of current brain implants. Wireless implantable device technologies have recently become popular as alternatives to conventional tethered implants, because they help minimize stress and inflammation in freely-moving animals during brain studies, which in turn enhance the lifetime of the devices.