

Maximum : 11.3°  
Minimum : -1.2°  
Humidity : 83%  
SUNSET Today 06:11 PM  
SUNRISE Tomorrow 07:21 AM

## P3 NEWS

## CITY SCHOOLS TO OPEN FROM FEB-20 FOR IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING OF COVID-19 SOP'S

Schools in Srinagar district will reopen from February-20 for implementation and monitoring of COVID-19 ...

## P7 THINK

## WILLOW WICKER CRAFT: A CRUMBLING HANDICRAFT

Willow wicker craft locally called "kaeni keam" is the intricate art of basket weaving. It is an indigenous business industry of Kashmir using twigs of wicker as raw material....



## 04 WORLD

## MYANMAR COUP LEADER: ROHINGYAS TO BE REPATRIATED TO RAKHINE STATE

Myanmar's army chief on Monday said Rohingya refugees who fled to Bangladesh during a 2017



## Widom Quote!

Don't waste your time with explanations: people only hear what they want to hear.

— Paulo Coelho

## PM Bids Tearful Adieu To Azad



Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi broke down several times in the Rajya Sabha on Tuesday while reminiscing about his close association with Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad ► More On P10

## 'Proud To Be A Hindustani Muslim'

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Outgoing Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad on Tuesday said he feels proud to be an Indian Muslim.

Delivering his farewell speech in the Upper House of Parliament, the veteran Congressman recalled his association with several leaders, including stalwarts from other parties, which helped



him learn many things. In his 28-minute speech, he used several couplets and hoped for the restoration of peace in Jammu and Kashmir and the ► More On P10

## Mercury Rises In Most Places Across Kashmir

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: The minimum temperature increased in Kashmir, except in Gulmarg, on Tuesday, even as the Meteorological department has forecast a spell of light rain or snowfall at a few places in the higher reaches of the valley, officials said.

Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir, recorded a low of minus 1.2 degrees Celsius on Monday night against the previous night's minus 2 degrees Celsius, the officials said.

## Landslide Blocks Highway Again

The Jammu-Srinagar national highway was blocked on Tuesday due to a landslide in Jammu and Kashmir's Ramban district, traffic officials said. Hundreds of vehicles have been stranded following the landslide at Marog area on the highway. The men and machines are engaged in the landslide clearance operation and efforts ► More On P10

## Pilgrims From India May Again Miss Out On Haj

Agencies

HYDERABAD: Indians looking forward to performing the Haj this year might be in for a disappointment again as there is no official word yet on whether the annual pilgrimage to Islam's holiest place is on.

It may be recalled that last year, the pilgrimage was scrapped because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

This year too, with continuing fears of the pandemic, Saudi authorities have banned arrivals from 20 nations till May 17, including those from India.

Every year, some two lakh



Indians travel to Macca to perform the Haj, but this year, pilgrims are waiting for a call from the Haj Committee for completing ► More On P10

## Missing Teen's 'Murder' Shocks Soibugh

Observer Monitoring Desk

SRINAGAR: A teenage boy missing for the last five days in central Kashmir's Budgam district was found hanging in an orchard on Tuesday, sending shock waves in his native

village Soibugh. 13-year-old Shahid Farooq Malik of Soibugh, Budgam was found hanging in an orchard at Daharmuna village on Tuesday morning with visible torture marks around his neck, reports said. The teen's ► More On P10

## DIGEST

## MHA Okays Alok Kumar's Deputation To J&amp;K

SRINAGAR: The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on Tuesday gave green signal to deputation of Alok Kumar, IRS to Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, saying that it has no objection for his deputation. Under Secretary to Government of India, Pankaj Awasthi in a letter has stated that the department of Jammu, Kashmir and ► More On P10

## 11 Injured As Vehicle Rolls Into Gorge

JAMMU: Eleven people sustained injuries, two of whom are in critical state, when a passenger vehicle skidded off the road and rolled down into a gorge in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district on Tuesday, officials said. They said the vehicle was coming to Rajouri from the Khawas area, and the accident took place near Latti. All the injured were evacuated by locals and shifted to a hospital for treatment. The officials ► More On P10

## 2 Car Lifters Arrested From City: Police

SRINAGAR: Police on Tuesday claimed to have solved a theft case by arresting two car lifters from Harwan and Chanpora areas of this capital city. On February 3, police station Harwan received a complaint from Javed Ahmad Wani that his Alto car (JK04A-1340) has been stolen during the intervening night of February 2 and 3, parked outside his house, a police spokesperson said. He said ► More On P10

## Probe Ordered Into Poonch Schools Closure

POONCH: Three government schools were found shut and staff members unauthorized absent in Mankote area of Poonch district of Jammu region on Tuesday, forcing the authorities to seek an explanation from the heads of schools. Officials said that locals from Balnoi area of Mankote informed higher authorities in the Education department about unauthorized closure of schools in the area with photographs of the same ► More On P10

## Police, Security Forces Working Professionally: DGP

SRINAGAR: Director General of Police Dilbag Singh on Monday lauded personnel of police and other security forces for "working professionally to eliminate threats" to peace in Jammu and Kashmir. The Police Kashmir Chief who is on three day tour to Kashmir appreciated J&amp;K Police and other security agencies for maintaining pressure on the elements inimical to peace in Jammu and Kashmir, he said. "With the coordinated ► More On P10

## ...DDC CHAIRPERSON POLLS

## J&amp;K Admin Helping BJP: Mehbooba

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: PDP president Mehbooba Mufti alleged on Tuesday that senior officers in the administration and police are helping the BJP in violating the people's mandate in the elections to the posts of chairpersons of the district development councils (DDCs).

"So much for Vajpayee ji's vision of insaniyat, Kashmiriyat &amp; jamhuriyat. Not surprised at all by recent DDC Chairmanship results. Two months were given to buy &amp; intimidate the DDC members," Mufti wrote on Twitter, referring



to a slogan coined by former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. The former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister said the ► More On P10

## DDC Members In Budgam Seek Re-Election For Chairman's Post

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: A group of elected District Development Council (DDC) members from Budgam on Tuesday held a protest here, demanding re-election for the post of chairperson.

The group protested at the National Conference (NC) headquarters Nawai-Subah after meeting party general secretary Ali Mohammad Sagar.

In Budgam district in central Kashmir, Nazir Ahmad Khan – an independent DDC member – was on Monday elected as the chairperson, while Nazir Ahmad Jahara of the NC was ► More On P10

## AC Approval Must For Over Rs 20 Cr Project Proposals

SRINAGAR: The government on Tuesday ordered that the proposals for Administrative approval of all projects above Rs 20.00 Crores should be placed for consideration and approval of the Administrative Council after the concurrence of the finance department. In an order issued, the commissioner

secretary to the Government, Manoj Kumar Dwivedi said that all administrative proposal for all the projects over Rs 20 crores shall be placed after the approval of the finance department. The decision was taken in exercise of the powers conferred by the third Proviso to Rule 7 read with entry 12 ► More On P10

## What Dr Farooq Said In Parliament

NEW DELHI: National Conference member Farooq Abdullah on Tuesday said the new farm laws are not religious scriptures that changes cannot be made as he appealed to the Centre to hold a dialogue with the agitating farmers and come out with a solution.

He was speaking during the discussion on Motion of Thanks to the President's address.

"I just want to make this request on the farmers' issue. It is not a 'Khudai kitaab' (religious scripture) that ► More On P10

## Govt Seeks Cybercrime Volunteers To Check Anti-National Content

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: In a bid to keep an eye on the cyber world in a "coordinated and comprehensive manner", the government has asked common people to register as cyber crime volunteers to help check posts against the sovereignty of the nation, on child and women abuse and attempts to disturb the law and order situation.

The project known as Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C)



is an initiative of the Union Ministry. It was started in militancy-hit Jammu and Kashmir last week where the police issued a circular asking

citizens to register themselves as volunteers. The volunteers are asked to keep an eye on posts which are against the sovereignty ► More On P10

## A Unique Initiative by the Government of Jammu &amp; Kashmir

## Block Diwas

on every Wednesday

at Locations Specified Below  
Speedy disposal of public grievances  
on spot at grassroots level.

All are invited to participate

Shri Manoj Sinha  
Lieutenant Governor

## District wise Locations for Block Diwas

01

## Kupwara

► Kupwara  
► Handwara  
► Lolab  
► Tangdhar

02

## Bandipora

► Bandipora  
► Bankoot  
► Aloosa  
► Sumbal

03

## Shopian

► Shopian  
► Zainapora

04

## Pulwama

► Pulwama  
► Pampore  
► Tral

05

## Kulgam

► Kulgam  
► Davsar  
► D.H. Pora

06

## Srinagar

► Harwan  
► Khunmoh  
► Panzinarra

07

## Ganderbal

► Ganderbal  
► Kangan  
► Lar

08

## Anantnag

► Anantnag  
► Bijbehara  
► Pahalgam  
► Kokernag  
► Dooru

09

## Budgam

► Budgam  
► Beerwah  
► Khansahib  
► Chadoora

10

## Baramulla

► Baramulla  
► Sopore  
► Pattan  
► Tangmarg  
► Uri

Government of Jammu &amp; Kashmir

DC, SSP & District Level Officers to remain available by turn at every Location every Wednesday.  
All Departmental functionaries to remain available for resolving grievances.

## Better communication about browning food can help limit food waste: Study

## Agencies

**P**eople often tend to avoid apples with brown spots, assuming that they taste bad. In a new study a UCPH researcher has emphasized that there's nothing wrong with oddly shaped or bruised apples and if we are to end food waste, we'll need to upend that assumption.

Most people skip the spotted ones and select those that are perfectly yellow. This is because emotions play an oversized role in our shopping decisions, according to a new study by Danish and Swedish researchers. The findings are published in the journal *Food Quality and Preference*.

"We choose food based upon an expectation of what it will taste like that is bound to our feelings. So, if we expect a brown banana to not match the taste of a yellow one, we opt for the latter," explains Karin Wendin, an associate professor at the University of Copenhagen's Department of Food Science, and one of the researchers behind the study. Approximately 716,000 tonnes of food are tossed out in Denmark every year—the majority of which are fruits and vegetables. Wendin laments this waste because brown fruits are not bad fruit:

"Bruised or oddly shaped fruit can easily be used. They usually taste just as good as nicely looking specimens. And in cases when an apple is bruised or a bit floury in texture,

one can still use it for juice or pie. When an "ugly" piece of fruit gets tossed, it becomes food waste, which is a big problem—including financially. This is why we need to work on reevaluating our feelings about brown and oddly-shaped fruit," she says.

The stickiness of a bad first impression in the study, 130 participants were asked to rate a series of images of apples with vary-

rate a series of images of apples with vary



ing appearances. Unsurprisingly, apples with deformities and imperfections ranked lowest in terms of how many participants wanted to eat them.

The participants then had to taste a different apple. This is when it became apparent that the bad first impression became sticky.

"When participants saw a photo of an ugly

apple, and then tasted one that was green and perfect, they stuck by their belief that it tasted awful. This speaks to the extent to which our emotions and psychology factor in with taste sensations," says Karin Wendin. "We remember negative feelings and expectations more than positive ones," she elaborates.

This is why it is imperative that we discover strategies to disrupt the negative emotions associated with brown fruit. Karin Wendin explains in greater detail:

"As things stand, communication about our foods--and what is good or bad--does not work optimally. People don't know where to seek advice and guidance. Few go online to investigate Nordic dietary recommendations on the Danish government's website. Did you know, for example, that imperfect fruit is often cheaper than its more perfect neighbors, even though both products probably taste the same?"

asks the food waste researcher.

This is why we need to help supermarkets communicate clearly about how to avoid food waste by grabbing an imperfect fruit, and also explore which platforms are most effective in getting messages about diet and food waste out to consumers, Karin Wendin believes.

"Or, should we instead communicate on social media, where people are and spend time on lifestyle issues? It would be interesting to dive into," she concludes.

[illegible][illegible][illegible][illegible][illegible][illegible][illegible][illegible][illegible][illegible]

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
The DOB of My daughter Soha Bashir has been wrongly written in school records as 10-11-2010 while her correct DOB is 26-07-2008 which needs immediate correction if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the Principal New Model Public Trehgam within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.  
Bashir Ahmad Mir  
F/o Soha Bashir R/o Trehgam NH K-r

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
The DOB My daughter Saniya Bashir has been wrongly written in school records as 02-09-2012 while her correct DOB is 10-08-2009 which needs immediate correction if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the Principal New Model Public Trehgam within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

**Basir Ahmad Mir**  
F/o Sania Bashir R/o Trehgam NH K-1

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

The DOB My daughter Sanah Bashir has been wrongly written in school records as 04-09-2013 while her correct DOB is 17-09-2010 which needs immediate correction If anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the Principal New Model Public Trehgam or ZEO Office Trehgam within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

**Basir Ahmad Mir**  
F/o Sanah Bashir R/o Trehgam NH K-1

**OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT REGIONAL  
TRANSPORT OFFICER BUDGAM KASHMIR**  
**NOTICE**

Whereas an application has been received from one, Shri : Rohit Kumar Koul S/o: Bansilal Koul R/o: Sheikhpora Budgam owner of vehicle bearing: Registration No:JK04E-9913 for cancellation of hire purchase agreement with M/S J&K Bank Ltd B/U Budgam.

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

No. ARTO/ BUDGAM.2480

Dated: 09/02/2021

Assistant Regional Transport officer  
Budgam Kashmir

**OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT REGIONAL  
TRANSPORT OFFICER BUDGAM KASHMIR**  
**NOTICE**

Whereas an application has been received from one.  
Shri : Kite High Lands School  
R/o: Gogon Budgam owner of vehicle bearing  
Registration No:JK04A 4990 for cancellation of hire purchase  
agreement with M/S J&K Bank B/U Humhama Budgam .  
Now therefore it is notified for the information of the  
general public that objections if any to the proposed cancella-  
tion of hire purchase Agreement shall be filed in writing in the  
office of the Assistant Regional Transport office ARTO Budgam  
within a period of 12 days from the date of publication of this  
notice in the daily newspaper .  
No. ARTO/ BUDGAM-2483  
Dated: 09/02/2021  
Assistant Regional Transport  
officer Budgam Kashmir

**OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT REGIONAL  
TRANSPORT OFFICER BUDGAM KASHMIR**

**NOTICE**

Whereas an application has been received from one. Shri : Gulam Mohammad Mir S/o: Gulam Mohi Ud Din Mir R/o: Sainbhugh Budgam owner of vehicle bearing Registration No:JK04D-1209 for cancellation of hire purchase agreement with M/S J&K Bank B/U Parnawa.

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

No. AITO/ BUDGAM.2495  
Dated: 09/02/2021

**Assistant Regional Transport officer  
Budgam Kashmir**

mcb

**OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT REGIONAL  
TRANSPORT OFFICER BUDGAM KASHMIR**

**NOTICE**

Whereas an application has been received from one. Shri : Shahinawaz Shah S/o: Ghulam Nabi Shah R/o: Housing Colony Ompora Budgamowner of vehicle bearing Registration No:JKD4E-1991 for cancellation of hire purchase agreement with M/S J&K Bank B/U Ompora.



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

No. ARTO/ BUDGAM.2489  
Dated: 09/02/2021  
mcb

Assistant Regional Transport  
officer Budgam Kashmir

**OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT REGIONAL  
TRANSPORT OFFICER BUDGAM KASHMIR**

**NOTICE**



Where a application for transfer of ownership has been recieved from one, Shri : Ab Rashid Bhat S/o: Ab Gani Bhat R/o: Dooru Near Govt School Sebdan Budgam (Transferee) of LMV CAR, Vehicle bearing registration number JK04C - 9420.



Chasis number 592802 Engine no. 376468 Model 2015, in favour of Shri. Manzoor Ahmad Rather S/o. Late Gh Hussain Rather R/o Barmina Khumaini Chowk (Transferee) as well as HPA cancellation with M/S J & K Bank Ltd B/U Khumaini Chowk is also required

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 officer ARTO Budgam within a period of 12 days from the date of publication of this notice in the daily newspaper Kashmir Observer.

**No. ARTO/BUDGAM/2493**

Dated 09/02/2021

enb.

Assistant Regional Transport  
Officer Budgam Kashmir

**OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT REGIONAL  
TRANSPORT OFFICER BUDGAM KASHMIR**

**NOTICE**

Whereas an application has been received from one.

Shri : Nisar Ahmad Malik  
S/o: Ghulam Ahmad Malik  
R/c: Pailar Budgam owner of vehicle bearing  
Registration No:JK04D-7548 for cancellation  
of hire purchase agreement with M/S J&K  
Bank Ltd B/U Budgam.

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

No. ARTO/BUDGAM/2481  
Dated: 09/02/2021  
mch.

**Assistant Regional Transport  
Officer Budgam Kashmir**

**OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT REGIONAL  
TRANSPORT OFFICER BUDGAM KASHMIR**

**NOTICE**

Whereas an application has been recieved from one. Shri : Arshid Ahmad Yatoo S/o: Alta Mohammad Yatoo R/o: Nagam Chadoora owner of vehicle bearing Registration No.JK04E 0958 for cancellation of hire purchase agreement with M/S J&K Bank B/o Malpora .

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

No. ARTO/ BUDGAM.2484  
Dated: 09/02/2021

Assistant Regional Transport officer  
Budgam Kashmir

mcb

**OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL**  
**GOVERNMENT MEDICAL COLLEGE, ANANTNAG, J&K**  
(CAMP OFFICE: MMABM, ASSOCIATED HOSPITAL, GMC, ANANTNAG)  
Phone No. 01932-227624 / fax 01.932-227625 \_\_\_\_\_e mail : gmcanantnag2018@gmail.com

**EXTENSION NOTICE**

Subject: - e-NIT No.11 GMCA of 2021 Dated: 16.01.2021 for the RUNNING OF Hospital Canteen of MMABM Associated Hospital, Govt. Medical College, Anantnag -Extension of last date thereof.

Due to the poor response to our - e-NIT No.11 GMCA of 2021 Date 16.01.2021 for the RUNNING OF Hospital Canteen of MMABM Associate Hospital, Govt. Medical College, Anantnag, the last date for submission of BIDs is extended up to 13-02-2021 (3:00pm) date of Opening of Bids 2021 , all other terms and conditions shall remain same

Principal / Dean  
Govt. Medical College, Anantnag

NO:-GMCA/Plg/190/ 4652-56  
Dated: 08.02.2021

DIPK-12740/20



**PARTS OF SRINAGAR CITY OBSERVED A SHUTDOWN** to mark the 8th execution anniversary of Mohammad Afzal Guru on Tuesday. Eye witnesses said shops and business establishments in the parts of city including commercial hub Lal Chowk remained shut and transport was thin on roads. Guru was hanged in Tihar jail on February 9, 2013, and his remains were not handed over to his family. KO Photo Abid Bhat

## City Schools To Open From Feb-20 For Implementation, Monitoring Of COVID-19 SOP's

Agencies

**SRINAGAR:** Schools in Srinagar district will reopen from February-20 for implementation and monitoring of COVID-19 Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's) to be followed during the reopening of schools for academic activities, the government said on Tuesday.

According to the order issued by the Chief Education Officer (CEO) Srinagar, Manzoor Ahmad Kumar, the schools shall remain open for the implementation and monitoring of activities specified from February-20.

The order states that the preparations made in this context by High and Higher Secondary Schools shall be monitored by District Level Committees," it reads.

Kumar said that the preparation for implementation of SOPs shall start from February-12 and monitoring of the



KO File Photo Abid Bhat

**“HEADS OF ALL government and private schools shall conduct meetings with their respective staff members to discuss and frame modalities regarding preparation for opening of schools for the implementation of SOP's issued by the government,”**

ties in the school.

Kumar in a SOP list said, "Arrange for thorough cleaning and disinfecting of all areas, furniture, equipment, stationery, storage places, water tanks, kitchens, canteen, washrooms, laboratories, libraries."

He also said that we need to ensure that working hand washing facilities, availability of key supplies like thermometers, disinfectants and soaps is available in the schools.

same shall start soon after.

"Heads of all government and private schools shall conduct meetings with their respective staff members to discuss and frame modalities regarding preparation for opening of schools for the implementation of SOP's issued by the government," it reads.

The order further reads that the Zonal Education officers (ZEO's) in Srinagar district shall conduct similar meetings with the Head of Institutions (HOI's) of elementary schools of their respective zones.

CEO ordered the concerned authorities to ensure proper cleaning and sanitation facilities

## 14 Lakh Cash Looted From City Home

**SRINAGAR:** In a shocking incident, burglars have looted rupees fourteen (14) lakh cash from a residential house in Chattabal locality of Downtown Srinagar.

Reports said that burglars broke into the house of Saleema wife of Mohd Shafi Gada during the intervening night of Monday-Tuesday and decamped with 14 lakh cash.

Meanwhile, Police have registered a formal case in this regard and have set further investigations into motion.



Representational photo

## Div Com Felicitates Covid Warriors In Srinagar



**SRINAGAR:** The Divisional Commissioner (Div Com) Kashmir, Pandurang K Pole today felicitated Covid-19 warriors at Divisional Covid Control Room (DCCR), Srinagar.

Those felicitated include DC Shopian, former In-charge DCCR, Shrikant Balasahib Suse, Director Health Services Kashmir, Dr Samir Mattoo, Registrar Academics/ Hospital Coordinator Kashmir Div, Dr Waseem Qureshi, Dr Talat Jabeen, Epidemiologist/ SSO Kashmir, Deputy Director, Dentistry, Dr Jahan Zaib, In charge DCCR, Tahir Ahmad Magray, Public Health Advisor, Dr Rabbani Tariq, Incharge Red Zone, Dr Rouf Hussain, In-charge ISM, Dr Iftikhar Gazi, Dr Noor Anjum Incharge Contact Tracing and other scores of doctors and various other officers and officials as Covid-warriors.

On the occasion, Div Com gave away certificates to covid warriors for their tireless work during the pandemic making it possible to contain the virus.

Speaking on the occasion, the Div Com appreciated all doctors, officers and officials

at DCCR for their tremendous work in containing the spread of coronavirus.

He praised all for maintaining the DCCR and said that the successful functioning of the DCCR Srinagar has found its place in the Niti Ayog's magazine which is actually the result of coordinated efforts and tireless work performed by all associated with the Control Room.

He said that though the virus has been controlled to a large extent in the valley, however, the need is to continue to fight against it as it is still prevailing in various parts of the world.

He said that with the functioning of DCCR the pandemic situation was dealt smoothly within the available resources in Kashmir as every officer/officials worked with utmost determination and dedication while performing his/her duties during the pandemic.

Meanwhile, Dr Talat expressed her gratitude to the Divisional Administration in her welcome address while as In-charge DCCR, Tahir Ahmad Magray presented the vote of thanks on the occasion.

## Imam Hussain Hospital/ College On Way To Progress



**A** preliminary review meeting of the Board of Management/Managing Committee of Imam Hussain Hospital/ College was held on Monday in which the present state of affairs of the hospital and college were discussed in detail and some important decisions were taken.

The important decisions included formation of various committees to work on registration of the hospital and the college, upgradation of out patient department, working out of professionals technically qualified and paramedical personnel requirement in the hospital, special audit of the previous accounts, bank account re-operation, income tax exemption in view of its charitable character, administrative streamlining and recruitment policy.

The meeting was chaired by Dr Syed Qazim. The meeting began with recitation by the holy Quran by Aga Syed Mujtaba. The meeting ended with a vote of thanks to the members of the Managing Committee and the chair.

### DIAL-EMMA



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

### AIRPORTS

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311 ✈️

### RAILWAYS



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

### HIGHWAY STATUS

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

## This Day in History

- 1940 - "Tom & Jerry" cartoon created by William Hanna & Joseph Barbera debut by MGM.
- 1943 - British 8th Army sweeps through North Africa to Tunisia
- 1952 - India holds its first general election: Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru remains in power
- 1954 - Eisenhower warns against US intervention in Vietnam
- 1961 - Niagara Falls hydroelectric project begins producing power
- 1974 - Iran / Iraqi border fight breaks out
- 1975 - The Provisional Irish Republican Army agrees to a truce and ceasefire with the British government and the Northern Ireland Office; Seven "incident centres" are established in nationalist areas to monitor the ceasefire
- 1990 - South African President F. W. de Klerk announces Nelson Mandela will be freed on February 11th
- 1991 - Lithuania votes for independence from USSR
- 1993 - US officially backs peace plan in Bosnia
- 1997 - Soyuz TM-25 launches to the MIR
- 2013 - 36 people are killed and 39 are injured in a stampede at a train station in Allahabad, India



HIJRI  
CALENDAR

27

JAMADI

-UL-SANI

1442

### PRAYERS

FAJR

5: 56

ZUHR

12: 45

ASR

4:30

MAGRIB

6:12

ISHA

7:34

## From KO Archives

## FIDAYEEN STORM JKP NERVE CENTRE

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR** - In yet an–other major strike, Fidayeen this evening stormed the heavily forti–fied police control room (PCR) here. Army was called out after a 4-member Fidayeen squad gate crashed into the sprawling complex killing two police–men and wounding eight others including a superintendent of police. Lashkar-e-Taiba owning responsi–bility for the attack, said it was carried out in retalia–tion to the recent spate of custodial killings.

According to reports, a 4-member Fidayeen squad in police uniforms forced their way to the main gate of the high–security PCR, the nerve centre of the state police in the summer capital, at around 7.10 p.m. hurling grenades and fir–ing indiscriminately on the se–curity guards. A policeman died on the spot while eight others sustained injuries. One of them later succumbed to his injuries. The deceased were identified as head constable Mohan Lal and constable Zahoor Ahmad.

Seven of the injured person–nel were identified as superin–tendent of police, Jalla, and con–stables, Rai Singh, Bashir Ahmad, Nazir Ahmad, Manzoor Ahmad, Darshan Lal and Akhtar Husain. Eighth po–liceman whose identity could not be ascertained immediately had been admitted in the police hospital within the complex. Jalla had received a bullet in–jury in his hand and was stated to be out of danger.

When contacted, the super–intendent of police, PCR, G H Bhat, told Kashmir Observer one militant was killed in the retaliatory fire immediately af–ter they stormed into the com–plex. Police believed only one more militant, and not three as was reported, was holed up in the single storied building ad–jacent to the main PCR build–ing. Bhat said the building houses the two PCR munshis (clerks). However, he put the number of injured policemen at four only.

While the army had laid the outer cordon around the huge complex, Bhat said, the central reserve police force (CRPF) and SOG personnel had launched an operation to flush out the–holed up militant. At least eight police personnel who had been present in the building when the militants sneaked into it, were rescued, he added.

Meanwhile, agency reports said, intermittent exchange of fire was going on when the re–ports last came in inside the complex which, apart from the PCR, houses the headquarters of the 3rd, 4th, 5th, 7th, and 11th bat–talions of the Jammu and Kashmir Armed Police, besides the police telecommu–nication centre, forensic science laboratory (FSL) and police hospital. Army had sur–rounded the entire complex, particularly the building in which the militants were holed up.

Citing an unidentified body in the PCR premises, an armoured vehicle of the bor–der security force (BSF) ap–proached the spot at9.15p.m. The body was believed to be that of the slain militant. However, the vehicle had to stage a hasty retreat after it came under heavy fire from the holed up militant.

Quoting a Lashkar spokes–man from Pakistan, a CNS re–port identified the Fidayeen as Salahuddin, who led the group, Abu Hafiz, Abdullah Umar and Abu Mu'aavia. Meanwhile, a NAFA report said the security forces began shelling the build–ing around 11.45 p.m. after which heavy exchange of fire was heard from a distance of three to four kilometers.

(KASHMIR OBSERVER, 10 February, 2001)

Zarif On Biden's Choices

## 'Go Down Trump's Path Or Return To JCPOA'



Agencies

Iran's foreign minister says it is the United States that has to return to compliance with the 2015 nuclear agreement because Washington is the party that abandoned the deal and violated its terms, warning the new American administration against building on the failed policies of its predecessor.

US President Joe Biden "has a choice," Zarif said, adding that he can either "build on the failures" of his predecessor Donald Trump or break with his hostile approach and choose a new path in dealing with Iran.

In 2015, Iran and six world powers signed the nuclear accord, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

In May 2018, however, Washington left the JCPOA, which was also ratified in the form of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231, and re-imposed illegal sanctions against Tehran in flagrant violation of the UN document.

The Islamic Republic remained fully compliant with the deal for an entire year, waiting for the co-signatories to fulfill their end of the bargain by offsetting the impacts of Washington's bans on the Iranian economy.

As the European parties failed to do so, Tehran moved in May 2019 to suspend its JCPOA commitments under the Articles of the agreement covering Tehran's legal rights.

Iran and the US have recently expressed their willingness to resur-

rect the accord, but they are both demanding that the other side take the first step.

In a CBS News interview, Biden indicated that Iran would have to stop enriching uranium before his administration would lift sanctions. This is while the JCPOA — which was signed when Biden was vice president — recognizes Iran's right to uranium enrichment.

Similarly, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken told CNN that Iran should make the first move in negotiations over the US return to the JCPOA.

"If Iran returns to compliance ... we would do the same thing" and use the pact as a starting point to form a "longer and stronger agreement" that includes other matters, including Iran's missile program, he added.

However, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei emphasized on Sunday that Iran will retrace its nuclear countermeasures once the US lifts its sanctions in a manner that could be verifiable by Tehran.

Tehran's "final and irreversible" decision is to return to compliance with the agreement only if Washington fully lifts the sanctions on the Islamic Republic, Ayatollah Khamenei stated.

We cannot keep honoring a deal whose sole loser is Iran: Qalibaf

Speaking at the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences in Moscow on Monday, Iran's Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf explained that the country can no longer abide by an accord that is only benefiting others.

## Myanmar Coup Leader: Rohingyas To Be Repatriated To Rakhine State

Agencies

Myanmar's army chief on Monday said Rohingya refugees who fled to Bangladesh during a 2017 crisis will continue to be repatriated to Rakhine state.

He insisted military rule would be different this time, as martial law was declared across swathes of the country after massive protests against the new junta.

Orders covering parts of Yangon, Mandalay and other areas banned people from protesting or gathering in groups of more than five, and imposing an 8pm to 4am curfew.

New junta chief General Min Aung Hlaing, wearing a green military uniform, made his first televised speech since seizing power, insisting the putsch was justified by "voter fraud."



He echoed previous military insistence that the power grab was in line with the constitution, but declared that this time things would be "different" from the army's previous 49-year reign, which ended in 2011.

"After the tasks of the emergency period are completed, free and fair multi-party general elections will be held ac-

cording to the constitution," he said.

"The winning party will be transferred state duty according to democratic standards."

The general said the country welcomed foreign investment and also announced lifting of coronavirus restrictions, including reopening schools and Buddhist pagodas.

## What To Watch As Trump's 2Nd Impeachment Trial Kicks Off



Agencies

WASHINGTON:— Former President Donald Trump's second impeachment trial begins on Tuesday, a solemn proceeding that will force lawmakers to relive the violent events of Jan. 6 as House Democrats prosecute their case for "incitement of insurrection."

The nine Democratic impeachment managers for the House, which impeached Trump last month, argue that he alone was responsible for inciting the mob of supporters who broke into the U.S. Capitol and interrupted the presidential electoral count.

Lawyers for Trump argue that the trial is unconstitutional and say the former president was exercising freedom of speech when he told his supporters to "fight like hell" to overturn his defeat. The arguments against conviction are expected to be persuasive with Senate Republicans, most of whom have signaled that they will vote to acquit.

The trial is expected to last into the weekend and possibly longer. It will begin midday Tuesday and could go late into some evenings.

What to watch as the trial kicks off: **FIRST, AN EFFORT TO DISMISS**

Tuesday's proceedings will begin with a debate to dismiss the trial before it even begins. Trump's lawyers have argued the trial is moot now that Trump is out of office, and 45 Senate Republicans have already voted once to move forward with an effort to dismiss the trial on those grounds. The Senate will debate the con-

stitutionality of the trial for four hours on Tuesday and then hold a vote on whether to dismiss it. The effort to dismiss is expected to fail, allowing arguments in the trial to begin on Wednesday.

Democrats point to the opinion of many legal scholars — including conservatives — who say the trial is valid under the Constitution. They point to an 1876 impeachment trial of a secretary of war who had resigned and note that Trump was impeached before he left office. Trump's lawyers dismiss that precedent and say language in the Constitution is on their side.

**WEDNESDAY: ARGUMENTS BEGIN**

The House managers will present their arguments first, beginning Wednesday. Each side will have up to 16 hours, running no more than eight hours per day.

The Democrats are expected to try and take advantage of the senators' own experiences, tapping into their emotions as they describe in detail — and show on video — what happened as the mob broke through police barriers, injured law enforcement officers, ransacked the Capitol and hunted for lawmakers. The carnage led to five deaths.

The impeachment managers have argued that the mob subverted democracy and that Trump was "singularly" responsible for their actions after months of falsely saying there was widespread fraud in the election. They will appeal to Senate Republicans to vote to convict after most of them criticized Trump in the wake of the riots, with many saying he was respon-

sible for the violence.

There was no widespread fraud in the election. Election officials across the country, and even then-Attorney General William Barr, contradicted Trump's claims, and dozens of legal challenges to the election put forth by Trump and his allies were dismissed.

It appears unlikely, for now, that there will be witnesses at the trial. But the managers can ask for a Senate vote on calling witnesses if they so choose.

**TRUMP'S TEAM HITS BACK**

Defense arguments are likely to begin Friday. In their main filing with the Senate, Trump's lawyers made clear that they will not only argue against the trial on process grounds, but also present a full-throated defense of Trump's actions that day and why they believe he did not incite the riot.

While the Democrats are expected to appeal to the senators' emotions, Trump's lawyers have signaled they will try and tap into raw partisan anger. They repeatedly go after the Democrats personally in the brief, describing their case as a "selfish attempt by Democratic leadership in the House to prey upon the feelings of horror and confusion" and another example of "Trump derangement syndrome" after four years of trying to drive him out of office.

The lawyers argue that Trump's words "fight like hell" did not mean to literally fight, that the rioters acted on their own accord.

**A (LESS) CAPTIVE AUDIENCE**

As they were last year, at Trump's first impeachment trial, senators are expected to listen to every word of the arguments before they cast their votes.

But this trial will look a bit different than the last one due to COVID-19 restrictions. To protect against the virus, senators don't have to be stuck at their desks for the entirety of the trial, and will be allowed to spread out in the upper galleries or watch a video feed in a room just off the chamber.

**REPUBLICANS TO WATCH**

Five Republican senators voted with Democrats two weeks ago not to dismiss the trial on constitutional grounds. Those senators so far appear the most likely to vote to convict Trump.

## Yemen's Houthis In New Push To Capture Govt Stronghold



Agencies

Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels have resumed an offensive to seize the government's last northern stronghold of Marib, a government source said on Monday, with dozens of casualties on both sides.

New clashes between the rebels and pro-government forces — backed by a Saudi-led military coalition — erupted after weeks of relative calm in the oil-rich and strategic region. The source told AFP that the Houthis had brought in reinforcements during that time.

"At least 20 government fighters were killed and 28 others injured," he said, adding that many rebels also died but no accurate count was available.

The Houthis have since 2014 held the capital Sanaa which lies just 120km away and are mounting a fierce campaign to take Marib.

In the past 24 hours, government forces repelled five attacks, the source said, a day after three pro-government fighters were killed and four injured in a missile attack on their camp in Marib.

The United States and Britain condemned the offensive, with the State Department saying it was "deeply troubled" by the violence and calling on the rebels to stand down and halt any new campaigns.

British Ambassador to Yemen Michael Aron said the Houthis must "prove their seriousness in wanting peace by supporting the efforts of UN special envoy Martin Griffiths."

US President Joe Biden last week announced an end to support for Saudi-led offensive operations in

Yemen, as part of a major reset in foreign policy.

The state department has also notified Congress of its intention to revoke a terrorist designation against the rebels, which had been announced at the end of former president Donald Trump's administration.

**UN envoy in Iran**

Humanitarian groups were deeply opposed to the terrorist tag, saying it jeopardized their operations in a country where the majority of people rely on aid.

But Yemen's information minister, Moammar al-Eryani, said on Sunday that "a reversal of the designation will complicate the Yemeni crisis and prolong the coup."

In a sign of the renewed diplomatic activity after the US policy revamp, Griffith is visiting Iran for the first time this week to discuss the crisis.

Biden, who has also halted some weapons sales to Saudi Arabia, called Yemen's war a "catastrophe" which "has to end."

But given the country's complex dynamics, a swift end to the conflict is unlikely, and analysts say the challenge is finding a compromise acceptable to its myriad armed factions.

Without any wider political resolution that also takes in Iran, Saudi Arabia fears that walking out of Yemen will leave a dangerously unchecked insurgency free to build its strength right on the kingdom's southern border.

Since 2015 Saudi Arabia has been leading a military coalition to support Yemen's internationally recognized government, in a conflict that the United Nations says has resulted in the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

## Families Despair; Weather Halts Pakistan Search For Climbers

Agencies

ISLAMABAD: Families of the three mountaineers, who went missing in Pakistan last week while attempting to scale K2 — the world's second-highest mountain — were growing more desperate on Tuesday, a day after bad weather halted the search for the climbers.

Hopes for the survival of the three — Pakistani climber Ali Sadpara, John Snorri of Iceland and Juan Pablo Mohr of Chile — were waning as heavy clouds continued to obscure K2.

Pakistani military helicopters were grounded, waiting for an opening in the weather to resume the search, said Karrar Haidri, head of the Pakistan Alpine Club.

The three lost contact with base camp late on Friday and were reported missing on Saturday, after their support team stopped receiving communications from them during their ascent of the 8,611-metre (28,250-foot) high K2 — sometimes referred to as "killer mountain".

Located in the Karakorum mountain range, K2 is one of the most dangerous climbs — one never accomplished in winter until last month, when a team of 10 Nepalese climbers made history by scaling K2



for the first time in winter.

The three-day search for the climbers was halted on Monday as heavy clouds enveloped most of K2. The families in a statement late Monday said they made the "difficult decision" to wait for the weather to improve before the search resumes.

The statement said the search-and-rescue mission was receiving high-resolution satellite imagery that can enable it to view "areas inaccessible to helicopters because of harsh winter conditions and excessive winds".

In winter, winds on K2 can blow at more than 200 kph (125 mph) and temperatures can drop to minus 60 degrees Celsius (minus 76 Fahrenheit). In one of the deadliest mountaineering accidents ever, 11 climbers died in a single day trying to scale K2 in 2008.

### NEWS MAKERS

## Did You Know Greta Thunberg Has THIS 'Superpower'? Know All About It



Agencies

Teenage climate activist Greta Thunberg has been in news lately for her tweets on farmers' protests. The 18-year-old had extended her support to the farmers protesting on the borders of New Delhi against the three farm laws saying that she stands in solidarity with the farmers. "We stand in solidarity with the #Farmers-

Protest in India," Thunberg wrote on Twitter on February 2.

After her speech on climate change at United Nations General Assembly in 2019 went viral, she faced some mockery and personal attacks and was criticised in response to her speech.

The 18-year-old has Asperger's, high-functioning autism and OCD (obsessive-compulsive disorder). Since going public about her diagnosis in 2015, Thunberg has emerged as an inspirational role model for those living with Asperger's. However, ignorance has led to mockery and criticism of Thunberg and her diagnosis, with some media outlets referring to her as "mentally ill" (US News Corp Fox News columnist Michael Knowles), or "deeply disturbed" (Australian News Corp columnist Andrew Bolt).

## 'Worst 90 Seconds Of My Life': Adult Film Star Stormy Daniels On Alleged Sex With Donald Trump

Agencies

When he was Donald Trump's attorney, Michael Cohen was hell-bent on silencing Stormy Daniels, even arranging a hush-money payment to the porn actress that landed him in federal prison.

Now, as one of many of the former president's insiders-turned-critics, Cohen is literally broadcasting Daniels' story — including intimate new details of her alleged sexual encounter with Trump — in a discussion ranging from shame and scandal to a haunted house in New Orleans.

Seeking to bury the hatchet, Cohen interviews Daniels in the latest episode of his podcast, "Mea Culpa," in which the two commiserate over life-altering experiences with Trump and his recent



departure from office.

"My battle is just now starting," Daniels tells Cohen in their first ever conversation, referring to litigation she said had been in a holding pattern before Trump left office. "People are really upset, and they're just going to get more pissed off at me."

Cohen, in keeping with the title of his program, apologizes for "the needless pain" he put Daniels through when he arranged a \$130,000 payment during the 2016 presidential campaign to keep

her quiet about an alleged dalliance with Trump a decade earlier. Trump has denied the affair.

"Both of our stories will be forever linked with Donald Trump, but also with one another," Cohen tells her. "Thanks for giving me a second chance."

The scandal turned Stormy Daniels into a household name, and critics accused her of capitalizing on her newfound fame, including crisscrossing the country on a "Make America Horny Again" strip tour.

Federal prosecutors charged Cohen with skirting campaign contribution rules by arranging the hush-money payment to Daniels and a similar payment to Playboy model Karen McDougal. He pleaded guilty to those counts — as well as lying to Congress and tax evasion — and was sentenced to three years in federal prison.

## Hacker Changes Drinking Water Chemical Levels To Poison In US City

SAN FRANCISCO: In a sophisticated cyber-attack, a hacker accessed the computer systems of the water treatment facility in a US city and modified drinking water chemical levels to dangerous parameters in an attempt to poison the city of nearly 15,000 residents.

Sodium hydroxide, also known as lye, is the main ingredient in liquid drain cleaners, used to control water acidity and remove metals from drinking water in the water treatment plant.

"The hacker changed the sodium hydroxide from about 100 parts per million to 11,100 parts per million. This is obviously a significant and potentially dangerous increase," Bob Gualtieri, Sheriff of Oldsmar city in Florida state in the US, was quoted as saying in local media reports on Monday. The intrusion took place on February 5 when the hacker remotely accessed a computer system that was set up to allow for the remote control of water treatment operations. According to a report in Tampa Bay Times, local and federal authorities, including the FBI, were investigating the attempt to poison the city of Oldsmar.

The city's water supply was not affected. "A supervisor working remotely saw the concentration being changed on his computer screen and immediately reverted it," Gualtieri said.

## J&K HC Formulates New Transfer Policy



**SRINAGAR:** The Jammu and Kashmir High Court on Tuesday formulated a fresh transfer policy for the transfer of judicial officers in the twin Union Territories including J&K and Ladakh, stating that three choices of stations shall be obtained from judicial officers likely to be transferred.

Order number 860, dated 09-02-2021 issued in this regard by Registrar General Jawad Ahmad, stated that in supersession of previous orders on the subject, the full Court has been pleased to lay down/formulate the transfer policy for transfer of Judicial Officers in the Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh.

"The general transfers of Judicial Officers in the Union Territories shall be effected ordinarily twice in a year in the months of March and September unless otherwise directed by the Chief Justice. The suitability of officers in the interest of administration of justice and exposing them to different nature of work shall be the paramount criteria for transfer/posting of officers," the order reads, according to the news agency KNO.

It added that no officer shall be posted as far as practicable in his district, home town or in any district where his or her blood, close relatives such as parents, spouse, son, daughter, brother, sister, nephew, niece, brother-in-law and sister-in-law are practicing.

"Endeavour shall be made, as far as possible, to post husband and wife (if both happens to be judicial officers) in the same district or adjoining districts and judicial officers suffering from a serious ailment or who is physically challenged may be given convenient posting. Ordinarily, judicial officers are transferable once in two years i.e the term of posting would normally be of two years but if exigency arises, they may be transferred earlier or permitted to overstay at the discretion of the Chief Justice subject to ratification by the Full Court," the transfer policy added.

It added that the term of posting of a judicial officer at a hard station or district shall be of one year only. The hard stations in-

clude Banni, Mahore, Gandoh, Gool, Kotranka, Budhal, D. H Pora, Uri, Tangdhar, Gurez, Leh, Nubra, Khaltisi, Kargil, Drass, Sanku and Zanskar.

"Any officer who has remained posted or serving at the hard station/district would not be posted in any other such station/district until the expiry of 4 years i.e. for two normal tenures of postings from his/her last posting at any such hard station/district. No judicial officer shall be posted in the same district twice as far as possible except as District Judge unless the Court otherwise directs in the exigency of service," it added

The transfer policy further added that in order to effectuate transfers of officers, the Registrar General shall obtain in advance three choices of stations from judicial officers likely to be transferred and shall place the same before the Chief Justice/Committee to facilitate the transfers/postings.

"No officer would ordinarily be appointed on deputation outside the Cadre except once while working as Civil Judge (Jr. Division), Civil Judge (Sr. Division) and District Judge and consecutive deputation would not be permissible except on the prerogative of the Chief Justice. Notwithstanding the above guidelines/policy, an officer would generally be given a station of his choice as the last posting before his retirement. If an officer has one or less than a year to retire, as on the first day of April, he may not be disturbed from his existing place of posting, as far as possible," it mentioned further.

"In regard to matters that are not specifically provided herein above, the Chief Justice may issue such general or particular clarifications as may be necessary for the effectuation of transfers and postings having regard to the general interest in the administration of justice. The office of the Registrar General shall keep the database of transfers/postings of the Judicial Officers updated (including soft form), for effective implementation of the transfer policy and keep it available on the Court's website," it added

## MHA Gives Go A Ahead To Alok Kumar's Deputation To J&K UT

**SRINAGAR:** The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on Tuesday gave green signal to deputation of Alok Kumar, IRS to Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, saying that it has no objection for his deputation.

Under Secretary to Government of India, Pankaj Awasthi in a letter has stated that the department of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh Affairs, MHA has no objection for deputation of Alok

Kumar, IRS to UT of J&K, on the basis of cadre clearance/no objection issued by the Competent Authority in CBDT, D/O Revenue, Ministry of Finance, vide letter number HRD/CM/152/85/2013-14 dated 16-12-2020.

"The deputation of Shri Alok Kumar, IRS to UT of J&K for a period of 3 years will be governed by terms and conditions issued by DoPT from time to time," Awasthi said in an office memorandum. Agencies

## Parents Will Have To Pay 100% School Fee During Pandemic Period, Says Supreme Court

Agencies

**G**iving a major setback to parents, the Supreme Court on Monday ruled that parents will have to pay 100% of the school fees for the academic session 2020-21 during the pandemic period which will be equal to the fees paid in the academic session 2019-20.

The Supreme Court gave this interim order on Monday while holding a joint hearing on the SLP filed by the Vidya Bhavan Society, the Managing Committee of Sawai Mansingh Vidyalaya, Gandhi Seva Sadan and the Society of Catholic Education Institutions which challenged the Fee-Regulation Act 2016.

Under the order, parents will have to pay the fee from March 5-2021, which can be collected in 6 instalments. Also, the



court clarified that no child's name will be omitted from the school due to non-payment of fees. Also, children of 10th and 12th will also not be denied to sit in the examination if fees are not deposited.

Earlier, the Rajasthan government had issued an order on October 28 asking Rajasthan Board of Secondary Edu-

cation (RBSE) to charge 60% to the state board affiliated schools and 70% to the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) accredited schools.

Apart from this, the state government has also been asked by the Apex Court to give the outstanding amount under Right to Education (RTE) admission within a month.

## 5G To Roll Out In India By Early-2022; Parliamentary Panel Pulls Up Dot For Delay



Agencies

**T**he government expects that the roll-out of 5G services will begin in early-2022 after another round of spectrum auction that is planned to be held after six month, according to a panel report tabled in Parliament on Monday.

The Standing Committee on Information Technology pulled up the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) for delay in the launch of 5G services when several countries have commercially rolled out the next-generation technology.

The telecom ministry has already announced the auction of spectrum worth Rs 3.92 lakh crore from March 1, but

it does not include the desired frequency band for 5G services.

The committee has been informed that by the end of the calendar year 2021 or beginning of 2022, there will be some roll-out in India in some specific uses, because 4G should continue in India for at least another 5-6 years, the parliamentary panel, headed by Lok Sabha MP Shashi Tharoor, said.

"From the foregoing, the committee are inclined to conclude that sufficient preparatory work has not been undertaken for launching 5G services in India.

"As such, India has not moved beyond the modest beginning stage as compared to other countries in the world,"

the report said.

The panel said the delay in the launch of 5G services reflects poorly on planning and execution in the country.

"So, it is likely that after missing the 2G, 3G and 4G bus, India is going to miss 5G opportunities, unless time-bound action is taken in core areas where governmental intervention is required," the report said.

Telecom industry body COAI raised concern before the panel that the telecom operators submitted the applications of 5G trial in January 2020 and till date, the guidelines for trials have not been made clear. There is no set date for commencement of these trials, it added.

The DoT has informed the panel that the test bed for 5G trials is expected to be ready by October 2021.

"It is disappointing to note that the department (DoT) has hardly learnt from the past delays as the vision for 5G, which was reflected in the constitution of the high-level forum and expert committees, has not been transformed into action on the ground and is not reflected in the policies formulated by the government," the report said.

## NC MPs To Stay Away From Delimitation Commission's First Meeting

**SRINAGAR:** National Conference (NC) Members of Parliament (MPs) on Monday stated that they will not attend the first meeting of the Delimitation Commission for Jammu and Kashmir on February 18.

Pertinently, the Delimitation Commission for Jammu and Kashmir has convened first meeting with Associate Members at its office in New Delhi on February 18 to discuss delimitation of Assembly constituencies in the Union Territory.

NC MPs from Anantnag constituency Hassnain Masoodi and Baramulla constituency Muhammad Akbar Lone refused to attend the meeting.

However, both the Members

of Parliament gave different reasons for not attending the first meeting.

Masoodi said that they have not received any kind of intimation earlier, but it is for the first time that they have received any intimation in this regard.

"Our stand is that this full exercise is unconstitutional because the commission has been constituted in exercise of powers under Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Act 2019. We are of the view that the act itself is unconstitutional and its constitutionality is being examined by the five judge bench of the Supreme Court. The Central government was expected

to desist from implementing the act till a final verdict would come from the top court of India," he said.

"It instead is going on to implement the act, which is constitutionally suspect law. We have already thrown a challenge to that. As on date, there is no point in getting associated because the exercise itself is not in tune with the constitution as it offends the constitution," Masoodi said.

Moreover, Lone, another NC MP also rejected to attend the meeting, saying that they are currently busy with the ongoing elections for the chairperson of District Development Council (DDC)—Agencies

## Covid-19: 55 Test Positive, No Death Reported In 24 Hours

**SRINAGAR:** Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday reported 55 fresh cases of Covid-19, taking the tally of total positive cases to 125,007, however, no death was reported in the last 24 hours.

Of the exact number of 125,007 cases, 73,333 are from Kashmir and 51,674 from Jammu division. Officials said that among 55 new cases, 38 belong to Kashmir division while as 17 are from Jammu division, adding that the total number of positive cases in Kashmir division have reached to 73,333 including 71,636 recoveries and 1,222 deaths while as total number of positive cases in Jammu division have reached to 51,674 including 50,834 recoveries and 722 deaths.

The officials said that the total number of active cases in Jammu and Kashmir are 593 including 475 from Kashmir division and 118 from Jammu division.

With 55 more recoveries, the tally of total recoveries in Jammu and Kashmir has reached 122,470 which is 97.97 percent of the total cases.

"Cases tested positive in J&K include 19 from Srinagar, 03 from Baramulla, 08 from Budgam, 05 from Pulwama, 00 from Kupwara, 01 from Anantnag, 01 from Bandipora, 00 from Ganderbal, 00 from Kulgam and 01 from Shopian in Kashmir division while as 17 from Jammu division include 08 from Jammu, 07 from Udhampur, 01 from Rajouri, 01 from Doda, 00 from Kathua, 00 from Samba, 00 from Kishtwar, 00 from Poonch, 00 from Ramban and 00 from Reasi," officials disclosed.

As per officials figures, 26,396 positive cases including 458 deaths and 25,734 recoveries are from Srinagar, 8,134 including 174 deaths and 7,942 recoveries are from Baramulla, 7,804 including 7,647 recoveries and 118 deaths are from Budgam, 5,766 including 5,626 recoveries and 88 deaths are from Pulwama, 5,666 including 96 deaths and 5,561 recoveries are from



Kupwara, 4,941 including 4,802 recoveries and 86 deaths are from Anantnag, 4,699 cases including 4,621 and 61 deaths are from Bandipora, 4,647 including 4,547 recoveries and 47 deaths are from Ganderbal, 2,702 including 2,632 recoveries and 54 deaths are from Kulgam and 2,578 including 2,524 recoveries and 40 deaths are from Shopian.

In Jammu division, 25,037 including 24,617 recoveries and 371 deaths are from Jammu district, 4,226 including 4,143 recoveries and 57 deaths are from Udhampur, 3,870 including 3,813 recoveries and 55 deaths are from Rajouri, 3,434 including 3,365 recoveries and 64 deaths are from Doda, 3,256 including 3,200 recoveries and 53 deaths are from Kathua, 2,832 including 2,785 recoveries and 40 deaths are from Samba, 2,732 including 2,709 recoveries and 22 deaths are from Kishtwar, 2,507 including 2,467 recoveries and 24 deaths are from Poonch, 2,135 including 2,112 recoveries and 21 deaths are from Ramban and 1,645 including 1,623 recoveries and 15 deaths are from Reasi.

As per the daily information bulletin 1,184,419 persons in Jammu and Kashmir are under observation while 34,164 persons have been kept under home quarantine besides that 593 persons are in isolation.

According to the bulletin, 1,042,243 persons have completed surveillance period and 105,475 persons are under home surveillance besides that so far results of 4,730,411 samples are available.

## GDC Beerwah Organises Webinar On Employment Avenues In J&K

**BUDGAM:** The Government Degree College (GDC) Beerwah in collaboration with District Employment and Counselling Center (DE&CC) Budgam conducted webinar, titled 'Navigating Employment Scenario and Opportunities in J&K' and 'Role and Functions of (DDUGKY) Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana', here.

The webinar was organised with an aim to access the efficient avenues about employment in the UT of J&K on Monday. Principal GDC Beerwah, Prof. Neelam Jan Shah, and the Convener, Career Counseling and Placement Cell of GDC Beerwah, Dr Nazir-Ul Amin Gash extended positive remarks to the Guest Speakers for making the event successful.

In the concluding note, it was impressed by the student community that such types of programs should be organized for the benefit of the students, in future who desire to seek employability (Employment Opportunities) in the state of J&K and outside the state.

## DDC Ang flags-off students for Snow skiing course at Gulmarg

**ANANTNAG:** District Development Commissioner (DDC) Anantnag, Anshul Garg today flagged off a group of 09 students from Sports Stadium Anantnag to participate in basic and intermediate levels of Snow Skiing Course 2021 at Gulmarg. The course is being organized by Directorate of Youth Services and Sports Jammu and Kashmir for a period of 15 days.

The DDC was informed that this was the third group from Anantnag district this season and all necessary facilities for the students are being provided by the concerned department. Speaking on the occasion, Garg said that the LGs administration is fully committed to encouraging and developing sports potential among the youth. The DC said it is heartening that the youth in Kashmir always participate in sports activities enthusiastically. He also informed that district administration in collaboration with YSS, Tourism and PDA will try to work out modalities to organise Winter Sports including skiing and other events in Pahalgam too.

### NEWS MAKERS

## Group Of 40 J&K Sarpanchs Visiting To Rajasthan

**JAMMU:** A group of 40 Sarpanchs, drawn from different districts of Jammu and Kashmir, are going to Rajasthan for an exposure tour.

It is the second batch of Sarpanchs from Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir, who are visiting Rajasthan on five day training cum exposure visit from 10th February 2021 to 14th February 2021.

The purpose of the visit is to expose them to the best practices being followed by their counterparts in that state, make them interact with the beacon leaders there, learn about the implementation of the flagship schemes etc in the state of Rajasthan.

Director Panchayats, Rakesh Srangal and Director Rural Development, Jammu, Sudershan Kumar held an interaction with the delegation ahead of the tour.

Sarpanchs were requested to take maximum advantage of the field exposure tour so that the best practices learnt get replicated in various Panchayats of J&K UT. During the visit, the Sarpanchs shall be exposed to various activities including Solid Liquid Waste Management, generation of Own Source Revenue, Preparation of Budget, Integration of labour budget under MGNREGA with GPDP and SDGs, Integration of Panchayat Development plans at various tiers, Panchayat Enterprise Suit applications etc.)

## Police Arrests Drug Peddler

**BANDIPORA:** Police arrested a drug peddler in Ganastan Sumbal area of North Kashmir's Bandipora district and recovered large quantities of Charas powder from his possession.

Police said that based on specific information, a police party of Police Post Nowgam led by Chokri Officer Nowgam under the supervision of SDPO Sumbal Nisar Ahmad during naka checking at Ganastan signaled one Scooter (DL13SH0280) rider to stop and during checking 15 KG's of Charas powder was recovered.

The accused Scooter rider has been identified as Parvaiz Ahmad Beig, a resident of Ganastan Sumbal.

Accordingly case vide FIR Number 14/2021 under relevant sections of NDPS Act was registered at police station Sumbal and further investigation taken up.

## Bat Factory Damaged In Nocturnal Fire Incident

**BIJBEHARA:** A bat manufacturing unit was badly damaged in a nocturnal fire incident in Bijbehara town of South Kashmir's Anantnag district.

The fire incident occurred in Hussanpora village of Bijbehara where this bat factory is located.

Local sources said that the bat factory was badly damaged in the fire incident. Fire tenders rushed to spot and controlled fire from spreading to other buildings.

The owner of the factory Muhammad Ramzan while confirming the fire incident said that timber and bats manufactured were damaged in the incident. He said property worth lakhs was destroyed in the incident.

Police registered a case and set investigation into motion.

## DC Gbl For Completion Of Ongoing Works Within Stipulated Time



**GANDERBAL:** The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Ganderbal, Shafqat Iqbal today impressed upon the concerned officers to speed up the pace of work on these works so that they get completed within the stipulated time frame.

The DC said this during a meeting of district officers to review the progress on works approved under the Back to Village program in the district.

On the occasion, the DC sought a detailed account of various ongoing works approved under B2V1 program from the concerned officers who briefed him about the physical and financial progress on such works.

The meeting also discussed the status of work estimation and tendering process of the works approved under B2V2 and B2V3 program.

The DC directed the concerned to complete the work estimation process in current month besides initiate tendering process on all such works which are approved under B2V2 and B2V3 so that works are taken up at an earliest.

He also stressed for regular monitoring of works and directed the officers to meet the targets and set timelines for the completion of vital projects in the district.

## KASHMIR OBSERVER

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### K O V I E W

## Battle for Bengal

Starting his election campaign in West Bengal, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday launched a scathing attack on the Mamata Banerjee-led TMC government in the state. He said while slogans like Jai Shri Ram angered Banerjee, she didn't say a word about "the international conspiracies to defame the nation". This was the PM's second visit to poll-bound states of Bengal and Assam in the last two elections. And this makes it clear that the BJP wants to leave no stone unturned to win the election in two states. More so, Bengal where the BJP wants to deny power to Banerjee and take over the state, which is one of the very few last remaining non-BJP bastions. And were this to happen, it will not only add to the growing political invincibility of the BJP under the leadership of PM Modi but will further reinforce the idea of India as envisaged by Sangh Pariwar. And this will, as a result, further narrow the space for a secular politics as practiced by the likes of Banerjee.

As of now, the situation in Bengal offers no clear cut clues as to the potential victor. The past few weeks have witnessed many a bitter exchange between the TMC and the BJP. Several TMC leaders have also defected to the BJP. The war of words between the parties is likely to get fiercer by the day.

But nothing can as yet be said with certainty about which of the two parties will eventually carry the day in Bengal. It is true that the BJP has never had a strong political base in the state. Its efforts over the past several years to mobilize public support haven't met with success. The TMC has a strong cadre and has been in power since the last ten years. The party would certainly be facing some anti-incumbency issues but it doesn't mean that the party is on a weaker wicket.

However, the significance of the Bengal election is beyond the BJP-TMC rivalry. Its outcome will be a profoundly important development. If the TMC wins, it will arrest the disarray among the secular forces and give them confidence to stand up to Modi in the upcoming state elections. As the result in recent Bihar polls has once again highlighted, only a broad secular front against the BJP could confront the party with a credible challenge. As things stand, there is no dislodging the Prime Minister Narendra Modi yet. That is, if no credible political rival emerges from the shadows in the near future, a prospect which looks bleak.

### O T H E R O P I N O N

## Troubled mountains: On Uttarakhand glacier disaster

The staggering collapse of part of a glacier in Uttarakhand's Nanda Devi mountain and the ensuing floods that have claimed many lives come as a deadly reminder that this fragile, geologically dynamic region can never be taken for granted. A significant slice of the glacier, dislodged by a landslide, according to some satellite images, produced roaring torrents in the Rishiganga and Dhauliganga rivers in Chamoli district, trapping unsuspecting workers at two hydro power project sites. Scores of people are still missing in the wave of water, silt and debris that swamped the rivers and filled tunnels in the Tapovan power project, although the immediate rescue of nearly 15 people by the ITBP, the Army and other agencies brings some cheer. The rescuers face a challenging environment as they try to locate more survivors and bring relief supplies to paralysed communities. These immediate measures are important, along with speedy compensation to affected families. But the Centre and the Uttarakhand government cannot ignore the larger context of the State's increasing frailty in the face of environmental shocks. Once the crucible of environmentalism, epitomised by Sunderlal Bahuguna, Gaura Devi and the Chipko movement, the State's deep gorges and canyons have attracted many hydroelectric projects and dams, with little concern for earthquake risk. Red flags have been raised repeatedly, particularly after the moderate quake in 1991 in the region where the Tehri dam was built and the 2013 floods that devastated Kedarnath, pointing to the threat from seismicity, dam-induced microseismicity, landslides and floods from a variety of causes, including unstable glacial lakes and climate change.

India is heavily invested in dam development and growth of hydropower, largely in the Himalaya region — especially to cut carbon emissions. By one estimate, if the national plan to construct dams in 28 river valleys in the hills is realised in a few decades, the Indian Himalayas will have one dam for every 32 km, among the world's highest densities. Yet, as researchers say, this may be a miscalculation for reasons, including potential earthquake impacts, monsoonal aberrations that could repeat a Kedarnath-like flood, severe biodiversity loss and, importantly, extreme danger to communities downstream. There is also some evidence that the life of dams is often exaggerated, and siltation, which reduces it, is grossly underestimated: in the Bhakra dam in Himachal Pradesh, for instance, siltation was higher by 140% than calculated. The need is to rigorously study the impact of policy on the Himalayas and confine hydro projects to those with the least impact, while relying more on low impact run-of-the-river power projects that need no destructive large dams and reservoirs. Unlike what the NITI Aayog seems to think of environmental accounting, this would be a sound approach.

The Hindu



## Uttarakhand Glacier Disaster

# A warning for J&K?

Put a moratorium on hydropower projects , explore solar power

DR RAJA MUZAFFAR BHAT

Nanda Devi glacier which recently broke in Uttarakhand's Chamoli district is seen as an outcome of the insensitivity of the Government in executing the developmental projects particularly construction of hydropower projects. Experts say that authorities have been executing numerous projects one after the other without properly assessing the impact of these projects on the local environment , particularly the mountain ecosystem. A study published in the journal Science Advances in June 2019, shows that glaciers have been losing the equivalent of more than a vertical foot and half of the ice each year since 2000 – double the amount of melting that took place from 1975 to 2000. Researchers at Columbia University in the US say that the data indicates that the melting is consistent in time and space, and that rising temperatures are to blame.

Temperatures vary from place to place, but from 2000 to 2016 they have averaged one degree Celsius higher than those from 1975 to 2000, they said. Researchers analyzed repeat satellite images of some 650 glaciers spanning 2,000 kilometers from west to east.

"Any area has an eco-sensitiveness and we are exploiting its limit. This disaster was a triggered one. I believe that the current government hasn't been showing enough sensitivity towards nature. The environmentalists, who have been voicing their concerns to the government against such large projects, have never been taken seriously", said Anand Arya noted environmentalist while talking to a national news channel a few days back.

Arya who is former Chairman of the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) Committee on earthquake engineering further said that another reason behind such tragedy is not following environmental assessment properly. Another noted environmental expert Anil Joshi also raised an important issue on relying upon large dams to fulfill the upcoming needs. According to him, there are other means to live. He said in his TV interview that the Government is relying upon hydropower more than any other form of energy because of its cost efficiency and reliability. "But we are missing out to evaluate the risk factor involved in the construction of dams this size", he added.

### Ujh hydropower project

Recently, an expert committee in the Ministry of environment, forests, and climate change gave clearance for the Ujh hydroelectric project in Kathua district of J&K. More than 2.14 lakh trees in this ecologically fragile area would be axed in the coming months. The project would be set up on the river Ujh which is one of the tributaries of the Ravi river that flows from Punjab and then enters Pakistan. Ujh is not only a hydropower project but it is considered to be a multipurpose project that would be used for irrigation and supplying drinking water to people as well. More than 4300 hectares of land would be required for the proposed project out of which almost 3500 hectares land will get submerged. In addition to the Government land which is around 300 hectares or more, around

700 hectares of forest land and approximately 2500 hectares of private land will also be acquired by the Government for this project. Ujh has already been declared as a national project more than 12 years back. The project is said to have 186 megawatts capacity. In the recent past, thousands of forest trees were axed during the execution of 440 KV Double Circuit Samba Amargraha transmission line. Only last month, more than 200 trees were axed around Sonmarg area during construction of the tunnel. For the Srinagar Ring Road project thousands of apple and plus trees will be cut down. In return farmers are paid compensation which was offered back in 1995. This is complete injustice.

### Environment and SDGs

Economic growth, environmental protection, and social inclusion are three core elements of sustainable development. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set up by the United Nations in 2015 are the blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all by 2030. Through SDGs, nations are likely going to address challenges that include poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace, and justice. Climate change and environmental degradation are the important aspects of SDG. Environmental Sustainability can only be achieved when we ensure environmental conservation, investment in renewable energy, saving water, supporting sus-

Goals (SDGs), as the policy adopted by Government, is completely unnatural and unsustainable.

### SC appointed committee report

A technical panel appointed by the Supreme Court in its report has estimated the value of a tree at 74,500 rupees multiplied by its age. This monetary valuation of the tree was made by a panel of experts which submitted its report to the apex court recently. The report will help frame the guidelines on the estimation and valuation of trees that are axed during land acquisition processes. As more than 2 lakh trees are to be axed during Ujh hydropower project, will the Government be able to provide adequate compensation to people or the forest department as the valuation of trees has been enhanced a lot?

Earlier the estimation would be done on the basis of wood, fruits, and life span of trees but the expert panel has now included oxygen as one of the major components of a tree.

A panel of experts told the Supreme Court bench, headed by Chief Justice S A Bobde, that trees serve the society as well as the environment and its valuation can be reached on various counts including oxygen, micro-nutrients, compost, and bio-fertilizer. The reference was made vis a vis heritage trees but this can be attributed to smaller trees as well with a lifespan of even 40 to 50 years.

**If things continue like this, by 2030, instead of achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs) in Jammu & Kashmir, people in this part of the world will be pushed into a never-ending environmental disaster**

tainable mobility, and innovation in sustainable construction and architecture. According to the national review report on the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) in India, the opening statement of which begins with Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, which is an ancient Vedic phrase whose literal meaning is "the world is one family". The opening statement read as:

"The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are thus part and parcel of the country's long standing tradition and heritage. Indeed, the goals substantially reflect the development agenda of India".

During his speech at the UN -SDG summit, PM Modi had said,

"Much of India's development agenda is mirrored in the Sustainable Development Goals. Our national plans are ambitious and purposeful; Sustainable development of one-sixth of humanity will be of great consequence to the world and our beautiful planet."

In a place like Jammu & Kashmir where there is already a scarcity of land, how can the Government allow the construction of big dams for hydropower projects which will prove to be a great threat to our ecology and environment. In addition, such mega-projects involve cutting down thousands of trees. These arbitrary decisions not only violate many laws themselves but this goes completely against the Sustainable Development

### Conclusion

If the Government believes in the philosophy of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam or sabka saath sabka vikas why are people of Jammu & Kashmir being pushed to the wall? The Government's arbitrary decisions will destroy this beautiful place in the coming years. If things continue like this, by 2030, instead of achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs) in Jammu & Kashmir, people in this part of the world will be pushed into a never-ending environmental disaster. PM must fulfill the promise he made during the SDG summit 2015 wherein he assured the United Nations to work on sustainable development and to ensure there is no environmental disaster in the name of development. The Govt of J&K & central Government in particular needs to learn a lesson from the Uttarakhand glacier burst and put a moratorium on the mega hydropower projects in J&K. Let solar energy be explored instead by setting up community solar power stations in towns and villages across Jammu & Kashmir

*Views expressed are author's own and do not necessarily represent the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer*

*Dr Raja Muzaffar Bhat is Chairman of the J&K RTI Movement. He is also the Anant Fellow for Climate Action*



## OBSERVER MAIL

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## So Long, 4G

In Kashmir valley, recently on 6th of February 2021, 4G internet was restored and that scenario was similar to that of the glacier which flows in the form of water to refresh the dank and dry rivers.

Tracing back to 18 months ago, when the abrogation of article 370 and 35A got the show on the road, the network also met a halt. For about 14 months, we're working on a slow speed 2G network and during these

circumstances, teachers used whole bags of tricks to teach students via online classes, but it was not more than chasing their tail.

Now, at the eleventh hour, we have got 4G network: a thing not less than a golden handshake. But, now we have to use this gift judiciously and cautiously. We must fast track the new ways to achieve what we have lost. Students must explore all avenues to achieve their lost knowledge

and time.

But, while 4G works like a charm, it's also a curse as its demerits are in bundles. Some of its disadvantages are:

1. Students waste their time surfing the dead wood sites.
2. Mobile causes distraction from studies and other work.
3. A phone also creates isolation in people.
4. The most dangerous disadvantage

tage of a phone is cyberbullying.

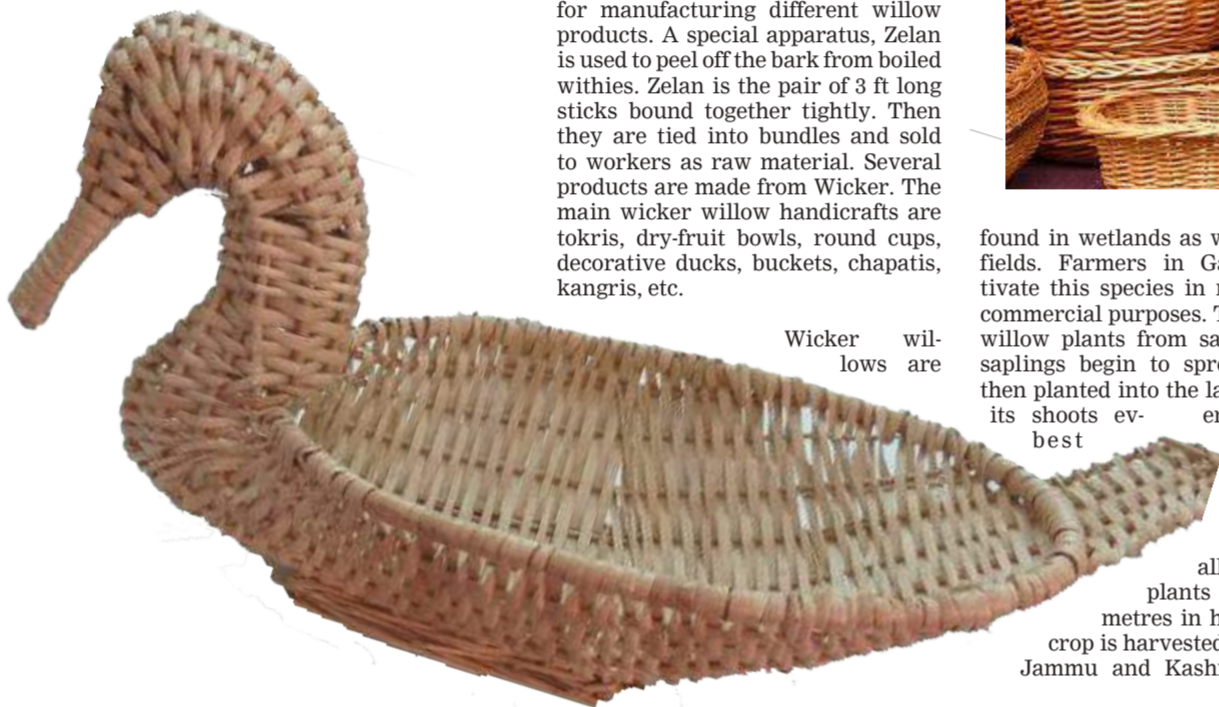
So, let's get the best out of 4G and let's get ducks in a row and let's sail through success in achieving our lost time, skill and knowledge. Because, if we will not use this "double-edged sword" cautiously, we have to either shape up or ship out.

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# Willow Wicker Craft: A Crumbling Handicraft

SADAF FAYAZ

**Wicker craft in Kashmir has undergone a number of uneven circumstances. Chinese products and plastic are trying to take the place of wicker willow products due to their finish**



Wicker willows are

**W**illow wicker craft locally called “kaeni keam” is the intricate art of basket weaving. It is an indigenous business industry of Kashmir using twigs of wicker as raw material. It is one of the oldest crafts of valley. The products of the craft once seen in every home are now witnessing a decline.

This craft is also known as Shaakhsaazi. The word “Shaakhsaazi” comprises of two words, “shaak” meaning slender pliable branches and “Saazi” meaning the act of weaving. The journey from raw wicker prunes to decorous creations is a very interesting one. The journey starts from harvesting the willow twigs. These twigs are then grouped according to the required length and breadth called “withe”. Withe is a strong flexible willow stem which is boiled and peeled subsequently. Withies are used as raw materials for manufacturing different willow products. A special apparatus, Zelan is used to peel off the bark from boiled withies. Zelan is the pair of 3 ft long sticks bound together tightly. Then they are tied into bundles and sold to workers as raw material. Several products are made from Wicker. The main wicker willow handicrafts are tokris, dry-fruit bowls, round cups, decorative ducks, buckets, chapatis, kangris, etc.



found in wetlands as well as in rice fields. Farmers in Ganderbal cultivate this species in rice fields for commercial purposes. They cultivate willow plants from saplings. When saplings begin to sprout, they are then planted into the land to harvest its shoots every year. The season for sowing of saplings is February to March. Usually, Willow plants grow upto 2-3 metres in height and the crop is harvested in October. Jammu and Kashmir enjoys a

monopolized market for wicker craft. Wicker craft is a small-scale forest based cottage industry. It plays an important role in the livelihood of stakeholders involved. Products from this craft like basket ducks and vases are used for decoration. The chairs, trays, baskets swings, trays, cradles, and the kangri are used as home utility. Willow products mark the sign of royalty on occasions like weddings and are also used by world class resorts

Wicker craft in Kashmir has undergone a number of uneven circumstances. Chinese products and plastic

are trying to take the place of wicker willow products due to their finish. Opting white collar jobs and the callous attitude of the government are the reasons that the craft is losing its legacy. With advancing living standards of people, artisans have brought innovative changes to the old designs. Designs include weaving in several directions and dyeing wicker willow to blue red or green to reclaim the declining market again.

*Writer is a student at Faculty of Forestry SKUAST-K. With Thanks to Dr Anup Raj for guidance*

## From Delhi To Doha, Karak Tea Is The Perfect Refreshment

Why is the hot drink so popular and where does it originate?

INDLIEB FARAZI SABER



**A**skilful waiter balances several trays of paper cups filled with hot, sweet karak tea, as he weaves through a cavalcade of cars to the ones at the front.

The cars are parked up along the curb outside a small shop selling the tea out of a hatch. As the customers, who remain seated in their cars, pay the couple of riyals for their hot drinks, the next car in the queue beeps for attention and eases forward to make its order.

This is what it can be like grabbing a hot drink in the Gulf.

This drive-through tea shop experience is not a business modification due to Covid-19, but has long been part of tea culture in the Middle East - specifically in Gulf countries where hot weather means many shops and restaurants offer a service where the customer doesn't have to leave the comfort of their car.

“Drinking karak in the car is also a rite of passage for the younger Qatari,” says Ghaffan Faraj Al-Abdulla, 32. “When they start driving, they don't want to drive somewhere alone, so along the way they may pick up friends and all ride in the same car together.”

“They either drive around Doha, or park somewhere and sit in the car listening to music or to watch videos on YouTube - but having a cup of karak whilst doing this adds to the experience. I would say drinking karak with friends adds flavour to the experience. It's a social event.”

### Taste of home

Karak is the name given to a tea usually made with loose black tea leaves, boiled for at least half an hour to make it strong. Fresh or tinned condensed milk is then added and cooked with the tea leaves, sometimes cardamom or other spices are also thrown in. It's also usually served sweet.

It's popularity led Emirati disc jockey and emcee, DJ Bliss, to produce a song in its honour, I Need a Karak.

The word karak itself means “strong” in Urdu and it is said that Pakistani truck drivers would break up their cross-country drives by stopping at a roadside stall to drink a cup full before hopping back into their ornately painted vehicles. The strong, spiced tea would wake them up and keep them going.

With the discovery of oil and gas in the mid-70s, migrant workers from South Asia travelled to the Gulf nations to help build the infrastructure for the rapidly developing countries, the workers also took their special blend of tea with them.

The tea provided a simple and familiar taste of home for many of the workers, Abid Mehmood remembers.

In 1975, then just 18 years old, Mehmood travelled to Qatar from Pakistan and says he was one of the hundreds of workers who built the emir's palace - Amiri Diwan.

“We didn't take much with us, but we took our tea - it was easy to make, and it kept us going.”

“I lived with other workers in our living quarters, and yes we would make our own meals and tea. There were no drive-by tea houses then, well none that I knew of. I'm guessing us bringing the karak over is how it became popular. A bit like when the British introduced tea to the sub-continent.”

It was in the 17th Century that the British discovered tea, after a trade deal with China. And in 1660, diarist Samuel Pepys first mentioned tea calling it

“excellent”. Tea leaves, expensive at the time, were brewed to a bitter blend and it wasn't until sugar and milk were added to it that it became popular and more accessible in Britain.

The English then took tea to India when it was under colonial rule, and tea plantations were introduced across the country.

### Adapting to a local palate

Shams al-Qassabi, Qatar's first female trader in Doha's Souq Waqif, has visited the tea plantations in several of India's states during business trips there to source tea and spices for her popular shop and restaurant, Shay Al Shamous.

The authentic Qatari restaurant serves up a traditional breakfast which includes karak tea, and the shop sells 480 different types of spices.

She says although the word karak may have originated in the sub-continent, the tea drunk in Qatar today is all Qatari.

“Qataris have been drinking tea with milk, chai haleeb, for generations. We used to boil the tea over firewood preparing a strong heavy tasting tea and later we added fresh cow or goat's milk, as every house in Qatar had livestock back then [in the 70s].

“Later when Rainbow tinned milk starting arriving in Qatar, people used it instead of fresh milk, and some used to add cardamom to their tea too. But the difference between Qatari karak tea and Indian karak tea is that we don't tend to add ginger or ma-

sala (spices).”

She recalls first hearing the word karak as a child, when her father mentioned it after returning from a business trip to India.

Al-Qassabi, 60, says: “Karak came later when the traders from the GCC countries, like my father, used to go to India for trade, and they would sit and drink this, and fell in love with it. My father said their tea was similar to ours, but theirs was strong and spicy.”

She says when “Indian men” later migrated to Qatar to “assist with household duties”, this is when karak was introduced to “every house in Doha. It became even more popular when Indians started their small cafeterias in Doha.

“But they don't make it how they do in India, they prepare it the Qatari way, they boil the tea with milk, but they do not add any spices, because as Qataris we like it this way. Tea, milk, sugar that's it. So I'd say karak does have Indian roots but it's prepared the Qatari way.”

Chapati and Karak, one of a Doha's many popular tea houses specialising in karak confirms al-Qassabi's views. Its website states: “The cafe's concept takes after a traditional Indian cuisine ritual that entered the GCC region and Qatar 50 years ago and has become ingrained in Doha's food culture.”

AlAbdulla, who likes sipping his karak medium sweet with a touch of cardamom, says: “Karak is part of our culture. It's comforting to drink, especially when we travel to places like London, or in cooler

months here, and we can enjoy it whilst sitting at an outdoor cafe.”

### Learning from elders

In 2014 Chapati and Karak opened its first branch outside of Qatar on London's Brompton Road.

It is part of a new wave of tea shops in the UK - not serving afternoon tea in dainty Dalton cups - but in paper ones and to a younger crowd.

One of the fastest growing chains of karak sellers in the UK is Chaiiwala. Owned by three cousins (and best friends) Muhummed Ibrahim, Mustafa Ismail and Mohammed Alimohamed, who all learnt how to make tea at the feet of their grandfather.

Ibrahim says: “I was seven years old when I made my first cup of karak.”

The trio's grandfather, Ibrahim Mahomed, was once a chaiiwala (tea seller) himself in 1920s Delhi.

When he migrated to the UK in 1975, he brought his secret tea recipe with him and continued the family tradition of teaching the boys and men of the family how to make karak.

“It's been a long-standing tradition and a show of bravado within our family. The men to this day still make the tea,” says Ibrahim. And he's planning to keep his grandfather's legacy alive. “The traditions of the family will always be passed down. My son is only two months old. But as soon as he can stand up, he will be at my side making tea, the family way.”

Five years ago, the cousins noticed people were looking for a place to socialise that didn't involve coffee, shisha or alcohol. Having grown up with karak being central to their day, drinking up to five cups, they decided to open up their own tea shop, and named it in tribute to their grandfather's profession.

Using a secret blend of five spices and tea leaves from India's Assam province, Ibrahim says his shop's karak offers an alternative flavour to Britain's coffee-loving public. And since the opening of their first store in Leicester - with seating space for only eight people - the company now has 33 outlets across the country and another 198 planned in the UK alone.

Ibrahim says its popularity and success are a result of people having lost the art of making karak at home. “The brewing process for a traditional karak chahi is over 40 minutes. It's a time-consuming process in today's fast paced lifestyle.”

### The cycle of tea

And centuries after the British first brought tea to India and England, the Chaiiwalas are set to do it again; they now plan to take karak back to India and into Pakistan and the Gulf.

“We have our roots in the East but we've developed and grown in the West,” says Ibrahim.

Branded as “Chaiiwala of London”, they are optimistic that the name itself will appeal to the Gulf and South Asian markets.

“We know that taking our brand in to those regions will give the customers there a feel of the West but with products that they know and love.”

And with a Chaiiwala recipe book out in May 2021, tea lovers will soon be able to brew their own cup of karak - whatever they call it and wherever they are in the world.

....  
Middle East Eye



## Petrol, Diesel Prices At Fresh Highs; Petrol Crosses Rs 87 Mark In Delhi



**NEW DELHI:** Petrol and diesel prices on Tuesday climbed to fresh highs in the country as rates were hiked after a three-day hiatus.

Petrol and diesel prices were hiked by 35 paise per litre each, according to price notifications of state-owned fuel retailers.

The increase took petrol prices to a fresh high of Rs 87.30 a litre in Delhi and to Rs 93.83 in Mumbai. Diesel rates rose to Rs 77.48 per litre in the national capital and to an all-time high of Rs 84.36 in Mumbai.

Prices were last hiked by 30 paise on February 5.

Rates have risen by Rs 3.59 per litre in case of petrol and by Rs 3.61 on diesel in 2021. Brent crude oil price on Monday rose above USD 60 per barrel for the first time in more than a year on improving demand outlook amid the global rollout of Covid-19 vaccines.

Last week, Mukesh Kumar Surana, head of India's third-largest fuel retailer Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL), said that a sudden spike in international oil prices because of a perception of mismatch in demand and supply as well as a cut in pro-

duction by Saudi was fuelling the retail price hikes.

He had said that only 25-30 per cent of the retail pump rates are dependent on cost and the rest are central and state taxes.

"We probably have no choice but to pass on the variation (in benchmark cost) to the consumer," he had said. "The government has taxation handle."

Also last week, Oil Minister Dharmendra Pradhan told the Rajya Sabha in a written reply to a question that excise duty levied by the central government makes up for Rs 32.98 per litre of the price of petrol in Delhi and sales tax or VAT of the state government constitutes Rs 19.55.

For diesel, the central excise adds up to Rs 31.83 and VAT to Rs 10.99, he had said.

Besides, the price includes a dealer commission of a minimum Rs 2.6 per litre on petrol and Rs 2 on diesel.

Retail petrol rates have risen by Rs 17.71 per litre since mid-March 2020 after the government raised taxes by a record margin to mop up gains arising from fall in international oil prices. Diesel rates have gone up by Rs 15.19. PTI

## SLEC Meeting Clears Horticulture Projects

**JAMMU:** Principal Secretary, Horticulture, Agriculture Production and Farmers' Welfare Departments, Navin Kumar Choudhary chaired a State Level Executive Committee (SLEC) meeting at the Civil Secretariat here today. The meeting was called by Department of Horticulture regarding approval of projects under Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH).

The Principal Secretary thoroughly checked details, projects analyses, their estimated costs and information about the applicants. He also reviewed project viability and estimated costs about the projects.

In all, four projects of Controlled Atmosphere Storage and one food processing project was cleared by the SLEC.

During the course of the meeting, Principal Secretary highlighted that the SLEC meetings must be held regularly and all applications be approved at the minimum possible time. Each and ev-

ery delay is practically a loss of opportunity cost as well as loss to economy, he said.

Navin Choudhary hailed that walnut processing and high density orchards have great untapped potential to give boost to our economy and generate a number of jobs. Establishing a robust food processing industry in J&K is the need of the hour, he added.

The meeting was attended by DG Planning, S Bilal Ahmad; Director Floriculture, KS Chib; Director Planning, Forests, Parvaiz Handoo; Director Horticulture (P&M), Ram Savak; Special Secretary (I&C), Tariq Ahmad Zargar, Additional Secretary Horticulture, Jahangir Hashmi; Joint Director (P), Subash Chander; Joint Director Agriculture Jammu, KK Sharma; Assistant Director Research, SKUAST Jammu, Pardeep Wali.

Director Horticulture Kashmir, Ajaz Ahmad Bhat and Director Agriculture Kashmir, Mohammad Iqbal Choudhary attended the meeting through video conferencing.

## IBEF, TPCI, FIEO Roped In For Brand Building Of J&K Handicraft Products

**NEW DELHI:-** A delegation of officers from Government of Jammu & Kashmir headed by Mahmood Ahmad Shah, Director, Handicrafts & Handloom, Kashmir, attended a series of meetings with the Senior officers of India Brand Equity Foundation (IBEF), Trade Promotion Council of India (TPCI) and Federation of Indian Export Organization (FIEO) here today regarding brand building of products manufactured in Jammu and Kashmir.

Vikas Gupta, Director Handicrafts & Handloom, Jammu and Aamir A. Rather, General Manager, JKTPO were also the part of the visiting delegation.

The delegation discussed in detail the products manufactured in J&K with Associate Director, IBEF, Parul Singh. During the meeting it was given that that standard parameters need to be put in place in order to distinguish GI Tagged products from other items. The meeting also decided that better branding on J&K products is required to gain customer's trust.

During the interaction, it was also suggested that short-duration films regarding GI Tagging should be created and circulated on the social media platforms for awareness of the masses at large.

Associate Director, IBEF, assured the visiting delegation that IBEF will help improve the designing and branding of J&K products and will also create a direct link between artisans and customers.

The meeting also discussed the ways and means for displaying and market-



File Photo

ing the products of J&K at five-star hotels and showrooms in different cities across the country.

The IBEF also agreed to provide value addition to the existing products and Film Tourism promotion in J&K.

In another meeting with Kapil Gupta, Joint Director General, TPCI and Sandip Das, Deputy Director General, TPCI in depth discussion was held to identify suitable locations in various cities across the country to organize exhibitions in the month of March, 2021 to showcase the J&K products.

The meeting was informed that around 25-30 artisans will participate in each exhibition. Further, it was also deliberated to showcase J&K products in malls and other preferable locations with heavy footfall. The officers of TPCI assured to provide all necessary infrastructure, logistics and publicity support for these exhibitions.

Similarly in an another meeting with Prashant Seth, Director, FIEO and Chandranath Som, DDG, FIEO,

global visibility to local industries, self help groups and GI Tagged items was discussed in length.

It was given out in the meeting that the process of creating a JKTPO-FIEO co-branded E-commerce portal for GI Tagged items of J&K having the capability of retail sale has already been initiated. Further, the capacity-building cum training programs, handholding programs to guide MSMEs and artisans were also discussed in the meeting.

The meeting was also informed that FIEO is in process of preparing a concept note for Export strategy for J&K products. Besides this, it will also help in promoting the products of J&K on social media.

The meeting also held detailed deliberations on issues of exporters, HS Codes for Handicrafts & Handloom products and setting up of standard parameters to differentiate handmade, machine made and semi-machine made articles.

## J&K Bank Q3 Net Profit Up 33% At Rs 65.94 Cr Quarterly Operating Profit Jumps 68% To Rs 563.47 Cr

**SRINAGAR:** Despite higher COVID-related provisioning, J&K Bank has delivered profits for the third consecutive quarter of the current financial year. The bank stated this today after the Board of Directors of the Bank reviewed and approved the Third Quarter and Nine Month Results (December 31, 2020) in a meeting held here at the bank's Corporate Headquarters.

**Performance Highlights**  
Backed by higher Net Interest Income (NII), the Bank's profit is up by 32.84% YoY at Rs 65.94 Cr against Rs 49.64 Cr recorded for the third quarter of last financial year. The bank's net interest income, or core income, has increased by 15% YoY to Rs 1005.13 Cr from Rs 874.65 Cr recorded for the corresponding period last year.

In aggregate terms, the bank has clocked Rs 116.37 Cr net profit for nine-months of the current fiscal. The operating profit of the bank has jumped 68% to Rs 563.47 Cr as against Rs 335.56 Cr recorded on December 31, 2019, while as the other income segment has more than doubled to Rs 271.65 Cr from Rs 128.66 Cr recorded for Q3 of last financial year. The Net Interest Margin (NIM) for the quarter has improved to 3.88% (annualized) as against 3.68% recorded last financial year.

"Delivering profits for three consecutive quarters testifies to our institutional resilience and our resolve to brave all odds through a triad of focused-policy, efficient-execution and effective-oversight. And, with these numbers, I think we have laid a stronger and better foundation for growth-momentum that also remains the focus not only of banking industry's outlook but at the heart of country's economic stance amid country-wide Covid-vaccination

drive", commented the bank's CMD R K Chhibber on the occasion.

**Higher Provisioning**  
Exhibiting prudence, the bank has increased the provision cover to create adequate buffer to further strengthen its balance sheet.

The Provision Coverage Ratio for the reviewed quarter is at 83.67% - one amongst the highest in the industry - as against 73.30% recorded during the corresponding period last year.

**Asset Quality**  
Meanwhile, the bank's net NPA's as percentage to net Advances ratio has halved to 2.50% from 4.36% while as the Gross NPA ratio has sharply declined to 8.71% from 11.10% recorded as on December 31, 2019.

Regarding the bank's asset-quality, the CMD asserted, "Since we have provided for stressed accounts upfront, the asset quality of our loan book is much better today thus making our balance sheet fundamentally stronger than it was a year ago. However, we will remain alert to any fresh slippages, make further provisions and move cautiously as many policy-minds forecast difficult NPA scenario ahead for the country's banks. At the same time we would keep our sights locked on NPA recovery and encourage one time settlements within the regulatory norms"

**Business Growth**  
The advances have increased by 3% from Rs 64488.06 Cr to Rs 66545.32 Cr during the quarter reviewed while as the deposits have shown a steady growth of 11% from Rs 93170.08 Cr to Rs 103804.23 Cr. However, the bank has witnessed 13% growth both in advances and deposits' portfolios in the UT of J&K despite sluggish market conditions across the country. The CASA Ratio of the bank during the re-

viewed quarter is 54.44% as against 51.54% recorded as on 31st December 2019.

Regarding the business growth, the CMD said, "We have performed quite well despite tough market conditions and secured a decent bottom-line while registering a double-digit growth in advances as well as in deposits in the UT of J&K. The growth in advances comes on the back of incredible performance vis-à-vis priority sector lending with focus on government sponsored cases. Also the Bank has registered impressive lending numbers of around Rs 1800 Cr under Centre's Atmanirbhar programme."

"Owing to the Government's focus on infrastructure spending, we expect a sizable growth in our lending book in the upcoming quarters", he added.

**Capital Adequacy**  
The bank's Capital Adequacy Ratio is at 11.77%, which is quite well within the BASEL III norms, as against 11.10% recorded as on December 31, 2019.

"The process for augmentation of capital by the bank is already in advance stage and once done, it shall boost our lending capacity to the more productive sectors of economy", the CMD said.

Further, shedding light upon other priorities of the bank in upcoming quarters, the CMD said, "The bank will sharpen its focus to improve service delivery mechanisms further, expedite the process of succession planning, complete the process of hiring specialized professionals besides recruitment of Probationary Officers and Banking Associates, incentivize performance through career progression, upskill human resource in specializations to meet the challenges of new-age banking while ensuring a transparent and accountable corporate governance system."

## Tourism Deptt To Organise Nowruz Festival, Baisakhi Mela

**BARAMULLA:** Director, Tourism, Kashmir, Dr. GN Itoo Tuesday visited Eco Park, Khadniyar, Baramulla and inspected various works being executed by NBCC, Gulmarg Development Authority and Tourism Department for its further development and beautification.

Taking an on the spot review of the works being undertaken at the park, the Director Tourism asked the officers to complete all the works by March-end and instructed them to strictly monitor the works on a regular basis for smooth execution of the projects. He was informed about the damages caused to the infrastructure due to recent snowfall and other issues including proper water supply to the park.

Dr. Itoo gave on spot instructions for the resolution of all the issues besides carrying out immediate repair works to the damaged infrastructure, restoration of amusement park for children and its up-gradation. He directed the officers to maintain the highest standard of works and complete them by March-end so that visitors can have all facilities here in the upcoming spring and summer seasons and the park, which has become a landmark on the Baramulla-Uri National Highway, emerges as an important tourist stop over.

The Director Tourism further said that the department will also explore developing a cycle track near the park to encourage adventure, recreational and eco-friendly sports activities among the locals and tourists equally. He also visited the Igloo hut at the park and other assets and said that a modern eco-friendly cafe will also be developed to provide food outlet facilities for the visitors.

Dr. Itoo said in the coming summer season, both private and public school children of the catchment areas will be invited to the park for camping and also day-long excursions to increase the visitors' flow to the park. He further informed that the park will also have a beautiful state of art solar light illumination system being installed jointly by NBCC and Engineering Wing of the Tourism Department.

The Director Tourism said the Eco Park has a huge tourism potential and the department in collaboration with district administration will promote and explore adventure, heritage, leisure, religious and recreational tourism. In this regard, he said the department will organise Nowruz festival on March 21 which will be followed by a

bigger Mela on Baisakhi to make this place popular on the tourism map and tap the tourism and adventure potential of this area fully.

On the tourism potential of Baramulla district, the Director Tourism said a cable car project from Khadniyar to Bosian at the Ecopark is being explored and in this regard a detailed project report will soon be undertaken. He said besides this various spots in the district which have emerged as potential tourist attractions like Guwas, Namblan fall, Kiterdaji etc. would be developed as regular tourist destinations.

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## Hoteliers Club Assures Support For Tourism Promotion Campaigns



**SRINAGAR:** Jammu and Kashmir Hoteliers Club Monday met Director Tourism Kashmir Dr. G N Itoo to welcome him who recently assumed office.

J&K Hoteliers Club was led by its Chairman Mushtaq Ahmad Chaya who was accompanied by Secretary-General Tariq Rashid Ghani and President Gulmarg Chapter Mukhtar Shah.

Chaya welcomed Dr. G N Itoo on assuming the office as Director Tourism Kashmir and expressed hope that under his leadership, the tourism sector will be taken to new heights.

Chaya said Tourism industry is one of the mainstays of JK's economy and needs to be promoted vigorously.

He complimented the efforts of the department for

attracting tourists back to the Valley after Covid-19 unlock.

Chaya said the hoteliers will provide every sort of support to the tourism department for the upcoming promotional activities.

He also informed the Director that tourists are confirming bookings in good numbers which is an encouraging sign and needs to be further capitalised.

"We have been facing a severe crisis for almost two years. Now tourists have started coming back. We are welcoming them but we need to further strengthen the promotional campaigns," he said.

J&K Hoteliers Club also raise various issues with the director and hope that they will be addressed sooner.

### NEWS MAKERS

## Govt To Soon Bring Bill On Cryptocurrencies? Here's What Finance Ministry Has To Say

The government will soon bring a bill on crypto currencies as existing laws are inadequate to deal with issues concerning them, Minister of State For Finance Anurag Thakur told Rajya Sabha on Tuesday.

Replying to a question in the Upper House, Thakur said regulatory bodies like RBI and Sebi do not have any legal framework to directly regulate crypto currencies as they are not currencies, assets, securities or commodities issued by identifiable users.

"The existing laws are inadequate to deal with the subject," he said. The government had formed an Inter-Ministerial Committee which has given its report on issues related to virtual currencies. There was also a meeting of the Empowered Technology Group. The Committee of Secretaries



chaired by the Cabinet Secretary has also given its report.

"A bill (on crypto currencies) is being finalised and it will soon be sent to the Cabinet. We will soon be bringing a bill," Thakur said. Earlier, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman too had said that a High-Level Inter-Ministerial Committee has been constituted in this regard. In its report, the report stated that "all private cryptocurrencies,

except any cryptocurrency issued by the State, be prohibited in India. The Government would take a decision on the recommendations of the IMC and the legislative proposal, if any, would be introduced in the Parliament following the due process."

In view of the risks associated with Virtual Currencies (VCs), including Bitcoins, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) through a circular in April 2018, had advised all the entities regulated

by it not to deal in VCs or provide services for facilitating any person or entity in dealing with or settling VCs.

However, Supreme Court, vide judgement dated March 4, 2020, had set aside the RBI's circular.

To another question regarding Chinese companies in the country, the minister said as of now, there are around 92 companies registered in the country. Out of them, 80 Chinese companies are actively working in India.

Electric automaker Tesla said Monday that it has invested around USD 1.5 billion in Bitcoin and it plans to begin accepting the digital currency as payment for its high-end vehicles soon. The price of Bitcoin soared 15.4 per cent to around USD 44,500 Monday in reaction to Tesla's announcement, according to CoinBase.

(With inputs from PTI)

## Sensex, Nifty Snap 6-Session Winning Run; End Marginally Lower

Snapping their six-session winning streak, equity benchmarks Sensex and Nifty ended marginally lower on Tuesday amid profit-booking in IT, FMCG and auto stocks.

After rallying 487 points to touch its lifetime intra-day high of 51,835.86, the 30-share BSE Sensex pared all gains to end 19.69 points or 0.04 per cent lower at 51,329.08.

Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty slipped 6.50 points or 0.04 per cent to 15,109.30. It touched a record peak of 15,257.10 during the day.

M&M was the top laggard in the Sensex pack, shedding around 4 per cent, followed by Bajaj Finance, ITC, Sun Pharma, Bajaj Auto, Bajaj Finserv and TCS. On the other hand, Asian Paints, ONGC, Titan, L&T and Axis Bank were among the gainers.

Domestic equities remained buoyant for most of the session with



benchmark indices making fresh highs. However, high volatility was seen towards the end of the session and profit-booking was witnessed in a large number of stocks, experts said.

Broad-based rally was not seen and only select large cap counters supported market, said Binod Modi, Head - Strategy at Reliance Securities. Midcap and smallcap indices underperformed sharply

and barring financials most of the key sectoral indices were in red. Elsewhere in Asia, bourses in Shanghai, Hong Kong and Tokyo ended with gains, while Seoul closed lower.

Stock exchanges in Europe were trading on a negative note in mid-session deals.

Meanwhile, the global oil benchmark Brent crude was trading 0.40 per cent higher at USD 60.94 per barrel. PTI

# Contd. from front page

## PM Bids Tearful

whose term is coming to an end next week.

The prime minister was participating in the farewell speech for Leader of Opposition Azad and three other members from Jammu and Kashmir -- Nazir Ahmad Laway, Shamsher Singh Manhas, Mir Mohammad Fayaz-- whose terms in the Upper House are coming to an end.

Modi said it would be difficult for anyone to fill the shoes of Azad as he cared not only about his political affiliation but also about the country and the House.

"I worry that after Azad whosoever will take over from him will have to fill very big boots because he cared not only about his party but about the country as well as the House. This is not a small thing, this a big thing," Modi said.

He noted that Azad had called him to ask for an all party meeting during COVID-19 period.

"I liked that and also did it. This kind of connection is there because he has the experience of both being in power and in opposition. Twenty-eight years experience in all, it is a big thing," the prime minister said.

Reminiscing about their long association, Modi said that as chief ministers of Jammu and Kashmir and Gujarat, both of them kept in touch with each other.

Sharing details of their communication during a militant attack on some Gujarati pilgrims in Jammu and Kashmir, Modi said Azad was the first one to call him about the incident.

With tears rolling down his cheeks, Modi said that Azad cried on the call while informing him about the horrific attack.

"Azad was the first person to call me. During that call he could not stop crying," Modi said with a choked voice as tears rolled down from his eyes.

Azad later went to the airport when the bodies were sent back and kept in touch till the plane landed in Gujarat, Modi said.

"Power comes and goes but (only a few know) how to digest it...therefore like a friend, I respect him on the basis of the things he has done over these years," Modi said while wiping his tears and saluting Azad.

Modi said he believes that Azad's concern for his country won't let him sit and whatever responsibilities he takes in the future would be beneficial for the nation.

"At a personal level, I would request him to not believe that he is not in the House. My door is always open for all of you. I will always expect and value your inputs," he said.

"I will not let you become weak," the prime minister told Azad as he closed his comments.

Earlier, Rajya Sabha Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu described Azad as a voice of sanity in public life over few decades when he made valuable contributions while serving both in government and in opposition.

Azad retires from Rajya Sabha on February 15 after being the leader of opposition for over six years since June 8, 2014.

Naidu said Azad's retirement is particularly painful with the House having lost Sushma Swaraj and Arun Jaitley.

### ‘Proud To Be A

return of Kashmiri Pandits back to the valley.

Recalling his journey, Azad, who started his political career when he was still a student, said reading about Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad made him patriotic.

He said it would take weeks to narrate his legislative experience of 41 years and recalled how his political career started during his school days.

"When I was a college student in Jammu and Kashmir, both August 14 and August 15 used to be celebrated. The majority used to celebrate August 14. I was among those few fortunate people, about a dozen, who used to celebrate August 15," Azad said.

The former Union minister said he is among those "lucky" people who have never gone to Pakistan.

"When I read about the state of affairs in Pakistan, I feel proud that I am a Hindustani Musalman," he said.

Muslims in India should have pride for themselves as they have kept away from the evils that are there in the neighbouring countries, Azad said.

However, he also added: "The majority community should also take two steps forward."

Remembering his tenure as the chief minister of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir, Azad said he had convened his first public meeting in the troubled Sopore district, which is unthinkable even today.

"I had said my government would be a government of the people of Jammu and Kashmir and if any minister worked on the basis of religion and party, I would be ashamed," he said.

Azad specially thanked former prime minister Sanjay Gandhi, saying he reached here only because of them.

"I have worked with five presidents and around four or five prime ministers as a member of their cabinets. I also got the opportunity to work as the party in-charge of states and Union territories 35-36 times," he said, adding that he got to learn several things from these experiences.

Azad also remembered how he got chances to work with senior Congress leaders and even with stalwarts of other political parties while negotiating on behalf of his party, including Jyoti Basu of the CPI(M), M Karunanidhi of the DMK, J Jayalalithaa of the AIADMK, Chandra Shekhar, Mulayam Singh Yadav, Parkash Singh Badal, G K Moopanar, K Karunakaran, Farooq Abdullah and Mufti Mohammad Sayeed.

"I was the parliamentary affairs minister with three prime ministers," he said.

However, Azad said he had a special bond with late BJP leader and former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

"I cannot forget that Indiraji used to tell me and Fotedarji (Makhan Lal Fotedar), who was then her political secretary, to be in touch with Atalji. She did not say the BJP, but asked us to be in touch with Atalji," he said.

Azad said from 1991-96, when the Congress was in power, he was the parliamentary affairs minister in the minority government and Vajpayee was the leader of opposition, he

learnt a lot from the latter.

"I have learnt from him as to how a solution is arrived at in which both the government and the opposition will have their say," he said.

Azad said he has cried only five times in his life -- when Sanjay Gandhi, Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi died, which were sudden, during the tsunami in 1999 and in 2005, when he was the chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir and militants had killed Gujarati tourists in a grenade attack on their bus.

Even when his father died, he had tears in his eyes but did not cry, he said.

"Today, I pray to god to finish militancy from this country," Azad said, while pointing out that thousands of police, military and paramilitary personnel have been killed in the battle against militancy.

"Several citizens have also been killed in cross-firing and thousands of our daughters and mothers have become widows," he said while hoping that normalcy returns to the Kashmir valley.

Azad also recalled his association with Kashmiri Pandits, who used to vote for him in large numbers during his student union days.

"Now, all of us are separated and I always have deep regrets when I meet my classmates," he said.

Dedicating a couplet to all those displaced from the valley, the former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister said, "Us ashiyana jo ki is waqt ujda hua hai, uske liye hum sabko prayas karna hai (all of us have to make efforts to restore the nest, which is devastated now)."

Azad thanked Rajya Sabha Chairman and Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other dignitaries, including the Secretary-General of the House.

He also praised the prime minister, who always wished him personally on occasions such as Eid and his birthday.

Azad's Rajya Sabha membership comes to an end on February 15

### Azad's Final Walkout

leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha, Modi said it won't be easy for anyone to step in Azad's boots. The speech saw the premier breaking down for his friend who in 2007 first informed him about the death of Gujarati tourists killed in a grenade attack in Kashmir.

Amid these accolades and tributes, Azad sat silent, concealed his emotions behind a mask and intermittently responded the resounding remarks and accolades with folded hands.

"But barely 8 years ago when Modi addressed his Lalkar rally in Jammu and created cleavage in Jammu region as a PM-elect, there was only Azad who could manage consolidating the Muslim vote of the region and get a good share of Hindu votes for his sway on the both the communities," said Sultan Mohammad, a senior congress political worker. "Today's friends were yesteryear's nemesis fighting a turf war in J&K."

By terming himself a "proud Indian Muslim", Azad recalled his association with Indira and her son Sanjay Gandhi in his farewell address in Rajya Sabha.

As a young and ambitious political activist, Azad made his formal political debut after the 21-month long Emergency imposed by his "madam" ended on 1977. He suffered an early loss from Indervall state assembly seat.

That primary defeat removed him from the political scene of J&K where his senior Mufti Mohammad Sayeed was then holding the congress fort and proving the only opposition to the National Conference.

Outside the state, his political career was mainly determined by his Rajya Sabha stints and his twin wins--1980 and 1985--from Maharashtra's Washim constituency.

In 1990, Azad was elected to Rajya Sabha from Maharashtra. National Conference nominated him to the upper house in 1996. He eventually played a big role in floating the PDP-Congress alliance in 2002.

In 2005, he was elected as the Chief Minister of J&K and months later registered the first assembly election win from J&K with a massive victory from his home-turf, Baderwah.

"After I became chief minister, I held first public meeting in [Syed Ali] Geelani's bastion, Sopore," Azad said in his farewell speech. "It was the message that none could be discriminated during my rule."

After three years, Azad saw his coalition government collapsing under the weight of 2008 summer agitation. A year later, Azad was reelected to Rajya Sabha.

While battling for J&K's Statehood and wishing to end turmoil in his homeland, Azad pointed out the fact in his parliament address that the majority has to lead by an example.

"I think it was a subtle parting comment on the state of affairs in the country today, under his friend's rule," Sultan, the congress activist, said.

### Mercury Rises

Qazigund recorded a low of minus 4.3 degrees Celsius, up from the previous night's minimum of minus 5.5 degrees Celsius, they said.

Pahalgam tourist destination in south Kashmir, recorded a low of minus 2.2 degrees Celsius -- up over three notches from minus 5.3 degrees Celsius the previous night.

The minimum temperature at Gulmarg in north Kashmir's Baramulla district settled at minus 3.5 degrees Celsius on Monday night, one notch down compared to the previous night's low, the officials said.

Kupwara town in north Kashmir recorded a low of minus 1.6 degrees Celsius, while Kokernag, in the south, minus 2.5 degrees Celsius.

The MeT office has said there is a possibility of a spell of light rain or snowfall at a few places in the higher reaches of the valley on Tuesday, while the weather in the plains is expected to remain mainly dry.

### Landslide Blocks

are about to ensure early restoration of traffic, they said.

There is only one-way movement of traffic from Srinagar towards Jammu. (PTI)

### Pilgrims From

pre-selection formalities.

There is also uncertainty over the February

10 meeting between Indian diplomats and Saudi authorities to finalise the Haj pilgrims' quota for this year and arriving at a mutual agreement.

A source in the State Haj Committee said chances of allotment of quota looks bleak with the pilgrimage dates drawing near.

The Haj is scheduled for July this year. Officials in the Haj Committee believe that even if Saudi government allows Indians, it is likely that the quota will be reduced.

### Missing Teen's

body was spotted by the villagers, who instantly informed the police about the shocking discovery.

A seventh standard student, Shahid had gone missing on February 3 from his native village. His family filed a missing complaint with police station Soibugh after the teenager failed to return home.

In a statement issued here, a police spokesperson said that on February 5, a complaint was received from Farooq Ahmad Malik that his teenage son has not returned home after venturing out to buy grocery.

"On receiving this report, a FIR was registered and search was begun. However today morning, locals informed police that the body of the missing child is lying in orchards of village pymus," he said.

He further said that a police party reached the spot and took the body into custody.

"Medico-legal investigation has been started into the matter," he added.

As per the officials, body of teenager was handed over to the family for last rites after completion of legal-medico formalities.

Meanwhile, the family members of the minor have alleged a murder and demanded a thorough investigation to bring culprits to the book.

"It's a cold blooded murder. He was hanged to death. We searched the spot thrice in these six days where the body was found today," a close relative said.

"He has been murdered last night only. What animosity would a 12-year-old have with anyone? We demand a transparent probe so that his killers are caught and punished," he added.

Meanwhile, a pall of gloom descended on the entire Soibugh area when the minor's body was brought home for funeral. Heart wrenching scenes were witnessed as the women were seen weeping and beating their chests in mourning.

### AC Approval

of the Second Schedule of the Transaction of Business of the Government of Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir Rules, 2019.

"Proposals for Administrative approval of all projects above Rs. 20.00 Crores, after concurrence by Finance Department, shall be placed for the consideration and approval of the Administrative Council constituted vide Government Order No. 808-JK (GAD) of 2020 Dated 01.09.2020," reads the order.

### What Dr Farooq

we cannot make changes. But we have made law. If they (farmers) want it to be scrapped, why can't you talk to them," he said.

"I would request you with folded hands that let us not stand on prestige... This is our nation. We belong to this nation and if we belong to this nation let us respect everybody in this nation," Abdullah said, adding, "Come out with a solution."

He also urged the law minister to bring some law to stop such activities.

Abdullah also asserted that Lord Ram belongs to the whole world.

"Ram belongs to all of us. The way Muslims have held on to the Quran, the Quran is not just ours."

He also accused NDA MPs of questioning the stature of political visionaries such as Jawaharlal Nehru and said that he feels really bad when he see that fingers are being pointed at India's first prime minister, Sardar Patel, Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi and other leaders.

"It is not Indian parampara. Respect those who have gone," he stressed.

On the recently-concluded District Development Council (DDC) polls, he said, these happened peacefully but now elected members were being purchased to force the members to vote for others.

Congratulating Indian scientists and the Serum Institute of India for developing a vaccine against coronavirus, he said that as of now very few people were being vaccinated and efforts should be made that more and more people get the jab.

He also said that the virus has badly hit the tourism industry in Jammu and Kashmir and he has no words to explain the poverty of the people in the Union territory.

### Govt Seeks Cybercrime

and integrity of India, against the defence of India, against the security of the State, against friendly relations with foreign States, content aimed at disturbing public order, disturbing communal harmony and child sex abuse material.

A spokesperson of Jammu and Kashmir police said that any Indian citizen can get associated with this programme by registering in any of three categories of cyber volunteers -- Cyber Volunteer Unlawful Content Flagger, Cyber Awareness Promoter and Cyber Expert.

While the first category will help identify illegal and unlawful online content like child pornography, rape, gang rape, terrorism, radicalisation, anti-national activities etc, the second category will help create awareness about cyber crime among citizens, including vulnerable groups like women, children, the elderly, rural population etc.

Cyber Expert category volunteer will help deal with specific domains of cybercrime, forensics, network forensics, malware analysis, memory analysis and cryptography.

While there is no prior verification required for the first category, a background verification of volunteers of other two categories will be done as per the norms of Know Your Customers (KYC) by the respective state governments and union territories.

The volunteers are required to furnish personal particulars like full name, father's name, mobile number, email address, residential

address.

Once the registration process is complete, the details of the volunteers would be accessible to the Union Territory Inspector General of Police (crime branch) who is the nodal officer for cybercrime.

The I4C is an idea conceived to fight against cybercrime in a coordinated and comprehensive manner.

"One of the important objectives of I4C is to create an ecosystem that brings together academia, industry, public and government in prevention, detection, investigation and prosecution of cybercrimes," a document of the Home Ministry said.

This programme also envisages bringing together citizens with a passion to serve the nation on a single platform and contribute in the fight against cybercrime in the country.

The Home Ministry document made it clear that the programme is "purely volunteer" with no monetary benefits and a volunteer shall not use it for any commercial gain.

The volunteers are barred from issuing any public statement about their association with this program and are also "strictly prohibited" from using the name of Ministry of Home Affairs or claim to have an association with the ministry on any social media or public platform.

While asking volunteers to read Article 19 of the Constitution which deals with freedom of expression, the Home Ministry said that they shall maintain strict confidentiality of task assigned or carried out by them as a part of this program, and any violations would lead to their re-registration

### J&K Admin

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) had already murdered "insaniyat" (humanity) and "Kashmiriyat" by scrapping Article 370 of the Constitution in August 2019 and now, by "manipulating the DDC election results", it has put "the final nail in the coffin" of democracy.

"Disgusting that senior officers in admin & police have taken it upon themselves to violate the mandate of people. By scrapping Article 370, BJP had already murdered insaniyat & Kashmiriyat. Now by manipulating DDC results, they've put the final nail in the coffin of Jamhuriyat," she said in another tweet.

Mehbooba's tweets came after the National Conference (NC) also accused the BJP and the Jammu and Kashmir Apni Party, led by former finance minister Altaf Bukhari, of "undermining" democracy by "resorting to illicit means" to capture power in the DDC polls.

### DDC Members

elected as the vice-chairperson of the council.

Khan was a member of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), but decided to contest the DDC polls, held in December last year, as an independent candidate.

The officials said there was a tie between Khan and his rival Abdul Ahad Dar with each securing seven votes.

A draw of lots was held in which Khan was declared as successful and thus elected as chairman DDC Budgam.

However, the protesting members said the approach employed by District Budgam officials has raised a question mark on the entire process and "quivered by its failure" to make a mark in the DDC polls. "the BJP and its ilk is employing all dishonest means to benefit its B-team to grab DDCs".

The BJP seems to have shun all its inhibitions in winning crossovers through hook or by crook, one of the nine DDC members told reporters.

"The procedure of the lottery was carried out in an unfair manner. The DC wrote the names of the two contenders on a piece of paper and asked the clerk sitting next to him to choose between the two slips. The clerk had already seen the DC scribble the names," he claimed.

"Having failed to make any mark in the elections, the BJP, and its ilk is now resorting to all illicit means to grab the power by coercing and intimidating DDC members in one way or another," the member said.

"We had participated in the elections to ensure that the sacred space of democracy is used to benefit the people, but contrary to their claims on strengthening grassroots democracy; the government is derailing democracy and setting wrong precedence by stooping to such stumpy levels of political impropriety and fraudulence," he said.

"We demand re-election for the post of chairperson," he added.

Earlier, the DDC members apprised the party general secretary about the "clumsy and unfair" mode of election and lottery system employed for the election of DDC chairperson, a NC spokesman said.

The visiting delegation acquainted how the local administration favoured a particular DDC member to benefit him in the election by ditching all established norms and rules, the spokesperson said.

Interacting with the visiting delegation, the NC general secretary said such measures undermine the democratic moorings of the country and violate the mandate of people.

"Through DDC elections, the people of J&K had conveyed a message. The BJP and its ilk are unfortunately making an error in reading it. In a curious turn of events it is nose diving to the lowest ebb of political impropriety in a gambit to grab power in DDCs using intimidation, coercion and state apparatus to achieve that end," Sagar said.

"The rampant instances of defection, and

crossovers using coercion, intimidation and bullying post DDC elections in Shopian, Srinagar, Budgam and elsewhere in Jammu and Kashmir is a telling indictment of the BJP's brand of politics," he added

### MHA Okays

Ladakh Affairs, MHA has no objection for deputation of Alok Kumar, IRS to UT of J&K, on the basis of cadre clearance/no objection issued by the Competent Authority in CBDT, D/O Revenue, Ministry of Finance, vide letter number HRD/CM/152/85/2013-14 dated 16-12-2020.

"The deputation of Shri Alok Kumar, IRS to UT of J&K for a period of 3 years will be governed by terms and conditions issued by DoPT from time to time," Awasthi said in office memorandum--(KNO)

### 11 Injured As

said two of them had sustained serious injuries and were referred to GMC hospital in Rajouri.

### 2 Car Lifters

accordingly, a case FIR No. 09/2021 under relevant sections of law was registered in Police Station Harwan and investigation was set into motion.

The police spokesperson said that a Special Investigation Team was constituted under the supervision of SDPO Nehrupark and SP East Zone City Srinagar headed by SHO PS Harwan. He said the investigation team questioned many suspects in the case

"Two suspects Fahim Ahmad Malla of Harwan and Nayaz Ahmad Matta of Chanpora confessed their involvement in the commission of crime. Both the accused persons have been arrested and shifted to Police Station Harwan where they remain in custody," he said.

He further said that on the disclosure of the accused, the stolen car was recovered from Imamshahib Shopian.

"During further questioning, both the accused persons confessed to have stolen a Tata Sumo bearing (JK01H-5284) from Nishat area during the intervening night of February 4-5. The said vehicle was recovered from Soura Srinagar. In this regard FIR No. 12/2021 already stands registered at PS Nishat," he added.

### Probe Ordered

going viral on social media.

"A team of education department also conducted inspection of some schools in the area. Three schools were found shut and entire staff missing," said officials.

They said that taking note of the issues, the heads of these schools and the staff members have asked the reason for their "unauthorized absence."

The officials said that the government schools that were found shut include Primary School Mohalla Dalla Ghanni, Primary School Balmoi Nimbel and Middle School Balmoi Nar--(KNO)

### Police, Security

efforts of forces the (militants) activities have been restricted and action against them has been intensified," the DGP was quoted as saying while interacting with the police personnel here in a statement issued to GNS.

He lauded the role of Jammu Kashmir Police officers and other personnel for "tackling difficult situations effectively."

"Despite many challenges, personnel of police and other security forces are working professionally to eliminate threats to peace from Pakistan and its sponsored (militant) outfits and subversive agencies," he said, adding, "We have to continue hard work to ensure long lasting peace in Jammu and Kashmir."

The DGP asked the officers to submit the requirements to the PHQ and added that Police Headquarter is committed to equip personnel with better facilities to meet out any challenge.

Earlier he inaugurated newly constructed building of Ahmednagar Police Post and also visited Police Component Srinagar where he inaugurated newly constructed two storied building, an additional accommodation for Jawans and also interacted with Police officers and Jawans.

Accompanied by IGP Kashmir Zone, Vijay Kumar, the DGP first visited Police Post Ahmadnagar in territorial jurisdiction of Police Station Soura in Srinagar where he inaugurated the newly constructed building and also reviewed crime situation within the jurisdiction of the Police Post.

The Police Post building consists of DOS office, MHC office, separate room for CCTNS Lab, accommodation for Jawans, Malkhana, Lockup and additional facility of washrooms. The Police Post Ahmadnagar has been created to address the crime in Anchar area of Srinagar District.

The DGP later visited Police Component Srinagar where he inaugurated additional accommodation for policemen. The accommodation will house around 50 personnel of the component. He also interacted with the officers and policemen on the occasion.

The DGP also visited Zakoora, Sringar where he inspected the prefabricated accommodation used during the elections and Shri Amar Nath Ji Yatra. He directed for building additional accommodation at the site.

The jurisdictional officers briefed the DGP J&K on various aspects of security as also for keeping the crime under check. (GNS)

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## England Beat India By 227 Runs In 1st Test, Take 1-0 Lead In 4 Match Series

Press Trust of India

**CHENNAI:** A determined England humbled India by 227 runs in the opening Test to take a 1-0 lead in the four-match series here on Tuesday.

Set a world record 420-run target to go one up in the rubber on the fifth day, India were bowled out for 192 in the second session after captain Virat Kohli's 72 off 104 balls on an MA Chidambaram surface, where batting wasn't the easiest of tasks.

the India captain, it was as good as over for the home team that entered the series after its incredible triumph in Australia.

While Gill hit seven fours and a six in his fluent knock, Kohli struck nine boundaries during his stay in the middle. However, with India left to climb a mountain, their efforts were never going to be enough.

Anderson was terrific with his three-wicket burst in seven overs, including four maidens. Leach, Dom Bess



Veteran pacer James Anderson (3/17) and left-arm spinner Jack Leach (4/76) shared seven wickets between them to complete a memorable win for England after skipper Joe Root led a strong first-innings batting display with a magnificent double century. Kohli was the lone hope left for India after opener Shubman Gill (50) had batted beautifully but was sent back by Anderson just when he looked set for a big one.

And When Ben Stokes bowled

and Stokes also enjoyed some success.

The 38-year-old Anderson showed why he is considered a master of reverse swing, cleaning up Gill (50) and Ajinkya Rahane (0) in the same over with deliveries that came in sharply.

India began the day at 39 for one, trailing by 381 runs.

Brief Scores: England: 578 and 178. India 337 & 192 all out in 58.1 overs (Shubman Gill 50, Virat Kohli 72; James Anderson 3/17, Jack Leach 4/76).

## 'England Have Set A Benchmark Now,' Says Captain Joe Root



Press Trust of India

**CHENNAI:** England have set a benchmark for themselves with their monumental victory against India in the first Test, gushed captain Joe Root while admitting that competing on spin-friendly tracks in Sri Lanka prepared them nicely for this tour.

England inflicted on India a humiliating 227-run defeat to go 1-0 up in the four Test series but the visiting skipper has no doubt that the home team has the kind of players who can exact revenge.

"I'm very proud of the way we've played this week. We have set a benchmark now, we've got something to work for to compare ourselves. Still there are areas we can improve on. We can still get better," Root said at the post-match press conference.

"We know that India are an extremely good team, especially in these conditions. And they're a very proud nation as well. They've got some exceptional players so they'll come back hard."

The skipper, who made a brilliant 218 which was the cornerstone of England's massive first innings total, mentioned the role played by the Sri Lanka series ahead of India assignment.

England had won that series 2-0 with Root leading from the front with his big hundreds.

"It certainly served us well, coming out here, having faced the volume of spin that we have, having the confidence of winning. And playing on a similar kind of wicket, wasn't the same by any stretch, but the tempo of the cricket that you play in the sub-continent I think served us really well coming into this game."

"The pleasing thing for me was to set a big first innings run, and we delivered it. We said we needed to be smart about how we're going to take 20 wickets, and we delivered it."

Root said the challenge before them now is to repeat the magnificent performance.

"Can we replicate that, can we go one better, can we keep looking to improve as a team and can we take it on individually that makes a difference."

About not declaring and not accelerating the scoring during the

second innings on day four which drew criticism from some quarters, Root said the idea was to not give the home team any chance of winning the game.

"I wanted to make sure that more than anything there were only two possible results. It would have been damaging had we lost this game."

"I knew that the way that it deteriorated the last three days in particular that coming into today it was gonna happen even quicker again. All we needed to do, be relentless with the areas we were bowling."

"Put the ball in good areas for a long period of time and the wicket will do the rest. It was just about holding on," Root added.

The England captain also patted left-arm spinner Jack Leach for staging a strong comeback in the second Indian innings after being hammered by Rishabh Pant in the first.

Leach scalped four batsmen in India's chase.

"Brilliant. (Dom) Bessy as well, in the first innings he took four wickets. As a whole group we needed to work together. Leachy obviously came into the wickets today. Jack was asked to do a job, against Pant, take a bit of a risk, see if he can take you on, try and create a chance."

"Unfortunately it wasn't quite fulfilling but for him to have the character and I suppose the skill level to come back from that shows where he's at with this cricket. And it's really pleasing to see him get rewards today, because throughout the whole Test, he was asked to perform in a certain way and he delivered every time. So I couldn't be more proud," he said.

Wicket-keeper batsman Jos Buttler won't be part of the series after Tuesday's win and changes are likely in their line-up. The England skipper said they have got good options.

"It's really important that we look after our players so that everyone comes into the game fit, fresh and ready and able to deliver their skill 100 per cent."

"The work ethic from the whole squad, even the guys that aren't in the squad, is to go better all the time, adapt to the conditions and it serves well on the field. You can see the results."



## DC Ganderbal Flags Off Group Of Students For Snow Skiing Course In Gulmarg

Agencies

**GANDERBAL:** Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Ganderbal District, Shafkat Iqbal, on Tuesday flagged off a group of 10 students for snow skiing courses being hosted by the Sports department at Gulmarg.

These students were selected for the course from different zones of the district by experienced field staff of the District Youth Services and Sports de-

partment on the direction of Director General, Youth Services and Sports department.

The DDC was informed that this was the third contingent from district Ganderbal this season and all the necessary facilities for the students are being provided by the concerned department.

Speaking on the occasion, the DDC appreciated students for showing interest in sports, he encouraged them to remain

more involved with sports activities, particularly winter sports.

While appreciating the efforts of the DYS&S for facilitating participation of students in such activities, he assured full support to the department in this regard.

DYSSO, Ganderbal, Sheikh Shafkat Iqbal and Activity I/C DYSSO, Ganderbal Mohammad Maqbool along with office staff functionaries and parents of the students were present on the occasion.

## Group Of 10 Ramban Students Flagged Off To Gulmarg For Attending Skiing Course

Agencies

**RAMBAN:** Deputy Commissioner, Ramban, Mussarat ul Islam, Tuesday flagged off a group of 10 students to Gulmarg for attending snow skiing course.

District Youth Services and Sports Officer, Dharamvir Singh and ZPEO Banihal, Ab. Rehman Wagay were also present on the occasion. The team will be imparted training under the overall supervision of PET Shakeel Ahmed Khan.

The 14-day-long camp is being organized by the Department of Youth Services & Sports Ramban in which students from different education zones of the



district are participating. Earlier, a group of girl students also attended the training course at Gulmarg resort.

While interacting with the participants, the DC impressed upon them to grasp the opportunity to learn the skiing skills.

The DC also urged DYSSO to

explore the possibility of holding similar skiing events in various parts of the district which receive heavy snowfall and are ideal for adventure sports like skiing. The DC further asked DYSSO to ensure proper boarding and lodging arrangements for the students during their travel and stay at Gulmarg.

## Sumit Nagal, India's Singles Challenger At Australian Open, Knocked Out In First Round

Press Trust of India

**MELBOURNE:** India's Sumit Nagal exited the Australian Open with a first-round defeat, struggling to cope with the power-packed game of Lithuanian Ricardas Berankis, here on Tuesday.

Nagal's challenge deflated in a matter of minutes as Berankis' powerful ground strokes proved to be too good for the Indian, who lost 2-6 5-7 3-6 in two hours and 10 minutes.

Nagal had lost to the world number 72 in the last week's tune-up event too.

The 23-year-old Nagal reeled off four straight games in the second set in his bid to stage a comeback but the initial dominance by Berankis largely dictated the outcome of the match.

While Nagal made an impression on his previous two Grand Slam appearances, the world

number 144 could only play well in patches on Tuesday. The precise and solid ground strokes of Berankis left Nagal playing defensively.

He did fight hard and played better as the game progressed but Berankis did not falter on key points.

Serving at 2-3, the Indian hit a forehand long to give Berankis three breakpoints in the sixth game and the Lithuanian converted the second with a forehand winner to go up 4-2. Nagal himself had three chances to draw the first blood in the third game, going up 40-0 on Berankis' serve, but could convert none.

The Indian tried to fight fire with fire but the intensity shown by Berankis blew him away and he found himself serving to stay in the set.

In the second set too, it was Berankis who dominated the proceedings. Two breaks pegged Nagal back and he went down 0-4.

## Series Win Over South Africa Much Needed For Pakistan Cricket: Coach Misbah

Press Trust of India

**KARACHI:** Pakistan's head coach Misbah-ul-Haq has hailed his team's 2-0 Test series win over South Africa as a much-needed boost for the country's cricket.

It was Pakistan's first Test series win over the Proteas since 2003.

Talking to the media on Tuesday, Misbah said the series against South Africa was very important after the poor performance of the team in New Zealand.

"I also think for the growth of players it is very important for countries to play Tests at home on a regular basis. It becomes easier for them to go abroad and perform as well," Misbah added.

"This series was very important for us as we had a very poor series in New Zealand and what is satisfactory is that the team showed grit and each player played his part in the series win," he said.

"I have never taken pressure because of my job's future but it was

## 'Body Language And Intensity Was Not Up To The Mark,' Says India Captain Virat Kohli

Press Trust of India

**CHENNAI:** The body language and intensity were not up to the mark, said a disappointed India skipper Virat Kohli, counting the many errors his team committed in the massive 227-run loss to a "more professional and consistent" England in the opening Test here.

Chasing a daunting 420-run target, India folded for 192 with only Kohli (72) and Shubman Gill (50) managing to resist the England attack on a deteriorating pitch.

"Our body language and intensity was not up to the mark, second innings we were much better. We were better in the second half of the first innings with the bat," Kohli said at the post-match presentation.

"We have to understand the things that we have done decently in this game and the things that we haven't and as a side we are always looking to improve. England were far more professional and consistent throughout the Test match than we were," the captain added.

Kohli also felt that India did not put enough pressure on England and leaked way too many runs.

"Collectively as a bowling unit, fast bowlers and Ash (Ravichandran Ashwin), were good in the first innings but we also needed to contain a few more runs and create pressure."

"Having said that, it was a slow wicket and not helping the bowlers which made it easy for the batsmen to rotate strike and get into the game."

Asked if the fourth and fifth bowlers -- Shahbaz Nadeem and Washington Sundar -- were not up to the mark, Kohli did not hide his disappointment.

"That's a fair assessment. You need your bowling unit to step up and create pressure on the opposition."

"We didn't achieve that in this game which is fine, lack of execution is acceptable but to understand our mindset was right is very important for us."

Washington gave away 98 runs in the first innings without taking a wicket and bowled only one over in the second. Nadeem conceded 167 runs for two wickets in the first essay while returned figures of 2 for 66 in the second innings.

"We did well in the second innings with the ball and put pressure on them. We are always learning as a side and evolving as a side," said the captain.

Kohli said England were ready for the grind and "probably better equipped than us."

"(Toss) ended up being crucial, I didn't think it would. We don't want to take anything away from England with the way they played. No excuses. We are a side that accepts our failures and faults and learns from them."

"One thing is for sure that in the next three matches we are going to give a tough fight and not let things slip away like it did in this Test."

England skipper Joe Root was adjudged the player of the match. He has now won six Test matches in Asia, behind only South Africa's Graeme Smith (8 wins from 21 Tests) and West Indies' Clive Lloyd (7 from 17).

"To take 20 wickets in alien conditions is a brilliant job from the bowlers. We knew from the outset it was going to be a good wicket. The first partnership got us going. Different stages guys came in and contributed," said Root.

Root is expecting that "India are going to come back hard at us".

Asked about their second innings declaration that never came, Root said the idea was to get to 400 and put India's win out of equation.

"It didn't quite materialise like that. But having spent some time out there, I knew the wicket had changed drastically and knew it was going to change again. Wanted to take India's win out of the equation."

"As a bowling group we didn't want to worry about the run rate."

Veteran pacer James Anderson tilted the game in England's favour with his exceptional spell, snaring three wickets, and Root acknowledged the effort.

"Standing here, having won the first game is very pleasing. The way he (Anderson) goes about things, challenging himself constantly and getting better all the time even at 38."

"He's a great role model to the rest of the group. His skill level is right up there with anyone we've ever seen," he said.



frustrating and disappointing that in the last one year we had come close to winning matches even in England and lost out due to poor fielding and lack of application."

Before the series, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) had made it clear that a defeat was not acceptable against South Africa.

"Look it does not matter to me what the cricket committee says and I never took any pressure because of that because I believe there are no sureties or guarantees about your job. No one can give that to you."

Misbah said what was important for him was that he and his

team had worked hard in the last one and half years, but without the desired results.

"But in this series it came together and our finishing was good and we grabbed the opportunities when they came our way," he added.

Misbah also felt that the emergence of Faheem Ashraf as an all-rounder at number seven had allowed the management to strike a balance.

"Till Abdul Razzaq and Azhar Mahmood were playing we had that balance but for sometime now we have lacked a quality bowling batting all-rounder at number seven. We have invested in Faheem and he is finally coming good for us."

He also believed that wicketkeeper-batsman, Mohammad Rizwan's performances were not surprising since he is a good player of fast bowling.

"He came into the team on the back of some good performances in domestic cricket and we needed someone down the order who could play fast bowling well."

## Pandemic Aside, Tokyo Olympics Have Another Problem In Its President Mori

Agencies

**TOKYO:** The postponed Tokyo Olympics have yet another problem besides the pandemic. This time it's Yoshiro Mori, the president of the local organizing committee.

Mori made derogatory comments about women almost a week ago in a meeting of the Japanese Olympic Committee. Basically, he said they talk too much, driven by a "strong sense of rivalry."

The 83-year-old former prime minister was forced to apologize, but this has not quelled calls for his resignation. They seem to grow daily, cutting into weakening support for the Olympics and raising questions why elderly men dominate politics and boardrooms in Japan.

In a statement on Sunday, the local organizing committee issued a vague statement saying it supports diversity. The committee is also heavily dominated by men with few women in any leadership roles.

Mori has been the continu-



ing topic of talk and news shows, which point out that the World Economic Forum ranks Japan 121st of 153 countries in gender equality. This contrasts with Japan's image as a sophisticated, developed country and the home of some of the world's most famous and trusted brands.

Mori's future could come to a head in a matter of days

Widely circulated reports in Japan say the organizing committee's executives will meet this week to discuss his fate.

Any disruption at the top could further soil Tokyo's image as it tries to pull off the Olympics in the middle of a pandemic, saddled with soaring costs that are now officially 15.4 billion but believed to be much higher.

The Switzerland-based International Olympic Committee quickly accepted Mori's apology. He was appointed under former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, has been backed by current Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga, and has built strong ties with IOC President Thomas Bach.

Bach has called Tokyo the "best prepared Olympics in history" and has repeated the compliment even as it tries to hold the most difficult games on record.

The IOC needs the Olympics to take place. Almost 75% of its income is from selling broadcast rights. Unlike other sports businesses, it has only two major events to sell the Summer and Winter Olympics.

Tokyo and the IOC plan to welcome 15,400 Olympic and Paralympic athletes in just under six months, keep them in a bubble, and limit their contact with media, fans, judges and officials.

An on-line petition was report-

ed Monday to have gained 140,000 signatures. It does not ask for Mori's resignation, but asks officials to address his behaviour.

The Japanese news agency Kyodo reported that its weekend poll showed almost 60% believe Mori is not qualified for the job. He has headed the organizing committee since 2014.

The Olympics are to open on July 23 but polls show about 80% of the Japanese public believe they should be cancelled or postponed again. The IOC has said they will be cancelled if they cannot be held this time.

In a radio interview on Sunday during the Super Bowl, U.S. President Joe Biden said he hoped the Olympics would take place for the good of the athletes.

"I've spoken with the prime minister of Japan, he's working very hard to be in a position to safely open the games, to have the games, and I think that has to be based on science, whether or not it is safe for that to occur," Biden said.

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