



**P5 NEWS**

**BUKHARI SPEWS VENOM AGAINST MEHBOOBA**

J&K Apni Party chief Syed Altaf Bukhari spewed venom against the PDP chief and his ex boss Mehbooba Mufti by calling her a "thief", stating...

**P7 THINK**

**NAMES THAT DID NOT CLICK**

Naming and renaming places and old or new infrastructure by a government is a common practice all over the world. However, it is not always that these officially assigned...



**P11 SPORTS**

**'THEY SHOULD STOP MOANING' NASSER HUSSAIN IDENTIFIES ENGLAND'S 'BIGGEST ISSUE' IN INDIA**

England need not moan about the condition of Indian pitches and instead rectify inconsistency in their...



**Widom Quote!**  
A proof once established is better left so.  
— Mark Twain

**NEWS DIGEST**

**Three OGWs Arrested In Tral: Police**

SRINAGAR: Police on Wednesday claimed to have arrested three Over Ground Workers (OGWs) of Hizbul-Mujahideen outfit in Tral area of South Kashmir's Awantipora. In a statement, the spokesperson said that acting on specific information of militant movement, Awantipora Police along with 42 RR and 180 BN CRPF launched search operation in village. **More On P10**

**Army Destroys Suspected IED In Rajouri**

JAMMU: A suspected Improvised Explosive Device (IED) planted inside a pressure cooker was detected on a busy highway in Rajouri district of Jammu region on Wednesday, officials said. The suspected IED was found on the roadside at Manjakote on Jammu-Poonch highway and was subsequently destroyed by the Army's Bomb Disposal Squad (BDS), the officials said. **More On P10**

**2 Soldiers Injured In Road Accident**

JAMMU: Two Army personnel were injured on Wednesday when the vehicle they were travelling in fell down from a bridge in Kathua district of Jammu and Kashmir, officials said. The Army vehicle broke the bridge's railing after its driver lost control of the vehicle and crashed it into the dry river bed at Sahar Khad along Jammu-Pathankot highway, the officials said. **More On P10**

**3 DDC Members Join NC In Ramban**

JAMMU: A day ahead of the scheduled elections for the posts of DDC chairperson and vice-chairperson in Jammu and Kashmir's Ramban district, the National Conference (NC) received a shot in the arm on Wednesday as three independent councillors joined the party. The NC, with six seats, emerged as the largest party in the district but fell short of majority by two seats. However, it was **More On P10**

**Driver Held For Smuggling Bovine**

SRINAGAR: Police in Kathua arrested a truck driver for allegedly smuggling bovines into Kashmir Valley. Muhammad Yakub, a resident of Dina Nagar Gurdaspur was arrested by a police team from Hiranagar after his truck was intercepted and during checking 17 bovines were found loaded in the vehicle, reports said Wednesday. **More On P10**



KO Photo: Abid Bhat

## Foreign Envoys Spend A Day In Kashmir Valley

Observer News Service

Srinagar: A group of envoys, including those from several Europe Union countries and a few OIC member states, began a two-day visit to Jammu and

Kashmir on Wednesday. They are here, according to government officials, to have a first-hand account of the situation, especially after the recently-concluded local body elections. The envoys, which has

representation from six OIC countries Malaysia, Bangladesh, Senegal Ghana, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan -- were taken to Magam in central Kashmir amid heightened security arrangements in **More On P10**

**Govt's 'Guided Tour A Futile PR Exercise': Cong**

Coming down heavily on the BJP-led government at the Centre, senior Congress leader Saifuddin Soz on Wednesday said that the foreign **More On P10**

**Delegations Come And Go: Mehbooba**

Former Chief Minister and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) chief Wednesday said that the delegations will come and go but the fact **More On P10**

## Youth Shot At, Injured In High Security Zone

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Suspected militants shot at and injured a youth in an audacious attack in the high security zone Sonwar here on Wednesday setting off alarms bells ringing in the security establishment.

22-year-old Akash Mehra of Janipora Jammu was critically injured when suspected militants fired upon him near a dhaba in the high security zone Sonwar area of this capital city on Wednesday evening, officials said. The youth, who sustained bullet injury in chest in the audacious attack, was removed to SMHS hospital here for treatment.

Akash, reports said, is son of Ramesh Kumar Mehra who has been running Krishna Dhaba, a famous vegetarian eatery in the area for decades. Medical Superintendent, SMHS hospital, Dr Nazir Choudhary **More On P10**



KO Photo: Abid Bhat

## IAF Proposes Closure Of Jammu Airport For 15 Days



File Photo

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: The Indian Air Force (IAF) has proposed closure of the Jammu airport for civilian traffic for 15 days next month for runway resurfacing work, drawing a strong resentment from the Jammu and Kashmir administration which has sought the defence ministry's intervention into the matter, officials said on Wednesday.

Nearly two dozen flights operate to and from the Jammu airport, and in view of the development, all the companies operating their flights

in the sector have stopped booking for the period.

Quoting a communication addressed to the Jammu airport director, the officials said Air Force Station, Jammu wants complete closure of the runway for 15 days towards laying of final two top DAC-II layers on the runway surface from March 6 to 20, which has been approved by Air Headquarters.

The officials said Jammu and Kashmir Chief Secretary B V R Subrahmanyam lodged his protest with the Civil Aviation Ministry against such **More On P10**

## Trains Likely To Chug From Feb 22



File Photo

Agencies

SRINAGAR: After remaining suspended for the last 10 months due to Covid-19 pandemic, the rail services are all set to resume "partially" from February 22 onwards in Kashmir, officials said on Wednesday.

The officials said that Chief Area Manager Northern Railway Srinagar has written a communication to SSP/GRP/ Srinagar, clearly mentioning that the train services are to be partially restored in Banihal-Baramulla section from February 22. The Chief Area Manager is learnt to have sought comments **More On P10**

## HC Bans Constructions In Gulmarg

Asks Chief Conservator Of Forests To Ensure No Tree Is Cut Down

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir High Court on Wednesday banned all types of construction in Gulmarg, the ecological fragile world famous skiing resort in north Kashmir.

Hearing a Public Interest Litigation, a bench of Justices Ali Mohammad Magrey and Vinod Chatterji Koul also banned cutting down of any tree in Gulmarg.

"This Public Interest Litigation was filed way back in the year 2012. Petitioner, namely Mohammad Rafiq Zargar, has sought restoration of prestige and pristine glory of world-renowned tourist resort, viz. Gulmarg," the court observed. This Court, the bench said, has



File Photo: Abid Bhat

passed slew of directions aiming at preserving glory of Gulmarg.

"It was in consequence of directions of this Court that a High Level Meeting, chaired by Chief Secretary, J&K, was held, in which threadbare discussion

had taken place and various steps were taken for preserving glory of Gulmarg. It was also decided to take a fresh process for formulation of the Master Plan," the court observed. A number **More On P10**

**THE CHAIRMAN, POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD, shall ensure that all the hotels in Gulmarg have proper sewerage and drainage facilities, The Chief Conservator of Forests shall ensure that no tree is cut down in Gulmarg."**

## NC MPs To Skip Delimitation Panel's Proceedings



Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: National Conference MPs led by party president Farooq Abdullah on Wednesday informed the Delimitation Commission for Jammu and Kashmir that they wouldn't participate in its proceedings as the abrogation of the erstwhile state's special status was pending adjudication before the Supreme Court. In a letter to Delimitation Commission chairperson Justice

(Retd) Ranjana Prakash Desai, Abdullah, Hasnain Masoodi and Muhammad Akbar Lone expressed their inability to associate with the commission.

They also urged him not to go ahead with the delimitation process as the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019 is under judicial scrutiny.

The Delimitation Commission for Jammu and Kashmir was constituted by the Centre on March 6 last year to redraw Lok Sabha **More On P10**

## 'Militant' Arrested From Jammu Airport: Police

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: A coordinator and facilitator of militant activities of various groups was arrested from Jammu airport on Wednesday soon after his arrival from abroad, police said here.

The man was identified by the police as Sher Ali.

In a statement issued here, a police spokesperson said that Ali is the main coordinator and facilitator of militant activities of various groups. Ali, he said, is involved in facilitating infiltration of militants, smuggling of arms and ammunition and narcotics from Pakistan-controlled Kashmir (PcK) to Indian Territory from Balakote area of Poonch district.

Police sources said Ali was arrested based on specific information immediately after his arrival at the Jammu airport. "He has been **More On P10**



**Dr. Dominic Shellard**

Ex Vice Chancellor

is giving a free webinar

on

Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> February at 8:00 pm IST

Please register your interest at

[aspire@indusdiscoveries.com](mailto:aspire@indusdiscoveries.com)

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How to get a place at a British University



# Study: Aspirin Effective In Preventing Blood Clots In Kids, Post-Surgery

## Agencies

The findings of a new study suggest that aspirin should be favoured over warfarin in order to prevent blood clotting in children who undergo a surgery that replumbs their hearts.

The research, led by the Murdoch Children's Research Institute (MCRI) and published in The Journal of Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery, will have implications for clinicians when prescribing blood-thinning medications after Fontan surgery, a complex congenital heart disease operation redirecting blood flow from the lower body to the lungs.

The Fontan procedure is offered to children born with severe heart defects, allowing the child to live with just one pumping heart chamber instead of two. MCRI Dr Chantal Attard said although the operation couldn't completely 'fix' the heart, most were able to live well into adulthood and have relatively normal lives. But she said those who have



the procedure were at an increased risk for blood clots.

"Blood clots are dangerous because they can cause the heart to fail or lead to a stroke. For this reason, all patients are given blood-thinning medications, with warfarin and aspirin the most common," she said.

"Warfarin can be affected by food, oth-

er medications and illness, so patients must have regular blood tests to check their warfarin levels are safe."

The study involved 121 patients enrolled in the Australian and New-Zealand Fontan (ANZ) Registry. It found stroke was common regardless of which medication the patient took. But patients on warfarin had poorer bone

mineral density and were at a higher risk of bleeding.

Dr Attard said the research showed for patients who undergo Fontan surgery, and do not have additional blood clotting risk factors, aspirin should be offered over warfarin.

She said given the need for regular INR monitoring of warfarin, a shift to aspirin would also have a cost-benefit to the patient and the healthcare system. About 70,000 post-Fontan patients are alive today, with this number expected to double within two decades.

Carley Clendenning's son Lachie, 7, had the Fontan procedure two years ago after being born with one heart ventricle. She said the aspirin findings were a relief as the medication was much easier to manage and would benefit other families whose children required the procedure in future.

"Lachie has been taking warfarin ever since his surgery and there are things you have to keep on top of with this medication," she said.

## PUBLIC NOTICE

My name has been wrongly written in School records as Anis Fayaz while my correct name is Ubaid Ahmad Wani which needs immediate correction . If anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the Iqra Public School Chotipora Shopian within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

**Ubaid Ahmad Wani**  
S/o Fayaz Ahmad Wani  
R/o Chotipora Shopian

ast

## PUBLIC NOTICE

I have lost my driving license somewhere. Now I am applying for the duplicate of the same if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the RTO Shopian within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

**Tariq Ahmad Masoodi**  
S/O Gh Hassan Masoodi  
R/o Namtabal Bagder Pampore

FYP

## PUBLIC NOTICE

I have lost my 8th pass Certificate somewhere. Now I am applying for the duplicate of the same if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the Govt Middle School Keller Shopian within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

**Mir Rameez Raja**  
S/O Gh Qadir Mir  
R/o Mastpora Keller Shopian

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Government of Jammu & Kashmir  
**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER SPL SUB DIV. TANGDAR**  
NOTICE INVITING TENDER  
NIT No. 74 SSD Tangdar of 2020-21 e-tendering DATED:16.02.2021

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, J&K UT e-tenders (In Single Cover System) are invited on percentage % basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with J&K State Govt., CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for the following works:-

S. No	Name of Work	Est. Cost (Rs. In Lacs)	Cost of T/Doc. (In Rupees)	Earnest Money (In Rs.)	Time of Completion In days	Time & Date of Opening of Bid	Class of Contractor	Major Head of Account
01	Restt of Kona Gabra Pathan Gali road bwo WBM G-I, G-II and laying of RCC spun pipes	39.20	1100	78400	15 days	26/2/2021	AAV / BEE	Pot holes
02	Restt of Tadd Mudiyan road bwo GSB, WBM G-II and wet mix/G-III and laying of RCC spun pipes	19.60	800	39200	15 days	26/2/2021	CEE / BEE	Pot holes
03	Restt of Chawan Mohalla Baghbeela road bwo P/L GSB WBM G-II, wet mix and 25 mm thick semidense, 6 mm seal coat	11.76	600	23520	15 days	26/2/2021	BEE / CEE / DEE	Pot holes
04	Restt of Dildar Karama road bwo P/L GSB, WBM G-II in km 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup>	11.76	600	23520	15 days	26/2/2021	BEE / CEE / DEE	Pot holes
05	Restt of Gomal Budwan road bwo P/L GSB WBM G-II, wet mix of 25 mm thick semidense with 6 mm thick seal coat	11.76	600	23520	15 days	26/2/2021	BEE / CEE / DEE	Pot holes

Position of AAA/TS Approved  
Position of funds committed

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

Sl. No.	Description	Date
01.	Date of issue of Tender Notice	16.02.2021
02.	Period of downloading of bidding documents	From 17/2/2021 (10AM)
03.	Bid submission start date	17/2/2021 from (10.00A.M)
04.	Bid submission end date	25/2/2021 upto (04.00P.M)
05.	Date & time of opening Bids (on line)	26/2/2021 at (11.00A.M) in the Office of the Executive Engineer Spl Sub Div Tangdar

Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in shape of E Challan / Treasury receipt in favour of Executive Engineer Spl Sub Div Tangdar (tender inviting authority) and Earnest money / Bid security in shape of CDR/FDR pledged to Executive Engineer Spl Sub Div Tangdar (Tender receiving authority).

- The date and time of opening of Bids shall be notified on web site [www.jktenders.gov.in](http://www.jktenders.gov.in) and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The bids of Responsive bidders shall be opened online on same web site in the office of the Executive Engineer Spl Sub Div Tangdar (Tender receiving authority)
- The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of bids.
- Any bidder/ tenderer withdraws his bid/ tender during the period of bid validity or makes any Modifications in the terms and conditions of the bid.
- Failure of Successful bidder to furnish the required performance security within the specified time limit.
- Failure of successful bidder to execute the agreement within 28 days after fixation of contract.
- Failure of submission of Tender document fee by the bidder using the site shall entail him for blacklisting.
- The key construction material shall have to be arranged by the contractor of his own as per the quality/specifications.

- Cement = Jeshlum Brand
- Steel of all sorts = SAIL certified (The seal certificate shall have to be produced /deposited in the division by the AEE concerned at the time submission of the work done bills). No extension in quantities/Cost is allowed in any case

No:4360-68  
Dt:16.02.2021

Executive Engineer  
Spl Sub Div Tangdar

**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER**  
**JAL SHAKTI (PHE) DEPARTMENT, DIVISION, QAZIGUND**  
email : qazigundphedivision@gmail.com  
Phone No: 01931-295040  
Notice Inviting e-Tender (Fresh)  
E-NIT SL. No. 35/PHEQ of 2020-21

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor of J&K fresh e-tenders (Two cover System) on Item Rate Basis including the maintenance cost for a period of Three Years which includes 12 months of DLP (for Items No. (05 & 06) are invited from Reputed and resourceful contractors/ Firms/Companies/Joint Venture of reputed in PWD or Equivalent in CPWD/ Railways and other state Governments for the following works, which should be uploaded on the Procurement web portal. <http://www.jktenders.gov.in> for the subjected work(s) referred below to be received by the Executive Engineer Jal Shakti (PHE) Department, Division Qazigund and as per the details mentioned in this e-tender notification and to whom all the terms and conditions of detailed e-NIT /Tender Documents/ PWD Form No:- 25 double are accepted. The detailed tender document and Specifications etc. can be downloaded on the e-procurement portal <http://www.jktenders.gov.in>. The cost of tender documents (Non-refundable/Non-Transferable) should be in the shape of e-Challan or Treasury Challan/Receipt in favour of MH-0215-PHE.

S. No	Name of Work	Estimated Cost (in lacs)	Cost of TD (in J)	Time of Contract	Class of Contractor	Programme
1	Retrofitting of water supply scheme Waltengoo by way of providing laying and fitting of pipes construction of chain link fencing around SR Chitergang laying of dome to existing SR at Wasaknag, including installation of 198 Nos FHTCs for WSS Waltengoo (Under JIM)	37.85	1100	45 days	A,B,JV	JIM
2	Retrofitting of water supply scheme by way of providing laying and fitting of pipes construction of chain link fencing around SR Chitergang, laying of dome to existing SR at Chitergang including installation of 285 Nos FHTCs for WSS Nigeenpora	38.58	1100	45 days	A,B,JV	JIM
3	Retrofitting of water supply scheme by way of providing laying and fitting of pipes, construction of Intake Channel / Chamber, including installation of 91 Nos FHTCs for WSS Betengoo. (Under JIM)	13.10	600	20 days	B,C,D,JV	JIM
4	Retrofitting of water supply scheme by way of providing laying and fitting of pipes, construction of Catch Water Drain around spring at Baba Dar, laying of RCC dome to existing 0.55 lacs gallons SR at Fatehpora. Construction of RCC slab over spring protection at Baba Dar, including installation of 221 Nos FHTCs for WSS Sadoora old (Under JIM)	39.38	1100	45 days	A,B,JV	JIM
5	Retrofitting of water supply scheme Panzath Old laying and fitting of pipes for retrofitting, Construction of 0.10 lacs gallons capacity RCC SR, Construction of Sluice chamber for SR, Dewatering and Desilting of Spring at Panzath, including installation of 112 Nos FHTCs for WSS Retrofitting Panzath Vessu old (Under JIM)	78.24	1600	60 days	A,JV	JIM
6	Retrofitting of water supply scheme by way of providing laying and fitting of pipes construction of 0.45 lacs gallons capacity RCC Sump and pump operator Quarter including installation of 286 Nos FHTCs with Electro/Mechanical Components for Lift WSS Kewa Malikabad (Under JIM)	82.90	3000	70 days	AAV/ Firm/ Company/JV	JIM

Position of Funds:- Approved: Position of AA: Accorded  
Major Head of Account: Jal Jeevan Mission (JIM)

The Bidding documents consisting of eligibility criteria, specification, bill of quantities (B.O.Q) set of terms & conditions of contract and other details can be seen/ downloaded from the e-procurement Portal "<http://www.jktenders.gov.in>" as per schedule of dates given below:-

S.No.	Description	Date			Time
		DD	MM	YYYY	
1.	Publishing date of NIT	15	02	2021	1700Hrs
2.	Download start date	16	02	2021	1000Hrs
3.	Bid submission start date	16	02	2021	1000Hrs
4.	Bid submission end date	02	03	2021	1600 Hrs.
5.	Bid opening date (Technical Cover)	03	03	2021	1030 Hrs.

**TERMS AND CONDITIONS:**

- The intending bidders have to upload all documents viz. Registration card with renewal, Treasury challan, GST registration with latest clearance, PAN, Bidders address format, Experience certificate, Annual turnover, Bid Security declaration.
- The tenderer should in his own interest inspect and examine the site, its surroundings/topography, nature of ground, climatic conditions, accessibility or other relevant information at his own expenses and responsibility to satisfy himself before tendering for the advertised work. The bidder will have to execute each part of the work i.e. Civil / Electro-Mechanical part (in case of Lift Scheme) under the close supervision of the respective Engineer-in-Charge of Civil & Mechanical wings in-charge of the Scheme.
- If L1 fails to start the work within 15 days of the issuance of letter of intent or allotment, whichever is earlier, the department shall allot the work to the other willing Lowest bidder like L2, L3, L4 thereby debaring the Contractor for a period of two years for participating in the e-NIT issued by the kmr. PHE Department Srinagar.

**CRITERIA FOR PARTICIPATION OF TENDERS:-**

- TECHNICAL**
  - The contractor should possess the experience having successfully completed works during last seven years ending 31/03/2020 which should be any one of the similar nature works:-
    - Similar works for:-
      - Similar works mean works like Rapid Sand filtration Plant or Slow Sand Filtration Plant, Clarifloculator, PST, OHT ; RCC Service Reservoir, Laying & fitting of Pipes & other water retaining & water conduiting works.
    - The completed work means successfully completed work in last seven years ending on 31.03.2020.
      - One similar completed work costing not less than 80% of advertised cost during the last seven years, or
      - Two similar completed works costing not less than 50% of advertised cost each during the last seven years, or
      - Three similar completed works costing not less than the 40% of advertised cost during the last seven years.
- All the bidders shall include the following information and documents with their technical bids in addition to above:-
  - Copies of original documents defining the constitution or legal status, Place of registration and principal place of business; scanned copy of instrument permissible on a/c of Bid Security Declaration and cost of Bidding Document as specified in NIT.
  - Financial turn over year wise achieved on execution of civil engineering works for the last five years i.e 2015-16 to 2019-20 duly certified by the Chartered Accountant. The bidder shall have an average turnover of at least 30% of cost of advertised work which shall be calculated from best three years out of last five years ending on 03/2020.
  - Copy of PAN card issued by the Income TAX Authority. The PAN Uploaded should be same as registered /reflected in TDS/Balance sheet.
  - Reports on financial standing of the bidder such as profit and loss statement, balance sheet & auditor's report for at least five years supported by TDS & ITR. The contractor / bidder should have positive net worth.
  - Evidence of access to line(s) of credit and availability of other financial resources /facilities equivalent to minimum of 25% of the proposed bid/estimated cost, certified by the Bankers (Not more than six months old).
  - Undertaking that the bidder will be able to invest minimum cash up to 25% of contract value of work, during implementation/ execution of work.
- Bidder shall furnish proof of latest returns in GST-3/GSTR-3B.

No: -PHQ/ 4231-46  
Dated:-15 /02/2021

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER  
JAL SHAKTI (PHE) DEPARTMENT, DIVISION, QAZIGUND

((Government of Union Territory Jammu & Kashmir))  
**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (R&B) CONSTR. DIV. NO. 1ST SGR**  
NOTICE INVITING e-TENDERS  
( Modified as per Circular No.A/Misc(2018)-III-895/J Dt.22-12-2020  
Issued by Finance Department).  
Fresh NIT No.136/e-tendering /CD-1/2020-21/14484-501 DATED\_15/02/2021

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

S. No	Name of Work	Adv. Cost (In rupees)	Cost of T/ Doc. (In Rupees)	Time of Completion (calendar days)	Class of Contractor	Ref. to TS	Ref. to A.A	Major Head of Account
1.	Repair / Renovation of faculty room No.208 opposite ward No.12 at SMHS Hospital Srinagar.	2,21,700/-	200/-	30 days	DEE class	37/TS/2020-21 dtd.02/2021	MC/Plan/SMHS/3974-80 dtd.07-12-2020	4210- Med.
2.	Improvement of Syed Meerak Shah colony, Dangeerpora , Devi Mohalla , Hamdan Mohalla , Shanpora ,koshipora by way of providing and laying GSB and WBM Grade 2 <sup>nd</sup> near Sadakadal from h/o Ummerwani.	3,94,300/-	200/-	07 days	DEE class	31/TS/2020-21 dtd.02/2021	SE PWD (R&B) Sgr.-Bud/219 of 2020-21 dtd.21-11-2020	State Sector

1. Position of Funds:- Available.

Sl. No.	Description	Date
1.	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	15-02-2021
2.	Period of downloading of bidding documents	From 16.02.2021 10:00 A.M to 22.02.2021 4.00 P.M.
3.	Bid submission Start Date	16.02.2021 from 10:30 A.M
4.	Bid Submission End Date	22.02.2021 upto 4.00 P.M
5.	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	23.02.2021 at 11:00 AM in the Office of the Executive Engineer, Construction Division No. 1st Srinagar.

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

Note :-The Bidders are advised to read all conditions laid down in the NIT carefully before uploaded softcopy any short fall found in the soft copy the tender shall be rejected.

Note: As per Circular issued by the Government of Jammu and Kashmir CivilSector/Finance department vide No.OM No.A/24(2017)-651 dtd.07-06-2018 which reads as under:-

- Furnishing of Hard Copies of bids immediately after submission of e-tenders is dispensed with. The same should be obtained only from the Bidder who's declared 1st/lowest (L-1) after opening of financial bids.
- The Cost of tenders should be collected by introducing E-challan/ or simply uploading a copy of necessary Treasury Challan/Receipt.

Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in shape of Treasury Challan/ in favour of Executive Engineer (R&B) Construction Division No.1st Srinagar ( tender inviting authority ).

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

Sd./ Executive Engineer,  
R&B Construction Division No. 1st Srinagar

DIPK-13192/20

No\_14484-501 DATED:15/02/2021.

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR  
**J&K SERVICES SELECTION BOARD**  
Hema Complex, Sector -3, Channi Himmat, Jammu  
[www.jkssb.nic.in](http://www.jkssb.nic.in)

Subject: OMR based objective type written Examination for Class-IV posts-Admit Card regarding.

**NOTICE**

Whereas, the J&K Services Selection Board has scheduled the OMR based objective type written Examination for Class-IV posts on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2021, 28<sup>th</sup> February, 2021 & 01<sup>st</sup> March 2021 across various districts of UT of J&K, and;

Whereas, the Board has received representations from candidates with the request that there are minor variations in the downloaded Admit Cards for aforementioned examination, and;

Whereas, the matter was examined and it transpired that few errors have inadvertently crept in the Admit Cards due to technical issue. The issue has been resolved and the Admit Cards have been uploaded afresh for such candidates.

Now therefore, it is notified for the information of such candidates to download the Admit Cards afresh from the official website [www.jkssb.nic.in](http://www.jkssb.nic.in).

It is further notified that any candidate(s) such issue(s) pertaining to Admit Cards may immediately contact the helpdesk No 9513850012.

Controller of Examinations  
J&K Services Selection Board  
Jammu

No. SSB/COE/Class-IV/1383-91  
Dated:15/02/2021

DIPK-13226/20



**J**al Shakti Department (PHE) has failed to repair the main pipeline along the road leading to Baghwanpora, Lalbazaar in Srinagar. The pipe burst on 4th January this year and the leaked water has entered nearby houses and shops causing huge damage. Residents have even filed an FIR against the PHE Department. All calls to Chief Engineer have elicited no response. The inundated road leads to some important places like Cherry Park, Nigeen Lake, Leprosy Hospital, Darul Uloom Bilaliya, Imam Bargah etc. Pix Hakim Sohail Abbas

## Bush Fire In Forest Area Of Koh-e-Soleiman



**SRINAGAR:** A bush fire incident was reported late night in forest area of Shankar Acharya hills (Koh-e-Soleiman) here in Srinagar. The area falls under the jurisdiction of police station Ram Munshi Bagh. Sources said that fire tenders and police rushed to the spot and brought fire under control. They said the cause of fire is being ascertained.

از دفتر نائب تحصیلدار ترہگام اجلاس سجاد احمدیٹ  
مضمون کاغذات درخواست منجانب حیدر شاہ ولد محمد اوریت شاہ ساکنہ گوگوسہ تحصیل  
ترہگام برادعلائی پہاڑی سٹیٹنگ سرٹیفکیٹ  
اشتیہار براد آگاہی ہر خاص و عام  
معاہد مندرجہ عنوان الصدور میں درخواست سائل دفتر ہڈا میں زیر کاروئی ہے اس سلسلے میں  
پہاڑی حلقے سے رپورٹ بشمولہ یکاڑ طلب کیا گیا ہے جس سے عیاں ہے کہ سائل پہاڑی  
بولے والے طبقے سے تعلق رکھتا ہے سائل کے مہانتہ مدنی 64000 سائل نے  
Member of Advisory Board for development  
of Pahari Speaking peopole  
سے ایک سرٹیفکیٹ اس نسبت حاصل کی ہے سائل کا کتبہ بڈیل فرد پر مشتمل ہے  
فوفمل/آڈب/پسپ/373/20  
فرحت خورشید ولدیت محمدوریت  
374/20  
ننا خورشید -  
375/20  
فضل خورشید -  
376/20  
زیگیس  
377/20  
نشیو  
378/20  
بڈیل  
.....  
16-10-2020 حاصل کی ہوئی ہے جس کے مطابق سائل اسکان پہاڑی سٹیٹنگ  
بولے والے طبقے سے تعلق رکھتا ہے سرٹیفکیٹ اجرا کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص کوئی مذریعہ اعتراض  
ہو تو وہ اپنا مذریعہ اعتراض ساتھ یوم اندر دفتر ہڈا میں پیش کرے معیار گرنے بعد کوئی بھی مذریعہ  
اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا  
نائب تحصیلدار  
fnt

از دفتر نائب تحصیلدار ترہگام اجلاس سجاد احمدیٹ  
مضمون کاغذات درخواست منجانب عامر حفیظ شاہ ولد حفیظ اللہ شاہ ساکنہ گوگوسہ تحصیل  
ترہگام برادعلائی پہاڑی سٹیٹنگ سرٹیفکیٹ  
اشتیہار براد آگاہی ہر خاص و عام  
معاہد مندرجہ عنوان الصدور میں درخواست سائل دفتر ہڈا میں زیر کاروئی ہے اس سلسلے میں  
پہاڑی حلقے سے رپورٹ بشمولہ یکاڑ طلب کیا گیا ہے جس سے عیاں ہے کہ سائل پہاڑی  
بولے والے طبقے سے تعلق رکھتا ہے سائل کے مہانتہ مدنی 48000 سائل نے  
Member of Advisory Board for development  
of Pahari Speaking peopole  
سے ایک سرٹیفکیٹ اس نسبت حاصل کی ہے سائل کا کتبہ بڈیل فرد پر مشتمل ہے  
فوفمل/آڈب/پسپ/727/20  
عاقب حفیظ  
728/20  
امرینہ -  
729/20  
16-10-2020 حاصل کی ہوئی ہے جس کے مطابق سائل اسکان پہاڑی سٹیٹنگ  
بولے والے طبقے سے تعلق رکھتا ہے سرٹیفکیٹ اجرا کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص کوئی مذریعہ اعتراض  
ہو تو وہ اپنا مذریعہ اعتراض ساتھ یوم اندر دفتر ہڈا میں پیش کرے معیار گرنے بعد کوئی بھی مذریعہ  
اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا  
نائب تحصیلدار  
fnt

از دفتر نائب تحصیلدار ترہگام اجلاس سجاد احمدیٹ  
مضمون کاغذات درخواست منجانب طاہر شریف ولدیت شریف الدین شاہ ساکنہ گوگوسہ  
تحصیل ترہگام برادعلائی پہاڑی سٹیٹنگ سرٹیفکیٹ  
اشتیہار براد آگاہی ہر خاص و عام  
معاہد مندرجہ عنوان الصدور میں درخواست سائل دفتر ہڈا میں زیر کاروئی ہے اس سلسلے میں  
پہاڑی حلقے سے رپورٹ بشمولہ یکاڑ طلب کیا گیا ہے جس سے عیاں ہے کہ سائل پہاڑی  
بولے والے طبقے سے تعلق رکھتا ہے سائل کے مہانتہ مدنی 8000 سائل نے  
Member of Advisory Board for development  
of Pahari Speaking peopole  
سے ایک سرٹیفکیٹ اس نسبت حاصل کی ہے سائل کا کتبہ بڈیل فرد پر مشتمل ہے  
فوفمل/آڈب/پسپ/454/20  
طاہر شریف ولدیت شریف الدین شاہ  
455/20  
مسرورہ شفی -  
455/20  
16-10-2020 حاصل کی ہوئی ہے جس کے مطابق سائل اسکان پہاڑی سٹیٹنگ  
بولے والے طبقے سے تعلق رکھتا ہے سرٹیفکیٹ اجرا کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص کوئی مذریعہ اعتراض  
ہو تو وہ اپنا مذریعہ اعتراض ساتھ یوم اندر دفتر ہڈا میں پیش کرے معیار گرنے بعد کوئی بھی مذریعہ  
اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا  
نائب تحصیلدار  
fnt

**Government of Jammu & Kashmir**  
**Office of the Executive Engineer Horticulture**  
**Planning And Marketing Division Jammu**  
**Cancellation**  
Name of work: Proving and fixing of chain link fencing at Fruit; and vegetable market Rajouri.  
Reference : e-NIT No 52 of 2020 -21 dated 03-02-2021  
Due to poor response the tender for above mentioned work invited vide this office e-nit referred abe is hereby cancelled.  
Executive Engineer Horticulture  
(P&M) Div. Jammu  
No: EEHPM/2020-21/ 1372-77  
Dated: 11-02-2021  
DIPK-13286/20

## CUK's DCJ Holds Condolence Meet

**SRINAGAR:** A condolence meeting was held in the Department of Convergent Journalism, School of Media Studies, Central University of Kashmir (CUC), at Tulmulla Campus to mourn the demise of the mother of Sr. Assistant Professor at the department, Dr. Asif Khan. The meeting conducted both offline as well as online, was attended by Dean School Media Studies, Prof. Shahid Rasool, Head of Department Dr. Arif Nazir, Senior Assistant Professors Dr John K. Babu, Dr

Nookaraju Bendukurthi, Rashid Maqbool besides staff members and students.  
Prof. Shahid expressed deep sorrow and grief over the demise of Dr. Asif's mother. In his message, he prayed for peace of the deceased soul and strength for the bereaved family. Dr Arif Nazir also expressed his condolences to the bereaved family and prayed for the departed soul. At the culmination of the meeting, special prayers were held and fateha offered for the departed soul.

## Mehbooba Unfollowed Many BJP Leaders

**SRINAGAR:** The former Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir Mehbooba Mufti who once used to follow most of the BJP leaders on Twitter has unfollowed almost all of them including incumbent Home Minister Amit Shah and former BJP National General Secretary Ram Madhav. Of the 152 people Mehbooba Mufti follows on Twitter, only 3 are from Bharatiya Janata Party. They include the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Defense Minister Rajnath Singh and Minister for Railways, Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal. When Mehbooba Mufti started her innings on Twitter, she was seen following more BJP leaders than her own party stalwarts. Once she used to follow BJP leaders like Amit Shah, Ram Madhav, Nir-mala Sitharaman and others but she has unfollowed all of them after August 5, 2019 upheaval. There are only two Government of India pages whom she follows. These include the Office of the Prime Minister of India and the Office of the Defense Minister of India. She has also unfollowed Imran Raza Ansari but continues to follow Sajad Gani Lone.



**از نیابت ماگام با اجلاس جناب نائب تحصیلدار صاحب ماگام**  
معاون: مضمون درخواست شاکر احمد وانی ولد غلام محمد وانی ساکنہ ماگام  
براد عطا علی بیکوڑا ایریا سرٹیفکیٹ تحت SRO294  
اشتیہار براد آگاہی ہر خاص و عام  
معاہد مندرجہ عنوان الصدور میں سائل نے ایک درخواست براد بیکوڑا ایریا سرٹیفکیٹ پیش کی ہے۔ جو کہ دفتر ہڈا میں زیر کاروئی ہے اور اجرا کرنے مطلوب ہے کہ بڈیل فرد پر مشتمل ہے  
حاجزہ نیکم زوجہ نظام محمد کھریلہ کام 60 سال  
زینبنداری 25  
سجاد احمد پسر 23  
شاگر احمد پسر 20  
اسکے علاوہ عبد کی مہانتہ آمدنی زرعی و غیر زرعی 10000 سے سرٹیفکیٹ زیر بحث ادا کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص یا اشخاص کو کوئی مذریعہ اعتراض ہو تو وہ اپنا مذریعہ اعتراض ساتھ یوم کے اندر پیش کریں۔ معیار گرنے کے بعد کوئی مذریعہ اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔  
نائب تحصیلدار  
sult

**از نیابت ماگام با اجلاس جناب نائب تحصیلدار صاحب ماگام**  
معاون: مضمون درخواست ممتاز احمد بیگ ولد غلام قادر نیکم ساکنہ بازیوڑہ  
براد عطا علی بیکوڑا ایریا سرٹیفکیٹ تحت SRO294  
اشتیہار براد آگاہی ہر خاص و عام  
معاہد مندرجہ عنوان الصدور میں سائل نے ایک درخواست بیکوڑا ایریا سرٹیفکیٹ پیش کی ہے۔ جو کہ دفتر ہڈا میں زیر کاروئی ہے اور اجرا کرنے مطلوب ہے کہ بڈیل فرد پر مشتمل ہے  
سارہ نیکم بیوہ غلام قادر کھریلہ کام 70 سال  
زینبنداری 27  
سکینہ نیکم زوجہ پرویز احمد کھریلہ کام 22  
ذیشان احمد پسر پرویز احمد ذریعہ تعلیم 05  
مشہر پرویز پسر پرویز احمد ذریعہ تعلیم 03  
ممتاز احمد پسر پرویز احمد ذریعہ تعلیم 24  
اسکے علاوہ عبد کی مہانتہ آمدنی زرعی و غیر زرعی 5666 سے سرٹیفکیٹ زیر بحث ادا کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص یا اشخاص کو کوئی مذریعہ اعتراض ہو تو وہ اپنا مذریعہ اعتراض ساتھ یوم کے اندر پیش کریں۔ معیار گرنے کے بعد کوئی مذریعہ اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔  
نائب تحصیلدار  
sult

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
The Name of my son has been wrongly written in Municipal Records as Samin Niyaz while his correct name is Imaad Niyaz which needs immediate correction . If anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the Municipal Committee Khrew within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.  
**Niyaz Ahamd Andrabi**  
**F/o Imaad Niyaz**  
**R/O Khrew Pampore**  
**FYP**

**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**

- 1930- US astronomer Clyde Tombaugh discovers Pluto
- 1932- Japan declares Manchuria independent
- 1951- Nepal becomes a constitutional monarchy
- 1965- The Gambia becomes independent from the United Kingdom
- 1974- NASA launches Italian satellite San Marcos C-2 (235/843 km)
- 1977- Space Shuttle above a Boeing 747 goes on its maiden flight
- 1979- NASA launches space vehicle S-202
- 1979- President Zia ur-Rahman's National Party wins elections in Bangladesh
- 2003- Comet C/2002 V1 (NEAT) makes perihelion, seen by SOHO.
- 2003- Nearly 200 people die in the Daegu subway fire in South Korea
- 2004 - Up to 295 people, including nearly 200 rescue workers, die near Neyshabur in Iran when a run-away freight train carrying sulfur, petrol and fertiliser catches fire and explodes.
- 2014 - Ukrainian Revolution of 2014 begins as protesters, riot police and unknown shooters take part in violent events in the capital, Kiev, culminating after five days in the ouster of President Viktor Yanukovich
- 2016 - Pope Francis questions US Presidential hopeful Donald Trump's Christianity over his call to build a wall on the Mexican border

**PRAYERS**

**FAJR**  
5:52

**ZUHR**  
12:45

**ASR**  
4:37

**MAGRIB**  
6:19

**ISHA**  
7:41

## From KO Archives

### EARTHQUAKES: A MONSTER IS LURKING BENEATH KASHMIR, SAY EXPERTS

Shafa'at Rasool

**SRINAGAR** - Kashmir may not always be a spectator to the angers of the Earth, as meteorological experts believe that we may witness a massive earthquake, registering above 8 on the Richter scale, in future. Nobody knows when- it can be tomorrow or after a hundred years. But contrary to the locally held belief that Koh-i-Sulaiman and other hills of volcanic origin may erupt, the danger is mainly due to the tectonic activity in the entire Himalayan re-gion; from the Hindukush in the west to Sadiya hills in the east. Iwrlan Meteorological De-partment has already placed central and south Kashmir in the high risk Zone 6 of the seismic map of India. This sig-nifies an extremely high probability of earthquakes of very high magnitudes. These dangers arise from the fact that the Indian peninsular plate is pushing itself in to the Eurasian plate at a rate of 6 cm per year and this is build-ing up pressure in the entire Himalayan region, thus pro-voking tectonic activity. Earthquakes in this region are primarily the release of this pressure caused by the movement of plates deep within. The point of worry is that the entire Himalayan region bar-ring Kashmir and western Nepal has experienced major earthquakes, thus releasing some of the tension. Experts say that an earthquake measuring 8 on the Richter scale is due in these two legions. Seismologists call an earth-quake of above 8 magnitudes as 'great'. But no one knows when this will happen as there is absolutely no reliable forecasting method available at this time. "Although we have minor earthquakes here, as the one last year of 6.2 magni-tude whose epicentre was in the Hindukush, but we have not experienced any great one in the last 160 to 900 years. By hypothesis and statistical prediction we can say mat Kashmir may witness a severe earth-quake. But nobody knows when", says Surinder Paul, senior meteorologist and Deputy Director Indian Me-teorological Department, Srinagar. Experts dismiss as myths the views about cur-rent volcanic activity in Kohi-Sulaiman and other hills in the valley. Prof. Muhammad Ismail Bhat, headof the geology and geo-physics department in Uni-versity of Kashmir clarifies: "These public fears have no basis, we do not face any danger from these hills nor is there any question of some volcanic activity going on inside them". Studies have revealed that these hills came into being some 280 million years ago because of volcanic eruptions, and remained active for another 100 million years. They have shown no activity for the past 180 million years. The extensive media treatment of the causes behind earthquakes (after the Gujarat quake) has made terms like 'tectonic plates' and 'Richter Scale' almost household words, and public awareness about earth's temperament has increase substantially. The fact that earthquakes cannot be predicted with pinpoint accuracy, leave alone prevented, is being accepted with philosophical stoicism. One point of comfort has emerged from this deluge of specialised information, and experts have put it across with admirable clarity: 'Earthquakes do not kill people, buildings do'. There lies the hope for people in regions prone to earthquakes, if governments wake up in time, that is. (KASHMIR OBSERVER, 18 February, 2001)

## Team Biden Downgrades Saudi Crown Prince To "Recalibrate" Ties



Agencies

US President Joe Biden intends to "recalibrate" the US relationship with Saudi Arabia while emphasizing outreach to King Salman, in a move that signals a downgrade in ties with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the country's de facto ruler.

"We're going to recalibrate our relationship with Saudi Arabia," Press Secretary Jen Psaki told reporters on Tuesday. "Part of that is going back to engagement counterpart-to-counterpart. The president's counterpart is King Salman."

Instead of engaging primarily with Biden, the crown prince's most appropriate US counterpart is Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, according to a person familiar. While Prince Salman's official role is deputy prime minister and defense minister, he has a vast range of responsibilities as heir to the throne his father, 85, has held since 2015.

The US statement is the latest sign of how the Biden administration is reassessing the close ties established between Washington and Riyadh during the Trump administration. Former President Donald Trump made Saudi Arabia the centerpiece of

his strategy toward the Middle East, and in a break with precedent took his first trip abroad as president to Riyadh.

That's all being scaled back now. In Biden's first few days, the US put a hold on some key weapons sales to the kingdom and announced new efforts to bring an end to the Saudi-led war in Yemen. Biden has also called on Saudi Arabia to improve its human rights record.

This suggests that US-Saudi relations will return to "more structured, routine channels," according to Aaron David Miller, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and a former Mideast official at the State Department.

"This is a slapdown of MBS, who the administration views as reckless and ruthless," Miller said, using an abbreviation for the crown prince. "The king's health is not great, but it's less about the king than it is about making it clear that MBS is no longer the main point of contact."

The US-Saudi relationship isn't entirely broken. Officials in the Biden administration have said they want to help the Saudis be better able to defend themselves against Iranian aggression, and the U.S. is expected to work closely with the kingdom's authorities to help bring about an end to the Saudi-led war in neighboring Yemen.

Even though he is the kingdom's de facto ruler, the crown prince became a pariah in much of official Washington after the killing of Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi, who was murdered inside the Saudi consulate in Istanbul in October 2018. A United Nations-led investigation implicated senior Saudi officials who reported directly to the crown prince in the killing, an accusation rejected by the kingdom's officials.

## Trump Sued For US Capitol Attack Under 19th Century "Ku Klux Klan Act"

Agencies

WASHINGTON: A senior Democratic congressman sued former president Donald Trump Tuesday, accusing him of violating the 19th century "Ku Klux Klan Act" by supporting the January 6 attack on the US Capitol.

Bennie Thompson accused Trump, his lawyer Rudy Giuliani, and extremist groups the Proud Boys and Oath Keepers of violating the 1871 act by supporting efforts to stop Congress from certifying Joe Biden as the new US president.

Thompson, who is Black and the chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee, cited a law originally created to protect the rights of African Americans after the Civil War and the end of slavery.

The lawsuit was filed in federal court in Washington two days after Trump was acquitted of supporting insurrection in an impeachment trial in the Senate.

While a majority of the Senate, 57 of the 100 members, voted for conviction, it fell short of the two-thirds majority required.

The act was designed to give the US president powers to op-



pose violently racist groups like the Ku Klux Klan which sprung up in the wake of the 1861-65 Civil War to oppose equal rights for Black Americans.

One seldom-invoked clause of the act, 1875, forbids conspiracy to obstruct federal officeholders from performing their jobs.

Thompson alleged that Trump, Giuliani and the two groups conspired "by force, intimidation and threats" to prevent him from discharging his official duty to carry out the certification of Biden's election win.

"The defendants acted in concert to incite and then carry out a riot at the Capitol by promoting an assembly of persons to engage in tumultuous and violent conduct or the threat of it that created grave danger of harm to the Plaintiff and to other Members of Congress," he said.

## Afghanistan Peace Talks Under Threat As Major Taliban Spring Offensive Takes Shape



Agencies

Unusually intense fighting in the winter by Taliban insurgents has spurred Afghan government preparations for more violence in the warmer spring, which international players fear will further endanger the nation's fragile peace process.

Nearly a year after Washington signed a troop-withdrawal deal with the Taliban that called for a reduction in violence by all sides, attacks by the group have escalated, according to General Scott Miller, the head of US forces and the Nato-led non-combat Resolute Support mission.

"Taliban violence is much higher than historical norms," Miller told Reuters. "It just doesn't create the conditions to move forward in what is hopefully a historic turning point for Afghanistan."

Typically fighting lulls during the snowy winter months before the Taliban launch a "spring offensive" around March.

It comes as negotiations have largely stalled in Doha in recent weeks and Taliban leaders have left Qatar, a senior state department official said, leading to growing fears that talks could be on the brink of collapse.

"If the violence isn't reduced, it's going to make a peace process very, very difficult; it would be very difficult for any

**TALIBAN VIOLENCE IS MUCH HIGHER THAN HISTORICAL norms,** Miller told Reuters. "It just doesn't create the conditions to move forward in what is hopefully a historic turning point for Afghanistan."

## Iran, Russia Start Joint Naval Drill In Indian Ocean

Agencies

TEHRAN: Iran's armed forces on Tuesday launched a joint naval drill with Russia in the north of the Indian Ocean designed to "enhance security" of maritime trade, state television reported.

The "Maritime Security Belt Exercise" is to cover an area of 17,000 square kilometres (6,500 square miles) and include units from the Iranian army and the elite Revolutionary Guards as well as Russia's navy, the broadcaster quoted drill spokesman Rear Admiral Gholamreza Tahani as saying.

"The purposes of this drill are to enhance security of international maritime trade, confront maritime piracy and terrorism, and exchange information," he added.

side to make the necessary compromises," Miller said.

The Afghan government has instructed security forces to carry out a comprehensive troop restructuring and design operations to prepare for a "tough and hard" spring offensive, two government sources told Reuters.

They added that Afghanistan's special forces from different institutions such as the military and police are being streamlined to operate under one command. Highly experienced commanders have been appointed to key areas, and security forces were planning to conduct more airstrikes to avoid losses on the ground.

An Afghan National Security Council spokesman said they were "ready for any kind of war," though they remained in "active defence" mode.

Four Taliban sources said that most of their commanders had in recent weeks cut short annual training sessions after being called back to the battlefield to prepare for intensive fighting.

Three residents in areas dominated by the Taliban in north-eastern Afghanistan had noticed a pick-up in the group's activity in recent weeks, telling Reuters they had seen Taliban fighters moving en masse, holding meetings in mosques, and beginning food and recruitment drives.

"In the past two weeks the topics Taliban preachers

preach, especially on Friday prayers... have changed," said a tribal elder from Kunduz province who asked not to be named for security reasons. "They preach about... fighting against invasion, and they openly invite people to join them. It's a clear message that they are preparing for another fight this spring."

A member of what the Taliban considers its special forces told Reuters that the group was preparing to act when there was an announcement about foreign troops.

"If they don't leave Afghanistan on the preset date then the USA, Nato and the world will face a dangerous war, a war that never happened in the past 20 years," he said.

A Taliban spokesman did not reply to request for comment on the spring offensive.

The administration of US President Joe Biden is reviewing its plans for Afghanistan, including whether to stick to the May 1 deadline in the troop withdrawal agreement former President Trump's administration signed with the Taliban in February 2020.

Miller said his command recognised that foreign forces could be a target if the Taliban view the deal as breached.

Experts and diplomats see a vanishing window of opportunity for talks to survive, although sides say they are committed negotiating.



Russia's Baltic Fleet said in a statement on Monday that three ships will take part in the drill.

Exercises will include "liberating a commercial ship abducted by pirates", and fighting fires, it said.

According to Tahani, the Indian navy will also join the exercise, in a message of "peace and friendship for neighbour-

ing and regional countries".

Iran's state news agency IRNA said the drill is to last three days.

The Iranian army said the exercises will also "expand bilateral relations" with Russia.

Iran, China and Russia held a similar drill in the area in 2019, and the Islamic republic participated in "Caucas 2020" drills held in Russia last September.

## Millions Struggle Without Power As Deadly Winter Storm Grips US

WASHINGTON: Millions were left without power as a winter storm gripped the southern and central United States Tuesday with record-low temperatures in ill-prepared areas, and a tornado claiming three lives.

More than 20 storm-related deaths have been registered so far, including in traffic accidents in Texas, Kentucky and Missouri, according to local media.

In hardest-hit Texas -- where freezing conditions prompted utility companies to implement rotating blackouts -- a woman and girl died from carbon monoxide poisoning after using a car to generate heat, according to NBC News.

In Houston on Monday, a homeless man was killed "possibly from exposure," according to the Harris County Sheriff's Department, and the city's police chief said another man had been found dead after potential exposure to low temperatures.

A man in Louisiana died when he hit his head after slipping on ice, and a 10-year-old Tennessee boy died after he and his six-year-old sister fell through the ice into a pond Sunday.

US President Joe Biden on Tuesday vowed to provide additional emergency resources for those affected by the "historic storm."

He also thanked "road workers, highway patrol officers, and first responders who are taking swift action in horrific conditions to save lives," according to a White House statement.

The winter storm spawned at least four tornadoes, according to Atlanta-based weather.com, in-



cluding one in coastal North Carolina late Monday that killed at least three people and injured 10 more. "It is estimated that at least 50 homes were affected in the incident and several power lines were damaged, causing power outages," Brunswick County Emergency Services said in a statement.

Photos and video broadcast by US media showed downed trees, flattened homes and smashed cars.

According to the Poweroutage.us tracking site, more than three million residential, commercial and industrial customers were without electricity in Texas as of Tuesday evening.

**- Plow shortage -**  
In the state capital Austin, the temperature dropped to 10 degrees Fahrenheit (-12 degrees Celsius) -- well below February's average low of 45F. By contrast, thermometers in Anchorage, Alaska read 20F.

Rare wintry scenes played out in Houston, where locals built snowmen and sledged. "It's lovely to see the white but very dangerous at the same time because people here don't know how to drive in it," Houston resident Michael, who only gave his first name, told AFP.

## Gunmen Kidnap Hundreds Of Schoolboys In Nigeria



Agencies

Gunmen believed to belong to a criminal gang stormed a school in central Nigeria, killing one student and kidnapping hundreds of others along with some teachers, sources said on Wednesday.

Heavily armed gangs known locally as "bandits" in northwest and central Nigeria have stepped up attacks in recent years, kidnapping for ransom, raping, and pillaging.

On late Tuesday, large numbers of gunmen dressed in military uniforms stormed the Government Science College (GSC) in the town of Kagara in Niger state before hauling students into a nearby forest, a government official and a security source said.

"Bandits went into GSC Kagara last night and kidnapped hundreds of students and their teachers," said the official, who asked not to be named due to the sensitivity of the issue.

"One of the kidnapped staff and some students managed to escape. The staff confirmed a student was shot dead during the kidnap operation," the official said.

Only two months ago, more than 300 students were kidnapped in Kankara, in nearby

Katsina state. The boys were later released but the incident sparked global outrage.

The school targeted on Tuesday has around 1,000 students and it was not immediately clear how many were taken.

"A head count is underway to establish how many students were kidnapped," a security source said.

Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari on Wednesday condemned the abduction of schoolboys from a school in central Nigeria and ordered a rescue operation, his office said.

"The President has directed the Armed Forces and Police, to ensure immediate and safe return of all the captives," presidential spokesman Garba Shehu said in a statement.

On Tuesday, Niger state authorities said bandits also killed 10 people and kidnapped at least 23 others in attacks on two remote villages.

The region is increasingly a hub for criminal gangs who raid villages, killing and abducting residents after looting and torching homes.

Bandits are known to hide in camps in Rugu forest, which straddles Zamfara, Katsina, Kaduna and Niger states. Despite the deployment of troops, deadly attacks persist.

The gangs are largely driven by financial motives and have no known ideological leanings.

But there is growing concern they are being infiltrated by jihadists from the northeast who are waging a decade-old insurgency to establish an Islamic state.

The latest kidnapping incident comes nearly three years after 111 schoolgirls were snatched by jihadists in Dapchi, in the north, and six years after 276 girls were taken from Chibok, in the northeast, in a raid that shocked the world.

### NEWS MAKERS

## Rihanna's Topless Photo With Ganesha Pendant Sparks New Row

Agencies

**THIS EXPOSES** how #Rihanna has no idea or respect for Indian culture, tradition and our issues here,"

NEW DELHI: Pop icon Rihanna has been accused of mocking a Hindu god after she was pictured topless with a pendant of Ganesha around her neck, sparking a furore in India.

Images of the lingerie photoshoot come just weeks after she upset the Indian government by commenting on huge farmers' protests that pose a major challenge to New Delhi.

The latest offending tweet to the superstar's more than



100 million Twitter followers is part of promotions for Rihanna's lingerie line Savage X Fenty.

The photo was also shared on her Instagram account, which

has 91.4 million followers. Social media users and politicians in India on Wednesday said her post was "derogatory", accusing her of disrespecting Hindu gods and hurting

local sentiment. "It's appalling to see how @Rihanna shamefully mocks our beloved Hindu God #Ganesha," tweeted Ram Kadam, a state legislator from BJP.

"This exposes how #Rihanna has no idea or respect for Indian culture, tradition and our issues here," he added.

The right-wing World Hindu Council said it had filed police complaints against Facebook and Twitter for hosting the picture and demanded action against Rihanna's social media accounts.

Earlier this month tweets from Rihanna and other celebrities on protests in India by farmers against new agriculture laws sparked anger at India's foreign ministry, which called their comments "sensationalist".

## Elon Musk's Reign Was Brief. Jeff Bezos Is World's Richest Again

Agencies

Elon Musk's reign as the world's richest person was brief.

Tesla Inc. shares slid 2.4% on Tuesday, erasing \$4.6 billion from its chief executive officer's fortune and knocking him from the top spot on the Bloomberg Billionaires Index ranking.

Jeff Bezos, who'd held the title for more than three years until last month, reclaimed his No. 1 position with a net worth of \$191.2 billion, or \$955 million more than Musk.



Musk's drop ends -- for now -- an almost six-week stint as world's richest person that saw him front and center in some of the biggest market events so far this year.

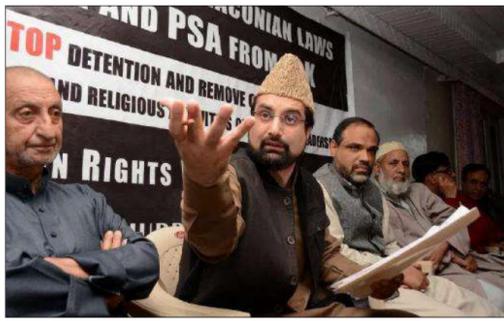
He fanned the flames of the Reddit-driven GameStop Corp. rally and sent the shares of

the cryptocurrency on its balance sheet. Still, despite Musk's seemingly constant social media presence, Tesla shares have slid almost 10% from a Jan. 26 peak.

It's been an eventful stretch for Bezos as well. He resumes the mantle of world's richest person as he's about to cede a title of his own. Amazon.com Inc. announced this month that Bezos will down step as CEO of the e-commerce giant in the third quarter to focus on other projects. Bezos owns space exploration company Blue Origin as well as the Washington Post and has accelerated his philanthropic giving in recent years. Amazon shares have climbed 53% in the past 12 months.

It may not be long though before Musk leapfrogs Bezos once again.

## Hurriyat Accuses India, Pak Of Reneging From Promises Made To Kashmiris



**SRINAGAR:** Hurriyat Conference Wednesday accused both New Delhi and Islamabad of reneging from their commitments made to the people of Jammu and Kashmir at the time of the partition of the Sub-continent.

"People of Jammu & Kashmir have for the past 74 years been incessantly demanding the resolution of the Kashmir conflict that arose in 1947, when India and Pakistan, two newly formed states, divided J&K between them", Hurriyat said in a statement on Wednesday.

"Both claim Jammu and Kashmir in its entirety as an integral part without ascertaining the will of the people of J&K. Commitments made to the people of J&K by the Governments of both the states at that time that their fundamental right to decide their future will be honoured, stands unfulfilled to this day", Hurriyat statement said.

While Hurriyat blames both India and Pakistan for breaking their pledge to Kashmiris it stopped short of saying anything on the situation on the Pakistani side of Kashmir. Hur-

riyat statement said, "Instead, a policy of repression and intimidation in varying degrees has been pursued in Jammu and Kashmir resulting in severe human rights abuses of the people of Kashmir".

"All attempts by APHC seeking dialogue between India Pakistan and people of J&K as a means of peaceful resolution of the issue stand snubbed, instead the leadership is jailed and harassed".

"Meanwhile efforts are on to change the demographic composition of the state to undermine its disputed nature, after it was downgraded to a union territory of India and brought under its direct rule. All forms of peaceful protest or dissent by the people to this unilateral authoritarian move and its resultant effects, is curbed by force as the number of armed troops in the valley is highest anywhere in the world.

In such situations a curated tour of foreign dignitaries to showcase normalcy in the valley to the outside world is misleading", the statement added.

**ALL ATTEMPTS BY APHC SEEKING dialogue between India Pakistan and people of J&K as a means of peaceful resolution of the issue stand snubbed, instead the leadership is jailed and harassed".**

## Talk To Politicians Instead Of Inviting Diplomats To Kashmir: Soz

**SRINAGAR:** Taking a dig at the Government of India for inviting foreign diplomats every year to Kashmir, senior Congress leader and former Union Minister Saifuddin Soz today said that the government is 'wasting' taxpayers money. He termed the visit of foreign diplomats a 'futile' exercise.

Soz told news agency Kashmir News Trust that instead of wasting money on these diplomats, the Government of India should start a dialogue with mainstream politicians. "If you have reservations in talking to Hurriyat leaders, but at least talk to mainstream leaders who are available. What government will get by inviting these diplomats? They will enjoy the scenic beauty of Kashmir and will get back to their countries without any outcome," he said.

Soz said that there are chances that behind this government



exercise, any diplomat will understand the ground reality and utter truth. "If they will meet me, I will shed light on everything. People are angry and want restoration of the special status of Jammu and Kashmir," Soz said, adding that in days to come, the Government of India will learn a lesson.

Soz said that the Government of India should take mainstream politicians on board without wasting any time.

**IF YOU HAVE RESERVATIONS IN talking to Hurriyat leaders, but at least talk to mainstream leaders who are available. What government will get by inviting these diplomats? They will enjoy the scenic beauty of Kashmir and will get back to their countries without any outcome."**

## JK Reports 84 New Covid-19 Positive Cases

**SRINAGAR:** Government on Wednesday said that 58 new positive cases of Novel Coronavirus (11 from Jammu Division and 73 from Kashmir Division) have been reported Wednesday taking the total number of positive cases in Jammu and Kashmir to 125547.

Moreover, 56 more COVID-19 patients have recovered and were discharged from various hospitals including 22 from Jammu Division and 34 from Kashmir Division.

According to the daily Media Bulletin on Covid-19, out of 125547 positive cases, 657 are Active Positive, 122939 have recovered and 1951 have died; 725 in Jammu division and 1226 in Kashmir division.

The Bulletin further said that out of 4917708 test results available, 4792161 samples have been tested as negative till 17th February, 2021.

Till date 1232067 persons have been enlisted for observation which included 33839 persons in home quarantine including facilities operated by government, 657 in isolation and 107361 in home surveillance. Besides, 1088259 persons have completed their surveillance period.

Providing district-wise breakup, the Bulletin said that Srinagar has 26639 positive cases (including 42 cases reported today) with 272 Active Positive, 25907 recovered (including 15 cases recovered today), 460 deaths; Baramulla has 8167 positive cases (including 02 cases reported today) with 35 Active Positive, 7959 recovered (including 15 cases recovered today), 175 deaths; Budgam reported 7835 positive cases (including 09 cases reported today) with 39 active positive cases, 7678 recovered (including 06 cases recovered today), 118 deaths; Pulwama has 5803 positive cases (including 06 cases reported today) with 37 Active Positive, 5678 recovered (including 05 cases recovered today) and 88 deaths; Kupwara has 5672 positive cases (including 01 case reported today), 05 Active Positive, 5571 recoveries (including 02 cases recovered today), 96 deaths; Anantnag district has 4973 positive cases (including 09 cases reported today) with 44 Active Positive, 4843 recovered (including 03 cases recovered today), 86 deaths; Bandipora has 4705



positive cases (including 01 case reported today) with 13 Active Positive and 4630 recoveries, 62 deaths; Ganderbal has 4660 positive cases with 31 Active Positive, 4582 recoveries and 47 deaths; Kulgam has 2712 positive cases with 12 Active Positive, 2646 recoveries (including 01 case recovered today) and 54 deaths while as Shopian has 2590 positive cases (including 03 cases reported today) with 17 active positive cases, 2533 recoveries and 40 deaths.

Similarly, Jammu has 25116 positive cases (including 11 cases reported today) with 92 active positive cases, 24651 recoveries (including 05 cases recovered today), 373 deaths; Udhampur has 4241 positive cases 23 active positive cases, 4161 recoveries (including 05 cases recovered today) and 57 deaths; Rajouri has 3873 positive cases with 04 active positive, 3814 recoveries and 55 deaths; Doda has 3436 positive cases with 06 Active positive, 3366 recovered and 64 deaths; Kathua has 3256 positive cases with no active positive case, 3203 recovered and 53 deaths; Kishtwar has 2733 positive cases with 01 Active Positive, 2710 recoveries; 22 deaths; Samba has 2835 positive cases with 09 active positive cases, 2786 recoveries and 40 deaths; Poonch has 2520 positive cases with 19 active positive, 2477 recoveries (including 06 cases recovered today) and 24 deaths; Ramban has 2135 positive cases with no active positive cases, 2114 recoveries and 21 deaths while Reasi has 1646 positive with no active positive case, 1630 recoveries (including 06 cases recovered today) and 16 deaths.

According to the bulletin, among the total 125547 positive cases in J&K, 12013 have been reported as travelers while 113534 as others.

The Bulletin said that the breakup represents districts from which the patients have been traced or are ordinarily residing.

The bulletin added that there are 1091 COVID dedicated beds, 962 Isolation beds with 957 vacant beds and 129 ICU beds where 122 beds are vacant in Jammu division while there are 1570 COVID dedicated beds, 1484 Isolation beds where 1433 beds are vacant and 86 ICU beds where 73 are vacant beds in Kashmir division. There are a total of 2661 COVID dedicated beds, 2446 Isolation beds with 2390 beds vacant and 215 ICU beds with 195 vacant beds in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

The Central Government is continuously monitoring the evolving situation of Covid-19 in the Union Territory and is providing all necessary support towards effective containment of the spread of Covid-19 and better clinical management of positive cases.

The government has also started free tele-consultation general OPD services by Specialists/MBBS Doctors for the residents of J&K under National Tele-consultation Service.

People can avail these services from home by registering online on web portal <https://esanjeevaniopd.in/>. The services are available on Monday to Saturday from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. People can also download and install sanjeevani OPD app from google play store.

Besides, 24x7 Rapid Antigen Testing facility for COVID-19 has been started outside the emergency of GMC Hospital Jammu. The facility will be very useful for segregation of patients in the emergency wing of GMC Jammu.

## Bukhari Spews Venom Against Mehbooba

**Says 'Feeling Ashamed For Standing With A Person Who Looted J&K Resources'**

**Agencies**

**SRINAGAR:** J&K Apni Party chief Syed Altaf Bukhari spewed venom against the PDP chief and his ex boss Mehbooba Mufti by calling her a "thief", stating he is feeling ashamed of himself for standing with a person who plundered resources of erstwhile state for her personal gains.

Bukhari said that he couldn't sleep for the whole night after reading the statement of Mehbooba wherein she claimed that PDP was not for restoration of statehood but article 370. "I want

to ask her how one can bring back 370 without restoration of Statehood. She wants this place to remain as backward, by opposing statehood what does she want to prove," he said.

Bukhari, who was a cabinet minister during PDP-BJP regime, said that she is opposing the statehood at the behest of PAGD. "What drama is she playing? She calls others as B team, so is she doing it for being A team," he said addressing party workers from Bijnbehara, Kupwara and other places at his Srinagar office.

Taking a dig at Mehbooba,

Bukhari said that "I wonder whether you deserve the respect we gave you at one point of time. And irony is that she opposed statehood at a place which is just 50 kms away from the other side of Kashmir where two families are divided just because of leaders like her."

Bukhari said that one of the PDP leaders is a master in narrating "Ram Katha". "Are we supposed to tell Ram Katha to people who are suffering or we should work towards mitigating the sufferings of people?," he said, adding that "Perhaps she (Mehbooba) is trying to hide her illegal assets and properties.

## DC Pulwama Oversees Functioning Of FASTag At Kaichachkoot Toll Plaza

**PULWAMA:** Amidst complaints of inconvenience by commuters over mandatory provision of FASTags by National Highway Authority of India (NHAI), the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Pulwama Dr. Raghav Langer today made a spot visit to Kaichachkoot, Toll Plaza to take appraisal of the issue.

The DC during the visit held interaction with all stakeholders and directed the officials and concessionaires of NHAI to ensure widespread awareness among the commuters. He directed for installing facilitation centers all along the National Highway besides installation of Billboards and Hoardings to disseminate information regarding the FASTags.

It was also directed to put up more counters of authorised banks and IHMCL (Indian Highways Management Company Ltd) for issuance of on spot FASTags.

The DC appealed to the public to cooperate with the authorities as the FASTags mechanism has been introduced to save time and seamless passage. He added that the exception clause shall be abided with, and people falling within the radius of 20 Kms shall be given the relaxation and a mechanism has been carved out for the same.

It is noteworthy that all the 12 lanes at Toll Plaza K.koot, Awantipora on NH-44 have been equipped with FASTags.

As per NH Fee Rules 2008, any vehicle not fitted with FASTag or vehicle without valid functional FASTag entering into the FASTag lane of the fee plaza shall pay a fee equivalent to two times the fee applicable to that category.

The high tech-initiative is internet-based aimed at promoting fee payment through digital mode, saving precious time and fuel consumption.

## Dr. Samoon Reviews JKEIP-2020



**JAMMU:** Principal Secretary, Skill Development Department, Dr. Asgar Hassan Samoon today chaired a meeting of senior officers of various departments to discuss and review the JK Education Investment Policy, 2020 (JKEIP) at Civil Secretariat here.

Commissioner Secretary, Higher Education Department, Talat Parvez Rohella; Special Secretary, Industries & Commerce, Tariq Ahmad Zargar; MD SIDCO, Mohammad Harun; MD SICOP, Atul Sharma; Special Secretary, PDD, Ravinder Sadhu besides senior officers of Revenue, Education, Finance and other allied departments were also present in the meeting.

Threadbare discussions were held on various components of EIP 2020 besides land required for establishing various educational hubs under education sector as per statutory rules.

It was also discussed that under EIP-2020 the structure of High tech Edu-city campus shall consist of reputed schools, colleges, Universities and Institutes like International Residential School, Digital Smart School, Engineering & Polytechnic College, Agriculture, Design & Town Planning College, Medical & Dental College, Law College, Tourism & Hospitality Development College and other institutes.

The meeting was informed that the Departments of Skill Development and Higher Education have received six proposals of almost 700 crores from both domestic and inter-

national investors. It was further decided that the six proposals received by the SDD and HED should be publicized through print medium and new prospective investors should be encouraged to come forward and invest in J&K.

It was also decided in the meeting that Investments in the field of education should be the top priority of education related departments and no stone should be left unturned in achieving this goal. The Principal Secretary directed the officers of I&C Department that they should facilitate the prospective investors for land allotment.

The officers of SIDCO & SICOP were directed to give able assistance in this exercise and top priority should be given to under developed and remote areas for these investments in the field of education as it would give a flip to the rural economy of J&K.

The meeting also suggested that prospective investors should come forward and give presentations regarding their proposals besides a ceiling of 200 kanals should be fixed in case of establishing universities and 21 kanals in case of Colleges.

It was also suggested in the meeting that I&C Department should ensure single window clearance mechanism for three SDD, HED and SED Departments besides focus should be on Gap analysis by the three departments in order to have a clearer picture on the issues involved.

**THE OFFICERS OF SIDCO & SICOP WERE directed to give able assistance in this exercise and top priority should be given to under developed and remote areas for these investments in the field of education as it would give a flip to the rural economy of J&K .**

### NEWS MAKERS

## Indian Army Developing Artisan Hub In Anantnag

**SRINAGAR:** With an aim to revive traditional Wood Carving and further bolster bond between people and army, a unique initiative was taken by the Indian Army under the name "DISHAA : Developing Intensive Skill Hub for Artisan of Anantnag".

The initiative will reinvigorate the traditional art by creating artisans' base equipped with the unique skills of wood carving and will also support the livelihood for locals. The event was conducted by the Indian Army at Anantnag High Ground (AHG) on the earnest request of locals for participation to learn and promote the indigenous art of Kashmir.

The event was conducted for seven days from 11th



Feb 2020 to 17 Feb 2020 at Anantnag High Ground & a total of fifteen locals participated in the event. The passion, containment and rejoice exhibited by locals while carving intricate designs was a sight to watch. Raw materials provided for the event were obtained from the Walnut tree locally known as "Doon Kul" and is cut once it matures

to the age of 300 years. Locals appreciated the event and expressed their heartfelt gratitude towards the Indian Army for conducting such an event that would support their livelihood and prove fruitful for them in the longer run. The locals expressed their strong desire that more such events be conducted in future.

## Reopening Of Schools: Director Education Visits Kulgam

**KULGAM:** In the wake of opening of schools after closure due to Covid-19 pandemic followed by winter vacations, the Director School Education, Mohammad Younis Malik today visited Kulgam district to oversee preparations.

The Director School Education along with the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam Showkat Aijaz Bhat chaired a meeting of officers at Mini-Secretariat, here. During the meeting the Director laid emphasis on adherence to Covid-19 SOPs in letter and spirit at all levels.

A sensitization programme was also held and participants were apprised about SOPs, precautions and safety measures to be taken after reopening of schools.

A detailed projection through power point presentation on modifying curriculum for teaching learning amidst Covid-19 was shared with the participants.

Later, the Director visited DIET Complex Kulgam and took stock of the functioning of the institution. The meeting was attended by ADC, JD-Education South Kashmir, CEO and Principals besides ZEOs, representatives of the health department and other concerned officers and officials.

## J&K MEGA Hails Govt For Meeting Pending Demands

**T**he J&K MEGA (J&K Mechanical Engineering Graduates Association) appreciated and welcomed various initiatives taken by the Administrative Department of PWD (R&B and Mechanical Engineering) under the dynamic leadership of Sh. R. R. Bhatnagar, Advisor to His Excellency Lt. Governor and Principal Secretary to Govt (R&B and Mech. Engg.) Mr. Shalindra Kumar (IAS) and his team for redressal of various long pending demands of Engineers.

The JKMEGA president Er Firdous Ahad Bhat apprised that The fast regularisation initiated, long pending promotions/ placements, transfer policy, accountability being implemented etc are historic moves to be welcomed and supported. The recent approval of the PWD Engineering Manual Book is a milestone in the history of Engineering.

The process of regularization which was at halt from the last one decade has been started at various levels. The regularization process is in progress in the Mechanical wing and hope it will be completed soon.

The Jammu and Kashmir Mechanical Engineering Graduates Association has welcomed the timely promotions / placements of Executive Engineers, Asstt. Executive Engineers, Asstt. Engineers and last but not the least long pending demand of promotion of Jr. Engineer (Mech.) under the able guidance of worthy Principal Secretary PWD (R&B and Mechanical Engineering) as per the service rules.

The Association has also expressed hope that in the Reorganisation and Restructuring of the department, the Mechanical Engineering fraternity in the modern mechanised world will be fully and properly utilised for greater public service.

The Association would also like to thank Additional Secretary (R&B) Mr. Rajnish Kumar, Additional Secretary (HRM) Mr. Shahid Mehmood and the team for putting their best efforts in redressal of the grievances of the Engineers.

K O V I E W

## Back to school?

The schools in Kashmir are reopening from March 1 and the government has allowed the school buses to ply. Incharge Divisional Commissioner Kashmir Dr Shahid Iqbal Choudhary said on Tuesday that the school transport will operate as usual when schools reopen across the Valley. On its face, it seems a good decision by the government. The number of Covid cases in Kashmir has registered a drastic decline over the past some months. On Wednesday, J&K recorded 58 new positive cases, 11 from Jammu division and 47 from Kashmir division. According to the daily media bulletin on the outbreak, out of 125463 positive cases, 629 are active, 122883 have recovered and 1951 have died, 725 in Jammu division and 1226 in Kashmir division.

This has created a conducive environment for reopening of all kinds of businesses including the schools. The situation has further improved with the arrival on the scene of the vaccines. In the first phase, the government is vaccinating health and the other frontline workers. With more people receiving the jab, things are likely to get even better. So, the reopening of schools will be the natural outcome of the turnaround in the situation. More so, when schools have already been closed for over eighteen months. Even before the Covid lockdown closed schools around the world, schools in Kashmir had already been shut for eight months due to the siege that followed revocation of Article 370 in August 2019.

That said, we are not out of the woods yet. The pandemic is very much a reality. In countries like Saudi Arabia, the UAE and the UK, the pandemic has witnessed a resurgence in recent weeks. This despite the fact that these countries have also been using the vaccine for some time now.

So, while deciding to reopen the schools, government should not lose sight of the state of affairs in other countries. More so, in case of school going children. True, the government will be coming out with Standard Operating Procedures for the schools but the problem will be its implementation. Many schools have a huge number of pupils and it will be difficult to follow the SOPs by them.

If we evaluate the situation objectively, the government's decision to reopen schools is premature. On ground the exercise is not only not going to serve its desired purpose but also disrupt the ongoing online classes and leave a majority of students without education. Considering the pandemic is not going to go away any time soon and we might even see fresh spurt in the cases, the government should wait for a month or so before allowing the schools to reopen.

OTHER OPINION

## The digital bargain

The battle between Google and, to a lesser extent, Facebook, and traditional news media in Australia reached a head earlier this month when the tech giant threatened to withdraw its popular search services from the country. The bone of contention is a proposed law that frames a bargaining code to ensure that news outlets are compensated for the content they generate. The dispute frames the issue of the dominance of a handful of companies in the digital news landscape. Second, given the abiding importance of quality journalism in informing public debate, it could provide the template for how news organisations' businesses and revenue models will evolve.

The proposed law has come not from Australia's media watchdog but from the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, which found after an 18-month investigation that the control over the distribution of content that Google and Facebook have, and the profit from news content they corner, threatens the viability of traditional media. For example, for every \$100 of digital advertising revenue accrued in Australia, \$53 goes to Google, \$28 to Facebook and \$19 is shared among the companies that often actually produce content. Under the new law, if an agreement cannot be reached between online platforms and media houses in a stipulated period, the matter will go into arbitration, where the decision will be binding. It is this final clause that Google objects to the most. As a compromise — and a strategy — Google has launched its "News Showcase" in Australia, and is trying to strike a deal with media groups before the new law comes into effect. News Showcase and a similar initiative by Facebook in the UK in December 2020 pay news outlets licence fees to use their content. The fear, especially among smaller media houses, is that without a law, they will have no bargaining power vis a vis digital behemoths.

There is little doubt that technology has changed how content is consumed and shapes how news outlets must evolve. In entertainment, for example, large studios like Disney have launched their own platforms to compete with the likes of Netflix and Amazon. Given the monopolistic control that Google and Facebook enjoy — and questions over their algorithm-led editorial judgment — preserving the diversity of the media landscape has merit. Already, the spectre of regulation seems to be pushing these companies to share profits with those who create content and report the news. Negotiations between old media and new in Australia will be keenly watched.

The Indian Express

# The Mute Maestros of Indian Cricket



MUKUL KESAVAN

**It has been a storied career. Jaffer is 42 years old. He recently retired from the first-class game, having played as an opening batsman for more than two decades. In that time, he played 31 Tests for India, won eight Ranji Trophy titles for Mumbai, and then moved to Vidarbha and won two more with an unfancied side. He is the most prolific run-scorer in the history of first-class cricket in India. He has scored more runs than any other batsman in the Ranji Trophy, the Duleep Trophy and the Irani Cup.**

Indian cricket nearly died this week. It was buried in a landslide in the Himalayan foothills. It lies there still, in critical condition, because hundreds of Indian players who could have helped dig it out have determinedly looked the other way.

An official of Uttarakhand's cricket association accused Wasim Jaffer, the provincial team's coach, of communalism. Jaffer is a Muslim; he was charged with favouring Muslims over Hindus. Given India's past and present, that is a wicked, career-ending allegation.

It has been a storied career. Jaffer is 42 years old. He recently retired from the first-class game, having played as an opening batsman for more than two decades. In that time, he played 31 Tests for India, won eight Ranji Trophy titles for Mumbai, and then moved to Vidarbha and won two more with an unfancied side. He is the most prolific run-scorer in the history of first-class cricket in India. He has scored more runs than any other batsman in the Ranji Trophy, the Duleep Trophy and the Irani Cup.

Jaffer's list of Test teammates reads like a Who's Who of Indian cricket. He played alongside Sachin Tendulkar, Rahul Dravid, V.V.S. Laxman, Virender Sehwag, Anil Kumble and Sourav Ganguly, who is currently president of the Board of Control for Cricket in India. Two days after he was accused of being communal, only Kumble amongst these storied names had come forward to offer support or solidarity.

Kumble didn't mention the accusation; he simply offered support and praised Jaffer for having done the right thing. (Jaffer had resigned as coach citing interference in matters of selection.) Even this brief message of solidarity echoed in the thickening silence as the other members of Indian cricket's modern pantheon stayed as mute as a row of waxworks.

It was left to Dodda Ganesh, who played for Karnataka and represented India in four Tests, to offer full-throated support. His tweet is worth quoting in full to illustrate what fraternal solidarity reads like: "Dear @WasimJaffer14, you've been a great ambassador of the game and represented India with pride. Cannot believe that this could happen to someone like you. You're a gem of a cricketer and human, brother. Cricket world knows you and your integrity."

There is an innocence about Ganesh's tweet that makes you want to cry. The 'cricket world' clearly doesn't know Jaffer; it certainly doesn't give two paise for his integrity, else Tendulkar, Dravid, Laxman, Sehwag and Ganguly might have used up 280 characters to tweet their support for him, as Kumble did.

This is what is so baffling, so dismaying about their silence: why couldn't they do what Kumble did? Just put out a tactful tweet that tells an old comrade that he is not alone, that they are, metaphorically, on his side. Unless they aren't, of course. Un-

less the manager who accused Jaffer and the association secretary who backed him up are, in the eyes of these immortals, local avatars of the meta-gods who own Indian cricket and, therefore, not to be crossed.

Which makes you wonder: what is the point of being a cricket immortal if you can't stand up for a teammate publicly accused of bigotry by a petty official? What price your Bharat Ratna if you can't practise that basic republican virtue, fraternity, within the narrow bounds of your sport? How seriously can we take the well-turned sentences of your Bradman Oration if you can't spare a dozen words to comfort a beleaguered colleague who you once shared a dressing room with? Why become the president of the BCCI if, on your watch, a cricketer noted for his professionalism and integrity can be defamed by your minions?

Jaffer shouldn't be in the dock, trying to defend himself against defamation. The officials of the Cricket Association of Uttarakhand who defamed him should be suspended for bringing the game into disrepute and asked, in the babu's menacing jargon — the only language that they understand — to show cause.

Contemptible as the behaviour of his national teammates has been, the bigger betrayal of Jaffer and Indian cricket has been the failure of Mumbai cricket to protect its own. For Indian cricket fans who grew up in the 60s and 70s, Mumbai wasn't just Indian cricket's regional powerhouse, it was a formidable cricketing culture.

Its league cricket nurtured some of India's greatest players. The Mumbai school of batsmanship, epitomized by Vijay Merchant, Vijay Manjrekar, Dilip Sardesai, Sunil Gavaskar, Dilip Vengsarkar and Sachin Tendulkar, was famous for orthodoxy, stubbornness and the ability to play the long game. The camaraderie engendered by this high-pressure cricket culture was intense and the loyalty of Mumbai's cricketers toward their own was legendary and, in matters of selection, notorious.

Where is that loyalty now? Jaffer is the embodiment of the Mumbai school of batting. He batted for Mumbai for nearly two decades with heroic consistency. Mumbai's cricketers man the commanding heights of every part of India's cricketing establishment. Sunil Gavaskar and Sanjay Manjrekar are fixtures in television commentary boxes; Tendulkar is India's cricketing mascot; Ravi Shastri is the manager of the national team; Rohit Sharma is the vice-captain of India's ODI side, and Ajinkya Rahane is the vice-captain of India's Test team. Not one of them has said a word in support of Jaffer.

Ajinkya Rahane was asked on the eve of the second Test against England about the Jaffer affair. He refused to comment, saying, "I don't have an idea regarding this issue..." Rahane was Jaffer's teammate in Mumbai's first-class side for years. It's fair to say

that he knows Jaffer. And it's hard to believe that he doesn't know that Jaffer's been accused of communalism. He lives in a bio-secure bubble, not under a rock.

Just a week ago, Rahane, Sharma, Kohli, Shastri and Tendulkar, prompted by the powers that be, were tweeting in chorus against foreign commentary on the farmers' agitation. #IndiaTogether was Rahane's preferred hashtag. Someone should tell this Mumbai batsman that unity begins at home.

This recent sequence of events has been the perfect reveal: on-demand tweeting one moment and deathly silence the next. When Mohammed Siraj was heckled abroad by bigoted Australian spectators, the Indian team's captain and manager brimmed over with outrage and solidarity. A month later, an awful allegation has been made against Jaffer, who held an impromptu press conference to rebut those charges, item by item. It hasn't elicited a single word of sympathy or solidarity from his fellows. What is so different now?

The answer to that question cannot be that in India, when cricketers who happen to be Muslim are at the receiving end of bigotry, discretion shall be the better part of valour. That would mean that Indian cricket, till recently breathing under that landslide in Uttarakhand, is conclusively dead. We should all hope that over the next few days, Jaffer's peers, past and present, begin to speak up for him.

They could start by reading a Mumbai player who had the decency and the heart to offer a resounding endorsement of Jaffer. Chandrakant Pandit, who had a brief Test career as a wicket-keeper-batsman, wrote: "It is shocking to read that Wasim tried to influence players over religion. I have known Wasim for... very long and worked closely with him during my time at Vidarbha. He was a role model to all the youngsters irrespective of caste or religion. He would only talk about talented players who he thought would benefit the team... He is an out-and-out team man. If any player was deserving, he would talk about him. It didn't matter what religion he belonged to."

Shishir Hattangadi, who batted for Mumbai for a decade, has, like Pandit, declared his faith in Jaffer. If more cricketers take their cue from Kumble, Ganesh, Manoj Tiwary, Pandit and Hattangadi, we might yet drag Indian cricket, breathing, from under the rubble. If they don't, we'll know it's dead. A team that represents a nation must consist of citizens who play for each other, not clients who service a hectoring State.

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

The article first appeared in The Telegraph. The author can be reached at: mukulkeshavan@hotmail.com



OBSERVER MAIL

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## Pheran: The unique dress-code of Kashmir

Pheran is one of the famous cultural outfits of Kashmir. It consists of two gowns, one over the other, which extends below the knees with or without side slit. Women love to wear the Tilla Pheran. The craft of embroidery is the most celebrated art of Kashmir which is known as Tilla Dozi, however the art is dying with time.

The Pheran was introduced by Mu-

ghal Emperor Akbar. It reflects the historical culture, as they have not made any drastic change in the garment. If a person from the 16th century wakes up, he would definitely identify pheran as something that belongs to their era.

During the winter season everyone loves to wear Pheran because it protects us from cold. Kangiri (fire pot), filled with coal is carried under the pheran. Coal is used for a lasting, which provides warmth

for a long time. Pheran and kangiri represent the rich culture of Kashmir.

Pherans that men wear are quite simple but women Pheran are designed with Tilla dozi. Tilla embroidered Pheran constitutes a unique part of varden (parent's gift) at the wedding time of daughters in Kashmir.

Tilla Dozi an embroidery work, constitutes gold or silver threads and threads are delicately tied by needle

point over the fabric to create lovely designs. Whole process of Tilla dozi needs skill, patience and accuracy. The artisans are not given appropriate wages for their work, which is the main reason behind the decline of Kashmiri art and machine made embroidery is also ruining the Kashmiri Tilla Handicraft.

Salma Farooq  
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# Names that Did Not Click

KHALID BASHIR AHMAD

**It is not always that these officially assigned names click with the people. In Kashmir, there are several instances when christening or rechristening of places, roads and bridges by a government has failed to meet public acceptance.**

**N**aming and renaming places and old or new infrastructure by a government is a common practice all over the world. However, it is not always that these officially assigned names click with the people. In Kashmir, there are several instances when christening or rechristening of places, roads and bridges by a government has failed to meet public acceptance.

In olden times, Kashmir was divided into two parts – Kamraz and Maraz – representing the north and south parts of the Valley, respectively. As the story goes, two ruling siblings, Kamran Dev and Marhan Dev, had divided the kingdom between themselves. Kamran ruled north Kashmir which came to be known after his name as Kamraz and Marhan ruled south Kashmir which got its name after him as Maraz. People in Kashmir still refer to north and south Kashmir as Kamraz and Maraz, respectively. During the Dogra rule (1846-1947) also, the Valley was administratively divided into two districts of Baramulla and Anantnag. The Srinagar tehsil, now forming two districts of Srinagar and Ganderbal, was part of the Anantnag district.

The Dogras changed the name of north Kashmir tehsil of Handwara to Uttarmachipura which then comprised the areas now forming the districts of Kupwara and Bandipore. The new name did find mention in official records including the Census Reports but on the people's level the tehsil continued, as it does today, to be known as Handwara.

The central Kashmir tehsil (now district) of Budgam was renamed, again by the Dogras, as Sri Pratapsinghpura tehsil after Maharaja Pratap Singh who ruled Kashmir between 1885 and 1925. Officially, the new name was popularized through government orders and documents but failed to generate any sentiment of acceptance among the people who refused to embrace the name change.

In 1964, Kashmir saw the construction of its first concrete bridge over the Jhelum near Qamarwari. Earlier, bridges in the Valley were made of wood only. G. M. Sadiq's government broke this age-old tradition, built this bridge in concrete and named it as Nur Jahan Bridge in memory of the 17th century Mughal queen and wife of King Jahangir. The name did not click with the public. They called it Seemath (Cement) Kadal and it continues to be known by this name.

In 1982, Chief Minister Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah inaugurated a newly constructed bridge over the Jhelum in downtown Srinagar, few meters upstream of an old bridge, the Fateh Kadal. It was named as the Biscoe Bridge after a famous educationist and author of Kashmir under Sunlight and Shade, Tyndale Biscoe, whose bust was also installed there. Although, Biscoe is revered by the people of Kashmir for his contribution in the field of education, the name of the bridge did not amuse them. They called it Nov (New) Fateh Kadal. During a protest demonstration over an unrelated issue, Biscoe's bust was disfigured. Later, it was mysteriously removed. Today, people do not even recall that the bridge was named after Tyndale Biscoe.

On reconstruction, an unnamed culvert on the Tsunt Kol, an outflow channel of the Jhelum, near the Radio Kashmir building, was named as Aziz Bridge in memory of Master Abdul Aziz who was an associate of Maqbool Sherwani. The duo is known to have misled the Tribal Raiders who were on their way to capture Srinagar in 1947 before the Indian Army could land there. The name of the culvert did not find favour with the public. During militancy in Kashmir, the plaque installed on the culvert was broken by some unknown persons. Today, it is a name-



less bridge over the Tsunt Kol.

Another instance is of the Afzal Beg Bridge, situated few meters from the Sangarmal shopping complex, again on the Tsunt Kol. The National Conference government named the reconstructed bridge after the former Deputy Prime Minister and once Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's close associate, Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg but, again, without any public acceptance.

There is this famous and busy road in Srinagar running between the Radio Kashmir and Lal Chowk, known as the Residency Road. The road derived its name from the official residence of the then British Resident in Kashmir, situated on its eastern take-off point. In 1976, a year after Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah had returned to power after 22 years following his dismissal and arrest in 1953, his government renamed the road as the Sherwani Road in memory of Maqbool Sherwani. However, like in the above cases, the new name did not find favour with the public and continues to be known by its colonial name - the Residency Road.

On 19 July 2004, Mohammad Yusuf Rather, Chief Engineer of Kashmir's public works department, was killed in a bomb blast at Kapran in south Kashmir where Deputy Chief Minister Mangat Ram Sharma was addressing a public meeting. Sharma and two other ministers escaped unhurt but Rather was not as lucky. Later, the Mufti Mohammad Sayeed led coalition government named the street running between Jahangir Chowk and Batamaloo as the Engineer Mohammad Yusuf Road but the name change failed to register itself with the people. They still know it as the Secretariat Road or the road leading to Batamaloo.

There are instances where the governments succeeding the autocratic rule in Kashmir have, through official communications and text books, actively

popularized renaming of some places like Anantnag and Shankaracharya, a south Kashmir district and a hillock in Srinagar, respectively. During the Dogra, rule these names were not very popular among people and even official records of that period and books written by foreigners mostly mention these by their previous names.

One of the instances of people accepting without any reservation the name change of an existing infrastructure is the rechristening of the Hotel Road running between the Corporate Headquarters of the J&K Bank and the Budshah Bridge, and the Guer-dav Kadal, a bridge over the Tsunt Kol at its take-off point. Both the road and the bridge were renamed by the Sadiq Government (1964-71) as the Maulana Azad Road and the Maulana Azad Bridge, respectively, in memory of a prominent Indian National Congress leader and independent India's first education minister, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad who was also a prominent religious scholar.

There is, at least, one instance in recent history when renaming of an institution by the government was successfully resisted by people, especially the youth. On 5 November 1973, the Mir Qasim Government was to rechristen the Government Women's College, Maulana Azad Road as Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial College for Women. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was to be the Chief Guest at the function. However, the government cancelled the function in the face of violent protest demonstrations by the students of different colleges in Srinagar.

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

*The article was originally the author's Facebook update*

**A**nother school term has started. For millions of students, it does not mean school doors are opening; but a return to distance learning, yet again. Since the beginning of this pandemic, more than 1.6 billion children and youth have been affected by academic closures. Over half of all students are still facing major disruptions to their learning, ranging from full school closures to reduced or part-time schedules. Prolonged and repeated school closures are increasing learning losses and taking a toll on the mental health of students worldwide.

But it is the most vulnerable children and young people that are bearing the brunt of COVID-19 on their education and future. Remote learning has left nearly 500 million students unable to access education. The combined effect of school closures and the economic recession has been especially devastating for girls, children from poor families and those with disabilities. Only a handful of countries can offer effective online distance learning. In sub-Saharan Africa, four out of five learners do not have access to the internet. UNESCO estimates that 24 million students may never see the inside of a classroom again. Decades of progress risk being reversed, widening inequalities and amplifying the learning crisis.

There is hope on the horizon. The World Bank projects that the global economy will expand by 4 percent in 2021 – a positive outlook that depends on the effective roll-out of vaccines. During this period of recovery, investments that lay the foundation for a more equitable future will be vital. Policies in education that focus on the most disadvantaged children will mitigate the adverse effects of the pandemic by keeping children in school and learning. But without immediate education financing, 825 million children in low- and middle-income countries will not gain the skills they need to successfully enter the job market by 2030.

These investments are urgent. Currently, education is not prioritised in

## It Is Time To Prioritise Education For Recovery

Longer term efforts to fund education equitably should be at the heart of the recovery from the pandemic.

Alice Albright | Stefania Giannini



recovery efforts, receiving a mere 0.78 percent of relief packages worldwide. Squeezed budgets see projections of the total aid to global education declining by 12 percent from now until 2022.

In the immediate future, reopening schools and keeping them open must be a priority, taking every measure to protect the health and wellbeing of teachers and students. Teachers are front-line workers and should be prioritised in vac-

ination campaigns. Policy responses must also include catch-up programmes for students who have fallen behind, enrolment campaigns for children who have dropped out and proper health and hygiene facilities to ensure that schools are reopening safely. This type of up-front investment in catch-up and remedial programmes will save money down the line by reducing the costs of repairing COVID-19-related damage by up to 75 percent.

Longer-term efforts to fund education equitably should be at the heart of the recovery from the pandemic. What this means in practical terms, is that governments and private partners must spend their budgets, however big or small, in ways that actively pursue inclusion and equity in education, such as through cash transfers and social protection measures aimed at the most vulnerable learners. New analysis from the Global Education Monitoring Report finds that only one in

**Teachers are frontline workers and should be prioritised in vaccination campaigns. Policy responses must also include catch-up programmes for students who have fallen behind, re-enrolment campaigns for children who have dropped out and proper health and hygiene facilities to ensure that schools are reopening safely**

five countries demonstrate a strong commitment to equity in education. More worryingly, some countries in sub-Saharan Africa – the region with the most out-of-school children – have no financing policies to promote equity at all.

These findings make the upcoming Global Partnership for Education (GPE) replenishment campaign even more critical. Through its "Raise Your Hand" campaign, GPE is calling for at least \$5 billion to help transform education systems in up to 90 lower-income countries and territories. Fully funded, the campaign will enable 175 million girls and boys to learn and enrol a further 88 million more children in school. As government budgets are being further squeezed by the economic fallout of COVID-19, this funding will give them the capacity to make reforms, address bottlenecks in their education systems, train teachers, invest in new and innovative curricula and find creative ways to deliver education to the children most at risk of being left behind. Millions of children around the world will see their future determined at the high-level GPE replenishment summit co-hosted by UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson and President of Kenya, Uhuru Kenyatta in mid-2021.

We call on countries to protect their budgets and work with partner countries in their region to adopt best practices to ensure that education finance reaches the most marginalised learners. We also call on donors to deliver on their overseas development assistance commitments and to pledge funding to support learners left behind through GPE's "Raise your Hand" campaign.

Education acts as a bulwark against inequalities; a driver of economic and social development and a basis for nurturing responsible, democratic citizenship. It contributes to all the Sustainable Development Goals. It must be a priority in the recovery. Our world needs it now more than ever before.

Al Jazeera

# 'Pausing before replying decreases perceived sincerity'

Agencies

The longer the hesitation, the less sincere the response appears, suggested a new research done by the American Psychological Association.

The study claimed that when people pause before replying to a question, even for just a few seconds, their answers are perceived to be less sincere and credible than if they had replied immediately.

The research was published in the 'Journal of Personality and Social Psychology'.

"Evaluating other people's sincerity is a ubiquitous and important part of social interactions," said lead author Ignazio Ziano, Ph.D., of Grenoble Ecole de Management.

"Our research shows that response speed is an important cue on which people base their sincerity

inferences," added Dr Ziano.

Researchers conducted a series of experiments involving more than 7,500 individuals from the United States, the United Kingdom, and France. Participants either listened to an audio snippet, viewed a video, or read an account of a person responding to a simple question (example: did they like a cake a friend made or had they stolen money from work).

In each scenario, the response time varied from immediate to a 10-second delay. Participants then rated the sincerity of the response on a sliding scale.

Across all 14 experiments, participants consistently rated delayed responses as less sincere regardless of the question, whether it was a harmless one about cake or a more serious one about committing a crime.

A few conditions reduced this

effect, the researchers found. For example, if the answer was considered socially undesirable, such as saying, "No, I don't like it" when a friend asks if you like their cake, response speed did not seem to matter much; the answer was considered sincere whether it was fast or slow.

The researchers also found that if people thought a slower response was due to mental effort (for instance, having to think back if you had stolen candy 10 years ago), response speed had a smaller effect.

The findings have wide implications, according to Dr Ziano. "Whenever people are interacting, they are judging each other's sincerity. These results can be applied to a wide range of interactions, going from workplace chat-chat to couples and friends bickering," he said.

"Further, in job interviews and in court hearings and trials, people are often tasked with judgments of

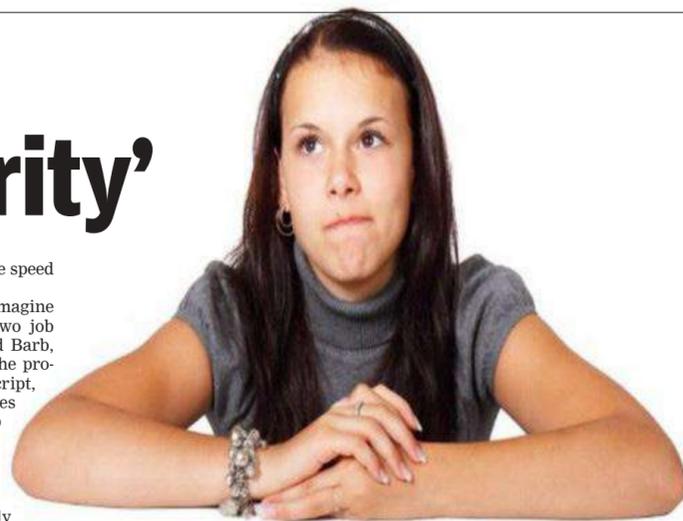
sincerity. Here, too, response speed could play a part."

For example, he said, imagine a hiring manager asking two job candidates, named Ann and Barb, whether they really know the programming language Javascript, as they claim. Ann says yes immediately, while Barb replies yes after three seconds.

"Our results suggest that in this situation, the hiring manager is more likely to believe Ann than Barb, and therefore more likely to hire Ann," said Dr Ziano. "In general, whenever there is a response that requires an answer, such as in a job interview, delayed responses can be perceived as less sincere."

Another area where response time may be important is jury reactions to testimony in court.

"It would be unfair for the re-



sponder, such as a crime suspect, if the response delay was misattributed to thought suppression or answer fabrication when it was in fact caused by a different factor, such as simply being distracted or thoughtful," said Dr Ziano.

The final experiment found that explicitly instructing participants to ignore delayed response reduced,

but did not completely remove, the effect of delayed response on the judgment of sincerity or guilt.

"Nevertheless, our research shows that, on the whole, a fast response seems to be perceived as more sincere, while a response that is delayed for even a couple of seconds may be considered a slow lie," said Dr Ziano.

# Study sheds light on elements that drive people to improve self-control

Agencies

A new study has found that people differ as to how strongly they desire better self-control, and reveals some of the factors affecting this desire.

The findings of the study were published in the journal 'Motivation Science'. Self-control significantly affects well-being and objective success in life. Although many agree that a high degree of self-control is beneficial, helping people develop more self-control is a tricky challenge.

Self-control training, like training in any domain, is affected by the basic question of whether a person is motivated to improve self-control. This study explores that people differ as to how strongly they desire better self-control and uncovers the elements that drive people to improve this important personal quality.

The desire for self-control (DSC) reflects a wish to have an improved self-control ability. This desire is influenced by societal or cultural demands, as well as internal motivations. In the new study led by Israel's Bar-Ilan University, Australia's University of Queensland, and Texas Tech University,



in the US, researchers sought to discover the elements that drive people to experience greater DSC.

The research involved four separate studies. Across all studies, individuals low in trait self-control expressed greater DSC. That is individuals who chronically believe they are deficient in self-control wish they had more (reflecting deficiency). However, importantly, the four studies showed that DSC also hinges on individuals' sense that self-control is needed to accomplish current goals (reflecting necessity).

In study one, necessity was expressed by a greater fear of failure in not able to meet goals, and in study two, it was expressed by associating DSC with meeting goals in the near

future. Crucially, studies three and four used experimental designs and showed that acknowledgment of the relevance of self-control for current goals (by, for example, knowing of an upcoming difficult task) causes an increase in desire for self-control.

The study also found that a stronger desire for self-control predicted a greater willingness to enroll in self-control training, by that highlighting the practical relevance of understanding the bases of this desire.

In a 2017 study, two of the current study's authors (Uziel & Baumeister) explored the implications of having a strong desire for self-control on task performance. It revealed an ironic effect, whereby wishing for more self-control resulted in impaired task performance in the face of difficult challenges.

Those who wished for more self-control expected to perform worse on the task, and thus gave up. In the context of this study, one might wonder what makes people want more self-control if it leads to dire consequences. The explanation that arises from the present findings is that the desire often arises too late in the process of addressing challenges and the prospects of succeeding cannot improve.

Agencies

A study published in the 'European Journal of Preventive Cardiology' found that high blood pressure or hypertension can cause atrial fibrillation and is the most important factor associated with heart rhythm disorder.

Study author Dr Georgios Georgopoulos of King's College London, UK and National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece said, "Establishing that elevated blood pressure causes atrial fibrillation provides further impetus for public health strategies aimed at improving blood pressure control in the general population



and for individual efforts to keep levels in check."

Atrial fibrillation is the most common heart rhythm disorder, affecting more than 40 million individuals globally. People with the disorder have a five times greater risk of having a stroke. Previous studies have shown an association between high blood pressure and devel-

oping atrial fibrillation, but there was no strong evidence of direct causality.

To investigate whether blood pressure has a direct impact on the risk of atrial fibrillation, the researchers conducted a naturally randomised controlled trial - called Mendelian randomisation. They used data from the largest genome-wide association study (GWAS) on blood pressure and atrial fibrillation which included more than one million individuals of European ancestry - of which 60,620 had atrial fibrillation and 970,216 did not.

The first step was to identify 894 genetic variants associated with blood pressure. Next, the re-

searchers analysed which of those variants play a role in atrial fibrillation. To conduct the naturally randomised controlled trial, the 894 genetic variants were randomly allocated to all participants at conception, giving each individual a blood pressure level. The investigators then analysed the association between blood pressure and atrial fibrillation.

Elevated blood pressure was associated with an increased risk of atrial fibrillation. Specifically, 1 mmHg rises in systolic blood pressure, diastolic blood pressure and pulse pressure were associated with 1.8 per cent, 2.6 per cent, and 1.4 per cent relative increases in the risk of atrial fibrillation, respectively.

## GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR J&K SERVICES SELECTION BOARD

Hema Complex, Sector -3, Channi Himmat, Jammu

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### IMPORTANCE NOTICE

Subject: Facility of scribe and compensatory time for Persons with Benchmark Disabilities - regarding.

Candidates appearing in various examinations conducted/scheduled by the J&K Services Selection Board are hereby informed that compensatory time of 20 minutes per hour of examination (with or without scribe) will be provided to the following eligible candidates belonging to the Persons with Disability (PWD) category:

- Visually Handicapped.
- Cerebral Palsy.
- Both Arms Affected.

d) In addition to above, with regard to a candidate with benchmark disability who has physical limitation to write and scribe is essential to write examination on his/her behalf, such candidates will be required to submit a certificate at the examination venue, obtained from the Chief Medical Officer/Civil Surgeon/Medical Superintendent of a Government health care Institution. Proforma of the Certificate is attached as Annexure-A. Candidates opting for own scribe would require to submit details of own scribe at the examination venue as per proforma provided at Annexure-B.

It is further clarified that the candidate shall have to remain personally present in the Examination Centre and if a candidate opts for his/her own scribe, the qualification of the scribe should be one step below the minimum qualification required for the post of the candidate taking the examination. The candidates with benchmark disabilities opting for own scribe shall be required to submit details of the own scribe. In addition, the scribe has to produce a valid ID proof in original at the time of examination. A photocopy of the ID proof of the scribe signed by the candidate as well as the scribe will be submitted along. In case, subsequently it is found that the qualification of the scribe is not as declared by the candidate, then the candidate shall forfeit his/her right to the post and claims relating thereto.

DIPK-13267/20

Controller of Examinations  
J&K Services Selection Board  
Jammu

No. SSB/COE/Class-IV/1474-82

Dated: 16/02/2021

### Annexure "A"

#### Certificate regarding physical limitation in an examinee to write.

This is to certify that, I have examined Mr/Mrs/Ms \_\_\_\_\_ (name of the candidate with disability), a person with \_\_\_\_\_ (nature and percentage of disability as mention in the certificate of disability), S/o/ D/o \_\_\_\_\_ a resident of \_\_\_\_\_ (village/District/State and to state that he/she has physical limitation which hampers his/her writing capabilities owing to his/her disability.

Signature of the Specialist

Name, Designation of the Specialist.

Name of Government Hospital/Health Care Centre with Seal.

Place:-

Date:-

Note:-

Certificate should be given by a specialist of the relevant stream/disability (eg. Visual impairment-Ophthalmologist, Locomotor disability- Orthopedic Specialist /PMR)

### Annexure "B"

#### Letter of Undertaking for Using Own Scribe

I \_\_\_\_\_, a candidate with \_\_\_\_\_ (name of the disability) appearing for the \_\_\_\_\_ (name of the centre) in the District \_\_\_\_\_ of UT of J&K. My qualification is \_\_\_\_\_.

I do hereby state that \_\_\_\_\_ (name of the scribe) will provide the service of scribe/reader/lab assistant for the undersigned for taking the aforesaid examination.

I do hereby undertake that his/her qualification is \_\_\_\_\_. In case, subsequently it is found that his/her qualification is not as declared by the undersigned and is beyond my qualification, I shall forfeit my right to the post and claims relating thereto.

(Signature of the candidate with Disability)

Place:-

Date:-

## Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (R&B) DIVISION GANDEBAL

Address: Mini-Secretariat Ganderbal Ph.01942951904

### NOTICE INVITING TENDER

NIT NO.178/2020-21 issue under endorsement No. 15789-98

Dated: 16-02-2021

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, UT J&K, e-tenders (In single cover system) are invited on Item Rate basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with UT J&K Govt., CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for the following works:-

S. No	Name of Work	Adv. Cost (Rs. In Lacs)	Cost of T/Doc. (In Rupees)	Time of completion	M.H of Account	Class of Contractor
1.	Extension of 1x10 Mtr. Span RCC Minor bridge at Wahidpora Lar near Food Store.	18.00	800/-	30 Days	S/S Bridges	CEE/BEE
2.	Strengthening of Berm b.w.o Khak Bajree and GSB on Ganiwan Yachama road incl. allied links	05.50	300/-	15 Days	NABARD	DEE/CEE
3.	Name of Scheme: Improvement/Upgradation of Ganiwan Yachama road. Repairs of damaged existing wooden boat at latti Ghat at Gundl-Roshan under State Sector Name of the Scheme: Roads in Dab area, Batpora (Shalhar, Tokerpora, Gundl-Roshan).	01.65	200/-	15 Days	4059 S/S	DEE

Position of AAA: Accorded

Position of funds: Available

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

1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	16.02.2021
2	Period of downloading of bidding documents	16.02.2021 from 4.00 PM
3	Bid submission Start Date	16.02.2021 from 4.30 PM.
4	Bid Submission End Date	24.02.2021 upto 4.00 PM.
5	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	25.02.2021 at 10.00 PM in the office of Executive Engineer R&B Division Ganderbal

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

3. All Bidders has to submit Bid Security Declaration Form instead of Earnest money as per the circular of Finance Department (Bid Security Declaration Form is as per Annexure "A" below)

4. The 1<sup>st</sup> lowest Bidder has to produce an amount equal to 3% of contract as performance security in shape of CDR/FDR/BG within 02 Days before fixation of contract and shall be released after successful completion of work.

4. The date and time of opening of Bids shall be notified on Web Site www.jktenders.gov.in and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The bids of Responsive bidders shall be opened online on same Web Site in the Office of Executive Engineer R&B Division Ganderbal (tender receiving authority).

5. The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of Technical bids

6. Instruction to bidders regarding e-tendering process.

6.1. Bidders are advised to download bid submission manual from the "Downloads" option as well as from "Bidders Manual Kit" on website www.jktenders.gov.in to acquaint bid submission process.

6.2. To participate in bidding process, bidders have to get "Digital Signature Certificate (DSC)" as per Information Technology Act-2000. Bidders can get digital certificate from any approved Vendor.

6.3. The bidders have to submit their bids online in electronic format with digital Signature. No bid will be accepted in physical form.

6.4. Bids will be opened online as per time schedule mentioned in Para-1.

6.5. Bidders must ensure to upload scanned copy of all necessary documents with the technical bid.

a. Extension of time shall be also admissible in the event of temporary suspension of work.

25. The tender / bid is liable to rejection if it does not fulfill the requirements as laid down in NIT.

26. All other terms conditions are as per PWD Form 25

No.15789-98

Sd/-

Dated: 16.02.2021

DIPK-13270/20

Executive Engineer  
R&B Division Ganderbal

## Bitcoin Tops \$50,000 As It Wins More Mainstream Acceptance



Agencies

Bitcoin rose above \$50,000 on Tuesday for the first time, adding steam to a rally fuelled by signs that the world's biggest cryptocurrency is gaining acceptance among mainstream investors and companies.

Bitcoin hit a record \$50,603 and was last up 0.83 per cent at \$48,351. It has risen around 67 per cent so far this year, with most of the gains coming after electric carmaker Tesla said it had bought \$1.5 billion in bitcoin.

The move by Tesla, which also said it would accept bitcoin as payment, was the latest in a string of large investments that have vaulted bitcoin from the fringes of finance to company balance sheets and Wall Street, with US firms and traditional money managers starting to buy the coin.

"The rally in bitcoin in part reflects the recent buoyancy of market confidence but also headlines suggesting an increase in corporate acceptability," said Jane Foley, head of FX Strategy at Rabobank.

Evolve Funds Group said on Tuesday it had applied to launch a Bitcoin exchange-traded fund on the Toronto Stock Exchange. That would be the second planned bitcoin ETF after Canada's main securities regulator approved a fund by Purpose Investments Inc.

Such mainstream moves could help bitcoin become a widespread means of payment - having so far failed to achieve large scale adoption - and in turn bolster prices.

"The more people that adopt it and use it as money, then the greater the chances of it perhaps being taken on board as a mainstream currency," said Russ Mould, investment director of AJ Bell. "That would feed further speculative interest."

The rush in 2021 by retail and institutional investors comes on top of a 300 per cent rise last year as investors searched for high-yielding assets and dollar alternatives amid rock-bottom or even negative interest rates globally. The meteoric rise of bitcoin, which traded at a few hundred dollars only five years earlier, has also led major investment banks to warn of a speculative bubble.

## Petrol Crosses 100-Mark In Rajasthan, First Time Ever In India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**NEW DELHI:** For the first time ever, the price of petrol crossed the 100 per litre mark in Rajasthan today after fuel rates were hiked for the ninth day in a row.

Petrol and diesel prices were increased by 25 paise per litre each, according to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers.

While branded or additive-laced petrol, which attracts higher taxes, had crossed the 100-mark in some places in states like Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, this is the first time that regular petrol crossed the physiological mark.

In Sriganganagar town of Rajasthan, petrol price soared to 100.13 a litre today.

Fuel prices differ from state to state depending on the incidence of local taxes such as VAT and freight charges. Rajasthan levies the highest VAT on petrol in the country.

After Wednesday's price increase, petrol in Delhi cost 89.54 per litre and diesel 79.95.

In Mumbai, petrol price rose to 96 a litre and diesel was priced at 86.98.

The record price in Rajasthan is despite the state government late last month cutting VAT on petrol and diesel by 2 per cent.

The value-added tax (VAT) on petrol, after the cut, at 36 per cent plus 1.5 per litre road



cess is still the highest in the country. On diesel, the state levies 26 per cent and 1.75 per litre road cess.

Diesel in Sriganganagar is priced at 92.13 a litre.

In Anuppur of Madhya Pradesh, petrol is priced at 99.90 per litre and diesel at 90.35.

Branded petrol at Sriganganagar was priced at 102.91 a litre and similar grade diesel at 95.79.

Branded petrol is priced at 92.37 per litre in Delhi and the same grade diesel at 83.24.

In nine straight days, prices have gone up by 2.59 per litre for petrol and 2.82 per litre for diesel.

The relentless hike in prices has been criticised by the opposition parties including the Congress, that has demanded an

immediate cut in taxes to ease the burden on the common man.

Oil Minister Dharmendra Pradhan last week had told Parliament that the government is not considering a reduction in excise duty to cool rates from their record highs.

Central and state taxes make up for 60 per cent of the retail selling price of petrol and over 54 per cent of diesel.

The union government levies 32.90 per litre of excise duty on petrol and 31.80 a litre on diesel.

Retail petrol rates have risen by 19.95 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 17.66.

## \$59 Million Hong Kong Flat Sale Sets New Asia Record

Agencies

Hong Kong may be in its worst recession in years, but its luxury property market is still thriving after a five-bedroom apartment broke records with its \$59 million price tag.

While there have been more expensive properties sold in Hong Kong, the 3,378-square-foot penthouse in the affluent Mid-Levels neighbourhood set a new benchmark for price per square foot at \$17,500.

The \$59.4 million sale, reported by local media yesterday and recorded in the development's register of transactions, illustrates the stark inequality in Hong Kong.

Recent political instability coupled with the coronavirus has hammered the economy, which contracted a record of 6.1% last year. Unemployment is currently at 6.6%, the highest in 16 years.

But bellwether luxury property sales suggest the super-rich are weathering the storm just fine.

The price paid by the unidentified buyer for the property at 21 Borrett Road -- a newly built luxury apartment tower -- beat the previous price per square foot record set in 2017.

And it comes a week after a consortium set a new record when it paid \$935.2 million -- or \$6,450 per square foot -- for a piece of land on The Peak, the mountain that dominates Hong Kong Island and remains the city's most exclu-

sive neighbourhood. Hong Kong is a city of stark contrasts -- where impoverished elderly people can be seen collecting cardboard to recycle on streets filled with supercars and luxury goods stores.

The cramped financial hub regularly tops various rankings of cities with the least affordable housing in the world, with even the cheapest apartments far out of reach for most workers.

Successive governments have failed to tackle inequality or the yawning shortage of housing, something that helped fuel huge democracy protests in recent years.

A 2019 report by real estate firm CBRE ranked Hong Kong as the most expensive city for residential property, with an average price of \$2,091 per square foot.

It listed the average property price in Hong Kong as \$1.2 million -- far above second-placed Singapore at \$874,372.

A report that year by UBS said a "skilled worker" needed 22 years of income to afford a 60-square-metre 645-square-foot flat, up from 12 years a decade ago, with salaries staying largely the same since 2008.

But the ultra-wealthy have seen their fortunes continue to grow.

According to Knight Frank's global wealth report, the number of billionaires in Hong Kong grew from 40 in 2013 to 71 in 2019, giving the city one of the highest ratios of billionaires per capita in the world.

## Dwivedi Discusses Export Promotion With FIEO, Govt Departments

**JAMMU:** Commissioner, Secretary, Industries & Commerce Department, Manoj Kumar Dwivedi, today discussed modalities for export promotion here at a meeting with Federation of Indian export Organization (FIEO) and concerned Government departments.

The meeting was hosted by Directorate of Handicrafts & Handloom, Jammu & JK Trade Promotion Organization, Jammu.

The Commissioner highlighted the need to boost exports by way of strengthening traditional industries/sectors of J&K. He underlined the need for transformation of economy of J&K, UT from a supply constrained one into a competitive export-led entity with wider participation at national and global economy.

Parshant Seth, Head of Research Team of Federation of Indian export Organization, Director FIEO, gave a detailed presentation, showcasing various verticals on which work needs to be done.

Various sectors of J&K like Tourism, Agriculture, Industries etc were discussed in detail and potential areas were also identified. It was suggested by FIEO that wider consultations are required for which there is a need to engage exporters of the UT for better policy framework.

Pertinently, to boost exports in the UT, Government of Jammu and Kashmir, has earlier notified J&K Trade and Export policy (2018-

2028). Since, various reforms are being introduced by the GoJK viz; the upcoming new Industrial Policy to incentivize the entrepreneurs/ existing businesses and new Land Allotment Policy. As such, it has become imperative to revisit the existing J&K Trade and Export policy (2018-2028), in this regard FIEO has given some fiscal and non-fiscal interventions which would pave a way to augment the exports from the UT. The department is therefore working on drafting a new export policy in consultation with FIEO and other stakeholders with the inputs from all the administrative departments and Directorates.

Besides, Secretary to Government Tourism Department, Sarmad Hafeez, Heads of Department of Handicrafts & Handloom, Jammu/Kashmir, Tourism, Agriculture, Horticulture, SICOP, JKEDI, Handicrafts & Handloom Corporation, JKI, KVIB, JKTPD, Industries and other stakeholders were also present in the meeting.

The officers from Valley also attended this meeting through Video Conferencing. They also highlighted the various interventions required to boost exports in their respective fields. The FIEO has agreed to hold individual meetings with these departments to formalise the specific actions required to augment exports in their sectors and based on that Department Wise Action Plan will also be prepared.

## PM's Attack On 'Earlier' Governments As Petrol Breaches 100 Per Litre



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**NEW DELHI:** On a day when petrol crossed the 100 mark, Prime Minister Narendra Modi today said the middle-class would not have been burdened if the previous governments had focussed on reducing India's energy import dependence.

Without referring to the relentless increase in retail fuel prices, which are linked to international rates, he said India

imported over 85 per cent of its oil needs in the 2019-20 financial year and nearly 53 per cent of its gas requirement.

"Can we be so import dependent? I don't want to criticise anyone but I want to say (that) had we focussed on this subject earlier, our middle-class would not have been burdened," he said at a function to inaugurate oil and gas projects in poll-bound Tamil Nadu.

Price of petrol crossed the

100 per litre mark in Rajasthan after fuel rates were hiked for the ninth day in a row. Since India imports majority of its oil needs, retail rates are benchmarked to international prices, which have spiralled in recent weeks.

PM Modi said his government is sensitive to concerns of the middle-class and so has focussed on raising share of ethanol mixing in petrol.

Ethanol extracted from sugarcane will help cut imports as well as give farmers an alternate source of income.

India, he said, is looking to cut energy import dependence as well as diversify its sources to reduce risks.

The focus now is also towards using renewable sources of energy, which will by 2030 form 40 per cent of energy generated in the country, he said.

Also, the government is working towards raising the share of natural gas in the energy basket to 15 per cent from the current 6.3 per cent and is committed to bringing it under the Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime to eliminate cascading effect of multiple taxes, he added.

**■ CAN WE BE SO IMPORT DEPENDENT? I DON'T WANT TO CRITICISE anyone but I want to say (that) had we focussed on this subject earlier, our middle-class would not have been burdened," he said at a function to inaugurate oil and gas projects in poll-bound Tamil Nadu.**

### NEWS MAKERS

## Sonamarg To Be Thrown Open For Tourists From Feb 24

**GANDERBAL:** The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Ganderbal, Shafiqat Iqbal and Director Tourism Kashmir, Dr. G.N Itoo today visited Sonamarg to review and assess on spot restoration of disrupted essential services due to snowfall.

During the visit the duo chaired a meeting that was attended by SDM Kangan, CEO, Sonamarg Development Authority, Executive Engineers of Jal Shakti and KPDC, ARO Ganderbal, Dy. SP Hq, Dy. SP Traffic, Tehsildar Kangan besides representatives of Hoteliers Association Sonamarg, Beopar Mandal Sonamarg and Pony Wallas and sludge union.

The DC and Director Tourism took briefs from the concerned departments regarding the status of restoration of essential services like water, electricity,



File Pic

Health, snow clearance on link roads and parking areas, restoration of public conveniences, mobile connectivity, etc.

The concerned informed the

meeting that men and machinery are already on job and colourful one-day event to welcome the tourists will be organised during which several programs like cultural items, snow biking, skiing etc.

Both the DC and Director exhorted upon the officers to take stock of the ground situation so that restoration of affected works and allied facilities is ensured before its opening for tourists.

After taking briefs from the departments and keeping in view the weather conditions and tourist footfall in the valley, it was decided that Sonamarg destination shall be thrown open for tourists from 24th of February, 2021.

It was also revealed that on opening, an impressive and colourful one-day event to welcome the tourists will be organised during which several programs like cultural items, snow biking, skiing etc.

**اطلاع عام**

گزارش یہ ہے کہ غلام محمد میر ولد نور میر ساکنہ براٹھ کلان تحصیل بوٹی زینگیر اپنی ملکیت زمین کا تبادلہ گاس چرائی کے ساتھ کرتا ہے اگر کسی کو کوئی اعتراض ہے تو وہ ساتھ دن کے اندر اندر عذر پیش کرے۔

غلام محمد میر ولد نور میر ملکیتی زمین زیر خسرہ نمبر 365

گاس چرائی زیر خسرہ نمبر 418

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**LOST OF REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE**

I have lost the RC of my Vehicle Bearing Registration No JK02BK-1655. Now I am applying for the duplicate of the same if anybody having any objection in this regard he/ she my file his/ her objection in the office of the RTO Jammu within a period of seven (7) days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Name:- Zubair Ahmad Gassi S/O Atiq Ullah Gassi  
R/O Lider Matoo Khanabal Anantnag

MJA

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**LOST OF 9TH PASS CERTIFICATE**

I have lost the 9th Pass Certificate under Admission No.5868. Now I am applying for the duplicate of the same if anybody having any objection in this regard he/ she my file his/ her objection in the office of the Principal Government Higher Secondary School Vessu Anantnag within a period of seven (7) days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Name:- Mohd Yaqoob Ganie  
S/O Assadullah Ganie  
R/O Furrah Anantnag

MJA

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**LOST OF REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE**

I have lost the RC of my Vehicle Motor Cycle Bearing Registration No JK03-2379. Now I am applying for the duplicate of the same if anybody having any objection in this regard he/ she my file his/ her objection in the office of the ARTO Anantnag within a period of seven (7) days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Name:- Gh Mohe ue din Bhat S/O Late Mohd  
Abdullah Bhat R/O Wanihama Anantnag

MJA

## Satellite Images Show China Emptying Military Camps At Border Flashpoint With India

**NEW DELHI:** Last week, the nuclear-armed neighbours announced a plan to pull back troops, tanks, and other equipment from the banks of Pangong Tso, a glacial lake in the Ladakh region.

China has dismantled dozens of structures and moved vehicles to empty out entire camps along a disputed Himalayan border, where Indian and Chinese troops have been locked in a face-off since last summer, satellite images released on Wednesday show.

The nuclear-armed neighbours last week announced a plan to pull back troops, tanks, and other equipment from the banks of Pangong Tso, a glacial lake in the Ladakh region, that



became a flashpoint in the prolonged border dispute. Satellite imagery of some areas on the northern bank of Pangong

Tso from Tuesday supplied by Maxar Technologies show that multiple Chinese military camps, which could be seen there in late January, have been removed.

"Similar action is happening from our side also," an Indian official in New Delhi, who asked not to be named, told Reuters.

India's defence minister Rajnath Singh told parliament that both sides had agreed to pull back troops in "a phased, coordinated and verified manner" around Pangong Tso, after which military commanders would discuss ending the standoff in other parts of the Ladakh frontier.

Tensions began rising along the high-altitude border in April, when

India accused Chinese troops of intruding into its side of the Line of Actual Control, the de facto border. China denied the allegation, saying it was operating in its own area.

But the confrontation spiralled in June when 20 Indian soldiers and an undisclosed number of Chinese troops were killed during hand-to-hand clashes in Ladakh's Galwan region - the first such casualties along the 3,500 km long border in decades.

Despite several subsequent rounds of diplomatic and military talks, India and China had been unable to settle on an agreement until February, making the ongoing first phase of the withdrawal critical.

## No Data Yet On Efficacy of Covid Vaccines Against Virus Variants, Say Scientists: Report

**NEW DELHI:** Preliminary research shows the two vaccines against COVID-19 approved in India are effective against the UK variant of the novel coronavirus but there is no data on their efficacy against the South African and Brazilian mutants detected in the country.

On Tuesday, the health ministry said four people were detected with the South African variant of SARS-CoV-2 and one tested positive for the Brazil variant, a first for India, prompting scientists to stress the need for more data and studies so the country's vaccine programme can be tailored to evolving exigencies.

The number of people who have tested positive for the

UK variant in the country has climbed to 187, officials added.

The vaccines currently approved for emergency use in India are Covishield, from the Oxford-AstraZeneca stable manufactured by Pune's Serum Institute of India, and Covaxin, developed by Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech in collaboration with the Indian Council of Medical Research and the National Institute of Virology (NIV).

Answering the question upmost in many minds, researcher Deepak Sehgal said it is difficult to say how effective the two will be against the new emerging variants, particularly the South African and Brazilian

ones, unless scientists have studied them properly.

Having said that, among the two vaccines currently in India, Covaxin may do better against the new mutants because it generates protection against the whole virus. The Covishield vaccine is targeted at only one protein of the virus, Mr Sehgal, head of the department of Life Sciences, Shiv Nadar University, Uttar Pradesh, told news agency Press Trust of India.

Covaxin, he explained, can produce antibodies against many epitopes, or many regions of the complete virus, while Covishield produces antibodies against only a specific region of the virus.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

### Foreign Envoys

the city and elsewhere in the Valley, officials said here.

Other envoys included in this delegation are from Brazil, Italy, Finland, Cuba, Chile, Portugal, the Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, Sweden, Ireland, Estonia, Bolivia, Malawi, Eritrea and Ivory Coast.

This is the third delegation that has arrived in Jammu and Kashmir since the government abrogated the erstwhile state's special status on August 5, 2019 and bifurcated it into two union territories by carving out Ladakh.

In Magam, the envoys went to a college and were received in a traditional way and after the customary rituals by the administration, they interacted with a group of locals.

"It was a free-flowing exchange of ideas by the delegation with the locals", the officials said.

Chairperson of DDC Budgam Nazir Ahmad, who interacted with the envoys, told reporters that he raised the need for the government to provide basic amenities like food, clothing shelter, electricity and good roads.

"Budgam is a down-trodden district which needs development. Our discussion was centered around it," Ahmad added.

Later, the delegation was taken to a hotel located along the famous Dal lake where they interacted with the Srinagar Mayor Junaid Mattu, chairpersons of just-formed District Development Councils, Block Development Councils and Municipal Councils from all parties.

The delegation was apprised of the government's initiative of ensuring democracy at grass-root level and strengthening of panchayats in the union territory of Jammu and Kashmir by giving them financial powers.

A significant thing about the delegation was the inclusion of OIC member states so that they could easily counter the propaganda of Pakistan which has been creating a false narrative about the situation in the union territory, the officials said.

The report of the OIC Secretary General on its activities submitted to the 47th session of the Council of Foreign Ministers referred to the situation in Jammu and Kashmir and said, "The decision of the Indian government on 5 August 2019 towards changing the demographic and geographic composition of the territory, and the continuous blockade and restrictions together with human rights abuses, had awakened renewed efforts of the international community towards a resolution of the conflict."

However, India, without naming Pakistan, had said that it was "regrettable that OIC continues to allow itself to be used by a certain country, which has an abominable record on religious tolerance, radicalism and persecution of minorities, to indulge in anti-India propaganda."

It may be mentioned here that curbs on the Internet were removed earlier this month and the speed was enhanced from existing 2G to 4G.

Later in the day, the delegation members also visited the revered Hazratbal shrine on the banks of Dal Lake and interacted with artists including Saima Shafi who is trying to revive pottery in the region, social activist Renuz Shah and Shahnawaz, who does calligraphy on Pashmina carpets.

Dr Shaista Ahmed -- a musician, Nighat -- a poet, and writers Nelofer Nehvi, Nighat Nazir and Nusrat Iqbal were also present at the function which was to enlighten the foreign dignitaries about the rich cultural heritage of Kashmir.

Some local political leaders and officials from the handicrafts and tourism departments were also seen interacting with the envoys at the gathering.

Emmanuel Lenain, Ambassador from France, and Cuban Ambassador Oscar J Martinez Cordoves showed keen interest in handicrafts especially pottery.

Interacting with Shafi, a junior engineer with the Public Works Department who is popularly known as 'Kral Kroor' or potter girl, the two ambassadors expressed surprise that women folk in the Kashmir valley were not involved in pottery.

"If women can make a house, they can mould the clay in whichever form they want," said Shafi, adding that both the envoys told her that in their countries it was females who were predominantly involved in this trade.

The Cuban ambassador informed that women were mainly involved in the arts such as painting and pottery. "I told him that it will take some time for Kashmir to ensure such equality in society," she said.

The Spanish representative showed some keen interest in embroidery and Pashmina besides the tourism infrastructure.

The delegation is scheduled to visit Jammu on Thursday where they are likely to meet the officials of the Union territory and call on Lt Governor Manoj Sinha.

In a related development, parts of Srinagar observed a spontaneous shutdown on the

arrival of the envoys' delegation to Kashmir. Shops in Lal Chowk and surrounding areas of the city remained shut as authorities deployed extra security personnel to ensure that the visit of the envoys passes off without any incident.

Former chief minister and president of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Mehbooba Mufti, termed the visit "event management by the BJP government".

Hurriyat Conference led by Mirwaiz Umar Farooq said the visit of the envoys was a curated tour for misleading the world.

"A curated tour of foreign dignitaries to showcase 'normalcy' in the valley to the outside world is misleading. People's spontaneous strike, the only means of protest left to them, speaks volumes to the world of what people feel and want," the amalgam said in a statement.

Last year, envoys from 17 nations, including the United States, had visited Jammu and Kashmir and the team also comprised ambassadors from Vietnam, South Korea, Brazil, Uzbekistan, Niger, Nigeria, Morocco, Guyana, Argentina, Philippines, Norway, Maldives, Fiji, Togo, Bangladesh and Peru.

Immediately three months after the Centre withdrew special status of Jammu and Kashmir and bifurcated it into two union territories, a delegation of 23 EU MPs was taken on a two-day visit to assess the situation in the Union Territory by the International Institute for Non-Aligned Studies, a Delhi-based think tank. With inputs from PTI

### Govt's 'Guided

envoys visit to Jammu and Kashmir was a futile Public Relations exercise by the government of India.

"As done earlier by the government of India and the government of Jammu and Kashmir, these Envoys will enjoy sightseeing in Kashmir and get back to their countries. Ultimately, this whole exercise will mean complete waste of taxpayers' money," Soz said in a statement issued to the media here on Wednesday.

He said that it was really unfortunate that the Indian government has not learnt any lesson from its past mistakes.

"Masters have rightly said that if the people do not learn a lesson from their mistakes, they are bound to repeat these mistakes, time and again," he added.

Expressing optimism that the envoys will read "agony" of Kashmiris and realize the fact that Kashmiris are deeply sad and angry on the abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution of India that happened to be the basis of their constitutional relationship with India. Soz said that the people of Kashmir have already started a democratic movement for restoration of their internal autonomy enshrined in the Article 370 of the Constitution of India.

"The people of Kashmir are sure that Govt. of India's security agencies will not be able to convince these envoys that things happened to be normal in Kashmir after Abrogation of Article 370 of the constitution of India," he added.

Meanwhile, senior Congress leader Manish Tewari took a dig over a group of envoys being on a two-day visit to Jammu and Kashmir, saying the "guided tour is a joke" and "rubs salt into the wounds" of a badly bruised populace.

"Foreigners (Firangis) can go but a Joint Parliamentary Committee & Opposition leaders can't go. This guided tour is a joke. Rubs salt into the wounds of a badly bruised populace," Tewari tweeted, tagging a media report on the envoy's visit to the Union Territory.

### Delegations Come

remains that the situation isn't favourable in J&K.

Mehbooba was addressing a gathering in the Handwara area of Kupwara. She is on a two-day visit to the border district.

Talking to reporters on the sidelines of her visit to Handwara, Mehbooba said that the delegations will come and go but the situation in Jammu and Kashmir is not good.

To a question about the approach of the central government and the visit of foreign delegation to J&K, Mehbooba said that the delegations keep coming but the situation is not good at all.

"The approach that has confined the movement of Jammu and Kashmir's leadership is not good at all. We are being caged in our own homes," she said.

### Youth Shot

told Kashmir Observer that the youth has received a bullet injury on the right side of his chest and he has been shifted to the intensive care unit (ICU)

"As of now, his condition remains critical," he added.

Pertinently, the attack came at a time when a group of foreign envoys toured parts of Srinagar and Budgam districts on their first day of two-day visit to Jammu and Kashmir to take a first-hand account of the situation in newly-carved union territory.

The attack also took place barely a kilometre from the residences of senior mainstream party leaders and protected persons, including

former Chief Ministers Farooq Abdullah and his son Omar Abdullah. Army's Badami Bagh cantonment is also in the vicinity of Sonwar where the attack was carried out.

In a statement issued here this evening, a police spokesperson said that the militants carried out the attack in Sonwar area in which a civilian was injured. He said that senior police officers have reached the spot as the area has been cordoned off and search operations launched.

"Police has registered a case in this regard under relevant sections of law. Investigation is in progress and officers continue to work to establish the full circumstances of this crime," he added.

Meanwhile, former chief minister and National Conference vice-president Omar Abdullah expressed concern over the attack.

"Very sorry to hear about the attack on the Krishna Dhaba in Srinagar, these attacks are unacceptable. I hope the injured person who is himself associated with the dhaba & is undergoing treatment in a city hospital makes a complete & speedy recovery," Abdullah posted on his Twitter handle.

Echoing similar views, PDP President Mehbooba Mufti also took to Twitter to express her sadness over the incident and said that "violence is never the answer"

"Deeply saddened by the attack on Krishna Dhaba at Sonwar in Srinagar. Extend my sympathies to the injured & his family. Violence is never the answer," she tweeted.

### IAF Proposes

a move and requested intervention of the defence ministry into the matter to ensure that the resurfacing is carried out in such a manner that civilian air traffic is not affected during the day time.

"Complete closure of the airport for 15 days would create huge administrative issues for the government of Jammu and Kashmir," Subrahmanyam had written in his letter to Civil Aviation Ministry Secretary Pradeep Singh Kharola.

The officials said the chief secretary highlighted that the Jammu airport, being the only civil airport in the division, caters to the requirement of civilian air traffic for the entire province and serves as the only connecting airport for Mata Vaishno Devi shrine.

"In the eventuality of the closure for 15 days, air traffic would have to be diverted to the nearest civil airport in Punjab, which would result in various logistical issues," Subrahmanyam said.

He added that air connectivity to Kashmir also gets disturbed and even disconnected in extreme weather conditions and in such cases, the air traffic at Jammu increases manifold as Kashmir-bound passengers also prefer disembarking at the Jammu airport.

The chief secretary further said tourist activities have only recently picked up in the union territory after easing of restrictions imposed on account of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"In the given scenario, it would be administratively and operationally prudent to explore the possibility of carrying out the resurfacing work at night time and simultaneously utilising ramp facilities for aircraft operations at the said runway, a practice which is generally adopted by the AAI (Airport Authority of India) for all resurfacing work," he said.

Responding to the letter of the chief secretary, Kharola took the matter with his counterpart in the defence ministry, Ajay Kumar, and requested his intervention into the matter, citing inconvenience to passengers and tourists and likely fallout on the economy, the officials said.

They said the AAI has already requested IAF Headquarters to plan and execute the proposed work of runway surfacing during night time so that civil aircraft operations are not hampered.

### Centre Approves

units due to transit delays while enhancing their availability with units." (ANI)

### Matric, Class 12th

the Board couldn't allow huge number of students to appear in the exams keeping in view the COVID-19 threat.

"In order to avoid students getting infected and observing government recommended Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), a very few students were allowed to appear for the exams in one particular room," she said.

Pandita also said, "Like previous years we were allowing up to 300 students to appear in the examination in a one hall, but this year the situation was entirely different and that is one of the major reasons for delay in declaring results."

She said that as of now BOSE was not fully prepared for declaring the results of 10th and 12th standard.

Earlier, on January-22, the Jammu and Kashmir government ordered re-opening of all government and private schools in Jammu and Kashmir in a staggered manner for physical academic activities.

In Jammu, the schools reopened on February-8 while in Kashmir division, the schools are scheduled to be reopening on March-1-2021 for physical academic activities--(KNO)

### HC Bans Constructions

of Committees were also constituted, including one to consider extension and renewal of leases in respect of live lease cases and expired lease cases.

A direction was also issued to CEO, Gulmarg Development Authority, to submit details regarding illegal constructions and violations.

"For about eight long years, this Court has been monitoring the instant PIL and ensuring that the glory and prestige of Gulmarg remains preserved. However, on examination of directions passed from time to time as also status report(s) filed by respondents, it has become necessary to pass further directions," the court said and ordered that no further construction shall be allowed to be raised on the land in Gulmarg.

"The Chairman, Pollution Control Board, shall ensure that all the hotels in Gulmarg have proper sewerage and drainage facilities," the court said in another direction, adding, "The Chief Conservator of Forests shall ensure that no tree is cut down in Gulmarg."

The bench was hearing the PIL filed in 2012 by one Mohammad Rafiq Zargar, seeking directions for protection of the fragile environment of Gulmarg. (GNS)

### Trains Likely To

from the SSP if his office has any objections in restarting the passenger services between Banihal-Baramulla section. The response has been sought on urgent basis, they added.

The decision for the resumption of the train services after Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Pandurang K Pole, wrote a letter to railway officials earlier this month.

### NC MPs To Skip

and assembly constituencies of the union territory in accordance with the provisions of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019.

"In our view, the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019 is palpably unconstitutional and has been enacted in disregard and violation of mandate and spirit of the Constitution of India and therefore not to be acted upon," the MPs said in the letter.

"We have thrown a challenge to the constitutional validity of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019 exercise of powers whereunder the meeting in question is proposed to be held," it stated.

The MPs said it would not be in tune with the mandate and spirit of the Constitution of India to associate with the proceedings taken in exercise of the powers under an Act the constitutional validity whereof was under challenge and under the judicial scrutiny by the highest constitutional court of the country.

"We would also respectfully and with all humility at our command, request Hon'ble Chairperson, a renowned legal luminary of the country, not to go ahead with the proceedings..." they said.

According to Section 60 of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, "...the number of seats in the Legislative Assembly of Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir shall be increased from 107 to 114..."

Out of these 24 seats are in Pakistan-controlled Kashmir. So effectively, the seats will go up from 83 to 90.

The union territory of Jammu and Kashmir came into being on October 31, 2019 after the state was reorganised and divided into two union territories, Ladakh being the other.

### 'Militant' Arrested

arrested in connection with a case lodged at police station Mendhar last year. He is also involved in many other cases," the police spokesperson said.

Sitting abroad, the police said, Ali facilitated the entry of two Pakistani militants from Dabbi area of Balakote sector (Poonch) on the intervening night of November 24 and 25 last year at the behest of his Pakistani handler, Sultan.

Both the militants of the J&K Ghaznavi Force were later killed in an encounter on December 13 last year in the Poshana area of Surankote.

"Ali also smuggled arms and ammunition, which included three pistols and one IED, besides other ammunition through Balakote sector," the police said.

Ali's father, Mushtaq Ahmed, and sister, Raskeem Akhter, were arrested by the Poonch Police on September 11 for receiving the arms consignment from P&K, and an FIR stands registered at the Mendhar police station in this case, the police said.

So far, the police said, five overground workers -- Mushtafa, Mohd Yaseen, Younis, Irfan and Raskeem -- involved in the militant network led by Ali have been arrested.

"Ali was also involved in drug smuggling along with smuggling of arms and ammunition, and 2 kg heroine, worth over Rs 8 crores

in the international market, was also recovered from this militant network which was meant to be used for militant financing," the police said.

It said five pistols, 13 grenades and one live IED had been recovered from the busted network.

Further investigation is in progress, the police added.

### Three OGWs

Batagund and Dadsara Tral. During search operation one militant module of three associates of outfit Hizb-ul-Mujahideen was arrested.

The arrested militant associates are involved in providing shelter, logistics and transportation of arms/ammunition to the HM militant in Tral and Awantipora area.

During the on-spot questioning of the arrested militant associates, following IED material was recovered from the house one of the arrested militant associate at village Dadsara.

Eight Electric Detonator Anti Mechanism Switches, seven Pressure Switches/Relay, three Mechanism Switches, one Improvised Switch and one Anti Mine Wireless Antenna were recovered from their possession.

The statement further stated that the arrested militant associates have been identified as Shafat Ahmad Sofi son of Muzaffar Ahmad Sofi Resident of Batagund, Majid Mohammad Bhat son of Lt. Gh. Mohammad Bhat Resident of Dadsara and Umer Rashid Wani son Ab. Rashid Wani resident of Dadsara.

Case FIR number 09/2021 stands registered against the arrested militant associates in Police Station Tral under relevant sections of law, reads the statement.

### Army Destroys

Senior Superintendent of Police, Rajouri, Chandan Kohli said, "This morning a road opening patrol of the Army found a suspicious object along the highway near Manjakote."

"Soon, traffic was controlled on the highway and a bomb disposal squad was called in. The suspected material, packed in a fruit packing box, has been destroyed through a controlled explosion," he said.

The officer said a case under relevant sections of law was registered at the police station and further investigation is on.

An Army officer said the suspected IED was noticed planted inside a three-litre pressure cooker apparently during the intervening night to set off an explosion.

Earlier, the Station House Officer (SHO) of the Manjakote police station Pankaj Sharma said the bomb-like object was found on the roadside at around 8.30 am.

He said the traffic on the highway was immediately suspended as a precautionary measure from both sides.

However, the traffic movement resumed nearly two hours later after the spot was secured with sandbags and an armoured vehicle, the SHO said, adding the suspected material was destroyed around 1.30 pm.

### 2 Soldiers Injured

They said both the injured soldiers were evacuated to hospital while the damaged vehicle is being retrieved.

### 3 DDC Members

enjoying support from the Congress and was set to win the District Development Council (DDC) chairperson's post in the district reserved for women.

Three independent DDC members -- Bashir Ahmed Runiyal, Rabia Rasheed Beig and Fayaz Ahmed Nayak -- joined the party in the presence of its provincial president Devender Singh Rana here, an NC spokesperson said.

The election to the DDC posts was deferred in the district on February 13 due to the lack of quorum. However, the NC had claimed that the absence of three BJP councillors was deliberate to deprive the party of the posts.

Welcoming the three councillors, Rana said their coming to the party fold at a time when some "unethical practices" are being set by some political parties to grab power by hook or crook speaks of their sincerity towards the larger public cause.

The present state of political opportunism is unfortunate, especially as the issues are related to governance at the grassroots level. The horse trading amounts to shaking the faith of the people in democracy. That such a precedence is being set to trample the public mandate is all the more disgusting, he said.

After discussing the impending elections to the posts of the chairperson and the vice-chairperson of DDC Ramban, the spokesperson said Shamsad Shan will be the party's candidate for the slot of the chairperson and Rabia Rashid Beig for vice-chairperson.

### Driver Held For

The truck, reports said, was on way to Kashmir before it was intercepted by cops.

Meanwhile, a case 22/2021 under section 188, IPC 11 PCA Act has been registered at police station Hira Nagar.

## 'They Should Stop Moaning' Nasser Hussain Identifies England's 'Biggest Issue' In India

Press Trust of India

**NEW DELHI:** England need not moan about the condition of Indian pitches and instead rectify inconsistency in their spin department if they want positive results in the remaining two Tests against India, feels former captain Nasser Hussain.

Hussain said Dom Bess' inability to maintain length has been the biggest issue for England, who suffered a massive 317-run defeat in the second Test to leave the series levelled at 1-1.

"England need to dust themselves off, not moan about the pitch, the toss, DRS, umpires or whatever and just try and rectify and improve in the areas they were found short - and knowing this side, I think that is exactly what they will do," Hussain wrote in his column for 'Sky Sports'.

"Even though they continue to get wickets, the biggest issue is the consistency in the spin department. It is not just this Test match, if you look back at Sri Lanka, Jack Leach and Dom Bess got wickets but Bess, in particular, was very inconsistent with his length."

He said Indian spinners outperformed their England counterparts and even experienced Moeen Ali was lacking control of his deliveries though he was playing his first Test since the 2019 Ashes.

"Ali got eight wickets (in 2nd Test) and he bowled some real beauties, like the one to bowl Virat Kohli in first innings and got him out twice in the game - but Mo himself will admit that in first innings, he didn't quite have the control and 4-128 is not what you're looking for on such a minefield for the spinners."

"If you compare that to how India's two spinners bowled and the control of Ravichandran Ashwin, they didn't do anything magical, they just jammed it in there ball after ball," said the 51-year-old Hussain, who played 96 Tests between 1990 and 2004.

"If you're asking me the main reason why England lost the Test match, I would say if you look at India's main two spinners - Ashwin and Axar Patel - they were more consistent than the England

spinners."

He, however, was careful not to be too critical of Ali who hasn't played a Test since the 2019 Ashes and had COVID-19 on tour in Sri Lanka.

Hussain also said England batsmen will have to find a way to score and not just depend though the pitch looked extremely difficult.



"I can't be overly critical of England's batting. They can learn though; India had a batsman in Rohit Sharma who scored nearly 200 runs and bowling all-rounder Ashwin got a second-innings hundred on it so it was not impossible."

"England have got to look at that and ask what Rohit and Ashwin did so well to try and learn and improve."

He said one of the pitches in the last two Tests may be another dust bowl and England have got to work out how they are going to play and improve on it.

"... this was a chastening defeat ... but that's what the challenge is playing away from home, the same way as it is when you go to Australia and we used to have to cope with the bounce at Perth."

"Or when players come to England and have to cope with the moving Dukes ball - it is part of being an all-round cricketer and occasionally you get pitches like that," said the former captain.

He also made a general point that England cricket authorities will need to do more to help spinners become more consistent.

"When Somerset produce a pitch at Taunton like the one we've just seen in Chennai, they get doctored points, then there is where and when we play our red-ball cricket."



## Real Kashmir Aim To Take Top Spot In I-League With A Win Over Roundglass Punjab

Press Trust of India

**KALYANI:** Real Kashmir FC can go top of I-League table with a victory over current table toppers, Roundglass Punjab FC. While Punjab FC would look to extend their one-point lead at the top of I-League table when they face second-placed Real Kashmir FC here on Thursday.

Punjab FC extended their winning run to three matches by beating Chennai City FC 2-0 in their last match. The win made them replace Churchill Brothers on the top of the I-League with 14 points from eight matches. A win on Thursday will extend Punjab's lead to four points over Real Kash-

mir, who still have a game in hand.

"I don't think there has been any extra pressure. We should not get carried away, it is where we finish at the end of the season, and not where we are now that matters. We have worked hard for eight games, and will continue to do so, Punjab head coach Curtis Fleming said.

"I rate Real Kashmir really high. He (David Robertson) has been there for three seasons, and are favourites to win the I-League. People say they play long, but when you have Dipanda Dika, Lukman, and Farooq. These are not long ball players. They are really good footballers and hard to defend against," he added.

On the other hand, Real Kashmir can replace Punjab FC on the top with a victory on Thursday. The Snow Leopards are coming into the match after extending their unbeaten run to seven games by beating NEROCA FC 4-3 in their last match. They have 13 points from seven games.

"I am pleased with the way we reacted after being pegged back from 3-1 to 3-3 (against Neroca). We managed to fight and go on to win the game under very difficult circumstances. It shows our team has an undying fighting spirit, and I hope they can continue it forward for the rest of season," Real Kashmir head coach David Robertson said.

**I DON'T THINK THERE HAS BEEN any extra pressure. We should not get carried away, it is where we finish at the end of the season, and not where we are now that matters. We have worked hard for eight games, and will continue to do so."**

## New Motera Stadium Has 4 Dressing Rooms, LED Floodlights To Eliminate Shadows

Press Trust of India

**AHMEDABAD:** The newly-installed LED floodlights at refurbished Sardar Patel Stadium in Motera will eliminate shadows, making it easier to spot the aerial balls during the upcoming day/night Test between India and England, starting February 24.

The world's largest cricket stadium will also have 11 centre strips, which is also unique, along with never-before heard four dressing rooms with in-built gymnasium, said Gujarat Cricket Association's joint secretary Anil Patel. The Motera stadium had undergone extensive renovation which started when current BCCI secretary Jay Shah was in charge of state cricket unit.

With a seating capacity of 1,10,000, which is more than Melbourne Cricket Ground, the GCA will put up around 55,000 tickets on sale for the next two Test matches at the venue.

Recently, the Syed Mushtaq Ali trophy's knock-outs were held at the Motera.

"This is the only stadium in the world with 11 centre pitches on the main ground. Also we are the only stadium in the world with same soil being used for practice as well as centre strips," GCA joint secretary Patel said.



"Instead of mast lights, we have installed LED lights on the entire circular roof for better visibility and to eliminate shadows," he said.

Patel also said that state-of-the-art drainage system will help the ground dry up in quick time in case of a heavy downpour.

"Sand has been used underneath the grass. This along with a state-of-the-art drainage system will remove the rain water very quickly in comparison to other regular grounds."

"Even in case of 8 cm of rainfall during a match, the water would drain out very fast. This will reduce the chances of matches being cancelled due to rain," said Patel.

He added that equipments worth Rs 2 crore were purchased just for the upkeep of the ground.

The stadium, spread in an area of 63 acres, also has 6 indoor pitches with bowling machines. This is in addition to the outdoor practice pitches and two practice grounds with a small pavilion area, said Patel.

"This is the only stadium in the world with four dressing rooms for the players. Each dressing room has a state-of-the-art gymnasium among other amenities. The stadium also has a clubhouse with 50 deluxe rooms and five suites," Patel said during the media tour of the stadium.

## No Shami As India Retains Same Squad For Last Two Tests Against England

Press Trust of India

**NEW DELHI:** The selectors on Wednesday retained 17 of the 18 members in the Indian squad for the final two Tests against England while senior pacer Umesh Yadav's inclusion would depend on his fitness assessment ahead of the day/night game in Ahmedabad.

Shardul Thakur is the only player who has not been kept as he will be released to compete in the Vijay Hazare Trophy.

The anticipation was around senior pacer Mohammed Shami's fitness, and it has been learnt that he is still not 100 percent fit for the rigours of five-day games.

"Umesh Yadav will join the team in Ahmedabad and after his fitness assessment will replace Shardul Thakur, who will be released for Vijay Hazare Trophy," BCCI secretary Jay Shah was quoted as saying in a press release.

Predictably, left-arm spin-

ner Shahbaz Nadeem has been dropped from the stand-by list after his poor show in the first Test. Leg-spinner Rahul Chahar and keeper-batsman Kona Srikr Bharat are stand-by players.

Priyank Panchal and Abhimanyu Easwaran have also been released to play Vijay Hazare Trophy.

The five net bowlers, who were in Chennai will also join the team in Ahmedabad. They are Ankit Rajpoot, Avesh Khan, Sandeep Warrier, Krishnappa Gowtham and Saurabh Kumar

Squad: Virat Kohli (Captain), Rohit Sharma, Mayank Agarwal, Shubman Gill, Cheteshwar Pujara, Ajinkya Rahane (Vice-captain), KL Rahul, Hardik Pandya, Rishabh Pant (wicket-keeper), Wriddhiman Saha (wicket-keeper), R Ashwin, Kuldeep Yadav, Axar Patel, Washington Sundar, Ishant Sharma, Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Siraj.

Standby players: KS Bharat, Rahul Chahar.

## Mbappé Hat Trick Gives PSG 4-1 Win Over Barcelona In UEFA Champions League

Agencies

**BARCELONA:** Kylian Mbappé outplayed Lionel Messi as Paris Saint-Germain put Barcelona up against the ropes in the Champions League again.

And with Mbappé in that kind of form, it's hard to see Barcelona staging another epic comeback this time.

After Messi put Barcelona ahead from the penalty spot, Mbappé netted a hat trick at the Camp Nou Stadium on Tuesday to give PSG a 4-1 win in the first leg of their round-of-16 match-up.

It was the team's first meeting since Barcelona erased a 4-0 deficit by winning the second leg 6-1 at the same stage of the competition four years ago. But Ronald Koeman's team was thoroughly outplayed at home, even with PSG missing Brazil star Neymar, and now has to attempt a comeback in Paris instead.

"It was a very important match for us," Mbappé said. "We wanted to come here and win. We did that in style. Tonight was magnificent, but we haven't won anything yet."

Mbappé scored five minutes after Messi's opener and added two second-half goals to become the first player to score an away hat trick at the Camp Nou in the Champions League since Andriy Shevchenko for Dynamo Kyiv in a 4-0 win in 1997.

His dominance was epitomized by the image of Barcelona captain Gerard Pique - making his return from a long-term injury layoff - pulling at Mbappé's shirt in an unsuccessful attempt at slowing down the France star as he rushed forward in attack.

"There's no doubt that Kylian is one of the best players in the world, despite his young age," said PSG coach Mauricio Pochettino, who was in charge of his first Champions League game with the French club, having led Tottenham to the final two years ago.

"He's already done extraordinary things. But we have to stay humble."

Moise Kean also scored in the second half for PSG, last season's finalist which looked far more dangerous than the hosts throughout

the match at the empty Camp Nou.

The second leg will be on March 10 in Paris. Liverpool defeated Leipzig 2-0 in the other round-of-16 match on Tuesday.

"I'm not going to lie, it's very difficult to come back from a 4-1 first-leg loss at home," Koeman said.

"They were better than us. They were very efficient, especially Mbappé. In the second half we had problems and PSG showed that they are physically much stronger than us."

The defeat deals another tough blow to Barcelona, which has been struggling financially and enduring political turmoil since the embarrassing 8-2 loss to Bayern Munich in last season's quarter finals.

"We needed an almost perfect game against them and we couldn't do it," Barcelona forward Antoine Griezmann said.

"It's tough when they score four goals on you at the Camp Nou, but we will go to Paris to try to advance, we won't go there just as tourists."

Barcelona was in control early on and opened the scoring with a 27th-minute penalty after Frenkie de Jong fell in the area when his heel was clipped by defender Layvin Kurzawa.

Messi fired a left-footed shot into the top corner for his 10th goal in the last 10 matches. It was Messi's record 28th goal in 31 matches in the round of 16 of the Champions League, according to UEFA. He has scored in the tournament for the 17th consecutive year - from 2005 to 2021 - to match Raúl González's feat from 1995 to 2011.

PSG immediately pressed forward and equalized five minutes later after a nice exchange of passes inside the area, with Mbappé controlling the ball and shooting it into the top of the net from close range after a clever one-touch pass by Marco Verratti.

PSG continued to play better and Barcelona goalkeeper Marc-André ter Stegen had to make a few good saves before Mbappé put his team ahead from inside the area in the 65th.

Kean added to the lead five minutes later with a header off a free kick, and Mbappé sealed the scoring by finishing off a quick counter-attack by curling a first-time shot into the far corner in the 85th.

## Joe Root Says Sorry To Moeen Ali For Saying The All- Rounder 'Chose To Go Home'

Press Trust of India

**AHMEDABAD:** England skipper Joe Root has apologised to Moeen Ali for saying that the all-rounder has "chosen" to go home after the second Test though it was already agreed upon as part of the national team's rotation policy, according to reports.

After taking eight wickets and top-scoring with an 18-ball 43 in England second innings on Tuesday in the second Test against India in Chennai, his first match since Ashes 2019, Ali chose to stick to the original plan and left for United Kingdom for a 10-day break.

According to a report in 'Mirror' newspaper, Root apologised to Ali at the team hotel for saying that "he has chosen" to go home.

A few other British newspapers also reported on similar lines.

Following a 317-run loss to India in Chennai on Tuesday, Root had said: "Moeen has chosen to go home. It's obviously been a very tricky tour for him. As we mentioned at the start

(of the winter), if players feel like they need to get out of the bubble, then that's been an option. It is really important that we stand by that."

"With Moeen it wasn't more asking if he wanted to stay, it was a decision he had chosen. Of course we wanted as many players available for as long as possible, but you also want them to be very comfortable here."

Jos Buttler, an all-format player like Ali, went home after the first Test and will be back in India for the tour's limited overs leg. Ben Stokes and Jofra Archer were rested for the recent Test series in Sri Lanka.

There was an intense debate around Jonny Bairstow's unavailability for the first two Tests in India but he too was rested after the Sri Lanka tour as the ECB has a clear rotation policy in place with cricketers having to spend months in a bio-bubble due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Bairstow is in India now for the last two Tests and the white-ball leg of the tour.

## RCB, CSK Could Bid For Maxwell, All Eyes On Arjun Tendulkar and M. Azharuddeen

Press Trust of India

**CHENNAI:** Flamboyant Australian Glenn Maxwell is expected to be a favourite, despite his underwhelming record, along with England's spin bowling all-rounder Moeen Ali during a condensed IPL players auction slated here on Thursday.

A total of 292 players have been enlisted for the shortened auctions - 164 of them Indian and 125 overseas. There will also be three associate players in the auction.

With 61 slots across eight franchises up for grabs, Royal Challengers Bangalore has the maximum, 11 vacancies, to fill with a purse of Rs 35.4 crore while Sunrisers Hyderabad has only three slots available with Rs 10.75 crore in its kitty.

The highest purse available is with Anil Kumble coached 'Punjab Kings', formerly Kings XI Punjab, which has Rs 53.20 crore available for spending on nine spots.

With the IPL back in India after being held in the UAE last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, focus will be on big-hitters as well as slow bowlers and Maxwell and Moeen fit the category to the T.

However, Maxwell averages 22 in the tournament, having played 82 matches for his 1,505 runs. He last played for Punjab.

Moeen, on the other hand, was seen in action for Royal Challengers Bangalore in the previous season.

While Maxwell and his former skipper Steve Smith are both in the highest bidding category of Rs 2 crore, one name that will surely attract attention is world's No.1 ranked T20 batsman Dawid Malan from England.

A strike-rate of nearly 150 in 19 T20 Internationals has catapulted Malan into limelight and a few teams may like to raise their bids for the 33-year-old with a base price of Rs 1.5 crore.

One of the most keenly-watched teams going into the auction will be Chennai Super Kings after a nightmarish 2020 season when they failed to qualify for the IPL play-offs for the first time in tournament's history.

Mahendra Singh Dhoni and head coach Stephen Fleming have always valued experience more than exuberance of youth in their team. A case in point is Robin Uthappa, who hasn't performed for at least five seasons, being picked by CSK from Rajasthan Royals during the trading window with an all-cash deal.

"Check out the kind of players Dhoni picks. It's always middle-level senior guys who have experience of handling pressure situations. It doesn't matter how the guy is perceived as a player in the fraternity. The only time his expectations didn't match was with Kedar Jadhav. Or else, he likes a bit of seniority and those with game awareness," a source close to the franchise told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

So, with nearly Rs 20 crore (19.90 crore) to spend and six vacancies to fill, Dhoni will look at some potential big hitters to help him, Suresh Raina and Faf du Plessis in the middle.

Since the IPL will be held in India, Maxwell despite his under-achieving stats could be picked for his skills as a tight off-break bowler on slower tracks.

In case of Malan, Kings XI Punjab could walk away with him considering their purse and lack of consistent firepower at the top of the order.

The only part that is debatable about Malan is how good he is when it comes to playing slow bowlers in Indian conditions.

Among Indian players, the three notable capped names are Kedar Jadhav, veteran off-spinner Harbhajan Singh and fast bowler Umesh Yadav.

The auction dynamics, when it comes to Indian players, have been very different compared to foreign players due to the limited available slots (8) in each squad.

For example, a Yuvraj Singh or a Jaydev Unadkat, despite underwhelming performances season after season, got bank-breaking deals simply because they are Indian players with specific skill sets.

That's the reason Sunrisers Hyderabad or a Rajasthan Royals won't mind having an Umesh on board because of his experience at the highest level.

Similarly, Kedar and Harbhajan, with

high-end base prices may go unsold during the first lot. But they are likely to be picked up in the final hour after franchises have settled squads.

Ditto for Steve Smith, among those with the highest base price but having a strike-rate which is not the greatest for a top-order batsman, might not find too many bidders unless any franchise is looking for a suitable captaincy candidate.

As usual, there would be some eye-popping bids for the uncapped domestic players like Kerala's Mohammed Azharuddeen (Junior), Tamil Nadu's handsome hulk Shah Rukh Khan, all-rounder R Sonu Yadav, Baroda's Vishnu Solanki and Bengal's Akash Deep. They could invite mini-bidding wars with their lowest base price bracket of Rs 20 lakh.

Sachin Tendulkar's son Arjun, a left arm fast bowler who made his senior Mumbai team debut this year, is bracketed in the Rs 20 lakh category, and the kind of traction that the young kid brings along could mean that some bidders will be there for him.

Mumbai Indians (15.35 crore) and Delhi Capitals (Rs 13.40 crore) will require seven and eight players, respectively, but the finalists of last year probably have a stable core and can look at improvising during the auctions.

It could well be the case of re-buying a few players from the auction as per needs.



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**Bajaj Allianz General Insurance Co. Ltd.** | Bajaj Allianz House, Airport Road, Yerwada, Pune – 411006. Reg.: 113 | CIN: U66010PN2000PLC015329 | UIN: IRDAI/HLT/BAGI/P-H/V.I/65/2016-17 | For more details, log on to : [www.bajajallianz.com](http://www.bajajallianz.com) or call at : Sales - 1800 209 0144 / Service - 1800 209 5858 (Toll Free No.) | For more details on risk factors and Terms and Conditions, please read the sales brochure before concluding a sale.

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