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P3 NEWS

WREATH LAYING CEREMONIES OF 3 POLICEMEN HELD IN SRINAGAR

Two wreath laying ceremonies were held at District Police Lines Srinagar on Friday to pay homage to the two policemen who were killed in various incidents....

P7 THINK

FAT PHOBIA AND DIET CULTURE

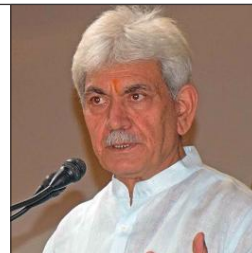
The pandemic and the subsequent lockdown that was imposed altered our lives in several ways. As the covid cases surged, stringent lockdowns were imposed across the world...



P5 NEWS

LG LAUNCHES 7 ONLINE SERVICES FOR STUDENTS AT POLYTECHNICS/ITIS ACROSS J&K

Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha today attended the closing ceremony of 32nd National Road Safety....



Widom Quote!

Do what is right, not what is easy nor what is popular.

— Roy T. Bennett

NEWS DIGEST

PAGD Wins Top DDC Post In Rajouri

JAMMU: The People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) on Friday won the post of District Development Council (DDC) chairperson in Rajouri district of Jammu and Kashmir, officials said. Rajouri, which is reserved for Scheduled Tribes, went to the polls in the final phase that marked the conclusion of the election process to DDC posts in all the 20. [More On P10](#)

81 New Covid Cases In J&K

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir on Friday recorded 81 fresh COVID-19 cases that pushed the infection count to 1,25,715, even as no new death due to the virus was reported in the Union Territory, officials said. Twenty-two of the fresh cases were from the Jammu division and 59 from the Kashmir division, they said. The officials said Srinagar district recorded a maximum. [More On P10](#)

Two Poachers Held In Ganderbal: Police

SRINAGAR: Police on Friday claimed to have arrested two poachers from central Kashmir's Ganderbal district. Javid Ahmad Malla and Mushtaq Ahmad Malla, both residents of Fethapora Ganderbal were arrested by police for misusing their licensed weapons for hunting migratory birds, a police spokesperson said Friday. The duo, he said, have caused huge loss to the wetlands. [More On P10](#)

Ex-Militant Among 2 Arrested

SRINAGAR: Two people, including a former militant on Friday were arrested with grenades in north Kashmir's Bandipora district. Abid Hasan Waza, a former militant and Shabir Ahmed Mir both residents of Bandipora were apprehended by a joint team of police, army and CRPF at a checkpoint established near Papchan on the basis of specific information, a local news agency KNT. [More On P10](#)

IT Dept Conducts Raid At Zainakote

SRINAGAR: Income Tax department on Friday raided a residential house in Zainakote HMT area of Srinagar district. Sources said that sleuths of the Income Tax department raided the house of Noor Mohammad Wagay, Son of Mohammad Ismail Wagay, resident of Zainakote HMT Srinagar, reported news agency KDC. Noor Mohammad. [More On P10](#)

HANDWARA PHE SCAM

HC Directs Completion Of Probe In 3 Months, Action Against Officials

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir High Court on Friday directed Senior Superintendent of Police, Crime Branch Kashmir, to ensure within three months completion of investigation into a case involving fraudulent withdrawal of Rs. 20,34,634 against non-existent works by PHE officials, leading to the denial of potable water supply to hundreds of people in Handwara area of North Kashmir's Kupwara district in 2014.

Disposing of a Public Interest Litigation, a bench of Justices Ali Mohammad Magrey and Vinod



File Photo

Chatterji Kou directed the SSP to file challan before the competent court of law within the period. "On consideration of the

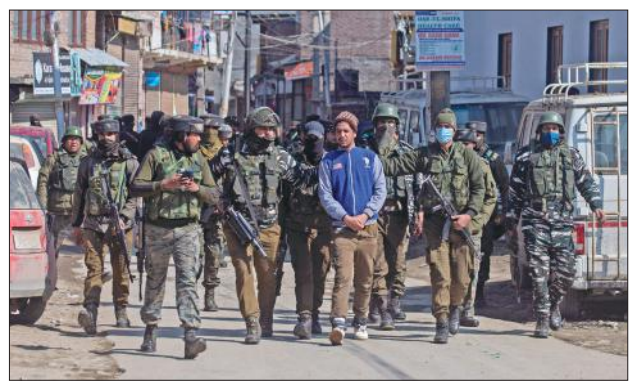
matter and in terms of order passed on 15th of December 2014, the Court had sought status report from. [More On P10](#)

'Ensure Drug De-addiction Centres Are Established'

Jammu and Kashmir High Court on Friday asked government to ensure establishment of drug de-addiction and rehabilitation Centres in Jammu and Kashmir. "The instant petitions (PIL) are filed by the petitioner, who is now elevated to the Bench (Justice Javed Iqbal). The subject of these petitions has reference to the policy of the Government to delineate on various methods to curb the menace of drug de-addiction which has been looming large in Jammu. [More On P10](#)

2 Cops Shot Dead By Militants On Airport Road

Lashkar Militants Involved In the Attack, Both Identified: IGP



Security men detaining a youth after Friday's militant attack in Baghat, Barzulla that left two cops dead. KO Photo, Abid Bhat

SRINAGAR: Two policemen were shot dead by a militant in an audacious broad-day light attack in Barzulla area of this capital city on Friday, barely two days after a prominent eatery owner's son was shot at and injured in high security zone Sonwar here.

Around 12:30 pm, an unidentified militant appeared in Baghat on the high security Airport road, took out assault rifle hidden under his cloak (pheran) and fired indiscriminately towards policemen who were at a tea stall, officials told. [More On P10](#)

3 Militants, Cop Killed In Twin Encounters

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Three local militants and a special police officer (SPO) were killed in two separate nocturnal encounters in twin districts of Shopian and Budgam in the Kashmir Valley, officials said Friday.

On the basis of specific input suggesting presence of militants, police, army's 44

RR and CRPF personnel from 178 battalion launched a cordon and search operation on Thursday night in Badigam area of Shopian district, a police spokesperson said Friday. He said that the militants were given repeated opportunities to lay down their arms and surrender. "Instead the hiding militants fired. [More On P10](#)

IGP Warns Mainstream Leaders Against 'Instigating' People

Police have devised strategy regarding the upcoming summer, Inspector general of Police Kashmir Zone Vijay Kumar said on Friday. Addressing reporters here, the top police officer of. [More On P10](#)

India Set An Example In 2019: HM

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday said by giving an "effective response" to the 2019 Pulwama attack, India set an example that it can take strong decisions for the respect of its troops.

Unveiling a book here on the 82-year history of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), the largest paramilitary force of the country, Shah said the central armed police forces (CAPFs) like the CRPF are faced

Wanted To Show Envoys J&K's March To Development: MEA



File Photo: Abid Bhat

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: The visit by 24 foreign envoys to Jammu and

Kashmir was aimed at enabling them to witness the union territory's march on the path of inclusive

India Rejects UN Special Rapporteurs Comments On J&K

India on Thursday hit out at two UN Special Rapporteurs for criticising its policies towards Jammu and Kashmir, asserting that the region is an "integral and inalienable" part of the country. India's reaction came after Special Rapporteur on minority issues, Fernand de Varennes, and Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or

Panel Bars Private Schools From Charging 'Any Kind Of Fee'

Agencies

SRINAGAR: The Committee for Fixation and Regulation of Fee of Private Schools (FFRC) on Friday asked private schools of Jammu and Kashmir not to enhance any kind of fee for the ongoing academic session.

FFRC Chairperson Muzaffar Hussain Attar in an order said that it has decided that all the private schools functioning in Kashmir division and winter

zone of Jammu division shall not enhance any amount of fee for the current academic session.

Attar said that the charges like tuition fee, annual fee, bus fee and any other kind of fee during the academic session 2020-21 shall not be hiked or enhanced and those schools affiliated with Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) for academic session 2021-22. He said, "All the. [More On P10](#)

J&K Doesn't Have Any Primitive Tribal Group

No Survey Done To Ascertain Pre-Agricultural Communities In UT: Govt

AGENCIES

SRINAGAR: Jammu & Kashmir doesn't have any primitive tribal group while no survey has been undertaken to ascertain pre-agricultural communities

in the Union Territory.

Official documents reveal that the department of Tribal Affairs has communicated to the Forest department that there is no primitive tribal group in J&K.

"The Tribal Affairs Department of J&K Government was requested to intimate the details of the Primitive Tribal Groups and Pre-Agricultural Communities (PAC). [More On P10](#)

Major Reshuffle In J&K Police On Cards

DGP, IGP's; Several SSP's Likely To Get Shifted



File Photo

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) is all set to make a major reshuffle in the Jammu and Kashmir Police department for the first time since the abrogation of special status and bifurcation of the erstwhile state into two Union Territories.

In the major reshuffle, DGP Dilbagh Singh, IGP rank

officers, several SSP's and SP's are likely to be shifted and transferred to new places for posting, a local news agency KDC reported Friday while quoting unnamed sources.

"The exercise for a massive reshuffle in police administration has been set into motion with the proposals being processed and finalized for the transfer of senior IPS officers. [More On P10](#)

J&K's Intel Chief Promoted To DGP Rank

Jammu & Kashmir's intelligence chief, RR Swain, and another senior IPS officer has been promoted to the rank of director general of police. According to an order issued by Ministry of Home Affairs, R R Swain. [More On P10](#)

Govt Sets Up UMTAs For Jammu, Srinagar

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir administration on Friday accorded sanction for the establishment of Unified Metropolitan Transport Authorities (UMTAs) for the twin capital cities of Srinagar and Jammu, an official order said. Union Territory's Chief Secretary B V R Subrahmanyam will head the

20-member UMTAs.

The members include a nominee each of the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban affairs, National Highways Authority of India, Northern Railways, Airports Authority of India and Inland Waterways Authority of India, among others. Besides, two experts from the field of urban. [More On P10](#)

JCCI Threatens Stir Over Property Tax Imposition

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: No major economic activity has taken place in Jammu and Kashmir since after the abrogation of Article 370 in August 2019, the Jammu Chamber of Commerce and Industries (JCCI) said on Friday, demanding immediate lifting of curbs on the movement of people to and from the union territory.

The traders body also

opposed the proposed property tax and said it would not hesitate to launch an agitation if it is imposed.

"The business community suffered economic losses due to strict restrictions in the wake of August 5, 2019 events followed by a prolonged coronavirus-induced lockdown. No major economic activity has taken place (in Jammu and Kashmir) after. [More On P10](#)



Dr. Dominic Shellard

Ex Vice Chancellor

is giving a free webinar

on

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aspire@indusdiscoveries.com

(Zoom link will be sent to participants on first come first served basis)

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Wreath Laying Ceremonies Of 3 Policemen Held In Srinagar



SRINAGAR: Two wreath laying ceremonies were held at District Police Lines Srinagar on Friday to pay homage to the two policemen who were killed in various incidents of violence in the last 24 hours. First ceremony was held in the morning in which wreaths were laid on the mortal remains of SPO Altaf Ahmad Najar, who got critically injured in an encounter at Zanigam Beerwa Budgam and subsequently succumbed at the hospital. Second ceremony was held in the afternoon when wreaths were laid on the mortal remains of Mohamad Yousf, who got critically

injured in a shootout incident near Bhaghat Chowk Srinagar subsequently both of them were killed. Wreath laying ceremony for the slain policemen was held at District Police Lines Srinagar and a rich tribute was paid to them. Senior officers of Police, Paramilitary Forces/Army & Civil Administration were present including IGP Kashmir Vijay Kumar, DIG CKR Amit Kumar, DC Srinagar Shahid Iqbal Choudhary, DC Budgam Shahbaz Ahmad Mirza, DIG CRPF Sec Ops. Kishore Prasad, DIG CRPF South, I/C SSP Srinagar Sandeep Gupta-IPS, SSP Security Kashmir Imtiyaz Hussain-JKPS & M. Majid Malik, SP Headquarters Srinagar, SP South City, SP West City Srinagar, CO CRPF 23rd BN, U.P. Singh, CO BSF Sec. HQ Panthachowk, Mund Sahab, CO Army Supply Depot BB cantt. Jamwal and other officers paid rich tributes to Martyrs and laid floral wreaths in two different events at DPL Srinagar on their mortal remains for their supreme sacrifice.

Educational Volunteers Stage Protest In Press Enclave Seek Enhancement Of Honorarium

SRINAGAR: Seasonal 'teachers' Friday staged a protest demanding cancellation of proposal that seeks enhancement of honorarium in favor of Seasonal Educational Volunteers from existing Rs 4000 per month to Rs. 6000 for 6 months. These seasonal educational volunteers assembled in Press Enclave Srinagar and staged a peaceful protest. One of the protesters Arshid Ahmed from Shopian said that they were promised to get honorarium for the whole year, but the Department of Education in its proposal has mentioned that honorarium for them will be given only for six months. Seasonal Centers are established to provide educational facility to the children of nomadic and migratory population within the age

group of 6-14 years during the period of their migration for a maximum of six months who are either already on the rolls of the school at their original places or out of school. "We were disappointed after going through the proposal. Instead of engaging us for the whole year, only six months have been mentioned that too on meager honorarium," said Manzoor Ahmed. The protesters sought intervention of Project Director Samagra Shiksha, Director Education and other concerned officials. Another protester Muhammad Ayoub said that there are more than 1500 Seasonal Educational Volunteers who despite working hard get honorarium for only few months. "It is injustice towards us," he said.

INDUSCOS Organises Mega Awareness Camp For Artisans At Soura

SRINAGAR: The INDUSCOS wing of the Department of Handicrafts & Handloom, Kashmir today organised a Mega awareness camp for the artisans, weavers and the target groups associated with the Cooperatives of the UT at Soura, here. The speakers on the occasion raised awareness among the participants about the benefits of forming cooperatives and about the recent endeavours of the LG administration including capital infusion in the cooperative sector in Handicrafts and Handlooms. On the spot registration certificates were issued to at least thirty cooperative self help groups. The participants in the camps were informed about the schemes with special focus on credit card scheme for individual artisans, financial support for Industrial Cooperatives, state award scheme and about the marketing of the products. The speakers stressed on the benefits that can be availed by the groups once they come under the ambit of cooperatives and strengthen and extend partnership between themselves. Joint Director Handloom Kashmir, Publicity cum Exhibition Officer, Deputy Registrar INDUSCOS Kashmir were present on the occasion, besides the camp was attended by a large number of artisan folk from the adjoining areas including Anchar.

THE J&K BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL ENTRANCE EXAMINATIONS

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NOTICE

Dated: 18.02.2021

It is notified for the information of below mentioned candidates, who have applied for the rechecking of Papers of Secretariat Assistant Course Departmental Examination 2020, that upon scrutiny of Answer Script of the said papers in terms of Rule 33 of J&K Public Service Commission (Conduct of Examinations) Rules, 2005 nothing has been found which would warrant any change in the result already declared by the Commission vide Notification No. PSC/Exam/2020/47 dated: 22.12.2020.

S.No	Roll No.	Name of the Candidate	Papers
1.	11	Aijaz Ahmad Shah	Paper IV
2.	34	Bilal Ahmad Wani	Paper IV
3.	69	Balvinder Kour	Paper IV
4.	80	Harvinder Kumar	Paper IV
5.	92	Tarsem Raj	Paper I & IV
6.	97	Balvir Singh	Paper IV
7.	101	Mehraj-ud-din Wani	Paper IV
8.	115	Tariq Rasool Munshi	Paper IV
9.	155	Sahil Gupta	Paper I
10.	159	Sujata Jalali	Paper IV
11.	166	Neerja R.J Singh	Paper IV
12.	175	Rajni Sharma	Paper IV
13.	207	Shamim Ahmad Sofi	Paper IV
14.	247	Bhem Dutt	Paper I & IV
15.	304	Natig Hussain Shah	Paper I & IV

SD/-(Dr. Shabir Hussain Keen) KAS

Controller of Examinations, J&K Public Service Commission.

No: PSC/Exam/Rechecking/SAC/FC/7

Dated:/18.02.2021

DIPK-13385/20

CUK's SoE Holds Student Events

GANDERBAL: School of Education (SoE), Central University of Kashmir (CUK) organised several activities in the established 14 centres for free winter coaching located across Jammu & Kashmir, to cater to the diverse needs of the students. On February 6, varsity's students-teachers, in collaboration with Iqbal Public High School, Soura, organised Na'at, debate and quiz competitions. In Na'at competition Absar Ahmad Rather and Attia Hilal from class 8th secured 1st and 2nd positions respectively. In debate, Ufaizah and Ansa yaqoob from class 8th secured 1st and 2nd position and Kariza from class 7th secured third place. In the quiz, Ansa yaqoob, Absar Ahmad, Tahreem, Arbeen (8th class students), Toiba from 7th class and Isra from 6th class were declared winners. In valediction, Ms. Tabasm and Ms. Fokiya appreciated the students for participating in the events and congratulated the student-teachers of CUK for their continuous efforts for students' betterment. A similar event was organised by student-teachers on February 15 in collaboration with Government Middle School, Gadoora, Ganderbal. Dean & Head SoE, Dr. Zahoor Ahmad Geelani presided over the event and congratulated the students of class 6th, 7th, & 8th for their dedication exhibited throughout the winter classes. He distributed prizes to Rukaya Nazir, Insha Mushtaq and Saboor Fayaz who bagged first, second and third positions respectively. On the same day, student-teachers in collaboration with Gousal Azam Memorial School organised a 4 kilometre cycle race for the students of 6th, 7th and 8th class which started at 7:30 AM. On the occasion, the principal thanked CUK trainees for their dedication and commitment toward teaching. Fazil Manzoor of class 8th secured first position, Amaan Manzoor of Class 6th secured second place and Sohaib Fayaz of class 6th secured third place.



OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER ELECTRIC DIVISION-IIIRD, SHEREEN BAGH, SRINAGAR.

Notice Inviting Tender.

e-NIT No.:- e-ED-III / 37 of 2020-21 Dated:- 17-02-2021

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor of UT of Jammu and Kashmir, e-Tenders, (in Two Cover System) are hereby invited from reputed companies or relevant class registered contractors/suppliers enlisted with CPWD/JMES/Railways/DS&D and Inspection Agency of JKPD, for Execution of DT Sub Station Creation works, along-with LT Network, (Key Material provided by departmentally) (SITC for allied Material) as details below:-

Name of the work.	Estt. Cost (Lacs)	Cost of Tender Document	EMD (In Rs)	Completion Period	Position of funds
Execution of Creation of 100 KVA DT Sub-Station along-with HT and LT Net Work, at Babu Reyana Lane Tail end Mustafabad. (Key Material provided by Departmentally like Transformer, Pole and Conductor)	2.81	Rs. 500/-	5620/-	15 days	Authorization Available under Capex 2020-21

1. Bidders are advised to study the Standard Bidding Document (SBD) / Tender Specifications carefully. Submission of e-Bid against this SBD shall be deemed to have been done after careful study and examine, of the procedures, terms and conditions of the Standard Bidding Document with full understanding of its implications by the bidder.

2. The tender document is available on website <http://jktenders.gov.in>. Interested bidders may view, download the e-Bid document, seek clarification and submit their e-bid online up to the date and time mentioned in the table below:

A	Date & Time of downloading of Standard Bidding Document	The standard Bidding Document can be downloaded over http://jktenders.gov.in from 17-02-2021; 08:00 PM
B	Sale of Bid Document (Start)	22-02-2021; 11:00 AM
C	Sale of Bid Document (End)	05-03-2021; 2:00 PM
D	Clarification start date	18-02-2021; 11:00 AM
E	Clarification End date	21-02-2021; 03:00 PM
F	e-Bid submission (start) date and time (submission of e-tender fee, EMD and other supporting documents in PDF/XLS format).	22-02-2021; 11:00 AM
G	e-Bid submission (End) date and time (submission of e-tender fee, EMD and other supporting documents in PDF/XLS format)	05-03-2021; 2:00 PM
H	Hard copy of tender document Submission end date (along-with Original Copy of e-tender fee, EMD Instruments and other supporting documents)	Required for LT only & to be submitted on or one day after opening of financial e-bid.
I	Online commercial and technical e-bid opening date and time	06-03-2021; 02:00PM
J	Online financial e-bid opening date & time (only of the technically qualified bidders)	Will be communicated to the technically qualified bidders
K	Venue of opening of technical & financial e-bids	The office of Executive Engineer ED-III, Sgr.
L	Cost of e-bid document. (Copy of treasury challan/receipt to be up-loaded with e-tender). DD also acceptable, (however Original DD to be submitted on end date of e-Bid submission).	Rs. 500/- (Rupees Five hundred only).
M	Amount of Earnest Money Deposit (Copy of CDR/FDR/DD, duly pledged to Executive Engineer Electric Division-IIIRD, Shereen Bagh Srinagar, JKPD, should be up-loaded with e-tender)	Rs. 5620/-

DIPK-NB-5784/20

No.:- ED-III/TS/8716-20

Executive Engineer Electric Division-III, Srinagar.

Dated:- 17-02-2021

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- TRAFFIC POLICE : 9419993745, 01998-266686
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SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311

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- 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

- 1864 Civil War battle of Olustee, Florida
- 1921 - Riza Khan Pahlevi seizes control of Iran
- 1922 - Vilnius, Lithuania, agrees to separate from Poland
- 1932 - Japanese troops occupy Tunhua China
- 1938 - UK Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden resigns stating Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain has appeased Nazi Germany
- 1938 - Adolf Hitler announces his support for Japan during the Sino-Japanese War
- 1941 - Nazi Germany orders Polish Jews barred from using public transportation
- 1952 - Britain's Jeannette Altwegg wins the Olympic women's figure skating gold medal at the Oslo Winter Games ahead of American Tenley Albright, who goes on to win in Cortina d'Ampezzo (1956)
- 1952 - American alpine skier Andrea Mead-Lawrence is only multi-gold medalist at the Oslo Winter Olympics when she wins the slalom, after taking out the inaugural giant slalom
- 1953 - US Court of Appeals rules that Organized Baseball is a sport & not a business, affirming the 25-year-old Supreme Court ruling
- 1954 - General Zahedi wins election in Persia
- 1962 - John Glenn becomes the 1st American to orbit the Earth, aboard Friendship 7
- 1965 - Ranger 8 makes hard landing on the Moon, returns photos, other data
- 1965 - Turkish government of Uerguplu forms
- 1966 - Author Valery Tarsis banished in USSR
- 1975 - USSR performs nuclear test at Eastern Kazakh/Semipalitinsk USSR
- 1975 - A feud begins between the official Irish Republican Army and the Irish National Liberation Army; the two groups assassinate a number of each other's volunteers until the feud ends in June 1975
- 1978 - Egypt announces it is pulling its diplomats out of Cyprus
- 1983 - Japan launches Tenma satellite to study x-rays (450/570 km)
- 1989 - An IRA bomb destroys a section of a British Army barracks in Ternhill, England
- 1998 - UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan lands in Baghdad, for peace negotiations
- 2001 - The United States Supreme Court declines to consider an appeal by five major oil companies against Unocal's patent on production of cleaner "reformulated" gasoline sold in California
- 2003 - During a Great White concert in West Warwick, Rhode Island, a pyrotechnics display sets the club ablaze, killing 100 and injuring over 300 others.
- 2005 - Spain becomes the first country to vote in a referendum on ratification of the proposed Constitution of the European Union, passing it by a substantial margin, but on a low turnout.
- 2012 - South Korea angers North Korea as it proceeds with live fire drills in disputed Korean sea borders
- 2012 - Scientists successfully regenerate the flowering plant, Silene stenophylla from a 31,800 year
- 2016 - US primary elections: South Carolina Republican Primary - Donald Trump wins with 32.5%
- 2017 - Famine is declared in Unity State, South Sudan, affecting 4.9 million

From KO Archives

HAJJ PILGRIM HELD UP FOR NOT BRIBING CID

OBSERVER NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR -Refusal to 'bribe' a police department sleuth has cost an intending Hajj pilgrim the final green sig-nal to proceed to the holy land. Even after travel documents, including pilgrim pass, had been issued to the pilgrim, au-thorities have dashed his hopes of performing the Hajj and asked him to stay put at his Kupwara home.

According to a NAFA report, Habibullah Kashi s/o Budullah r/o Anwarababad, Salkot (Kupwara district) had been se-lected for this year's Hajj vide serial No 4478. He was scheduled to fly to Jeddah tomorrow. His flight has to take off from here at 10.30 a.m. He has already re-ceived his pilgrim pass and other travel documents.

Surprisingly, the authorities have stopped his departure for the holy pilgrimage at the last minute. He has been asked not to leave his home. The di-visional commissioner who is also the convener of the state Han committee is understood to have informed him that he would not be allowed to be proceed before CID clearance. His frantic efforts to reach the in-spector general of police, CID failed as the letter's office avoided him.

Family sources told NAFA an official from the CID had ap-proached Habibullah in connection with verification and allegedly demanded Rs 500. He expressed his inability to bribe the ' official as he was proceeding for a holy pilgrimage. The official might have forwarded an adverse report, they suspected.

Interestingly, report said, Habibullah Kashi visited Pakistan-controlled Kashmir in October 1999 on a valid passport bearing number A-6579375. The passport had been issued only; "after proper verification of his antecedents. "If the CID didn't have any objection for his visit to Pakistan or Pakistan-controlled Kashmir, why did they withhold clearance on my pilgrimage for Hajj which is mandatory for the eligible Muslim", he asked.

(KASHMIR OBSERVER, 20 February, 2001)

Ambitious US Citizenship Act Of 2021 Introduced In Congress

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



WASHINGTON: A bicameral US Citizenship Act of 2021 proposing a pathway to citizenship to 11 million undocumented workers, elimination of per country quota for employment-based green cards and work authorization for dependents of H-1B foreign workers, was introduced in the Congress.

The bill, if passed by both the chambers of the Congress - House of Representatives and the Senate - and signed into law by President Joe Biden would bring citizenship to millions of foreign nationals, including undocumented and those who came to the country legally.

The legislation would also benefit hundreds and thousands of Indian IT professionals and their families.

Authors of the bill - Senator Bob Menendez and Congresswoman Linda Sánchez - told reporters that the US Citizenship Act of 2021 establishes a moral and economic imperative and a vision of immigration reform that is expansive and inclusive.

It grows the economy by making changes to the employment-based immigration system, eliminating per-country caps, making it easier for STEM advanced degree holders from US

universities to stay, improving access to green cards for workers in lower-wage industries, giving dependents of H-1B holders work authorization, and preventing children of H-1B holders from aging out of the system.

"I am the daughter of immigrant parents from Mexico. I have dedicated my career to building an immigration system that lets people live without fear, and a system that gives immigrants - like my parents - who sought a better life and contribute to our nation a fair opportunity to thrive," Sanchez said.

"Immigrants contribute greatly to our country and society. They own businesses, pay taxes and teach our children. They are our coworkers, neighbors and friends," said Menendez.

"We have a historic opportunity to finally enact bold immigration reform that leaves no one behind, addresses root causes of migration, and safeguards our country's national security. We have a moral and economic imperative to get this done once and for all," he said.

The ruling Democrats have a majority in both the House and Senate. However, in the upper chamber, they need support of 10 Republicans to get the legislation through the Congress before it can be signed into law.

The Democratic leadership and the White House hope that they will get the necessary support in the interest of millions of non-citizens living in the country.

Supported by the White House, the bill creates an earned roadmap to citizenship for all 11 million undocumented immigrants, with an expedited three-year path to citizenship, and giving all other undocumented immigrants who pass background checks and pay taxes with an eight-year path to citizenship without fear of deportation.

US Offers To Restart Talks With Iran To Revive Nuclear Deal

Agencies

The United States has said it was ready to restart talks with Iran to revive a 2015 nuclear agreement, reversing former President Donald Trump's decision to walk out of the landmark deal that was aimed at preventing Tehran from acquiring nuclear weapons.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, after a meeting with his European partners on Thursday, stressed President Joe Biden's position that Washington would return to the accord formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) if Tehran came into full compliance with the deal.

The state department later said it was open to an "informal meeting" with the so-called P5+1 - the parties to the agreement including Iran - that a European Union official has offered to host. It is the most concrete step the Biden administration has publicly made towards direct engagement with Tehran on the nuclear deal to date.

However, Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh seemed to immediately throw cold water on the suggestion, tweeting on Friday "It is now only Iran and P4+1".

"Gestures are fine. But to revive P5+1, US must Act: LIFT sanctions," he wrote.

'Remove the cause if you fear the effect'

Iran has in recent months stepped up its nuclear activity in breach of the deal blaming the US and European powers - the other signatories to the deal - of reneging on their commitments. Tehran says Washington and European powers must be first to return to its commitments under the historic 2015 nuclear deal.

Iran has also threatened to stop part of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspections of its nuclear facilities scheduled for February 21 if the other signatories do not implement their own commitments under the deal.

European powers Britain, France and Germany - a group known as the E3 - and the US on Thursday warned Iran it would be "dangerous" to limit UN nuclear agency inspections.

"If Iran comes back into strict compliance with its commitments under the JCPOA, the United States will do the same and is prepared to engage in discussions with Iran towards that end," said a



joint statement issued at the meeting in Paris.

Iran began breaching the deal in 2019, about a year after Trump withdrew and re-imposed punishing economic sanctions.

Responding to the four nations' statement, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Ja-

IF IRAN COMES back into strict compliance with its commitments under the JCPOA, the United States will do the same and is prepared to engage in discussions with Iran towards that end," said a joint statement issued at the meeting in Paris.

vad Zarif said on Thursday that Washington should make the first move.

"Instead of sophistry & putting onus on Iran, E3/EU must abide by own commitments & demand an end to Trump's legacy of #EconomicTerrorism against Iran," Zarif said in a tweet.

"Our remedial measures are a response to US/E3 violations. Remove the cause if you fear the effect," he continued. "We'll follow ACTION w/ (with) action."

He said in a second tweet on Friday: "US unconditionally & effectively lift all sanctions imposed, re-imposed or re-labeled by Trump. We will then immediately reverse all remedial measures. Simple: #CommitActMeet."

Zarif has previously signalled an openness to talks with Washington and the other parties over reviving the deal.

Open to meeting
On Thursday, a spokesman for the US State Department said that Washington "would accept an invitation from the European Union High Representative to attend a meeting

of the P5+1 and Iran to discuss a diplomatic way forward on Iran's nuclear program".

That statement came after Enrique Mora, the deputy secretary general for political affairs of European External Action Service, tweeted he was ready to invite the parties to an "informal meeting to discuss the way forward".

In a subsequent background briefing with reporters, US State Department officials said Washington's openness was not "itself a breakthrough", but said the meeting could be a "start what could be a prolonged path of trying to get back to a situation where both the US and Iran were back into compliance", while reiterating Iran would have to come back into compliance first.

The officials said they did not expect the announcement to stop Iran from further violating provisions of the agreement in the coming days, saying "frankly, that was part of the calculation".

Tehran's deadline
Tehran has set a deadline of next week for Biden to begin reversing sanctions imposed by Trump, adding it will take its biggest step yet to breach the deal - banning short-notice inspections by the UN nuclear watchdog.

Britain, France, Germany, and the US have repeated their concerns over Iran's recent actions to produce uranium enriched up to 20 percent and uranium metal.

Refining uranium to high levels of fissile purity is a potential pathway to nuclear bombs, though Iran has long said it is enrichment programme is for peaceful energy purposes only.

US officials have offered some conciliatory gestures towards Iran such as relaxing the travel restrictions on diplomats in its mission to the United Nations that the Trump administration imposed in 2019, which had confined them to a small section of New York City.

Massive Breach Fuels Calls For US Action On Cybersecurity

WASHINGTON: Jolted by a sweeping hack that may have revealed government and corporate secrets to Russia, US officials are scrambling to reinforce the nation's cyber defences and recognising that an agency created two years ago to protect America's networks and infrastructure lacks the money, tools and authority to counter such sophisticated threats.

The breach, which hijacked widely used software from Texas-based SolarWinds Inc., has exposed the profound vulnerability of civilian government networks and the limitations of efforts to detect threats.

It's also likely to unleash a wave of spending on technology modernisation and cybersecurity.

"It's really highlighted the investments we need to make in cybersecurity to have the visibility to block these attacks in the future," Anne Neuberger, the newly appointed deputy national security adviser for cyber and emergency technology said Wednesday at a White House briefing.

The reaction reflects the severity of a hack that was disclosed only in December.

The hackers, as yet unidentified but described by officials as "likely Russian," had unfettered access to the data and email of at least nine US government agencies and about 100 private companies, with the full extent of the compromise still unknown. And while this incident appeared to be aimed at stealing information, it heightened fears that future hackers could damage critical infrastructure, like electrical grids or water systems.

President Joe Biden plans to release an executive order soon that Neuberger said will include about eight measures intended to address security gaps exposed by the hack.

The administration has also proposed expanding by 30 per cent the budget of the US Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Agency, or CISA, a little-known entity now under intense scrutiny because of the SolarWinds breach.

Republicans and Democrats in Congress have called for ex-



panding the size and role of the agency, a component of the Department of Homeland Security. It was created in November 2018 amid a sense that US adversaries were increasingly targeting civilian government and corporate networks as well as the "critical" infrastructure, such as the energy grid that is increasingly vulnerable in a wired world.

Speaking at a recent hearing on cybersecurity, Rep. John Katko, a Republican from New York, urged his colleagues to quickly "find a legislative vehicle to give CISA the resources it needs to fully respond and protect us."

Biden's COVID-19 relief package called for USD 690 billion more for CISA, as well as providing the agency with USD 9 billion to modernise IT across the government in partnership with the General Services Administration.

That has been pulled from the latest version of the bill because some members didn't see a connection to the pandemic. But Rep. Jim Langevin, co-chair of the Congressional Cybersecurity Caucus, said additional funding for CISA is likely to reemerge with bipartisan support in upcoming legislation, perhaps an infrastructure bill.

"Our cyber infrastructure is every bit as important as our roads and bridges," Langevin, a Rhode Island Democrat, said in an interview.

"It's important to our economy. It's important to protecting human life, and we need to make sure we have a modern and resilient cyber infrastructure."

CISA operates a threat-detection system known as "Einstein" that was unable to detect the SolarWinds breach. Brandon Wales, CISA's acting director, said that it was because the breach was hidden in a legitimate software update from SolarWinds to its customers.

Rich Nations 'Hoarding' A Billion Doses Of Excess Covid Vaccine

Agencies

People from poorer nations will probably be unable to get a COVID-19 vaccine this year because the world's richest countries have bought one billion more doses than their citizens need, a new study has found, as G7 leaders indicated a willingness to share their excess doses ahead of a meeting on Friday.

"This huge vaccine excess is the embodiment of vaccine nationalism, with countries prioritising their own vaccination needs at the expense of other countries and the global recovery," said ONE, a group that campaigns against poverty.

ONE's policy team added "a massive course correction" in distribution was needed if the world wanted to protect and save lives as the death toll from the pandemic approaches 2.5 million.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres' said on Wednesday that just 10 countries had so far administered 75 percent of all vaccinations, describing it as "wildly uneven and unfair".

Guterres said at least 130 countries have not yet received a single dose of COVID-19 vaccine.

"At this critical moment, vaccine equity is the biggest moral test before the global community," he said, adding that a meeting later on



Friday of the G7 top industrialised nations "can create the momentum" to address the inequality.

"Unprecedented inequality" There are indications that the G7 is listening with the leaders of France, the UK and the United States all suggesting they will make concessions on vaccines during the virtual meeting, which is being hosted by the UK.

French President Emmanuel Macron has called for Europe and the United States to commit between 3 and 5 percent of their vaccine supply to developing countries.

"It's an unprecedented acceleration of global inequality and it's politically unsustainable too because it's paving the way for a war of influence over vaccines," Macron told the Financial Times newspaper in a video link interview on Thursday.

Macron said that German Chancellor Angela Merkel has also agreed that the decision to share part of Europe's vaccine stockpile should be a concerted effort.

US Eases Restrictions On Iranian Diplomats' Movements In New York

Agencies

WASHINGTON: The United States said Thursday it was easing draconian restrictions imposed by Donald Trump's administration on movements of Iranian diplomats accredited at the United Nations, headquartered in New York City, as part of a bid to reduce tensions.

"The idea here is to take steps to remove unnecessary obstacles to multilateral diplomacy by amending the restrictions on domestic travel. Those had been extremely restrictive," a State Department official told reporters.

As part of his maximum pres-



sure campaign on Iran, Trump in 2019 barred Iranian diplomats from all but a few blocks around the United Nations and their mission, with Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif saying he was even prohibited during a UN visit from visiting a col-

league in a New York hospital.

The State Department said that Iranian diplomats would still be subject to restrictions on diplomats applied to nations with poor relations with the United States, such as North Korea, who need authorization to go beyond a 25-mile (40-kilometer) radius from Midtown Manhattan.

President Joe Biden's administration also said Thursday it was ready to meet with Iranian officials under EU auspices to jumpstart diplomacy and reversed Trump's widely derided contention that the United States snapped back UN sanctions against Iran.

Facilitating Sikhs To Visit Their Religious Sites: Pakistan Foreign Ministry



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has said it is fully facilitating Sikh pilgrims from across the world, including India, for visiting their religious sites in the country.

The remarks of the foreign ministry on Friday came a day after India denied permission to around 600 Sikh pilgrims to visit Pakistan, citing the security and Covid situation in the country.

"Pakistan provides maximum facilitation to the Sikh yatris from all over the world, including India, for visiting their religious sites in Pakistan," Foreign

Office spokesman Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri said at the weekly media briefing.

India, Chaudhri said, should also facilitate Sikh pilgrims for visiting their religious sites in Pakistan.

In a communication to the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC), an apex Sikh religious body, India's Home Ministry on Wednesday said the security situation in Pakistan continues to be adverse and there is a threat to Indian citizens in that country.

Besides, the COVID-19 pandemic has affected five lakh people in Pakistan and 10,000 people lost their lives due to the disease. The health infrastructure in Pakistan is also not adequate, it said.

Citing these reasons, the Home Ministry conveyed to the SGPC that it has decided not to accord permission to the group that was expected to visit gurdwaras in Pakistan from February 18 to 21. — PTI

NEWS MAKERS

UK's Prince Harry To Lose All Honorary Titles, Says Buckingham Palace

Agencies

LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM: Britain's Prince Harry will relinquish his honorary military appointments and patronages after confirming to Queen Elizabeth II that he and his wife Meghan Markle will not return as working royals, Buckingham Palace announced Friday.

The Duke and Duchess of Sussex, as they are formally known, rocked the British monarchy when they quit frontline royal duties a year ago.

They have since embarked on a new life involving several commercial ventures in the United States, and now live in California.

Under the initial terms of their departure thrashed out at an emergency summit with the queen in



early 2020, Harry had agreed to review the decision a year on.

"The Duke and Duchess of Sussex have confirmed to Her Majesty The Queen that they will not be returning as working members of The Royal

Family," Buckingham Palace said in a statement.

"The Queen has written confirming that in stepping away from the work of The Royal Family it is not possible to continue with the responsibilities

and duties that come with a life of public service.

"The honorary military appointments and Royal patronages held by The Duke and Duchess will therefore be returned to Her Majesty, before being redistributed among working members of The Royal Family."

Prince Harry, a former soldier, holds several honorary military titles, as well as Commonwealth appointments and some other patronages.

Meghan was also handed several honorary roles after she wed Harry in a fairytale ceremony at Windsor Castle in May, 2018.

The couple, who are expecting their second child, are poised to give an "intimate" interview about their lives with US chat show host Oprah Winfrey.

Malala Yousafzai's Shooter 'Threatens' Her On Twitter; She Asks Imran Khan, Pak Army 'How Did He Escape'



ISLAMABAD: A Pakistani Taliban militant who nine years ago is alleged to have shot and badly wounded Nobel Laureate Malala Yousafzai has threatened a second attempt on her life, tweeting that next time, "there would be no mistake." Twitter on Wednesday permanently suspend the account with the menacing post.

The threat prompted Yousafzai to tweet herself, asking both the Pakistan military and Prime Minister Imran Khan to explain how her alleged shooter, Ehsanullah Ehsan, had escaped from government custody.

Ehsan was arrested in 2017, but escaped in January 2020 from a so-called safe house where he was being held by Pakistan's intelligence agency. The circumstances of both his arrest and escape have been shrouded in mystery and controversy.

Since his escape, Ehsan has been interviewed and has communicated with Pakistani journalists via the same Twitter account that carried the Urdu-language threat. He has had more than one Twitter account, all of which have been suspended. The government is investigating the threat and had immediately asked Twitter to shut down the account, said Raouf Hasan, an adviser to the prime minister.

Ehsan, a longtime member of the Pakistani Taliban or Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan as they are known, urged Yousafzai to "come back home because we have a score to settle with you and your father." The tweet added that "this time there will be no mistake." Yousafzai, who has setup a fund that promotes education for girls worldwide and even financed a girls' school in her home in the Swat Valley, called out the government and the military over Ehsan's tweet. "This is the ex-spokesperson of Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan who claims the attack on me and many innocent people. He is now threatening people on social media," she tweeted.

Valediction Of 32Nd National Road Safety Month-2021 Held Across Kashmir

SRINAGAR: Series of activities to raise awareness among the masses with respect to road safety marked the culmination of National Road Safety Month-2021 themed 'Sadak Suraksha Jeevan Raksha' across all the districts of Kashmir.

On the occasion, Valediction function was held at Srinagar and at all the districts to observe the conclusion of the month long awareness drive that was kick started on 18 January, 2021.

During this period, a number of activities including debates, quiz, essay and painting competitions, distribution of pamphlets and print material, blood donation camp, fitness mela, walkathon, rallies to raise mass awareness among the drivers and the public about road safety norms besides health check up camps were conducted by the Regional Transport Authority, Kashmir and Asst. Regional Transport Offices of all the districts.

Meanwhile, the live streaming of LG's speech was facilitated by the district Administrations for the participants during the function.

In Srinagar, a programme was

ticipated in the month-long program.

SSP Ganderbal, Khalil Poswal, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Farooq Ahmed Baba, ARTO Ganderbal, District Information Officer, Ganderbal, Presidents of various transport unions, Drivers, and Students of different schools attended the function.

At Pulwama: On the culmination of National Road Safety month, Assistant Regional Transport office Pulwama today organized a Valedictory function at New Bus Stand Drussu here.

The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Pulwama, Dr Raghav Langer was the Chief Guest while, SSP Pulwama Ashish Mishra, District Health Officer, Tehsildar Pulwama, ARTO Moazam Ali Shah and DSP traffic were also present on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, DC stressed on the need for strict implementation of traffic rules and regulations to minimize the road accidents and traffic jams. He asked participants to learn rules of driving and appealed Transporters/ drivers to strictly adhere to the rules to avert road accidents.



After militants killed two cops, police top brass arrived at Baghat area of Srinagar on Friday. KO Photo Abid Bhat

LG Launches 7 Online Services For Students At Polytechnics/ITIs Across J&K

- Buses procured under J&K Transport Subsidy Scheme flagged off
- Institute of Driving, Training & Research is coming up in Jammu at the cost of Rs 17 cr

JAMMU: Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha today attended the closing ceremony of 32nd National Road Safety Month and Fitness Mela here at Gulshan Ground.

During his visit, the Lt Governor launched 07 Online Services and e-inaugurated 19 'Learner's License Test Centres' for students at Polytechnics/ITIs across J&K. Buses procured under J&K Transport Subsidy Scheme were also flagged off by the Lt Governor.

During his address, the Lt Governor underlined the significance of spreading awareness on road safety and following traffic rules.

The transition from Road Safety Week to Road Safety Month shows that increasing road accidents is a critical issue. The Government is making continuous efforts to make the public aware and this Road Safety Month was also one such effort, the Lt Governor said.

The Lt Governor also lauded the Traffic police personnel for discharging their duties with utmost dedication and commitment. Not only the transport department and traffic police, but collaborative efforts are required on part of all stakeholders to get desired results on the ground, he added.

Laying special emphasis on reaching out to youngsters and target groups, the Lt Governor called for organizing programs on road safety with people's participation throughout the year, to create massive awareness on the vital issue. He asked the Transport Department to organize a UT level slogan competition on Road Safety. He further advised the Transport Department for organizing First Responder and Safe Driving workshops every month.

"We need to work on more innovative ideas like Mission Road Safety and Good Samaritan to rope in maximum volunteers in Road safety programs, besides making improvements in the response system as per the requirements", said the Lt Governor.

The Lt Governor suggested incorporating mechanism in the accident analysis under Road Accident Data Management System through which the need of making changes in road designs or any other engineering interventions required can be identified so that corrective measures can be taken in collaboration with all the stakeholder departments.

While highlighting various reformative measures taken by the Government in the Transport Sector, the Lt Governor observed that the Government has abolished 9% tax on electric vehicles which is a major step towards conservation of the environment and promoting maximum use of electric vehicles. Road tax on tricycles has also been abolished for empowerment of specially-abled persons, besides, Road Tax on Tractors upto 3000 CC capacity has also been exempted, he added.

Working on the reforms in the Transport Sector and promoting Ease of Doing Business, the Rule in J&K Motor Vehicle Rules 1991 under which new models of Transport Vehicles needed permission from an Empowered Committee has been removed, said the Lt Governor.

The Lt Governor said that an Institute of Driving, Training & Research is coming up in Jammu at the cost of Rs 17 crore which will improve the driving skills and spread awareness about Road Safety and Motor Vehicle Rules reducing road accidents in future.

Similarly, an Inspection and Certification centre worth Rs 14 crore is coming up in Samba to ensure automated fitness of Vehicles without any manual intervention. In the long run, such initiatives will prove to be vital for safe transportation, added the Lt Governor.

Terming faceless, paperless, and cashless services as a major step towards transparent governance, the Lt Governor said that we have introduced a new era in the transport sector. Recently, starting 12 online services of Transport Department and today, with the 07 online people-friendly services, the Government has promoted an effective and transparent public service delivery system in Transport Department, the Lt Governor maintained.

In yet another reformative measure, the Government is providing subsidies amounting to Rs 5 Lakh per bus to develop the 15 years and above old buses into new eco-friendly fuel-efficient ones. During the current financial year, 35 buses worth Rs 1.75 crore were provided to the beneficiaries, said the Lt Governor.

While concluding his address, the Lt Governor called upon all the citizens of J&K to Be Aware, Be Safe & Be Happy.



organised by Regional Transport Office, to mark the valediction of the National Road Safety Month at Parimpora, here.

During the programme, participants highlighted the measures to be taken to avoid road accidents and discourage juveniles to drive motor vehicles. They suggested that it is the social responsibility of every individual to save precious lives.

Speaking on the occasion, ARTO, Kashmir, Akramullah Tak stressed on the continuation of awareness campaigns at different levels to educate masses regarding observance of traffic rules and regulations while plying vehicles.

On the occasion, ARTO, Kashmir distributed mementos and certificates among the students who participated in essay and painting competitions organized by the department. Besides, certificates were also distributed among the Transport associations for their participation in various activities conducted by the department.

Among others present on the occasion were officers of the transport department, transporters and students.

At Ganderbal: Motor Vehicle Department, Ganderbal today organized a culmination function of month long Road Safety event at Mini Secretariat, here.

The function was presided over by the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Ganderbal, Shafiqat Iqbal.

Speaking on the occasion, the DC highlighted the importance of holding month long awareness on road safety and traffic rules. He stressed upon the general public, especially youth to strictly follow the road safety measures and ensure their safety when they are on roads so that precious lives are saved.

He said the District Administration is making all possible efforts to road safety in the district to curb the loss of lives in road accidents, adding that awareness programs on road safety and traffic rules shall continue at regular intervals across the district.

Later, the DC distributed awards among the winners of the painting competition and best performers who participated in the month-long program.

He also said that such programmes will be helpful to make the commuters and drivers aware of traffic rules and would also help in streamlining the traffic system in the district.

Experts from the Motor Vehicle Department and students delivered lectures on various road safety measures.

At the end awards (mementos/certificates) were distributed by the dignitaries among the students and other participants who participated in various events conducted during the Road Safety month.

At Anantnag: The concluding ceremony of National Road Safety month was presided over by Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Anantnag, Gulzar Ahmad Bhat, held at Transport Yard Harnag, here.

In his speech, the ADC stressed upon the participants including drivers regarding strict adherence to the traffic rules and safety measures for the safety of the passengers and vehicles.

He directed the Motor Vehicle Department Anantnag to continue such programmes round the year to raise mass awareness regarding safety measures and safe driving. ADC on occasion distributed helmets and fitness certificates among the disabled Scooty riders and Sumo drivers respectively.

Among others, officers and officials of ART Office, MVD Anantnag were present on the occasion, besides Sumo Drivers and other heavy vehicle drivers also participated in the event.

On the occasion, the drivers were provided awareness regarding the safety measures and safe driving besides; the ophthalmic checkup of the drivers was also done.

At Shopian: To build awareness about Road Safety and reduce accidents, a month-long National Road Safety awareness drive culminated today with a celebration of valediction organised by the Motor Vehicle Department, Shopian at Old Fruit Mandi, Arhama.

Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shopian, Sachin Kumar Vaish said that the main objective of organizing such events is to make the young generation well aware about the road Safety rules and ethics.

EJAC Appeals Govt To Reconsider Retirement Order

JAMMU: Employees Joint Action Committee Jammu & Kashmir (EJAC) held a meeting at Jammu to discuss the tough law by virtue of which employees who will be under performing, involved in corruption, or have a tarnished image shall be forcibly retired in a particular age group or a service period. The meeting was chaired by Fayaz Ahmad Shabnum, President EJAC.

Speaking on the occasion Shabnum said that in the present world where concepts like dignity of labour and equal work, equal wages have become the slogan of the masses, this part of the world is experiencing a different scenario. He said that corruption, inefficiency, tarnished image are not a factor to be measured by age or years, it can be an attribute of some people at any point of time. Shabnum said that to every government, its employees are its limbs and the third world has shown much respect to the working class. We need to provide a healthy atmosphere to our employees to help them grow in every aspect. Threats and suppressions will only discourage them and lower their morale. He hoped that the good sense will prevail and the govt will revoke this order.

Handmade Tweed Being Revived Under World Bank Project

SRINAGAR- The making of handmade tweed is set to get a major impetus under the World Bank funded Jhelum Tawi Flood Recovery Project.

On his visit to the wool cluster at Bandipora, Director Handicrafts & Handloom, Kashmir Mehmoos Shah was informed about the holistic development of the wool cluster from skill upgradation to new product development by the domain experts namely Rang sutra Crafts India engaged by the Project Management Unit JTFRP.

The said organisation has a proven experience in creation of sustainable livelihoods in the craft sector. During interactions with the weavers undergoing skill upgradation trainings the Director was informed that the aim of the cluster development program is to create market driven products and link the weavers to the markets both at National and International Levels. During the visit the textile technologist Partha Roy from Rangsurta briefed the Director about the interventions in the weaving processes being incorporated during the trainings which will result in increasing the quality, look and feel of the tweed fabric being made by the weavers of the said cluster.

Director Handicrafts and Handloom Kashmir said that Kashmir is the land of unbeatable artisan work and the crafts of Kashmir need no introduction globally. He stressed upon the officers associated with the project to expose the artisans to markets round the globe. The Director was informed that the cluster will be registered as a Producer Company with the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Government of India so as to ensure ownership to each artisan associated with the craft in the cluster besides ensuring long lasting sustenance of the project.

During the course of his visit, he interacted with different artisans linked with the cluster and took their feedback and suggestions. The Director Handicrafts and Handloom expressed his satisfaction with the overall functioning of the cluster. He was also accompanied by the officers related to the project.

Govt Asks JKSSB To Withdraw 211 Posts Of Horticulture Technician Class-IV

SRINAGAR: The authorities have asked the JKSSB to withdraw 211 posts of class 4th of horticulture technicians in Jammu.

In an order, under secretary to the government, Farooq Ahmad Wani has written to secretary JKSSB, Jammu to withdraw 211 posts of horticulture technician posts.

"I am directed to refer you to this department's letter No. Horti/56/2017 dated 14.01.2021 and convey the withdrawal of all the 211 posts of Horticulture Technician Grade-IV, advertised by J&K Service Selection Board vide Advertisement No. 01 of 2021 dated 03.02.2021," the order reads. (KNS)

DC Inspects Four Laning Work On NH-44, Visits DH, GDC Ramban

RAMBAN: Deputy Commissioner, Ramban, Mussarat Islam today inspected progress of four-laning works on Nashri to Banihal stretch of Jammu-Srinagar National Highway (NH44).

During the visit, Additional Deputy Commissioner, (Collector Land Acquisition NHW), Harbans Lal, and Project Director NHAI Parshotam Kumar were also present.

The ADC briefed the DC in detail about the removal of structures and trees coming in the alignment on 25 KM Nashri to Ramban stretch barring Dhalwas, where structures standing along RoW, adjacent to the mosque shall be removed /relocated shortly. He further informed that the land acquisition process on 45 KM Ramban to Banihal stretch is over and the possession of the land has been handed over to NHAI.

He said all structures and trees standing on the acquired land and along the road have been removed, except four structures in Ramssoo due to court cases. "The four-laning work is in progress on the stretch and NHAI has been urged to increase the pace of work in a planned way", the ADC added.

The ADC further informed that the Banihal-Qazigund tunnel work is in its final stage and shall be ready for commissioning soon. The work of fly-over bridges in Ramban and Banihal was also reviewed and construction companies were instructed to expedite the same in a planned way.

Meanwhile, Deputy Commissioner constituted Sub Division level committees, headed by concerned SDMs, to monitor works of construction and to resolve issues of public as well as construction companies. The DC also visited District Hospital Ramban and took stock of healthcare facilities being provided to patients.

NEWS MAKERS

Placement Drive For Students Held At Budgam



pass out students participated in the fair and applied for various jobs available.

The DC on the occasion urged the youth to come forward and make full use of the placement drive. He said that the government employment is shrinking day by day and has very limited scope of job opportunities. He reiterated that the private sector has huge potential to absorb many unemployed youth and give ample opportunities to build carriers of thousands of students.

He said the youth, once successful as entrepreneurs will provide jobs to others rather than being job seekers. The DC further said that placement drive initiatives shall continue to be held in future as well. Meanwhile, Bajaj Allianz and KTM actively participated in the programme. The day-long placement drive was also attended by CPO Budgam, Rafiq Ahmad, Assistant Director Employment, Miss Hafsa and other concerned.

BUDGAM: The District Employment and Counseling Centre (DE&CC) Budgam in collaboration with District Administration Budgam today conducted a Job fair for Diploma and ITI pass outs under Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) at New Conference Hall, here.

The Job fair was organised under the chairmanship of District Development Commissioner (DDC) Budgam, Shahbaz Ahmed Mirza and hundreds of Diploma and ITI

Sachin Kumar Assumes Charge As DC Shopian

SHOPIAN: Sachin Kumar Vaish today assumed the charge as Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shopian.

Soon after assuming the charge, the DC took an introductory meeting of district officers and sub-ordinate staff in his office chamber.

While addressing the meeting, the DC urged upon the officers and field functionaries to work with added dedication and honesty so that the present developmental scenario of the district is carried to its higher levels.

He sought co-operation from them to take the development profile of the district to new heights.

He said our thrust should be monitoring developmental works and welfare programmes at grassroots level adding that the district is famous and has also historical importance. He said that resolution of the public issues should be the priority of the District Administration.

Earlier, Additional Deputy Commissioner while welcoming the DC assured of all possible support for smooth functioning of the district.

Additional Deputy Commissioner, Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Assistant Director Planning and other officers besides sub-ordinate staff were present on the occasion.

از نیابت چندوسه نائب تحصیلدار ایکڑ کیٹو مجسٹریٹ درجہ اول

عنوان: مشن محمد دین گوگر پڑ و سلطان احمد گوگر پڑ و پیران فاروق احمد گوگر پڑ ساکر طر برادر عطائی

ST سرٹیفیکٹ تحت 279 SRO

ایشیاد برادر آگاشی بر فاض و عام

مقابلہ مندرجہ عنوان العدر میں درخواست سائل دفتر پڑا میں ذرے کاروائی ہے اس نسبت پڑاری حلقہ سے رہا ہٹ بشمول مطلوبہ تقوالات ریکارڈ طلب کے لئے جس سے جہاں ہوتا ہے کہ سائل ساکر متبع طر کا سکونت دار ہے کہہ نہ کی سالانہ آمدنی مبلغ 17000 روپے تک ہے کہہ نہ پڑیل افراد پر مشتمل ہے

محمد دین گوگر پڑ 60 سال
مسماہ فانی زبیر محمد دین گھریلا کام 58
فاروق احمد گوگر پڑ 36 مزدوری
مسماہ سعدہ بیگم زبیر فاروق احمد گھریلا کام 35
عابدہ فاروق پڑ زبیر تعلیم 08
ریحانہ فاروق پڑ زبیر تعلیم 06
سلطان فاروق پڑ زبیر تعلیم 04
عبدان فاروق پڑ زبیر تعلیم 01
ذیر احمد زبیر تعلیم 20

اسکے علاوہ کوئی بھی افراد کہہ نہیں بتلا گیا ہے سرٹیفیکٹ ذرے بحث ادا کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص یا انھیں کو کوئی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ اپنا عذر یا اعتراض ساتھ ہی کے ادر پیش کریں۔ عید گزرنے کے بعد کوئی عذر یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔

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Development vs Heritage

A Case for Continuing with Tongas

SHAKIR MALIK

Kashmir's future is wedded with tourism. And, if you 'modernise' everything at the cost of heritage, all you are left with is pollution, not just air pollution, but cultural pollution.

Whenever I would hear and read about Kashmir's Sopore, a very pristine and green picture would spontaneously unfurl in my head. In the year 2018, I was fortunate to get to work there.

However, the first impression that I got there was of polluted air: endless dust swirling around vehicles, with women, men, children and all walking like silhouettes in near darkness. Roadsides devoid of sidewalks were powdered with dust, and probably because of that, people would walk and vehicles would ply side by side on the same although macadamized but narrow worn out road, making short traffic jams almost a daily ritual. The inner streets of newer colonies remained squalid in the winter, so much so that the jeans that one wore for the day would become too dirty to take off in your room.

The drains carrying sewerage were not covered making houseflies breed with greed. And Sopore lacking any dump yard or Sanitary landfill was so much strewn with garbage and filth that by that yardstick any charm or fame associated with its historical stature fell apart in front of my eyes, in shreds of desolation.

Some people told me Sopore is known as Chota London, which after seeing its unplanned growth makes the sobriquet look like a joke. But I am pretty sure, in the past, this comparison would have been drawn out wisely. It might be the case that there has been little positive involvement of the government in its developmental itinerary.

Why I started underscoring the plethora of problems before addressing the main point is because you can't scapegoat tonga drivers instead of addressing core developmental challenges that Kashmir's apple town faces.

Cart-drivers mostly belong to the economically weaker section of the society. By banning them, you are rendering many underprivileged people unemployed. A healthy policy initiative would be to provide them with

jobs before shutting them down. Okay, a libertarian might say cart-drivers are just unlucky sacrificial goats — a roadblock to development and that banning them will open up roads and parking lots. "Let's not care about their employment"

However, when tongas are made invisible, there is a larger interest at stake here, that is preservation of cultural heritage. Kashmir's future is wedded with tourism. And, if you 'modernise' everything at the cost of heritage, all you are left with is pollution, not just air pollution, but cultural pollution. And tongas are part of Kashmiri cultural heritage. Apart from the general life-style of people and the colours of the market, tongas are what made Sopore special to me. Krakow city, the second largest city of Poland attracts hordes of tourists not because of absence of tongas, but preservation of its historical aura. Cart drivers are not deemed a nuisance there, but a part of history.

There is an old adage in Kashmiri, 'Kayanladas wanawukh power kar band, tym doup toyi kariw ache bandh.' Because turning off the lights would have required effort, something that the listless person can't afford, in this case that effort means building infrastructure, that is widening roads, building metros wherever feasible, introducing cable-cars and building a robust public-transport mechanism. Closing your eyes, a listless attitude, would mean telling tonga drivers to vacate.

If traffic jam and occupation of parking lots is a problem caused by tongas, let me propose one more alternative, and it won't take long-term developmental work. If you lack funds and you want to lessen the traffic jam that is presumably caused by slow tongas, the best way that is recommended everywhere in the world to reduce traffic is to ensure a robust public transport system and discourage the use of personal cars. It not only reduces jams, but also preserves the environment and reinforces social cohesion, so after public transport is kicking, hop on the public vehicle and give up pollution-prone personal cars,

or hop on the non-polluting tonga instead.

In my opinion, the administration should have incentivized using tongas. Not only this, it should have gone a step further, and strengthened the public transport system and urged people to use it as much as possible. But that would need some money and effort: buying brand-new buses, providing employment to new drivers, subsidizing the fares, etc. Tonga drivers are banned because they constitute low-hanging fruit.

Another nuisance related to horse-carts is thought to be the foul smell. I have heard it from many people who have been to Pahalgam that they think that smell to be its indispensable aspect. They can't feel Pahalgam without that smell. By the way, we are not talking about some stinky sewer here. Probably, you might end up liking the smell after forgetting for a moment that it emanates from horse-shit.

Public policy is formulated keeping in mind the larger public interest rather than somebody's personal tastes. Given the fragile ecology and tourist friendliness of Kashmir, the first priority on the cost-benefit scale should be preservation of the environment. And Tongas serve that purpose.

Here, I think the administration should also focus on preservation of animal rights as well. See to it that the horses are fed adequately, advise tonga drivers not to whip them and not to overload them etc. So, if you bring back tonga drivers, you restore their economic rights. And if you let Tongas ply, you take care of the environment.

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

It Is Time To End Extractive Tourism

The pandemic presents us with a great opportunity to do away with the destructive mass tourism industry.

VIJAY KOLINJIVADI

As we draw closer to the anniversary of the World Health Organization declaring the COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic, many are hopeful that the vaccine roll-out will help us return to our pre-pandemic "normal". For a certain privileged group of people, this would mean getting back the "freedom" to travel anywhere they want.

Indeed, their perceived "right" to holiday in far-away places where tourists are provided with all comforts and freedoms to do as they please has become almost sacrosanct. This has as much to do with privilege, as it has with the way capitalism exploits labour.

As wages remain stagnant, productivity demands increase and working hours get longer, capitalist societies are creating a middle class that sees tourism as a form of momentary escape from its stressful reality.

Capitalist forces have convinced the increasingly overworked middle-class labour force in the West and elsewhere that to "relax", it needs a vacation abroad with all comforts provided. As a result, it is willing to pay significant sums of money to be mass transported south and east to enjoy a week of leisure at the expense of local communities who suffer from the abuse of their land and resources by tourism corporations and their local partners.

Quite literally, whole relationships between people, and between people and nature are shaped by the need to allow the paying tourist customer to do and be whatever they desire. It is a vicious circle where capitalist labour exploitation, consumerism and wealth extraction work to produce an incredibly destructive kind of mass tourism.

If there was ever a time to reconsider the tourism industry, it would be now. The COVID-19 pandemic offers us the unique opportunity to reflect on the ugly reality behind our exotic vacations and break the cycle of exploitation. This would take not only reforming the tourist industry but also overhauling our labour systems.

The many harms of extractive tourism

The tourism industry, and the governments that welcome foreign revenue, thrive on the argument that local livelihoods depend on tourism and insinuate that millions of people will be reduced to abject poverty without it. But a closer examination of how large-scale tourism clusters function reveals who the true winners and losers of mass tourism are.

Like a gold rush to the latest discovery of untapped ores, a panoply of hotel chains, foreign tour operators, online booking agencies, airlines, real estate speculators and multinational construction companies quickly rush to capitalise on any curiosity that a visitor might have towards any site of historical or natural value.

Examples of attraction sites becoming mining pits for an extractive tourism industry abound. The historical centres of cities like Amsterdam, Marrakech, Barcelona, Krakow, Yogyakarta, Cusco and Kyoto have turned into giant open-air museums, overwhelmed by crowds of tourists flocking to kitsch souvenir shops, cheap hotels and fast-food restaurants. Many long-time residents of these cities have been forced out of their homes and urban communities due to rising property values and tourism-induced gentrification. Those who remain suffer from the enormous strain that the crowds of tourists put on the local infrastructure.



Elsewhere, rare and beautiful landscapes of natural or cultural heritage like the beaches of Thailand, wildlife hotspots like the Maasai Mara in Kenya, or the historical site of Machu Picchu in Peru are depopulated, fenced off through preservation laws, and repopulated with a globalised architecture of tour agencies, airline companies, and agribusiness-controlled supply chains and their local subsidiaries required to funnel people to the valued sites as quickly and as comfortably as possible.

Government officials acquiesce to mega-tourism projects due to large kickbacks and pass regulations to facilitate them under the promises of economic growth. These actions all too often supersede the sovereignty of communities in terms of their traditions and historical relations to sites of historical or natural significance. As a result, local people often lose control of their land and community development and see little benefit from employment in exploitative low-paying jobs with long hours and minimal or no provision of social benefits.

Instead, most of the wealth extracted from the tourist "mine site" flows into multinational conglomerates which own travel agencies, hotels, airlines, cruise ships and even local commercial retail shops and whose tentacles extend to major tourist hotspots across the world.

Pandemic inequality

The more wealth and power large multinationals amass, the less accountability they face not only for labour exploitation, but also for the massive environmental damage they cause in the form of a high carbon footprint, water contamination and overuse, deforestation and coastal destruction. Tourism accounts for eight percent of global greenhouse gas emissions or around 4.5 gigatonnes of carbon dioxide.

The pandemic has already triggered wide-ranging public conversation about Green New Deals, divestment from fossil fuels and just green transitions. It offers a rare and profound opportunity for rethinking whole sectors of the economy, from healthcare to education and agriculture, to undo and rechart how they operate given the perverse inequalities that the pandemic has exposed.

But for the tourism industry, as one of the world's largest economic sectors, time is running short to make such profound changes. As wealthy Westerners get vaccinated first and are convinced by flawed "win-win" narratives of relieving their "travel itch" and at the same time supporting struggling tourism enterprises, old and new forms of inequality will quickly get entrenched.

In countries that will likely receive and distribute vaccines much later, a new form of "vaccine apartheid" is set to emerge. Privileged vaccinated tourists will feel safe enough to travel to these countries but will still pose a risk to local people, as vaccines are not known to prevent inoculated individuals from transmitting the virus. Unvaccinated local workers would be forced by financial need to take up exploitative jobs in the tourism sector to service foreigners and thus face the risk of contracting COVID-19, continuing to circulate the virus within working-class communities in the South.

Until a significant proportion of the global population is vaccinated, considerable precautionary measures are required to protect the labour force in tourist hotspots. However, governments eager to restart the engines of the tourism industry and cash-strapped families may not see this as a priority.

Thus, the return to "normal" in the tourism sector does not only mean a return to the old exploitative and extractive practices but also poses a deadly prospect for the struggling host communities.

Labour and cultural sovereignty

So what can we do to stop the extractive tourism industry from worsening the effects of the pandemic? We can act to curb the demand for escapist mass tourism and give control over historical and natural sites back to the communities they belong to.

We should follow the example of social movements like La Via Campesina, which are calling for food sovereignty, demanding that food production be controlled through democratic processes by those who directly work the land. Likewise, we should call for sovereignty in labour and leisure.

We have to break the vicious cycle of labour ex-

ploitation that forces the middle classes of more privileged countries to seek relief through cheap, mass tourism. For that to happen, workers have to collectively determine what level of productivity is deemed humane and acceptable. Labour sovereignty implies that workers take control over their own productivity, which has to be a fundamental part of an economy that prioritises regeneration and repair over growth.

The current pandemic is a great opportunity to translate increased efficiencies from transitions to virtual working environments in certain sectors into more leisure time for workers. It is also the time to challenge abusive practices in the tourist industry to ensure someone's leisure does not translate into someone else's exploitation.

To protect workers from host communities, we also have to advocate for cultural sovereignty in the tourism sector. This requires that the communities adjacent to sites of cultural heritage or natural beauty have the autonomy to collectively and democratically determine how to manage these special places. Tourism can remain an important source of revenue for these communities, but control over how it is developed and regulated has to remain in their hands.

Cultural sovereignty implies a tourism industry that does not sell tradition, heritage or natural beauty to the highest bidding multinational conglomerate, regardless of whether they masquerade as promoting "ecotourism" or not. Instead, it prioritises equitable and just distribution of benefits from tourism and minimises negative impacts of tourist activity.

The labour and cultural sovereignties have to go hand in hand with shifting the global culture of consumption towards a recognition of sufficiency or "enoughness" that helps avoid the destructive trajectory of pre-pandemic life. Ultimately, addressing the damage of global mass tourism requires taking stricter climate action against the aviation industry and encouraging more domestic and regional leisure travel. Introducing more fuel-efficient aeroplanes would simply reduce costs and increase demand. The urgency required to scale back emissions before 2030 means flying has to be phased out. The pandemic grounded flights; responding to climate change demands the same.

The post-pandemic world must continue to keep air travel reserved for essential purposes, such as family reunification and repatriation. This is the only way to transition to a post-pandemic tourism sector that makes a serious effort to meet commitments to the Paris Agreement's goals.

These different forms of affording sovereignty around the tourism sector offer a clear strategy to re-think travel in a post-pandemic world and to prevent the reproduction of new injustices in light of the coming "vaccine apartheid". They build upon the unique moment that the pandemic has offered to structurally transform the tourism industry in a way that puts the autonomy of all workers first in demanding culturally sensitive, climate responsible, and equitable and manageable working conditions.

Together these strategies disincentivise the "work hard, play hard" mantra of capital that is ultimately a zero-sum game, generating enormous inequality and leading us to a destructive future.

The views expressed in this article are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect Al Jazeera's editorial stance.
Al Jazeera

Fat Phobia and Diet Culture

DANIA SHEIKH

Capitalism takes advantage of these insecurities that are engendered especially among girls. Brands capitalize on this dissatisfaction and exploit our sentiments to expand their markets and aggrandize their profit. They come up with myriad products ranging from fat loss pills to fairness creams which only seem to validate these distorted notions of beauty and exacerbates the existing insecurities.



Feminism in India

The pandemic and the subsequent lockdown that was imposed altered our lives in several ways. As the covid cases surged, stringent lockdowns were imposed across the world, and quarantine became the new necessity. It was an unprecedented event and people took to several new activities and hobbies to keep themselves engaged. Social media was flooded with aesthetic pictures of dalgona coffee and quarantine bakes. There was an increase in social media consumption as people had a lot of free time on their hands. Memes were circulated to get through the monotony that was brought about by the lockdown and one particular meme which caught everyone's attention was the 'Barbie charlie' meme, it mockingly implied how our appearances would drastically change because of all the quarantine cooking, baking and immobility during the lockdown. While such memes might seem harmless but they are extremely problematic and can have grave repercussions on our physical and mental health. These memes perpetuate fatphobia and make us believe that weight gain is something that we must dread.

While these memes are directed towards everyone regardless of their age and gender but women especially are targeted. Women suffer this double jeopardy of living in a patriarchal and capitalistic society.

From quite early on in their lives women are indoctrinated with the socially constructed notions of beauty and are told that it is a prerequisite for a happy life. Their worth is reduced to how they look, they are made to derive their confidence from their looks

and their physique. Young girls begin to idealize the barbies they play with, the female actors they see on television, and the mannequins they see in stores.

Exposure to such unrealistic and homogenous standards of beauty in the formative years of children has grave repercussions for their physical and mental well-being. Studies have shown that children who are not confident about their physical appearances lag behind their peers in academics and extra circular activities. A recent study reveals that 40-60% of elementary school-aged girls are dissatisfied with their weight and anxious about putting on weight.

Capitalism takes advantage of these insecurities that are engendered especially among girls. Brands capitalize on this dissatisfaction and exploit our sentiments to expand their markets and aggrandize their profit. They come up with myriad products ranging from fat loss pills to fairness creams which only seem to validate these distorted notions of beauty and exacerbates the existing insecurities.

'Fat-phobia is defined as the 'irrational fear of, aversion to or discrimination against, obesity or people with obesity. Fat-phobia establishes the need for diet culture, and the consequences this unhealthy obsession with diet culture has are frightening. It ruins a person's relationship with one's body and with food. Eating disorders like Anorexia nervosa, Bulimia nervosa, and binge eating are at an all-time high. Anorexia Nervosa mortality rate supersedes that of depression or any other psychiatric illness. Over the years these habits get so solidified that it becomes extremely difficult to rectify these habits,

and these eating disorders if left untreated lead to suicides, deaths due to malnutrition, and cardiovascular diseases. A study reveals that every 62 minutes someone dies as a direct result of an eating disorder. It is, therefore, necessary to dismantle these toxic and misleading notions of what constitutes health and beauty.

The US weight loss market is worth a whopping \$72 billion, diet culture is so well marketed that it clouds our rationality and demands to be followed. People feel obligated to make these 'unhealthy healthy' choices.

The pandemic has exacerbated fat-phobia and the obsession with clean eating. There is an urgent need to apprise people about what being healthy means, healthy is not a size, and more importantly healthy looks different on different bodies, it cannot be gauged by a weighing scale. The recent body positivity movements by plus-size models have been successful in helping people to embrace their bodies and to overcome their fears of eating.

Eating disorders are lethal, they can wreak a person's physical and mental health and are emotionally draining, if not taken into account and not given the attention it requires, it could become the next epidemic. Abandoning a diet culture should not translate into consuming inordinate amounts of junk and processed food either, healthy choices are choices that make you energetic and enable you to live a happier life.

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Bold And Body Positive

Women can build positive body image by controlling what they view on social media

RACHEL COHEN, AMY SLATER AND
JASMINE FARDOULY

Social media use is often described as being problematic for mental health and body image. But is all social media use bad?

Our new research shows that viewing body positive Instagram content may actually improve women's body image, at least in the short term.

With more awareness, social media users might be able to curate a social media environment that promotes positive body image by unfollowing or blocking idealised accounts, and following more body positive accounts – possibly including more Celeste Barbour – on Instagram.

Chasing 'the ideal'

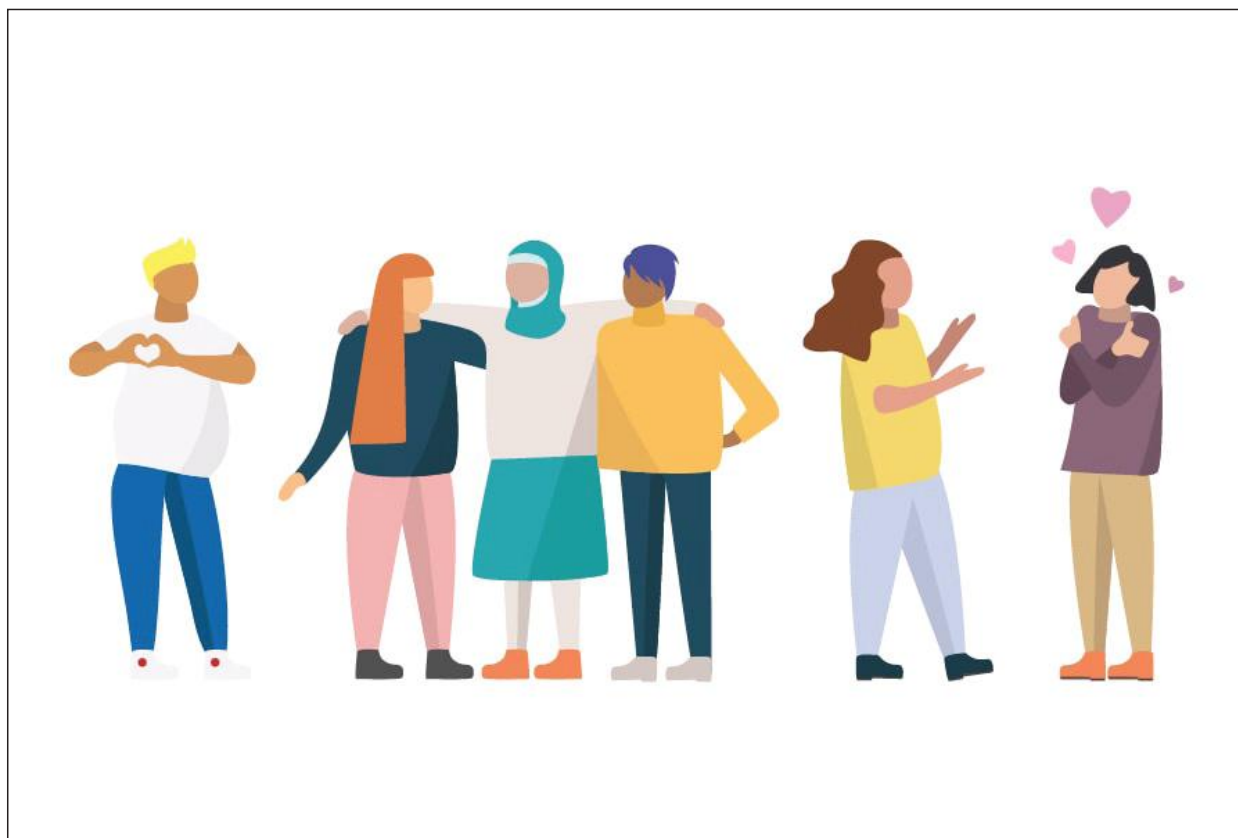
Body image concerns are common among young women and can have serious negative consequences. Most young women use social media daily, and research suggests that viewing idealised appearance-focused content is associated with poorer body image.

That is, following accounts like the Kardashians/Jenners, fitspiration, or influencers and friends posting glamorous bikini shots, is associated with women being more preoccupied with their appearance and less satisfied with their own bodies. As a result, women may engage in unhealthy dieting or exercise strategies to try and achieve "the ideal" they see in their social media feeds.

The rise of BoPo

Recently, a new trend has emerged on social media called "body positivity" (or "BoPo").

Body positivity aims to challenge narrow beauty ideals and encourage acceptance and appreciation of bodies of all shapes, sizes, and appearances. BoPo accounts such as @bodyposipanda (with over 1 million followers), have become particularly popular on Instagram.



A search for the hashtag #bodypositive returns almost 9 million posts, and #effyourbeautystandards (popularised by body positive activist Tess Holiday) generates almost 4 million posts.

A recent content analysis of body positive content on Instagram shows that these posts do indeed depict a broad range of body sizes and appearances. Content includes:

- selfies of women proudly displaying their belly rolls and cellulite
- before and after photos of "real" vs "edited" bodies, encouraging awareness of the common use of Photo-shop on Instagram
- self-compassion quotes
- images focusing on body function-

With more awareness, social media users might be able to curate a social media environment that promotes positive body image by unfollowing or blocking idealised accounts, and following more body positive accounts

ality (what the body can do rather than what it looks like).

But do women feel better?

Although body positive content is intended to make women feel better about their appearance, there had been no research confirming whether this was actually the case.

In our new study, 195 young women (18-30 years old) viewed either body positive content, idealised content with thin women, or appearance-neutral content taken from Instagram.

Before and after viewing this content we asked women to rate their mood, body satisfaction, and the extent to which they focused on their appearance (known as self-objectification).

We found that brief exposure to body positive Instagram posts resulted in improved body image and mood in young women, compared to idealised and appearance-neutral posts.

Women who viewed body positive posts felt more satisfied with their bodies, were more appreciative of the unique functions and health of their bodies, and had more positive mood. In contrast, those who viewed idealised Instagram posts had poorer body image and mood.

Although this study found positive results for body image, it also showed that body positive content can make women more focused on their physical appearance over other aspects of themselves.

This has been a criticism of body positive accounts in the past, with some suggesting that it may be better to focus on aspects of the self that are unrelated to physical appearance in order to improve well-being.

We need more research to determine the effects of body positive content over time and to explore what types of posts are more helpful than others.

Curate your own environment

Given the popularity of social media among young women, we need to understand the type of use that may be helpful or harmful for body image. Unlike traditional media formats (like magazines and television), social media users are active content creators and have agency in what they post and view.

Interestingly, another recent study found that showing women humorous, parody Instagram content (@celestebarber) resulted in improved body image and positive mood, compared to viewing traditional thin celebrity posts.

So, maybe social media is not necessarily all bad? Rather, we need to be more mindful of the content we are consuming. Considered choices about who we follow, and the messages they promote, might actually help us feel better.

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 02 سال

29 Lakh PCs Shipped In India In Q4: Dell Leads, Followed By HP, Lenovo, Acer



Agencies

Driven by the demand from e-learning and remote working, the India traditional PC market inclusive of desktops, notebooks, and workstations grew 27 per cent year-over-year to hit 29 lakh shipments in the fourth quarter of 2020,

the International Data Corporation (IDC) said on Thursday.

Dell Technologies replaced HP in the top position in the overall PC market, as its shipments grew 57.1 per cent YoY in the October-December quarter, showed the data from IDC. Worldwide Quarterly Personal Computing Device Tracker.

Role Of Narayan Murthy Requires Investigation: CAIT



Agencies

NEW DELHI: Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) has asked Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal to conduct an investigation into the role of Amazon supplier, Cloudtail India owned by N.R. Narayan Murthy.

CAIT in a letter to Goyal has sought a point wise investigation including mockery of the law by Cloudtail India Limited and Appario Retail (P) Limited, joint ventures with Amazon India Limited.

"In this context, we reiterate that not only Amazon, its joint ventures in India too are hand in glove and knowingly helping it desecrating our country's rule of law. It is also deeply worrying that some banks are colluding with Amazon by helping it keep prices lower than the market through exclusive policies giving cashback," CAIT said.

"We draw your kind attention towards Cloudtail India (P) Limited, a company owned by Sh Narayan Murthy, Appario Retail (P) Limited, owned by Mr. Ashok Patni, Darshita EteDarshita Mobiles, STPL-Green Mobiles and Rocket Commerce", CAIT said.

It added that these together control 80% of business on Amazon marketplace. Though according to law and policies, the marketplace (Amazon) should not have relation or control over the retailer (eg Cloudtail), these retail companies are fully controlled by Amazon. Thus, Amazon's "marketplace" narrative is a mere myth, CAIT said.

"In Cloudtail and its holding company, Prione Business Services, it is no coincidence that

the managing directors, CFOs, key persons are (so-called) former employees of Amazon. Even the majority of board members of Cloudtail are (so-called) former employees of Amazon. No surprises that Sh Murthy owns 76 per cent in Cloudtail (and Prione owns 100 per cent of Cloudtail) yet the board of directors have Amazon in majority. To reiterate, Cloudtail and Prione are managed and operated by Amazon via (so-called) former employees", CAIT said.

In Cloudtail and its holding company, Prione Business Services, MD, CFOs, senior employees are all (so-called) former employees of Amazon. Even the Board of Cloudtail is a mélange of present and (so-called) former employees of Amazon, including Amit Agarwal, Amazon; Sandeep Varaganti, MD, former Amazon employee; Rajesh Jindal, MD, former Amazon employee; Komal Patwari, Prione legal counsel; Amit Ranade, Catamaran; Nithyanandan R (former Infosys Global Counsel), Catamaran; Arjun Narayanswamy, Catamaran; Sheetal Bhat, Catamaran, whereas the Board of Cloudtail include S/Shri Rajesh Jindal, MD, Prione a former Amazon employee; Komal Patwari, Prione legal counsel; Sumit Sahay, MD; Cloudtail, former Director of Category Leadership, Amazon; Amit Ranade, Catamaran; and Nithyanandan R (former Infosys Global Counsel), Catamaran, CAIT said.

"The above structure lays bare the brazenness and intent of Amazon. Even though Murthy holds the majority of shares, he has allowed the (so-called) former employees of Amazon on the driver's seat of both Cloudtail and Prione. This points to complicity of Murthy and possible financial contributions by Amazon, making Murthy and each of the named individuals wilful "partners in crime." The role of Murthy requires appropriate investigation," CAIT said.

Fuel Prices Hiked For 11Th Consecutive Day; Petrol Crosses Rs-90 Mark In Delhi

Agencies

Petrol and diesel prices touched new highs across the country on Friday after oil marketing companies (OMCs) increased the rates for the 11th consecutive day.

According to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers, petrol price was increased by 31 paise, while diesel was hiked by 33 paise in Delhi.

With this increase, petrol is now priced at Rs 90.19 a litre



and diesel at Rs 80.60 a litre in the national capital.

RBI Issues Master Direction To Ensure Security Of Digital Payments

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

The Reserve Bank on Thursday came out with a Master Direction for banks and card-issuing entities laying down common minimum standards to ensure security of digital payments.

The Master Direction lays down guidelines for internet banking, mobile payments, card payments, customer protection and grievance redressal mechanism.

"In view of the proliferation of cyber-attacks and their potential consequences, regulated entities should implement, except where explicitly permitted/ relaxed, multi-factor authentication for payments through electronic modes and fund transfers, including cash withdrawals from ATMs/ micro-ATMs/ business correspondents, through digital payment applications," it said.

The provisions of these directions would apply to the Regulated Entities (REs)-- Scheduled Commercial Banks, Small Finance Banks, Payments Banks; and Credit card issuing NBFCs.

Such a move is expected to improve the security of digital payment channels and also convenience for users. These directions contain requirements for robust governance, implementation and monitoring of certain minimum standards on common security controls for channels like internet and mobile banking, card payments, etc.

The robust protocol will help in



checking frequent outages and disruption while providing secure environment of digital transaction.

The RBI in December temporarily barred largest private sector lender HDFC Bank from selling new credit cards or launching new digital banking initiatives, taking a serious view of service outages at the systemically important bank over the last two years. The digital banking app of the country's largest lender SBI was also facing service outages.

The Master Direction provides necessary guidelines for the Regulated Entities to set up a robust governance structure and implement common minimum standards of security controls for digital payment products and services and the guidelines are technology and platform agnostic and shall create an enhanced and enabling environment for customers to use digital payment products in a more safe and secure manner, it said.

It further said that entities would incorporate secure, safe and responsible usage guidelines and training materials for end-users within the digital payment applications.

"They shall also make it mandatory (i.e. not providing any option to circumvent/ avoid the material) for the consumer to go through secure usage guidelines (even in the consumer's preferred language) while obtaining and recording confirmation during the on-boarding procedure in the first instance and first use after each update of the digital payment application or after major updates to secure and safe usage guidelines," it said.

REs would adhere to extant instructions, updated from time to time, to put in place systems for online dispute resolution for resolving disputes and grievances of customers pertaining to digital payments, it said.

On public awareness, it said, financial institutions should inform about types of threats and attacks used against the consumers while using digital payment products and precautionary measures to safeguard against the same.

"Customers shall be cautioned against commonly known threats in recent times like phishing, vishing, reverse-phishing, remote access of mobile devices and educated to secure and safeguard their account details, credentials, PIN, card details, devices, etc," it said.

With regard to mobile apps, it asked to deactivate the older application versions in a phased but time-bound manner not exceeding six months from the date of release of newer version.

UK Supreme Court Rules Uber Drivers Are Workers, Not Self-Employed

Agencies

LONDON: Britain's top court on Friday ruled that ride-hailing giant Uber's drivers are entitled to workers' rights, in a judgement with huge implications for the "gig economy".

The Supreme Court ruling that the drivers were employees followed a years-long legal battle with the Silicon Valley taxi and delivery company.

"This has been a gruelling four-year legal battle for our members -- but it's ended in a historic win," said Mick Rix, from the GMB trade union.

The Supreme Court has upheld the decision of three previous courts, backing up what GMB has said all along: Uber drivers are workers and



entitled to breaks, holiday pay and minimum wage," he added.

Uber said it respected the court ruling.

Lower courts ruled in 2016, 2017 and 2018 in favour of a group of 20 Uber drivers who argue they were entitled to employee status given the length of time they had been working through the Uber app, and the way that the company oversaw their work.

Uber insisted that the drivers were self-employed since they choose their own hours and place of work, and often find passengers through rival apps.

The complainants can now ask an employment tribunal for compensation, and it could trigger further-reaching changes affecting all ride-hailing drivers.

"GMB will now consult with our Uber driver members over their forthcoming compensation claim," said Rix.

The ruling could equally affect other online platforms behind the so-called gig economy in Britain -- people doing short-term work without formal contracts, or working without guaranteed hours.

Telecom Subscriber Base Dips Marginally To 1,173 Million In December; Airtel, Jio Add New Customers

Agencies

Telecom subscriber base in the country fell marginally to 1,173 million in December 2020 with Vodafone Idea and state-run telecom firms BSNL and MTNL losing the bulk of their customers, according to data released by sector regulator Trai on Thursday.

Bharti Airtel and Reliance Jio were the only gainers of new customers in December.

"The number of telephone subscribers in India decreased from 1,175.27 million at the end of November 2020 to 1,173.83 million at the end of December 2020," Trai's telecom subscribers report for December 2020 said.

The mobile subscriber base declined to 1,153.77 million in December, from 1,155.2 million in November.

The dip in the subscribers base was mainly due to Vodafone Idea losing over 5.69 million mobile customers. It was followed by BSNL, which lost over 2,52,501 subscribers, and MTNL lost 6,442 customers.

Bharti Airtel led the mobile segment with an addition of over 4 million new customers and Reliance Jio added 4,78,917 new customers.

Bharti Airtel also led the market in active subscriber base. The company reported 97.1 per cent active subscribers in December. It was followed by Vodafone Idea with 90.26 per cent and Reliance Jio with 80.23 per cent.

Only about half of BSNL's mobile customer base was found to be active, while only less than one-fifth of MTNL customers were found active in December, according to the report.



Punjab reported the highest decline rate in mobile subscriber base of 3.34 per cent. It was followed by Mumbai, Madhya Pradesh, Delhi, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

The highest growth rate in mobile subscriber base was recorded in Jammu and Kashmir, followed by Assam, Himachal Pradesh, and northeastern region.

Reliance Jio led customer addition in the fixed line segment by gaining 2,35,317 customers while market leader BSNL continued to lose customers in the segment. Private players Bharti Airtel, Quadrant and Vodafone Idea also gained fixed line customers.

BSNL lost 2,55,909 fixed line customers, which was the biggest loss reported by a player in the segment in December. Its sister concern MTNL also lost 23,277 customers.

Broadband subscriber base in the country grew marginally to 747.41 million in December with wireless segment recording 724.46 million connections.

Reliance Jio maintained its lead in the broadband segment with 410.84 million customers. It was followed by Bharti Airtel with 179 million broadband subscribers, Vodafone Idea 120.77 million, BSNL 26.32 million and Atria Convergence 1.78 million connections in December 2020, the report said.

Dir Law Enforcement Reviews Supply Of Quality PP Chemicals



JAMMU: A meeting with Pesticide manufacturers/distributors was held today under the chairmanship of Director Law Enforcement, J & K. B. K. Chandan, here at Krishi Bhawan, Talab Tillo, to review the supply of quality Plant Protection Chemicals in Jammu Division.

Plant Protection Officer, Devinder Sharma; Agriculture Chemist, Surishtha Devi; Assistant Director Law Enforcement, Roshan Lal Bhagat; Assistant Agriculture Chemist, P. P. Singh and representatives of the PP Chemical manufacturing units, beside distributors of Jammu Division attended the meeting.

The Director Law Enforcement highlighted the importance of quality PP Chemicals in agriculture/ horticulture sector and instructed the representatives of manufacturing units to ensure the supply of good quality plant protection material to the farmers.

Interacting with the officers and pesticide company representatives, he called for strict adherence

to norms and laws mentioned in seed/ Fertilizer/ Pesticide Acts while manufacturing and supply of Agri-Inputs for the betterment of farming community.

Deliberating on various issues, the Plant Protection officer instructed the manufacturers and distributors to ensure timely filing of monthly sale returns as per format and avoid supply of products without quality test reports from the manufacturers. He stressed on display of price lists and to fulfill all other necessary parameters entrusted in Insecticide Act.

Later, Director Law Enforcement also chaired a review meeting and took stock of the functioning of Law enforcement Agency of the department.

Assistant Director Law Enforcement informed that 743 inspections under insecticide Act were conducted this year till date, while 589 seed samples and 106 fertilizer samples were lifted from different suppliers during this period.

NEWS MAKERS

Pakistan To Register Himalayan Pink Salt As Geographical Indications

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has decided to register Himalayan pink salt as Geographical Indications (GI) to prevent its unauthorised use by other countries.

A GI tag is a sign used on products that have a specific geographical origin and possess origin-based qualities and reputation in the region.

The precious salt is extracted from the Salt Range in Punjab which extends along the south of the Potohar Plateau and the north of the Jhelum River.

The decision was taken in a meeting with the Intellectual Property Organisation (IPO) Pakistan chaired by Commerce Adviser Razak Dawood. IPO Chairman Muejeb Ahmed Khan also attended the meeting, the Dawn newspaper reported on Friday.

An official announcement said that during the meeting, GI registration of products from various regions of Pakistan was discussed. The move aims to curb unauthorised use



of Pakistan's GI by other countries.

Pink Himalayan salt is said to be loaded with minerals that are beneficial to health.

Pakistan is fighting a case in the 27-member European Union against India's move to get Basmati rice registered as its product.

"We decided that, after registration of rice, pink salt from the Salt Range mountains of Pakistan will be registered as GI," the adviser said,

adding that this would encourage and motivate our producers to expand their business at a global level.

For this, a registrant would be designated with the approval of the Cabinet. Similarly, a list of other products on a priority basis will be pursued.

"We urge our business community to identify and inform IPO of other products that can be registered as GI in order to protect them for realising their export potential,"

Dawood said.

The commerce adviser expressed satisfaction at the progress made and reiterated the importance of GI registration for various products.

The registration of GI products would serve as a potential economic tool to promote and enhance national and international trade of Pakistan, Dawood said, adding speedy registration would protect GIs of Pakistan and eradicate the possibility of violation of these products, the adviser said.

He further advised the commerce ministry to double its efforts for registration of potential products as GI on a priority basis, it said.

In January, Pakistan received the GI tag for its Basmati, paving the way for creating a local registry for the particular strain of rice and making a case in the international market, as the country fights a case in the EU against India's move to get Basmati rice registered as its product. PTI

WhatsApp To Move Ahead With Privacy Update Despite Backlash



Facebook Inc's WhatsApp said on Thursday that it will go ahead with its controversial privacy policy update but will allow users to read it at "their own pace" and will also display a banner providing additional information. In January, the messaging platform informed users it was preparing a new privacy policy, under which it could share limited user data with Facebook and its group firms.

It sparked a global outcry and sent users to rival apps Telegram and Signal, among others, prompting WhatsApp to delay the new policy launch to May and to clarify the update was focused on allowing users to message with businesses and would not affect personal conversations.

In India, the messaging app's biggest user base, Facebook executives fielded questions from a parliamentary panel on the need for the changes, days after the country's technology ministry asked the messaging platform to withdraw them.

In its latest blog, WhatsApp said it would start reminding users to review and accept updates to keep using the messaging platform.

"We've also included more information to try and address concerns we're hearing," it added.

WhatsApp's announcement comes as parent Facebook moved to block all news content in Australia on Thursday, facing backlash from publishers and politicians, prompting a senior British lawmaker to label the move as an attempt to bully a democracy. Reuters

2 Cops Shot

Kashmir Observer. The two policemen collapsed near the shop in a pool of blood as the militant made a quick escape from the spot.

Parties Condemn Killings
Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir political leaders, including former chief ministers Omar Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti, condemned the killing of two unarmed policemen by a militant in an upmarket Srinagar area on Friday.

Abdullah, who is also the National Conference vice president, said the attack was “reprehensible” as the two policemen were unarmed and shot from behind.

“I condemn this act of militant violence & send my condolences to the families of these brave men,” he tweeted.

“What makes this attack even more reprehensible is that SgCT Mohammad Yousuf of Zurhama and Ct Suhail Ahmad of Logripora were unarmed & shot in the back. Senseless & cowardly at the same time,” he added.

PDP president Mehbooba condemned the attack saying the cycle of violence only begets misery.

“Condemn the killing of two policemen in the Baghat attack. My heart goes out to their families & loved ones. This cycle of violence serves no cause & begets only misery,” she tweeted.

People's Conference led by Sajad Lone also condemned the killing of the policemen.

“We strongly condemn the killing of two policemen in a dastardly and savage act of senseless violence at Baghat today. Our thoughts and prayers are with the families of Suhail Ahmad and Mohd Yusuf in this hour of grief,” the party said.

Local leaders of the BJP and the Congress also condemned the killings.

BJP leader Altaf Thakur termed the attack an act of cowardice. “There is no place for such cowardly acts and the attackers must be brought to book,” he said.

The two constables were on duty at Baghat on the high-security airport road when they were attacked. The militant, identified as Saqib, can be seen pulling out an assault rifle hidden inside his pheran', a loose over-garment worn during winters, and pumping bullets at them at close range. (PTI)

3 Militants, Cop

indiscriminately and also managed to keep some of the inmates as hostage. Due to darkness the operation was suspended however the cordon remained intact throughout night,” the police spokesperson said.

With the first light of the day on Friday, he said, the joint party tactfully evacuated the hostage and renewed surrender offer to the holed up militants. However, the militants, he said, refused the offer and fired indiscriminately on the join team which was retaliated resulting in the killing of all the three hiding militants.

The police spokesperson identified the trio as Suhail Sheikh alias Azeem of Turkwangam, Shahid Ahmad Dar alias Furkan of Sambora in Awantipora and Muddasir Ahmad Wagay of Chak Sangren, all affiliated with Al-Badr militant outfit.

“The bodies of all the three killed militants were retrieved from the site of encounter. Arms and ammunition including 2 AK rifles, 5 AK magazines, 96 AK rounds, a pistol, one pistol magazine and five rounds and other incriminating materials were recovered from the site of encounter,” he said.

He further said that all the recovered materials have been taken into case records for further investigation and to probe their complicity in other crimes.

Meanwhile, an SPO was killed in a gunfight with militants in central Kashmir's Budgam district, police said Friday.

According to the police spokesperson, police, army's 53RR and CRPF 79 battalion launched a joint cordon and search operation in village Zanigam Beerwah of Budgam. During the search operation, he said, the hiding militants fired indiscriminately upon the joint search party in which two police personnel- SPO Mohammad Altaf and Sg Ct Manzoor Ahmad received gunshot injuries.

“However, Mohammad Altaf succumbed to his injuries while another injured police personal has been shifted to hospital,” he said.

“However, taking advantage of the darkness, the militants believed to be two in number managed to escape in an injured condition from the spot. Efforts are on to track the militants,” he added.

Inspector General of Police, Kashmir Zone, Vijay Kumar said while the militants have managed to escape in injured condition, their blood trace has been followed to another village some two kilometres away from the encounter site. The area has been cordoned off, he said.

IGP Warns Mainstream

Kashmir also warned mainstream leaders with “necessary action” irrespective of stature if they according to him try “instigating people on fake news or rumours”.

“As regards summer, police is ready. Some ten days ago, we sat here with officers from across Kashmir and devised a strategy. What planning we have, we won't disclose it but we are ready,” Kumar said.

“We took into consideration the possibilities and what is required to be done has been worked out and we will handle it (situation),” he said, adding, “Leaders of some mainstream political parties are trying to instigate people on the basis of rumours. I want to request, appeal them, not to instigate people on the basis of fake news. No matter how big a leader, we have prepared dossiers and are bringing every activity on the record. If need arise we will take action also,” he said.

Referring to filing of case against under Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) against National Conference leader Hilal Lone, the IGP said: “You can see the video in which he says he will train the militants. If UAPA is not filed against him then against whom it should be filed.”

Regarding registering of cases under UAPA against family members of a youth killed recently in an “encounter” at Lawaypora Srinagar, the police officer said that the Act makes it clear cut if anybody raises anti-India, anti-country or any anti-state or talk about succession, Act will be invoked.

“If somebody takes out protest for demanding body, FIR will not be lodged but Act makes it clear cut if anybody raises anti-India, anti-country or any anti-state or talk about succession, Act will be invoked.”

Regarding Pazzalpora IED blast earlier this month, Kumar said a militant— Hidayatallah of Pulwama who was arrested in Jammu recently—has confessed that it was done by a militant from Bijbehara.

Major Reshuffle

holding key positions in the J&K Police. The process for deputation of several senior officers and return of some others from centre deputation to J&K Police, have been set into motion,” sources said.

The DGP is all set to join next posting as Central government on last Thursday cleared the empanelment of 29 Indian Police Service officers to hold Director General level or equivalent posts across the country in different departments.

These officers are from 1985, 1986, 1987 and 1988 batches. The empanelment of these officers for DG-level and equivalent posts is considered by a Selection Committee comprising the Principal Secretary to Prime Minister, the Cabinet Secretary, the Home Secretary, the Secretary (Personnel) and the Director of Intelligence

Bureau.

Jammu and Kashmir Director General of Police Dilbagh Singh, a 1987-batch Jammu and Kashmir cadre officer is also in the list.

The report said that Dr. B Srinivas (IPS) (JK-90) Commandant General, HG/CD/SDRF J&K with additional Charge Director Fire & Emergency Services and V. K. Singh (RR-87) DGP Prisons J&K are among the new faces for the new DGP of J&K UT.

The report further said that the new DGP is likely to assume office in the first week of March. It also added that Alok Pouri and Gareeb Dass will get new postings of IGP's in Jammu and Kashmir respectively.

Sources told KDC that the MHA have shortlisted the selection process of DGP and other officers holding key posts and the process will be finalized this week.

They said that district SSP's list is also being finalized in coming days adding that Srinagar, Bandipora, Ganderbal, Baramulla, Kathua, SSP Crime Branch Kashmir and SP's from Awantipora, Sopore, SP East and North of Srinagar city and SSP Cyber Crime Kashmir are among are likely to get transferred.

J&K's Intel Chief

and A K Choudhary have been promoted to DGP rank with effect from 01 January, 2021. Swain, who is ADGP, Criminal Investigation Department (CID), has held key positions in Jammu & Kashmir including district police chief of both Srinagar and Jammu districts-considered the most sensitive assignments in J&K. He also served as DIG of the State Vigilance Organisation, now known as the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB).

He returned from central deputation last year and was posted as ADGP CID.

The other IPS officer who was promoted is A.K. Choudhary(ADGP, Armed Police).

With this order, the number of DGP rank officers of J&K cadre which was merged with AGMUT has gone to eight, of which three are on central deputation.

The officers with DGP rank are Navin Aggarwal (central deputation), V.K. Singh (DGP, Prisons), SM Sahai (central deputation), Dilbagh Singh (DGP, J&K Police), Laltendu Mohanti (central deputation) and Dr. B. Srinivas (Commandant General, HG/CD & SDRF)

Wanted To Show

development and the dynamism in the grassroots democratic institutions following the successful conduct of the recent local polls, the Ministry of External Affairs said on Thursday.

The comments by MEA spokesperson Anurag Srivastava came at the end of the two-day visit to Jammu and Kashmir by the envoys.

Prior to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, two groups of envoys had visited Jammu and Kashmir.

“The idea behind facilitating these visits was to enable Foreign Heads of Missions to get a better sense of the ground situation and the prevailing normalcy in the union territory,” Srivastava said, replying to a media query.

“Subsequently, there has been an enhanced interest in the ongoing political and democratic process, including strengthening of grassroots democracy in Jammu and Kashmir,” he said.

“The present visit by the third group of Foreign Heads of Missions, is in this context, to allow foreign envoys to witness, first-hand, Jammu and Kashmir's march on the path of inclusive development and the dynamism in the grassroots democratic institutions,” he added.

The group comprised envoys from Bangladesh, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Cote d'Ivoire, Cuba, Estonia, Finland, European Union, Eritrea, France, Ghana, Italy, Ireland, Kyrgyz Republic, Malaysia, Malawi, Netherlands, Portugal, Senegal, Spain, Sweden and Tajikistan.

On Wednesday, the group visited Srinagar and Budgam.

“Yesterday, the group visited Magam in Budgam district of Central Kashmir and participated in 'Block Diwas', a grassroots level democratic outreach initiative organised regularly by the local administration in Jammu and Kashmir, as part of efforts to promote good governance,” Srivastava said.

“The interaction at the Block Diwas event provided the envoys an opportunity to hear directly from the general public and local level people's representatives on the functioning of empowered grassroots democratic institutions, devolution of power and developmental activities,” he added.

In Srinagar, Srivastava said they had a very fruitful interaction with the elected representatives of the Urban Local Bodies, District Development Councils (DDC) and the Block Development Councils (BDC) from all the districts of the Kashmir Division representing various regional and national political parties.

The group also visited the famous Hazratbal Shrine, the holiest and most revered mosque in Srinagar frequented by scores of locals for mass prayers.

Both in Srinagar and Jammu, the group interacted with representatives from civil society, including youth from different ethnic, religious and socio-economic communities, local business and political leaders, civil administration and representatives of mainstream media, Srivastava said.

“Today, the group of envoys visited the Chinar Corps headquarters in Srinagar, where they received a briefing on the prevailing security situation, including external threats, in Jammu and Kashmir and on the initiatives of the J-K Police relating to community policing and engagement,” he said.

The group also visited Jammu and met the Chief Justice of Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh, the J-K Lt Governor, other senior officials and members of the civil society.

“During the interaction, the Chief Justice highlighted the role played by the judiciary in enhancing access to the legal system for the common people in Jammu and Kashmir, including to preserve rule of law and protect the rights of the people,” the MEA spokesperson said.

India Rejects UN

belief, Ahmed Shaheed expressed concern over the revocation of Jammu and Kashmir's special status and enactment of new laws saying that the changes in the erst-while state risk undermining minorities' rights

Their comments were part of a press release published on the website of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

In response to media queries, External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Anurag Srivastava said the press release has been deliberately timed to coincide with the visit of a group of ambassadors to Jammu and Kashmir.

“The press release disregards the fact that Jammu and Kashmir is an integral and inalienable part of India and the decision of August 5, 2019, regarding the change in the status of the state of Jammu and Kashmir into a Union Territory of India was taken by the Parliament of India,” he said.

Srivastava said the press release failed to take into account the steps aimed at ending decades of discrimination, enshrining democracy at the grassroots level through successful conduct of local elections for the District Development Councils (DDC), and ensuring good governance.

“The press release has ignored the positive impact of extending laws applicable to the rest of India to Jammu and Kashmir, enabling the people of Jammu and Kashmir to enjoy the same rights as available to people in other

parts of India,” he said.

In the press release it was said the UN human rights experts are concerned over India's decision to end Jammu and Kashmir's autonomy and enact new laws that could curtail the previous level of political participation of Muslim and other minorities in the country.

“The loss of autonomy and the imposition of direct rule by the government in New Delhi suggests the people of Jammu and Kashmir no longer have their own government and have lost power to legislate or amend laws in the region to ensure the protection of their rights as minorities,” Varennes and Shaheed were quoted as saying in the release.

Srivastava said the press release calls into question the larger principles of objectivity and neutrality that the Special Rapporteurs are mandated by the Human Rights Council to adhere to.

“We expect the Special Rapporteurs (SRs) to develop a better understanding of the issues under their consideration before jumping to hasty conclusions and issuing press statements,” he said.

He further said, “It is deplorable that the SRs, after sharing their questionnaire on February 10, did not even wait for our response. Instead, they chose to release their inaccurate assumptions to the media.”

Let Neutral Int'l

and assess the situation on ground by free interaction with the Kashmiri people.

Foreign Office Spokesperson Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri made the comments during the weekly briefing here. Envoys from several countries, including member states of the European Union and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) visited Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday and Thursday to assess the ground situation. India has told Pakistan that it has no locus standi to comment on internal affairs of India, asserting that the union territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh have been and will remain an integral part of the country.

Chaudhri said that India should allow UN observers, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the OIC Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission, and the international media to visit Kashmir and assess the situation on ground by free interaction with the Kashmiri people.

To a question about India prohibiting the Sikh Yatris to visit Pakistan for religious purposes, he said Pakistan provides maximum facilitation to the Sikh Yatris from all over the world, including India, for visiting their religious sites in Pakistan.

We believe that India should also facilitate Sikh Yatris for visiting their religious sites in Pakistan, Chaudhri said.

On Wednesday, India denied permission to around 600 Sikh pilgrims to visit Pakistan, citing the security and COVID-19 situation in the country.

Chaudhri said that a workshop on Exchange of Good Practices in tackling COVID Pandemic and the Way Forward was organised for SAARC member countries plus Mauritius and Seychelles in a virtual format.

In line with its policy of enhanced regional and international cooperation in dealing with the pandemic, Pakistan is also participating in the said workshop and sharing its good practices with the regional countries, he said.

Responding to a question about Afghan peace process, the spokesperson said Pakistan desires that the developments made so far toward durable peace in Afghanistan should be preserved and built upon. He said all the stakeholders in Afghanistan should seize the opportunity of reaching a long-lasting peace.

He said Head of Afghan Massoud Foundation, Ahmad Wali Massoud, along with his delegation, who arrived in Islamabad on Tuesday, met Prime Minister Imran Khan who reiterated his longstanding position that there is no military solution to the conflict in Afghanistan and that a political solution is the only way forward.

The Prime Minister also underscored that all Afghan parties must work for reduction in violence leading to a ceasefire and conveyed that Pakistan would support whatever the Afghans agreed upon about the future of their country.

Chaudhri also said Prime Minister Khan is likely to visit Sri Lanka later this month. He said the two sides are currently working on the elements of the programme keeping in view the COVID-19 health related protocols.

EU 'Takes Note'

elections and the resumption of 4G internet services in Jammu and Kashmir, and was looking forward to a number of other important steps, including the early organisation of the legislative assembly polls.

The comments by a spokesperson of the EU came a day after a number of top diplomats from the 27-member bloc returned from Jammu and Kashmir after a two-day visit as part of a trip by 24 foreign envoys.

The visit presented the opportunity to see the situation on the ground and interact with local interlocutors as part of the EU's outreach to all stakeholders, the official said, adding the EU look forward to continuing its dialogue with India on it.

“We have taken note of recent steps such as the election of district development councils and the resumption of 4G internet services. The right to freedom of expression online and offline is a key value for all democracies,” the spokesperson added.

“We look forward to a number of other important steps to be taken in the political and economic sphere, including the early organisation of the legislative assembly elections,” the spokesperson said.

The statement was released by the EU mission in Delhi in response to queries about the visit of EU envoys to the Union Territory of J&K.

The EU spokesperson also said the EU ambassador to India and several envoys of EU member states, among other countries, participated in the visit to J&K Kashmir on February 17-18 on invitation of the Ministry for External Affairs (MEA), and the programme included meetings with civil and military authorities, some newly elected political representatives, and selected representatives of civil society.

MEA Spokesperson Anurag Srivastava on Thursday said the visit by 24 foreign envoys to J&K was aimed at enabling them to witness the union territory's march on the path of inclusive development and the dynamism in the grass-root democratic institutions following the successful conduct of the recent local elections.

Govt Sets Up

transport are nominated by the government. The order, issued by Commissioner Secretary, General Administration Department, Manoj Kumar Dwivedi, said UMTAs for metropolitan regions of Jammu and Srinagar were set up under Section 16A(1) of Jammu and Kashmir Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MRDA) Act. The terms of reference of UMTAs include securing development of an integrated, efficient, modern, multi-modal mobility system including non-motorized means of mobility with focus on movement of people and goods instead of vehicles for the area falling in the jurisdiction of the MRDA, among others.

The UMTAs will work to prepare a strategic plan through such internal or external consultations as deemed necessary or expedient for developing an integrated, efficient, modern and multi-modal mobility system, the order said.

These authorities will also formulate a policy for

developing the transport system in the twin cities, to identify sources of finance for the development of transport infrastructure and to identify need and finalize regulatory mechanism to regulate integration between different modes, safety, fares, interoperability, and other allied aspects.

The UMTAs will also promote research and development on mobility, the order said.

JCCI Threatens

the abrogation of Article 370 and Article 35A,” JCCI president Arun Gupta told reporters here.

Voicing his concern over the continued restrictions on the movement of people at Lakhampur, the gateway to Jammu and Kashmir, Gupta said 40 per cent of the businesses, including hotel and transport industries, depend on pilgrims and tourists but due to the continued restrictions, people are reluctant to visit the UT.

“The COVID-19 restrictions were eased across India in January this year but the J&K government has kept Lakhampur in the red zone category and not allowing inter-state bus services, besides subjecting people coming from outside to Covid testing,” he said.

Gupta said the people are suffering immensely due to the “harsh restrictions” and are affecting the business in the UT, which has already suffered a lot due to the prolonged lockdown.

“The governments outside J&K are coming to the rescue of their residents by reducing existing taxes but on the contrary the J&K government is planning to impose property tax to further weaken the people economically. This time when people are struggling to make both ends meet and pay tuition fees of their children, the imposition of property tax is grave injustice and illogical,” he said.

He said the chamber is not willing to take an agitation path due to the economic crisis people are facing, but “we will not hesitate to launch indefinite strike if government imposes property tax. We will not allow it to happen.”

J&K Doesn't Have

residing in UT of J&K, which has been notified by the J&K Government, Government of India, Ministry of Tribal Affairs. That Department has conveyed that there is no primitive tribal group in UT of J&K notified by the J&K government or Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India,” read the documents.

“As regards pre-agricultural communities, no survey has been yet conducted in UT of J&K.”

These details were sought by the department to ensure compliance of the Schedule Tribes and other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act 2008 while diverting forestland for non-forestry purposes.

According to the 2011 Census, Scheduled Tribes form 11.9 per cent of Jammu and Kashmir's population.

It is worthwhile to mention that Jammu & Kashmir has set the ball rolling for implementation of Forest Rights Act in Jammu and Kashmir

Under the Act, members of the Scheduled Tribes dwelling in forests along with other traditional residents will have the right over forest land—(KNO)

India Set

with very tough working conditions and they never got their “due recognition”, but his government is determined to ensure that the lives of these personnel and their families are made better.

“The country remembers the Pulwama attack with a lot of sensitivity and empathy. Forty CRPF personnel were killed in the incident.

“But it was the first time that by giving an effective reply, India ensured that this sacrifice of the CRPF personnel did not go waste and set an example that it can take the strongest decision for the respect of its troops,” he said.

On February 14, 2019, a CRPF bus, which was part of a convoy of 78 vehicles, was targeted between Jammu and Srinagar by a Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) suicide bomber who rammed his explosives-laden car into it, killing 39 personnel on board and one trooper on the ground, who was tasked with road-sanitisation duty.

The Indian Air Force (IAF) carried out an air strike in Pakistan's Balakot soon after on February 26, targeting militant camps.

Shah said he believes this sacrifice will inspire generations as he spoke at the evening event at a CRPF complex in the Vasant Kunj area, after returning from a two-day tour of West Bengal.

He praised the personnel of the CRPF and those of the other CAPFs, saying they work under very tough conditions and have no definite duty hours.

“I believe that the way the CAPFs and state police forces work, they never got their due fame and recognition.

“I am trying to ensure better facilities.... I have not been successful yet.... But we are working to ensure that the housing satisfaction level among the personnel of the CAPFs reaches up to 85 per cent and that every jawan gets to spend 100 days with their families every year,” the home minister said.

He lauded the CRPF saying it has made a glorious history for itself and there was no instance where it showed its back in the face of adversity.

Shah said the book he released, titled “Rashtra Pratham” (country first), will provide inspiration to the serving personnel of the force and even to those who aspire to join it and serve the country.

“The book aptly describes how anti-nation conspiracies hatched by various elements were thwarted by the force and I hope that more tales of bravery and courage are added to it,” he said.

Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla also attended the event.

Earlier in the day, CRPF Director General A P Maheshwari declared that the third Friday in February will hence forth be observed as the “veterans' day”.

According to CRPF spokesperson Moses Dhinakaran, the force has about four lakh surviving veterans and a number of them were invited to the events that were held on Friday.

The about 3.25 lakh personnel-strong Central Reserve Police Force was raised as the Crown Representative's Police (CRP) under the British in 1939 and a decade later, in 1949, it was re-named as CRPF.

It is the lead internal security force of the country with three of its main tasks being anti-Naxal operations, counter-militancy combat in Jammu-Kashmir and tackling insurgency in the northeast.

Panel Bars Private

schools are directed to strictly obey the orders of the Committee.”

Attar said that the two subsequent lockdowns in 2019 and 2020 respectively have resulted in economic inactivity and some sections of people lost jobs and most of peoples' income was substantially reduced. It had become difficult for most of people even to have bare necessities of life.

Meanwhile, in another order of FFRC, the Committee revoked the order that was allowing the private schools to hike fee by six percent annually.

In 2019, the FFRC had allowed the private schools to charge the annual fee by six percent.

“The orders of annual hike of fee by six percent is hereby rescinded and revoked forthwith,” Attar said.

Attar said that the private schools shall not make any hike on their own like they were charging the fee by six percent as provided in order issued in January-2019.

The Committee said that it would neither be fair, nor reasonable, nor just to allow a universal hike of fee

in all the schools, without ascertaining the actual factual position and requirement of each individual school. Otherwise, also is tantamount to abdication of responsibility by the Committee,” reads the order.

HC Directs Completion

the Senior Superintendent of Police Crime Branch, Srinagar, about the investigation of case FIR No. 91/2014, which was earlier registered at Police Station, Handwara and thereafter transferred to Crime Branch, Srinagar,” the court observed in an order.

The Court had also sought status report about the departmental enquiry initiated against the delinquent officials.

A status report of the investigation in the FIR as also about the inquiry conducted by the department was filed subsequently by the officers concerned.

“It is seen from status report filed by the Senior Superintendent of Police that several persons fraudulently and dishonestly have withdrawn an amount of Rs. 20,34,634/- against non-existent works in the PHE Division Handwara. Some of the officers were arrested and placed under suspension,” the court said, adding, “Perusal of the record reveals that Finance Department vide letter dated 27th of October, 2016, has also directed the Director General Audit and Inspection to conduct special audit of the PHE Division Handwara w.e.f. 2006. Status report filed by the Commissioner/Secretary to Government Irrigation and Flood Control Department, reveals that the inquiry has been expediated and is in the process of conclusion.”

The Director, General, Audit and Inspection, the court observed, has also submitted report to the Government for taking action.

“The respondents (government functionaries) are on record to guarantee supply of safe drinking water to the public as per their requirement. It has been highlighted that in most of the areas safe drinking water is supplied as per the scheme of the Government of India and Government of Jammu Kashmir.”

The court closed the PIL, observing that it was satisfied with the investigation of the matter, the inquiry conducted by the Government as also supply of safe drinking water to the public in Handwara.

“Commissioner/Secretary to Government, Jal Shakti Department (PHE), shall take departmental proceedings to its logical conclusion by adherence to rules and regulations in vogue and pass appropriate orders,” the court said, adding, “Chief Engineer, PHE Department, Kashmir shall ensure that safe drinking water is supplied to the areas of PHE Division, Handwara, which is not covered in terms of the scheme in vogue.” (GNS)

Ensure Drug

and Kashmir and for establishment of drug de-addiction and rehabilitation centres,” a bench of Justices Ali Mohammad Magrey and Vinod Chatterji Koul observed.

“The Court has already passed the directions from time to time, which has yielded results, as the Government is on record by not only assuring establishment of drug de-addiction and rehabilitation centres but also curbing the menace by accelerating all agencies concerned and also evolving the mechanism for general awareness of the public in general and the youngsters in particular,” the court said, adding, “We are satisfied with the approach adopted by the Government and other respondents in dealing with the menace.”

However, the court reiterated the directions from time to time and asked the authorities concerned to implement them. “The respondents shall ensure establishment of drug de-addiction and rehabilitation Centres and for accelerating the awareness of the effect of the menace amongst the general public,” the court said, adding, “In view of above, both the writ petitions (PIL) are disposed of.”

PAGD Wins Top

districts of the Union territory, officials said.

The win in Rajouri gave PAGD, an alliance of various mainstream parties including National Conference, PDP and CPI(M), its third district in Jammu region.

On Friday, PAGD had won the posts of DDC chairpersons in Ramban and Kishtwar districts with the support of Congress, whose DDC member was also elected to the post of vice-chairperson in Kishtwar.

NC's Naseem Liaqat, an advocate, won the post of DDC chairperson in Rajouri by eight votes against six by his rival Shazia Choudhary (independent), while senior Congress leader and former minister Shabir Khan was elected to the post of vice-chairperson after PAGD and Congress joined hands.

All 14 members were present and the election concluded in a conducive atmosphere, the officials said.

Of the 14 DDC seats, PAGD had won six (NC five and PDP one) followed by Congress and BJP (three each) and Apni Party and an independent (one each) in the elections held in November-December last year.

The election in the district was rescheduled for Friday after it was deferred on February 13 due to lack of quorum.

'A Nerve-Wracking IPL Auction, My Parents Had Tears Of Joy,' Says Krishnappa Gowtham

Press Trust of India

AHMEDABAD: A net bowler with the Indian team right now, uncapped Karnataka all-rounder Krishnappa Gowtham is still trying to get a grip on his emotions after fetching a mind-boggling Rs 9.25 crore deal with Chennai Super Kings which left his parents and wife overwhelmed by tears of joy.

After a bidding war at the IPL auction in Chennai on Thursday, Gowtham was bought by CSK, his price surpassing that of Krunal Pandya's then record of Rs 8.8 crore by the Mumbai Indians in 2018 for an uncapped player.

"It was nerve-wracking, I was very anxious, watching on TV," Gowtham, who is currently with the Indian Test team here as a net bowler for the series against England, told ESPNcricinfo.

"We'd just landed in Ahmedabad and I'd just switched on TV and my name came up. Emotions were changing every minute. Then, Rohit Sharma and Hardik Pandya knocked on my door and gave me a big hug and they asked for a big treat," Gowtham added.

His base price was Rs 20 lakh and he was quickly the focus of a fierce bidding war between the Kolkata Knight Riders and the Sunrisers Hyderabad, before CSK swooped in with a late bid.

The 32-year-old off-spin all-rounder from Karnataka has modest IPL statistics. He has played just 24 matches in three seasons since 2018 and has scored 186 runs and taken 13 wickets.

He was a part of Rajasthan Royals for two seasons — 2018 and 2019 playing 15 and 7 matches, respectively — and was with Kings XI Punjab (now Punjab Kings) in 2020 where he featured in just two games before being released.

Gowtham's parents and wife in Bengaluru were in tears when they came to know of the good news.

"My parents had tears, happy tears. They were all so happy for

me," Gowtham said, adding: "It's hard to describe that feeling. It's all just sinking in. Obviously this isn't the first time I've been part of the auction but every time your name comes up, the kind of butterflies in your tummy is unimaginable."

Gowtham, an India A regular, will be playing under Mahendra Singh Dhoni at the CSK.

The 32-year-old remembered queuing up with a few other uncapped players to get his bat signed by the legendary wicket-keeper batsman after an IPL game three years ago.

"The first time I met him, I asked MS what I needed to do to take my game to the next level," Gowtham recalled.

"It was a fanboy moment. After that, I've managed to chat with him a couple of times, haven't really had long chats, they have just been short and simple. I'm waiting to now join the set-up and have many fruitful conversations with him. It's an exciting feeling to play for CSK," Gowtham said.

Five years ago, things were tough for Gowtham when he was gripped by self-doubt. He had been reported for a suspect action that needed remodelling. Then, he was not picked by his state team Karnataka even after his bowling action was deemed legal.

"It was tough sitting out. Yes, there weren't too many opportunities but I tried to make the most of my time. That is the kind of person I am, you have to keep learning and improving every day," he said.

"I worked on my fitness, worked hard on improving my skills in the nets and making the most of learning from Anil Kumble and other senior coaches so that I could be ready whenever the opportunities comes," he added.

"Keep giving your best. Every day is a new opportunity. My aim is to be a better version of my previous self. Day by day, keep getting better. It's just that simple," Gowtham concluded.

Can't Wait To Wear Mumbai Indians Jersey, Says Die-hard Fan Arjun Tendulkar



Press Trust of India

MUMBAI: Pacer Arjun Tendulkar can't wait for his maiden IPL stint to start with Mumbai Indians and thanked the coaches for having faith in him after being picked by the five-time champions at the players' auction.

The 21-year-old, son of iconic former captain Sachin Tendulkar, got a major fillip on Thursday when he was bought by Mumbai Indians at his base price of Rs 20 lakh.

His celebrated father hasn't just played for the franchise but is also the mentor of the side, which is the most successful team in the IPL.

"Since childhood I have always been a die hard fan of Mumbai Indians. I would like to thank the coaches and support staff who showed faith in me.

"I am excited to join the MI Paltan and can't wait to wear the blue and gold," Arjun said in a video message posted on MI's twitter handle.

Arjun has been a net bowler for the franchise for the past two-three seasons.

He recently made his senior Mumbai team debut when he played in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy, the national T20 championship, against Haryana.

Virat Kohli Reveals Suffering From Depression During 2014 England Tour

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: India cricket captain Virat Kohli has revealed that he battled depression during a harrowing tour of England in 2014 where he felt like the "loneliest guy in the world" after a string of failures with the bat.

In a conversation with former England player Mark Nicholas on his 'Not Just Cricket' podcast, Kohli conceded that he went through a tough phase during that particularly difficult tour.

"Yes, I did," was his response when asked whether he had suffered from depression at the time.

"...it's not a great feeling to wake up knowing that you won't be able to score runs and I think all batsmen have felt that at some stage that you are not in control of anything at all," he recalled.

Kohli had a disastrous tour of England in 2014, registering scores of 1, 8, 25, 0, 39, 28, 0, 7, 6 and 20 in five Tests, averaging 13.50 in his 10 innings. He roared back to form in the tour of Australia after that, accumulating 692 runs in the Test series.

"You just don't understand how to get over it. That was a phase when I literally couldn't do anything to overturn things...I felt like I was the loneliest guy in the world," he said of the England tour. Kohli remembered feeling alone despite the fact that there



were supportive people in his life. He said professional help was what he needed.

"Personally, for me, that was a revelation that you could feel that lonely even though you are a part of a big group. I won't say I didn't have people who I could speak to but not having a professional to speak to who could understand what I am going through completely, I think is a huge factor.

"I think I would like to see it change."

The India captain, considered one of the best batsmen in modern cricket, believes mental health issues cannot be overlooked as they can destroy a person's career. "Someone whom you can go to at any stage, have a conversa-

tion around and say 'Listen, this is what I am feeling, I am finding it hard to even go to sleep, I feel like I don't want to wake up in the morning. I have no confidence in myself, what do I do?'

"Lots of people suffer with that feeling for longer periods of time, it carries on for months, it carries on for a whole cricket season, people are not able to get out of it," Kohli said.

"I strongly feel the need for professional help there, to be very honest," he added.

Kohli is currently in Ahmedabad for the ongoing home Test series against England. The two teams have won a game each and will compete in the third Test from February 24.

Woke Up At Midnight To Check How Much Rs 15 Crore Is In NZ Dollars, Says Kyle Jamieson After IPL Auctions

Press Trust of India

CHRISTCHURCH: Waking up at around midnight in New Zealand, Kyle Jamieson wondered how much Rs 15 crore would be in his country's currency, after having watched an intense three-way bid for him in the IPL auction.

The 6'8" pacer eventually ended up with Royal Challengers Bangalore for USD 2 million approximately, making him the highest paid New Zealand and fourth highest in the IPL's 14-year history.

"I woke up around midnight and decided to check the phone. Rather than trying to avoid the situation, (I thought) I'll sit back and enjoy it. It was certainly a weird hour and a half waiting for my name to be called up," Jamieson was quoted as saying by stuff.co.nz.

"I had a message from Shane Bond (former New Zealand pacer and Mumbai Indians bowling coach) as it was going and he said, 'How good is this'."

"I didn't actually know what the amount of money, how that translated to New Zealand dollars. It was quite cool to share that moment with him and ride that two or three minutes with him."

Also showing in interest in him were Delhi Capitals and the Punjab Kings in the auction on Thursday.

He is with the New Zealand team here ahead of the T20 International series against Australia.



Former Black Caps coach Mike Hesson, RCB's director of cricket operations, led the charge to win the three-way bidding for Jamieson, who made his Test debut against India at home last year.

His retainer fee for the Black Caps, according to the report, is between USD 100,000 to USD 150,000, which makes RCB's winning bid amount 20 times more. It completed a rapid rise for Jamieson, who is known for extracting awkward bounce. The right-arm quick, playing in the 2019 Super Smash, picked up 6 for 7 in four overs, a New Zealand T20 record, which have been bettered by only three men in the world.

He has so far played in six Tests, two ODIs and four T20Is. He took two five-wicket hauls in his first four Tests and has also shown a lot of competence with the bat as well.

Asked what would he buy if his New Zealand teammates asked for

a treat, Jamieson said, "Probably a few coffees I would have thought."

"I don't know. It's only been a few hours. My bank account hasn't changed overnight, but there'll be a bit of stick given and a few coffees and a few beers I'm sure."

Jamieson will join a star-studded RCB team, headlined by Indian captain Virat Kohli, AB de Villiers and Australian all-rounder Glenn Maxwell, who scooped Rs 14.5 crore in the auction.

"I think it's such a special tournament, obviously the biggest franchise tournament around. There's so many cool experiences to be had over there and learning opportunities."

"That's the thing that excites me the most... being able to rub shoulders with these guys. It's such a unique situation for us as cricketers and to be able to do that is something pretty special."

Pakistan Super League T20 Tournament To Mark Return Of Fans In Stadiums

Agencies

KARACHI: Spectators will return to cricket stadiums in Pakistan for the first time since the coronavirus pandemic began when the sixth edition of the Pakistan Super League begins in the southern port city of Karachi on Saturday.

The government has allowed the Pakistan Cricket Board to admit 20 per cent capacity of fans inside the stadiums for the country's premier Twenty20 league, maintaining proper social distancing and making masks mandatory for spectators.

The decision meant National Stadium in Karachi will accommodate 7,500 fans and Lahore's Gaddafi Stadium 5,500.

"Without crowd there was no enjoyment," said Quetta Gladiators wicketkeeper/batsman Sarfaraz Ahmed.

"It's the great news that we will be playing in front of our own crowds after a long time."

During the pandemic, the PCB successfully hosted two international series against Zimbabwe and South Africa in empty sta-

tures two-time champions Islamabad United, last year's third-place finisher Multan Sultans and 2017 champions Peshawar Zalmi.

Several leading international Twenty20 cricketers will be in action over a month-long tournament with Chris Gayle, Ben Dunk, Chris Lynn and world's top-ranked T20 bowler, Rashid Khan of Afghanistan.

Karachi will host the first 20 league games while Lahore will host the remaining 14 matches, including the final on March 22.

Karachi will be among the favorites for the title with Pakistan T20 regular Imad Wasim leading the side. They have an ideal set of openers Pakistan Twenty20 skipper Babar Azam and hard-hitting batsman Sharjeel Khan. They also have experienced bowler Mohammad Amir and Afghanistan offspinner Mohammad Nabi.

Lahore has last year's world top three Twenty20 wicket-takers among its ranks. Rashid might have to leave the side due to Afghanistan's tour of Zimbabwe after playing in initial matches,



diums besides organising more than 200 domestic cricket matches in a bio-secure bubble.

The PCB is confident that it is now well-versed in implementing its COVID-19 procedures, with only one local player being expelled for violating protocols during a domestic game.

More than 120 players, 60 support staff and about a dozen match officials will remain in a biosecure bubble for the PSL tournament.

"COVID-19 and cricket can co-exist, provided we follow the proper protocols," PCB chairman Ehsan Mani said.

Mani admitted that a large number of fans will be disappointed due to limited seating available both in Karachi and Lahore. However, the government will review crowd capacity at Karachi's Gaddafi Stadium before the playoffs and the final in Lahore next month.

Karachi Kings defeated arch-rivals Lahore Qalandars in the final in November after the PSL playoffs were postponed due to COVID-19 in last March. Just three months later, the defending champions will open the new season with a match against 2019 winners Quetta.

but Shaheen Afridi and Haris Rauf form a formidable pace attack with experienced Mohammad Hafeez providing the nucleus of their batting.

Islamabad United, led by all-rounder Shadab Khan, signed Pakistan fast bowler Hasan Ali. Hasan made a strong return to international cricket against South Africa after two years due to injuries.

Islamabad had a minor setback when they lost Colin Munro, who could not travel to Pakistan from New Zealand due to COVID-19 restrictions, so he was replaced with Australian spinner Fawad Ahmed.

Quetta did make the playoffs for the first time last year. The side has Australian allrounder Ben Cutting, who could prove handy in the middle order with his clean hitting along with England's Twenty20 specialist opening batsman Tom Banton.

Peshawar Zalmi will be led by fast bowler Wahab Riaz and has the two most experienced Twenty20 players in Kamran Akmal and Shoaib Malik. South Africa's David Miller will strengthen the batting lineup in the second half of the tournament, but they have young hard-hitting batsman Haider Ali and England's experienced Ravi Bopara among their ranks.

SEVERAL LEADING INTERNATIONAL Twenty20 cricketers will be in action over a month-long tournament with Chris Gayle, Ben Dunk, Chris Lynn and world's top-ranked T20 bowler, Rashid Khan of Afghanistan.

Ankita Raina Wins Maiden WTA Title, Assured Of Doubles Top-100 Entry For First Time

Press Trust of India

MELBOURNE: India's Ankita Raina on Friday claimed her maiden WTA title by lifting the Phillip Island Trophy along with Russian partner Kamilla Rakhimova, a feat which will catapult her into the top-100 in the doubles for the first time in her career.

Ankita and Kamilla erased a one-set deficit to beat the Russian combination of Anna Blinkova and Anastasia Potapova 2-6 6-4 10-7 in the summit clash here.

The 28-year-old Indian shared the USD 8000 prize money with her partner and earned 280 ranking points, which will take her to 94 from the current 115 when the WTA doubles chart is updated next week.

Ankita will become only the second player to crack the doubles top-100 since Sania Mirza, who is a six-time Grand Slam champion.

The past two weeks have been extremely memorable for the gritty Indian, who made her Grand Slam debut at the Australian Open in the doubles, and also won a round in the main draw of a WTA singles tournament.

Elated at her performance and the result, Ankita says the singles top-100



is also just around the corner.

"It's been a great week. Kamilla and I played together for the first time. We signed up just 20 minutes before the draw because there was a lot of confusion with the entry list.

"Kamilla plays very aggressive, has good strokes and I just had to ask her to be aggressive at the net, which she did," Ankita told PTL.

"It was not that draw was easy, we beat some good players who were tough not only in doubles but in singles, too. Kamilla has great fighting spirit. It's

great... first WTA titles and doubles top-100, too. I am looking forward to crack singles top-100," she added.

"We were 7-9 down by two match points in the semis. I had some great volleys. I was working on that and when I could do that (execute) in match nothing is more exciting."

Indian tennis players have always struggled to get finances and enough support to survive on the demanding tour but Ankita did not make any such complaint. Instead, she thanked all who supported her.

Also, at 5 feet and four inches, she does not have a frame to counter the taller and stronger rivals. However, Ankita insisted that, too, is not an issue for her.

"I don't think my height is an issue for Indian females. It's average, of course on the international circuit there are players with bigger physique but then there are also who are leaner or shorter than me.

"So I feel one just needs to work on their strengths and have a game accordingly."

"As far as infrastructure and all is concerned, in Ahmedabad where I started playing tennis, there were tennis courts, tennis academy right behind my house and if it wasn't there then it would be a different story and I might not be here.

"But since I started playing there's been a lot of development in terms of sports and tennis and it's much bigger now in India.

"Of course it can be better and I'm very sure with more players it'll come up more. Also during my transition period from juniors to women's, I remember there were a lot of ITFs which I participated in India and did well, which helped me to start my Pro career."

Man United, Spurs Win Big In Relocated Europa League Games

Agencies

BERLIN: Bruno Fernandes scored twice as Manchester United took a big step toward the last 16 of the Europa League with a 4-0 "away" win over Spanish team Real Sociedad in Italy.

The first leg was played on Thursday in Turin, one of a number of games relocated away from their original venues due to coronavirus-related travel restrictions from certain countries affecting teams from Britain.

Portugal's Benfica had to host Arsenal in Rome, where Bukayo Saka's away goal put the Premier League side in a good position with a 1-1 draw. Tottenham defeated Austrian team Wolfsberg 4-1 in Budapest, Hungary.

Germany's Hoffenheim was also affected by pandemic-related travel restrictions.

Hoffenheim's game with Norwegian side Molde was played at Villarreal's stadium in Spain, while Villarreal beat Salzburg 2-0 in Austria.

Hoffenheim forward Munas Dabbur scored two goals, set up another, and then missed a penalty before Molde came back from two

goals down to draw 3-3.

UNITED FLYING

Fernandes had Sociedad's defense to thank for his first goal in the 27th, when two defenders collided with their own goalkeeper, leaving him free to score into an empty net. He then finished off a quick counterattack to make it 2-0 in the 57th. Fernandes let Marcus Rashford's pass go behind him to Daniel James, then received the ball back and fired inside the right post.

Rashford added the third in the 64th and James completed the scoring in the last minute.

United is playing in the Europa League for the third time in five seasons, a drop for a club once regarded as a continental heavyweight.

BALE'S BOW

Gareth Bale reminded his detractors of his qualities as he scored one goal and set up another for Tottenham.

The Wales forward, back at Tottenham on loan from Real Madrid to the end of the season, cut

the ball back for Son Heung-min to open the scoring in the 13th, before he illustrated why Madrid paid Tottenham a record transfer fee for his services in 2013.

Bale showed Matt Doherty exactly where he wanted the ball, out-paced Jonathan Scherzer to reach it, then stopped to leave the Wolfsburg defender sprawling, before curling a powerful shot past goalkeeper Alexander Kofler with his left boot.

Bale has been struggling in his second spell at Tottenham, making just seven Premier League appearances. He recently irked Jos Mourinho for posting "Good session today" on Instagram with the Tottenham coach saying there was "a contradiction between the post and the reality."

Lucas Moura eluded a number of defenders to make it 3-0 in the 34th. A penalty from Michael Liendl gave the Austrians some hope in the second half, but Vinicius, who had come on during the break for Son, scored from close range in the 88th.

Wolfsberg is playing for the first time in the knockout stages of a European competition.

Toolkit Case: Delhi Court Sends Disha Ravi To Judicial Custody

Agenceis

NEW DELHI: Climate activist Disha Ravi has been sent to three days in judicial custody by a Delhi court on Friday in connection with the 'toolkit' case on the farmers' protest that the police is investigating.

Disha, whose five-day police custody ended today, was produced before Patiala House Court by the Special cell of Delhi Police.

This morning Disha had been produced before a metropolitan magistrate (MM) Akash Jain in Patiala House Court, according to the Delhi Police officials.

Public Prosecutor Irfan Ahmed appearing on behalf of Delhi Police said



that during her time in police remand Disha has been evasive and has shifted the blame to advocate Nikita Jacob and activist Shantanu Muluk also named as accused by the police in the same case.

The Delhi Police counsel told court that Disha needs to be confronted with her co-accused and sought three days of judicial custody for her.

"During the course of interrogation, Disha Ravi has shifted the blame on Nikita and Shantanu," said the Public Prosecutor.

"During the course of the investigation, she has been evasive. So we want further three days of Judicial Custody," said Advocate Irfan Ahmed.

"Bail application has been moved and it will come up for hearing tomorrow," said Public Prosecutor Irfan Ahmed in the court.

The advocate also told court that the police have sent a notice to Shantanu asking to join the investigation on February 22.

Advocate Sidharth Aggarwal appeared for Disha Ravi in the trial court.

Disha was arrested from Bengaluru on February 13 and taken to Delhi by flight. She was produced before a Delhi Magistrate the next day and remanded to police custody till February 19.

On February 18, Disha moved the Delhi High Court seeking a direction to the Delhi Police to not leak any investigation material in relation to FIR filed against her to any

third party, including the media.

The Delhi Police sent a communication to Google seeking registration details and activity log of the account, through which a "toolkit" was created and uploaded on the social media platform.

Two e-mail IDs, one Instagram account, and one Uniform Resource Locator (URL) were mentioned in the toolkit and police have asked for details from the respective platforms.

The police had registered an FIR against unidentified persons in connection with the creators of the 'toolkit'.

The Bombay High Court had on Wednesday granted transit anticipatory bail of three weeks to Nikita Jacob.

56 Kg Gold Given To Weigh Then PM Shastri In 1965 To Go To Govt

Agenceis

Gold weighing 56.86 kg, given to the District Collector in Rajasthan's Chittorgarh for weighing then Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri in wake of the 1965 India-Pakistan war, will be passed on to the government, a court has ordered.

The gold, valued at Rs 4.76 lakh at that time, is now valued at Rs 27.29 crore.

The District and Sessions Court in Chittorgarh on Wednesday directed the officials concerned to hand over the gold to the Assistant Commissioner of Central Goods and Service Tax.

The controversy over ownership of the gold dates back to late 1965 when the precious metal was given to Chittorgarh District Collector for weighing Shastri. The case has been heard five times earlier in different courts since then, and each time, the decision went in the government's favour.

At present, this gold is lying in a cupboard in the Udaipur District Collector's office.

On December 9, 1965, a person named Gunwant filed a case against Ganpat and two others, alleging that the accused did not return 56.86 kg gold to him.

On December 16, 1965, Ganpat handed over the gold to Chittorgarh Collector for weighing Prime Minister Shastri, who had a scheduled visit in Udaipur. However, Shastri passed in Tashkent in January 1966 following talks with Pakistan organised by

the then Soviet Union. Thereafter, police seized the gold but its custody was given to the Chittorgarh Collector.

In 1969, a challan was presented in the Assistant District Session Court in Udaipur and gold was then brought to Udaipur.

On January 11, 1975, the court sentenced Ganpat and Hiralal to two years imprisonment and rights over the gold were given to the Gold Controller.

Ganpat and Hiralal challenged the judgment in the sessions' court and were freed, but they did not regain the right to possession of the gold.

A petition was again filed by Gunwant against the verdict in the High Court, which, on September 14, 2007, upheld the order of acquittal, but rejected the appeal for transferring them rights over the gold.

In 2012, Ganpat's heir Govardhan filed a writ in court, saying that the gold belonged to his father and police had recovered it from him. However, this writ is still pending.

On July 17, 2020, the Assistant Commissioner, CGST, Chittorgarh submitted an application in the Chief Judicial Magistrate's court for delivery of the gold, and on August 5, 2020, the court said that the High Court has issued directions for the delivery of gold to the CGST official.

Govardhan then appealed to the session court, which also decided in favour of the gold be transferred to the official.



4 Chinese Soldiers Were Killed In Galwan Valley Clash, Acknowledges China



Agencies

Four Chinese soldiers were killed in the fierce clash with the Indian Army in the Galwan Valley in eastern Ladakh in June last year, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) acknowledged for the first time on Friday.

China's military authorities have honoured two officers and three soldiers, including four who received the awards posthumously, for defending the country's western border, the official Xinhua news agency reported, quoting the The People's Liberation Army Daily, the newspaper of the Chinese military.

Five Chinese frontier officers and soldiers stationed in the Karakoram Mountains have been recognised by the Central Military Commission of China (CMC) for their sacrifice in the border confrontation with India, which occurred in the Galwan Valley in June 2020, the PLA Daily said.

The CMC is headed by Chinese President Xi Jinping, also General Secretary of the ruling Communist Party of China.

The title of "border-defending hero" was conferred on Battalion Commander Chen Hongjun posthumously, while Chen Xianrong, Xiao Siyuan and Wang Zhuoran received first-class merit. Qi Fabao, who was seriously injured in the skirmish, received the title of "hero regiment commander for defending the border," the Xinhua report said.

Three PLA soldiers were killed in the combat while another soldier died while crossing the icy river when he went to support his army mates.

Asked why China chose to reveal the casualties suffered dur-

ing the Galwan incident after over eight months, Hua said, "the report has been revealed to give the truth to the public because the truth is long awaited and is necessary for the people to know the true story."

India has said that 20 of its soldiers were killed in the fierce hand-to-hand combat on June 15 in Galwan Valley, an incident that marked the most serious military conflicts between the two sides in over four decades.

While China acknowledged casualties, it did not disclose details.

"These heroes will along will be remembered by the Chinese people. Their sacrifices made to defend our territory will never be forgotten by the Chinese people," she said.

"We all know that conflict broke out in Galwan in June last year and responsibility does not rest with Chinese side," Hua claimed.

"We hope the border issue will be put in a proper place in our bilateral relations. We hope to work with the Indian side to properly resolve the issue and uphold the general picture and the interests of the bilateral ties," Hua said.

"India is an important neighbour of China and restoring a healthy stable relationship is the aspiration and also in the interest of the two peoples. I hope the Indian side will work with us towards achieving this shared goal," she said.

Asked whether the details of the Galwan incident revealed by China today will impact Saturday's 10th round of Commanders-level talks to discuss further disengagement of troops, Hua said these are two separate issues.

"Through diplomatic and military channels of the two sides are in communications in complet-

ing the disengagement smoothly," she added.

"We hope the Indian side will bear in mind the general interest of bilateral relations and bring the ties to the right track. What we released is just the facts and the truth," she said.

The border standoff between the Indian and Chinese militaries erupted on May 5 last year following a violent clash in the Pangong Lake areas and both sides gradually enhanced their deployment by rushing in tens of thousands of soldiers as well as heavy weaponry.

The Chinese soldiers used stones, nail-studded sticks, iron rods and clubs in carrying out brutal attacks on Indian soldiers after they protested the erection of a surveillance post by China on the Indian side of the Line of Actual Control in Galwan.

The PLA Daily claimed that the Indian soldiers attacked the Chinese military personnel with steel tubes and cudgels and threw stones.

This is the first time China has acknowledged casualties and details of these officers and soldiers' sacrifice, four of whom died when dealing with the Indian military's "illegal trespassing" of the Galwan Valley Line of Actual Control (LAC), the report said.

While India has announced the casualties immediately after the incident, China did not officially acknowledge the casualties until Friday.

The Russian official news agency TASS reported on February 10 that 45 Chinese servicemen were killed in the Galwan Valley clash. According to an American intelligence report last year, the number of casualties on the Chinese side was 35.

Maharashtra: Birthday Bash Flouts Covid-19 Norms, FIR Against 500

Agenceis

Police have registered a case against around 500 people for allegedly violating the COVID-19 norms by gathering for a birthday celebration at Dombivli in Maharashtra's Thane district, officials said.

The birthday party was held during the intervening night of February 17 and 18 at Deslepada, the Kalyan Dombivli Municipal Corporation (KDMC) said in a statement on Thursday.

KDMC's ward officer Akshay Gudge had received a complaint that people had assembled in large numbers to celebrate the birthday of a local resident without following the coronavirus norms like

wearing masks and maintaining social distancing, it said.

After being alerted, the civic authorities visited the premises and later lodged a complaint with the Manpada police station against around 500 people, including the host and the attendees, the statement said.

The police have registered an FIR against them under IPC sections 269 and 270 (negligent and malignant act likely to spread infection of diseases) and 188 (disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant) and under sections of the Disaster Management Control Rules against the crowd.

No arrest has been made in this connection so far, police said.

India's Next Mars Mission Likely To Be An Orbiter



Agenceis

As NASA's Perseverance rover landed on Mars in the early hours of Friday to look for signs of past life, ISRO's next mission to the Red Planet is likely to be an orbiter.

Perseverance, the biggest and the most advanced rover ever sent by NASA, made its landing at Jezero Crater.

After its successful Mars Orbiter Mission, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) called for 'Announcement of Opportunities' on Mars Orbiter Mission-2.

"It is now planned to have the next orbiter mission around Mars for a future launch opportunity," according to the Announcement of Opportunities.

But there are other major projects that are lined up. After the Mars Orbiter Mission's success, ISRO also decided to explore Venus.

However, the immediate priorities of ISRO remain to be Chandrayaan-3 and Gaganyaan -- both projects have been delayed due to the coronavirus-induced lockdown.

Under Chandrayaan-3, ISRO will

once again try to land a rover on the Moon. The mission was to be launched late last year.

Chandrayaan-2 did not yield expected results as the lander hard-landed, dashing India's hopes to successfully land on the Moon.

ISRO plans to send three humans to space by 2022 under the Gaganyaan (human space) mission.

The India-France Joint Vision for Space Cooperation also mentions about the possible collaboration to explore Mars.

"CNES and ISRO, with the support of Laboratoire de météorologie dynamique (LMD, CNRS), will jointly work on the modelling of Mars and Venus atmospheres," the vision statement said.

Mangalyaan or Mars Orbiter Mission was India's first endeavour to successfully reach another planet. The launch vehicle, spacecraft and ground segment cost Rs 450 crore, one of the cheapest missions to Mars so far.

Designed to work for six months, the mission has completed over six years. The Mars orbiter has sent thousands of pictures totalling more than two terabytes.

Dir Tourism Flags Off 4x4 Extreme Terrain Expedition for North Kashmir

Says Kashmir has diversity of tourism products with its adventure potential

In order to promote adventure tourism activities and to uncover new tourist destinations in remote and far-flung areas of north Kashmir, the Director Tourism Kashmir Dr. G N Itoo on Friday flagged off 4x4 Extreme Terrain Expedition for north Kashmir here at Royal Springs Golf Course.

A group of 13 expert expeditions will cover North Kashmir's off road places including Kupwara, Tangdhar, Keran, Macchil, Watlab, Farkiya Gali, Zardara Gali and other remote places during the expedition known as "Across Shamsabadi" from February 19 to March 01, 2021. The expeditions will drive 4x4 vehicles on difficult terrains and explore beautiful lesser known places in North Kashmir.

The expedition is being organized by Wander Beyond Boundaries (WBB) in association with the Department of Tourism, CEAT and Terrain Fit.

Speaking on the occasion, the Director Tourism Kashmir said that the department is making all out efforts to promote the all faces of tourism in Kashmir to lure the maximum



visitors. He observed that Kashmir is an all season destination offering visitors not only mesmerizing beauty of its natural landscape, its perennial revisers and lakes, gardens and meadows, mountains and valleys, forests and wildlife but also diversity of tourism products with its adventure potential.

Dr. Itoo hoped that this expedition will be a live experience to see life in these remote areas and will also explore new tourist destinations on the tourism map beside creating avenues for local employability. He said the ex-

pedition is part of the Department's promotional campaign for promoting tourism.

While expressing their views, the participants said that they have visited a number of tourist places across Kashmir and they want to introduce uncovered beauty to the world and meet the people to know about the culture besides exchange their thoughts with them to experience the beauty and diversity of Kashmir. Secretary, Royal Spring Golf Course, Javid Bakshi, Deputy Director Tourism, Ahsan-ul Haq Chisti and others were present on the occasion.

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