



P3 NEWS

GOVT TO RESTORE KHUSHALSAR, GILSAR LAKES

The Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir, Pandurang K. Pole, accompanied by the Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Dr Shahid Iqbal Choudhary, Saturday...

P7 THINK

BREAK THE SILENCE: ENDING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IS A HUMAN RIGHTS IMPERATIVE

"There is a global epidemic of violence against women – both within conflict zones and within societies at peace – and it is still treated as a lesser crime and..."



P11 SPORTS

CHRIS GAYLE RETURNS TO WEST INDIES SQUAD AFTER NEARLY TWO YEARS

Veteran batsman Chris Gayle has returned to the West Indies squad for the first time in nearly two years for the three-match T20 International series against Sri Lanka...



Quote!

You'll never find a rainbow if you're looking down
— Charlie Chaplin

NEWS DIGEST

J&K Reports 97 New Corona Cases

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir on Saturday recorded 97 new COVID-19 cases, taking the infection tally to 1,26,383, officials said. No fresh COVID-19-related death was reported in the past 24 hours, they said. Of the new cases, 24 were from the Jammu division and 73 from the Kashmir division, officials said. Srinagar district recorded the highest 44 cases followed by 11 each in Jammu and ➔ [More On P10](#)

Kulsuma Named SKIMS Spokesperson

SRINAGAR: Director Sher-e-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS) Soura, Dr A G Ahanger on Saturday appointed Kulsuma as spokesperson for print/electronic and social networking media. "In supersession to all previous orders on the subject matter, Mrs. Kulsuma (4903), Asst. Director Public Relations shall henceforth function as SKIMS Spokesperson for Print/ Electronic ➔ [More On P10](#)

CASO Launched In Bemina

SRINAGAR: The special operations group (SOG) of police and army on Saturday launched a cordon and search operation in Bemina area of this capital city. A contingent of SOG personnel joined by the soldiers of army's 2 RR laid a siege around Hamdania Colony in Bemina and started a search operation, reports said. The search operation was in progress when the last reports came in.

Burglars Loot Cash From Gurudwara

SRINAGAR: Unidentified burglars broke into a Gurudwara in north Kashmir's Bandipora district and looted cash and other valuables, reports said Saturday. Unknown burglars struck into a Gurudwara in Ward Number 1 of Nowpora village of the district and decamped with unaccounted cash and valuables from the/ donation box, news agency KNT reported Saturday. The incident came into the notice of authorities after ➔ [More On P10](#)

Rare Coin Fetches Rs 56L In Auction

BENGALURU: A rare 10.9 gram gold coin of Kam Bakhsh, the fifth son of Mughal emperor Aurangzeb, went under the hammer here, fetching Rs 56 lakh. Marudhar Arts, a leading numismatic auction house here, held the auction at a price ranging between Rs 45 lakh and Rs 50 lakh, but it was sold for Rs 56 lakh. Rajendra Maru, the CEO of Marudhar Arts, told PTI the gold 'Mohur' of Bijapur Daruz-Zafar mint has ➔ [More On P10](#)

No Bearing Of LoC Truce On Anti-Militancy Ops: Army



Press Trust Of India

UDHAMPUR: The Army's northern commander Lt Gen Y K Joshi on Saturday said the agreement between India and Pakistan to strictly adhere to the ceasefire pact along the

Line of Control (LoC) would have no bearing on the counter-militancy operations in Jammu and Kashmir. He said the northern command, which looks after the security of the twin union territories of ➔ [More On P10](#)

Ready To Move Forward To Resolve All Issues: Pak PM

Says Onus Of Creating 'Enabling Environment' For Further Progress Rests With India

Press Trust Of India

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan on Saturday welcomed the ceasefire agreement with India but said the onus of creating an "enabling environment" for further progress in bilateral relations rests with New Delhi. In his first comments since



the militaries of India and Pakistan jointly ➔ [More On P10](#)

Will Show 'Max Restraint' If Pak Violates Truce: Army

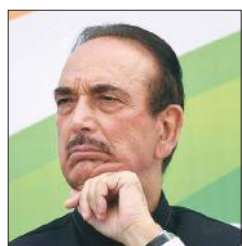
Days after the ceasefire agreement between India and Pakistan on the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir, the Army on Saturday said it will exercise maximum restraint in case of any violation of the understanding by the other side. Welcoming the agreement arrived at between the Director Generals of Military Operations (DGMOs) of the two countries, a top Army officer said the decision was significant as it would bring relief to the people living near the LoC. "We will not retaliate as long as it is possible and we hope that the Pakistani side will also uphold the agreement," General Officer Commanding (GoC), 28 Infantry Division, Major General V M B Krishnan told reporters in Kupwara, about 100 km north of Srinagar, when asked about the ➔ [More On P10](#)

Azad Vows To Continue J&K Statehood Battle

Says Retired From Rajya Sabha Not Politics

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: Asserting that he had retired only from Rajya Sabha and not politics, Senior Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad Saturday expressed a resolve to continue his fight for the restoration of Jammu and Kashmir's statehood and its residents' special rights over jobs and land. The former chief minister also stressed the importance of unity among



the residents of the Union Territory to fight the threats from China and Pakistan and said "we need to stand with our forces against the enemies". ➔ [More On P10](#)

Army Probes 'Data Breach' In Northern Command

Agencies

UDHAMPUR: The Indian Army has ordered a probe into an alleged case of a data breach in the northern command after a soldier was found to be passing data to Pakistani operatives.

The data breach took place when the soldier from Punjab and posted under the Northern Command was caught by officials dealing with the alleged ➔ [More On P10](#)

Travellers Raise Coronavirus Graph In J&K

Weekly Cases Up By 40 Percent, 66% Of them Travellers

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: After showing a considerable decline over the past months, coronavirus in Jammu and Kashmir have witnessed forty percent increase in weekly cases with over 60 % of the infected comprising travellers who are visiting the



Union Territory. These details were given by J&K Chief Secretary,

B V R Subrahmanyam during a high-level meeting chaired ➔ [More On P10](#)

Vaccine Jab Capped At Rs 250 In Pvt Hospitals

Private hospitals can charge up to Rs 250 per dose of COVID-19 vaccine, the Union Health Ministry said on Saturday as India prepares to vaccinate people aged above 60 years and those over 45 with comorbidities from March 1. The ministry also specified 20 comorbidities among people aged between 45 and 59 years who will get the vaccine -- heart failure with hospital ➔ [More On P10](#)

Determined To Fulfil Vision Of New, Healthy J&K: LG

Jointly Inaugurates First Batch Of GDC Doda With Jitendra Singh



Observer News Service

DODA: Jammu and Kashmir government is taking several reformative measures for the advancement and upgradation of health

infrastructure, besides providing affordable healthcare services to all, Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha said Saturday. Inaugurating the first batch of 100 MBBS ➔ [More On P10](#)

....CCTVs In Police Stations

Govt Finally Forms Panels Ordered To Be Set Up By SC

Agencies

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir government has constituted two committees regarding CCTVs in police stations which on December 2 last year were directed by Supreme Court of India to be set up within six weeks.

First committee is Union territory Level Oversight Committee and the second District Level Oversight Committee (s).

The UT level is headed by Principal Secretary to the Government, Home Department and its members include Director General of Police, J&K, Member Secretary, Mission Director, ICPS/SRCW, Social Welfare Department and Additional Secretary to the Government, Finance Department. Its terms of reference ➔ [More On P10](#)

Cold Returns To Kashmir After Fresh Snowfall



KO Photo: Abid Bhat

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: Fresh snowfall in Kashmir on Saturday brought back cold wave-like

conditions in the valley where the day temperature for the past week was several degrees higher than normal for ➔ [More On P10](#)

Landslides, Shooting Stones Block Highway

The authorities on Saturday suspended the vehicular movement on Srinagar-Jammu national highway due to landslides and shooting stones at several places of Ramban district. ➔ [More On P10](#)

March 1, 2021 (11:00 am)
Venue: SKICC, Srinagar

1st CONVOCAATION 2021

Chief Guest

Professor D. P. Singh
Chairman, UGC

Vice Chancellor

Professor Mushtaq A. Siddiqi

Chancellor

Shri Manoj Sinha
Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor
UT of J&K

'Honouring our Students'

Islamic University of Science and Technology, Kashmir



To place an advertisement
CALL +91-194 2502327
Monday - Saturday (9am - 6pm)
No 5- Dal Lake Boulevard Srinagar, 190001, Kashmir

Sunday | 28.02.2021

KASHMIR OBSERVER

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PUBLIC NOTICE

I have lost my Canteen Smart Card somewhere. Now I have applied for the duplicate of the same if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the concerned office within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

MOHAMAD REYAZ BHAT S/O KHAZIR MOHD BHAT
R/O AMARGARH P/O TARATHPORA
DISTT KUPWARA PIN CODE 193224

sult

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have lost my 12th marksheet bearing Roll No: 525307 Session 2005 somewhere. Now I have applied for the duplicate of the same if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the Board Of School Education Sub Office Kupwara within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Tajamul Islam Bhat
S/o Khazir Mohammad Bhat
R/o Ahgam Zachaldoora

sult

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have lost Driving licence bearing DL NO: jk15 2017 0000524 somewhere. Now I am applying for the duplicate of the same if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the RTO Bandipora within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Altat Hussain Malik
S/o Nazir Ahmad Malik

aj-ko

OFFICE OF THE REGIONAL TRANSPORT OFFICER KASHMIR NOTICE

Where as an application for transfer of ownership has been received from MS Arise Wheels Address Hyderabad Srinagar (Transferor) of M/Cycle bearing registration No. JK01AC-2706 chasis No: 8007408 Engine No: 8007408 Model 2016 in favour of Shah Zaib Wani S/O Mohd Shafi Wani R/O Bilal Colony Qamarwari (Transferee). Now, therefore, it is notified for the information of the general, public that representation/ Objection, if any in connection with proposed transfer will be received within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice in the daily newspaper Kashmir Observer to the address of undersigned.

No, representation/ objection shall be considered unless it is made writing it is made in the aforesaid period.

NoJK-RTOK 7136
Dated: 27/02/2021
Regional Transport Office, Kashmir
FKO



OFFICE OF THE REGIONAL TRANSPORT OFFICER KASHMIR NOTICE

Whereas, a joint application has been received from Shri Khurshid Ahmad S/o Gh Mohd Makaya R/o Reshanhar Nawakadal (Transferor) and Shri New J&K Roadways Prop: Maqbool Lone R/O Transport Nagar Parimpora (Transferee) for transfer of Mini Bus carriage route Permit No / 211/CMB/WA Covering Vehicle No JK01F- 9547 .

Now, therefore, it is notified for general information that objections, if any to the proposed transfer of the said route permit / vehicle shall be filled in writing in the office of the Regional Transport Officer, Kashmir.

Within a period of 7 days from the date of publication of this notice in the daily News Paper Kashmir Observer. Seller and purchaser identified by the authorized representatives of M/S New Road Ways Namely Mohd Maqbool

NO: JK/RTOK /7176
Dated: 27/02/2021
Regional Transport Office, Kashmir
FKO



از نیات درگولہ با اجلاس ایگزیکٹو مجسٹریٹ درجہ اول

عنوان: مضمون درخواست وسم احمد اختر حسین و سلیم احمد گوہر کھاری ولد شیر محمد گوہر کھاری ساکنہ موضع درگولہ برادر عطا گئی ST

اشیاء برادر آگاہی ہر خاص و عام

معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں ساکن نے ایک درخواست برادر ST پیش کی ہے۔ جو کہ فتر ہذا میں زیر کاروائی ہے اس ضمن میں پواری حلقہ سے رپورٹ طلب کی گئی ہے جس سے عیاں ہے کہ ساکن وائی گوہر کھاری ذات سے تعلق رکھتا ہے اور وہ ہذا میں پچھلے پندرہ سالوں سے مستقل طور پر رہائش پذیر ہے

سرٹیفکیٹ زیر بحث ادا کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص یا اشخاص کو کوئی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ اپنا عذر یا اعتراض ساتھ یوم کے اندر پیش کریں۔ معادہ گزرے کے بعد کوئی عذر یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔

تایب تحصیلدار درگولہ
sult

از عدالت ایگزیکٹو مجسٹریٹ درجہ اول

(تایب تحصیلدار انت ناگ) با اجلاس زیر امحاء صاحب۔

درخواست نمائند: نسیم یوسف میر ولد محمد یوسف میر ساکنہ قہرہ گند بلوڑا اجرائی تاریخ پیدائش سرٹیفکیٹ نام مائین ناسیم۔

Ainain Naseer

اشیاء برادر آگاہی ہر خاص و عام۔

معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں ساکن/ساکنہ مذکورہ بالا نے عدالت ہذا میں ایک درخواست طعن بیان پیش کیا ہے ساکن کے دفتر کا تاریخ پیدائش 30/05/2018 ہے اس ضمن میں سرٹیفکیٹ پیدائش نکلنے کا خواہ ہے کہ اس سرٹیفکیٹ مذکورہ کا اجرا کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص کو کوئی بھی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ ایک ہفتہ کے اندر اندر دوران دفتری اوقات میں پیش کرے بصورت دیگر کوئی بھی اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔

ایگزیکٹو مجسٹریٹ درجہ اول
mja

از عدالت ایگزیکٹو مجسٹریٹ درجہ اول

(تایب تحصیلدار انت ناگ) با اجلاس زیر امحاء صاحب۔

درخواست نمائند: شیر احمد میر ولد محمد رمضان میر ساکنہ سومر بلوڑا اجرائی تاریخ پیدائش سرٹیفکیٹ نام زائرہ شیر اختر شیر احمد میر۔

اشیاء برادر آگاہی ہر خاص و عام۔

معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں ساکن/ساکنہ مذکورہ بالا نے عدالت ہذا میں ایک درخواست طعن بیان پیش کیا ہے ساکن کے دفتر کا تاریخ پیدائش 25/09/2013 ہے اس ضمن میں سرٹیفکیٹ پیدائش نکلنے کا خواہ ہے کہ اس سرٹیفکیٹ مذکورہ کا اجرا کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص کو کوئی بھی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ ایک ہفتہ کے اندر اندر دوران دفتری اوقات میں پیش کرے بصورت دیگر کوئی بھی اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔

ایگزیکٹو مجسٹریٹ درجہ اول
mja

Government of Jammu and Kashmir Department of Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs.

Subject - Appointment of Member-1 in the District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission- regarding.

Advertisement No. 01-FCS&CA of 2021 dated 26/02/2021
Last date for acceptance of Applications - 18/03/2021

Applications are hereby invited from suitable and interested candidates for being considered for appointment to the post of **Member-1, District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (District Commission)** in different Districts of Jammu & Kashmir in terms of Section 28 of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, read with the rules framed there under issued vide G.S.R 452(E) dated 15-07-2020 against the available vacancies.

Total vacancies of Member-1: 20 (twenty) @ one in each District Commission. **All genders are eligible to apply.**

1. Qualification:-

The applicant should-

- Not be less than 35 years of age on the date of notification of the advertisement;
- Possess a Bachelor's degree from a recognized University;
- Be person of ability, integrity and standing, and having special knowledge and professional experience of not less than 15 years in Consumer Affairs, Law, Public Affairs, Administration, Economics, Commerce, Industries, Finance, Management, Engineering, Technology, Public Health or Medicine.

2. Disqualification:-

The applicant shall be disqualified for appointment as a Member, if he/she

- has been convicted and sentenced to imprisonment for an offence which involves moral turpitude; or
- is adjudged to be insolvent, or
- is of unsound mind and stands so declared by a competent court, or
- has been removed or dismissed from service of the State Government or the Central Government or a body corporate owned or controlled by such Government; or
- has, in the opinion of the State Government, such financial or other interest as is likely to affect prejudicially the discharge by him/her of his/her functions as a member.

3. Term & Conditions:-

- The appointment is subject to submission of an undertaking by the candidate that he/she does not and will not have any such financial or other interest as are likely to affect prejudicially his/her functions as Member of the District Commission.
- The Member shall receive salary and allowances and their terms and conditions of services shall be as per the rules notified by the Government in this regard.
- The Member of a District Commission shall hold office for a term of four years or upto the age of 65 years whichever is earlier.
- Every appointment of a Member shall be subject to submission of a certificate of Physical fitness signed by a Civil Surgeon or Chief Medical Officer to his/her medical fitness.

4. Declaration of Financial and other interest- A Member before entering upon his/her office shall declare his/her assets and liabilities.

5. Oath of office and secrecy – Every person appointed as Member before entering upon his/her office shall take an oath of office and secrecy in Form I and II.

6. No TA/DA is admissible for attending any test or interview in this connection, if conducted by the Selection Committee.

7. Important instructions before applying:-

a) Applications shall be submitted only digitally through an e-mail by attaching the duly filled application form in PDF format at the given e-mail address:-
cdrcforjk@gmail.com

b) The Department of Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Government of J&K, shall duly acknowledge the receipt of every application through a return mail.

c) **A fee of Rs. 2000/- (Two Thousand only) per application** has to be deposited through Government of J&K's Treasury under Scheme code

04080110100990383(under the classification Receipt Head-0408, Sub Major Head-01, Minor Head-101, Group Head-0099 & Sub Head-0383). The receipt of Treasury Fee shall be the only enclosure to be attached with the duly filled application form in PDF.

d) It is clarified that multiple applications have to be submitted in case a candidate wants to apply for multiple District Commissions. Separate Fee is to be submitted for each application.

e) Candidates are not required to submit any document along with the Application Form, except for the receipt of Treasury Fee. Original documents/testimonials will be seen only when specifically called for Viva or interaction with the Selection Committee, at a later stage.

f) The Selection Committee, constituted by the Government in terms of G.O. no. 14 – JK(FCS&CA) of 2021 dated 03-02-2021, may shortlist the applications as per the below mentioned criteria-matrix, only if required on account of receipt of a very large number of applications-

S.No	Benchmark	Points to be awarded
1.	For possessing at least 15 years of professional experience exclusively in Consumer Affairs or Law.	03
2.	For possessing professional experience in any of the prescribed fields beyond 15 years.	02 points for each additional year beyond 15 years.
3.	For holding a Master's degree from a recognized university in any of the prescribed fields with at least 65 % marks.	02 points for each Master degree in the prescribed field.
4.	For holding a PhD degree from a recognized university in any of the prescribed fields.	03

g) If shortlisting of candidates is resorted to, the Selection Committee may invite such number of candidates for Viva / interaction as it deems appropriate.

h) The procedure for appointment shall be in consonance with **Rule 6 (Procedure for appointment)** of the Consumer Protection (Qualification for appointment, method of recruitment, procedure of appointment, term of office, resignation and removal of the President and members of the State and District Commission) Rules, 2020.

i) The above mentioned shortlisting criteria, however, shall not be binding upon the Selection Committee while recommending its panel of candidates to the government. As per **rule 6(9)** of the Consumer Protection (Qualification for appointment, method of recruitment, procedure of appointment, term of office, resignation and removal of the President and members of the State and District Commission) Rules, 2020, the Selection Committee shall make its recommendations of suitable panel after taking into account the *suitability, record of past performance, integrity and adjudicatory experience* of the candidates.

8. The Selection Committee reserves the right to issue any clarification at any later stage, if required.

DIPK-14039/20

No.FCS&CA/Legal/05/2021

Application Form

Advertisement No. 01- JK(FCS&CA) of 2021 dated 26.02.2021

APPLICATION FOR THE POST OF MEMBER-1, DISTRICT CONSUMER DISPUTES REDRESSAL COMMISSION (DISTRICT COMMISSION)

- Name of the District for which applying :
- Name of Applicant :
- Gender :
- Father's Name / Spouse's Name :
- Permanent Address :

Affix your recent passport size photograph duly attested

DECLARATION

I hereby declared that all statements made in this application are true and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief. In the event of any information being found false or incorrect or ineligibility being detected before, during or after the process of selection / appointment, my candidature will stand cancelled and all my claims to the appointment will stand forfeited.

Date:-

(SIGNATURE OF THE CANDIDATE)

NB: - 1) All particulars should be filled in capital Letters.
2) Application without duly authenticated photograph and receipt of Fee would be treated as incomplete and void ab-initio.

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Govt To Restore Khushalsar, Gilsar Lakes

SRINAGAR: The Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir, Pandurang K. Pole, accompanied by the Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Dr Shahid Iqbal Choudhary, Saturday, visited Gilkadal Nowshehra and took stock of restoration works of Gillsar, a lake connected to Khushalsar at Gil-Kadal.

On the occasion, the locals met the Divisional Commissioner and apprised him about the dilapidated condition of the lake, turned by releasing of untreated sewage into the water body, throwing of polythene and garbage. They said that illegal constructions on encroached land of the lake and land filling has also deteriorated the glory of the Lake.

The locals demanded that the lake needs immediate dredging to restore it to its original position, besides connecting it with Nigeen Lake via Bota kadal so that its waters remain flowing through the year imperative for saving it from further deterioration and turning into cesspool.



Bota kadal so that its waters remain flowing through the year imperative for saving it from further deterioration and turning into cesspool.

They requested the Div Com to take cognisance of their long pending demand of restoration of Khushalsar a big water body in centre of the city, connected with Gillsar.

The Div Com assured the locals that the Government shall take all the steps to restore the pristine glory of this lake within the shortest possible time. He directed the concerned officers to take immediate steps

process started by the Government. He asked them to act as responsible citizens and desist from throwing garbage and polythene into the lake and also sensitise others to stop it for their own interests.

Later, the Div Com visited 90 ft road, Soura and Alamgari Bazar areas of Srinagar city to assess hurdles that come in way for laying of water pipes by PHE dept to ensure drinking water supply to various areas.

The concerned officer informed the Div Com that several shops need to be demolished at 90 ft road Soura and at Alamgari Bazar to ensure laying of pipes for providing drinking water supply to various areas of Srinagar city.

Among others, Chief Engineers of R&B and UEED, and Joint Commissioner, SMC was also accompanied the Div Com during the visit.

THE LOCALS DEMANDED THAT THE LAKE NEEDS IMMEDIATE DREDGING TO RESTORE IT TO ITS ORIGINAL position, besides connecting it with Nigeen Lake via Bota kadal so that its waters remain flowing through the year imperative for saving it from further deterioration and turning into cesspool.

Four-Day Training Programme On Mental Health Concludes At KU

SRINAGAR: A four-day training programme on mental health concluded at the University of Kashmir on Saturday.

The capacity-building programme for community-level health professionals was organised by the varsity's Department of Social Work (DoSW) as part of a research project sponsored by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), New Delhi.

Dean of Research at KU Prof Shakil A Romshoo was the chief guest at the valedictory function. Applauding the DoSW for organising the training programme for grassroots-level health professionals, Prof Romshoo said the university is taking new initiatives to take the outcome of its academic and project-based research to the society.

"We have constituted a research outreach committee to reach out to the society with the findings of research conducted in this university on different societal and environmental problems. The idea is to develop a strong society-university linkage and to help address the pressing societal problems, including mental health and drug abuse," he said.

Prof Romshoo said alongside capacity building of health professionals, it is important for people to come together and



strengthen the lost societal connect that they once cherished.

"Somehow there has been a loss of social spaces in Kashmir where regular interactions among people, visiting relatives frequently and sharing personal concerns and problems with friends would be a regular affair. I think that needs to be revived in this journey of addressing mental health concerns, alongside removing taboos and social stigma falsely attached to the mental health problems," he said.

Prof Romshoo later released the 'Social Work Bulletin', the first volume of a peer-reviewed and refereed journal of the Department of Social Work.

Coordinator DoSW Dr Adil Bashir highlighted aims and objectives of the training programme, even as he talked at length about the Mental Healthcare Act of 2017 and its provisions.

He said the DoSW will continue to organise such training programmes and workshops to help address major societal problems in line with the mandate of the department.

Dr Sumir Gul from KU's Department of Library and Information Sciences also spoke on the occasion as a special guest. The valedictory function, among others, was attended by Deputy Director DIQA Showket Shafi, and faculty members of DoSW.

DPS Srinagar Rewards Parveena Ayoub

SRINAGAR: Delhi Public School Srinagar Saturday awarded Satya Devi Amla cash prize of Rs 50,000/- and a two year fully funded scholarship to Parveena Ayoub of Ganderbal who scored 490 out of 500 marks in her class 10 examination.

In a statement the school said Parveena's father, Ayoub, has to support a family of six including his four daughters and wife and the family lives in a single room tin shed with minimum source of income. "Coming from a financially weak background, Parveena soared through all the hardships and with perseverance and efforts, she managed to secure good grades by living in a single tin room with her siblings & parents."

Every year the school offers a cash prize of Rs 50,000 to a meritorious girl student, keeping with its tradition of encouraging gender equality and promoting women empowerment. Delhi Public School Srinagar also runs a vocational centre for visually impaired named after Satya Devi.

Announcing the reward and scholarship, Vijay Dhar Chairman DPS Srinagar said, "We feel responsible for nurturing the dreams of achievers and dreamers, and under no condition can we let their dreams go waste for lack of resources. Parveena's success deserves to be encouraged further, and provided the best platform to nurture it further."

He reiterated that Delhi Public School Srinagar will provide her the best platform to excel in academics & other co-curricular & extra-curricular fields.

Power Shutdown In Srinagar Parts On March 1

SRINAGAR: According to the Power Controller, Kashmir province, the power supply to the areas fed from the Receiving Stations of Rangreth, Rasoo, Doodganga, JKLL, Peerbagh and Airforce shall remain affected on March 1, from 10.00 am to 3.00 pm in order to execute the works related to installation of street lights.

LG Asks Mayor SMC To Take Measures For Ensuring Better Civic Facilities



SRINAGAR: Mayor, Srinagar Municipal Corporation, Junaid Matu Saturday called on the Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha here at Raj Bhavan.

The Mayor briefed the Lt Governor about various ongoing initiatives being launched by SMC to strengthen the Corporation for ensuring better civic facilities for the people of Srinagar.

The Lt Governor asked the Mayor to take all requisite measures for making constant improvement in the functioning of the Corporation. He also laid special emphasis on ensuring round the clock provision of basic civic amenities to the people.

Meanwhile, former Legislator, Rafi Ahmad Mir also called on the Lieutenant Governor and projected various issues of public importance pertaining to up-

gradation of Sub District Hospital Pahalgam, augmentation of drinking water supply, and promotion of tourism at Pahalgam.

Later, Environmental activist and Advocate Nadeem Qadri submitted a memorandum of demands and issues pertaining to the conservation of environment.

He discussed with the Lt Governor various measures for conservation of Wildlife, Forests, Lakes, Wetlands, Springs, besides making Kashmir polythene-free zone.

The Lt Governor, while interacting with members of the delegations, impressed upon them to continue their noble work for the welfare of the public, safeguarding the environment, besides empowering the grass root institutions of democratic setup in J&K.

THE LT GOVERNOR ASKED THE MAYOR to take all requisite measures for making constant improvement in the functioning of the Corporation. He also laid special emphasis on ensuring round the clock provision of basic civic amenities to the people.

DIAL-EMMA

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

AIRPORTS

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311 ✈️

RAILWAYS

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

HIGHWAY STATUS

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

This Day in History

- 1998 - First flight of RQ-4 Global Hawk, the first unmanned aerial vehicle certified to file its own flight plans and fly regularly in U.S. civilian airspace.
- 2001 - The US Environmental Protection Agency announces that it intends to proceed with implementation of tighter restrictions on sulfur content in diesel fuel; the rule is opposed by many in the refining industry
- 2004 - Over 1 million Taiwanese participating in the 228 Hand-in-Hand Rally form a 500-kilometre (300-mile) long human chain to commemorate the 228 Incident in 1947
- 2005 - Lebanon's pro-Syrian prime minister, Omar Karami, resigns amid large anti-Syria street demonstrations in Beirut.
- 2005 - A suicide bombing at a police recruiting centre in Al Hillah, Iraq kills 127.
- 2007 - Jupiter flyby of the New Horizons Pluto-observer spacecraft.
- 2013 - 35 people are killed in violent demonstrations across Bangladesh
- 2013 - 28 people are killed and 60 are injured after a series of bombings across Baghdad, Iraq
- 2013 - The brains of two rats successfully connected so that they share information
- 2014 - Russia moves troops into the Crimea to protect its interests against Ukraine



HIJRI
CALENDAR

15

RAJAB-UL-
MURAJJAB

1442

PRAYERS

FAJR

5: 38

ZUHR

12: 43

ASR

4:45

MAGRIB

6:29

ISHA

7:49

From KO Archives

DISTRESS POWER CUT AS GT SUPPLY STOPS

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR Barely a few hours after the power development department PDD finalised revised curtailment schedule for the valley assuring around 12 hour power supply, authorities gave it an quit burial this evening. Even after the power minister, S S Slathia, directed continued 4-hour daily (7 pm to 11 pm) operation of gas turbines to improve power availability, the 5-unit Pampore turbines screeched to an abrupt halt following orders from above.

According to reports authorities were forced to resort to 'distress load shedding of ru-ral areas to enable maintain-ing minimum supply to the city and some major towns besides the essential services. The 'revised' programme is to be further revised in keeping with the reduced availability ordered by the power managers in Jammu.

Reports said the revised schedule, drawn up for 10 days. February 26 to March 7 had been worked out on the premise that about 100 megawatts of power would be available in ad-dition to that imported from northern grid and local genera-tion. The valley was divided into two groups. A and B. Calculat-ing a net availability of 430 mw to 460 mw, the re-vised schedule on even ' odd basis envisaged a fairly improved supply position.

Meanwhile, according to sources, the power generation from Uri project had improved over the past few days following a marginal rise in the water level of the river. From a mea-gre 50 mw, it shot up to 140 mw on Saturday and Sunday. Even to-day, it hovered around 120 mw. The generation from the Lower Jhelum hydel project and other stations had also gone up ap-precably.

Contrary to governments claims of heavy dependence on imports from the northern grid, and even the common belief, sources said, the valley exported 40 mw of power to northern grid for h brief while on Saturday and Sunday However, the PDD preferred to keep a tight lid over the report to avoid any embarrassment


On Saturday, the power minister had himself told Kashmir Observer that uni-form supply would be ensured between rural and urban areas of the valley with the avail-ability of 200 mw to 230 mw from northern grid. He had assured supply for nine hours on an average However, he okayed a further im-provement to make it about 12 hours in 24 hours for which he ordered continued operation of (he gas turbine.

Interestingly, the official handout issued after Slathia's Pampore visit yesterday boastfully screamed, "gas turbine in operation despite whop-ping daily expenditure". Reminis-cent of Mirza Galib's famous cou-plet ke merey qail ke baad us my jafa se tauba / hai us zood pashaiman ka pas-haiman hona, " he (Slathia) expressed regrets on the incon-venience faced by the people in the valley due to blast-ing of the transmission towers."

Now that the 'generosity' has been unceremoniously with-drawn the minister's (read government's) regret has proved to be shockingly short-lived.

Even as, in the absence of permanent restoration, the 220-K V and 132-KV transmission lines may prove to be too fragile, like a slender thread, to ensure sustained import of power, a question mark will continue to hang over the state govern-ment's role in ensuring an equitable distribution of electricity between Kashmir and Jammu.

(Kashmir Observer, 28 February, 2001)



J&K Small Scale Industries Development Corporation Limited (SICOP)
(A J&K Government Undertaking)
Office of the General Manager (M) SICOP Sanat Ghar Bemina Srinagar Kashmir.

E-TENDER NOTICE NO: 48-SICOP (GMM) of 2020 **Dated: 27-02-2021**

For and on behalf of the Managing Director of J&K SICOP and in terms of **Govt. Order No. 342-IND of 1995 dated 01.11.1995 read with Order No. 189- Ind of 2009 Date 26.08.2009**, Online e-tenders are invited from Small Scale Industrial Units (SSI Units), registered with SICOP under Marketing Assistance Scheme (MAS) in Kashmir Division for fixation of rate for **following item:**

S.No	Description	Earnest money (In INR)	Cost of Tender Document (In INR)	SSI Units	Remarks	Financial Year
1	Providing and Fixing of Wooden Joinery (additional) Items.	5,000	25	Registered with SICOP under MAS Scheme	Kashmir Division Only	2020-21

Terms & Conditions:

- Only those SSI Units can quote the rates that are registered with SICOP under its Marketing Assistance Scheme (MAS) in Kashmir Division.
- The tender documents for the above job can be seen on the website [www. Jktenders.gov.in](http://www.Jktenders.gov.in) from **27-02-2021 (02:00PM)**.
- The tender documents can be downloaded from the above website from **27-02-2021 (02:00PM)** onwards.
- The bids shall be deposited in electronic format on website www.jktenders.gov.in from **27-02-2021 (02:00PM) up to 05.03.2021 (05:00 PM) only**.
- The uploaded pre-qualification bids in the first instance on the website will be opened on **06.03.2021 (12:00PM)** in the office of **General Manager (M), SICOP, Sanat Ghar Bemina Srinagar Kashmir** in presence of bidders who wish to be present. In case of holiday on the date of opening of bid, the same will be opened on the next working day at the same time and venue. The financial bids of only those SSI units shall be opened who will qualify in technical bid. Intimation about the opening of financial bids shall be notified separately.
- Tender documents fee shall be deposited in Account No.0148020100000200, IFSC Code-JAKAOKARRAN, Branch J&K Bank Karan Nagar, Srinagar. **The Earnest Money Deposit (In shape of CDR/FDR/TDR) in original, favoring General Manager (M), SICOP, Srinagar Kashmir** shall be uploaded online.
- All documents as required as per SBD should be uploaded with the technical bid.
- Complete bidding process will be online (Price Bid not to be submitted in physical form).
- This tender is floated only for fixation of rate contract. The supply order shall be placed with the SSI units on the rates as shall be received in the tender (lowest), duly approved by the Competent Authority of SICOP.
- All terms and conditions, governing the Marketing Assistance Scheme shall apply.

General Manager (M)
SICOP Kashmir

DIPK-NB-6023/20

Religiosity Fostering Rise In Militancy: Pakistan Experts



ISLAMABAD: Militant attacks are on the rise in Pakistan amid a growing religiosity that has brought greater intolerance, prompting one expert to voice concern the country could be overwhelmed by religious extremism.

Pakistani authorities are embracing strengthening religious belief among the population to bring the country closer together. But it's doing just the opposite, creating intolerance and opening up space for a creeping resurgence in militancy, said Mohammad Amir Rana, executive director of the independent Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies.

"Unfortunately, instead of helping to inculcate better ethics and integrity, this phenomenon is encouraging a tunnel vision" that encourages violence, intolerance and hate, he wrote recently in a local newspaper.

"Religiosity has begun to define the Pakistani citizenry." Militant violence in Pakistan has spiked: in the past week alone, four vocational school instructors who advocated for women's rights were travelling together when they were gunned down in a Pakistan border region. A Twitter death threat against Nobel laureate Malala Yousafzai attracted an avalanche of trolls. They heaped abuse on the young champion of girls' education, who survived a Pakistani Taliban bullet to the head. A couple of men on a motorcycle opened fire on a police check-post not far from the Afghan border killing a young police constable.

In recent weeks, at least a

dozen military and paramilitary men have been killed in ambushes, attacks and operations against militant hideouts, mostly in the western border regions.

A military spokesman this week said the rising violence is a response to an aggressive military assault on militant hideouts in regions bordering Afghanistan and the reunification of splintered and deeply violent anti-Pakistan terrorist groups, led by the Tehreek-e-Taliban. The group is driven by a radical religious ideology that espouses violence to enforce its extreme views.

General Babar Iftikar said the reunified Pakistani Taliban have found a headquarters in eastern Afghanistan. He also accused India of financing and outfitting a reunified Taliban.

India and Pakistan routinely trade allegations that the other is using militants to undermine stability and security at home.

Security analyst and fellow at the Center for International Security and Cooperation, Asfandyar Mir, said the reunification of a splintered militancy is dangerous news for Pakistan.

"The reunification of various splinters into the (Tehreek-e-Taliban) central organisation is a major development, which makes the group very dangerous," said Mir.

The TIP claimed responsibility for the 2012 shooting of Yousafzai. Its former spokesman, Ehsanullah Ehsan, who mysteriously escaped Pakistan military custody to flee to the country, tweeted a promise that the Taliban would kill her if she returned home.

Iftikar, in a briefing of foreign journalists this week, said Pakistani military personnel aided Ehsan's escape, without elaborating. He said the soldiers involved had been punished and efforts were being made to return Ehsan to custody.

Israeli Cargo Ship Struck In Oman Gulf After US Air Strike



Agencies

TEL AVIV: The careful calculus of force in the Middle East was on display today as the Biden administration made its first use of the American military, this one an airstrike against Iranian proxies.

The F-15 airstrike, reported to have killed 17 people, drew an initial muted response from Iranian officials. However, a ship owned by an Israeli company was damaged later in the day while sailing in the Gulf of Oman. The MV Helios Ray sails under the Bahamas flag and belongs to the Israeli company Helios Ray Ltd, owned by Rami Unger, one of the largest car importers in Israel.

First indications point to sea mines or missiles. The ship was hit during a cruise out of Oman Bay. There were no casualties, but the ship that had made its way to Singapore from the city of Damam in Saudi Arabia was damaged and had to return to Saudi Arabia.

Unger is one of the largest car importers in Israel and Israeli sources said today that first indications point to an Iranian-initiated attack performed by one of its proxies.

The US Fifth Fleet is helping in the initial investigation.

The initial air attack was very limited and occurred in response

to Iranian rocket attacks against US targets in Iraq. The US airstrikes killed at least 17, local sources and one medical source said Friday.

The F-15s attacked targets in eastern Syria on the Syrian-Iraqi border early Friday morning, according to Syrian state television. The strikes appeared to be limited in scope, potentially lowering the risk of escalation.

Moredchai Keidar an expert on Iran, told BD that the Iranians will retaliate "probably in Iraq, but they will let the Americans know a strike is planned. They don't want to kill Americans because they know this will take the confrontation to another, different stage."

US President Joe Biden on Thursday night and Friday morning approved the attack in eastern Syria against facilities belonging to what the Pentagon said were Iran-backed militia.

The strikes destroyed multiple facilities at a border control point used by a number of Iranian-backed militant groups, including Kata'ib Hezbollah (KH) and Kata'ib Sayyid al-Shuhada (KSS).

The Israeli Air Force (IAF) was warned minutes before the attack began, a senior reserve officer in the IAF told BD. While the Americans know exactly where Israeli aircraft are flying over

Syria, they decided to give the warning to avoid any mishap.

Iran's operations in Syria are orchestrated by the Quds Force. Direct involvement by Iranian forces consist of two separate contingents: the first one consists of exclusively Iranian forces, based on the ground forces of the IRGC. The second is a smaller group of units from the regular Iranian army, Artesh, which began arriving in Syria in early 2016.

Iranian fighting forces in Syria grew to at one point as many as 2,500 men. But fear of criticism at home over losses caused by an unpopular distant war, drove Iran to gradually decrease the number of fighters in Syria, to less than a thousand today. These numbers mask the crucial role of Iranians as battlefield commanders of Syrian and Shiite militias.

Meanwhile, Biden came under attack by the left wing of his party for the use of force.

"This makes President Biden the seventh consecutive US president to order strikes in the Middle East. There is absolutely no justification for a president to authorize a military strike that is not in self-defense against an imminent threat without congressional authorization," Rep. Ro Khanna, a member of the House Armed Services Committee and deputy whip of the Congressional Progressive Caucus. "We need to extricate from the Middle East, not escalate. The President should not be taking these actions without seeking explicit authorization instead of relying on broad, outdated, I spoke against endless war with Trump, and I will speak out against it when we have a Democratic President."

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'Hold MBS Accountable': World Reacts To US Khashoggi Report

Agencies

US intelligence agencies have concluded in a new report that slain Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi was murdered by a Saudi hit squad operating under the command of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS).

The unclassified report released on Friday confirmed the role top US intelligence officials believe Saudi Arabia's de facto ruler played in the 2018 killing of Khashoggi.

"We assess that Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman approved an operation in Istanbul, Turkey, to capture or kill Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi," the Office of US Director of National Intelligence said.

"Since 2017, the Crown Prince has had absolute control of the Kingdom's security and intelligence organisations, making it highly unlikely that



Saudi officials would have carried out an operation of this nature without the Crown Prince's authorisation."

The 59-year-old was a columnist for the Washington Post newspaper who had been critical of the Saudi government. He was killed inside the Saudi consulate in Istanbul in October 2018.

Saudi officials have denied MBS had any role in the assassination.

Here is how the world reacted to the release of the four-page report.

Saudi Foreign Ministry: In a statement carried by Saudi state news agency SPA,

the kingdom's foreign ministry said: "The government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia completely rejects the ... assessment in the report pertaining to the Kingdom's leadership, and notes that the report contained inaccurate information and conclusions."

United Arab Emirates: The UAE defended Saudi Arabia's position, reported UAE's state news agency WAM on Saturday.

The UAE's foreign ministry "expressed its confidence in and support for the Saudi judiciary rulings, which affirm the kingdom's commitment to implementing the law in a transparent and impartial manner, and holding all those involved in this case accountable", WAM said.

United Kingdom: The British foreign office reiterated the United Kingdom has always been clear that "Jamal Khashoggi's murder was a terrible crime".

Kidnappers Release 27 Nigerian Schoolboys As Search For 300 Abducted Girls Continue

Agencies

MAIDUGURI: Gunmen in Nigeria on Saturday released 27 teenage boys who were kidnapped from their school last week in the northern state of Niger, while security forces continued to search for more than 300 schoolgirls abducted in a nearby state.

Schools have become targets for mass kidnappings for ransom in northern Nigeria by armed groups, many of whom carry guns and ride motorcycles.

On February 17, 27 students, three staff and 12 members of their families were abducted by an armed gang who stormed the Government Science secondary school in the Kagara district of Niger state, overwhelming the school's security detail. One boy was killed during the raid.

After their release, boys were seen by a Reuters witness walking with armed security through a dusty village, some struggling to stand and asking for water. A government official said the boys were aged between 15 and 18.

"The Abducted Students, Staff and Relatives of Government Science Collage Kagara have regained their freedom and have been received by the Niger State Government," Governor Abubakar Sani Bello said in a tweet.

The release of the schoolboys comes just a day after the raid on a school in Zamfara state where gunmen seized 317 girls.

The recent attacks have raised concern about rising violence



by armed gangs and Islamist insurgents. Jihadist group Boko Haram carries out abductions in Nigeria's turbulent northeast, as does a branch of Islamic State.

The unrest has become a political problem for President Muhammadu Buhari, a retired general and former military ruler who has faced mounting criticism in recent months over high profile attacks by the gangs known locally as "bandits".

Buhari replaced his long-standing military chiefs this month amid worsening violence in Nigeria.

In December, gunmen raided a school in northwestern Katsina state and kidnapped nearly 350 boys, who were subsequently rescued by security forces.

Violence and insecurity have compounded the economic challenges faced by citizens in Africa's most populous country and top oil exporter, which is struggling to cope with a fall in revenues due to a slump in crude prices in addition to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The most high profile school kidnapping was that of more than 270 schoolgirls abducted by Boko Haram from the town of Chibok in 2014. Around 100 of them remain missing. **Reuters**

More Tribes Strike Non-Aggression Agreements With Advancing Army, Allies In Yemen's Ma'rib



Agencies

More major Yemeni tribes have signed non-aggression agreements with advancing Yemeni army troops and allies in the strategic central province of Ma'rib.

Lebanese Arabic-language al-Akhbar newspaper, citing local sources, reported that elders from Ubaidah, Murad, Jahm and Jadaan tribes took the decision as the Yemeni armed forces and allied fighters from Popular Committees are pulling the plug on Saudi mercenaries loyal to Yemen's former president Abd Rabbuh Mansur in Ma'rib.

Accordingly, a number of senior sheikhs from Ma'rib, whose tribes have struck peace deals with Yemen's Sana'a-based National Salvation Government, held a meeting in the capital and stressed the need for the liberation of the region.

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The sources noted that Brigadier General Abdul Ghani Sha'alan was seriously wounded during bitter skirmishes with Yemeni armed forces and Popular Committees, and later died in hospital.

Saudi airwarplanes out nearly two dozen airstrikes against various regions in Ma'rib province on Friday, Arabic-language al-Masira television network reported.

They launched the air raids against Sirwah and Mahliyah districts, but there were no immediate reports about the extent of damage caused and possible casualties.

The Lebanon-based and Arabic-language al-Mayadeen television news network also reported on Friday evening that multiple explosions were heard in the so-called Third Military Region of Ma'rib.

The report, however, did not provide any information about the extent of damage and possible casualties.

NEWS MAKERS

Why Russian Diplomats Returned From North Korea On Rail Trolley

Agencies

SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA: Eight Russian diplomats and family members -- the youngest of them a three-year-old girl -- have arrived home from North Korea on a hand-pushed rail trolley due to Pyongyang's coronavirus restrictions.

Video posted on Russia's foreign ministry's verified Telegram account showed the trolley, laden with suitcases and women, being pushed across a border railway bridge by Third Secretary Vladislav Sorokin, the only man in the group.

They waved and cheered as they approached their homeland, the culmination of an expedition that began with a 32-hour train trip from Pyongyang, followed by a two-hour bus ride to the border.

"It took a long and difficult journey to get home," the ministry said in the post late Thursday, speaking



of the final stretch.

"To do this, you need to make a trolley in advance, put it on the rails, place things on it, seat the children -- and go," it said.

"Finally, the most important part of the route -- walking on foot to the Russian side."

Sorokin was "the main 'engine' of the non-self-propelled railcar", it said, and had to push it for more

than a kilometre.

Once on Russian territory, they were met by foreign ministry colleagues and were taken by bus to Vladivostok airport.

"Don't leave your own behind", the ministry added as a hashtag. North Korea imposed a strict border shutdown in January last year to try to protect itself from the coronavirus that first emerged in

neighbouring China and has gone on to sweep the world.

The shutdown has cancelled all flights in or out of the nuclear-armed, sanctions-hit country, and cross-border trains.

'Rigorous and demanding work'

With staff and supplies unable to enter, the restrictions have severely hampered the activities of diplomats and aid workers, and several Western embassies have pulled out their entire staff.

But Russia has close relations with the North and maintains a significant diplomatic presence.

On Friday, the Kremlin said the journey out of North Korea demonstrated that diplomatic service is no walk in the park.

"It seems very pleasant and elegant but in reality this is very complex, rigorous and demanding work," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov, himself a trained diplomat, told reporters.

Prince Harry On Queen's First Gift To Great-Grandson Archie

Agencies

NEW YORK: Britain's Prince Harry said in a rare one-on-one interview that he left royal life because the British press was "destroying" his mental health, and revealed he watches "The Crown."

Harry gave an intimate insight into his young family's new life in Los Angeles during an open-top bus tour of the city with "The Late Late Show" host James Corden.

"We all know what the British press can be like, and it was destroying my mental health," said Harry, who relocated to the United States with wife Meghan Markle last year.

"I was, like, this is toxic. So I did what any husband and what any father would do. I need to get my family out of here."

Harry and Markle's shock an-



nouncement in January 2020 that they were stepping back from royal duties rocked Britain's royal family, with British newspapers dubbing it "Mexit."

Earlier this month, Buckingham Palace announced that the couple had permanently quit royal duties following a one-year review of the new arrangement.

Queen Elizabeth II ordered the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, as they are formally known, to re-

linquish their honorary titles and patronages.

"It was never walking away," Harry, 36, told Corden. "It was stepping back rather than stepping down. It was a really difficult environment."

Harry has long had a difficult relationship with Britain's tabloids, blaming press intrusion for contributing to his mother Princess Diana's death in a car crash in 1997.

Earlier this month, Markle won a high-profile privacy claim against Associated Newspapers for publishing a private letter that she wrote to her estranged father.

Harry said he was "more comfortable" with the portrayal of the royal family in the hit Netflix series "The Crown" than he is with newspaper stories written about him and his family.

DM Kupwara Issues Weather Advisory

KUPWARA: The District Magistrate Kupwara Saturday said that in view of incessant rainfall for last two days and increasing high water level/ apprehension of landslides, the people of the district in general and people residing in the areas like Keran, Karnah, Machil, Budnamal, Jumbund, Nowgam, Kumkadi and in the periphery of different Nallahs/ rivers prone to floods, sloppy areas of the District in particular are advised to refrain from venturing in avalanche

prone areas till the improvement of weather.

In case of any urgency general public can contact District Administration Control Room on 01955- 253522 and Police Control Room Kupwara on 252451 and Handwara on 262295.

Meanwhile Deputy Commissioner has asked all districts and sectoral officers not to leave the respective headquarters without prior permission from this office and keep their men and machinery ready to meet any exigency.

Troop Reduction Essential To Normalise Kashmir Situation: ANC

Srinagar: Welcoming the agreement between the armies of India and Pakistan, President Awami National Conference Khalida Shah said that it was necessary to reduce the number of troops to normalise situation in the Kashmir Valley.

Shah said that the liaison between the two countries' directors of military operations on the hotline a big development.

Khaleda said that there was no other way but to hold talks between the two countries to stop violence inside Jammu and Kashmir and on the borders.

She further said that the central government should reduce the number of troops deployed here to create a peaceful atmosphere in the valley so that the people could get relief from their daily problems. (KNS)

Social Justice Vital For Maintaining Social Stability: Justice Magrey



BARAMULLA: J&K High Court Judge, Justice Ali Mohammad Magrey Saturday termed the social justice and equality vital for maintaining social stability. He said that the constitution of India gives some fundamental rights and liberties and there is a need to uphold them while discharging one's duties.

Justice Magrey said this during a daylong awareness cum workshop on 'Social Justice and Role of NGOs' organised by District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Baramulla, at Dak Bungalow here.

J&K High Court Judge, Justice Ali Mohammad Magrey was the Chief Guest on the occasion and Deputy Commissioner (DC) Baramulla, Mohammad Aijaz Asad was the Guest of Honour.

Principal District and Sessions Judge Baramulla (Chairman DLSA) Sanjay Parihar, Sub-Judge Baramulla (Secretary DLSA) Faizan ul Haq Iqbal, SSP Abdul Quyum, district and sectoral officers, representatives of several NGOs, civil society members, and prominent citizens among other functionaries attended the workshop.

The Chief Guest, during his address said that rights and duties go hand in hand and everyone should identify his/her role in the society.

Appreciating the role of NGOs, Justice Magrey said that these organizations need to be strengthened as they play an important role in social justice and empowerment. He further said that smooth delivery of justice will be ensured only if the govt functionaries and other stakeholders perform their duties with open conscience and with full devotion.

Justice Magrey also added that social injustice is a threat to the stability and sustenance of a society and every effort should be made to ensure that justice and

equality prevail.

Justice Magrey, who is also the Executive Chairman of State Legal Services Authority highlighted the role of judiciary in carrying out welfare activities outside their domain of work as what is termed as Judicial Activism.

He gave a brief appraisal of National legal Services Authority Act and said that judiciary is playing its part in this regard with zeal and vigor.

The Deputy Commissioner, in his address underlined the role of NGOs towards dissemination of justice and said that district administration works in tandem with several NGOs while carrying out various welfare activities.

He added that welfare of the society is possible only when all the stakeholders play their constructive role in their respective domains. Moreover, DC said that there is a need to widen the social base of NGOs so that their range of activities is expanded positively.

On the occasion, an array of lectures were presented by the resource persons comprising legal experts, paralegal volunteers and other eminent personalities who highlighted several aspects associated with the role of NGOs towards social justice and equality.

Earlier, Principal District and Sessions Judge presented the valedictory address wherein he welcomed the chief guest and other participants. He gave a brief introduction of District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Baramulla and highlighted its role towards welfare of the society.

Secretary DLSA presented the vote of thanks during which he expressed gratitude to the participants who showed their enthusiastic participation in the programme.

JUSTICE MAGREY ALSO ADDED THAT social injustice is a threat to the stability and sustenance of a society and every effort should be made to ensure that justice and equality prevail.

JKFDCL Board Approves Proposal To Start E-Auctions Of Timber



JAMMU: The first meeting of Board of Directors (BoDs) of Jammu and Kashmir Forest Development Corporation Limited (JKFDCL) was held under the chairmanship of Commissioner Secretary, Forest, Ecology & Environment Department, Sarita Chauhan.

The meeting was attended by Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Dr. Mohit Gera; Secretary Tribal Affairs, Rehana Batul; Managing Director, JKFDCL, Vasu Yadav; members of the Board besides representatives of Finance, Rural Development and Industries & Commerce departments also participated in the meeting.

The members of the Board deliberated on key administrative and financial issues involved in switchover of business from erstwhile J&K State Forest Corporation (JKSFC) to JKFDCL besides roadmap for smooth transition to the newly created entity was held in detail during the meeting.

The Board approved the proposal to start e-auctions of timber on pilot basis. This is a significant step towards digitisation of services which will benefit the consumers in general, and timber traders in particular.

The Board also discussed introduction of Pay and Accounts Office system in JKFDCL for streamlining the processes and digitisation of accounting process to incorporate financial discipline in the JKFDCL.

This major reform will not only facilitate the consumers who procure goods and services from J&KFDCL but will also bring all the business units of the Corporation on a common platform for the purpose of accounting and book-keeping.

Managing Director JKFDCL on the occasion gave a brief presentation on the actions taken for transition of the JKSFC to JKFDCL and functions performed by the Company during the period of transition.

Pertinently, the JKFDCL was incorporated in December 2020 under the Companies Act 2013 and will take over the assets and liabilities of the erstwhile JKSFC.

First Case Of Avian Influenza Detected In Poultry

SRINAGAR: After crows, a first case of Avian Influenza, commonly known as Bird Flu has been confirmed among poultry in north Kashmir's Baramulla district on Saturday.

An official said that a sample of poultry from Iqbal market Baramulla was taken, which was declared positive following which ten kilometres from the epicentre has been declared as 'Alert Zone'.

"Director Animal Husbandry Department Kashmir vide letter number DALIK/Tech/A-59/18534-40 Dated:



24.02 2021 has intimated that a sample of poultry from Iqbal Market, Old Town Baramulla has been declared positive for Avian Influenza virus (HSN8) by the ICAR NISHAD and it has been recommended that surveillance of the affected areas

be intensified besides declaring the epicenters as Alert Zones to check the spread of the Influenza," reads an order issued by district magistrate Baramulla.

"Now, therefore, in view of above, a radius of 10 KM from the Khan Chicken point Iqbal Market, Old Town Baramulla is hereby declared as 'Alert Zones'. Accordingly, Animal Husbandry Department shall keep the aforementioned area/Market under surveillance and conduct random sampling within 10 KM of the said shop," it further added.

Gupta Discusses Action Plan Of Solid Waste Management For Capital Cities

JAMMU: Principal Secretary, Housing and Urban Development Department, Dheeraj Gupta Saturday chaired a meeting with senior officers to discuss and review progress of various ongoing works under project AMRUT.

The meeting was informed about the various ongoing projects carried out under AMRUT in Jammu City including construction of Multi-tier parking of old Jammu at Panjirthi, Parade, Circular Road and Gandhi Nagar, construction/up-gradation of drainage nallahs passing Trikuta Nagar, Gandhi Nagar, Nanak Nagar besides Shastri Nagar, drainage schemes for construction of deep drain Sunder Nagar.

The meeting also discussed the issues of construction of sewerage system by way of laying of sewers, construction of main hole for 5 nallahs on left side of River Tawi, construction of deep drain from Daily Excelsior Forest Land Janipur up to Patoli Baba Mastram Ashram through Ram Vihar Shant Nagar Janipur and construction of Peerkho Nallah.

The ongoing works of Srinagar City under AMRUT including Anantnag Town were also discussed in the meeting besides construction of multi-level car Parking at Sheikh Bagh, intelligent Traffic System Phase-II, development of Cycle Track along the Bund of River Jhelum from Shivpora towards Batwara in Srinagar, water supply in University Area and construction of multi level Parking places of Janglat Mandi were also discussed.

Principal Secretary asked the concerned authority to speed up the ongoing process of various projects in the Jammu and Kashmir and clear all bottlenecks in this regard so that the projects could be completed within stipulated time frame.

Dheeraj Gupta also stressed upon the executive agencies to increase more men and machinery for expedition of works under AMRUT projects and asked the all concerned HoDs for proper monitoring of the projects.

Earlier, Principal Secretary, Housing and Urban Development Department also chaired a meeting of senior officers to review the Solid Waste Management action plan of Municipal Corporations and decentralized SSWM facilities in 76 Urban Local Bodies of Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting reviewed various issues regarding action plan of Solid Waste Management including handling capacity of the generated solid wastes in each ward, adopting eco-friendly SWM practices for sustainable development, set out requirement for specific infrastructure and cost effective plans with proactive public participation programs.

The meeting was informed regarding existing and proposed SWM system in JMC, Sanitation, Waste Generation, planning for Sanitary Landfill, Bio-remediation of Existing Dumpsite, Planning & interventions for C&D waste, Bins proposed for source, funds requirements for CAPEX besides benefits of action plan.

Principal Secretary directed the concerned officers to implement Solid Waste Management action plan in letter and spirit so that disposal of the garbage from both capital cities of Jammu and Kashmir is done efficiently.

JKSSB Bars 3 Candidates From Participating In SSB Exams

JAMMU: The J&K Services Selection Board conducted phase first of objective type written examination for the Class IV post Saturday from 12 noon to 2 pm.

A statement issued here by SSB said that the officers/officials deployed for examination duty while exercising extra vigil caught three candidates while indulging in malpractice.

The candidates were found to be in possession of Bluetooth devices/ electronic equipment taken in stealthily, at Govt Girls Higher Secondary School, Rehari, Jammu, Venue code 1297, RP School, Alamdar Colony, Lal Bazar Srinagar, Venue Code 1452 and University of Kashmir, Hazratbal Srinagar, Venue Code 1438 while attempting to appear for Class-IV examination, the statement said.

It added that the candidates were not allowed to attempt question paper and were immediately put in isolation. "The Board appreciates the efforts and extra vigil exercised by the invigilatory staff and has decided to suitably acknowledge their contribution in strengthening the endeavour of the J&K

Services Selection Board to ensure fair & transparent Examination Process," it said.

The Board said that Section 27(a) of the Jammu & Kashmir Services Selection Board (Conduct of Examination) Regulations, 2013, lays down that the candidate found to be in possession of communication device, electronic equipment/ gadget or any other material with the intention of receiving assistance shall be declared to be using unfair means in the examination". Accordingly, the Services Selection Board in order to maintain transparency & fairness in the examination decided to debar the said 03 candidates for 3 years from participating in the Examinations conducted by the J&K Services Selection Board.

Further, all the candidates who are scheduled to appear for Class-IV examination to be held on 28th February, 2021 (phase-2) and 01st March, 2021 (phase-03) are once again cautioned to desist from indulging in such malpractices as strict action shall be taken against erring candidates by the J&K Services Selection Board.

Dir RDD Condoles Demise Of BDO Tulail

SRINAGAR: The Director Rural Development Department Kashmir, Qazi Sarwar has expressed deep shock over the sudden demise of M Saleem Darzi, Block Development Officer, Tulail/ Gurez while he was on duty.

Highlighting the qualities of M Saleem Darzi, the Director described him as an officer of undoubted integrity, honesty and sincerity whose contribution in the department will always be remembered.

The Director has prayed for eternal peace to the deceased officer and immense strength to his family members to bear this irreparable loss.

Further, the Director is in constant contact with divisional administration/ district administration so as to enable to airlift the deceased officers body from Tulail/ Gurez to his native place in district Anantnag for last rites, which has been delayed due to bad weather conditions.

DDC Gbl For Stern Action Against Shopkeepers Indulging In Illegal Trade Of Pesticides

GANDERBAL: District Development Commissioner (DDC) Ganderbal, Shafqat Iqbal, Saturday, chaired a meeting convened to review the achievements made under Agriculture and Horticulture sectors.

The Chief Horticulture Officer and Agriculture Officer briefed the meeting about the key achievements registered by the departments during the current fiscal. They said that department has registered remarkable achievements under nurseries/orchards sector including transplantation of clonal root stock for propagation of quality fruit plants, grafting of walnut root stock and grafting of other fresh fruits.

They also briefed the meeting about the achievements under various schemes like MIDH, PMDP, ATMA, PM-KISSAN, KCC and CAPEX during the current financial year.

The Chief Agriculture Officer informed that under CAPEX budget 2020-21, Rs 43.29 lakh has been expended against financial allotment of Rs 53.94 lakh till date.

Similarly, the Chief Horticulture Officer informed that against an outlay of Rs. 330.55 lakh for the year 2020-21 under CAPEX, an expenditure of Rs. 84.53 lakhs has been made till date.

The meeting also discussed the status of pesticides sampling for

which the Chief Horticulture Officer informed that during 2020-21, 14 samples were collected and all were satisfactory. The DDC directed the CHO to carry special drive to ensure no unauthorised person is allowed to operate in the district and carry special drive in this regard. Besides, stern action as per law shall be initiated against such shopkeepers who are indulged in illegal trade of pesticides/insecticides in the district.

While reviewing the progress on centrally sponsored schemes, the DDC stressed for generating mass awareness among the common masses so that deserving beneficiaries are covered under these schemes.

He also called for special attention in the Agriculture and Horticulture sectors especially on up-gradation of Rehpora Grapes, organic farming, efforts on high density plants and awareness regarding new techniques in agriculture sector as most of the populace is directly involved with the agriculture and allied sectors which is the back-bone of the economy in the district.

The meeting was attended by Chief Planning Officer Ganderbal, Chief Agriculture Officer, Chief Horticulture Officer, Horticulture Development Officers, President Pesticide and Fertilizer union Ganderbal and other concerned.

NEWS MAKERS

Govt Yet To Evacuate Deceased BDO's Body From Gurez

BANDIPORA: A day after the Block Development Officer (BDO) died off massive cardiac arrest, the government is yet to evacuate the body of the deceased officer from Tulail village of north Kashmir's Gurez area in Bandipora district citing inclement weather conditions.

The body has been lying in a hospital in Gurez ever since. An official said that unfortunately, due to bad weather, the administration has failed to evacuate the deceased body from Gurez to his ancestral home south Kashmir's Anantnag district today. "The weather in Gurez was not favourable all day due to which we could not evacuate the body to his ancestral home," an official said from Gurez.

He, however, said that the efforts will be made once again in the wee hours of Sunday morning to evacuate the body, adding that the administration will also seek help from the Army, if required.

Meanwhile, the family members of the deceased officer have demanded immediate evacuation of the body from Gurez to his ancestral home so that his last rites can be performed.

Earlier, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora Dr Owais Ahmad had said the district administration is making arrangements for airlifting the body of the deceased officers through a special air sortie as and when the weather permits.

Pertinently, Gurez-Bandipora road is closed for traffic from past few months, owing to heavy snowfall in Gurez Valley and Razdan top—(KNO)

Government of Jammu & Kashmir Union Territory

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER

Mechanical Division, Mechanical Engineering Department, Kashmir, Srinagar

Fax No: 0194-2497093 email: xenmds@gmail.com website: www.medkashmir.org

Cancellation Notice

Subject: Supply of steel material for fabrication of 01 No. V- blade for TATA 1212 vehicle

of BRO (1059 Fd Wksp).

References: 1.This Office NIT NO: MDS/TS /2020-21/139 /e-tendering ; Dated: 11.07.2020. Tender ID: 2020_PWDJK_111408_2

The above referred e-NIT issued by this office for the subject work evoked no response from the bidders, as such the NIT is hereby cancelled.

Sd/-
(Er. Rajesh Sharma)
Executive Engineer,
Mechanical Division Sgr.

No: MDS /TS-521/ 8948-52
.02.2021

Dated: 26

DIPK-14097/20

Break the silence Ending Gender-Based Violence Is A Human Rights Imperative

SHOBHA SHUKLA

“There is a global epidemic of violence against women – both within conflict zones and within societies at peace – and it is still treated as a lesser crime and lower priority” had said Angelina Jolie, actress and then UN Ambassador for refugees more than five years ago. With the onslaught of the pandemic and global public health emergency and cascading humanitarian crises, these words have only become even more relevant today.

The Asia Pacific region presents some very challenging development indicators for women and girls and socially excluded and marginalized populations. There are deep rooted gender inequalities and discriminatory socio-cultural norms and practices arising out of patriarchal systems and structures, and sexual and other forms of gender-based violence continues to remain pervasive in the region.

According to latest statistics, the proportion of women in Asia Pacific who have experienced physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime ranges from 15% in Bhutan, Japan, Lao PDR and Philippines to 64% in Fiji and Solomon Islands. Also 4% (in Japan) to 48% (in Papua New Guinea) of women have experienced intimate partner violence in the last 12 months.

Also, in most countries of the region, women are much more likely to have experienced physical or sexual violence at the hands of intimate partners, rather than by other perpetrators. Thus women who are experiencing violence are unable to find ways to stop the violence or to leave the violent relationship. Moreover, many communities often stigmatise the survivors and perceive some practices, like domestic violence, as acceptable.

Several studies have proven that sexual and other forms of gender-based violence, which is perpetuated by poverty and various gender-biased sociocultural norms and values, escalates in crises situations. The findings of one such study conducted in Central Sulawesi, Indonesia, as shared by Melania Hidayat, National Programme Officer on Reproductive Health, UNFPA, Indonesia, reveal that incidents of sexual and other forms of gender-based violence, sexual harassment, rape and domestic violence increased in the aftermath of a natural disaster (earthquake followed by landslide). However, the general reaction of the survivors was to remain silent due to fear (of the perpetrators), shame and lack of support from immediate family members. They often have to bear the double burden of sanctions and blame from the community as well.

Hidayat rues that even humanitarian workers, programme managers or service providers do not see prevention and management of sexual and other forms of gender-based violence as a priority in emergency humanitarian responses and the mechanism for reporting and management of sexual and other forms of gender-based violence does not exist. At the same time, community awareness and understanding is also low that tends to put the survivor to further risks of violence.

Then again, as the UN Secretary General has very rightly and repeatedly said, the global lockdowns during the COVID-19 pandemic have resulted in a “horri-



Perhaps the COVID-19 pandemic has provided an opportunity to further evolve and innovate approaches to ensure long term transformative changes to end sexual and other forms of gender-based violence, which is probably going to outlive the pandemic

fy surge” in the already existing gender-based violence, further deepening gender inequalities.

The heightened risk of sexual and other forms of gender-based violence for women and girls due to the pandemic has deeply affected the Asia Pacific region as well. It has placed additional barriers to operationalize many of the existing prevention strategies, thus limiting the ability of survivors of sexual and other forms of gender-based violence to distance themselves from their abusers and/or access life-saving services related to sexual and other forms of gender-based violence.

But there have been some promising adaptations, as shared by Sujata Tuladhar, Technical Specialist (gender-based violence) UNFPA Asia Pacific. She gives the examples of several countries where a variety of digital tools, including community based radios and televisions, are being used to continue with community engagement and mobilization programmes, in the face of the pandemic.

In Philippines, social media and other online platforms, including text messaging via phone, are being used to raise visibility of violence against women, challenge the stereotypes, and share information about existing services. Where these are not possible, countries are adapting to spread the messages through loudspeakers or in moving vehicles.

In the Pacific Island countries messages around gender-based violence are being included in emergency cards that are given to communities to provide COVID-19 related information.

In Pakistan, Mongolia, Indonesia and some other countries tele-counselling modalities have become very commonplace.

In Nepal trained community based psychoso-

cial workers have been equipped with cell phone credits, so that they can continue to reach out and respond to women at risk of violence in their communities telephonically.

Some countries are also exploring the concept of creating shelters through partnerships with Airbnb, hotels or university dorms that make rooms available for gender-based violence survivors in a safe way.

Service providers are also connecting to gender-based violence survivors via mobile safety apps and other online resources. One such example is a mobile app ‘Her Voice’ that was recently launched in the Philippines.

Community-based health workers, like midwives and female health workers, are being further supported to safely identify cases of gender-based violence, provide first line support and facilitate referrals. A case in point is in Cox’s Bazaar, Bangladesh, where midwives sit in women-friendly spaces and provide support to gender-based violence survivors, despite COVID-19 related restrictions in place.

COVID-19 has forced many of the capacity building initiatives to move online and become virtual. Tuladhar says that it has been quite a realization that this modality can work even for very specific gender-based violence related areas – like trainings for case management and for hotline operators – which can be made available online for more participants in far off areas at no extra cost, thus bridging many financial and geographical barriers. While the effectiveness of these virtual modalities of capacity building will need to be evaluated, they seem to hold a lot of promise.

Despite all these efforts, several challenges remain. In most contexts, gender-based violence services and

responses are still not considered as part of essential COVID-19 response and remote delivery of gender-based violence services continues to be difficult.

We are also seeing new emerging forms and means of perpetrating violence. Digital technology facilitated gender-based violence, is the new demon on the block. Victim-survivors have little recourse against the many forms of online gender-based violence where the perpetrators use the internet to remotely resort to blackmail, release of personal information and private photos without consent, online stalking and threats of harm, that has devastating effects on the psyche of their targets and often forces them to move out of online spaces.

The way forward

Perhaps the COVID-19 pandemic has provided an opportunity to further evolve and innovate approaches to ensure long term transformative changes to end sexual and other forms of gender-based violence, which is probably going to outlive the pandemic. We will have to take concrete steps to be able to prevent the pandemic’s longterm impacts on gender equality and women’s empowerment after it is over.

One point that emerged strongly during a virtual session of the ongoing online 10th Asia Pacific Conference on Reproductive and Sexual Health and Rights (APCRSHR10) was that it is important to engage and empower men and boys, and not just women and girls, for prevention of violence. We cannot solely look into the women and girls. For gender equality we also need to work hand-in-hand with the men’s crew, said Professor Thein-Thein Htay, former Deputy Health Minister of Myanmar and noted public health expert.

But Hidayat cautions that while it is good to have initiatives from male groups to work together and fight to end gender-based violence, one needs to be careful to not put male involvement as an area for males to dominate the women more. The intention is to safeguard the women without limiting their activities or work.

Sagar Sachdeva, Programme Coordinator at The YP Foundation, India, blames the growing religious fundamentalism and right wing nationalism in countries like India, which is also getting legally codified and thus having serious impacts in the context of gender-based violence as well as masculinities. It has also resulted in a general increase in violence against minority communities.

Tuladhar calls for continued investment in prevention and social norm changes – whether through parenting programmes, or life skill programmes, or comprehensive childhood education that addresses young girls and boys in their gender norms formative years.

The UN Secretary-General’s UNiTE to End Violence against Women campaign, is one such multi-layer effort aimed at preventing and eliminating violence against women and girls. It amplifies the call for global action to bridge funding gaps, ensure essential services for survivors of violence, even during crises, focus on prevention, and collection of reliable data to develop evidence based policies and programmes to end all kinds of violence against women-be it sexual, physical or emotional.

Twocircles.net

MADRID – All over the world, democracy is in retreat. In 2020, the Democracy Index, published by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) since 2006, fell to its lowest-ever global level. This development cannot be attributed exclusively to restrictions imposed due to the pandemic, because the ratings have been in free fall since 2015. So it is not surprising that in his first foreign policy speech as US president, Joe Biden focused on the need to safeguard democratic values around the world.

Biden reaffirmed his intent, which he announced during his campaign, to organize a Summit for Democracy early in his presidency. In Biden’s own words, this summit “will bring together the world’s democracies to strengthen our democratic institutions, honestly confront countries that are backsliding, and forge a common agenda.” The United Kingdom has embraced the idea by proposing the establishment of a D10, to be formed with the members of the G7 along with Australia, India, and South Korea.

The outline and complementarity of these proposals have not yet been determined, but their essence is far from new. When John McCain ran for president against Barack Obama in 2008, he advocated the creation of a League of Democracies that would encompass more than a hundred states. In fact, when McCain floated the idea, a similar (but more modest) coalition had already existed since 2000, when the United States and Poland spearheaded the foundation of the Community of Democracies (CoD). That initiative still operates, but it is almost completely forgotten, demonstrating the difficulty of sustaining such efforts.

From its beginning, the CoD was hampered by incongruities and tactical dissention, as well as by doubts about its purpose. Unfortunately, the countries that joined the project were not successfully encouraged to perfect their respective democratic systems. One revealing fact is that the organization’s seat is in Poland, currently at number 50 in the EIU rankings, after marked democratic deterioration in recent years.

Before getting underway, Biden’s Summit for De-

Build a Coalition of Democracies from the Ground Up

JAVIER SOLANA

mocracy will face the very questions that caused similar projects to run aground: who, how, and why. When considering these questions frankly, one can identify a series of obstacles and drawbacks, which lately have become even more difficult to circumvent.

The first uncomfortable reality that the US must negotiate is that, even though it maintains much of its gravitational pull in the international arena, its reputation as a standard-bearer for democracy has suffered some significant blows. Clearly, the country is passing through a serious institutional and social crisis, owing largely to the transgressions of the Trump administration, with the connivance of the Republican Party. Biden’s arrival – with his promise of unity and eagerness to mend fences – has been a great relief, but his conciliatory approach will not bear fruit overnight.

Beyond these domestic considerations in the US, which other countries would be invited to the summit? Inviting too many would make reaching consensus more difficult, while including too few would lead to unproductive overlaps with existing forums such as the G7. Moreover, inviting some governments with dubious democratic credentials could contribute to whitewashing their practices, but excluding them could lead to diplomatic crises and be counterproductive from a strategic point of view.

It remains to be seen whether Biden contemplates merely a single summit or a more permanent coalition – perhaps even taking an institutionalized form. The first option would be purely symbolic and hardly worth the effort. The second would run up against the



The first uncomfortable reality that the US must negotiate is that, even though it maintains much of its gravitational pull in the international arena, its reputation as a standard-bearer for democracy has suffered some significant blows.

imperatives of a multipolar order in which economic ties and vicinity play an essential role.

Sharing the same political system does not imply sharing the same interests and priorities, so providing a coalition of democracies with a concrete, substantial, and lasting objective is practically impossible. When realpolitik enters the scene (for example, in trade matters), the coalition could be discredited.

Lastly, although a Summit for Democracy could be packaged positively, not punitively, it would surely be interpreted as an effort to draw a sharp dividing line between democracies and autocracies. To situate this dividing line at the center of international relations is to risk precipitating what we can still avoid: another cold war, this time between the US and China. In the face of the tremendous global threats looming over us, from pandemics to climate change, a dynamic of confrontation between rival blocs would impede – if not prevent – the multilateral cooperation that we sorely need.

But recognizing the drawbacks of Biden’s proposal does not mean that we should resign ourselves to the global decline of democracy. Although it is advisable to opt for the G20 or for even more representative and ambitious formats to manage the shared challenges of the twenty-first century, democratic countries can use other, already existing, frameworks for more fruitful dialogue. Likewise, democracies can reinforce their moral leadership by distancing themselves from the abuses of autocratic regimes, as Biden has just done by withdrawing US support for Saudi Arabia’s offensive in Yemen.

If anything has become clear of late, it is that democracy is not usually lost in the blink of an eye. It is often eroded little by little, almost unnoticed day to day. In order to rebuild it, a piecemeal approach – instead of grand global gestures – may prove most effective. By working patiently from the bottom up, and from the local to the international, we can still help democracy regain its luster.

Project Syndicate

Diaper Pollution: Who to Blame?

MUKHTAR AHMAD FAROOQI

We as responsible citizens should either use alternatives till affordable environment friendly nappies are readily available and should avoid throwing the used nappies mindlessly on roads or in water bodies

Pollution being a global problem has a direct impact on climate change and environmental sustainability. We all are aware of different forms of pollution like air, water, noise, plastic that are widely debated across different platforms. However, a type of plastic pollution namely disposable baby diapers has become a key source of environmental pollution is often overlooked by activists.

"Disposable Nappy" was officially created and patented for the first time in 1948 and has since then become an easy solution for parents. Synthetic diapers began being produced in the 1960s and gained popularity with the passage of time. They are a billion dollar industry.

They may seem more convenient but their environmental impact is unimaginable because almost 90% of nappies are dumped into landfills, covered and not exposed to sun or air at all. Disposable diapers are made from synthetic materials (non recyclable polyethylene plastic) which are non biodegradable in nature. This is why they're an environmental hazard. Besides accumulation of waste, disposable diapers contain many harmful substances. Some of the toxic substances present in them and their effect on living beings are:

Tributyltin (TBT) – It is a biocide which is used to prevent the growth of bacteria but is poisonous to marine life as well as humans. It reduces fertility, and damages other organs. TBT can be fatal if inhaled and it doesn't degrade. TBT remains in our ecosystem and is slowly entering our food chain thereby can have disastrous future consequences.

Dioxins – A class of persistent organic pollutants. The bleaching process used on diaper material creates dioxins as a by-product. They're carcinogenic and linked to long-term health problems. Dioxins are highly toxic, according to the EPA.

Adhesives, synthetic dyes, and perfumes – Adhesives are used to hold the entire diaper together. Synthetic dyes are used to print the cute images found on diapers, as well as the colored straps and the convenient strip telling you whether the baby needs to be changed. Diapers use perfumes to hide odors. Chemicals used in these processes add to the list.

Sodium polyacrylate – This chemical is known as waterlock, and is added to the inner pad of a disposable to make it super-absorbent. Menstrual pads containing this compound have been implicated in cases of toxic shock syndrome.

Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) like toluene, xylene, ethyl benzene, and dipentene. They are used in the preparation of dyes, polymers, and adhesives. But the problem with these chemicals is that they are quickly released into the air when exposed to heat.

Plastics/polymers – Mainly polypropylene and polyethylene, but also includes polyester, polyurethane, and polyolefin. They're the primary materials used in product packaging, household products, and the production of plastic grocery bags, respectively. Most of a diaper is composed of these non-recyclable plastics.

Phthalates – While they're used to soften plas-

tics, the diaper's adhesives, dyes, and perfumes also contain these chemicals. People of any age can have adverse reactions to phthalates, but unborn babies and young children are potentially more susceptible.

Petroleum/petrolatum – Used to keep diapers from leaking.

Disposable nappies require large volumes of pulp, paper, plastic and other raw materials during the manufacturing process and therefore need significant amounts of water and energy.

Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (SBA), a nation-wide campaign in India aims to clean up the streets, roads and infrastructure of India's cities, towns, and rural areas. The Urban populace is given the option of collecting the waste in dustbins even segregating and then putting it in garbage collecting bins (Refuse Collector) of SMC whereby it then gets transported to garbage dumping sites but in rural areas SBA is more or less a disaster both as a concept as well as in reality. Even if the people collect garbage in homes, after some time they are not left with any option and remain in dilemma as to where to put the garbage? This results in them throwing it on roadsides, alleyways and even in water bodies like streams, rivulets or ponds due lack of garbage collectors/sites and established dumping sites thereby the very motive of this campaign gets defeated.

In the absence of Garbage Collectors/Dumping sites, disposable nappies have become a nuisance especially in rural areas as this waste is thrown in water bodies, roads, alleyways which ultimately reach the agricultural fields.

Government as well as the common populace is equally responsible for this whole mess.

What are the alternatives?

Biodegradable Diapers are one such option. Biodegradable diapers use plant-based materials instead of polyacrylate stuffing, artificial dyes, toxic materials, and plastics. These diapers are little expensive due to higher manufacturing costs users won't be exposed to harsh chemicals.

Reusable Cloth Diapers: All those people who can't afford biodegradable diapers can think of using reusable cloth diapers which have been used for generations. Redesign cloth diapers with contours, velcro or snaps, leak protection, and some pretty stylish prints are currently available in the market. Now diapers are made of breathable fabrics and don't require soaking before washing (like they did previously). Not only are they environmentally friendly, but cost effective as well.

We as responsible citizens should either use alternatives till affordable environment friendly nappies are readily available and should avoid throwing the used nappies mindlessly on roads or in water bodies. The government functionaries on the other end should install garbage collectors in rural areas so that the people living in these areas are not compelled to throw the waste generated from the use of these diapers in water bodies and roads thereby polluting/choking them.

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The author can be reached at
mukhtar.farooqi37@gmail.com



Tourism Needs a Plan Post-Pandemic

SUSANNE BECKEN

With each passing day, the grave future of Earth becomes more stark. The disruption of COVID-19 has not been enough to shift the trajectory, nor has it prompted polluting sectors of the economy to reconsider the harms they inflict on the planet.

Nowhere is this clearer than in the global tourism sector. Before COVID-19, international aviation emissions - already a major contributor to global warming - were forecast to potentially triple between 2015 and 2050. Likewise, emissions from the cruise ship industry were also growing.

The pandemic itself can be traced back to humanity's relentless damage to nature. And mass global tourism is emblematic of this voracious, growth-at-all-costs mentality.

Tourism brings many economic, social and cultural benefits. But it's time the industry seriously reconsiders its business model, and overall purpose, in a post-pandemic world.

We can't return to normal

The United Nations is among many voices urging the global tourism industry to address its many sustainability challenges in the wake of COVID-19.

The UN says it recognises tourism's important role in providing incomes for millions of people. But in a recent policy brief, it said now is the time to "rethink how the sector impacts our natural resources and ecosystems".

Unfortunately, there's little evidence that global tourism is looking to transform. For example, the International Air Transport Association is clearly seeking to return to the "old normal". Its resources guide to support airlines during the pandemic and beyond examines ways to restart the industry, but makes no mention of environmental sustainability.

Similarly, the World Travel and Tourism Council's 100 Million Jobs Recovery Plan calls on nations to remove barriers to travel, saying traveller confidence is "critical to the sector's



survival and recovery". Sustainability rates only a passing mention.

The industry's immediate focus on recovery is understandable. But the lack of a long-term environmental vision is damaging to both the industry and the planet.

A job half done

Pre-COVID-19, the global tourism and travel industry had begun to address some sustainability challenges.

For example, international aviation is seeking to improve global fuel efficiency by 2% each year until 2050. But this target is "aspirational" and even the International Civil Aviation Authority has conceded it was "unlikely to deliver the level of reduction necessary to stabilize and then reduce aviation's absolute emissions contribution to climate change".

Current technological constraints mean decarbonising aviation is challenging. An expected future increase in flight demand will only add to the problem. Globally, 7.8 billion passengers are expected to travel in 2036.

What's more, tourism's damage to the environment extends far beyond climate change. It adds to marine plas-

The industry's immediate focus on recovery is understandable. But the lack of a long-term environmental vision is damaging to both the industry and the planet.

tic pollution, degrades habitat and leads to a loss of wilderness and natural quiet. The industry's resurgence must address these and other harms.

A vision for the future

People travelling outside their normal context are open to new experiences and perspectives. In this way, tourism presents an opportunity to encourage a new connection with nature.

So what should the future of tourism look like? I and others are advocating for a more sustainable tourism sector that's vastly different to what exists now. Travel should be closer to home, slower, and with a positive contribution at its core. In this model, all erosion of natural, cultural and social capital ceases.

Practices under the model (some of which already exist at a small scale) might include:

- more travel to regional and local destinations, involving shorter distances. Under COVID-19, the trend towards such tourism has already begun. However, communities must be empowered to determine what type of tourism they want.
- travellers paying a conservation-focused levy upon entering a country, such as those imposed in New Zealand and Botswana.
- the donation of time, money or expertise to support environmental

restoration as an integral part of the travel experience. For example, the Adventure Scientists initiative shows people with outdoor skills how to collect environmental information as they travel, providing new data for researchers.

- businesses that "give back" by design. For example, Global Himalayan Expeditions empowers communities by electrifying remote villages in Ladakh, Kashmir. Trekkers co-finance solar panels and carry them as part of their travel experience.
- ambitious industry standards, which ramp up over time, for sustainable management of environmental, cultural and human resources.

The UN Sustainable Development Group has suggested other changes, including:

- a frequent flyer levy
- incentives for domestic tourism
- restrictions on flight advertising
- no more airport expansions in high-income countries
- better transport alternatives to aviation.

Bouncing back differently

The above vision for tourism involves great changes. The industry's focus must shift from growth and profit to "regeneration" – helping to restore the natural world that humans have so badly damaged.

And the transition must happen gradually, to allow tourism-dependent economies and businesses to adjust.

The global tourism industry will persist after COVID-19. But it must be reimagined as, first and foremost, a public good rather than a commercial activity.

And the goal of ecosystem restoration must be at the industry's core. Planetary health is inextricably linked to our own well-being – and that of the tourism industry. After all, there's no tourism on a dead planet.

By Arrangement with
The Conversation

Scientists identify drugs with potential to stop plaque buildup in arteries

Agencies

A new clinical study led by researchers of the University of Alberta claim to have found better treatments for cardiovascular disease, the second leading cause of death in Canada.

The researchers identified a new mechanism responsible for the buildup of plaque on artery walls, a process known as atherosclerosis. This plaque, made up of fats, cholesterol and other substances, can restrict blood flow and is a major factor in cardiovascular disease.

"We identified a new mechanism underlying atherosclerosis," explained Chris Cairo, a professor in the Department of Chemistry and co-lead author of the new study. "We also demonstrated that this can be addressed pharmacologically. Using inhibitors developed in our lab, we found that this

could be a new strategy for therapeutics in cardiovascular disease."

The discovery identified drug targets with the potential to stop the buildup of plaques—a breakthrough that could make a world of difference for many Canadians. The second leading cause of death in Canada, cardiovascular disease affects 2.4 million people across the nation, according to the federal government. New and more effective treatments are still needed, Cairo explained.

According to the study, if people do develop Alzheimer's disease, those with depression may start experiencing dementia symptoms about two years earlier than those who do not have depression.

Experts say that measures put in place to fend off the coronavirus — mask wearing, social distancing and virtual schooling — were a big factor in preventing a "twindemic" of flu and Covid-19.



"The clinical implications of this study include the discovery of a novel pathway involved in the development of atherosclerosis—one of the most important causes of cardiovascular mortality—and the

The researchers examined the role of glycosylation of circulating lipid particles in the blood in atherosclerosis. Low-density lipoproteins (LDL), which are sometimes called bad cholesterol, are a complex of lipids, cholesterol and glycoproteins.

The researchers looked at LDL particles before and after the removal of a specific glycan residue, known as sialic acid. LDL that had sialic acids removed were taken up by cells more than those that were unmodified. Animal models deficient in the enzymes that remove sialic acids had less formation of atherosclerotic plaques, suggesting these enzymes could be new targets for future therapy.

"The work built on several years of basic research, and we hope will lead to benefits for clinical treatment," said Cairo, who noted the study was performed in animal models and will need more preclinical research before being

applied in human clinical trials.

Cairo and Pshezhetsky are both network investigators with GlycoNet, a pan-Canadian Network Centre of Excellence of more than 170 glycomics researchers, centred at the U of A.

This research was funded by GlycoNet and conducted in collaboration with a post-doctoral fellow, Tianlin Guo, and a graduate student, Radhika Chakraborty, working at the U of A.

"It was exciting to see that this project is proceeding to the next phase, which is one step closer to clinical application," said Warren Wakarchuk, a professor in the Department of Biological Sciences and scientific director of GlycoNet. "As a leader in glycomics research, GlycoNet is proud to be supporting the development of health innovations that will improve the quality of life of patients and their families in Canada and worldwide."

PUBLIC NOTICE

My name was wrongly mentioned in PNB MetLife Policy No: 00276966 as Mr Syed Shajad Hussain Shah. Instead of Mr Syed Sajad Hussain, which needs immediate correction. If anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the PNB MetLife India Insurance Company Ltd, Haiddqa Complex, Baghat Barzulla Srinagar within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Mr. Syed Sajad Hussain
R/o Chittergull Anantnag

mja

Government of Jammu & Kashmir Directorate of Rural Development Kashmir Condolence Message

Director Rural Development Department Kashmir, Mr. Qazi Sarwar, has expressed deep shock over the sudden demise of Mr. Mohammad Saleem Darzi, Block Development Officer, Tulail / Gurez, while he was on duty. Highlighting the qualities of Mr. Mohammad Saleem Darzi, the Director described him as an officer of un-doubted integrity, honesty and sincerity whose contribution in the Department would always be remembered. The Director has prayed for eternal peace of the deceased officer and immense strength to his family members to bear this irreparable loss. Further the Director is in constant contact with Divisional Administration / District Administration so as to enable to airlift the deceased officer's body from Tulail Gurez to his native place in District Anantnag for last rites, which has been delayed due to bad weather condition.

Directorate Of Rural
Development Kashmir

THE J&K BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL ENTRANCE EXAMINATIONS

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

Subject: Provisional select list of Second round of up-gradation/ allotment counselling (physical) of eligible candidates for admission to M.Sc. Technology Courses-2020.

Reference: i) Notification No.037-BOPEE of 2020 dated 10.10.2020.
ii) Notification No.004-BOPEE of 2021 dated 09.01.2021.
iii) Notification No.012-BOPEE of 2021 dated 22.01.2021.
iv) Notification No.0116-BOPEE of 2021 dated 04.02.2021.
v) Notification No.019-BOPEE of 2021 dated 09.02.2021.
vi) Notice No.024-BOPEE of 2021 dated 22.02.2021.

**Notification No: 29-BOPEE of 2021
Dated: 26-02-2021**

Consequent upon the completion of Second Physical round of up-gradation/ allotment counselling held on 26.02.2021 at BOPEE Office, Srinagar/ Jammu simultaneously for filling-up of unfilled seats for M.Sc Technology Course- 2020 at SKIMS, Soura, Srinagar notified vide Notice No.024-BOPEE of 2021 dated 22.02.2021, the provisional select list of eligible candidates so selected/ upgraded is given below at Annexure "A" to this notification.

The candidates so provisionally upgraded/allotted seats under second round shall report to the allotted institution by or before 6th March-2021 (3.PM) along-with all requisite documents/ certificates. The Head of the Institution is advised to furnish the list of candidates who have joined against allotted seats till 06.03.2021 upto 5.00 PM through e-mail helpdesk@jakbopee@gmail.com/ ceo@jakbopee@gmail.com.

Note:

- As provided under section-(9) of Reservation Act-2004, the Board converted all notified available unfilled Reserved Category Seats into open merit due to non-availability of eligible Reserved Category candidates at the time of counselling and filled the same by the candidates belonging to open merit category at the time of counselling strictly as per their merit cum preference.
- In order to facilitate the provisionally selected candidates, the Head of the Institution is advised to keep the admission counter open even on holidays/ off days to enable them to complete the admission process. However, the candidates should in their own interest avoid waiting for the last day to complete admission formalities as such delay has the potential of causing hardships to the candidates only.
- The admission of candidates is purely provisional and shall be cancelled in case any information furnished by any candidate proves to be false / fabricated, and action as warranted under law shall be initiated against such candidates.
- It will be sole responsibility of the Institution Authorities to check and verify the documents and eligibility of each provisionally selected candidate in accordance with the prescribed rules/ norms. In case any deficiency is found against any candidate such candidate shall not be allowed to join unless he/ she shall not remove the said deficiency before the cut-off date.
- The other terms and conditions shall remain the same as notified in e. Information Brochure/ Notifications/ Notices issued by the Board from time to time in this regard.

Annexure-A

SNO	Name of Candidate	CAT	RANK	DISCIPLINE	INSTITUTION	CAT-SLI	U/A/ DISCIPLINE	U/A INSTITUTION	CAT-SLI
1	Sumaya Rashid	OM	28	Medical Technology	SKIMS Soura, Srinagar	OM	Dialysis Technology	SKIMS Soura, Srinagar	OM
2	Masroofa Akhter	RBA	39	Medical Lab Technology - Pathology	SKIMS Soura, Srinagar	RBA	Medical Lab Technology - Hematology	SKIMS Soura, Srinagar	OM
3	Insha Bashir	OM	42	Medical Technology	SKIMS Soura, Srinagar	OM	Neo-Natal Science Technology	SKIMS Soura, Srinagar	OM
4	Danish Bashir	OM	44				Medical Technology	SKIMS Soura, Srinagar	OM
5	Adnan Adil	RBA	47				Operation Theater Technology	SKIMS Soura, Srinagar	OM
6	Touseefa Shafi	RBA	48				Medical Lab Technology - Microbiology	SKIMS Soura, Srinagar	OM
7	Dilawar Shafi	RBA	50				Medical Technology	SKIMS Soura, Srinagar	OM
8	Jafiya Gulzar	OM	51				Medical Lab Technology - Pathology	SKIMS Soura, Srinagar	OM
9	Sayima Farooq	RBA	52				Medical Lab Technology - Cl. Biochemistry	SKIMS Soura, Srinagar	OM
10	Aarif Wali	OSC	53				Radiotherapy	SKIMS Soura, Srinagar	OSC
11	Mehak Mehandi Mushtaqee	OM	56				Medical Lab Technology - Cl. Pharmacology	SKIMS Soura, Srinagar	OM
12	Asia Bashir	OM	64				Medical Technology	SKIMS Soura, Srinagar	OM

E&OE
DIPK-NB-6008/20

No: BOPEE/EXAM-35(III) /2020

Dated 26-02-2021

(Dr Sunil Gupta)
Controller Of Examinations
J&K BOPEE

Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir. OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER RURAL ENGINEERING WING BARAMULLA. NOTICE INVITING TENDERS

NIT No: - 35/Xen/Rew/Bla/2019-2020 Dated. 25/02/2021

For and on behalf of Lt. Governor, J&K UT e-tenders (In Single Cover System) are invited on item rate basis from approved and eligible Contractors Regd. With J&K State Govt. CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for each of the following work:-

S.No	Name of Work	Est. Cost (In Lacs)	Cost of T/Doc. (In Rs.)	Earnest Money/ Bid Security (In Rs.)	Time of completion	Class of Contractor	Major Head of Account	Position of AAA/ TS	Position of Funds
1	C/o Culvert at Ganie Mohalla Rampore Block Zaingeer.	4.90	200	9800	45 Days	DEE.	CD & PYT.	AAA Accredited	Available
2	C/o Culvert with R/Wall in Nallah at Kehdora Block Nadihal.	3.36	200	6720	45 Days	DEE.	CD & PYT.	AAA Accredited	Available
3	C/o Road from h/o Manzoor Ahmad to onwards at Khushbahar Colony at K.P. Seri Block Singhpora.	3.03	200	6060	45 Days	DEE.	CD & PYT.	AAA Accredited	Available
4	C/Development of Public Park near Astan Shareef Hazret Abbass (AS) Board at Harinara Block Singhpora.	3.30	200	6600	45 Days	DEE.	CD & PYT.	AAA Accredited	Available

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

Date of Issue of Tender Notice	26-02-2021
Period of downloading of bidding documents	From 26-02-2021 to 04-03-2021 up to 4:00 PM
Bid submission Start date	26-02-2021
Bid Submission End Date	04-03-2021 up to 4:00 PM
Deadline for receiving the hard copy (original DD & EMD) including all the soft copy documents uploaded on the site.	Hard copy will be received in the office of the Executive Engineer Baramulla either by hand or by courier/Regd. Post up to 05-03-2021
Date and time of Opening of Bids (Online)	Technical Bids will be opened on 06-03-2021 at 11:00 AM in the office of the Executive Engineer REW Baramulla and Financial Bid opening will be declared online.

- Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in shape of treasury challan/receipt mentioning therein name of work and NIT No. (copy enclosed) in favour of the Executive Engineer, REW Division Baramulla (Tender inviting Authority) and Earnest money / Bid security in shape of CDR/FDR/BG pledged to Executive Engineer, REW Division Baramulla (Tender inviting Authority).
- The date and time of opening of Bids shall be notified on Web Site www.jktenders.gov.in and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The bids of Responsive bidders shall be opened online on same Web Site at the office of the Executive Engineer, REW Division Baramulla.
- The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of technical bids.
- The earnest money shall be forfeited, if:-
 - Any bidder/ tenderer withdraws his bid/ tender during the period of bid validity or makes any modifications in the terms and conditions of the bid.
 - Failure of Successful bidder to furnish the required performance security within the specified time limit.
 - Failure of successful bidder to execute the agreement within 28 days after fixation of contract.
- Instruction to bidders regarding e-tendering process.
- Bidders are advised to download bid submission manual from the "Downloads" option as well as from "Bidders Manual Kit" on website www.jktenders.gov.in to acquaint bid submission process.
- To participate in bidding process, bidders have to get 'Digital Signature Certificate (DSC)' as per Information Technology Act-2000. Bidders can get digital certificate from any approved vendors.
- The bidders have to submit their bids online in electronic format with digital Signature. No financial bid will be accepted in physical form.
- Bids will be opened online as per time schedule mentioned in Para-1.
- Bidders must ensure to upload scanned copy of all necessary documents with bid. Besides, original documents related to bid be submitted physically by the bidder who is declared as LI immediately after opening of financial bid.
- Bidders must ensure to upload scanned copy of necessary documents in terms of soft copies with the technical bid & no documents in terms of hard copies shall be entertained. However, in case of any clarification, the bidders shall have to produce original documents in support of soft copies if need arises.
- The earnest money in favour of un-successful/ non-responsive bidders shall be released only after ensuring submission of tender document fee in original, irrespective of Hard copies, failure of submission of tender document fee by the bidder using site shall entail him for blacklisting.
- The tender/ bid is liable to rejection if it does not fulfill requirements as laid down in NIT.
- All other terms conditions are as per PWD Form 25 (Double agreement Form).

No 11573-80

Dated 25.02.2021

DIPK-14032/20

Executive Engineer,
REW Baramulla

Government of Jammu & Kashmir

Office of the Chief Animal Husbandry Officer.

(e-mail: cahosopian@jkanimalhusbandry.net; Fax/Phone: 01933261420)

No:- CAHOS/SK/1276

Dated:-26/02/2021

Short Quotation Notice

Sealed quotations are invited from reputed suppliers/agencies for procurement of following items with given specifications. Details of the items required with specifications are as follows:

S.No.	Name of items	Specification	Quantity
01	Poultry cage	L=91cm, W=55cm, H=27cm With door size=36cm	05 No.'s
02	Lixin Powder	20gm Sachet	02 kgs
03	Amprolium Powder	150gm Sachet	03 kgs
04	Formaline	40% formaldehyde 05 litre can	05 No.'s
05	Saw dust	Dry homogenous and clean.	02 trucks (Tata mobile)

Quotation documents sealed in envelopes should be delivered to the office of the undersigned upto 04/03/2021. All the quotations received will be opened in on 05/03/2021 at 11.30 am. The Department reserves the right to modify, accept or reject any or all the documents without giving any reason thereof.

For details and further updates if any kindly mail at Email: cahosopian@jkanimalhusbandry.net or contact at 01933295500.

DIPK-14067/20

Chief Animal Husbandry Officer
Shopian.

INDUSCOS Organises Mega Awareness Programme For Artisans At B'pora

BANDIPORA: The Industrial Cooperatives (INDUSCOs) of the Handicraft Department on Saturday organized a day-long awareness programme for artisans at Bandipora.

The awareness camp was inaugurated by Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Dr Owais Ahmad.

Addressing the gathering, the DC said that the objective of organizing the camp was to make artisans aware of various welfare programmes and schemes of the department meant for their overall socio-economic progress.

He said the Industrial Cooperatives is an association of workers and craftsmen involved in cottage or village industries who come together to undertake collective production, processing and marketing of goods manufactured by the members and provide them with the necessary services and assistance.

He said to keep the tradition of vibrant handicraft industry alive with vitality, the state government has taken a number of measures to uplift this industry and handhold the artists to improve their socio-economic conditions by providing them training, help in marketing of their products and provide them short term subsidised loans to grow their business.

He said INDUSCO provides Rs. one lakh financial assistance to registered cooperative societies in two equal installments.

He appealed to the artisan fraternity to come forward and get themselves registered with the department to avail the benefits. He asked them not to get discouraged as the world is now recognizing the importance of hand-made

things and predicted a bright future for artisans in view of the growing demand in the market for hand-made goods.

He said with the advent of tourism season, the administration aims to organize exhibitions at tourist spots for providing market vents to artisans.

Dr Owais said the industrial cooperative society aims to develop self reliance, cooperation and self respect among the members, to purchase and supply raw material, tools and equipment needed by workers to obtain contacts from the government and other organizations and helps in providing source of livelihood and socio-economic development of artisans.

On the occasion, Deputy Registrar Kashmir INDUSCO, Vishaldeep Chandan apprised the artisans about the schemes available for their welfare. He said that the department is making efforts to make sure that the benefits of newly designed schemes for artisans percolate to the targeted beneficiaries.

He said there are 162 active industrial cooperatives in the district with a membership of over 1650 artisans.

Giving details he said there were 82 cooperative societies already registered with 847 members and share capital of Rs 1.94 lakh in district Bandipora while 80 cooperatives were registered under New Financial support scheme during the current fiscal with 812 membership and share capital of Rs 99600.

During the programme, experts provided awareness regarding the manufacturing and marketing process while JCI presented a detailed powerpoint presentation regarding various schemes and different craft related trades, and procedure for registrations.

Meeting Held To Promote Export Of Handicrafts, Handloom In Canada



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR:- Jammu & Kashmir Trade Promotion Organization (JKTPO) in association with Consulate General of India Toronto, Canada & Indo Canada Chamber of Commerce (ICCC) has organized a virtual meet aimed to increase the export of Handicrafts and Handloom items to Canada by creating more avenues of trade.

The virtual meet was attended by Ms. Apoorva Srivastava, Consul General, Consulate General of India Toronto, Mr Vijay Thomas, President, Indo Canada Chamber of Commerce (ICCC), Ms. Anoo Malhotra, Managing Director, J&K Trade Promotion Organization (JKTPO), Mr Mahmood Ahmad Shah, Director Handicrafts & Handloom, Kashmir and Vikas Sharma, Director, Small and Medium Enterprise (SME), ICCC along with senior officials from the Govt of J&K.

& CGI, Toronto, and eminent members of the Handicraft and Handloom exports and import community.

While welcoming the dignitaries, Mr Vijay Thomas said that such events will help to build strong relationships between importers and exporter, adding that ICCC is planning to create marketplace-based events for 10 states and UT of Jammu & Kashmir is one of the focus regions."

Mrs. Anoo Malhotra, MD JKTPO said, that Jammu and Kashmir made exports worth INR 1360 crore during 2019-20, with the majority coming from RMG wool and manmade yarn fabrics, which is an encouraging fact for this platform and invite importers to connect with exporters from the UT. As a matter of fact, the Department of Handloom & Handicrafts is running more than 500 training centers with a capacity of 13,000 artisans. With skill de-

velopment initiatives of Government of Jammu & Kashmir more than 7,500 artisans are getting benefitted, she added".

Ms. Apoorva Srivastava, said that there is a huge demand for these exquisite handmade products, including Basholi painting and other products, in Canada and the Government would encourage importers from Canada to buy such exquisite products from Jammu and Kashmir. She said that Government is planning a similar event in future also.

A presentation on Unique Handicrafts and Handloom products of Jammu & Kashmir was given by Mr Mahmood exhibiting the extraordinary intricacy, skill, and artistic expertise of the people. Special emphasis was given to products of copperware, walnut wood (GI), Pashmina, Sozni embroidery, Kani Shawl Art (GI), Bashoni Pashmina, Chain Stitch Embroidery, along with Papier Mache, Khatamband, KalBaffi, Basohli Paintings, Tweed Jackets, and Kishtwari Loi.

The event connected the reputed exporters of Handicrafts and Handloom in J&K with the potential Canadian importers. More than 40 participants participated in event. The event concluded with a Q&A session and the details along with company profiles of the registered exporters from J&K were shared with the CGI, Toronto to connect the buyers and sellers. Mr Vikas Sharma,

6 WHILE WELCOMING THE DIGNITARIES, MR VIJAY Thomas said that such events will help to build strong relationships between importers and exporter, adding that ICCC is planning to create marketplace-based events for 10 states and UT of Jammu & Kashmir is one of the focus regions."

Exports From Kmr Meet ADG Foreign Trade Demand Separate ITC (HS) code, Testing Lab For Pashmina

SRINAGAR: The leading Kashmir based exporters had a meeting with the Additional Director General, (ADG) Foreign Trade (FT) Ministry of Commerce, Govt. of India, Suman Sharma at SKICC and discussed varied issues of their interest.

The exporters put forth solid suggestions before the visiting dignitary for arresting the decline of exports from Kashmir Valley. Exporters of the Valley strongly registered the withdrawal of the MEIS scheme that has been replaced with RODTEP, where rates have not been notified till date and the valley based exporters are facing huge problems on this account.

The valley based exporters reiterated the problem they are facing on account of GST that has been imposed on various handicraft items exported from Kashmir. The visiting dignitary was also of the opinion that the Handicrafts Sector being 75% labour oriented should have a friendly GST pattern. The exporters also demanded a separate ITC (HS) code for Pashmina.

In addition to the demand of funding under TIES scheme, the visiting dignitary was made aware about the problems being



faced by the exporters of Kashmir in view of infrastructural deficiencies in the office of DGFT at Srinagar. The visiting dignitary assured to look at the demands on priority with regard to the deputing of suitable human resource power to the office of DGFT, Srinagar.

With regard to the Districts being promoted as export hubs, the exporters demanded a proactive participation of DGFT to infuse more funding in this particular component.

Strongly demanding that no value cap should be placed on Pashmina Shawls or other value added handicraft items under ROSCTL scheme, the exporters demanded

that the minimum reimbursement in this particular component is killing the Pashmina and Paper-Machie Industry wherein at latter case the products should be valued on unit basis as compared to the weight basis.

The exporters also demanded that the testing lab of the CDI Srinagar should be designated as the testing lab for Pashmina shawls for valley based exporters as compared to the present practice whereby the testing is done at Dehradun to which the visiting dignitary assured to take the matter with the concerned on priority. The exporters also demanded that shipment bills from customs to DGFT should be minimized. The exporters demanded air, freight, transport subsidy and organizing of physical fairs by DGFT as emergency measures to increase the quantum of exports from Kashmir.

The meeting was arranged by the Directorate of Handicrafts and Handloom, Kashmir.

Thanking the visiting dignitary for sharing her valuable inputs, Director Handicrafts & Handloom Kashmir, Mahmood Ahmad Shah assured the exporters of all possible help in redressing their genuine issues.

Bring Innovative Products For Startups, Fintech, PM Asks Banks

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday stressed on increasing credit to businesses to meet the needs of a fast refloating economy and said financial products will have to be tailor-made for fintech and startups.

Speaking at a webinar on Budget announcements on Financial Services, Modi said to help small and medium businesses during the Covid pandemic, 90 lakh MSMEs were given credit worth

Rs 2.4 trillion.

"Supporting MSME and startups and expanding credit flow to them is necessary. The government has undertaken reforms and opened up sectors like farm, coal and space. Now it's the responsibility of the financial sector to understand the aspirations of rural and smaller cities and make them the strength of Aatmanirbhar Bharat," he said. — PTI

Indian Economy In +Ve Zone, Grows 0.4%

NEW DELHI: The road to recovery appears to be in sight for the Indian economy, with the country's gross domestic product growing by 40 basis points or 0.40 per cent in the October-December quarter. The size of the economy had shrunk in the April-June quarter and July-September quarter, pulling down the country into a technician recession. However, the positive growth — though not very strong yet — has taken the Indian economy out of the recession.

A consistent growth in consumer demand, festive spends and a jump in government expenditure appear to have supported the Covid-battered economy to spring back into the positive territory. The expenditure trend, however, remains weak as government and private consumption expenditure continued to contract in the third quarter.

"The GDP at constant (2011-12) prices in Q3 of 2020-21 is estimated at Rs 36.22 lakh crore, as against Rs 36.08 lakh crore in Q3 of 2019-20, showing a growth of 0.4 per cent," data released by the ministry of statistics and programme implementation showed on Friday.

The Indian economy had grown at the rate of 4.7 per cent in the same quarter last year.

According to the data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO), the farm sector recorded a growth of 3.9 per cent, and the manufacturing sector output grew by 1.6 per cent. The construction sector advanced by 6.2 per

cent, while electricity, gas, water supply and other utility services clocked a 7.3 per cent growth.

Trade, hotels, transport, communications and services related to broadcasting continued to bore the brunt of post-Covid consumer behaviour. These segments posted a 7.7 per cent contraction in the third quarter.

Economists and rating firms had widely expected India's GDP to grow in the third quarter on the back of higher economic activity and reducing the number of coronavirus cases in the country. They are also hopeful that India's economic growth in the fourth quarter will improve further due to the mass vaccination drive that started in the country in January.

While the third-quarter data suggested buoyancy in the economy, the NSO revised its growth projection for the fiscal 2020-21 marginally downwards by 30 basis points or 0.30 per cent.

Compared to the projection of 7.7 per cent of degrowth in January, the government expects the economy to degrow by eight per cent, signalling a weaker than expected rebound in the March quarter.

The NSO, however, added a disclaimer stating that the measures taken by the government to contain the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic have impacted the economic activities as well as the data collection mechanisms. "Estimates, therefore, are likely to undergo sharp revisions for the aforesaid causes in due course." — PTI

Twitter Considers Charging Users For Special Content, In Revenue Push

SAN FRANCISCO: Twitter said Thursday it plans to offer a subscription service in which users would pay for special content from high-profile accounts, part of an economic model to diversify its revenue.

The globally popular social media platform announced the potential new Super Follows service at its annual investor meeting, as it searches for new revenue streams beyond targeted advertising.

"Exploring audience funding opportunities like Super Follows will allow creators and publishers to be directly supported by their audience and will incentivize them to continue creating content that their audience loves," a Twitter spokesperson told AFP.

Top Twitter executives discussed Super Follows while outlining goals and plans for the near future during the streamed presentation.

"We are examining and rethinking the incentives of our



service -- the behaviors that our product features encourage and discourage as people participate in conversation on Twitter," the spokesperson said.

Super Follows was described during the presentation as a way for Twitter audiences to financially support creators and receive newsletters, exclusive content and even virtual badges in exchange.

Twitter, which currently makes money from ads and promoted posts, might be able to add additional revenue via the Super Follows transactions.

Creative Strategies analyst Carolina Milanese was not convinced people will be inclined to pay for special content on Twitter. — AFP

US Owes India USD 216 Billion As American Debt Soars To USD 29 Trillion: Lawmaker



WASHINGTON: The US, the world's largest economy, owes India USD 216 billion in loan as the country's debt grows to a record USD 29 trillion, an American lawmaker has said, cautioning the leadership against galloping foreign debt, the largest of which comes from China and Japan.

In 2020, the US national debt was USD 23.4 trillion that was USD 72,309 in debt per person.

"We are going to grow our debt to USD 29 trillion. That is even more debt owed per citizen. There is a lot of misinformation about where the debt is going. The top two countries we owe the debt to are China and Japan, not actually our friends," Congressman Alex Mooney said.

"We are at global competition with China all the time. They are holding a lot of the debt. We owe China over USD 1 trillion, and we owe Japan over USD 1 trillion," the Republican Senator from West Virginia said on the floor of the US House of Representatives as he and others opposed the latest stimulus package of USD 2 trillion.

In January, US President Joe Biden announced a USD 1.9 trillion coronavirus relief package to tackle the economic fallout from the pandemic, including direct financial aid to average Americans, support to businesses and to provide a boost to the national vaccination programme.

"The people who are loaning us the money we have to pay back are not necessarily people who have our best in-

terest at heart. In Brazil, we owe USD 258 billion. In India, we owe USD 216 billion. And the list goes on the debt that is owed to foreign countries," Congressman Mooney said.

America's national debt was USD5.6 trillion in 2000. During the Obama administration, it actually doubled.

"Since the eight years Obama was President, we doubled our national debt. And we are adding another—projected here—a completely out of control debt-to-GDP ratio," he said urging his Congressional colleagues to consider this national debt issue before approving the stimulus package.

"So I urge my colleagues to consider the future. Don't buy into the—the government has no money it doesn't take from you that you are going to have to pay back. We need to be judicious with these dollars, and most of this is not going to coronavirus relief anyway," he said.

Congressmen Mooney said that things have gone completely out of control. The Congressional Budget Office estimates an additional USD 104 trillion will be added by 2050. The Congressional Budget Office forecasted debt would rise 200 per cent.

"Today, as I stand here right now, we have USD 27.9 trillion in national debt... That is actually a little more than USD 84,000 of debt to every American citizen right here today," Mooney said.

"We have actually borrowed USD 10,000 per person in one year. I mean, that is out of control," he said. — PTI

NEWS MAKERS

Over Eight Crore Traders Protest Against High Fuel Prices, GST Changes

NEW DELHI: Over eight crore traders from over 40,000 trade associations, one crore transporters, three crore hawkers and nearly 75 lakh small industries across India have shut shop in protest against rising fuel prices, changes in GST rules and the e-way bill mechanism, among other issues.

Industry body Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT), which called for the 'Bharat Bandh', was also supported by the All India Transport Welfare Association (AITWA), the apex organisation of India's around crore transporters. Other organisations including the All India FMCG Products Distributors Federation, All India Women Entrepreneurs Association, Hawkers Joint Action Committee, Federation of All India Vegetable Oil Dealers Association, National Small Industries Association and other national and state level organisations participated in the bandh. However, various markets remained open, with traders saying that despite supporting the cause, they did not want to suffer another day of losses. Essential services such as medicine and vegetable shops were open for business. The response to the bandh was mixed with differential impact seen across states, traders' representatives pointed out.

All major markets were shut in states like Maharashtra, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh, whereas it had around a 70-80 per cent impact in South India and over 80 per cent impact in the North East states, they said. Markets in most parts of West Bengal also bore a barren look, according to reports. Fewer vehicles were seen plying on the roads of Bhubaneswar and a majority of trucks and goods-carrying vehicles did not ply on highways across Karnataka. The shutdown call given by All India Traders' Association, however, only evoked a poor response in Telangana with few shops downing shutters in parts of Hyderabad.

PM Modi Asks Toy Manufacturers To Use Less Plastic, More Eco-Friendly Material



NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday exhorted toy manufacturers to use less plastic and more eco-friendly and recyclable material in a bid to increase the share of the domestic industry in the global market. Inaugurating the first India Toy Fair, the Prime Minister said, "We have to become Aatmanirbhar in the toy sector and also cater to the global market".

Observing that India's share in the USD 100 billion global toy market is very small, and 85 per cent of the toys in the country are sourced from abroad, Modi said there is a need to change this situation. "In the field of toys, India has tradition and technology, India has concepts and competence. We can take the world back towards eco-friendly toys. Through our software engineers, computer games can bring the stories of India to the world," he said. While referring to the traditional toy industry, the Prime Minister underlined the need for promoting Handmade in India. If there is a demand for Made in India today, then the demand for Handmade in India is also increasing equally, he said, adding "today people do not only buy toys as a product, but also want to connect with the experience associated with that toy. So, we have to promote Handmade in India as well". The Prime Minister appealed to the manufacturers to make toys that are better for both ecology and psychology, using less plastic and more of such things that can be recycled. Referring to the initiatives of the government, Modi said the country has now graded the toy industry in 24 major sectors.

No Bearing Of LoC

Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, remained on the highest alert and made possible what was believed impossible by the bravery, grit and determination of its personnel in the face of challenging situations along the border.

Recently, the Director General of Military Operations (DGMOs) of India and Pakistan have announced an agreement to uphold ceasefire along the LoC from February 24 and 25 midnight. I want to assure that this ceasefire will have no bearing on the counter-militancy operations and we will maintain our alertness," Lt Gen Joshi said at the northern command investiture ceremony here.

During the ceremony, the Army commander presented two Bar to Sena medals (gallantry) and 50 Sena medals (gallantry) to the brave soldiers.

He also presented three Sena medals (distinguished) and six Vishisht Seva medals for selfless service to the nation.

Lt Gen Joshi also awarded unit appreciation to 26 units for their overall outstanding performance in the command theatre.

"The northern command has always stood like a shield against the attempts by our neighbouring countries to spread disturbance and it will continue to remain so in the future. Whenever anyone raises an evil eye on our country, Indian Army has replied strongly," Lt Gen Joshi said.

Without naming China and Pakistan, he said Indian Army has maintained its domination on its borders with the neighbouring countries and helped in maintaining peace in the hinterland.

Referring to the eastern Ladakh standoff with the Chinese army, he said Indian Army stood up to the challenge on the snow-capped mountains of the Line of Actual Control during the challenging situation in 2020 and maintained the highest alert.

"Our action is a glaring example of our training, bravery and pledge (to safeguard the borders) and it will be written in history with golden words. The northern command made possible what seemed impossible. The success of the operation (in Ladakh) is the glaring example of the bravery of Indian Army," he said.

He said 2020 was historic in many ways for the Army which demonstrated its mettle in eastern Ladakh by its 'grit, determination, self-confidence, bravery and steadfastness'.

He said there has been a tremendous improvement in the basic deployment and preparedness and the efforts in this direction will continue. "The measures we have put in to strengthen our defences, the same efforts were made to maintain peace," he said.

In Kashmir, he said, the overall security situation saw a great improvement in the previous year as there has been a considerable reduction in militant-initiated incidents, stone-pelting activities and protests as a result of tireless efforts of the security forces and the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

He said the Army also played a key role in the fight against the coronavirus pandemic.

"Under 'Seva Paramo Dharma', Army doctors, nursing staff, ambulance and medical corps staff without caring for their lives worked round-the-clock and are continuously doing so," he said.

He congratulated those who were decorated for their bravery and conveyed his heartfelt gratitude to the brave men who made the supreme sacrifice on the borders, including at Galwan Valley, and in the battle against internal security challenges.

Lt Gen Joshi urged all ranks, ex-servicemen, civilians and their families to rededicate themselves to the cause of the nation.

Ready To Move

announced on Thursday that they have agreed to strictly observe all agreements on the ceasefire along the Line of Control (LoC) and other sectors, Khan said Pakistan remains ready to move forward to resolve "all outstanding issues" with India through dialogue.

"I welcome restoration of the ceasefire along the LOC. The onus of creating an enabling environment for further progress rests with India. India must take necessary steps to meet the long-standing demand & right of the Kashmiri people to self-determination according to UNSC resolutions," Khan tweeted.

"We have always stood for peace & remain ready to move forward to resolve all outstanding issues through dialogue," Khan said in a series of tweets.

India has told Pakistan that "talks and terror" cannot go together and has asked Islamabad to take demonstrable steps against militant groups responsible for launching various attacks on India.

On Thursday, India said it desires normal neighbourly relations with Pakistan and is committed to resolving all issues bilaterally in a peaceful manner.

"On relations with Pakistan, as we have said earlier, India desires normal neighbourly relations with Pakistan. We have always maintained that we are committed to addressing issues, if any, in a peaceful and bilateral manner," Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Anurag Srivastava said in New Delhi.

India and Pakistan issued a joint statement on Thursday to strictly observe all agreements on ceasefire along the LoC and other sectors after the hotline discussions by their Director Generals of Military Operations. The decision by the two countries came into effect from the midnight of February 24/25.

India and Pakistan signed a ceasefire agreement in 2003, but it has hardly been followed in letter and spirit over the past several years.

On the Kashmir issue, Khan said, India must take necessary steps to meet the long-standing demand and right of the Kashmiri people to self-determination according to UNSC Security Council resolutions.

New Delhi has told Islamabad that it has no locus standi to comment on the 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.

Meanwhile, Pakistan's Foreign Office said on Saturday that it was committed to peaceful coexistence and resolution of the Kashmir issue as per the UN resolution.

"As this day is commemorated, we once again make clear to the world community that Pakistan remains committed to peaceful coexistence and resolution of the long outstanding Jammu & Kashmir dispute in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions and the wishes of the Kashmiri people, it said in a statement.

Will Show

directions for the Army in case Pakistan violated the ceasefire agreement. The 28 Infantry Division covers the Tangdhar, Keran, Machil (in Kupwara district) and Gurez (in Bandipora) sectors along the LoC.

"We welcome the ceasefire agreement between India and Pakistan. We hope it ushers in an era of peace, security and development to the villages close to the LoC," Maj. Gen. Krishnan said.

He also expressed hope that the infiltration from across the LoC is "shut down" by Pakistan.

The GoC said the reiteration of the ceasefire agreement is a significant decision as it will bring a lot of

relief to the people of about 300 villages located very close to the LoC.

"It will now enable these people to go about their daily lives.... It is important for us to have peace and security in our region so that development can take place," he said.

Saying if peace and tranquillity prevail along the LoC, it will help build mutual trust and confidence between the two neighbouring countries, the GoC asserted that the ceasefire agreement is the first step towards that.

"(But) we have a fair amount of distance to cover. I hope militancy gets absolutely diminished and eliminated in the next couple of years. So we have to take all these steps for many things to happen in Jammu and Kashmir," he said.

Maj. Gen. Krishnan said the LoC has been tranquil for the last two days as there has been no violation and "it is very quiet".

However, he said the Army continues to receive inputs about the presence of militants at some launchpads across the LoC.

"We are on high alert and fully prepared to foil any infiltration attempt," he added.

Asked about the possible impact of the agreement on infiltration attempts from across the border, the GoC said when there are no ceasefire violations, "it does enable us to handle the situation very well".

However, infiltration attempts are very much possible, especially given the rugged terrain of the area, he added.

The Army officer said while drones were spotted in the airspace on the Indian side of the LoC, there have been no instances of weapons-dropping.

"We have shot at them and sent them back," he added.

Cold Returns

this time of the year, officials said.

Fresh snowfall was reported from most parts of Kashmir, including Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir, the officials said.

Macchil and Z-Gali areas in remote Kupwara district recorded snow between one foot to 18 inches, while places like Gulmarg, Baramulla and Sonamarg recorded up to seven inches of snow, they said.

Srinagar has been witnessing rainfall since Friday night, followed by sleet and brief snowfall on Saturday.

The precipitation has brought down the day temperature by several degrees. While the maximum temperature on Friday was 15 degrees Celsius, the minimum temperature was 3.8 degrees Celsius.

The maximum temperature over the past week has been six to seven degrees above normal for this time of the year.

The weatherman has forecast improvement in weather from Sunday evening.

Landslides, Shooting

Traffic was suspended Saturday morning due to landslides and shooting stones triggered by rain at Penthyal and Margooz on the highway, said a traffic police official.

He said heavy rain during the night triggered shooting stones, landslides and mudslides.

The National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) has pressed into service sophisticated machines to put through the traffic, he said adding continued shooting stone are hampering the clearance operation. It was heavily raining between Banihal to Ramsu, triggering more mud and landslides besides shooting stones.

Once the road clearance operation will be completed, traffic will be resumed, he said.

He said today Light Motor Vehicles (LMVs) were to ply from Jammu to Srinagar. LMVs had to cross Nagrota Jammu between 0800 hrs to 1200 hrs and from Jakheni Udhampur between 0900 hrs to 1300 hrs.

Only stranded Heavy Motor Vehicles (HMTVs) between Nashree and Ramban were to ply towards Srinagar, he said.

Pertinently the highway was closed on Friday for weekly maintenance and repair work.

Azad Vows To

Ghulam Nabi Azad retired from the Upper House on February 15.

"I have retired from Rajya Sabha but not from politics. This is not for the first time that I retired from parliament. Till my last breath, I will continue my services for the nation and will continue my fight for the rights of people," Azad told a 'Shanti Sammelan' organised by the Gandhi Global family here.

He was joined by senior party leaders including Kapil Sibal, Manish Tewari, former Haryana chief minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda, Raj Babbar and Anand Sharma.

In an apparent reference to the August 5, 2019 development when the Centre revoked J&K's special status and split it into two Union Territories, he said, "We have lost our identity but we will not give up and continue our fight for the restoration of the statehood within and outside parliament."

"We want representatives of the people of all the three regions of erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir - Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh - to form the government. Leh supported the UT status but Kargil is against it. Every party in Jammu - from BJP to RSS and National Conference to PDP and Panthers Party wants statehood back," he said.

"It is the voice of the people and I challenge anyone to come out with a statement that they do not want the restoration of statehood to J&K," he said.

He also said he will continue his fight for the locals' rights over land and jobs.

"Jammu and Leh face the immediate threat if outsiders start settling in J&K and Ladakh. We are not against the people coming from outside to get jobs here, but in Jammu and Kashmir, resources are limited as we do not have any big industry here," Azad said.

In politics, he said the fight continues to ensure that the people get their rights.

"Jammu and Kashmir shares its border with China and Pakistan and the enemy is very active unlike any other part of the country. We had many wars in the past but the rift has not ended till date. It is our responsibility that we maintain harmony, peace, love and fight the enemy together," he said, adding it is possible when "we are united and did not fall prey to those who are doing the politics of division".

He said every party has a right to come to the power but doing the politics of religion is not good for the country.

"You need to take everyone along as was done by Congress in the past. The Congress could not have achieved freedom for the country, had it not welcomed everyone from every region, religion and every community including educated people, farmers, traders and labourers, irrespective of their caste and creed," he said.

He said the Congress learnt from former prime minister Indira Gandhi that border residents are brave people who fight the enemy alongside the forces and need to be given a special attention.

"We salute our forces for their bravery in the face of challenges from Pakistan and China. We support them

and stand with them against the enemy," he said.

"World leaders like US president Joe Biden makes a reference to Kashmir soon after taking over. They do not talk about any other place of the country but we have now lost our identity and have to fight for its restoration," he said.

Army Probes

issue, Army sources said here.

After the incident came to light, a court of inquiry has been ordered to probe how the soldier could get access to the data and the extent to which it was leaked to the operatives of Pakistani agencies.

The data breach took place when the Indian side was deeply engaged in a military stand-off with the Chinese military.

According to the sources, "the probe would also find out how deeply the soldier was engaged with the enemy operatives and how much was he compromised by them."

The Udhampur-based Northern Command is in charge of security on both China and Pakistan borders in the Ladakh sector.

The Chinese intruded into the Indian territory in the April-May timeframe after which a whole of the nation approach helped in making the Chinese go back to the most critical Pangong lake area.

Travellers Raise

by the Cabinet Secretary, Rajiv Gauba, to review the public health response to COVID-19 in which he asked all the States and Union Territories to closely monitor the trajectory of COVID infections to prevent surge in cases and assiduously expedite vaccination of priority groups in accordance to the guidelines in this regard, an official spokesperson said.

The Chief Secretary, he said, informed that the J&K government is conducting mandatory universal tests on all incoming travellers coming via roadways, railways and airways.

"He informed that J&K saw a 40% surge in weekly cases with travellers contributing to 2/3rd of all the positive cases, adding that in Srinagar district alone 50% of recorded positive cases were travellers," he said.

The Chief Secretaries of Chattisgarh, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab, Telangana, and West Bengal also participated in the meeting.

Subrahmanyam, as per the official spokesperson said that through concerted efforts the government was consistently monitoring the COVID trajectory among its local population with a special focus on districts with an increased tourist footfall.

"Regarding vaccination drives, it was informed that in J&K, 67% of healthcare workers and 59% of frontline workers have been vaccinated during the initial stages of the vaccine roll-out and arrangements are in place to incorporate the third prioritized group in the upcoming days," he said.

Terming the situation in J&K by and large comfortable and under control, the Chief Secretary, as per the official spokesperson said that the bed occupancy in the designated COVID hospitals is less than 4% with approximately 100 patients admitted to health care institutes that have been prepped to accommodate 3000 patients.

Earlier, the Cabinet Secretary informed that India is witnessing a resurgence of COVID cases with an average of 14,300 daily cases, marking an approximate 21% week-on-week increase in the new cases.

According to the official spokesperson, Gauba urged the states and the Union Territories to ensure a multi-sectoral response in addition to swift vaccination drives to prevent subsequent waves of infection especially in the wake of emergence of mutant strains of the virus.

The next phase of the vaccination will start from 1st March, 2021 to cover the third prioritized age group of persons above the age of 60 years, and persons with co-morbidities in the age group of 45-59 years.

"He advised the States/UTs to ardently promote COVID appropriate behaviour, improve the rate of testing especially in districts that are falling short of target quotas, increase the share of RTPCR tests viz-a-viz RATs, monitor mutant strain for early hotspot identification, adopt refocused & stringent containment strategies and undertake priority vaccination with provisions of geographically targeted vaccination in clusters witnessing a surge in COVID cases," the official spokesperson said.

Vaccine Jab

admission in past year, moderate or severe valvular heart disease, coronary artery disease, CT/ MRI- documented stroke, diabetes of over 10 years or with complications, hypertension, end-stage kidney disease on haemodialysis, diagnosis of any solid cancer on or after 2000 or currently on any cancer therapy.

The COVID-19 vaccine will be given free of cost at government hospitals, while people will need to pay for it at private facilities.

To ramp up the vaccination capacity manifold, a significantly large number of private facilities are being involved, the ministry said.

"Rs 250 will be the ceiling -- Rs 150 per dose of vaccine plus Rs 100 service charge. This arrangement will remain effective till further orders," an official source said.

All these information was shared by Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan during an interaction with health secretaries and mission directors (National Health Mission) of states and union territories on the vaccination of age-appropriate groups through a video conference.

"Around 10,000 private hospitals empanelled under Ayushman Bharat-PMJAY, more than 600 hospitals empanelled under CGHS and other private hospitals empanelled under State Governments Health Insurance Schemes can participate as COVID vaccination centres (CVCs)," it said.

"Health Departments of state governments have already initiated dialogue with these private hospitals so that they can be encouraged to participate in this drive as CVCs," the ministry said.

A list of all these private hospitals has been uploaded on the website of the Ministry of Health and the National Health Authority.

In addition, there will be government health facilities which will be used as CVCs such as medical college hospitals, district hospitals, sub divisional hospitals, community health centres, primary health centres, health sub-centres and health and wellness centres.

Geo reference maps with GPS coordinates of all these health facilities have been prepared that will serve as CVCs and these Geo referenced maps are being shared with the states, the ministry said in a statement.

"States have been explained that the private hospitals functioning as CVCs can charge subject to a ceiling of Rs 250 per person per dose along with the electronic and financial management mechanism in this regard.

The simplified system of certifying people with 20 co-morbidities within the 45-59 years age group was also explained to the states.

The ministry has shared the format of the simplified one-page certificate to be signed by any registered medical practitioner.

The certificate can either be uploaded on Co-WIN2.0

by the beneficiary while self registering or a hard copy can be carried by the beneficiary to the CVC, the ministry said.

The ministry on Friday had said beneficiaries would be able to self-register in advance by downloading the Co-WIN 2.0 portal and through other IT applications such as Aarogya Setu, which will show the government and private hospitals serving as COVID-19 vaccination centres (CVCs) with date and time of the available schedules.

The beneficiary would be able to choose the CVC of his/her choice and book an appointment for vaccination. However, people will not have the option of choosing between the two currently approved vaccines -- Covishield and Covaxin -- but having the option of choosing the site of inoculation may lead to beneficiaries opting for a particular vaccine.

There is, however, no official words on which vaccine is being supplied to which hospital.

"Eligible beneficiaries would be able to register themselves on the Co-WIN platform from March 1 itself," R S Sharma, Chairman of Empowered Group on COVID-19 Vaccine Administration, had said.

All the private health facilities which will serve as government COVID vaccination centres must follow strict norms of due process, quality and safety, including integration with the National Co-Win technology platform.

All private health facilities must also have adequate space, adequate cold chain arrangements, adequate number of vaccinators and support staff and adequate arrangements for addressing Adverse Event Following Immunization (AEFI).

States were explained the three methods of registration -- advance self-registration, on-site registration and facilitated cohort registration.

Under the first route, beneficiaries will be able to self register in advance by downloading the Co-WIN 2.0 portal and through other IT applications such as Aarogya Setu.

The facility of on-site registration allows those who cannot self register in advance to walk into the identified CVCs and get themselves registered on-site and then vaccinated.

Under the facilitated cohort registration mechanism, the state and UT government will take proactive lead.

The other comorbidities among eligible people aged above 45 include post cardiac transplant/left ventricular assist device, moderate or severe valvular heart disease, congenital heart disease with severe PAH or idiopathic PAH, coronary artery disease with past CABG/PTCA/MI, and kidney/liver/hematopoietic stem cell transplant.

Determined To

students of Government Medical College (GMC) Doda here through virtual mode with MoS, PMO, Dr. Jitendra Singh on Saturday, Sinha termed the healthcare sector as imperative for the development of J&K and observed that the UT was spending 2.86% of its GSDP on public health, which is the best in the country, an official spokesperson said. He said that special attention was being paid to three areas - Prevention, Better Treatment, and Care.

As per the official spokesperson, the LG also termed the role of medicine students important in strengthening the healthcare system of J&K and advised the young aspiring doctors to serve humanity & imbibe the spirit of selflessness.

He said that the LG also observed that J&K government was taking several reformative measures for the advancement and upgradation of health infrastructure, besides providing affordable healthcare services to all.

"We are determined to fulfil the vision of a new & healthy J&K," he said, as per the official spokesperson.

"Five new medical colleges, two AIIMS, nearly 1000 healthcare and wellness centers, five new nursing colleges, BSc paramedical course as well as more than 100% increase in medical seats are contributing towards the development and advancement of the healthcare sector in the UT," he added.

According to the official spokesperson, the LG also said that the tendering process for establishing two new medical colleges in Udhampur & Handwara, at an estimated cost of Rs 325 crores each, has been started which will lead to tremendous health security improvement in remote areas.

The LG, he said, underlined the improvements recorded by J&K in different health indicators and said that the health index of J&K shows incremental improvements and positive changes.

"In the last three years, the neonatal mortality rate in Jammu and Kashmir has come down from 23.1 to 13.3 per 1000. The infant mortality rate has come down from 32.4 to 16.3 per 1000. Sex Ratio at birth has increased from 923 to 976 per 1000. Institutional deliveries have increased from 7% to 92.4%," Sinha said, as per official spokesperson.

He also mentioned the PMJAY-SEHAT scheme which was launched by the Prime Minister recently and is covering 100% of the population without discrimination.

In a major step towards addressing the issue of shortage of doctors in Jammu and Kashmir, the LG, as per the official spokesperson said that with the formation of five new medical colleges, 500 additional MBBS seats have been added this year, and their number has now doubled in Government Medical College, out of which 85 seats are reserved for financially weaker sections.

"To overcome the shortage of post-graduate doctors and to prepare specialists at that level, our Health Department has also started Diploma of National Board Courses in the new and old medical colleges of the districts, which will increase at least 250 seats," the LG said.

Speaking on upgradation of health infrastructure, Sinha, according to the official spokesperson observed that the new medical colleges have been upgraded by attaching them to the District Hospitals, which will be equipped with all facilities, and soon the existing 300 bedded hospitals will be developed into 500 bedded hospitals.

"To promote AYUSH care services, two AYUSH colleges - Unani and an Ayurvedic college have been started. Facilities of AYUSH are also being provided to 571 Stand Alone Dispensaries," Sinha said, as per the official spokesperson.

"Jammu and Kashmir has received Rs 881 crore for 140 health projects under PMDP out of which 75 projects have been completed and 26 projects will be completed by March this year. World Bank is providing financial assistance of Rs 367 crore to Jammu and Kashmir, which will further strengthen the health care institutions here," he added.

While speaking on attracting investors in the healthcare sector, the LG, as per the official spokesperson observed that the new Health Care Investment Policy-2019 has been approved and the operational guidelines of this policy, besides proposal of two medicities in the UT are being considered which will prove to be milestones in this area.

"The LG, he said, expressed his satisfaction on being informed that the Doda Government College has gathered adequate facilities for the education, training of all the students and will be able to serve around 12

lakh people in the coming days, including the surrounding districts.

"A total of 56 faculty have joined this medical college and by June 2021 its main complex will also be ready. The LG assured that the issue of availability of senior faculty in Anatomy and Radiology will be resolved soon," the official spokesperson said.

On this occasion, he said, the LG congratulated the Principal and faculty members of GMC Doda for commencement of the first batch of the college.

"It's a matter of great satisfaction that out of 100 students in the first batch, 50 are girls," he said.

Speaking on the occasion, Union MoS PMO, Dr. Jitendra Singh termed the occasion as a historic moment, the official spokesperson said.

"He said that the dream of establishing Government Medical College in the district and beginning of the maiden academic batch of the college has turned into reality due to the efforts of the central government under the able leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister and assured all possible help in providing quality education to the students," he added.

Sinha, as per the official spokesperson said that the promises made by the Prime Minister with the people of J&K are being fulfilled for holistic and equitable development of the UT.

LG's Advisor Rajeev Rai Bhatnagar also spoke on the occasion and extended his heartiest congratulations to the newly enrolled MBBS students and faculty members of the College while Atal Dulloo, Financial Commissioner, Health and Medical Education Department highlighted the achievements made by the Health Department in the recent past.

Govt Finally

includes to purchase and monitor distribution and installation of CCTVs and related equipments; to arrange budgetary allocation for the purpose; to continuously monitor the maintenance and upkeep of CCTVs and allied equipment; to carry out inspections and address the grievances received from the DLOC and to call for monthly reports from the DLOC and immediately address any concerns like faulty equipment.

"The Committee shall be serviced by the Home Department and shall co-opt any officers) as member(s) as deemed appropriate," reads an order by the government. District Level Oversight Committee (s) comprises of Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir/ Jammu, Chairperson(s) of the District Development Council(s), District Magistrate(s) and Superintendents) of Police.

The committee is to supervise the maintenance of CCTVs and related equipments; continuously monitor their upkeep and seek inputs in this regard from the concerned Station House Officers (SHOs); send monthly reports to the UTLO about the functioning of CCTVs and allied equipments and to review footage stored from CCTVs in the various Police Stations to check for any human rights violation that may have occurred but are not reported.

"The DLOCs may co-opt any officers) as member(s) as deemed appropriate," the order added.

As per the apex court's orders the State and Union Territory Governments should ensure that CCTV cameras are installed in each and every Police Station functioning in the respective State and/or Union Territory. Further, in order to ensure that no part of a Police Station is left uncovered, it is imperative to ensure that CCTV cameras are installed at all entry and exit points; main gate of the police station; all lock-ups; all corridors; lobby/the reception area; all verandas/ outhouses, Inspector's room; Sub Inspector's room; areas outside the lock-up room; station hall; in front of the police station compound; outside (not inside) washrooms/toilets; Duty Officer's room; back part of the police station etc.

"Whenever there is information of force being used at police stations resulting in serious injury and/or custodial deaths, it is necessary that persons be free to complain for a redressal of the same," the top court had said.

Such complaints may not only be made to the State Human Rights Commission, which is then to utilise its powers, more particularly under Sections 17 and 18 of the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993, for redressal of such complaints, but also to Human Rights Courts, which must then be set up in each District of every State/Union Territory under Section 30 of the Act, the court said.

"The Commission/Court can then immediately summon CCTV camera footage in relation to the incident for its safe keeping, which may then be made available to an investigation agency in order to further process the complaint made to it." (GNS)

J&K Reports 97

Udhampur districts.

While nine districts did not report any new case, seven districts had cases in single digits.

The number of active has risen to 828 in the union territory, while 1,23,599 patients have recovered from the disease so far, officials said.

The death toll stands at 1,956, they added.

Kulsuma Named

and Social Networking Media," reads an order issued in this regard.

Burglars Loot

they found lock of Gurudwara gate broken.

Meanwhile, Police have registered a case vide FIR number 22/2021 under section 457,380 IPC and set investigation into motion.

A team from Bandipora Police Station along with FSL team reached the spot and took samples for investigations, the report added.

Rare Coin Fetches

a Persian legend and brought in Rs 56 lakh.

He, however, did not disclose the name of the buyer. "The coin, weighing 10.90 gram, is almost uncirculated. So it's unique," Maru, who is organising the auction, said.

According to a statement on Marudhar Arts' portal, Kam Baksh took active part in the wars.

In 1707, he seized the control of the Bijapur fort

Why India Cannot Afford To Make Another Horror Pitch At The Motera Cricket Stadium

Press Trust of India

AHMEDABAD: The Motera track may have received a lot of flak after the pink ball Test ended inside two days but it is unlikely to attract any severe sanctions from the game's governing body ICC with the pitch for the final game set to be a batting beauty.

With India 2-1 up in the four-

cide its course of action. Also as of now, the England team hasn't lodged any official complaint," the BCCI official said.

If there has been one good and one bad pitch at the same venue, the ICC is unlikely to take any action. While India would be happy with a 3-1 margin, they will not require a result oriented turner as a draw would suffice their purpose.



Test series and needing a draw to qualify for the World Test Championship final at Lord's from June 18-22, another turner is currently out of question as the home team will be aiming to take minimal risks as far as the track is concerned.

"Expect a good hard surface which will be firm and even bounce. It will be a batting beauty and since it's a traditional red ball match, one can expect a very high scoring contest here from March 4-8," a senior BCCI official privy to the developments told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

Also the BCCI bigwigs along with the team management understands the fact that another dust bowl won't augur well for the new venue which is expected to host a lot of important matches during IPL as well as ICC T20 World Cup.

"If there are two matches played at the same venue, you can't hold one result in isolation. Let the final Test be over and then only based on match referee Javagal Srinath's report can ICC de-

Also the Indian team management doesn't want to prepare a track that can ideally backfire on them in a very high-stake game of cricket.

"The pink ball Test went well because it was more about the ball and the way it skidded rather than the pitch which many English former greats are panning. It was straight deliveries that they couldn't counter. But having said that these kind of tracks have a tendency to backfire and BCCI is well aware of that," he said.

The team combination for the next Test will be an interesting one after Jasprit Bumrah was released from the squad due to personal reasons.

Mohammed Siraj has a better chance than Umesh Yadav of being Ishant Sharma's new ball partner, while it is expected that all three spinners will be automatic picks.

Washington Sundar's superior batting skills might come in very handy in the middle order for the last Test match.

“THE PINK BALL TEST WENT WELL because it was more about the ball and the way it skidded rather than the pitch which many English former greats are panning. It was straight deliveries that they couldn't counter. But having said that these kind of tracks have a tendency to backfire and BCCI is well aware of that.”

Alastair Cook Questions Virat Kohli's Defence Of Motera Pitch

Press Trust of India

LONDON: Former England captain Alastair Cook today questioned Virat Kohli's stance on the Motera pitch and said the India skipper "defended the wicket almost as if it's a BCCI thing".

Disagreeing with Kohli's assessment of the third Test that ended with India crushing England by 10 wickets inside two days, Cook said batting was near impossible on the newly laid strip at the refurbished stadium in Ahmedabad.

"Virat Kohli's come out and defended the wicket almost as if it's a BCCI thing — it cannot possibly be the wicket. Yet it was so hard to bat on that. So hard," Cook told Channel 4.

Only two batsmen — one each from both sides — could score a half-century as 28 wickets fell to the spinners on a Motera pitch that many



players felt was not ideal for a Test match. The likes of Sunil Gavaskar, however, credited the spinners rather than blaming the pitch.

Cook added, "We've got Virat Kohli, Joe Root, we have some great players

Bengal Smash J&K, Win Match By 86 Runs In Vijay Hazare Trophy

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir cricket team on Saturday were smashed by a superior Bengal side in the Vijay Hazare Trophy Group E match played at the Videocon Academy Ground, Saltair, Kolkata.

Put in to bat first, the Bengal batsmen rallied to a dominant total of 368 for the loss of 4 wickets in the allotted 50 overs. Brilliant performances by Abhimanyu Easwaran (99) and skipper A. Majumdar (92 not out) guided their team

to the mammoth total. The duo were ably supported by Ritwik Chowdhury (55), Kaif Ahmed (42) and Shahbaz Ahmed (48 not out).

For J&K, Mujtaba Yousuf took 2 wickets. While Umran Malik and Abid Mushtaq took 1 wicket each.

In reply, the entire J&K team were bowled out for 286 runs in 45.3 overs.

The J&K batsmen started off well but Bengal bowlers took regular wickets to break any threatening momentum from the batting side.

Abid Mushtaq (68), Captain

Parvaiz Rasool (50) and Shubham Khajuria (44) were the top scorers for their team.

For Bengal, Arnab Nandi took 4 wickets. Mukesh Kumar took 2 while Ishan Porel and Shahbaz Ahmed took 1 wicket each.

This defeat in the 4th Round of the Vijay Hazare Trophy leaves J&K second from bottom of Group E with 4 points, winning 1 and losing 3 in the process. Bengal, on the other hand, climbed to the 3rd spot.

J&K next play 2nd-placed Chandigarh on March 1.

Resurgent Mohammedan Sporting Face Tough Challenge From Title Aspirants Real Kashmir FC

Press Trust of India

KOLKATA: With a top-six finish on the line, Mohammedan Sporting will face a tough challenge in the form of unbeaten Real Kashmir FC in their I-League match at the Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan here on Sunday.

Mohammedan Sporting broke a two-match losing streak after they beat Chennai City with a last-gasp winner from Suraj Rawat in their previous outing.

The Black Panthers sit on sixth place with 13 points from nine games. With Aizawl FC closing behind them, Sankarlal Chakraborty's side will have to do what no team has achieved this season -- beat Real Kashmir to confirm their place in the top six.

In the second phase of I-League, the top six teams of the ongoing first phase will once again play a match each against each other. The points from both the phases will be added to determine the champion team.

Speaking ahead of Sunday's match, Chakraborty said, "Winning matches is a confidence booster. We have been in a winning mood and it's now a matter of consolidating the winning spirit."

"The game against Real Kashmir is a determining factor to our future in the league and we are aware of what is expected of us. I always tell the players

to focus on the match and not



on league table. We prefer to go match by match and it will be the same against Real Kashmir."

Talking about Sunday's opponents, he said, "Real Kashmir plays a very good brand of football and they are quick. They are also highly technical. I have nothing but respect for them."

"It is going to be a tight match but we will make sure that we implement our game plan and see how they respond."

Real Kashmir confirmed their top-six spot with a 3-1 victory over Aizawl FC in their last match. The Snow Leopards sit second on the standings with 17 points, two short of toppers Churchill Brothers.

Despite achieving a top-six spot, coach David Robertson will push his side to reduce the gap on the top with a win, considering

that points from both the phases will be counted together to determine the league champion.

"It was great to win the game fighting from a goal down, but I was disappointed that we conceded the goal. Sometimes, things go against the team, but we seem to keep overcoming them and get stronger with every game we play," Robertson said.

"There is no margin for error as we have five games left after this game. We got to focus on our philosophy and see where it takes us."

"Mohammedan have had an inconsistent season, but they have quality players. We know they will be fired up because it is a must-win game for them. They are a difficult opponent to play, and we got to be at our best," the Scottish manager added.

Michael Vaughan Terms India's Win 'A Shallow Victory', Demands ICC To Take Action



Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Former England captain Michael Vaughan on Friday said the more India is allowed to "get away" with producing pitches that are not deemed good enough for Test cricket, the more "toothless" the ICC will look.

England on Thursday suffered an embarrassing 10-wicket defeat in the third Test against India on a spin-friendly Motera track to go down 1-2 in the four-match series.

The match ended inside two days with the pitch drawing flak from former players like Vaughan, though batting legend Sunil Gavaskar credited the Indian spinners rather than blaming the surface.

"The longer powerful countries like India are allowed to get away with it the more toothless the ICC will look," Vaughan wrote in the Daily Telegraph.

"The governing body are allowing India to produce whatever they wish and it is Test cricket that is getting hurt," he said while expressing his displeasure with the BCCI.

Vaughan, who has led England from 2003 to 2008, felt broadcasters asking for refunds if a match finishes too soon may help change things.

"Perhaps it will take broadcasters to ask for refunds for things to change. They accept Test finishing early because the players are not good enough but not when home boards produce such poor pitches."

"They are left with three blank days but are still having to pay for production. They will not be happy and might think twice about good money for Test rights," Vaughan said.

He called India's win "a shallow victory" but admitted that the home

team is much better equipped to deal with the conditions.

"India won the third Test but it was shallow victory. In fact, there was no winners from that game at all," Vaughan started his column with these words.

He added, "Yet, India showed their skill. We are not being fair if we do not accept that their skill levels in those conditions are far better than England's."

"But the good of the game needs to be looked at and as ex-players it is our duty to call it out."

Vaughan said the pitches in the last two Tests have let the players down.

"We have to be fair and recognise that these players are battling for their careers and over the last two weeks they have been let down by the surfaces."

"How can anyone say that 250 is a par first innings score in a Test match and claim the pitch is good enough."

"Test cricket is not about accepting you need to have a bit of fortune as a batsman to score runs in the first innings."

"... If you have a World Test Championship you need to deduct points for producing surfaces that are not deemed good enough for Test cricket."

"But it is also a real concern for the game that we have seen India respond to going 1-0 down by producing pitches which turn prodigiously from ball one and which they know full well will only last two or three days," Vaughan said. He also blamed England's rotational policy and said they deserved to be in the position they are in at the moment.

"The disregard they showed by sending Jonny Bairstow home to walk his dogs for two weeks and then go back and bat at three against Ravi Ashwin has bitten them on the backside."

WI Vs SL: Chris Gayle Returns To West Indies Squad After Nearly Two Years

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Veteran batsman Chris Gayle has returned to the West Indies squad for the first time in nearly two years for the three-match T20 International series against Sri Lanka, beginning on March 3.

The 41-year-old top-order batsman was recalled to the 14-man squad under Kieron Pollard on the basis of his good performances in recent tournaments, including the IPL and the Pakistan Super League.

Senior fast bowler Fidel Edwards, 39, is also back in the national squad after a nine-year hiatus.

The three matches of the T20I series will be played on March 3, 5, and 7 at the Coolidge Cricket Ground in Antigua, which will be making its international debut.

The big-hitting Gayle last played for West Indies in their home series against India in August 2019 after the



50-over World Cup that year.

He had earlier said that the 2019 World Cup matches would be his last appearances for West Indies.

"Chris Gayle has performed very well in recent tournaments and the selection panel thinks that he can still add great value to our team," Roger Harper, Cricket West Indies' (CWI) head selector, said in a media release.

"As we build towards the defence of the T20 World Cup, the opportunity

is being taken to determine our best team and squad as we go forward."

Gayle is the highest run scorer in T20 history. He has played in 103 Tests, 301 ODIs and 58 T20Is since making his international debut in 1999.

As for Edwards, Harper stated that his recall was to "give the bowling the potent firepower needed".

Edwards, who played 55 Tests for West Indies, moved to Hampshire in 2015 on a Kolpak deal. However, following the

UK's recent departure from the European Union, Edwards expressed his desire to make an international comeback.

Off-spinner Kevin Sinclair earned his maiden West Indies selection and left-arm spinner Akeal Hosein got his first T20I call-up.

The selection panel also named the squad for the ODI series against the visiting Sri Lankans to be played between March 10-14 at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium in Antigua.

T20I squad: Kieron Pollard (c), Nicholas Pooran, Fabian Allen, Dwayne Bravo, Fidel Edwards, Andre Fletcher, Chris Gayle, Jason Holder, Akeal Hosein, Evin Lewis, Obed McCoy, Rovman Powell, Lendl Simmons, Kevin Sinclair.

ODI squad: Kieron Pollard (c), Shai Hope, Fabian Allen, Darren Bravo, Jason Holder, Akeal Hosein, Alzarri Joseph, Evin Lewis, Kyle Mayers, Jason Mohammed, Nicholas Pooran, Romario Shepherd, Kevin Sinclair.

Yusuf Pathan, Sanath Jayasuriya To Feature In Road Safety World Series

Press Trust of India

RAIPUR: Former India cricketers Yusuf Pathan, Naman Ojha and Vinay Kumar, all of whom recently announced their retirements, will feature in the India Legends team in the 'Road Safety World Series' starting here on March 5.

Former Sri Lankan swashbuckling opener Sanath Jayasuriya, who is remembered for the vital role he played in the team's 1996 ODI World Cup triumph, will be playing for the Sri Lanka Legends.

"Sri Lanka Legends have also included Sanath Jayasuriya, Russel Arnold and Upul Tharanga in their team led by Tilakratne Dilshan," a media release issued here said on Saturday.

India Legends will play their first match against Bangladesh Legends on March 5 and Sri Lanka Legends start their campaign against West Indies Legends on March 6.



All the matches will be played at the Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh International Cricket Stadium.

This T20 League aims to influence and change people's mindset towards their behaviour on the roads and create awareness towards road safety in the country, the release added.

The first edition of the series

had to be called off after four games on March 11, 2020 due to the pandemic.

Squads:

India Legends: Sachin Tendulkar, Virender Sehwag, Yuvraj Singh, Mohammed Kaif, Pragnan Ojha, Noel David, Munaf Patel, Irfan Pathan, Manpreet Gony, Yusuf

Pathan, Naman Ojha, S Badrinath and Vinay Kumar.

Sri Lanka Legends: Tilakratne Dilshan, Sanath Jayasuriya, Farveez Maharoof, Rangana Herath, Thilan Thushara, Ajantha Mendis, Chamara Kapugedera, Upul Tharanga, Chamara Silva, Chinthaka Jayasinghe, Dhammika Prasad, Nuwan Kulasekara, Russel Arnold, Dulanjan Wijesinghe and Malinda Warnapura.

West Indies Legends: Brian Lara, Tino Best, Ridley Jacobs, Narsingh Deonarine, Sulieman Benn, Dinanath Ramnarine, Adam Sanford, Carl Hooper, Dwayne Smith, Ryan Austin, William Perkins and Mahendra Nagamootoo.

South Africa Legends: Jonty Rhodes Morn van Wyk, Garnett Kruger, Roger Telemachus, Justin Kemp, Alviro Petersen, Nantie Hayward, Andrew Puttick, Loots Bosman, Zander de Bruyn, Thandi Tshabalala, Monde Zondeki, Makhaya Ntini and Lloyd Norris-Jones.

Babar Azam Leads Karachi To 7-Wicket Win Over Multan In PSL

Agencies

KARACHI: Babar Azam hit his second successive half century in the Pakistan Super League and anchored Karachi Kings to a seven-wicket win over Multan Sultans on Saturday.

Babar's unbeaten 90 off 60 balls — including 13 fours and a six — led Karachi to 198-3 with seven balls to spare in yet another successful chase in Pakistan's premier Twenty20 league.

All nine league matches in this season's PSL have been won by the teams chasing, including four successful chases of 190-plus runs.

Multan had earlier spoiled a blistering start and were restricted to 195-6 as Karachi skipper Imad Wasim followed a familiar script of captains putting the opposition into bat after winning the toss.

"Credit goes to the bowlers first," Wasim said. "The way we finished at the end was fantastic. We saved almost 15-20 runs at the death."



Englishman Joe Clarke (54 off 26 balls) took the game away from Multan by combining in an electrifying stand of 97 runs with Babar.

Clarke smashed four sixes against spinners Shahid Afridi and Khushdil Shah and also hit three boundaries in his robust half century before he was caught at short fine leg while attempting to ramp a slow bouncer from Shanawaz Dhani (2-28).

Babar led Karachi to its second

win in three games with a six and two fours in succession against fast bowler Sohail Khan in the penultimate over. Earlier, Multan failed to cash in on Chris Lynn's robust start (32 off 14 balls) and were cruising along at 72-1 in the first six overs of batting powerplay.

James Vince (45) and skipper Mohammad Rizwan (43) both fell in successive overs of fast bowler Arshad Iqbal (2-36) as Multan slipped to 133-3 in the 14th over.

Karachi came back strongly in the last five overs with their fast bowlers leaking only one boundary. Left-arm fast bowler Mohammad Amir, who earlier started with a maiden over, bowled seven wide balls in his next three overs but got the dangerous Shahid Afridi (3) in the 19th over to finish with 1-34.

After its third loss, Multan slipped to fifth in six-team event with a solitary win against Lahore Qalandars, who are due to meet Islamabad United in Saturday's other league match.

US In Delicate Balancing Act As Saudi Prince Spared Sanctions

Agenceis

WASHINGTON: Washington on Friday released a long-delayed intelligence report that accused Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman of approving Khashoggi's 2018 murder in Istanbul, drawing a rebuke from Riyadh, which strongly rejected the assessment.

US President Joe Biden's decision not to sanction Saudi Arabia's crown prince over journalist Jamal Khashoggi's murder has frustrated campaigners, underscoring Washington's delicate balancing act as it seeks to avoid a diplomatic rupture.

Washington on Friday released a long-delayed intelligence report that accused Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman of approving Khashoggi's 2018 murder in Istanbul, drawing a rebuke from Riyadh, which strongly rejected the assessment.

The public censure of the prince and a slew of US sanctions on dozens of Saudi officials marks a sharp departure from the policy of former president Donald Trump, who sought to shield the kingdom's de facto ruler.

But Washington did not slap any direct sanctions on Prince Mohammed, known by his initials MBS, with Secretary of State Antony Blinken explaining that Biden wants to "recalibrate" but not "rupture" its relations with Riyadh, a longstanding Middle East partner.

"This is not the Saudi smack-down that many hoped for," said Varsha Koduvayur, a research analyst at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, a conservative Washington think-tank.

It indicates "Biden's overall Saudi stance: put values at the heart of US foreign policy, emphasise human rights, and reverse the transactional approach of last four years (under Trump) -- while preserving the relationship," Koduvayur added.

Call for sanctions
The Washington-based campaign group Freedom House said it was "disappointing and frustrating that the US is yet unwilling to act on its own intelligence" and impose sanctions on the Saudi prince.

"We expect nothing less than justice for Jamal Khashoggi and all of Saudi Arabia's brave dissidents," said the New York-based Human Rights Foundation, which produced "The Dissident", a critically acclaimed documentary on the journalist's murder.

"The United States and the European Union must urgently place sanctions on MBS himself."

The intelligence report -- which had been withheld after being completed under Trump -- said it was "highly unlikely" that Khashoggi's murder could have taken place without his green light.

The killing of Khashoggi, a

Washington Post columnist and critic of Prince Mohammed, also fits a pattern of "the crown prince's support for using violent measures to silence dissidents abroad", it added.

But Saudi observers dismissed the highly anticipated report, with Ali Shihabi, a government adviser close to the kingdom's royal court, saying the "thin" assessment lacked a "smoking gun".

Soon after the report was made public, the Arabic hashtag "We are all MBS" began trending on Twitter, with pro-government cyber armies tweeting in support of the Saudi heir apparent.

Preserving ties

Biden had pledged during his campaign to make the kingdom a "pariah" after it got a free pass under Trump, but observers say he is instead adopting a middle path.

While scrutinising human rights, his new administration is expected to work to preserve a valuable security partnership while it moves to reboot nuclear talks with Riyadh's arch-enemy Tehran.

Biden also needs to deal with the top crude producer on the highly fraught issues of energy, counterterrorism, and efforts to end the conflict in Yemen.

"The Biden foreign policy team is comprised of seasoned experts who are not so naive as to think that they can achieve their goals in the Middle East without dealing with a Saudi state that still anchors, though in a less totalising way, both oil and security in the Gulf," said Kristin Diwan of the Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington.

"For this reason, they have ruled out the sanctioning of Mohammed bin Salman, preserving space to deal with the Saudi state and its top leadership."

Still, Washington on Friday announced the "Khashoggi Act" that will ban entry into the US of foreigners who threaten dissidents and placed 76 Saudis on the blacklist, in what could serve as a strong deterrent.

Biden also appears to have steered away from his predecessor's transactional relationship with the kingdom, an important buyer of US military hardware.

Recent official statements from Washington have called Saudi Arabia a "security partner", instead of what the Trump administration highlighted as an "ally".

In an apparent snub earlier this week, Biden insisted on making his first Saudi phone call to 85-year-old King Salman, even as Saudi pro-government supporters insisted that his son, Prince Mohammed, was the kingdom's day-to-day ruler.

"Washington realises that MBS could go on to rule Saudi Arabia for the next half century, so it cannot afford to completely alienate him," a Western diplomat told AFP.



Ban On International Flights Extended Till March 31

Press Trust of India

MUMBAI: Aviation regulator DGCA on Friday extended the suspension of international commercial passenger flight services till March 31.

Scheduled international flight operations were suspended from March 23 last year in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic in the country.

"In partial modification of circular dated June 26, 2020, the competent authority has further

extended the validity... regarding scheduled international commercial passenger services to and from India till 23.59 pm IST of March 31, 2021," the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said in a circular.

However, international scheduled flights may be allowed on select routes by the competent authority on case-to-case basis, it said. The restriction will not apply to cargo flights and flights specifically approved by DGCA, the circular added.

Amid the suspension, special international flights have been allowed under the Vande Bharat Mission since May last year and under bilateral "air bubble" arrangements with select countries since July.

India has formed air bubble pacts with several countries including the US, the UK, the UAE, Kenya, Bhutan and France, among others.

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

Govt Sets '50 Lakh Users' Threshold To Define 'Significant Social Media Intermediary' Under IT Rules

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: The government has fixed fifty lakh registered users as the threshold for defining 'significant social media intermediary', which will have to adhere to additional obligations and compliance under the new IT rules that seek to crack down on misuse of social media platforms.

The new rules, announced earlier this week, require 'significant social media intermediaries' to follow additional due diligence, including the appointment of a chief compliance officer, nodal contact person and resident grievance officer. All three officials will have to reside in India.

They will have to publish a monthly compliance report and details of the contents removed proactively.

At present, the country has 53 crore WhatsApp users, 44.8 crore YouTube users, 41 crore Facebook subscribers, 21 crore Instagram clients, while 1.75 crore account holders are on microblogging platform Twitter.

"...the Central Government hereby specifies fifty lakh registered users in India as the threshold for a social



media intermediary to be considered a significant social media intermediary," the notification said.

Earlier on Thursday, the government announced the tightening of the rules governing social media and streaming companies, requiring them to take down contentious content quicker, appoint grievance redressal officers and assist investigations.

The move aims to make social media platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter and Instagram - which have seen a phenomenal surge in usage over the past few years in India - more accountable and responsible for the content hosted on their platform.

Social media companies will have to remove contentious content flagged by the government or court orders within

36 hours and take down posts depicting nudity or morphed photos within 24 hours of receiving a complaint, as per the latest intermediary rules.

Also, social media platforms on being asked by the court or government will be required to disclose the first originator of the mischievous information that undermines the sovereignty of India, security of the state, or public order.

The new guidelines followed the government's spat with Twitter over allegedly inflammatory tweets and hashtags supporting farmer protests, with the microblogging service initially refusing to comply with orders to take down about 1,500 such posts and accounts. Twitter complied after it was threatened with penal action.

RARE DISEASE DAY

Health Advocacy Groups Press For Govt Policy, Say India's Numbers Unknown

Agenceis

NEW DELHI: Only 450 of the 8,000 known rare diseases in the world are recognised in India, an anomaly that underscores a mounting health crisis in which many patients go without being diagnosed accurately or treated on time, say experts while stressing the urgent need for a comprehensive policy.

Rare diseases, including genetic disorders such as Hunter syndrome, Gaucher disease and Fabry's disease, are expensive to treat, difficult to identify and extract a huge toll, mostly on the young, the experts said ahead of Rare Disease Day on Sunday. The lack of a government policy also means the disease burden is unknown, said health advocacy groups.

"We are literally sitting on a ticking time bomb," said Prasanna Shirol, executive director and co-founder of the Organisation of Rare Diseases in India (ORDI).

According to ORDI, there are 8,000 known rare diseases globally but only 450 are recognised in India.

"There is no official list of identified rare diseases issued by the government. The 450 diseases identified are reported by the patients. Fifty per cent of the rare diseases are by birth and the rest are late onset. Only seven of the 450 are treatable diseases, the rest need to be managed," Shirol said.

Lack of awareness is the biggest challenge in diagnosing rare diseases, he said, explaining that the average time to identify a rare disease in a patient is seven years.

While the government has earmarked special funds for diseases such as haemophilia (Rs 1,400 crore per year) and thalassaemia (Rs 700

crore), it has completely ignored the more serious ones, he said.

"What the government believes is utterly contradictory. They ask why should they initiate anything massive for a group which does not have a massive patient burden unlike non-communicable diseases like cancers, but what I say is that to know the real burden it has to make newborn screening mandatory," Shirol said.

Shirol, who has a daughter with a genetic disorder, said a policy from the government can bring some order to the lives of people with such conditions in the country.

"It appears hope is the only medicine government is trying to give us for our genuine demands," he said.

While there is no formal definition for a rare disease, global health bodies say it is characterised by three factors—the total number of people having the disease, its prevalence and the non-availability of treatment.

According to the website rare-diseaseday.org, 72 per cent of rare diseases are genetic whilst others are the result of infections (bacterial or viral), allergies and environmental causes, or are degenerative and proliferative. An estimated 70 percent of genetic rare diseases start in childhood.

Health groups in India have also urged the government to make newborn screening mandatory to be able to identify genetic problems at an early stage. The monthly treatment cost of such diseases can be anywhere between Rs 10 lakh and Rs 50 lakh, they said.

Rare diseases are also not covered by insurance policies. It is imperative the government steps in to help these patients so they can lead a near normal life, they said.

Rooster Kills Owner With Cockfight Blade In Telangana: Police

Agenceis

NEW DELHI: A rooster fitted with a knife for an illegal cockfight has killed its owner in Telangana, sparking a manhunt for the organisers of the event, police said Saturday.

The bird had a knife attached to its leg ready to take on an opponent when it inflicted serious injuries to the man's groin as it tried to escape, officers said.

The victim died from loss of blood before he could reach a hospital in the Karimnagar district of Telangana earlier this week, local police officer B Jeevan told AFP.

The man was among 16 people organising the cockfight in Lohunur when the freak accident took place, Jeevan said.

The rooster was briefly held at the local police station before it was sent to a poultry farm.

"We are searching for the other 15 people involved in organising the illegal fight," Jeevan said.

They could face charges of manslaughter, illegal betting and hosting a cockfight. Cockfights are banned but still common in rural areas of Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Odisha—particularly around the festival of Sankranti. Specially-bred roosters have 7.5-centimetre (three-inch) knives or blades tethered to their legs and punters bet on who will win the gruesome fight.

Thousands of roosters die each year in the battles which, despite the efforts of animal rights groups, attract large crowds.

Thieves Dig Tunnel Into Jaipur House, Steal Silver Buried Under Basement

Agenceis

JAIPUR: In a daring heist, thieves allegedly stole huge quantity of silver kept in a box buried in the basement of a Jaipur house by digging a 20-foot-long and 15-foot-deep tunnel, according to police.

The owner of the house, who is a doctor by profession, has not disclosed the exact quantity of silver. Police said the accused had purchased a house right behind the doctor's house for 87 lakh in January and covered its wall with tin sheds to block the view and started the digging work. The accused dug the tunnel from the newly purchased house and reached the exact location where the box was buried. They cut open the box and stole the silver.

Dr Sunit Soni, who runs a hair transplant clinic, came to know about the theft when he found the flooring of the basement uneven and dug it on Wednesday. Mr Soni informed police on Wednesday evening.

"Primary investigation indicates the involvement of Dr Soni's friend who knew about the silver. We have detained him and he is being interrogated. Four more accused are also there in the case," police official Ajaypal Lamba said. The prime accused is a bullion trader.

There were three big boxes buried in the basement. Soni informed police that the accused stole silver from one box while the rest were empty. However, he could not give an answer why empty boxes were concealed there.

Bombay HC Refuses To Hear Case As Lawyer Removes Mask In Courtroom

MUMBAI: The Bombay High Court recently refused to hear a case after a lawyer representing the appellant removed his face mask inside a courtroom.

The order of the February 22 incident was made available on Saturday. A single-judge bench of Justice Prithviraj Chavan was on February 22 hearing an appeal matter during which the appellant's advocate removed his mask in the courtroom contrary to guidelines.

Referring to the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) laid down by

the high court at the time of resumption of physical hearing of cases, Justice Chavan said that wearing a face mask all the time is compulsory.

Justice Chavan refused to hear this particular case following which it will be listed once again in due course.

"The matter be removed from the board," the order said.

Justice Chavan allows only lawyers appearing in a case called out to enter his courtroom while other lawyers and parties have to wait in the adjoining room for their matter to come up as per serial numbers.

The HC and all subordinate courts in Maharashtra, except Pune, had resumed in-person hearings in December after a gap of eight months.

Since the coronavirus pandemic began, the courts had been conducting hearings online, through video interface.

Maharashtra and Mumbai have been witnessing a surge in fresh coronavirus positive cases since mid February.

As on February 26, Maharashtra's case tally stood at 21,38,154 while Mumbai has 3,23,879 cases. PTI

Protein Inherited By Humans From Neanderthals Linked To Reduced COVID-19 Severity

Agenceis

Increased levels of a protein, which humans have inherited from neanderthals, are associated with reduced disease severity in COVID-19 patients, according to a study that may lead to the development of new therapeutics against the novel coronavirus infection.

The research, published in the journal Nature Medicine on Friday, noted that the protein OAS1 is linked to less severe disease requiring ventilation and reduced mortality among COVID-19 patients, and may help develop potential therapies to treat those infected with the virus.

"Our analysis shows evidence that OAS1 has a protective effect against COVID-19 susceptibility and severity," explained Brent Richards, study senior author from Lady Davis Institute (LDI) in Canada.

"This is a very exciting devel-

opment in the race to identify potential therapies to treat patients because there are already therapies in pre-clinical development that boost OAS1 and could be explored for their effect against SARS-CoV-2 infection," Richards said.

In the study, the scientists explored proteins detectable in the blood as a potential drug target against COVID-19.

However, the researchers said they faced several hurdles in determining which proteins play a causal role in disease progression, and which were influenced by COVID-19 itself or other confounding factors.

Applying latest technology for isolating and measuring hundreds of circulating proteins at once, along with genetic analyses, they found that increase in OAS1 levels was associated with reduced COVID-19 death or ventilation, hospitalisation, and susceptibility in up to 14,134 CO-

VID-19 cases and 1.2 million controls.

When they measured levels of this protein in 504 patients with different COVID-19 outcomes, they found that its increased levels in post-infection patients were linked to protection against very severe COVID-19, hospitalisation, and susceptibility.

"The protective effect was particularly large such that we observed a 50 per cent decrease in the odds of very severe COVID-19 per standard deviation increase in OAS1 circulating levels," said Sirui Zhou, study co-author from LDI.

"Interestingly, for non-African peoples, this protective effect is likely inherited from a Neanderthal derived form of OAS1 called p46," Zhou added.

The scientists believe this form of OAS1 likely emerged in people of European ancestry through interbreeding with Neanderthals tens of thousands of years ago.

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