



P5 STATE

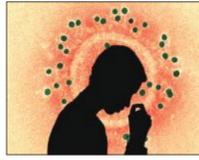
DIR TOURISM INVITES TRAVELLERS TO VALLEY'S SCENIC LOCATIONS

Jammu and Kashmir Tourism Department Thursday held a road show at Ahmedabad in Guajrat as part of its promotional campaigns across India to attract tourists...

THINK

MENTAL HEALTH ILLNESS - A SILENT PANDEMIC

Mental illness has turned out to be a next major global health challenge, making it a matter of urgent concern considering the enormous distress and burden with subsequent after...



P11 SPORTS

'BEN STOKES WAS SWEARING AT ME, TOLD VIRAT BHAI TO HANDLE IT,' MOHAMMED SIRAJ ON 4TH TEST FACEOFF

India pacer Mohammad Siraj on Thursday said England all-rounder Ben Stokes swore at him on the opening...



Quote!

Believe you can and you're halfway there.
— Theodore Roosevelt

NEWS DIGEST

J&K Logs 79 New Corona Cases, 1 Death

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday recorded 79 new COVID-19 cases, taking the tally to 1,26,772, while one fresh death was reported in the past 24 hours, officials said. Out of the fresh cases, 14 were from the Jammu Division and 65 from the Kashmir Division of the union territory, they said. The officials said Srinagar district recorded the highest of 47 cases, followed by 12 in Jammu district. While 10 districts... [More On P10](#)

Shab-i-Meraj Holiday Postponed

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir administration on Thursday postponed the holiday on the occasion of Shab-i-Meraj from March 11 to March 12. "In partial modification of Government Order No. 1159-JK (GAD) of 2020 dated 24-12-2020, it is hereby ordered that the holiday on account of Shab-i-Meraj shall now be observed on 12th of March, 2021 (Friday) instead of 11th March, 2021 (Thursday)," reads an... [More On P10](#)

LG Takes First Jab Of Covid Vaccine

JAMMU: Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha took his first dose of Coronavirus vaccine here in this winter capital on Thursday. "I have taken the vaccine today. It was a smooth process. I urge all the eligible people to come forward and get the vaccine dose. The vaccines are safe and I congratulate all the scientists for producing the vaccine," the Lt Governor said after taking his first dose of the... [More On P10](#)

Soldier Hangs Himself Inside BB Cant

SRINAGAR: An Army man was found dead here on Thursday in a suspected case of suicide, officials said. Rifleman Anup Kumar (28), who was posted on sentry duty at the Badambagh cantonment in Jammu and Kashmir, was found hanging from the ceiling of the sentry post at the main gate at Batwara here with a light machine gun's loop. Kumar hailed from Haryana's Bhiwani, the officials... [More On P10](#)

Police Busts Fake Job Racket

SRINAGAR: Police on Thursday said that a gang of at least five persons allegedly running a job racket was busted in Sumbal area of Bandipora district. On receipt of a written complaint, an investigation was set in motion under FIR No. 23/2021 under sections 420, 120(B) at Police station Sumbal, a police official said. He said during the course of investigations, it surfaced that the gang was involved in luring gullible persons to pay money in lieu of... [More On P10](#)

Srinagar Least Liveable City In India: Survey

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: Once known as Venice of the East, capital city of Kashmir is not liveable any more, according to the governments own 'Ease of Living Index'. Bengaluru was adjudged the most liveable among 111 cities in India followed by Pune, Ahmedabad, Chennai, Surat, Navi Mumbai, Coimbatore, Vadodra, Indore and Greater Mumbai. Of the 49 cities ranked on livability index in the 'million-plus population' category, Delhi figures at the 13th spot and Srinagar at the bottom. According to the index released



File Photo

by Union Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri, Shimla topped the category of cities with 'population less than million'.

In this category, Bhubaneswar was ranked second, Silvassa came third, and they were followed by Kakinada, Salem, Vellore,

66

Srinagar Listed At Bottom Of 49 Cities With A Million-Plus Population.

Gandhinagar, Gurgaon, Davangere and Tiruchirappalli. Muzaffarpur was at the bottom of the list of 62 cities that were ranked

on livability index in the 'less than million population' category. Ghaziabad and Meerut figured at the 30th and the 36th spot in the 'million-plus population' category respectively, while Allahabad is at the 32nd position and is followed by Patna (33rd). Faridabad is ranked 40th in this category. Performance of the cities have been measured on four broad parameters governance and social, physical and economic infrastructure. The government said the 'Ease of Living Index' is an assessment tool that evaluates the quality of life and the impact of various... [More On P10](#)

Govt Service Rules Tightened

No Salary For New Entrants Without CID Verification

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir government on Thursday made verification from the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) mandatory for new entrants into government service to withdraw salary and other allowances. "In terms of Government Order No. 1918-GAD of 1997 dated 09.12.1997, read with Government Order No. 1328-GAD of 2016 dated 07.12.2016, security clearance from the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) has been made mandatory for drawing salary and allowances of new entrants into government service," reads an order issued by Commissioner-Secretary, General Administration Department (GAD), Manoj Dwivedi.

"It is however, been observed that these instructions are not being adhered to in some Departments/Subordinate offices, as a



File Photo

result of which many individuals with dubious character antecedents and conduct have been paid salaries and allowances, without obtaining their mandatory CID verification," the order says. The order issued by Dwivedi directs all Administrative Secretaries/Divisional Commissioners/Deputy Commissioners/Heads of the Departments and Managing Directors of all

PSUs/Corporations to identify such cases and ensure in the Government Service is paid salary/allowances till verification by the CID. "Further, with a view to expedite verification process, a simplified mechanism has been devised in consultation with the Criminal Investigation Department, which is enclosed as Annexure-A to this Circular and may be adopted," the order adds.

Delimitation Panel Gets One-Year Extension

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: The Delimitation Commission, a panel for redrawing the parliamentary and Assembly constituencies in Jammu and Kashmir, has got a one-year extension, a move indicating that the Assembly polls in the Union Territory would not be held anytime soon. A gazette notification issued by the government on Wednesday night said the panel, headed by retired Supreme Court judge Ranjana Prakash Desai, will get one more year for completing its task in the Union Territory, which came into existence on October, 2019 after the Centre abrogated the special status of the erstwhile state in August that year and announced its reorganisation.

The panel was set up last year to redraw the electoral constituencies of Jammu and Kashmir and four north-eastern states — Assam, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland. However, the one-year extension is only for Jammu and Kashmir. The proceedings of the commission, which has five MPs from the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir as ex-officio members, have been boycotted by the National Conference... [More On P10](#)

US Welcomes Steps Taken By India In J&K

Press Trust Of India

WASHINGTON: The United States on Wednesday welcomed the steps taken by New Delhi to return the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir to full economic and political normalcy consistent with India's democratic values. State Department Spokesperson Ned Price said the US, at the same time, continues to follow developments in Jammu and Kashmir closely. The US policy with regard to Kashmir has not changed, Price told reporters at his daily news conference.

"We welcome steps to return the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir to full economic and political normalcy consistent with India's democratic values. As we've said before, Secretary (of State Tony) Blinken has had a couple opportunities to speak to his Indian counterpart, both bilaterally and in the context of the Quad," Price said. The Quad, comprising India, the US, Australia and Japan, is aimed at ensuring a free and open Indo-Pacific, a region



that has witnessed increasing Chinese military assertiveness in the recent years. The US has important relationships with India, as well as Pakistan, the spokesperson said, adding "these relationships stand on their own in our view." "They are not a zero-sum proposition when it comes to US foreign policy. We have productive, constructive relations, and productive and constructive relationships with one does not detract from the relationship we... [More On P10](#)

MeT Predicts Wet Weekend, Issues 'Yellow Warning'

Agencies

SRINAGAR: The weatherman on Thursday forecast widespread rains on March 7 even as the minimum temperatures increased in Kashmir Valley, officials said on Thursday. A meteorological department official said that Srinagar recorded a low of 3.9 degree Celsius against 2.8

degree Celsius on the previous night. The temperature was 1.7 degree Celsius above normal for this time of the year in this summer capital, the official said. Qazigund recorded a low of 2.2 degree Celsius against 1.4 degree Celsius on the previous night while the mercury settled at 2.1 degree Celsius at the... [More On P10](#)



No Traffic On Highway Today

The Jammu-Srinagar highway, the only surface link connecting Kashmir with the outside world, shall remain shut on Friday owing to weekly maintenance and repair work... [More On P10](#)

LG Takes Note Of Delay In Tendering Power Projects Directs Officers To Fix Responsibility, Take Action For Non-Compliances

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Taking strong note of the delays in tendering and awarding of power projects, Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha on Thursday directed officials to fix responsibility and take strict action for the non-compliances.

Chairing the third high level meeting with the team of experts from Power sector, senior administration officials and Power Development Corporation Limited to revamp the Power Supply System in J&K, here at Raj Bhavan on Thursday, the LG directed the concerned officers to increase the pace of



works undertaken to ensure mitigation of power-related issues to the people of Jammu and Kashmir, an official spokesperson said.

The LG, he said, passed strict instructions to remove all bottlenecks and hurdles that impede the timely completion of

augmentation and restoration works of various power projects. "While taking a strong note of the delays in tendering and awarding of projects, the Lt Governor asked the concerned officers to fix responsibility and take strict action for the non-compliances."... [More On P10](#)

LoC Truce Cheers Up Uri Residents

Press Trust Of India

KAMALKOTE: A week after the ceasefire agreement between India and Pakistan on the Line of Control, residents along the border have heaved a sigh of relief and hoped it is followed in letter and spirit without any violations.

India and Pakistan had announced on February 25 that they have agreed to strictly observe all agreements on ceasefire along the LoC in Jammu and Kashmir and other sectors.

In Sarai Bandi village in Kamalkote sector in Uri area of North Kashmir's Baramulla district, about three kilometres from the LoC, the... [More On P10](#)

Traumatic Kashmir's 'Too Many Claimants' Denied Mental Health Insurance

Aaqid Andrabi

A tight and overly-cramped lane in Downtown Srinagar leads to a barely maintained one-storey house of Abdul Manan.

One can see his two pre-teen sisters running and frolicking around in the tiny front yard.

Until November 2019, Manan had a job with a private firm in Kashmir. He found himself left hanging high and dry when he lost his means of survival due to the layoffs that ensued from the perpetual blockade imposed on the erstwhile state of Jammu & Kashmir after the abrogation of Article 370 in August 2019.

As much as lack of employment is a problem, Manan was diagnosed with chronic depression nine years back. The loss of a job didn't help that.

Coming from a lower-middle-class family from Central Kashmir, Manan has to fend for a family of 6 and would do so at a paltry salary of Rs 9000 a month.

To manage all that, he had to borrow money from a private money-lender who comes knocking every fortnight for the repayment.

Manan's medicines and psychiatric medicinal expenses were a bit too steep for him, so he opted for an insurance policy from a private insurance provider.

He was in for a bitter surprise when he found out that the provider has placed a maturity period of a few years on the 'pre-existing' conditions and won't be covered during that period by his insurance provider. His medicines alone cost him Rs 10,000 a month plus fortnightly psychiatric consultations, costing Rs 3,000 per session. Running helter-skelter to remedy



the same didn't prove to be of much use since his insurance provider cited the health cover conditions, denying the consumer any benefits until the

maturity period has lapsed. The distressed downtowner's trysts with his mental health and lack of support show the irrefutable need for

comprehensive insurance policies covering mental illness and disorders.

Data gathered by Kashmir Observer from various district hospitals of the Kashmir division suggests that, on average, a specific district hospital has a monthly footfall of 300 patients who come in with one or the other mental disorder or illness.

The infrastructure necessary to deal with conditions is of sub-optimal levels, to say the least.

Our investigation led us to conclude that the number of patients consulted at the district levels snowball into a much bigger quantum for the entire Kashmir division in its entirety.

The dedicated psychiatric hospital at Rainawari, Srinagar, on average, houses at least 300-400 patients every month. These numbers don't include those patients who are treated and

sent home. That amounts to a rather significant caseload when looked at in the larger context.

The data provided by the Baramulla district hospital shows a fair amount of patient footfall who come seeking psychiatric treatments.

In January 2021, 370 patients sought psychiatric help at the hospital, showing the common masses' dire state of mental affairs. Even the previous surveys and studies have painted the distressed mental state in the strife-laden valley.

In an MSF survey (Medicine Sans Frontiers/Doctors Without Borders) in 2015, 45 per cent of the adult population in Kashmir valley showed significant mental distress symptoms.

Among those surveyed, 41 per cent exhibited symptoms of probable depression, 26 per cent showed signs of potential anxiety... [More On P10](#)

Government of Jammu & Kashmir
**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
 WATER WORKS DIVISION SRINAGAR**

GIST OF NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER

E-NIT No: 43 / WWD of 2020-21 Dated: 26.02.2021

Executive Engineer Water Works Division Srinagar on behalf of Governor of J&K State of (U.T.), invites tenders by E-Tendering Mode from approved and eligible registered "A" Class - Reputed and resourceful contractors/Firms/Companies/Joint venture of repute of Union Territory of J&K.

S. No	Name of Work	Estd.Cost (In lacs)	Cost of tender Document (challan) (In Rs)	T.O.C	Class of Contractor
1	Design, construction, testing & successful commissioning of 50,000 gallons capacity RCC Column type Over Head Tank in single compartment with 15 mtrs staging height for back wash arrangement of 4.00 MGD Water Treatment Plant at Karipora Doodhganga, including providing, laying and fitting of supply main 200/150mm dia D.I K-7, 100mtr each rising main, inlet, outlet, washout & overflow arrangements including connecting with existing system by providing, fixing of 200/150mm dia M.S flanged pipe 6mm thick 50mtr/100mtr including M.S fittings with 14mm thick flanges including cost of pipes, nuts, bolts, washers, M/S lid with frame and cover including construction of hand railing around the stair, sluice valves, covels, heavy duty of VAG make or Kirloskar make. Levelling of ground including disposal of excavated material from premises, including trial run for six months period after completion of Job. Adopt bearing capacity of soil 12.66 M.Ton/Sqm at 3 mtr depth. Architectural aesthetics shall be kept in consideration to make the structures appealing for Water Supply Scheme Doodh Ganga under Lauquishing Programme "LUP.1203".	74.90	1500	4 Months	"A" Class - Reputed & resourceful contractors/ Firms/companies/joint venture of repute

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

S. No	Date of publishing	26.02.2021
1	Date of publishing	26.02.2021
2	Document downloading date	26.02.2021 / 1600 hrs
3	Bid submission start date	26.02.2021 / 1630 hrs
4	Bid submission closing date	09.03.2021 / 1600 hrs
5	Date and time for opening bids	10.03.2021 / 1400 hrs
6	Place of opening of bids	Office of The Exe. Engineer Water Works Division Sgr.

No: WWD/8970-87
 Dated: 25.02.2021
 Sd/- Executive Engineer
 Water Works Division Srinagar.
 DIPK-14371/20

**OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT REGIONAL
 TRANSPORT OFFICER SHOPAIN
 NOTICE**

Whereas joint application has been received by this office from Mr.Nisar Ahmad Wagay S/O Abdul Razak Wagay R/O Zawoora Shopain(Party No.1st) as Transferor, (Seller) Owner of the Vehicle Alto k10 Bearing Regd. No.JK22A-0594(Commercial/ Non-Commercial) covering under R/P No NO Nill . and Mr.Mushtaq Ahmad Kumar S/O Ab Gani Kumar R/O Nunwani Krolpora Anantnag (Party No.2nd) as Transferee (Purchaser) requesting for transfer of R/C & R/P of the above noted Vehicle from party No 1st and 2nd. And Cancellation of hire purchase agreement with JK Bank Zainpora Shopain. Before the case is disposed off on its merit, anybody has any objection regarding the proposed transfer Army file his objection within (7) days from the publication of this notice to the office of the undersigned. No any representation / objection shall be entertained after stipulated period.



Assistant Regional Transport Officer Shopain
 mja

LOST OF DRIVING LICENSE

I have lost my Driving License Bearing Registration No.1027/MVD/GBL. Now applied for its duplicate if anybody has any objection in this regard may file at ARTO Ganderbal within Seven (7) days after that no objection shall be entertained.
Name:-Rouf Ahmad Shah
 S/O Gh Nabi Shah
 R/O Krangsoo Mattan Anantnag
 mja

**Office of the Assistant Regional
 Transport Officer Kupwara**

Whereas A Joint Application Has Been Received From Ghulam Mohammad Wani S/O Abdul Jabbar Wani R/O Madmadew Kupwara (As Transferor) And Aamir Lateef Mir S/O Mohammad Lateef Mir R/O Langate Kupwara (As Transferee) For Transfer Of Vehicle Type Maxi Cover Route Permit No 34Cc Cover Vehicle No JK09A-3039
 Now It is notified for general Information that objection if any to the prosed transfer of the said vehicle shall be filled in writing in the office of Asstt Regional Transport Officer Kupwara Within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.
 Asstt Regional Transport Officer Kupwara
 sult

از نیابت ماگام با اجلاس جناب نائب تحصیلدار صاحب ماگام

عنوان: مضمون درخواست سیر احمد و رمیز رمضان و طاہر رمضان اولادان محمد رمضان لون ساکنہ سوزل
 براد عطا گی RBA سرٹیفیکٹ تحت SRO294
 اشتہار براد آگاہی ہر خاص و عام
 معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں سائل نے ایک درخواست براد RBA سرٹیفیکٹ پیش کی ہے جو کہ فتر ہذا میں زیر کاروائی ہے اور اجرا کرنے مطلوب ہے کہہ بذیل افتراد پر مشتمل ہے
 محمد رمضان لون ولد عبدالغنی زمینداری 58-سال
 سیر احمد مزدوری 30
 ثقفینہ بیگم گھریلو کام 30
 سہیل سیر زیر تعلیم 10
 سفینہ سیر زیر تعلیم 06
 رمیز رمضان مزدوری 29
 طاہر رمضان مزدوری 22
 اسکے علاوہ کوئی بھی مہمان آمدنی زریع و غیر زریع 7000 ہے سرٹیفیکٹ زیر بحث ادا کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص یا اشخاص کو کوئی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ اپنا عذر عذر یا اعتراض ساتھ ایم کے اندر پیش کریں۔ میعاد گزرنے کے بعد کوئی عذر یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہو گا۔
 نائب تحصیلدار ماگام sult

Public Notice

My mother's name has been wrongly written in my Municipal Records as Jafia Rasool while her correct name is Jasia Rasool which needs immediate correction. If anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the Municipal Committee Shopain within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.
Aahil Aijaz
 S/O Aijaz Ahmad Sofi
 Mother's Name Jasia Rasool
 Main Bazar Shopain
 ast

Public Notice

I am applying for the issuance of Pesticides license under name and style "Shadab Agro Chemicals Zawoora Shopain". If anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the Plant Protection Officer Lal Mandi Srinagar within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.
Shafeeq Ahmad Dar S/o Abdul Rahim Dar
 R/o Shadab Karewa Shopain
 ast

از دفتر نائب تحصیلدار چندوسہ

عنوان: مضمون درخواست غلام الدین خان ڈھدیہ و یار محمد خان پیر ریش احمد و امتیاز احمد ساکنہ چندوسہ براد عطا گی
 تحت PSC SRO294
 اشتہار براد آگاہی ہر خاص و عام
 معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں درخواست سائل دفتر ہذا میں زیر کاروائی ہے اس نسبت پٹواری حلقہ سے رپورٹ بشمول مطلوبہ نقوالات ریکارڈ طلب کے گئے جس سے عیاں ہوتا ہے کہ سائل پہاڑی بولنے والے طبقے سے تعلق رکھتا ہے کہہ کی مہمان آمدنی مبلغ 144000 روپے تک ہے۔ کہہ بذیل افتراد پر مشتمل ہے
 غلام الدین خان ڈھدیہ مزدوری 60-سال
 لال جان بیگم زوجہ غلام الدین گھریلو کام 55
 ریش احمد مزدوری 30
 امتیاز احمد زیر تعلیم 25
 نسیم احمد زیر تعلیم 23
 جمیل احمد زیر تعلیم 21
 مدیہ بانو زیر تعلیم 16
 اسکے علاوہ کوئی بھی افراد کہہ نہیں بتلایا گیا ہے سرٹیفیکٹ زیر بحث ادا کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص یا اشخاص کو کوئی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ اپنا عذر یا اعتراض ساتھ ایم کے اندر پیش کریں۔ میعاد گزرنے کے بعد کوئی عذر یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہو گا۔
 نائب تحصیلدار چندوسہ aij

از نیابت ماگام با اجلاس جناب نائب تحصیلدار صاحب ماگام

عنوان: مضمون درخواست دانش احمد انگری ولد علی محمد انگری ساکنہ ماگام
 براد عطا گی ST سرٹیفیکٹ تحت SRO294
 اشتہار براد آگاہی ہر خاص و عام
 معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں سائل نے ایک درخواست براد ST سرٹیفیکٹ پیش کی ہے جو کہ فتر ہذا میں زیر کاروائی ہے اور اجرا کرنے مطلوب ہے کہہ بذیل افتراد پر مشتمل ہے
 علی محمد ولد حیات انگری مزدوری 50-سال
 رفیقہ بیگم زوجہ علی محمد گھریلو کام 48
 دانش علی پیر زیر تعلیم 18
 انشاء جان دختر زیر تعلیم 15
 محمد سلیم پیر زیر تعلیم 13
 کارملان پیر زیر تعلیم 06
 اسکے علاوہ کوئی بھی مہمان آمدنی زریع و غیر زریع 7000 ہے سرٹیفیکٹ زیر بحث ادا کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص یا اشخاص کو کوئی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ اپنا عذر عذر یا اعتراض ساتھ ایم کے اندر پیش کریں۔ میعاد گزرنے کے بعد کوئی عذر یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہو گا۔
 نائب تحصیلدار ماگام sult

**The Jammu And Kashmir State Board
 Of School Education
 Branch Office, Magam**

NOTICE

The candidate whose photograph is given is claiming to have lost his/her marks card/s with the following particulars issued by the J&K State Board Of School Education:-
 Name Masrat Qasim
 D/o Mohamad Qasim Sheikh
 R/o Goom Ahmadpora
Details Of Marks Certificate Lost
 • Secondary School Examination (class 10th) Roll No: 2145512 Year and Session 2014 (12annual)
 • High Secondary Examination Part-II (12th class) Roll No 2418284 year and Session Annual/Reg (2016)
 The said candidate has applied for issuance of duplicate marks certificate/s in this office. Before the same is processed and issued to the candidate, any body having any objection in this regard may file the same in the Board Branch Office Magam within Seven (7) days from the date of publication of this notice. Besides the original marks card be treated as cancelled.
 Sd/- Asstt. Secretary,
 Br. Office, Magam
 bmg



PUBLIC NOTICE

I am applying for the issuance Of "C" class Contractor card . IF anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the R&B Baramulla within a period of three (3) days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.
Nabeem Ul Bashir
 S/o Bashir Ahmad
 Lone R/O Atipora Zikar Tangmarg Bla
 (bmg)

از دفتر نائب تحصیلدار چندوسہ

عنوان: مضمون درخواست محمد اقبال خان ترنن ولد محمد شفیع خان ساکنہ شملر براد عطا گی PSC تحت SRO294
 اشتہار براد آگاہی ہر خاص و عام
 معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں درخواست سائل دفتر ہذا میں زیر کاروائی ہے اس نسبت پٹواری حلقہ سے رپورٹ بشمول مطلوبہ نقوالات ریکارڈ طلب کے گئے جس سے عیاں ہوتا ہے کہ سائل پہاڑی بولنے والے طبقے سے تعلق رکھتا ہے کہہ کی مہمان آمدنی مبلغ 12000 روپے تک ہے۔ کہہ بذیل افتراد پر مشتمل ہے
 محمد شفیع خان ترنن دکانداری 46-سال
 زریعہ بیگم گھریلو کام 44
 محمد اقبال زیر تعلیم 21
 سہیل احمد زیر تعلیم 18
 یاسر احمد زیر تعلیم 15
 اسکے علاوہ کوئی بھی افراد کہہ نہیں بتلایا گیا ہے سرٹیفیکٹ زیر بحث ادا کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص یا اشخاص کو کوئی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ اپنا عذر یا اعتراض ساتھ ایم کے اندر پیش کریں۔ میعاد گزرنے کے بعد کوئی عذر یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہو گا۔
 نائب تحصیلدار چندوسہ aij

گزارش

برائے مہربانی ADC Sopore سے گزارش ہے کہ ہم ہاشدہ ولب زمینداری مطلع کرتے ہیں کہ یہاں ایک نالہ فارسٹ چیک پوسٹ سے آج سے 100 سال پہلے آرہا تھا 20 فٹ چوڑائی پہ غلام نبی لون دامادہ غنی ریشی کے سہن سے آرہا تھا جس پر اس نے بلڈوزر (buldoser) لگا کر نالہ بند کروایا۔ اب ہم زمینداران ولب گزارش کرتے ہیں کہ غلام نبی لون کے خلاف کاروائی کی جائے۔ اور کردار اور پٹواری موقع پر تشریف لائے۔
 بذریعہ زمیندار ولب ams

از دفتر نائب تحصیلدار تہگام با اجلاس سجاد احمد بٹ

عنوان: مضمون درخواست عامر رشید پایز ولد عبدالرشید پایز ولد ساکنہ کونڈ تحصیل تہگام
 براد عطا گی RBA تحت SRO294
 اشتہار براد آگاہی ہر خاص و عام
 معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں درخواست سائل دفتر ہذا میں زیر کاروائی ہے اس نسبت پٹواری حلقہ سے رپورٹ بشمول مطلوبہ نقوالات ریکارڈ طلب کے گئے جس سے عیاں ہوتا ہے کہ سائل ساکنہ موضع حائن کا سکونت دار ہے۔ کہہ بذیل افتراد پر مشتمل ہے
 عامر رشید پایز ولد سجاد احمد مزدوری 60-سال
 شائینہ بیگم زوجہ عبدالرشید گھریلو کام 45
 عامر رشید پایز پیر زیر تعلیم 40
 خالدہ رشید دختر زیر تعلیم 19
 محمد اقبال پایز پیر زیر تعلیم 28
 اسکے علاوہ کوئی بھی افراد کہہ نہیں بتلایا گیا ہے سرٹیفیکٹ زیر بحث ادا کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص یا اشخاص کو کوئی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ اپنا عذر یا اعتراض ساتھ ایم کے اندر پیش کریں۔ میعاد گزرنے کے بعد کوئی عذر یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہو گا۔
 نائب تحصیلدار تہگام fnt

از دفتر نائب تحصیلدار تہگام با اجلاس سجاد احمد بٹ

عنوان: مضمون درخواست عبدالغنی ڈار و غلام نبی ڈار پیران غلام احمد ڈار ساکنہ کونڈ تحصیل تہگام
 براد عطا گی RBA تحت SRO294
 اشتہار براد آگاہی ہر خاص و عام
 معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں درخواست سائل دفتر ہذا میں زیر کاروائی ہے اس نسبت پٹواری حلقہ سے رپورٹ بشمول مطلوبہ نقوالات ریکارڈ طلب کے گئے جس سے عیاں ہوتا ہے کہ سائل ساکنہ موضع کونڈ کا سکونت دار ہے کہہ کی مہمان آمدنی مبلغ 14000 روپے تک ہے۔ کہہ بذیل افتراد پر مشتمل ہے
 شہانہ بیگم بیوہ غلام احمد ڈار گھریلو کام 55-سال
 عبدالغنی ڈار پیر مزدوری 31
 غلام نبی ڈار پیر SPO 28
 عظیمہ بیگم زوجہ عبدالغنی گھریلو کام 25
 آقیہ جان دختر عبدالغنی شیر خوار 01
 اسکے علاوہ کوئی بھی افراد کہہ نہیں بتلایا گیا ہے سرٹیفیکٹ زیر بحث ادا کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص یا اشخاص کو کوئی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ اپنا عذر یا اعتراض ساتھ ایم کے اندر پیش کریں۔ میعاد گزرنے کے بعد کوئی عذر یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہو گا۔
 نائب تحصیلدار ماگام fnt

از دفتر نائب تحصیلدار تہگام با اجلاس سجاد احمد بٹ

عنوان: مضمون درخواست عبدالرشید ڈار و بلال احمد ڈار پیران محمد صدیق ڈار ساکنہ کونڈ تحصیل تہگام
 براد عطا گی RBA تحت SRO294
 اشتہار براد آگاہی ہر خاص و عام
 معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں درخواست سائل دفتر ہذا میں زیر کاروائی ہے اس نسبت پٹواری حلقہ سے رپورٹ بشمول مطلوبہ نقوالات ریکارڈ طلب کے گئے جس سے عیاں ہوتا ہے کہ سائل ساکنہ موضع کونڈ کا سکونت دار ہے کہہ کی مہمان آمدنی مبلغ 7000 روپے تک ہے۔ کہہ بذیل افتراد پر مشتمل ہے
 محمد صدیق ڈار ولد حیات ڈار زمینداری 62-سال
 خیرہ بیگم زوجہ محمد صدیق گھریلو کام 57
 محفوظ اختر دختر محمد صدیق ناتوان 30
 عبدالرشید ڈار پیر مزدوری 26
 بلال احمد ڈار پیر مزدوری 25
 شکیلہ بیگم زوجہ بلال احمد گھریلو کام 24
 حادیہ بانو دختر بلال شیر خوار 02
 اسکے علاوہ کوئی بھی افراد کہہ نہیں بتلایا گیا ہے سرٹیفیکٹ زیر بحث ادا کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص یا اشخاص کو کوئی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ اپنا عذر یا اعتراض ساتھ ایم کے اندر پیش کریں۔ میعاد گزرنے کے بعد کوئی عذر یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہو گا۔
 نائب تحصیلدار ماگام fnt

از دفتر نائب تحصیلدار تہگام با اجلاس سجاد احمد بٹ

عنوان: مضمون درخواست فرزدین گوہر کھٹانہ ولد سراج الدین گوہر کھٹانہ ساکنہ ہائیں تحصیل تہگام
 براد عطا گی ST تحت SRO294
 اشتہار براد آگاہی ہر خاص و عام
 معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں درخواست سائل دفتر ہذا میں زیر کاروائی ہے اس نسبت پٹواری حلقہ سے رپورٹ بشمول مطلوبہ نقوالات ریکارڈ طلب کے گئے جس سے عیاں ہوتا ہے کہ سائل ساکنہ موضع ہائیں کا سکونت دار ہے۔ کہہ بذیل افتراد پر مشتمل ہے
 فرزدین گوہر کھٹانہ مزدوری 62-سال
 نسیر بیگم زوجہ فرزدین گھریلو کام 57
 طارق احمد گوہر کھٹانہ پیر زیر تعلیم 30
 طالب احمد گوہر کھٹانہ زیر تعلیم 26
 آسیہ بانو دختر زیر تعلیم 25
 اسکے علاوہ کوئی بھی افراد کہہ نہیں بتلایا گیا ہے سرٹیفیکٹ زیر بحث ادا کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص یا اشخاص کو کوئی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ اپنا عذر یا اعتراض ساتھ ایم کے اندر پیش کریں۔ میعاد گزرنے کے بعد کوئی عذر یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہو گا۔
 نائب تحصیلدار ماگام fnt

از دفتر نائب تحصیلدار تہگام با اجلاس سجاد احمد بٹ

عنوان: مضمون درخواست ران محمد گوہر چوہان ولد وزیر محمد گوہر چوہا ساکنہ ہائیں تحصیل تہگام
 براد عطا گی ST تحت SRO294
 اشتہار براد آگاہی ہر خاص و عام
 معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں درخواست سائل دفتر ہذا میں زیر کاروائی ہے اس نسبت پٹواری حلقہ سے رپورٹ بشمول مطلوبہ نقوالات ریکارڈ طلب کے گئے جس سے عیاں ہوتا ہے کہ سائل ساکنہ موضع حائن کا سکونت دار ہے۔ کہہ بذیل افتراد پر مشتمل ہے
 ران محمد گوہر چوہان ولد وزیر محمد مزدوری 60-سال
 تاج محمد گوہر چوہان پیر مستزی 45
 حسین جان زوجہ تاج محمد گھریلو کام 40
 محمد دیم گوہر چوہان پیر تاج محمد زیر تعلیم 19
 گلزار محمد گوہر چوہا پیر تاج محمد مزدوری 28
 زینس زوجہ گلزار محمد گھریلو کام 22
 اسکے علاوہ کوئی بھی افراد کہہ نہیں بتلایا گیا ہے سرٹیفیکٹ زیر بحث ادا کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص یا اشخاص کو کوئی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ اپنا عذر یا اعتراض ساتھ ایم کے اندر پیش کریں۔ میعاد گزرنے کے بعد کوئی عذر یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہو گا۔
 نائب تحصیلدار ماگام fnt

Mirwaiz Set Free After 20 Months Of House Detention

Observer Monitoring Desk

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir authorities on Thursday lifted restrictions on the movement of moderate Hurriyat Conference chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq who was placed under house arrest in August 2019 following the abrogation of Article 370 provisions.

"The police has informed the Mirwaiz that there were no restrictions on his movement anymore and that he was free to visit Jamia Masjid on Friday," a close aide of the Hurriyat chairman said.

However, the administration neither confirmed nor denied the claim made by Mirwaiz's aide.

According to the reports, mobile police vehicles continue to remain deployed outside the main entrance of Mirwaiz's Nigeen residence. The reports also said that Mirwaiz will address Friday congregational gathering at historic Jamia Masjid tomorrow after



82 weeks.

The Mirwaiz, who is also the chief priest of Kashmir, was among hundreds of political leaders -- both separatist and mainstream -- who were taken into custody or placed under house arrest as the Centre revoked Jammu and Kashmir's special status under Article 370 of the Constitution 19 months ago.

While most leaders were released by March last year, some including the Mirwaiz contin-

ued to be under detention.

Pertinently, Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) President Mehbooba Mufti had welcomed release of Mirwaiz on Wednesday.

"Good to hear about Mirwaiz's release from arbitrary detention. I hope that hundreds of Kashmiri men languishing in jails in and outside J&K will also be released soon. Its time they returned home to their families," Mehbooba wrote on her Twitter handle.

Mirwaiz's Release Significant: Bukhari



Srinagar: Apni Party President Altaf Bukhari welcomed the release of Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and demanded that all other remaining political detainees must be released in order to mitigate sufferings of their families.

In a statement, Bukhari the release of Mirwaiz is a significant move that will help in making the situation more conducive. He demanded that those political activists currently detained in and outside Jammu and Kashmir jails be freed especially in view of the Coronavirus pandemic.

"It has been our consistent demand that all the political activists and leaders irrespective of their political ideologies be released to ease up the sufferings of people. Their release has assumed more significance in light of the prevailing Pandemic that has doubled the sufferings of their kith and kin," Bukhari observed.

Mirwaiz's Release Will Open Doors For Dialogue: Yaseen

Srinagar: Welcoming the release of Umar Farooq Chairman People's Democratic Front (PDF) Hakeem Yaseen sought release of all other political detainees to pave way for restoration of political process and confidence building measures in Jammu and Kashmir.

He also urged for restoration of statehood to Jammu and Kashmir and holding of Assembly elections at the earliest.

In a statement Yaseen said that the step would help to restore political activities and open up doors for dialogue to settle issues amicably.

Singh Takes Stock Of Arrangements In Srinagar Schools

SRINAGAR: Administrative Secretary, School Education Department, Biswajit Kumar Singh Thursday visited some schools of Srinagar district and took stock of arrangements made by schools in order to prevent the spread of Covid 19.

Director School Education Kashmir, Mohammad Younis Malik accompanied the Secretary during the tour.

During his visit, B.K.Singh interacted with students and teachers inside the class rooms. BK Singh was satisfied to see that all necessary arrangements have been put in place by school administrations for prevention of the spread of corona virus like provision of hand sanitisers, hand wash facility, social distancing and use of face masks.

B.K.Singh interacted with students of GHSS Kothibagh, SP HSS Srinagar and asked them about their academics. The Secretary and Director School Education Kashmir were pleased to know that students were happy in their classes for which they were eagerly waiting for last one year due to the Covid Pandemic.

He advised the students to learn by heart and understand the logic of any lesson instead of rote learning and cramming for examinations. On this occasion, Director School Education Kashmir gave an overview of the initiatives taken by DSEK during the Covid pandemic and informed the Secretary about future plans of the Directorate chalked out for the betterment of Education sector in the division.

Bollywood Artists, Music Maestros Expected To Perform At Tulip Festival

JAMMU: Principal Secretary to Lieutenant Governor, Nitishwar Kumar Thursday reviewed preparations for the upcoming Tulip Festival to be held at Srinagar's Tulip Garden.

The Principal Secretary said that the festival would mark as formal opening of Tulip Garden for tourists from all over the world, and called for its large scale promotion using various online and offline means of publicity.

He said that the festival would present a unique opportunity to display the diverse culture of Jammu & Kashmir.

He directed Director Information, Rahul Pandey to promote the festival on day-to-day basis and stream all the proceedings of the mega festival on the department's social media platforms.

On the occasion, he was informed that popular local artists as well as those from Bollywood including leading music maestros are expected to perform at the festival.

Secretary Tourism, Sarmad Hafeez was asked to make a



calendar of events and design promotional campaign accordingly.

It was also decided that large displays would be installed in Srinagar city for public viewing.

The Principal Secretary asked Secretary Tourism to identify the most suitable agencies for successful conduct of the festival. The festival would showcase the rich cultural heritage and traditions of J&K so that people all over the world are attracted and can enjoy the

mesmerising beauty of J&K, he maintained.

The meeting was attended by Commissioner Secretary Floriculture; Sheikh Fayaz Ahmad; Secretary J&K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages, Krittika Jyotsna and Director Tourism Jammu, Naseem Javid Chowdhary, besides other senior officers.

While Director Floriculture Kashmir and other senior officers from Kashmir participated in the meeting via video conferencing.

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT REGIONAL TRANSPORT OFFICER SHOPAIN

NOTICE

Whereas joint application has been received by this office from Mr.Shakeel Ahmad Shah S/O Ghulam Hassan Shah R/O Karan Nager Sarai Serinagar(Party No.1st) as Transferor, (Seller) Owner of the Vehicle Truck HGV Bearing Regd. No.JK22-0375(Commercial/ Non-Commercial) covering under R/P No NO N/A. and Mr.Sameer Farooq S/O Farooq Ahmad Mandoo R/O Lal Mandi Wazirbagh Serinagar (Party No.2nd) as Transferee (Purchaser) requesting for transfer of R/C & R/P of the above noted Vehicle from party No 1st and 2nd. And Endorsement of hire purchase agreement with AK Investment Transport Nagar Jammu. Before the case is disposed off on its merit, anybody have any objection regarding the proposed transfer Amy file his objection within (7) days from the publication of this notice to the office of the undersigned. No any representation / objection shall be entertained after stipulated period.

Assistant Regional Transport Officer Shopain

mja

Public Notice

I have lost the RC of my vehicle bearing Regd No; JK05C- 8219 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 RTO Sopore within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Nazir Ahmad Shash S/o GH Mohd Shash R/o Kanli Bagh Baramulla

ams_r

اطلاع عام

میری گاڈی زیر نمبر 5571JK13B کی آر سی کہیں پرگم ہوگئی ہے اس کی ڈپلیکٹ کا پی نکالنی مطلوب ہے اس بارے میں اگر کسی کو کوئی اعتراض ہو تو ہفتے کے اندر اندر اسے آر ٹی پلامہ کے دفتر میں پیش کریں۔ بعد گزرے معیار کوئی اعتراض قابل قبول نہ ہوگا۔

المشتر: ولی محمد بٹ ولد غلام محمد بٹ ساکن ڈاڈورہ پلامہ

اطلاع عام

میری گیارویں جماعت پاس و سپارچ سنٹیکٹ کہیں پرگم ہوگئی ہے اس کی ڈپلیکٹ کا پی نکالنی مطلوب ہے اس بارے میں اگر کسی کو کوئی اعتراض ہو تو ہفتے کے اندر اندر گورنمنٹ گراڈ ہائز سینٹرری اسکول پلامہ کے دفتر میں پیش کریں۔ بعد گزرے معیار کوئی اعتراض قابل قبول نہ ہوگا۔

المشتر: سیکند اختر محمد شعیبان چوپان ساکن منگہامہ پلامہ

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER GENERATION DIVISION USHP II KANGAN

E-NITNo: USHP-II/GD/ 59 of 2020-21
Dated:- 27/02/2021

For and on behalf of the Managing Director, J&K State Power Development Corporation, sealed bids (Part-A: Techno Commercial Bid) & Part-B: (Price Bid) valid for 180 days, accompanied with earnest money in the shape of DD/ Bank Guarantee from any Nationalized/Scheduled Bank @ 2% of the estimated cost pledged to the Executive Engineers Generation Division USHP-II Kangan, are invited from Registered firms/ MSMEs/SSI unit holders/Licensed Electrical Contractors/Registered Workshop owners having sufficient related experience for undertaking the following titled work at USHP-II Kangan. Supply, Installation, testing and commissioning of PRV drain valves of unit IST,IIND, and IIIrd at the Power House USHP-II, Kangan as per scope. The e-tender can be downloaded from jktenders.gov.in or jkspdc.nic.in. The tenders should be addressed to the Superintendent Engineer, Generation Circle PDC Bemina. However, the downloaded document at the time of submission should be accompanied with cost of tender document in the shape of Demand Draft pledged to CP&AO Kangan along with EMD @2% of Estimated Cost pledged to Executive Engineers Generation Division USHP-II Kangan.

S.No	Description	Quantity	Estimated cost (Lacs)	Amount of EMD	Cost of tender specification(Non Refundable)	Time of completion
1	Supply, Installation, testing and commissioning of PRV drain valves of unit IST,IIND, and IIIrd at powerhouse USHP-II Kangan as per scope.	As per scope	4.02 lacs (inclusive of all applicable taxes and duties including GST, Insurance etc.)	2 % of the estimate cost i.e. Rs 8040/-	Rs. 1000	20 Days

CRITICAL DATES

1.	Date of issue of tender notice.	27/02/2021
2.	Period of downloading of bidding documents.	01/03/2021 to 16/03/2021
3.	Bid submission start date.	01/03/2021
4.	Bid submission end date.	16/03/2021
5.	Deadline for receiving the hard copies (CDR&EMD).	17/03/2021
6.	Date & time of opening of Online tenders (techno commercial).	18/03/2021

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
- BUBHERA: 01932-228243
- PAMPORE: 01933-294132
- PATTAN: 01954-293507
- QAZIGUND: 01951-296153

HIGHWAY STATUS

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

PRAYERS

HIJRI CALENDAR
20 Rajab
1442

FAJR 5: 32
ZUHR 12: 43
ASR 4: 49
Magrib 6: 33
ISHA 7: 53

This Day In History

- 1793 - French troops are defeated by Austrian forces and Liège is recaptured
- 1795 - Amsterdam celebrates Revolution on the Dam; Square of Revolution
- 1795 - Treaty of Basel - Prussia ends war with France
- 1915 - World War I: The LZ 33, a zeppelin, is damaged by enemy fire and stranded south of Ostend.
- 1924 - Computing-Tabulating-Recording Corp becomes IBM
- 1931 - Gandhi & British viceroy Lord Irwin sign pact
- 1943 - Anti-fascist strikes in Italy
- 1943 - RAF bombs Essen Germany
- 1949 - The Jharkhand Party is founded in India.
- 1958 - Explorer 2 fails to reach Earth orbit
- 1959 - Iran & US sign economic & military treaty
- 1968 - US launches Solar Explorer 2 to study the Sun
- 1970 - Nuclear non-proliferation treaty goes into effect
- 1970 - Dubnium atoms are first detected conclusively.
- 1979 - Voyager 1's closest approach to Jupiter (172,000 miles)
- 1979 - Iran resumes petroleum exports
- 1980 - Earth satellites record gamma rays from remnants of supernova N-49
- 1981 - Michael Stewart's musical "Bring Back Birdie" opens at Martin Beck Theater, NYC for 4
- 1982 - Russian spacecraft Venera 14 lands on Venus sends back data
- 1991 - Iraq repealed its annexation of Kuwait
- 1993 - Fokker 100 crashes at Skopje Macedonia, 81 die
- 1994 - Largest milkshake made; 1,955 gallons of chocolate in Nelspruit, South Africa
- 2012 - 27 members of Iraq's security force are killed by gunmen disguised as police in Haditha
- 2012 - Tropical Storm Irina kills 65 in Madagascar
- 2013 - Venezuelan Vice-President Nicolás Maduro assumes the presidency after the death of Hugo Chávez
- 2013 - Willcom announces the world's smallest mobile phone, weighing 32 grams
- 2014 - A survey by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights reports that about 1/3 of women in the European Union have experienced physical or sexual violence since the age of 15
- Event of interest: Event of interest
- 2015 - Harrison Ford crash-lands his 1942 Ryan Aeronautical ST3KR aeroplane in California
- 2015 - 8th Islamic State militants ransack and destroy ancient cities of Nimrud, Hatra and Dur-Sharrukin in Iraq
- 2016 - US air strike kills 150 Al-Shabaab militants north of Mogadishu, Somalia
- 2017 - US President Donald Trump in a tweet accuses former President Obama without offering any evidence of wiretapping Trump Towers during the presidential campaign
- 2018 - North Korean leader Kim Jong-un meets South Korean officials for the first time since taking office, hosting a dinner in Pyongyang
- 2018 - China announces a military budget of 1.1 trillion yuan (\$175 billion)

From KO Archives

Mines Removal Likely To Delay Bus Service

Agencies

ISLAMABAD - Removal of landmines on both, sides of the Line of Control is one of the major problems that can delay the launch of the Muzaffarabad-Srinagar bus service.

Dawn quoting sources said on Sunday that senior military officers of India and Pakistan had established contact the other day and discussed early clearance of mines. The two sides would exchange information about the number of mines on each side of the border.

They did not rule out the possibility of the assistance in the form of technical know-how and financial help to carry out the job. Both India and Pakistan had planted thousands of mines along their border areas, including Kashmir, after wars in 1948, 1965, 1971 and 1998 (Kargil).

Sources said the two countries had agreed that not only the mines - would be removed but a road would be built to facilitate the bus travel as the existing road on both sides of the LoC was in bad shape.

Report said that Pakistan would provide funds to the army to get the road repaired and mines removed as early as possible.

"Bun this job perhaps cannot be completed by April 7, the date agreed between the two countries for revival of the old kind route on both sides of the LoC", a source said.

During a visit to Jammu on Monday, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had hinted the possibility of starting another bus service between Jammu and Sialkote.

(Kashmir Observer, 05 March, 2005)

Biden Names Modi Critic Vice Chair Of Key Congressional Subcommittee



Agenceis

WASHINGTON: Indian-American Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal has been named vice chair of the Subcommittee on Antitrust, Commercial, and Administrative Law.

Chennai-born Jayapal, 55, from the Democratic Party, will oversee the subcommittee's urgent work on antitrust, big tech, reining in anti-competitive behaviour, helping prevent monopolistic practices, protecting a free press, and allowing innovation to thrive.

Ms Jayapal, the only Indian-American woman in the House of Representatives, has been a leading voice on the committee, where she most recently played an active role in conducting America's first major congressional antitrust investigation in decades, a media release said.

"I am honoured to lead the House Subcommittee on Antitrust, Commercial, and Administrative Law at a pivotal moment in which we must write the next chapter of antitrust law," Jayapal said in a statement.

"That's how we will finally hold dominant tech platforms accountable while advocating for workers, stopping hate and misinformation, and protecting a free press," she said.

"By reasserting the power of Congress and using our historic investigation as a roadmap, we

will continue the work necessary to rein in anti-competitive behaviour, help prevent monopolistic practices, protect local and independent journalism, and allow innovation to thrive," Jayapal said on Wednesday.

In July, Jayapal questioned the CEOs of three dominant tech platforms.

She asked former Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos about how the tech giant uses third party seller data. She also questioned Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg on how the social networking giant harvests and monetises user data and then utilizes it to copy, acquire, and kill rivals, the media release said.

Additionally, Jayapal asked Google's CEO Sundar Pichai about the company's total control of the ad market as the owner of the market, the ad buyer, and the ad seller, which has harmful effects on the local and independent journalism necessary for our democracy to thrive.

The hearing was part of the Antitrust Subcommittee's more than 16-month investigation into the state of competition in the digital economy.

"I can say conclusively that self-regulation by Big Tech comes at the expense of our communities, small businesses, consumers, the free press, and innovation," she said after the investigation's findings were released in October.

I AM HONoured TO LEAD THE House Subcommittee on Antitrust, Commercial, and Administrative Law at a pivotal moment in which we must write the next chapter of antitrust law."

Dozens Of Migrants Heading To Yemen Thrown Overboard, Feared Dead



Agenceis

The International Organization for Migration has said that at least 20 migrants and refugees are dead after smugglers threw 80 people overboard during a voyage from Djibouti in East Africa to Yemen.

A statement says "smugglers started shouting there were too many on board" after the boat with 200 migrants, including children under 18 years old, set off on Wednesday.

The IOM said five bodies have been recovered, and survivors are being treated in Djibouti. It is not immediately clear what countries the migrants in this latest journey

were from.

Drownings in the waters off Djibouti, typically involving migrants and refugees from Ethiopia or Somalia trying to escape poverty and war at home by finding work in Saudi Arabia or the United Arab Emirates, have become common.

In October, at least eight migrants drowned after smugglers forced them off a boat near Djibouti.

In 2017, up to 50 migrants from Somalia and Ethiopia were "deliberately drowned" when a smuggler forced them into the sea off Yemen's coast.

And in 2018, at least 30 migrants died when a boat capsized off Yemen, with survivors reporting gunfire.



A poster of Pope Francis and Iraq's top Shiite cleric, Ayatollah Ali Al-Sistani, is seen along a street ahead of the Pope's planned visit to Iraq, in Najaf, Iraq, March 3, 2021.

Preparations In Full Swing For Pope's Meeting With Ali Al-Sistani

Agenceis

BAGHDAD: Pope Francis and Grand Ayatollah Ali Al-Sistani, a preeminent Shiite figure, are to meet on Saturday for at most 40 minutes, part of the time alone except for interpreters, in the cleric's modest home in Najaf.

Al-Sistani is notoriously reclusive and has not left his Najaf home in years. He does not make public appearances and his sermons are delivered by representatives. He rarely receives foreign dignitaries.

The Vatican's hope was that Francis would sign a document with Al-Sistani pledging human fraternity, just as he did with Sunni Islam's influential grand imam of Al-Azhar,

Ahmed El-Tayeb, based in Egypt.

The signature was among many elements the two sides negotiated over extensively. In the end, Shiite religious officials in Najaf told the AP a signing was not on the agenda, and Al-Sistani will issue a verbal statement instead.

The 84-year-old pontiff's convoy will pull up along Najaf's busy column-lined Rasool Street, which culminates at the Imam Ali Shrine, one of the most revered sites in the world for Shiites.

To the side is an alleyway too narrow for cars. Here, Francis will walk the 30 meters to Al-Sistani's modest home, which the cleric has rented for decades. Waiting to greet him at the entrance will be Al-Sistani's

influential son, Mohammed Ridha.

Inside, and some steps to the right, the pontiff will come face to face with the ayatollah.

Each will make a simple gesture of mutual respect.

Francis will remove his shoes before entering Al-Sistani's room.

Al-Sistani, who normally remains seated for visitors, will stand to greet Francis at the door and walk him to an L-shaped blue sofa, inviting him to take a seat.

The pope will be offered tea. Gifts will be exchanged.

Francis will almost certainly present Al-Sistani with bound copies of his most important writings, top among them his latest encyclical "Brothers All."

Five Places The Pope Will See On His Exceptional Iraq Trip

BAGHDAD: Pope Francis has an ambitious agenda for the first-ever papal visit to Iraq, including some of the country's most treasured sites.

Here are five key locations the pontiff is set to visit.

Beleaguered Baghdad
On his first day in the Iraqi capital, Francis will give a speech at the "Our Lady of Salvation" Catholic Church in the main commercial district of Karrada.

On October 31, 2010, Islamist militants stormed the church and killed 44 worshippers, two priests and seven security force personnel in one of the deadliest attacks on Iraq's dwindling Christian community.

Now, stained-glass windows at the church bear the victims' names and a defiant message above the altar reads, "Where is your victory, oh death?"

But the congregation has dwindled and concrete blast walls surround the church, making access difficult.

In the days leading up to the Pope's arrival, an Iraqi artist painted his likeness across those concrete walls, alongside the Iraqi flag and doves representing peace.

Shrine city of Najaf

As part of his outreach to Muslims, the Pope will visit Najaf, the 1,230-year-old city that is the spiritual capital of most Shiites around the world.

Its imposing shrine — with a golden dome and intricate tiles inside — is the burial place of the Prophet Mohammed's son-in-law Ali, highly revered in Shiite Islam.

The city was long under Otto-



man rule, but during the First World War Britain took control, holding on despite a revolt by local clerics.

Former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein banned pilgrimages to the holy city, but it witnessed a revival after he was ousted in the 2003 US-led invasion.

In Najaf, Pope Francis will meet with Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani, the top authority for most Shiite Muslims.

The 90-year-old cleric is never seen in public and rarely grants access to visitors, making the encounter one of the most extraordinary parts of the papal trip.

The two will meet in Sistani's humble one-storey home, with most press barred from attending the sit-down.

Abraham's birthplace

From there, the Pope will travel to the desert location of Ur, which was founded in the fourth millennium before Christ, and became a major city in the ancient Sumero-Akkadian empire.

Its most important feature is its ziggurat, a staggered, pyramid-

like structure that was excavated between the two world wars.

Ur, thought to mean "town" in Sumerian, is believed to be where Abraham — the father of Judaism, Christianity and Islam — was born in the second millennium BCE.

Pope Francis will hold an inter-religious service there with some of Iraq's smallest minorities, including the Yazidis and the pre-Islamic Sabaeans.

Mosul and Qaraqosh

The northern province of Nineveh is the heartland of Iraq's Christian community and its capital, Mosul, is where the Islamic State group chose to announce the establishment of its self-styled "caliphate" in 2014.

In Mosul, the Pope will visit the Al-Taheera Church in the city's west, which was ravaged by IS and the fighting that eventually forced the jihadists out of the city.

The first written records on Al-Taheera date back to the 17th century but some historians believe it could be as much as 1,000 years older.

Will Ensure That America Not China Sets The International Agenda: White House

Agenceis

WASHINGTON: The Biden Administration has said that by restoring US credibility and reasserting forward-looking global leadership, it will ensure that America, not a more assertive and authoritarian China, sets the international agenda, working alongside countries like India to shape new norms and agreements globally that advance its interests and reflect its values.

The comments were made in the Biden administration's Interim National Security Strategic Guidance released on Wednesday.

It lays "out a vision for how the United States can seize what we view as a once-in-a-generation opportunity to renew America's advantages at home and abroad," White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki told reporters at her daily news conference.

The Guidance, she said, is designed to communicate the administration's strategic approach and central priorities for national security policy.

partner nations.

"We will deepen our partnership with India and work alongside New Zealand, as well as Singapore, Vietnam, and other Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) member states, to advance shared objectives. Recognising the ties of shared history and sacrifice, we will reinforce our partnership with Pacific Island states," the Guidance said.

At its root, the White House said that ensuring national security requires them to defend and nurture the underlying sources of American strength, including its people, economy, national defence, and democracy at home; promote a favourable distribution of power to deter and prevent adversaries from directly threatening the US and its allies, inhibiting access to the global commons, or dominating key regions; and lead and sustain a stable and open international system, underwritten by strong democratic alliances, partnerships, multilateral institutions, and rules.

It said that the US will position



"It describes the changed strategic landscape the US faces today and affirms our enduring core national interests, including protecting the security of the American people, expanding economic prosperity and opportunity, and realising and defending the democratic values at the heart of the American way of life," Psaki said.

In its interim National Security Guidance, the White House said that this agenda will strengthen its enduring advantages, and allow it to prevail in strategic competition with China or any other nation.

"The most effective way for America to out-compete a more assertive and authoritarian China over the long-term is to invest in our people, our economy, and our democracy," it said.

"By restoring US credibility and reasserting forward-looking global leadership, we will ensure that America, not China, sets the international agenda, working alongside others to shape new global norms and agreements that advance our interests and reflect our values."

"By bolstering and defending our unparalleled network of allies and partners, and making smart defense investments, we will also deter Chinese aggression and counter threats to our collective security, prosperity, and democratic way of life," the Guidance said.

Reiterating that the US will reinvigorate and modernise its alliances and partnerships around the world, the Guidance said that beyond its core alliances, the US will also double down on building partnerships throughout the world, because its strength is multiplied when it combines efforts to address common challenges, share costs, and widen the circle of cooperation.

"As we do, we will recognise that our vital national interests compel the deepest connection to the Indo-Pacific, Europe, and the Western Hemisphere. And we will be mindful of both our values and our interests as we engage

itself, diplomatically and militarily, to defend its allies.

"We will support China's neighbours and commercial partners in defending their rights to make independent political choices free of coercion or undue foreign influence. We will promote locally-led development to combat the manipulation of local priorities," said the Guidance.

"We will support Taiwan, a leading democracy and a critical economic and security partner, in line with longstanding American commitments. We will ensure that US companies do not sacrifice American values in doing business in China. And we will stand up for democracy, human rights, and human dignity, including in Hong Kong, Xinjiang, and Tibet. On all these issues, we will work to forge a common approach with like minded countries," it said.

The relations between the US and China are at an all-time low. The two countries are currently engaged in a bitter confrontation over various issues, including trade, the origins of the novel coronavirus pandemic, the communist giant's aggressive military moves in the disputed South China Sea and human rights violations.

At the same time, the White House recognises that strategic competition does not, and should not, preclude working with China when it is in its national interest to do so.

"Indeed, renewing America's advantages ensures that we will engage China from a position of confidence and strength. We will conduct practical, results-oriented diplomacy with Beijing and work to reduce the risk of miscalculation and misperception," it said.

"We will welcome the Chinese government's cooperation on issues such as climate change, global health security, arms control, and nonproliferation where our national fates are intertwined. As we do, we will rally our allies and partners to join us, pooling our negotiating leverage and showing our collective power and resolve," the Guidance said

NEWSMAKERS

7-Year-Old Alabama Girl Helps To Fund Her Own Brain Surgery

Agenceis

HOMEWOOD (ALABAMA): Liza Scott, 7, started a lemonade stand at her mom's bakery last summer so she could buy some frills like toys and sequined high-heeled shoes. The bouncy little girl is still in business months later, yet the money is going toward something entirely different: surgery on her brain.

Last month, doctors determined a series of seizures that Liza began suffering were caused by cerebral malformations that needed repair, said her mother, Elizabeth Scott. Always eager to help out and with an eye toward entrepreneurship after a childhood spent around a small business, the little girl volunteered to help raise money for her upcoming operation.

Located near the cash register of Savage's Bakery in suburban

Birmingham, her stand of bright pink and yellow wooden crates offers lemonade for a quarter, plus other treats. But people are putting in a lot more as word spreads of her medical condition and her attitude.

"I've got a USD 20 bill, and a USD 50 bill and a USD 10 bill and a USD 5 bill and a USD 100 bill," Liza said Tuesday as she counted donations from the morning.

Liza was still in the hospital after suffering two major seizures when she came up with the idea to help out with the stand, said her mom, who also has a pre-school-age boy.

"I told her, You don't have to do that," Elizabeth Scott said. "There's no expectation of her doing anything to help pay the bills. I'm a single mom, I take care of my kids on my own."

Yet Liza wanted to help, and she has. Her little stand has made more than USD 12,000 in a few days — nearly all through donations.

"She likes being part of the team. This is something she can really take ownership of," Scott said.

While Liza's story has warmed plenty of hearts, some are outraged over the idea that a child facing brain surgery would feel a need to raise funds for her own care. The story is yet another sign that the US health system is broken beyond repair and driving families into bankruptcy, critics say.

Despite having good insurance through the popular bakery she runs with her father, Elizabeth Scott could quickly see that she was still going to be responsible for some "pretty exorbitant" expenses. So, she also set up an online fundraiser.

"Just one week in the hospital and the ambulance rides is more than my monthly salary, and that's without the surgery and travel expenses," she said. "I can't fund that by myself, and we have a business to support."

Friends, family and others who have been touched by Liza's story have already donated more than USD 300,000. A bubbly little girl who likes Barbie dolls, dressing up — and lemonade — Liza hadn't shown any signs of major health problems until January 30, her mom said.

"She had a massive seizure at 5 in the morning and it lasted like 45 minutes," said Elizabeth Scott. Another one occurred hours later. It was a few days before tests revealed Liza had three malformations that were both causing the seizures and posing a risk of rupture that could lead to a stroke or other problems.

Pakistani Sikh Gurdeep Singh Wins Senate Election From Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

PESHAWAR: Gurdeep Singh of the ruling Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party on Wednesday became the first turban-clad Sikh representative from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province in Pakistan's Senate when he defeated rival candidates on a minority seat by a huge margin in the election to the upper chamber of Parliament.

Singh secured 103 votes in the House of 145 whereas Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (Fazlur) candidate Ranjeet Singh secured just 25 votes and Asif Bhatti of the Awami National Party received 12.

The Election Commission authorities informed that five votes of minority candidates were rejected by the Presiding Officer.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief



Minister Mehmod Khan claimed that Singh would secure 102 votes whereas he obtained one more vote indicating that one Opposition member also

voted in his favour. Singh, who hails from Swat district, is the first turban-clad Sikh representative from the province in the Senate.

Hindu community leader Haroon Sarabdiyal hailed the election of Singh as Senator from the province, saying it's good omen for the minority community.

The total strength of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party led by Prime Minister Imran Khan in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly is 94. The extra votes were polled by the members of the parliamentary parties supporting the PTI in the province.

The members of the Senate — the upper house of parliament — are elected for six-year terms. PTI

CUK's Zoology Dept Observes Wildlife Day

Observer News Service

Ganderbal: The department of Animal Sciences (Zoology), Central University of Kashmir (CUK) observed the World Wildlife Day here on Wednesday.

Holding placards and banners, the students raised awareness among the masses by spreading the messages about wildlife protection, especially the endangered species in Kashmir.

The students also climbed the mountain peak of Sindh forest division Ganderbal and witnessed diverse flora and fauna. The group also interacted with the local community and talked about the presence of the wildlife species. The students also visited a plant nursery where saplings were distributed among them. Earlier, the Dean School of Life Sciences, Prof. Mohammad Yousuf, briefed the students about the importance of exploring the local wildlife. The event was coordinated by Dr. Lateef Khaliq, Sr Assistant professor along with, Irfan Noorani, Asst Prof, Department of Zoology, Dr. Saleem Mushtaq and Parvaiz Yousuf.

All Parameters Of 'Violence' In Kashmir Have Dwindled: GoC 15 Corps

Observer News Service

Sopore: Maintaining that the peace is prevailing across the valley, General officer Commanding of Srinagar-based 15 Corps Lt General BS Raju Thursday said that all the parameters of violence in Kashmir have come down including the "stone-pelting, agitation, and bandh calls" and added the overall environment is changing. GoC 15 Corps Thursday formally inaugurated the Chinar Radio FM station in Sopore in presence of the GOC Kilo Force and other top officers. GoC Raju while addressing the reporters on the sidelines of the inaugural ceremony said that the entire north Kashmir will enjoy the presence and service of the radio station and any local information can be aired on it. Besides entertainment, he said that the administration can use this as well for different announcements and the local talent can use this platform to showcase theirs. Highlighting the uses, the



GoC said that the FM station can be used to highlight grievances and raise demands for blood and other things. "Altogether it's an important tool through which people of this area can be connected and hopefully, this project will be a success," he said. The Lt-General informed that some four months back

a community radio has been started in south Kashmir and in the next couple of months two more will come up in Kashmir that will give radio coverage to native areas. Responding to a question, he said: "Today we can interact with the people of Sopore in a much positive manner." "Yes there were challenging

times in Sopore but things are beginning to change and people here have come close to Army. We both are moving forward towards peace." He also said that they are seeing a very stable environment and "I have stated earlier as well that all the parameters of violence have come down whether the stone-pelting, agitation, and Bandh calls." "People in the valley are looking more forward to peace", he said. "They want to get dividends of change of the environment taking place and even the COVID-19 has come under some control." The GoC said that, "I see a lot of economic activities taking place. A large number of tourists coming to the valley and all are moving in the right direction." About the Radio Chinar project, the Lt General Raju said: "I think this is an important project for me not for anything else because it's an opportunity to connect with the larger population in one go and what better to connect through than music?" (KNO)

Kashmir's Shia Clergy Charts New Course In View of 'Adverse' Situation

Observer News Service

Srinagar: A major gathering of Shia clergy Thursday decided to unitedly fight the challenges posed by the 'new and unfavourable' situation in Jammu and Kashmir.

The conference held at Jamia Elmiya Imam Reza in city outskirts unanimously decided to constitute a forum called 'Majlis-e-Ulama-e-Imamia Jammu and Kashmir' which will carry out its activities in the spheres of religion, education and social arenas in the backdrop of new realities faced by the people of Kashmir.

The day long conference was attended by prominent religious heads and pass outs from Qum and Najaf seminaries.

"The conference lauded the role of clergy in discharging their religious duties despite the challenging situation in Jammu and Kashmir. The conference also felt that the responsibilities of religious leaders and scholars have increased manifold," a handout



issued today said. "So, in light of contemporary challenges and the changing circumstances, it was unanimously decided to constitute a joint forum 'Majlis-e-Ulama-e-Imamia Jammu and Kashmir' comprising academicians, social and religious figures besides pass-outs of reputed religious seminaries which will take a united stand on various socio-political and religious and community issues," it added.

The handout further said that to take the process of constituting the joint forum, an adhoc body will be formed that will work for four months before a permanent body of Majlis-e-Ulema is formally elected.

Coordinated Approach Necessary To Conserve Kashmir Water Resources

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Chairman JK Water Resources Regulator Authority, Ghanshyam Jha Thursday stressed for an integrated and coordinated approach by the different departments, complimenting and supplementing each other, avoiding overlapping of actions to conserve the water resources of Kashmir.

He said this during an interactive meeting convened at I&FC guest house, Ram Munshi Bagh, here.

The meeting was attended by Commissioner Srinagar Municipal Corporation, VC LAWDA, Chief Engineers of I&FC, PHE and Coordinator WUCMA.

During the meeting, the Chairman emphasised the need to restore the lost natural drainage links to avoid urban flooding. He laid stress on demarcation of all lakes using geo-tagged boundary pillars to prevent encroachments on the analogy of Wular Lake done by WUCMA.



He further directed to carry out upstream interventions to arrest silt load at source, thereby reducing siltation of water bodies. He also directed to strike a balance between the need and the availability of resources for managing water resources by concerned authorities.

The meeting also discussed various issues including dumping of garbage into water bodies, removal of encroachments from water bodies, rehabilitation of

Banyari and Outfall channel of Jhelum at Ningli.

Appreciating the initiative of Wular Conservation and Management Authority, Jha commended it for taking up a large scale restoration project for conservation of Wular Lake under the Wular Action Plan. He appreciated WUCMA for completing demarcation of Wular Lake to prevent encroachments using geo-tagged boundary pillars.

On concluding the visit, Jha said he received firsthand experience of issues that are of interest to conservation, management and regulation of water resources of Kashmir.

He expressed his commitment to work with all stakeholders within the authorities mandate. J&K Water Resources Regulator Authority will monitor very closely the functioning of all concerned authorities to make sure all issues pertaining to water regulation, its judicious use and conservation are addressed, he added.

He visited lakes and water bodies in and around Srinagar city like Gilsar, Khushalsar, Anchar, Nalla Amir Khan and Baba Demb. He also inspected Wular Lake, Jhelum inlet at

CUK's Dept Of Politics Holds Workshop On Mental Health

Observer News Service

Ganderbal: Department of Politics and Governance, Central University of Kashmir (CUK) started a two-day workshop on "Mental Health and Well-being" for the students and research scholars of the varsity on Thursday.

Laila Qureshi, Psychologist and Counsellor, from "Exceptional Minds," was the resource person for the event.

Speaking on the occasion, Dean School of Social Sciences, Prof. G M Bhat said that such workshops were need of the hour to de-stress the students, scholars and the faculty members.

He said the lockdown due to Covid-19 pandemic had further stressed the students of the Valley. Prof. Bhat underscored the need of doing physical exercises and workout for maintaining the physical and mental well-being of the individuals.

Department Coordinator, Dr. Khalid Waseem, in his address, highlighted the aims and objectives of holding the workshop.

He asked the students and scholars to interact with the expert with an open mind and seek answers to their questions.

Laila Qureshi, made a detailed presentation, about the subject and asked the participants to address their personal problems with a positive approach. She threw detailed light on the issues confronted by the youngsters in the Valley.

Science Writing Workshop Concludes At SKUAST-K



Observer News Service

Srinagar: Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Science and Technology, Kashmir Thursday concluded first of its kind three-month Science Writing Workshop, aimed at developing writing and analytical skills among students and scientists of the university.

The workshop was organised by the university's Faculty of Forestry under the World Bank-ICAR funded National Agricultural Higher Education Project (NAHEP) for the institutional development of SKUAST-K.

The workshop was conducted by the freelance media consultant for science writing KP Madhu of Current Science. Vice-Chancellor, SKUAST-K, Prof Mushtaq Ahmad, in his message stressed having more such skill-oriented pro-

gramme in future.

Director, Planning & Monitoring, and PI, NAHEP, Prof Nazir Ahmad Ganai, who was the chief guest at the occasion, said that he was delighted to see the outcome of the workshop. He described the program as the beginning of a remarkable journey for aspiring science writers. He desired to have enhanced writing skills developed among students as well as teachers at all faculties of SKUAST-K. Dean, Faculty of Forestry, Prof TH Masoodi said the way students have groomed their writing skills while attending this course is remarkable. He congratulated the expert KP Madhu and the organising committee for wonderfully conducting this workshop. KP Madhu in his comments described this journey as amazing and memorable. Earlier, Prof Anup Raj (Organizing Secretary) and Dr Amir

Farooq (Organizing member) presented the outcomes of the workshop. On the occasion, the students' writing assignments named Kashur Meeras and Sci-Gest were also released by the dignitaries. Dr Ashfaq A Mir and Sofi Jeelani were among the members who contributed to designing the magazines.

The valedictory session and certificate distribution ceremony was conducted by Dr Akhlaq Amin Wani (Organizing member). About 39 candidates had applied for the program, out of which 20 were selected to pursue the program. Among others who participated in the concluding ceremony include Prof FA Zaki (HRM, Consultant, NAHEP SKUAST-K) Prof KN Qaisar, Prof SA Gangoo, Prof PA Khan, Prof MA Islam, Dr JA Mugloo, Dr PA Sofi, Dr GM Bhat, Dr SNZ Geelani, Dr Khurshheed besides other faculty members.

LISCENCE REQUIRED

I have applied for the fertilizer liscence. The shop for the purpose has been identified at Srigufwara in district Anantnag. Any one having any objection can register the same with the department within seven days after which no objection will be entertained.

Towheeda Jan
D/o Mohd Ashraf Shah
R/o Lalpora Tral.

LISCENCE REQUIRED

I Syed Aabid Hussain s/o Syed Ali Shah r/o Muftibagh Harwan Srinagar have lost my driving license bearing No. JK-0120040021656 in the area of Lal Bazar. An FIR has been already lodged in Police Station Lal Bazar, Srinagar. I intend to apply for duplicate from the RTO Office Srinagar. If anyone has any objection please report the same to the office of RTO Srinagar within a weeks time.

Sd
Syed Abid Hussain

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, MECHANICAL IRRIGATION DIVISION SRINAGAR NEAR J&K BANK (Zaldagar)

Telefax No. 0194-2503195 e-mail id: xenmidrsrinagar@gmail.com

Gist of Short-Term e-NIT No. 75 OF 2020-21, Dated: 02-03-2021

For and on behalf of Lt. Governor of UT of J&K, Executive Engineer, Mechanical Irrigation Division, Srinagar, invites e-tenders on item rate basis by e-tendering mode from the registered **Electrical/ Mechanical Contractors/ firms/ SSI Unit Holders** for:-

Electro-Mechanical works at Various Lift Irrigation Schemes of different Sub-Divisions of Mechanical Irrigation Division Srinagar as enlisted below:-

S. No.	Particulars of the work	Cost of document/ tender fee (In Rs.)	Estimated Cost of work "Rs" in Lacs	Exemption Allowed	Completion period	Validity of Rates
1.	Fabrication, Providing, Installation and testing of 01 Ton capacity Sump Gantry each at LIS Dar Mohall and LIS. Astanpora Rawalpora.	200.00	1.56	Yes	15 days (each)	180 days from the date of opening of financial bid.
2.	Replacement of wornout Chain Pulley Block/monorail with new 05 Ton capacity CPB and mono rail for internal Pump house Gantry at LIS Noorbagh.	200.00	0.84	Yes		
3.	Fabrication, Providing, Installation and testing of 01 Ton capacity Sump Gantry at De-Watering Station Sangam.	200.00	0.30	Yes		
4.	Supply, installation Testing & Commissioning of Priming Pumping unit coupled with 5 HP, 3 phase electric induction motor and allied works at LIS Narayan Bagh.	200.00	0.58	Yes		
5.	Supply, installation Testing & Commissioning of FASD Starter for LIS Dugpora.	200.00	0.75	Yes		
6.	Supply, installation Testing & Commissioning of FASD Starter for LIS Sheikh Mohalla Anchar	200.00	0.75	Yes		

The bidding process shall be completed online in single cover containing -Tender Document fee, Earnest Money Deposit, Pre-qualification & Financial Bid in the prescribed BOQ.

The critical dates are as tabulated below:-

i	Publish Date	02/03/2021 at 1700 hrs
ii	Document Download/sale start Date	02/03/2021 from 1700 hrs
iii	Clarification start date	N/A
iv	Bid submission start date	03/03/2021 from 10:00 hrs
v	Clarification end date	N/A
vi	Bid submission/ Document Download/sale end date	12/03/2021 upto 1600 hrs
vii	Date and time of Bid opening	13/03/2021 at 1400 hrs

The bid uploaded on the website up to due date and time will be opened on scheduled date /time or any other date convenient to the tender opening authority in the office of the Executive Engineer, Mechanical Irrigation Division, Zaldagar Srinagar.

All other terms and conditions shall remain same as laid down in PWD Form No. 25 & 33.

Position of funds	Available Under MBE: 2702
Position of AAA	Accorded under Order No.s:- 136-MCO of 2020-21, Dated:- 02-03-2021 & 137-MCO of 2020-21, Dated:- 02-03-2021
Technically sanctioned vide No's	102, 103, 104, 106, 107 and 108 of 02/21

No. MIDS/Ts/ 4326-32
Dated:- 02-03-2021

DIPK-14388/20

Sd/-
Executive Engineer,
Mechanical Irrigation Division,
Srinagar

K O V I E W

Mirwaiz' release

Government Tuesday released top Hurriyat leader Mirwaiz Umar Farooq after eighteen months. According to reports, he will address the congregation at Srinagar's grand mosque today. It will be interesting to see what he has to say in his sermon. As for Article 370, separatists' fought for its continuation as they saw in it a protection to the existing demographic character of J&K. They also didn't want to be seen too much for safeguarding Article 370 as it diluted their demand for secession of Kashmir from India. Now that the Article has been withdrawn, it remains to be seen how separatists who were so far under detention would react.

New Delhi has already released most of the mainstream leaders including Dr Farooq Abdullah, Omar Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti - three former J&K Chief Ministers. This shows the growing confidence of the union government in the improvement of the situation in the erstwhile state. It now sees less likelihood of the situation tipping into turmoil. No doubt, the J&K administration has put under fresh detention some mainstream leaders, most of them from the PDP, but that is not necessarily connected to the alleged safeguarding of the public order.

So far most of the mainstream leaders who have been released have exercised caution so far as pressing for the restoration of J&K autonomy. This despite the fact that the major political outfits have gotten together to fight for Article 370. The alliance that calls itself People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration recently suffered a jolt with the exit of Sajad Gani Lone, the chief of the People's Conference. Even the National Conference and the PAGD, the two major constituents of the five party grouping are finding it hard to get along. The alliance hasn't even met since the results of the recent DDC polls were declared. Nor does such a meeting look likely in near future.

Be that as it may, the release of Mirwaiz is a welcome development. This will go a long way to push Kashmir on the road to "economic and political normalcy", to borrow the Wednesday's statement of the US state department on Kashmir. What also makes Mirwaiz' release significant is that it comes in the wake of the recent LoC ceasefire agreement between India and Pakistan. So, this is a pointer to the anticipated normalisation of relations between the neighbours. Here's hoping that more leaders are released and this is built upon by a dialogue between the two countries. Only the talks and a sustained engagement promises the long term peace in the region and in Kashmir.

OTHER OPINION

The Pope in Iraq

The lead-up to the first-ever papal visit to Iraq has been somewhat overshadowed by concerns over its timing. The pope's determination to go ahead testifies to the significance he attaches to a visit that sums up two key themes of his papacy: the need to develop genuine inter-faith dialogue with Islam, and a non-sectarian vision of the church as a "field hospital", where the spiritual wounds of the suffering are healed.

On Saturday, in the city of Najaf, a holy city for Shia Muslims, Francis will meet the Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, Iraq's leading Shia cleric and one of the world's most influential Muslim leaders. He will also visit Christian communities in Baghdad and in Iraq's north, where thousands of believers were killed by occupying Islamic State forces between 2014 and 2017. Many more fled Iraq altogether. Since the disastrous Anglo-American invasion in 2003 unleashed a cycle of violence and sectarianism, the estimated Christian population of the country has plummeted from around 1.5 million to between 200,000 and 300,000. A message of inter-faith tolerance and solidarity will be symbolised by a joint prayer service at the ancient archaeological site of Ur, believed to be the birthplace of Abraham. The ceremony will be attended by Yazidis and other Iraqi religious minorities, as well as Muslims and Christians.

Following the 9/11 attacks and the Iraq war, the notion of a clash of civilisations between Christianity and Islam fuelled the growth of violent religious extremism, with tragic and bloody consequences. Christian minorities in the Middle East and elsewhere have suffered persecution. In parts of Europe and in the United States, the promotion of "cultural Christianity" has become a proxy for thinly-veiled Islamophobia and hostility towards migrants. The pope's visit to Iraq, which takes as its motto the words of Matthew's gospel, "You are all brothers", is intended to challenge such divisions and distortions of religious faith. Two years ago, Pope Francis joined with the grand imam of Cairo's al-Azhar mosque, Sheikh Ahmed al-Tayeb, one of the world's leading Sunni clerics, in a groundbreaking call for a cross-faith commitment to human fraternity. In an era of cultural and religious polarisation, alliances such as these are desperately needed to create a counter-narrative. Pope Francis's trip, and his meeting with the grand ayatollah, will hopefully prove to be landmark moments in that crucial task.

The Guardian

The anatomy of a spring ceasefire

HAPPYMON JACOB

Different from the earlier routine assurances, the new India-Pakistan agreement also defuses an ugly two-front situation

In the wake of registering 5,130 ceasefire violations in 2020, guns on either side of the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) fell silent on the intervening night of February 24-25, 2021. The February ceasefire has triggered widespread speculation about its durability, significance and implication for bilateral relations in general.

The announcement by the two Director Generals of Military Operations (DGsMO) came as a surprise to many, and yet, it underlined the simple fact that all statesmen/women recognise while in office: countries cannot be run by rhetoric alone. More so, this announcement is also a recognition in New Delhi and Islamabad that they cannot afford to let violence spiral out of control given its inherently escalatory nature as events in the wake of the Pulwama terror attack in February 2019 highlighted.

Peace feelers

Notwithstanding the surprise factor in the development, there have been some indications about a possible thaw in the relations between the traditional rivals. Pakistan Army Chief Qamar Javed Bajwa stated in early February that "It is time to extend hand of peace in all directions", and on the Indian side, the Army Chief General Manoj Mukund Naravane said around the same time that "with our continuous engagement with Pakistan, we will be able to prevail over them (for border peace)... as unsettled borders help no one". India allowed the use of its airspace by Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan's special aircraft to fly to Sri Lanka and just a day before the ceasefire announcement, and upon his arrival in Colombo, Mr. Khan said, "Our only (sic) dispute is Kashmir and it can only be resolved through dialogue." Clearly, the two sides were setting the stage for the announcement.

Significance of the ceasefire

What makes the February ceasefire significant is the fact that this agreement is different from the routine ceasefire assurances that the two sides made till January 2021. Twice in 2018, for instance, the two sides had agreed to uphold the ceasefire agreement when ceasefire violations were on the rise. But what makes the February 2021 ceasefire different is its two distinct features: one, this was a joint statement by the two DGsMO, and that unlike the previous declarations, the recent agreement mentions a specific date, i.e., the night of February 24-25, to begin the ceasefire. In that sense then, the February ceasefire is arguably one of the most significant military measures by India and Pakistan in over 18 years to reduce violence along the LoC in Kashmir. Coming in the wake of over 5,000 ceasefire violations in 2020 (the highest in 19 years since 2002) the agreement is path-breaking from a conflict management point of view. Interestingly, the November 2003 ceasefire agreement was also announced in the wake of a high level of violence through 2002 and 2003.

The ceasefire is also significant because this helps New Delhi to defuse what was becoming a growing concern for the decision makers in New Delhi: an ugly two-front situation and a feeling of being boxed in by an inimical Pakistan and an aggressive China. It is easy to talk about a two or 'two-and-a-



It is easy to talk about a two or 'two-and-a-half' front situation for domestic grandstanding, but dealing with it is neither easy nor practical. That the Indian Army had to redeploy forces from the western border with Pakistan to the northern border with China is indicative of the serious material challenges it could throw up. The best way to deal with the two front challenge then, was to defuse at least one front. The LoC was a natural candidate

half front situation for domestic grandstanding, but dealing with it is neither easy nor practical. That the Indian Army had to redeploy forces from the western border with Pakistan to the northern border with China is indicative of the serious material challenges it could throw up. The best way to deal with the two front challenge then, New Delhi could have reasoned, was to defuse at least one front. The LoC was a natural candidate. Given that the back channel process started much before the recent India-China disengagement on the LAC, New Delhi must have decided to defuse the western challenge from Pakistan first. And it worked.

A brief history

The history of India Pakistan ceasefire pacts and war termination agreements is both complex and instructive. The Karachi agreement of 1949, which ended the first war between newly formed India and Pakistan, was the first ceasefire agreement between the two countries which, signed under the good offices of the United Nations, created the India Pakistan boundary in Kashmir called the Ceasefire Line or CFL. The United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) was mandated to monitor the ceasefire along the CFL. The 1965 India-Pakistan war also ended in a ceasefire, but since status quo ante bellum was restored after the Tashkent Agreement, the CFL in Kashmir remained unaltered. However, the India-Pakistan war of 1971 would change that. The December ceasefire which ended the 1971 war was enshrined into the Simla Agreement the following year. But unlike 1965, status quo ante bellum was not restored by the Simla Agreement, a decision that would have important implications for bilateral relations.

The Suchetgarh Agreement of 1972 delineated the 'line of control' in Jammu and Kashmir which resulted from the ceasefire of December 1971 thereby renaming the CFL as the LoC. By this

smart move, Indian negotiators not only changed the nomenclature of the India-Pakistan dividing line in Kashmir and the physical alignment of the border in Jammu and Kashmir, but also made the UNMOGIP presence in Kashmir irrelevant. Recall that the UN force was mandated to ensure a ceasefire on the CFL, but there was no CFL after 1972, and, more so, the UN was not even a party to the Simla Agreement unlike the Karachi Agreement.

Let us cut to the present. The 2003 agreement between the DGsMO, communicated through a telephone call between them, was a reiteration of the December 1971 war termination ceasefire; Technically, therefore, even the February 2021 ceasefire too is a reiteration of the 1971 ceasefire agreement.

A form of intent

And yet, a ceasefire does not observe itself — it requires a clearly articulated and mutually-agreed upon set of rules and norms for effective observance along with an intent to observe them. The February ceasefire is an expression of such an intent, but without the rules and norms to enforce it. The Simla Agreement or the Suchetgarh Agreement do not have those rules either. The Karachi Agreement, on the other hand, has clearly laid down provisions on how to manage the CFL which, of course, was overtaken by the LoC. Ironically, therefore, armed forces deployed on either side of the LoC in Kashmir often have to resort to the strictures enshrined in the long-defunct Karachi Agreement to observe the ceasefire mandated by the Simla Agreement. This needs to change. Now that the two DGsMO have declared a joint ceasefire, the next logical step is to arrive at a set of rules to govern that ceasefire. An unwritten ceasefire, experiences from conflict zones around the world show, tend to break down easily and trigger tensions in other domains.

Return to the back channel

What is also significant to note about the ceasefire agreement between the two DGsMO is that this was preceded by weeks, if not months of, high-level contacts through the back channel. For sure, major agreements of this kind cannot be finalised by army officers especially given the vitiated atmosphere surrounding India-Pakistan relations. More crucially, the fact that this ceasefire has political blessings makes it more durable.

Interestingly, the 2003 ceasefire was also preceded by discreet parleys between the heads of the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) of Pakistan and the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) of India. The 2003 CFA led to a sustained period of back channel talks on Kashmir which, by mid 2007, had almost finalised a deal to resolve the Kashmir conflict. My research on the 2004-2007 back channel talks shows how discreet conversations between high-level interlocutors appointed by the heads of governments were able to make unprecedented progress on the mother of all India Pakistan conflicts, Kashmir. What is also evident from that period is that one key reason why the CFA held at least till 2008 was because there were parallel talks, along with holding fire on the LoC, on other outstanding bilateral issues, principally Kashmir. While whether the 2021 CFA would prompt talks in other areas is unclear as of now, I doubt the ability of piecemeal agreements to create durable stability bilaterally unless followed by progress in other domains.

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

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Chase Goals not Marks

I have scored satisfying marks and have achieved it with my capability. I'm not defending myself but I don't want to delude myself either. I want to talk about the mindset of some people which is rampant in Kashmir. We people are unaware of the actual meaning of education which can be toxic for our future generations.

Education isn't for learning how to make a living but to learn how to live. It isn't about finding one's ability by judging their marks in examinations just because a child couldn't remember what a poet wrote in his poem isn't go-

ing to tell us about their intelligence.

We can't deny the fact that lakhs of people have scored full marks in exams and have achieved nothing in life because of unemployment.

So many people yearn for jobs, are depressed and are still living with this miserable mindset which needs to be changed.

Nobody thinks about the suicide cases after results are announced. Why is it happening? The answer is us.

Why is everyone interested in the 10th, 12th class results while nobody even cares about people who have no

jobs and are suffering because of it? Jammu and Kashmir has the second-worst unemployment rate among the States in the country and nobody seems to care about this unfortunate thing. We're only invested in running behind results when the main problem is thousands of adults sitting without jobs.

After results are out, everyone seems to give their two cents — some out of concern and others out of habit. But this leaves many demotivated and underappreciated.

Education has nothing to do with

marks but is important to make us a better person every day. The most powerful weapon Allah has provided us with is our mind which is indeed the force behind success.

Our mindset needs to change from chasing marks to chasing goals. We know our worth, our capabilities and with the grace of Almighty, we can achieve so much in life.

Be kind, Be jubilant and Be grateful! For that is the true measure of success.

May we all be crowned with happiness.
Zuha Ashai
Baagaat, Srinagar

Mental illness has turned out to be a next major global health challenge, making it a matter of urgent concern considering the enormous distress and burden with subsequent after effects of the COVID-19 pandemic we are witnessing. Poverty, conflicts and other humanitarian crises are closely related to mental illness and, in some cases, they lead to suicide, one of the most common causes of preventable death among teenagers and young adults. And we are not alien to these things here in Kashmir. The burden of crisis induced as a result of the political quagmire we are in we have been facing the burnt since long and its ill effects are quite evident. In the absence of appropriate mental health facilities for children and adolescents, the state of mental health in Kashmir has deteriorated. Children have been left powerless and unhappy as a result of the perceived danger and relentless abuse, which has halted their successful coping mechanisms and resulted in a rise in various psychological problems. Talking about the service delivery, we are way behind, more precisely behind the borderline of adequate minimum of the developed world.

Despite a multi-fold increase in mental symptoms of mental ill-health, not much attention is being paid to expand and modernize the present mental health infrastructure. In the past two decades, the only psychiatric hospital in the valley has seen a massive rise in the inflow of patients and is in no way adequate to meet the needs and demands of ever-increasing mental health cases. There is an immediate need, under such circumstances, for mental health services at all fronts and levels – be it micro or macro. The promising District Mental Health Program (DMHP) under the National Mental Health Programme (NMHP) is still in its infancy in the region and so far, no significant progress has been made regarding its implementation. Given the high magnitude of the mental health issues, lack of both pharmacological as well as non pharmacological interventions, and inadequate community-based intervention, there is an urgent need to address this serious problem. Our approach to address mental health concerns is yet to evolve beyond the conventional segregated model of psychiatric care in a setting meant exclusively for such problems. There is, in no way, a mechanism in place in the mainstream health care setting that incorporates a mental health service delivery.

Approaches and Intervention in settings

Mental health research has emerged predominantly from a health-based discourse, but has been influenced by an increasing awareness of the multiple and complex biological, psychological and social factors that shape mental illnesses (WHO). The dominant mental health care models have proven inadequate to overcome the dynamic complexities of mental illness, which accounts for nearly one-third of all adult disability worldwide. Apart from the concerns about the efficacy and safety of conventional treatments, we have been witnessing disparities in mental health service delivery to different socioeconomic classes and the lack of integration of mental health services into primary care and other medical specialties. It is a known fact that individuals with mental health problems often have a wide range of needs that may be social and psychological implying those requiring the services have to access not just to doctors and nurses, but to psychologists, social workers, occupational therapists and other therapists.

ARUSHI SHARMAMAY

All poetry about old age conjures up a vivid image of being — of growing up and growing old. We are made acutely aware of the inevitability of the process. We cannot escape growing old, yet society places little emphasis on our emotional, psychological, and social well-being in the later years. In fact, in many cases, depression in older adults goes undiagnosed. Instead, it is often brushed off as a natural by-product of ageing or confused with other illnesses.

Today, as we slowly break the stigma around mental well-being, mental illness and the like, the young receive a fair share of advocacy. But when it comes to the mental health of the elderly, the public discourse seems to be limited to cognitive and intellectual impairments like dementia and Alzheimer's disease. What can we do to make it more inclusive? And what may be holding us back? Let's see.

ELDERLY MENTAL HEALTH: PUTTING TOGETHER THE WORDS

Currently, 600 million people around the world belong to the 60+ age group. This number will double in the next five years. By 2050, the population of older adults is likely to hit the two-billion mark, with developing countries accounting for a majority share².

The WHO estimates that depression affects around 7 per cent of the global elderly population today. What further compounds the issue is the fact that the aged are more susceptible to other physical and cognitive disabilities. So, the slope is rapidly rising without adequate preparedness to handle the disease magnitude on many fronts.

It does not help that several misconceptions and stereotypes have marred our perception of the ageing process. Everywhere, we portray growing old as an

Mindful Fridays

Mental Health Illness – A Silent Pandemic

Call for Collective Action

MUZAMIL WAGAY



Designing Alternate Models of Care

We have not yet seen any significant outcome in terms of mental health care as the overriding effects of illness are ever increasing with each passing day. We have learned that quite recently when COVID hit and with how lonely we got when the lockdown was in place. The burden somehow increased and there was no mindfulness to unlock happiness within and outside. That's where we felt that how much health, relationships, interests, mattered. The work had to be kept all aside and we just sought ways to get on the routine. The championed care models began to lose essence and we could realise that there should be in place a basic human model of care- models capable of more adequately addressing mental illness in primary care settings, taking into account complex medical, psychological, social, and cultural factors. These circumstances call for radical change in the paradigm and practices of mental health care, including improving standards of clinician training, developing new research methods, and re-envisioning current models of mental health care delivery.

Convergence and Integrated Approach

Convergence doesn't mean just more on print and less on ground. There should be a zeal to incorporate and implement it in the settings by orienting people responsible for it. More interprofessional education and training on mental health, both in terms of its genesis and interconnectivity with physical health must be put on priority. This training must be cemented into the early basic training of all health and social care staff as a matter of urgency; that all professional bodies

It is a known fact that individuals with mental health problems often have a wide range of needs that may be social and psychological implying those requiring the services have to access not just to doctors and nurses, but to psychologists, social workers, occupational therapists and other therapists

should make such training a requirement of ongoing professional development for their members; that staff across different disciplines should have regular opportunities to exchange expertise and information. "Better integration can help drive positive change. But in the end, this is not only about systems, it's about people at the helm. It's about inspiring local leaders, dedicated and energetic staff and individuals who deserve the most integrated, personalised and empowering care and support we can offer." (National Collaboration for Integrated Care and Support, UK)

Setting of a Multidisciplinary Team

The need to establish community-based alternatives to hospital treatment and to ensure the coordinated health and social care for the severely mentally ill establishes the "TEAM" as a central feature

of virtually all forms of modern mental health care. The multidisciplinary team is members of different professionals working together. A team is described as a group of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, performance goals, and approach, for which they hold themselves mutually accountable. Having a forum that represents various areas of expertise is becoming increasingly important as healthcare specialisation increases and awareness about health and mental health conditions grows. Some of the benefits of multidisciplinary team models include improved clients' health outcomes and functioning, enhanced quality of life, reduced costs, and utilization of medical services. Modern psychiatric practice calls for effective interprofessional collaboration between psychiatrists, nurses, psychologists, social workers, occupational therapists, speech & language therapists, special educators and other health service professional staff with proper consultation with patients and their significant others. It is essential to obtain the agreement of all professional staff and carers, expected to contribute to a patient's care programme that they are able to participate as planned." The trajectory of services would include; viewing patients in a socio-economic context, systematic view of service provision, Team-based services, long-term longitudinal treatment perspective, and commitment to social justice by addressing the needs of children and adolescents and to provision of services where those in need are located and in a fashion that is acceptable as well as accessible. A key

strength of multidisciplinary teams is that the combined expertise of a range of mental health professionals is used to deliver seamless, comprehensive care to the individual. Research supports that multidisciplinary collaboration is the most successful way to offer a comprehensive mental health service to people with mental health issues, particularly those with long-term mental health problems. We cannot oversee the reality of adopting a multi-faceted integrated approach in policy and practice, as the limitations of the intervention models that we have been using, have shadowed our results so far.

Paradigm Shift: Community Mental Health

Based on experience, there is broad international consensus for shifting from a single focus on treatment of psychological symptoms to "contextually appropriate, multi-layer systems of support that build on existing resources" (UNICEF). The community-based intervention approach is the prime model not only for comprehensively understanding the intricacies about the causality of mental health illness but also for paving the way for effective and integrated formulation and implementation mechanisms for mental health services, thereby addressing all the mental health disparities and asymmetries. Community-based intervention contributes to an increase in the relevance and outreach of the public health impact of mental health services. Such intervention also contributes to the reduction of mental distress-related social stigma and is also the strongest intervention in low economic conditions in communities. The approach ensures to create pathways to more effectively restore, strengthen, and mobilize family and community support and systems with the ultimate goal of supporting child and family wellbeing in humanitarian settings.

To achieve intended impact and outcome, the intervention strategies need to be focused by keeping in mind the diverse needs of individuals, diverse groups and communities.

Strengthening natural support systems and capitalising on community's own knowledge and capacity prove meaningful and sustainable in helping recover and restore well-being of people. This is a more sustaining and effective mechanism to meet new challenges and be hopeful about the future.

The customised approach can be directed to the different contexts by tailoring the processes and adopting a theory of change.

This can be done by recognising the local support systems, bringing in the pool of resources at disposal, supervising the community stakeholders and building capacities of the frontline functionaries and making them a part of the process.

This emphasises more for a strengthened mechanism of multi-layered approach at the policy level and incorporating a range of service delivery protocol through a comprehensive team at place.

Views expressed in the articles are the author's own responsibility. The content is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment and is strictly for educational/informative purposes only

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Elderly Mental Health: Looking At The Gaps In The Conversation

expected sadness or as an everyday ennui. More often than not, we assume ageing would bring an unnecessary crankiness. Considering that depression is the most common mental health disorder affecting the elderly, this narrative ought to take a sharp u-turn. Instead of viewing older people as the "other" and assuming that they are alien to us, adopting the approach of 'bridging and belonging'⁴ could do wonders in shaping the conversation and creating adequate mental health interventions.

'OTHERING' ON AGEIST GROUNDS EVERYONE IS SUSCEPTIBLE TO EXPERIENCE AGEISM IF THEY LIVE LONG ENOUGH

In sociology, we understand othering as a process of stigmatisation or objectification of another person or group in a negative light. This comparison or exclusion is usually made to justify one's own positive identity. Of course, no one is comfortable acknowledging their privilege. In this case, however, the impact is seen across ages. How? Negative societal views and stereotypical representations of old age affect people across the age continuum. The elderly end up feeling alienated, while the younger people internalise these ageist attitudes. The result? It hampers their self-perception as they themselves grow older.

Research suggests that ageism may even be the most pervasive of the "isms," surpassing sexism and racism. According to Ayalon and Tesch-Römer (2017), "Age changes with time and people are likely to change age group affiliation, with the passage of time. Hence, in contrast to the other two isms, everyone is susceptible to experience ageism if they live long enough." And it can take many shapes, such as prejudicial viewpoints, discriminatory practices, and institutional policies that perpetuate negative beliefs⁵.

Moreover, the current narrative expects older adults to fade into the background upon retiring. Why? They are no longer the members of the so-called

productive workforce. Such perceptions, policy neglect, and the consequent marginalisation could prove to be more unsettling in a country like India, which loves to turn the spotlight on its demographic dividend. This 'us versus them' thinking pervades the mental health landscape and policies and creates a seemingly irreparable rift.

THE INDIAN CONTEXT

India is home to 104 million older adults, who represent 8 per cent of the country's total population. The figure is expected to reach 20 per cent by the end of 2050.

In the traditional joint family structure, both young and old were absorbed with mutual harmony. But as Indian families undergo the process of nuclearisation with limited outlets to absorb the old parents, the feelings of loneliness, rejection, and social isolation also come to the fore. As a matter of fact, even in residential and community care institutions, senior citizens face disrespect and are habitually treated as a burden.

At the same time, being with the family does not guarantee emotional support or social security. The elderly can also face many forms of exploitation and abuse from their near and dear ones.

THE BIGGER PICTURE, THE WAY OUT

We need to adopt a multi-faceted approach to promote the general mental health and quality of life of the seniors. The presence of older people and the problems they encounter in their daily life have far-reaching impacts on the structure and functions of the economy and society. Also, "old people" are who we all will become, which further reinstates that elderly mental health is a psychosocial and structural problem. So, how can we address it?

Medical research is an integral part of the solution architecture, but we also need interventions that go beyond just psychopathology. Our respect for the elderly should translate into their representation across popu-

lar culture and the media. Sometimes, even the most well-intentioned advocates can further negative generalisations, and positive messaging is inherent to creating greater awareness around this issue.

TWEAKING THE EXISTING SYSTEMS

We need to come up with innovative solutions to combat elderly loneliness. For example, Age UK runs a unique Befriending Service that pairs older adults with a friend who visits them once or twice a week for a cup of tea, a recreational activity, or an outing. Alternatively, the local centres can arrange such friendly conversations over the phone or online. Of course, we will need to consider the fabric of Indian family systems and adapt the idea, but it is a good starting point nevertheless.

Another example of a successful social integration programme in the UK is the University of Third Age (U3A). It organizes learning and development courses specifically for older adults who want to pick up a new skill or simply share their knowledge with others. Technological advancement has made possible the creation of a nationwide network and discussion forums where they can exchange ideas about arts, crafts, gardening, literature, computers, or anything else of their interest. We could learn from these programmes and come up with initiatives that address the Indian context.

After all, this is stating the obvious: we need improved access to personal and psychological counselling services. Talking to trained therapists can provide a judgement-free environment and help us find ways of dealing with our emotional issues.

Our solutions should embody the values of compassion, company and care to make room for everyone's struggles.

After all, we all deserve to live with dignity and assert our right to holistic care, irrespective of our age and other biological or social labels.

The Mental Health Mirror

Custom diet, lifestyle changes key to optimising mental health: Study

Agencies

While a balanced diet is advisable to provide the body all the essential nutrients, customized diets and lifestyle changes could be key to optimising mental health, according to new research including faculty at Binghamton University, State University of New York.

"There is increasing evidence that diet plays a major role in improving mental health, but everyone is talking about a healthy diet," said Begdache, an assistant professor of health and wellness studies at Binghamton University and co-author of a new paper in *Nutrients*.

"We need to consider a spectrum of dietary and lifestyle changes based on different age groups and gender," she said. "There is not one healthy diet that will work for everyone. There is not one fix."

Begdache, who is also a regis-

tered dietitian, believes that mental health therapies need to consider the differences in the degree of brain maturity between young (18-29 years old) and mature (30 years or older) adults, as well as the brain morphology among men and women.

She and her research team conducted an online survey to examine food intake, dietary practices, exercise and other lifestyle factors in these four subpopulations. Over a five-year period (2014-19), more than 2,600 participants completed the questionnaire after responding to social media posts advertising the survey. The team collected data at different time points and seasons and found important dietary and lifestyle contributors to mental distress - defined as anxiety and depression - in each of the groups.

Key findings of this study are:-

Significant dietary and lifestyle approaches to improve mental well-



being among young women include daily breakfast consumption, moderate-to-high exercise frequency, low caffeine intake and abstinence from fast food.

Dietary and lifestyle approach to improve mental well-being among mature women include daily exercise and breakfast consumption, as well as a high intake of fruits with

limited caffeine ingestion.

To improve the mental well-being of young men, dietary and lifestyle approaches include frequent exercise, moderate dairy consumption, high meat intake, as well as low consumption of caffeine and abstinence from fast food.

Dietary approaches to improve mental well-being among mature

men include moderate intake of nuts.

Begdache and her team split the respondents into two age groups because human brain development continues into the late 20s. For young adults of both genders, quality of diet appears to have an impact on the developing brain.

"Young adults are still forming new connections between brain cells as well as building structures; therefore, they need more energy and nutrients to do that," Begdache said.

As a result, young adults who consume a poor-quality diet and experience nutritional deficiencies may suffer from a higher degree of mental distress.

Age is also the reason high caffeine consumption was associated with mental distress in both young men and young women.

"Caffeine is metabolized by the same enzyme that metabolizes the sex hormones testosterone and estrogen, and young adults have high

levels of these hormones," Begdache said. "When young men and women consume high levels of caffeine, it stays in their system for a long time and keeps stimulating the nervous system, which increases stress and eventually leads to anxiety."

The team also split respondents based on biological sex, since brain morphology and connectivity differ between men and women. Put simply, the male brain is "wired" to enable perception and coordination, whereas the female brain is built to support analysis and intuition. Begdache and her team believe these differences may influence nutritional needs.

"I have found it in my multiple studies so far, that men are less likely to be affected by diet than women are," said Begdache. "As long as they eat a slightly healthy diet they will have good mental well-being. It's only when they consume mostly fast food that we start seeing mental distress."

Government of Jammu and Kashmir

J&K Pollution Control Board Jammu

winter office: November-April

Parivash Bhawan Gladni Transport Nagar Narwal Jammu (J&K) 180006 Ph Fax 0191-2476925

Summer Office: May - Oct

Sheikh Ul Alam Campus Behind Govt Silk Factory Rajbagh Srinagar (J&K) 190008 Ph fax 0194-231165

Email: membersecretaryjkspcb@gmail.com

Public Notice

Sub.: Public Hearing for Minor Mineral (River Bed Mineral) Block-4 scheduled on 05.04.2021 for District Baramulla (J&K).

As per EIA Notification Rule 7(1) Section (III) issued by Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India vide S.O.1533 dated 14th September, 2006 (as amended till date), Public Hearing of the below mentioned mining block for minor mineral extraction is to be carried out.

The Public Hearing is being conducted by J&K Pollution Control Board as per requirement of EIA notification. The TOR (Terms of Reference) has been forwarded by JKEIAA vide no. SIA/JK/MIN/55381/2020 dated 06.08.2020 for the said Public Hearing along with draft EIA/EMP, which is scheduled to be conducted as per below mentioned detail:

Name of Agency	Area	Location of minor mineral area / Coordinates	Name of Village/ Tehsil / District	Location of public hearing Venue (Date and time)
Sh. Manorathvir Singh S/o Sh. Inderjeet Singh. H.No. 103, sunder Nagar, Dangu road, Pathankot, Punjab - 145001	2.77 Hect.	Block -4, having an area 2.77 ha. Shraie bridge to Abandoned bridge downstream nallah Ferozpora, Distt. Baramulla Coordinates:- A 34°4'4.99" - N 74°28'24.94" - E to H 34°4'4.29" - N 74°28'27.18" - E	Vill. : Shraie Tehsil : Tangmarg Distt. : Baramulla (J&K)	Date - 05.04.2021. Time: 10.30 pm to 2.00 pm At village : Shraie Tehsil : Tangmarg. Distt. : Baramulla (J&K)

The Executive Summary of EIA and draft EMP in English and Urdu of the above proposed mining block is available in the website of JKPCB i.e., www.jkspcb.nic.in as well as in the following offices:-

- The Commissioner / Secretary to Govt. Forests, Ecology & Environment Department, Civil Secretariat, Jammu.
- Director, Ministry of Environment & Forests, Government of India Northern, Regional Office, Chandigarh.
- Director, Ecology Environment & Remote Sensing / Member Secretary, JKEIAA Paryavaran Bhawan, Transport Nagar, Narwal, Jammu.
- Member Secretary, J&K Pollution Control Board, Transport Nagar, Narwal, Jammu.
- Deputy Commissioner, District Baramulla.
- Regional Director, Sheikh-ul-Alam Campus, Behind Govt. Silk Factory, Rajbagh Srinagar.
- Divisional Officer, Pollution Control Board, Baramulla.
- Divisional Officer, Department of Geology and Mining Department, Baramulla.

All concerned are hereby informed through this notice to send their suggestions / written objections or comments on or before 5th of April, 2021 addressed to Member Secretary, J&K Pollution Control Board, Parivash Bhawan, Gladni, Transport Nagar, Narwal, Jammu (09.30 AM to 05.30 PM) on any working day or by email membersecretaryjkspcb@gmail.com

The panel for conducting public hearing shall be as under:-
i) District Magistrate, Baramulla, J&K or his representatives not below the rank of Addl. District Magistrate.
ii) Regional Director, JK Pollution Control Board, Rajbagh Srinagar or his authorized representative.
iii) District Mineral Officer, Department of Geology and Mining Department, Baramulla.
iv) Divisional Officer, Pollution Control Board, Baramulla.

All interested persons/organizations/groups/stake-holders are invited to participate in the above mentioned Public Hearing on the aforementioned date, venue and time and give their suggestions, view/comments and objections, if any, to the authorities, conducting the Public Hearing.

Any person having interest in this public hearing can also have access to the Executive Summary of EIA from Office of District Pollution Control Board, Baramulla.

(B.M.Sharma) IFS
MemberSecretary JKPCB, Jammu

DIPK-NB-6126/20

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER R&B DIVISION SHOPIAN

Fax No/ Tell No: 01933-260226
Email. rnbdivisonshopian@gmail.com

CORRIGENDUM

It is notified for the information of all concerned that please read Unit

As
Hours
Instead of
No

In the BOQ (item No.14) for the work Viz "Repair/ Renovation of Fire and Emergency Station Building at Shopian. (Balance work) advertised vide this office NIT) No: 149/ 9756-66/SPN/RnB/e-Tendering/2020-21 Dated:- 02-03-2021

No: DDB/RnB/Spn/421-24
Dt: 03-03-2021

DIPK-14406/20

sd/-
Executive Engineer
R&B Division Shopian

UNION TERRITORY OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER GANDERBAL

(Convener District Registering Authority)

GANDERBAL

Email:ganderbalcmo@gmail.com Ph.No.2416244

CIRCULAR

It is impressed up on the owners of all Private Clinical Establishments/Diagnostic Centre's and Imaging Centre's of District Ganderbal Who have not registered their establishments under Clinical establishments(Registration and Regulation)Act 2010/PC&PNDR ACT and revised UT rules called S.O 167 & 168/or whose registration is expiring/expired or still having validity in place as per previous rules, shall apply in the office for Provisional/Permanent with in one month from the date of issue of this circular as per new rules. After expiry of the stipulated date/time any person found running his Unit without Registration shall be dealt strictly under relevant rules, which shall also lead to the ceasure of his unit/establishment.

No/CMO/Gbl/Reg/Clin/2021/ 3891-93
Dated: 04 .03.2021

Chief Medical Officer
(Convener District Registering Authority)
Ganderbal

DIPK-14438/20

Government of Jammu & Kashmir

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER MECHANICAL HOSPITAL AND CENTRAL HEATING DIVISION SRINAGAR

-----Telefax:- 0194-2496089, Email ID:- xenmhchdk@yahoo.in-----

Gist of e-tender

NIT No: MHCHD/TS /2020-21/309/e-tendering

Dated: - 02-03-2021.

For and on behalf of Lt. Governor of UT of Jammu & Kashmir, e-tenders are invited on item rate basis from Original Equipment Manufacturers or their Authorized dealers/ Registered/ Reputed firms having requisite experience for the below mentioned work:-

Name of Work	Est. Cost (Rs. in Lacs)	Cost of T/Doc. (In rupees)	Time of completion (in Days)	Position of AAA/funds	TS No:
Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of 50 KVA of D.G set along with, Cement Concrete Foundation at Govt. Sub District Hospital, Hazratbal, Srinagar.	5.65	500	10	AAA Vide No: 118-MCS of 2021, Dated: 01-03-2021	110 of 03/2021

- Downloading of Bids:- The NIT Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in from 03.03.2021 (15.00 hrs) and can be downloaded from 03.03.2021 (15.00 hrs).
- Uploading: The bidders shall deposit their bids in electronic format on the above web site from 03.03.2021 (15.00 hrs) to 12.03.2021 (14:00 hrs) in two (02) covers.
- Opening of Bids:- The bids received upto due date and time shall be opened on 12.03.2021 at 16.00 hrs or any date convenient to the Department.

Sd/-
Executive Engineer,
MHCHD, Srinagar

No: MHCHD/TS/10636-45
Date:02.03.2021

DIPK-14403/20

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR

J&K SERVICES SELECTION BOARD

Hema Complex, Sector -3, Channi Himmat, Jammu

www.jkssb.nic.in

NOTIFICATION

Subject: Interview of the candidates for the posts of Junior Scale Stenographer, Item No. 003, Advt No. 05 OF 2017, Item No. 059, Advt No. 02 OF 2015, Item No. 065, Advt No. 02 OF 2015, Item No. 252, Advt No. 02 OF 2014, Junior Assistant Item No. 351, Advt No. 03 OF 2016, Item No. 447 Advt No. 04 OF 2016 and Item No. 445 Advt No. 04 OF 2016.

In continuation to this office notification issued under endorsement notice no. SSB/Secy/Sel/2021/1193-99 dated 10-02-2021, it is hereby notified that the interview of the candidates for the post of Junior Scale Stenographer (Labour & Employment) State Cadre, Item No. 003, Advt No. 05 OF 2017, (Planning & Dev. Dept.) Division Cadre Kashmir, Item No. 059, Advt No. 02 OF 2015 and (Planning & Dev. Dept.) Division Cadre Jammu, Item No. 065, Advt No. 02 OF 2015, (Law Dept.) District Cadre Reasi, Item No. 252, Advt No. 02 OF 2014, Junior Assistant (Education/Health & Medical Education/ Revenue) District Cadre Kathua Item No. 351, Advt No. 03 OF 2016, (Health & Medical Education) Div Cadre Jammu Item No. 447 Advt No. 04 OF 2016 and (Health & Medical Education) Div Cadre Kashmir Item No. 445 Advt No. 04 OF 2016 respectively, shall be conducted at 10.00 am as per schedule indicating name/date/venue at Annexure "A" of this notice failing which no claim / objection in this regard shall be entertained. The other terms and condition will remain the same as envisaged in the above said quoted notification.

No. SSB/Secy/Sel/2021/COE/2601-07
Dated: -02.03.2021

DIPK-14364/20

Controller of Examinations,
J&K Services Selection Board,
Jammu

Annexure "A"										
Inter view S.No	Application F.No	Roll No	Post	Name	Father Name	DOB	Cat	ITEM /ADVT NO	Date of Interview	Venue Name
15	17000000093 02700000184	1400000467	Junior Scale Stenographer	RASMEET SINGH	GURMEET SINGH	25-05-1994	OM	003 05 OF 2017	10 March 2021	Divisional Office, JKSSB
4	1502065000089	1400000040	Junior Scale Stenographer	AMIT KUMAR	TARSEM LAL	11-09-1989	OSC	065 02 OF 2015	09 March 2021	Sehkari Bhawan, Panama Chowk, Jammu
3	1502252000012	1400000260	Junior Scale Stenographer	MANU PANDEY	BANSI LAL PANDEY	09-01-1989	OM	252 02 OF 2014	09 March 2021	
6	1603351000180	1400000306	Junior Assistant	MR ADEESH KUMAR	JAI DEV	02-06-1986	SC	351 03 OF 2016	08 March 2021	
7	1603351000165	1400000251	Junior Assistant	MANJEET SINGH	ROSHAN LAL	06-04-1992	SC	351 03 OF 2016	08 March 2021	
26	1604447000713	1400000663	Junior Assistant	VARUN SANOTRA	DURGA DASS	23-03-1994	OSC	447 04 OF 2016	08 March 2021	
18	1502059000001	1400000333	Junior Scale Stenographer	MUBASIR SHAFI	MOHD SHAFI SHIGAN	05-04-1993	OM	059 02 OF 2015	12 March 2021	Camp Office of J&K Services Selection Board, Zum Zum Building Rambagh Srinagar
11	1604445000239	1400000333	Junior Assistant	MUBASIR SHAFI	MOHD SHAFI SHIGAN	05-04-1993	OM	445 04 OF 2016	10 March 2021	

JK refreshes bond with Gujarat for tourism promotion

Dir Tourism invites travellers to Valley's scenic locations

SRINAGAR: To strengthen and refresh the age-old bond between J&K and Gujarat, the J&K Tourism Department held a roadshow at Ahmedabad as part of its promotional campaigns across the country to attract tourists.

Director Tourism Kashmir Dr. GN Itoo led the delegation of the representatives of local travel and hospitality sector for the promotion of the J&K's vast tourism potential and invited travellers to the union territory.

Leading tourism operators, travel agents, destination management companies besides regional and national media were invited at the promotional evening on Thursday who networked with the J&K's travel agents for business opportunities and promotion of the varied tourism products.

While appreciating the travel fraternity from Western coast of India for their continued promotion of Kashmir in travel packages, Director Tourism Kashmir said Gujarat has remained one of the major markets where a large number of travellers visit J&K.

In his detailed PowerPoint and video presentation, Dr Itoo highlighted the steps taken by the J&K government in mitigating the Covid19 threats and assuring safe journey for the travellers with the implementation of the set SOPs and guidelines.

He assured them that Kashmir is safe for tourism activities and hundreds of tourists are already enjoying their holidays at prime resorts like Gulmarg, Sri-



nagar and Pahalgam.

The Director Tourism also highlighted the huge participation of over 2000 athletes and players in the recently concluded 2nd Khelo India National Winter Games which was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually. He informed them that the JK and Union Government have

already taken up with the airlines the direct flights to Srinagar from major cities including Ahmedabad to facilitate easy connectivity between the regions.

Various short films on known and off-beat destinations were also screened on the occasion.

The J&K Tourism Department also

held a separate media interaction in which representatives from over 50 popular media houses attended and interacted with travel fraternity from JK.

During the interaction, the media was also briefed about various steps JK Administration has taken to ensure travellers' safety post Covid pandemic. They were

also informed of various promotion activities conducted and the upcoming events and festivals so that travellers can align their tour programmes as per the festivals. The travel show was organised in collaboration with J&K Pilgrim and Leisure Tour Operators Forum.

Additional Secretary Tourism Waseem Raja, CEO Tourism Dev. Authorities, Mansar Gurbinder Jeet Singh were also present on the occasion.

Chairman PILTOF Showkat Pakthoon besides various office bearers of the Forum who were present on the occasion had a fruitful interaction with their counterparts.

Ajay Modi - a leading travel agent from Gujarat - hailed the efforts of JK Tourism in opening the region for tourism activities.

He said J&K is one of the prime destinations of the country where travellers always return back with beautiful memories.

The department has already organised several shows at other major cities including, Kolkata, Pune, Puri, Jaipur, Amritsar. The department will also organise more road shows in Bhubaneswar, Bhopal and Bangalore on March 6 followed by Indore on March 8, Chennai on March 12, Raipur Varanasi & Lucknow on March 13, Nagpur on March 17, Mumbai & Hyderabad on March 19, Delhi on March 25, Cochin on March 26 and Mysore on March 27 besides it will also participate in major travel marts like OTM, SATTEE as part of its aggressive marketing campaign.

Sensex, Nifty Drop Over 1 Percent Amid Global Equity Retreat

PTI: Snapping its three-session winning run, benchmark BSE Sensex plunged by around 599 points to crack below the key 51,000-level on Thursday due to heavy selling in financial, energy and IT stocks amid a meltdown in global shares.

Asian and European markets tumbled as another rise in US bond yields fanned fears of higher inflation that may prompt central banks to raise interest rates.

Intra-day, the 30-share BSE barometer fell as much as 905 points before ending the session at 50,846.08, showing a decline of 598.57 points or 1.16 per cent. Of 30 Sensex shares, 25 closed with losses.

The broader NSE Nifty closed down by 164.85 points or 1.08 per cent at 15,080.75 with 38 of its constituents ending in the red zone.

On the Sensex chart, HDFC, L&T, SBI, Axis Bank, Bajaj FinServ and HDFC Bank were major laggards.

Mortgage major HDFC fell the most by 2.62 per cent. Bajaj Finserv dropped 2.49 per cent, SBI by 2.28 per cent, Axis Bank by 2.24 per cent, HDFC Bank by 2.1 per cent and ICICI Bank by 1.73 per cent.

Larsen & Toubro declined by 2.31 per cent, NTPC by 1.6 per cent, Bharti Airtel by 1.24 per cent and Reliance by 1.17 per cent. IT stocks Infosys, Tech Mahindra, HCL Tech, and TCS also saw losses of up to 1 per cent.

"Domestic equities traded lower today mainly on weak global cues...Financials and Metals indices were keg drags today, while FMCG, Pharma and IT indices were resilient. A sharp 6 bps rise in 10-Year USA treasury yield made investors jittery today," said Binod Modi, Head - Strategy at Reliance Securities.

Over the previous three sessions, the Sensex had ris-



en by 2,344.66 points or 4.77 per cent, while the Nifty had added 716.45 points or 4.93 per cent.

UltraTech Cement bucked the trend and rose by 4.07 per cent to become lead gainer among Sensex stocks. DrReddy rose by 1.63 per cent, Asian Paint by 0.65 per cent while Maruti and HUL also advanced.

BSE Midcap index also advanced 0.48 per cent while Smallcap index rose by 0.80 per cent. But largecap followed the benchmark to end lower by 0.46 per cent.

Among sectoral indices, BSE metal emerged as the top loser with 2.31 per cent drop. BSE finance declined 1.46 per cent and bank by 1.45 per cent.

Of 19 sectoral indices, 11 ended in the red. Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services said, "Domestic markets along with its global peers mirrored the wounded trend of the US market. The surge in US bond yields added selling pressure in technology stocks, forced Wall Street to close lower."

"Blue-chips were much affected by the weak global cues, but Mid & Small caps with its increased investor

confidence retained its positive momentum".

S Ranganathan, Head of Research at LKP Securities commented that markets traded weak on muted global cues despite heightened investor interest in PSU stocks on hopes of privatisation and asset monetisation.

Modi opined that the concerns over rising bond yields are short lived and any immediate correction in the market will only create an opportunity for investors to buy quality stocks at reasonable valuations.

Foreign investors had bought equities worth Rs 2,088.70 crore on a net basis in Indian capital markets on Wednesday, according to exchange data.

Among Asian markets, Japan's Nikkei 225 dropped 2.1 per cent and the Hang Seng in Hong Kong fell 2.2 per cent. The Shanghai Composite index dropped 2.1 per cent.

On the forex market front, the rupee ended 11 paise lower at 72.83 against the US dollar.

Meanwhile, global crude oil benchmark Brent was trading 1.16 per cent higher at USD 64.73 per barrel.

Petrol Price Can Come Down to Rs 75 if Brought Under GST, But There's Lack of Political Will: SBI Economists



MUMBAI: Petrol price can go down to Rs 75 a litre across the country if brought under the ambit of the Goods and Services Tax (GST), but there is a lack of political will, which is keeping Indian oil product prices at one of the highest in the world, economists at SBI said on Thursday. Diesel will come at Rs 68 a litre and the revenue loss for the Centre and states will be only Rs 1 lakh crore or 0.4 per cent of GDP, according to the calculation by the economists made under the assumption of global crude prices at USD 60 a barrel and exchange rate at Rs 73 per dollar.

At present, every state has its own way of taxing fuels, while the Centre also collects its own duties and cess. Petrol prices have touched Rs 100 per litre in some pockets of the country and concerns are being expressed about the high taxation which is making the fuels dearer. The SBI economists said bringing petrol and diesel under the goods and services tax is an unfinished

agenda of the GST framework and getting the prices under the new indirect taxes framework can help.

"Centre and states are loathe to bring crude oil products under the GST regime as sales tax/VAT (value added tax) on petroleum products is a major source of own tax revenue for them. Thus, there is lack of political will to bring crude under the ambit of GST," they said. At present, states choose to levy a combination of ad valorem tax, cess, extra VAT/surcharge based on their needs and these taxes are imposed after taking into account the crude price, the transportation charge, the dealer commission and the flat excise duty imposed by the Centre, they explained.

Assuming for the crude prices and dollar rate, transportation charges at Rs 7.25 for diesel and Rs 3.82 for petrol, dealer commission of Rs 2.53 for diesel and Rs 3.67 for petrol, cess of Rs 30 for petrol and Rs 20 for diesel which will be divided equally between the Centre and

states, and GST rate at 28 per cent, the economists came at the final price estimates. A growth in the consumption diesel going up 15 per cent and petrol by 10 per cent has been used to assess the Rs 1 lakh crore fiscal impact of getting petroleum prices under GST, it said.

Petrol, Diesel Prices Remain Unchanged for Over a Week Amid Stable Global Oil Rates

An increase of USD 1 in the crude oil prices will push up the petrol price by around 50 paise and diesel prices by around Rs 1.50, and bring down the overall deviation by around Rs 1,500 crore under the baseline scenario, it said. States, which have the highest share of tax revenues at present, will be the biggest losers if the system shifts to GST, it said, quickly adding that such a move will help consumers pay up to Rs 30 less.

Interestingly, the simulation exercise suggests that when crude oil price declines by USD 10 per barrel, Centre and states could save close to

Rs 18,000 crore, if they keep the petrol prices at baseline prices without passing the benefit to consumers, which is higher than the savings of Rs 9,000 crore when the crude prices go up by a same measure. "We thus recommend the government build up an oil price stabilisation fund which can be used in bad times for compensating revenue loss by cross subsidising fund saved from good times, without hurting the consumer," it said.

For the LPG cylinders, the economists proposed an increased and graded subsidy may be provided to poor consumers which can be tapered off over a period of, say, 5-years. Meanwhile, the note said the latest revenue and expenditure numbers could lead to lowering of fiscal deficit to 8.7 per cent in FY21, down from 9.5 per cent in the revised budget estimates. It is highly likely that the Government might cancel its Rs 49,000 crore borrowing planned in the last fortnight of March, they said.

BJP's 'Ill-Considered Demonetisation Decision' Has Resulted In High Unemployment: Singh

PTI: Lashing out at the Centre, former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, said India's unemployment rate has spiked due to the "ill-considered demonetisation decision" taken by the BJP-led government in 2016. The senior Congress leader further added that the informal sector is in "shambles".

"Unemployment is high and the informal sector is in shambles, a crisis precipitated by the ill-considered demonetisation decision taken in 2016", Singh said.

He made the comments during the inauguration of a development summit organised by the Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Development Studies, a Kerala-based economic think tank aligned to the Congress ideology.

Singh also criticised the central government for not holding regular consultations with the states adding that "temporary measures" taken by the BJP and the Reserve Bank of India "to paper over the credit problem cannot solve the looming

credit crisis that could affect the small and medium sectors".

The summit was organised to launch a Vision Document, a framework of ideas for development of Kerala well in advance of the state elections.

Singh said in Kerala and in many other states, public finances are in disarray with states having to resort to excessive borrowing, which creates an intolerable burden on future budgets.

"Federalism and regular consultation with states, which was the cornerstone of India's economic and political philosophy as enshrined in the Constitution, no longer finds favour with the present Central government," he said.

Singh also said while Kerala's social standards are high, there are other sectors that need strong attention in the future.

"There are many roadblocks ahead that the state has to overcome. The global downturn of the last two or three years, ag-



gravated by the pandemic, has made the global interface of Kerala more fragile.

"While the increased use of digital modes of work may keep the IT sector afloat, tourism has been hit badly and the rate at which the pandemic is galloping in Kerala poses challenges for this industry", Singh said.

Noting that the focus on health and education has enabled Kerala to take advantage of job opportunities elsewhere in the country and in all parts of the world, Singh said this has led to a growing stream of remittances from abroad which created a booming real estate sector and sharp growth of the services sector, led by tourism and information technology.

"In the midst of all the gloom, I see the UDF's steadfast adherence to planned growth with a clear sense of direction and concern for the common man a beacon of hope, not only for Kerala, but for the whole country", he said.

School Education Dept Announces Four Tier Covid Monitoring Mechanism

'Teams To Ensure Frequent Cleaning Of Schools, Spraying Of Disinfectants'

Agencies

SRINAGAR: The School Education Department on Thursday constituted a four-tier COVID-19 monitoring team to make certain observance of prescribed Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) in schools.

Among the four-tier COVID-19 monitoring team, Joint Director Central and north have been asked to keep a tab on Srinagar and Ganderbal districts.

For the Anantnag, Kulgam, Shopian and Pulwama districts, JD south have been designated to monitor the situation, JD Samagra Shiksha have been asked to monitor the Kupwara, Bandipora and

Baramulla districts and PO have been directed to monitor the adherence of COVID-19 SOPs in Budgam district.

Besides the four-tier monitoring team, the School Education Department in an order has said that District Institute of Educational Trainings (DIETs) along with the DRGs shall also formulate monitoring teams.

The government has directed the four-tier monitoring team to ensure frequent cleanliness and disinfection of school infrastructure and equipment, proper waste management, wearing of mask and maintenance of hand hygiene by students and teachers. It also said that the concerned

officials have been asked to ensure maintaining of physical distance of 2 meter by students and teachers at all places in the school (Inside the classroom, in the ground, in corridors, at stairs, entry and exit points, during mid day meals, presence of hand washing stations, separate toilet facilities soaps and sanitizers in the school.

The government also said that there should be ban of congregations in schools that is discouragement of sharing of student's belongings, meals etcetera and sanitization of school transport and maintain physical distance and other COVID-19 SOPs during commuting of students and ensuring mental wellbeing of students—(KNO)

PM To Address Conference Of Top Military Leadership

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address a conference of the country's top military leadership in Gujarat's Kevadia on Saturday, which will also see the participation of jawans and junior commissioned officers (JCOs) for the first time, according to an official statement on Thursday.

The Combined Commanders' Conference, a premier brainstorming event of the military officials, is taking place after three years in Kevadia from Thursday to Saturday, the Department of Military Affairs (DMA) said in a statement.

It said that in a major departure from the past, the scope of this year's conference has been expanded to make it a "multi-layered, interactive, informal and informed event with the added participation of about 30 officers and soldiers of various ranks from the three services."



Jawans and JCOs will be attending specific sessions related to human resource issues during the conference.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, the military commanders, and a team of secretary-level officers from the Ministry of Defence will join deliberations from Friday onward, the DMA noted.

"The valedictory session on the third and final day will be chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi with National Security Advisor Ajit Doval also in attendance,"

the DMA mentioned.

Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat, Army Chief General MM Naravane, Air Chief Marshal R K S Bhaduria, Navy Chief Admiral Karambir Singh will attend the conference.

The DMA said the combined apex level military leadership of the country will review "the security situation and defence preparedness of the armed forces" and deliberate on "pertinent organisational issues for evolving a joint military vision for the future" during the conference.

Since 2014, this conference has been taking place in different locations of the country other than Delhi.

The conference was held on board INS Vikramaditya in 2015 and at the Indian Military Academy in Dehradun in 2017.

The last edition of the conference was held in 2018 over a period of two days at the Air Force Station in Jodhpur.

The top military meet is

taking place in Kevadia at a time when India and China are engaged in talks on disengagement of troops in eastern Ladakh.

A border standoff between the Indian and Chinese militaries erupted on May 5 last year following a violent clash in the Pangong lake area and both sides gradually enhanced their deployment by rushing in tens of thousands of soldiers as well as heavy weaponry even as military and diplomatic-level talks continued between the two neighbours.

Last month, armies of the two countries had concluded withdrawal of troops and weapons from north and south banks of Pangong Tso in the high-altitude region.

At the subsequent 10th round of the senior commanders' meeting, India is learnt to have insisted on a faster disengagement process in areas such as Hot Springs, Gogra and Depsang to defuse tension in the region. (PTI)

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Srinagar Least Liveable

initiatives for urban development.

A total of 32.2 lakh people residing across 111 cities participated in a 'Citizen Perception Survey' holding a weightage of 30 per cent.

"These cities have emerged as models of development who will inspire others to perform better. Further, their peers will also benefit from emulating their best practices," Puri said.

In the 2018 'Ease of Living Index', Pune was ranked the most liveable city in the country. Nav Mumbai and Greater Mumbai, which held the second and the third position in 2018, have slipped to the sixth and the 10th rank respectively in the 2020 edition of the East of Living Index.

Tirupati was at the fourth position, while Chandigarh had been ranked fifth in 2018, but in the 2020 'Ease of Living Index', Tirupati and Chandigarh have slipped to the 46th and the 29th position respectively.

Indore topped the 'Municipal Performance Index', involving 51 municipal corporations in the million-plus population category, while Guwahati figured at the bottom.

In this category, Surat came second, followed by Bhopal, Pimpri Chinchawad, Pune, Ahmedabad, Raipur, Greater Mumbai, Visakhapatnam and Vadodara.

New Delhi Municipal Council topped the 'Municipal Performance Index 2020' in the 'less than million' population category. It is followed by Tirupati, Gandhinagar, Karnal, Salem, Tiruppur, Bilaspur, Udaipur, Jhansi and Tirunelveli. Shillong is at the bottom of this list featuring 60 municipal corporations.

The Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry said that the 'Municipal Performance Index' is an effort to assess and analyse the performance of Indian municipalities based on their defined set of functions.

Puri said the central government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has unleashed the most comprehensive effort to transform the urban landscape.

The 'Municipal Performance Index' will strengthen democracy and participatory governance by allowing citizens, civil society and other key stakeholders to gain a deeper understanding of the functioning of their local government bodies, and hold the officials accountable, the minister added.

Delimitation Panel

(NC) that has three representatives in the panel.

Before Parliament passed the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act in August 2019, the effective strength of the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly was 87, including four seats from Ladakh, which is now a separate Union Territory without a legislature. The strength of the realigned Jammu and Kashmir Assembly is 107 now with 24 seats to continue to remain vacant as those fall in Pakistan-controlled Kashmir (PcK).

The NC members, while disassociating themselves with the Delimitation Commission, had said the party has challenged the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act in the Supreme Court and the matter is pending.

In a letter to the chairperson of the commission, the NC MPs, including former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister and veteran politician Farooq Abdullah, had said, "In our view, the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019 is palpably unconstitutional and has been enacted in disregard and violation of the mandate and the spirit of the Constitution of India and therefore, not to be acted upon."

"We have thrown a challenge to the constitutional validity of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019 exercise of powers whereunder the meeting in question is proposed to be held," the letter, also signed by two other MPs -- Hasnain Masoodi and Muhammad Akbar Lone -- had said.

According to section 60 of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act 2019, "...the number of seats in the Legislative Assembly of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir shall be increased from 107 to 114...."

With 24 seats in PcK, the effective strength will go up from 83 to 90.

The elections to the Assembly of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir will be held only after the process of delimitation is completed.

US Welcomes

have at the other. It does not come at the expense of the relationship we have with the other," Price said.

"When it comes to India, we have a global comprehensive strategic partnership, and we've talked about that. When it comes to

Pakistan, I addressed this the other week: We have important shared interests in the region. And we will continue to work closely with the Pakistani authorities on those shared interests," he said in response to a question.

The US continues to support direct dialogue between India and Pakistan on Kashmir and other issues of concern, Price said. "Of course, we've continued to call for a reduction of tensions along the Line of Control (LoC), returning to that 2003 ceasefire," he said.

MeT Predicts

famous resort of Pahalgam against 0.5 degree Celsius on the earlier night.

Kokernag, also in south Kashmir, recorded a low of 3.4 degree Celsius against 2.5 degree Celsius on the previous night.

The minimum temperature settled at 3.4 degree Celsius in Kupwara against 0.2 degree Celsius on the previous night, the official said.

Gulmarg, the world famous skiing resort, recorded a minimum temperature of minus 1.0 degree Celsius against minus 2.4 degree Celsius on the previous night.

"Fairly widespread" rains have been predicted for March 6 while widespread rains (76-100% predictability) have been forecast on March 7.

The weatherman has also issued "yellow warning" for "isolated heavy rain/snow/thunder/lightning/hail" on March 7 and said that the weather system may impact surface traffic due to landslides on Jammu-Srinagar highway, the only surface link connecting Kashmir Valley with the outside world.

"There is possibility of light to moderate rain with thunder and lightning over plains and light to moderate snow over higher reaches during late night of 6th March and 7th March and thereafter decrease in intensity and distribution," the Met official said.

Possibility of heavy snow over isolated places particularly over higher reaches can't be ruled out during March 7, the officials said.

He said that the probable impacts include disruption of surface transport over higher reaches, possibility of landslides and shooting stones over Jammu-Srinagar Highway, possibility of hailstorm at isolated places over plains of Jammu Division and fall in maximum temperature by 4-8 degree Celsius.

There are four types colour codes signifying the level of caution: green which means no action, yellow—situation to be watched), amber—government agencies need to be prepared for severe weather and red—action needed by the agencies. (GNS)

LG Takes Note

He also directed for initiating an inquiry in the erring matters and submit the report at the earliest," he said.

In order to speed up the works on different power projects, Sinha, as per the official spokesperson directed the concerned to come up with a policy framework for procurement of spares and inventory, and directed them to conduct an auction of the scrap and discarded items.

The official spokesperson said that a detailed PowerPoint presentation was given on "Updated status & Next steps" and discussion was also held for immediate focus on Jammu division for ensuring adequate supply in the coming summers.

He said that the LG asked the Power Development Department to complete the digitization work in the power sector on priority for its smooth functioning.

"The meeting also discussed the identified immediate or short-term focus areas with respect to the augmentation of existing 220kv level Grid Stations, 132kv level Grid Stations, augmentation of transfer capacity of 220kv and 132kv transmission lines, besides completion of transmission lines long delayed on account of legal, arbitration and ROW issues," he said.

As per the official spokesperson, the LG was also informed that several site visits were carried out by the officers to get first-hand review of the projects taken up to revamp power sector in the region.

"The meeting discussed the creation of new Sub-stations, progress on up-gradation of old and obsolete Distribution Infrastructure, Spares & Inventory and Centrally Sponsored Projects like Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana, (DDUGY), PMDP, RAPDRP, RGGVY, IPDS, and other schemes undertaken in PDD sector," he said.

The meeting was also informed about the status of restructuring and unbundling of JKPD, JKSPDCL & JKSPCL besides, the appointment of Administrative Secretary & Director (Finance) on the boards of JKPTCL,

KPDCL, JPDCL; appointment of MD for the new corporation, etc.," he added.

The meeting was attended by BVR Subrahmanyam, Chief Secretary; Arun Kumar Mehta, Financial Commissioner, Finance Department; Rohit Kansal, Principal Secretary, Power Development Department; Dr. R.P. Singh, Ex. CMD, PGCIL; chairmen of KPDCL, JKPTCL, JPDCL, and other experts of power sector.

LoC Truce

residents are happy about the call taken by the director-general of military operations of both the countries.

The village suffered the brunt of the firing by the Pakistani side on November 13 last year when six civilians were killed and several others injured. Many residential houses suffered the damage.

Karamat Hussain, 83, lost his 45-year-old son Irshad Ahmad that day. Father of six children - four girls and two boys - Ahmad had gone to a government store to get ration for the family. "He was hit by a shell and he died on the spot," Hussain said.

Often in the line of fire of the aggression of the two countries, the villagers expressed hope the ceasefire is followed in letter and spirit without any violations.

"We celebrated (the news). It is like awakening from a deep slumber. We were happy to know there is going to be a ceasefire. We have been sleeping with peace since then and we hope it continues and there is no violation," Hussain, who has himself been injured in the firing, said.

Syed Muneer, 43, whose brother, Nader Hussain, 45, lost both his legs in the shelling that day, said the family has been struggling to cope up with the incident.

"My brother was in hospital for a long time. There was no support from the government, except for the Rs 40,000 from the Red Cross fund. He survived, but he cannot support his family," he said.

Muneer said the ceasefire has brought hopes to the people and the decision has come as a sigh of relief.

"We can live a normal life. Our children can go to school without any fear. We feel at ease and at least there is no fear (of the shelling) right now. We want peace and calm. We want both the countries to talk to each other to resolve the issues," he said.

Qazi Mohammad Sheikh, a local socio-political worker, also welcomed the agreement, saying it was a good step.

"We hope it continues. Our situation is very sensitive. People want peace, we do not want war. We want both the countries to talk about peace, we request them to maintain peace. We have suffered always and we want peace now. We want to live our life normally and peacefully," he said.

While the locals appreciated the role of the Army, they lamented the lackadaisical approach of the government.

Apart from the "little" help by the government to the victims of the ceasefire violations, the biggest issue, and the demand, in the villages near the LoC is the construction of bunkers. The villagers said the government has constructed only one bunker to cater to the population of about 25,000 people.

"For the last so many years, we have been demanding that bunkers be constructed, be it individual bunkers or community bunkers. But, the demands have not been met. The population of about a dozen villages near the LoC is around 20-25,000. We only have one bunker," Sheikh said.

The bunker near a government-run school, which has been constructed by the Rural Development Department and is primarily meant for schoolchildren, is a 24 by 18 feet structure with a single ventilation shaft.

The locals alleged that the government apathy can be judged from the fact that the contractor has not been paid his dues yet.

"This bunker is meant for a population of about 25,000. How can only one bunker cater to all of us? The government should think about it," Sheikh said.

One of the senior Army officers in the area said while the construction of bunkers was the responsibility of the government, the Army was ready for any support.

He also said the issue would be taken up at the appropriate level.

No Traffic

on the road, authorities said on Thursday. In a communiqué, Traffic Police said that no traffic shall be allowed from either direction on the thoroughfare between Nashri and Jawahar Tunnel in view of the weekly maintenance and

repairing on the road.

Pertinently, the Mughal Road and Srinagar-Sonmarg-Gumri road continue to remain closed due to snow accumulation and adverse road condition.

Traumatic Kashmir's

and 19 per cent showed symptoms of probable PTSD—post-trauma stress disorder.

Those numbers are more or less likely to have increased significantly over the last five years.

A study conducted in 2005-06 earlier revealed that the prevalence of depression among Kashmiris was 55.72 per cent, and this was much higher in rural areas (84.73 per cent) compared to urban areas (15.26 per cent). There was a higher prevalence of depression among females (93.10 per cent) than males (6.8 per cent).

As distressing as they are on their own, the numbers were not the primary subject of investigation.

A perusal of publically accessible hospital records enabled us to determine that lack of monetary support for such patients from governmental and non-governmental establishments is one of the most pressing issues.

Barring a few, most private insurance providers don't have much to offer when it comes to mental health and the incurred or to-be-incurred costs. It is the patient or their caretakers who primarily bear the expenses of therapeutic care or medicines.

On average, a consultation session with a professional psychiatrist/psychologist costs somewhere around three thousand rupees an hour. Multiply that four times a month, and that comes up to twelve thousand a month. Add to this the cost of medicines that the patient has to take, and it comes up to around twenty thousand rupees.

That is an amount that the mostly middle-class population of the Kashmir division would certainly feel making a dent in their monthly expenditure plans.

These findings further substantiate the issue of significantly high (60 per cent) out-of-pocket expenditure incurred by Kashmiris on health.

HDFC Ergo is one of the few insurance providers that offer insurance cover on the costs incurred while dealing with some mental illnesses, albeit with its conditions and caveats.

There is a "maturity period" of three years, which means that even after getting the insurance cover, the beneficiary will have to wait for as many as three years before he can benefit from the insurance cover that he has nonetheless been paying for the past three years.

Furthermore, pre-existing mental health conditions are not covered by the insurance provider. That leaves a lot to wish for even after paying hefty premium amounts.

Interestingly, mental illnesses did not come under the insurance ambit till 7 April 2017, when the Mental Healthcare Act (2017) was passed. It came into force on 7 July 2018, with Section 21(4) of the Act stating that "every insurer shall make provision for medical insurance for treatment of mental illness on the same basis as is available for the treatment of physical illness".

Subsequently, in August 2018, the Insurance Regulatory Authority of India (IRDAI) directed all insurers to comply with the Act's provisions. Very few have complied so far.

All this shows the irrefutable need for comprehensive insurance policies covering mental illness and disorders.

We tried to delve deeper into the issue and spoke to one of the managers working with a national insurance provider: "It all comes down to what the company gains when it gets involved in such transactions with a customer. Covering any mental illnesses isn't a lucrative business model for an insurance provider since, as we have noticed lately, there are too many claimants for the same. The Covid-19 pandemic and the ensuing restrictions on life as we knew it has brought to fore the real damage that people have incurred or will incur, psychologically speaking."

Such revelations were almost the same throughout the industry. Another person working with yet another insurance provider had to say the same about the insurance providers: "When the company provides you with an insurance cover, they tend to look for what profits they get from any such policy. There aren't many claimants that don't suit any insurance provider's for-profit business model for 'claim ratios'. Every insurance provider wants to earn more than they have to shell out when an individual claims the benefits. The lack of knowledge about such products is also a significant factor of insurance providers

not wanting to offer such services since there isn't much demand if we talk about Jammu and Kashmir's state (union territory). The blame lies on both sides; the public doesn't want to pay considerable premium amounts or isn't just aware of the available options. On the other hand, the insurance companies also aren't putting in much efforts to educate the common masses about such products of theirs."

To understand the effects of such significant expenses on the already distressed individuals' psyches, we spoke to a practising psychologist, Dr Seema Malik.

"This is quite a tricky situation when it comes to people dealing with depression or anxiety or any such kind of mental problems," she said.

"The fundamental problem itself is the disease, and when we add the extreme pressure brought on by the incurred expenses, it creates a high-pressure situation for the affected individual. I have noticed significant erosion of the progress an individual had already made just because they have no way to manage the expenses thus incurred."

When asked what the solution could be, she said, "First of all, we need to identify the erratic areas that are causing the issues to those who are afflicted. One of the major problems is the disparities in income and expenditure. Insurance providers need to bring mental health under the ambit of health insurance, as directed by our country's Supreme Court. And then, there also needs to be the recognition of mental health and associated problems deserve. We still treat these issues as taboo. One can barely talk about these issues to their friends, family or peers. We need to get rid of that attitude. Also, there need to be mass-awareness campaigns all over the valley about the illness and the economic remedies (insurance cover). I believe adopting these few steps could help those among us who suffer from such problems."

However, Manan is yet to see the light at the end of the tunnel. After getting the insurance, he was hoping that at the least, it will take care of his medical expenses. "That turned out to be a false sense of hope," he lamented. "I have a large and dependent family to look after. My father passed away seven years back, and since then, it has been my job to bring the bread home. Even though I don't have any physical disability, I still feel like a cripple who barely manages to feed his family."

J&K Logs 79 New

did not report any fresh cases, eight other districts had cases in single digits.

The number of active was 883 in the union territory, while 1,23,930 patients have recovered so far, the officials said.

The death toll in the union territory due to the pandemic has reached 1,959 as one fresh death was reported from the Kashmir Valley in the union territory in the past 24 hours, they added. (PTI)

Shab-i-Meraj

order issued by the government on Thursday. The order has also been sent to all the relevant departments for compliance.

LG Takes First Job

vaccine at the Government Medical College and Hospital (GMCH), Jammu.

According to an official spokesperson, Sinha also appealed to people not to lower their guard and follow all COVID related SOPs even after getting vaccinated.

"The LG remarked that the world has acknowledged the ingenuity of the Indian scientists. He also expressed his gratitude to all frontline workers, the doctors, and medical personnel, who lead a formidable fight against COVID-19," he added.

Soldier Hangs

said, adding that the reason behind his taking the extreme step was not immediately known.

On Wednesday, a 24-year-old Army man shot himself dead in Rajouri district and an Army officer of the rank of a lieutenant colonel committed suicide at an Army depot in the Khonmoh area here.

Police Busts

providing them jobs in different government departments.

"Three of the accused have been arrested while other persons are still at large", the official said adding that "Investigations into the case is going on and arrests are expected to be made soon." (GNS)

Man United, Leicester Stumble To Draws In Premier League

LONDON: As a gruelling and intense Premier League season heads toward its conclusion, Manchester United and Leicester are stumbling their way toward Champions League qualification.

United has completely lost its attacking spark, with a 0-0 draw at Crystal Palace on Wednesday at a fog-shrouded Selhurst Park making it three straight goalless stalemates in all competitions for Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's team.

Leicester also had to make do with a point, drawing 1-1 at Burnley, though manager Brendan Rodgers wasn't too unhappy considering his growing injury list.

United and Leicester remain second and third, respectively, but have won just five of their last 16 league games combined.

They are giving their top-four rivals a big opportunity to reel them in, with West Ham, Chelsea, Liverpool and Everton all within eight points of United and having games in hand.

Real Kashmir Face Undeclared Churchill Brothers In I-League Phase 2 Today

Press Trust of India

KOLKATA: Table-toppers Churchill Brothers' undefeated run will be on line when they face another title-contender Real Kashmir in the second phase of the I-League, here on Friday.

The Fernando Varela-coached team has been a juggernaut this season with six wins and four draws.

However, the Red Machines will face a litmus test in the form of Real Kashmir FC when the two sides clash at the Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan here.

The Red Machines have garnered 22 points from 10 matches, while Real Kashmir follow closely behind with 17 out of 10.

A win for either side could have long-term implications on the season of both the contestants.

Although their previous meeting ended in a goalless stalemate, the form that Clay-



vin Zuniga, Luka Majcen, Mason Robertson, and Lukman Adefemi are in, it could be goals galore come Friday.

Churchill Brothers managed to thwart off a late scare by Gokulam Kerala FC in their last match while trotting off to a comfortable win and Fernando Varela's side would aim to keep the winning momentum going.

"We are aware of the counter-attacking threat that Real

Kashmir possesses. We are well prepared and are looking forward to the fixture. We will be taking one game at a time and are not thinking about the future at this moment in time," Varela said at the pre-match press conference.

Midfielder Quan Gomes said, "The morale of the team is very high. We are working very hard and the next match is very important for us. We are prepared for the next match

and grabbing 3 points against Real Kashmir is our focus."

Real Kashmir, on the other hand, had suffered a 0-2 loss to Mohammedan SC in their last match. With 10-man Mohammedan pulling off a miracle, Real Kashmir looked like a withered form of themselves.

However, David Robertson's side will aim to recuperate and get back to winning ways against the Red Machines.

"It is going to be a tough game tomorrow. It is the first game of the second stage and we will love to start with a win. We were a little flat last time around and we just need to get back on track," head coach David Robertson said.

Defender Dharmaraj Ravanan said, "We have our focus set on the next match against Churchill. We are motivated and well prepared. The defeat in our previous match will not affect us heading into the next match."

The match kicks off at 2 PM.

IND VS ENG 4th Test

India Lose Shubhman Gill After Bowling England Out For 205 On Day 1

Press Trust of India

AHMEDABAD: India lost opener Shubhman Gill early after bundling out England for 205 on the opening day of the fourth and final Test here on Thursday.

England opted to bat on a track that had bounce and turn, though not vicious, and managed to cross the 200-run mark only for the second time in this series.

It was a much better show by the visitors though they could have done better had the batsmen applied themselves more.

India were 24 for one at stumps with a watchful Rohit Sharma (8) and ever-steady Cheteshwar Pujara (15) at the crease. Gill could not even open his account, losing his wicket to James Anderson in the third ball of the innings.

India spinners, led by Axar Patel (4/68), yet again troubled the visiting batsmen even as all-rounder Ben Stokes (55) resisted the attack quite

well before being trapped in front by Washington Sundar.

Once he got his eye in, Stokes even employed the risky reverse sweep.

Dan Lawrence, coming out at number seven, also batted well, helping England get close to the 200-run mark with his 46-run knock.

Had Lawrence shown a bit more patience, it would have served England's purpose even more.

For the hosts, spinners Axar Patel (4/68) and Ravichandran Ashwin (3/47) shared seven wickets between them, while pacer Mohammed Siraj (2/45) also accounted for two batsmen.

India are leading the series 2-1 and need just a draw to qualify for the World Test Championship final against New Zealand to be held in June.

Brief Scores: England 1st Innings: 205 all out in 75.5 overs (Ben Stokes 55, Dan Lawrence 46; Axar Patel 4/68, Ravichandran Ashwin 2/47, Mohammed Siraj 2/45).

'Ben Stokes Was Swearing At Me, Told Virat Bhai To Handle It,' Mohammed Siraj On 4th Test Faceoff

Press Trust of India

AHMEDABAD: India pacer Mohammad Siraj on Thursday said England all-rounder Ben Stokes swore at him on the opening day of the fourth and final Test in Ahmedabad, an incident "handled well" by skipper Virat Kohli during an on-field showdown with the visiting player.

Kohli was seen having an animated discussion with Stokes after the all-rounder allegedly swore at Siraj. Umpire Nitin Menon had to intervene for play to resume after England were reeling at 32 for three.

"He was swearing at me, so Virat bhai intervened and handled that well. These things happen at ground," Siraj said at the post-match press conference.

Stokes, on his part, played down the incident.

"Pretty animated was that (the conversation)...look at it from a different way, you know, two-three guys who care about what they are doing, care about representing



and played against each other and you know, why would they not be competitive?" he asked.

"So we are not going to back down to anyone...for me that is what it was competitive guys trying to get over each other," he added.

England were eventually bowled out for 205 with India 24 for one at stumps in response.

Playing his second game of the series, Siraj picked up two

wickets in England's innings. Siraj was also at the centre of the controversy during the Test series in Australia where he was racially abused by a section of the crowd.

Cricket Australia had apologised for that incident and even evicted some spectators from the ground during the Sydney Test.

Siraj and Kohli are also teammates in the IPL franchise Royal Challengers Bangalore.

Pakistan Super League Postponed With Immediate Effect Due To COVID-19 Outbreak

Press Trust of India

KARACHI: The ongoing Pakistan Super League was on Thursday postponed with immediate effect after three more cricketers tested positive for COVID-19, taking the total number of cases in the T20 event to seven.

"Following a meeting with the team owners and considering the health and wellbeing of all participants is paramount, the Pakistan Cricket Board has decided to postpone the HBL Pakistan Super League 6 with immediate effect," the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said in a statement.

"The decision was made after seven cases were reported in the competition, which had started on 20 February."

The domestic T20 tournament has been rocked by a series of COVID-19 cases with the governing body confirming on Thursday that three unnamed players from two different teams tested positive for the disease.

Only 14 games were completed in the 34-match tournament.

The PCB said it "will focus



on the safe and secure passage of all participants, and arrange repeat PCR tests, vaccines and isolation facilities to the six participating sides."

England batsman Tom Banton had earlier claimed that he was one of the two foreign players who tested positive for COVID-19 and has been

put under isolation.

PCB Director of Media Sami-ul Hasan Burney on Tuesday said that two foreign players and one member of the support staff had tested positive for the virus.

This was after Australian leg-spinner Fawad Ahmed tested positive on Monday.

Burney had not named the two players and the support staff member.

PCB Chief Executive Wasim Khan, Director-Commercial Babar Hamid, will hold a media conference at the National Stadium later in the day to provide further updates, the statement said.

Spin Legend Bishan Singh Bedi Recovering Well After Surgery To Remove Blood Clot In Brain



Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Legendary spinner Bishan Singh Bedi has undergone a surgery to remove a blood clot in his brain at a city hospital a few days back and is recovering well.

The 74-year-old former India captain had undergone a bypass surgery at the hospital last month after he complained of heart problems. He underwent the procedure in his brain just after the bypass surgery.

"He had the blood clot (in his brain) removed six days back, just after the bypass surgery. He is recovering well and will be shifted to a private cabin by tomorrow," a source

close to Bedi told PTI.

Bedi, a premier left-arm orthodox spinner in his playing days, represented India in 67 Tests and 10 ODIs between 1967 and 1979, scalping 266 and seven wickets respectively.

In December last year, Bedi had protested against the Delhi and District Cricket Association's (DDCA) decision to name the Feroz Shah Kotla stadium after its late ex president and former union minister Arun Jaitley.

He had threatened to take legal action against the DDCA if his name was not removed from a spectators' stand at the stadium.

MS Dhoni Reaches Chennai, Super Kings Training Camp Likely From March 9

Press Trust of India

CHENNAI: Chennai Super Kings captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni has landed here to take part in the team's training camp likely to begin on March 9 in the lead-up to the upcoming season of the Indian Premier League (IPL).

The former India captain arrived here late on Wednesday and will serve a five-day quarantine.

CSK tweeted a picture of Dhoni at the airport and wrote: "Thalai-Vaa! Smile with the Mass(k) on! Super Night! #DenComing #Whistle-Podu #Yellowe."

Former India batsman Ambati Rayudu also reached Chennai on Wednesday while the Tamil Nadu players in the squad will be joining a little later.



"First #Dencoming of the summer from across the border is Manavaadu Bahubali!!! #Yellowe #WhistlePodu," CSK posted with a photo of Rayudu.

The camp is likely to get underway from March 9, CSK CEO K S Viswanathan said, adding the players who are

available would take part in it.

"Yeah...the camp is likely to start from March 9. Whoever is available would take part in the training sessions," he told PTI.

"The players will undergo five-day quarantine before they start training. Also, they

will have to return three negative tests..." he added.

The Indian players in the CSK will be a part of the camp, he said, adding they would be arriving in batches.

The schedule and venues for the 14th edition of IPL have not been confirmed yet.

CSK, during the recent mini auction earlier this year, picked up England all-rounder Moeen Ali for Rs 7 crore, apart from Karnataka all-rounder K Gowtham (for Rs 9.25 crore) and Cheteshwar Pujara (Rs 50 lakh).

It also roped in a few others including Tamil Nadu batsman C Hari Nishaanth, Harishankar Reddy and Bhagath Varma (all for Rs 20 lakh).

The team did not fare well in the last IPL, failing to qualify for the play-offs for the first time ever.

Zimbabwe Coach Lalchand Rajput Hails 'Fantastic' Test Win Over Afghanistan

Press Trust of India

ABU DHABI: Zimbabwe coach Lalchand Rajput has hailed his team's 10-wicket win over Afghanistan in the first Test in Abu Dhabi, saying it was a "satisfying" effort as they had played a five-day game after a long time.

Zimbabwe, led by skipper Sean Williams, thrashed Afghanistan by 10 wickets inside two days at the Shaikh Zayed Stadium in Abu Dhabi to go 1-0 up in the two-Test series.

"It is a fantastic win and also to be 1-0 up in the series. It is great that our bowlers, especially fast bowlers,



showed their skills to get Afghanistan out twice in two days and the match finished inside two days," an elated Rajput told PTI from Abu Dhabi.

"Zimbabwe do not often play Test cricket and were playing a Test match

after a long gap, so to have a win is satisfying. Our preparation was good and the players played first-class matches to get enough exposure," added 59-year-old Rajput, who has had several successful stints as coach and team manager in the past, including that of India.

Rajput, a domestic veteran, also observed that while pacers of his team got success, it was Afghanistan spinners, who did the bulk of the damage.

"It is a contrast that Zimbabwe medium pacers bowled their heart out to get 20 wickets, where as Afghanistan spinners did most of the damage to the Zimbabwe batsmen," he said.

Pollard Hits Six Sixes In An Over As West Indies Beat Sri Lanka

Press Trust of India

COOLIDGE (ANTIGUA): Sri Lanka leg-spinner Akila Dananjaya experienced the precipitous highs and lows of Twenty20 cricket when he claimed a hat-trick which included the wicket of West Indies star Chris Gayle for a first-ball duck, then was hit for six sixes in an over by Keiran Pollard in the first international in Antigua.

The West Indies on Wednesday won the match by four wickets with 41 balls to spare, finishing at 134-6.

Dananjaya became only the 15th player and the fourth Sri Lankan to take a T20 international hat-trick when he dismissed Evin Lewis (28), Gayle and Nicholas Pooran (0) with consecutive deliveries in the fourth over.

He had little time to reflect on his new-found fame when it turned to notoriety. In his next over he was hit to all parts of the ground by Pollard, who became only the second player after Yuvraj Singh to hit six sixes in an over in a T20 international and the third player to achieve the feat in all international formats.

Yuvraj did so off England's Stuart Broad in the inaugural T20 World Cup in 2007 and had to wait 14 years for company.

Pollard said he thought six sixes was a possibility "after the third one." "I just had to come out and back myself," he said.

Explain Rationale Behind Classification For COVID-19 Vaccination: HC to Centre

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: The Delhi High Court on Thursday asked the Centre to explain the rationale behind keeping strict control over class of persons who can be vaccinated against COVID-19 currently as under the present system those above the age of 60 years or with co-morbidities can receive vaccination.

The High Court said the two institutes which have developed the vaccines COVISHIELD and COVAXIN - Serum Institute of India and Bharat Biotech - have more capacity to provide the vaccines but it seems that their full capacity is not being exploited.

"We are not utilising it fully. We are either donating it to foreign countries or selling it to them and are not vaccinating our own people. So there has to be that sense of responsibility and urgency," a Bench of Justices Vipin Sanghi and Rekha Palli said.

The High Court directed the two institutes to file separate affidavits on their capacity to manufacture the vaccines on per day, per week and per month basis and also the current opt of the vaccines and how much unused capacity is lying.

lawyers as "frontline workers" so that they could receive COVID-19 vaccination on priority and without limitations of their age or physical condition.

It also asked the Delhi High Court Bar Association and BCD to disclose the strength of members registered with them to get an idea of number of people to be vaccinated in the judicial system in the national capital.

During the hearing, the counsel for Bharat Biotech sought to know the target audience for vaccination and whether the ambit was entire judiciary.

Additional Solicitor General Chetan Sharma and advocate Anil Soni, representing the Centre, informed the court that selection of class of people for vaccination was a policy decision which was taken by an expert body.

Sharma informed the High Court that a similar petition was pending before the Supreme Court and will come up for hearing on Monday.

To this, the Bench said the issue here was to find out if the whole judicial system, including judges, lawyers and court staff, can be prioritised without age and co-morbidities limitation.



They also have to indicate if they can scale up their production capacities, it said.

"Union of India shall file an affidavit disclosing the capacity to transport the vaccines while maintaining the whole chain, particularly to the NCT of Delhi. The Union of India shall also indicate the extent to which it is presently being used," the court said.

"The Union of India shall explain the rationale behind keeping strict control over class of persons who can be vaccinated as noticed in our last order. Under the present system, persons above 60 years of age and between 45 to 60 years with co-morbidities can receive vaccination.

"An affidavit to be filed by the Union of India disclosing the rationale for such classification," it said.

It also asked the Delhi Government to carry out inspection of medical facilities available in court complexes here and to report if COVID-19 vaccination centres could be set up there and also the short comings in facilities.

The High Court asked all the authorities to file their affidavits by March 9 and listed the matter for further hearing on March 10.

The High Court was hearing a PIL initiated by it to examine the demand of Bar Council of Delhi to declare all people associated with the judicial functioning, including judges, court staff and

On Wednesday, the High Court had taken suo motu cognisance and initiated on its own a public interest litigation on the basis of a communication received from the Bar Council of Delhi.

It had said there is a clear pattern emerging that the number of COVID-19 positive cases increase with greater intermingling and congregation of people.

It had said premises and court rooms of the High Court, which is scheduled to resume physical functioning from March 15, and some of the district courts are air-conditioned and with increased footfall, there is likelihood of the rate of infection amongst those who attend the courts spiking, once the full-fledged physical functioning of courts in Delhi resumes. It had noted that in the first round, frontline workers, particularly of the medical community were covered, and others such as the police force have already been covered.

The court had referred to a communication sent to the Chief Justice by Bar Council of Delhi chairman Ramesh Gupta requesting that appropriate directions be issued to the authorities concerned to make available necessary infrastructure in court premises, particularly in dispensaries for vaccinating the members of the judicial system by treating them as frontline workers.

India Downgraded To "Partly Free" In Report By US Think Tank



India's status change means that less than 20% of the world's people now live in a "free" country.

Agenceis

India was downgraded to "partly free" for the first time since 1997 in an annual ranking of democracies by the U.S.-government funded research group Freedom House, which cited worsening civil rights under Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The world's largest democracy slipped in rankings this year because of continuing discrimination against its Muslim citizens and increased harassment of government critics and journalists, according to the "Freedom in the World" report released by the Washington-based organization.

The report cited "a multi-year pattern in which the Hindu nation-

alist government and its allies have presided over rising violence and discriminatory policies." It listed several events in 2020 like religious riots in Delhi, use of sedition laws against critics and hardships endured by migrant workers after PM Modi announced a sudden lockdown to control the coronavirus pandemic.

India was among 73 nations downgraded for declines in political rights and civil liberties, affecting three-fourths of the world's population. The report, which ranks 210 nations, found that states designated "Not Free" have reached the highest since 2006. Those affected included not just authoritarian states like China, Belarus, and Venezuela, but also troubled democra-

cies like the U.S. and India. India's status change means that less than 20% of the world's people now live in a "free" country - the smallest proportion since 1995, the report said. The changes in India since PM Modi took charge in 2014 "form part of a broader shift in the international balance between democracy and authoritarianism, with authoritarians generally enjoying impunity for their abuses and seizing new opportunities to consolidate power or crush dissent," the report said.

Freedom House was formally established in New York in 1941 to promote American involvement in World War II and the fight against fascism, according to its website.

19 Myanmar Cops Seek Refuge In India Rather Than Carry Out Junta's Orders

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New Delhi: At least 19 Myanmar police have crossed into India to escape taking orders from a military junta that is trying to suppress protests against last month's coup, a police official said on Thursday, adding that more were expected.

The men have crossed into Champhai and Serchhip, two districts in Mizoram that share a porous border with Myanmar, the official said, declining to be named because of the sensitivity of the issue.

All the men, who are lower-ranking policemen, were unarmed, the official said. "We are expecting more to come," he said, citing intelligence reports.

There have been several instances recounted on social media of police joining the civil disobedience movement and protests against the junta, with some arrested, but this is the first reported case of police fleeing Myanmar.

The official said that the policemen crossed over fearing persecution for disobeying orders and would be temporarily housed by local Indian authorities.

"They didn't want to take orders against the civil disobedience movement," he said, referring to the agita-



tion in Myanmar calling for the reversal of the February 1 coup and the release of elected leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

Of the 19, three Myanmar policemen came across the border near the town of North Vanlaiphai in Serchhip district on Wednesday afternoon and authorities there were assessing their health, another police official said.

"What they said is they got instructions from the military rulers which they cannot obey, so they have run away," Serchhip Superintendent of Police Stephen Lalrinawma told Reuters.

"They are seeking refuge because of the military rule in Myanmar," Lal-

rinawma said. India shares a 1,600 km (1,000 mile) land border with Myanmar, where more than 50 people have been killed during protests against the coup.

The junta overthrew a democratically elected government, and detained its leader, Suu Kyi, having disputed her party's landslide victory in November.

India is already home to thousands of refugees from Myanmar, including ethnic Chin people and Rohingya who fled the southeast Asian country during previous bouts of violence.

A Chin community leader in New Delhi said police have rarely fled to India.

Taj Mahal Vacated After Hoax Bomb Call



Security personnel with a sniffer dog check for bombs in the premises of the historic Taj Mahal, in Agra, on Thursday. PTI Photo

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI/AGRA: The Taj Mahal complex in Agra was vacated on Thursday morning following a hoax bomb call, officials said.

They said an unidentified person called the 112 emergency response number of the Uttar Pradesh police at around 9 am and claimed that a bomb was kept inside the monument - that is conserved by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and protected by armed

personnel of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF).

The Uttar Pradesh police immediately informed the CISF personnel, who asked the visitors to vacate the premises of the iconic 17th-century monument and launched anti-sabotage checks around 9.15 am.

"Nothing suspicious has been found and the checks are almost done," a senior CISF officer said in Delhi. The hoax call has been traced to Firozabad in Uttar Pradesh, another officer said.

Trinamool Meets Election Commission Over PM's Photo On Vaccine Documents



Press Trust of India

KOLKATA: A delegation of Trinamool leaders on Wednesday met Election Commission officials and alleged that the use of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's photo on advertisements of various central schemes and the vaccination certificates distributed by the Union health ministry violated the model code of conduct.

The ruling party in West Bengal termed it as a "blatant misuse of official machinery" and sought the intervention of the poll panel to remove hoardings advertising central government schemes with images of PM Modi at petrol pumps, state minister Firhad Hakim said after meeting the Election Commission officials.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi happens to be the star campaigner of the BJP in this assembly elections. As a politician, he is seeking support for his party during rallies. In this situation, using his photo in vaccination certificates is akin to influencing voters and violates the model code of conduct.

"We have sought the EC's intervention to remove his photo in hoardings promoting central

schemes at petrol pumps," Mr Hakim said.

The minister called on the EC officials a day after Trinamool Rajya Sabha MP Derek O'Brien alleged that the PM photos have been used on the COVID-19 vaccination certificates even after the announcement of poll dates.

"Elections declared. PM photo still brazenly appearing on #COVID19 documents. Trinamool @AITCofficial taking this up strongly with Election Commission @ECISVEEP," he said on Twitter on Tuesday.

Reacting to these allegations, BJP state president Dilip Ghosh termed it as "baseless" and said the vaccination drive had started before the announcement of the election dates.

"If a government project starts before the declaration of an election, it may continue in the same form. At petrol pumps, hoardings are advertising several welfare projects of the Centre. These are put up on private land," Mr Ghosh said.

He also said the EC would take a call on the issue. Elections in Bengal will be held in eight phases, beginning with polling for 30 seats on March 27.

Votes will be counted on May 2.

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