



P3 CITY

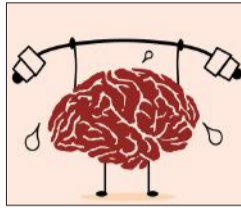
IN 5 DAYS, 50,000 VISITORS BEFALL TULIP GARDEN

Tulip garden located in the foothills of Zabarwan mountain range overlooking famous Dal Lake in Srinagar has enthralled a recorded number of almost 50,000 visitors in...

P7 THINK

7 SIMPLE HABITS TO PROTECT YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

When a patient came to see me for long standing symptoms of depression and anxiety (they often co-occur), he was hesitant at best. He wanted to feel better, but "getting treatment" didn't fit with his...



P5 STATE

FROM KASHMIR TO KANYAKUMARI IN 8 DAYS, VALLEY CYCLIST TRAVELS 3,600 KM IN EXTRAORDINARY FEAT

Adil Teli a professional Kashmiri cyclist Tuesday created history covering the 3600 Kilometers distance between...



Widom Quote!

Fortune sides with him who dares
—Virgil

NEWS DIGEST

PIA Written Balloon Found In Poonch

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir police recovered an aircraft shaped balloon with PIA written on it in Mendhar area of Poonch district, reports said Tuesday. The balloon was found near a Border Security Force (BSF) camp in Achhad area of Mankote in Mendhar on Monday evening, reports said. **More On P10**

Search Operation Conducted In Pattan

SRINAGAR: The state forces on Tuesday carried out a cordon and search operation (CASO) in Pattan area of north Kashmir's Baramulla district. A joint team of Special Operations Group (SOG) of police, army's 29 RR and CRPF laid a siege around Magraypora village of Pattan on Tuesday afternoon and carried out a search operation, reports said. The search operation, reports **More On P10**

2 Hotels Damaged In Midnight Blaze

SRINAGAR: Two hotels were partially damaged in a fire that broke out during the intervening night of Monday and Tuesday at tourist resort Pahalgam in south Kashmir's Anantnag district. Fire erupted from one of the hotels-Hotel Crown View belonging to Farooq Ahmad Malik and Hotel Retreat & Restaurant owned by Tariq **More On P10**

39 Vehicles Without J&K Registration Seized

SRINAGAR: Police on Tuesday seized as many as thirty-nine vehicles plying without proper documents, the majority of which include the vehicles without mandatory Jammu and Kashmir registration. A police official said that the drive has been launched after directions received from authorities to make sure that all the vehicles are well-documented and any outside **More On P10**

Probe Ordered After PHCs Found Locked

JAMMU: The Poonch deputy commissioner has ordered action against errant officials after a surprise inspection found two primary health centres locked and low attendance at other facilities. On the direction of Deputy Commissioner Inder Jeet, the late-night inspection at the district hospital, sub-district hospitals (SDHs), primary health centres (PHCs) and community health centres (CHCs) **More On P10**

Imran Khan Sends Thank You Note To PM Modi Says Peace In South Asia Hinges On Resolving Kashmir Dispute



Agencies

NEW DELHI: Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan on Tuesday responded to his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi's Pakistan Day message, saying that people of his country also desire peaceful and cooperative ties, Dawn newspaper reported.

PM Narendra Modi had written to Khan on March 23 and extended greetings to the neighbouring country on the occasion of Pakistan National Day. In his letter, Modi said India desires cordial relations with Pakistan and underlined that an environment free of terror was **More On P10**

No Passport For Mehbooba's Mother Too

Application Rejected Over Adverse Police Report

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: The passport application of Gulshan Nazir, wife of former Union home minister and two-time Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Mufti Mohammed Sayeed, has been rejected following an adverse police report.

Her daughter Mehbooba Mufti's application for a passport was also rejected and the PDP president had approached the Jammu and Kashmir High Court for the document but her petition was dismissed on Monday. The mother and daughter, who had applied for fresh passports in December last year, wanted to perform "Umrah", a pilgrimage to Mecca which can be undertaken at any time of the year, according to some People's Democratic Party (PDP) leaders.

According to a letter sent to Nazir, the Regional Passport Office informed her that the Jammu and Kashmir Police's CID department has not cleared her passport application under **More On P10**

SOPORE SHOOTOUT

Injured Councillor Succumbs, Death Toll 3



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: A municipal councillor injured in a militant attack in Sopore town on Monday, succumbed to his injuries at a hospital here on Tuesday, taking the number of fatalities in the broad-daylight attack to three, reports said Tuesday.

Officials told Kashmir Observer that the injured

councillor Shams-ud-Din succumbed to his injuries at the SMHS hospital here where he was being treated after Monday's militant attack. "He had received a bullet in his abdomen. He was put on life support system, however around 4:30 am today, he breathed his last," Medical Superintendent, SMHS hospital, Dr Nazir **More On P10**

File Photo

PSOs Should Have Retaliated Against Militants: IGP

AGENCIES

Admitting the security lapse in Sopore militant attack in which two Municipal Councillors and a cop were killed, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Kashmir Vijay Kumar Tuesday said that had the PSO's present at the spot retaliated, militants would not have succeeded in their efforts. He said four PSOs have been suspended while as an OGW has been arrested while as an OGW has been arrested who has revealed that the plan to carry out the attack was hatched by one LeT militant and a foreigner at his home. Talking to reporters on the sidelines of the wreath laying ceremony of a CRPF man, who was injured in Lawaypora militant attack and succumbed yesterday, at RTC Humhama here, the IGP said: "There has been some **More On P10**

Police To Revisit Existing Security Deployments

In the aftermath of recent militant attacks, IGP Kashmir Vijay Kumar (IPS) chaired a security review meeting here through video conferencing with Range DIsG and district SSSP of Kashmir. DIG CKR Srinagar and SSP Srinagar attended the meeting physically at PCR Kashmir, a police spokesman said. "On the occasion, IGP Kashmir was briefed by the participating officers about the overall security scenarios in their respective areas and the security measures being adopted to counter the challenges." **More On P10**

10 KAS Officers Shifted In Minor Rejig

Observer Monitoring Desk

SRINAGAR: In the interest of the administration, the Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha led Jammu and Kashmir administration on Tuesday ordered transfer of 10 Kashmir Administrative Service (KAS) officers with immediate effect. According to an order issued on Tuesday, Asif Hamid Khan (KAS), Registrar, Cooperative Societies, J-K, has been transferred and posted as Member, J&K Special Tribunal (Srinagar Bench).

Rohit Khajuria (KAS), awaiting orders of adjustment in the General Administration Department, has been posted as Vice-Chairman, Jammu Development Authority.

Babila Rakwal (KAS), Vice-Chairman, Jammu Development Authority, has been transferred and posted as Chief Executive Officer, Jammu and Kashmir Energy Development Agency (JAKEDA) relieving Alok Kumar, IRS, Principal Secretary to the Government, Youth Services and Sports Department of the additional charge of the post.

Rachna Sharma (KAS), Additional District Development Commissioner, Samba, has been transferred and posted as Administrator, Associated Hospitals, Jammu.

Dr. Ravi Shanker Sharma (KAS), Additional Secretary to the Government, **More On P10**

Coronavirus Spikes In J&K As 359 Test Positive



Covid-19 rules go for a toss at the famed Tulip Garden in Srinagar on Tuesday. KO Photo, Abid Bhat

Observer Monitoring Desk

SRINAGAR: In what seems to be an alarming trend, Jammu and Kashmir reported on Tuesday 359 new cases of coronavirus, even as one death due to Covid-19 was also reported from the Union Territory during the last 24 hours.

According to the officials, the cases witnessed over 100 percent jump since last week when 157 had tested positive

for the infection. Also, this is for the second time that single-day cases breached 300-mark in Jammu and Kashmir. In all, nearly 2900 cases were added to the tally in the last fortnight, officials said.

Also, one death due to the virus was reported in the last 24 hours, taking the J&K's fatality count to 1990-735 in Jammu and 1255 in Kashmir.

Among the fresh **More On P10**

Dr Farooq Tests +ve, PM Wishes Him Speedy Recovery

Veteran politician and National Conference president Farooq Abdullah tested positive for COVID-19 on Tuesday and he received wishes for speedy recovery from several leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi. In a tweet this morning, the National Conference (NC) leader's son Omar Abdullah informed about his father testing positive for the coronavirus and also urged everyone who came in contact with him recently to get tested. Prime Minister Modi, while replying to his tweet, wished Farooq Abdullah, a Lok Sabha member and a former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister, a speedy recovery. "Praying for the good health and speedy recovery of Dr. Farooq Abdullah Ji. Also praying for your and **More On P10**

Srinagar Placed In Orange Zone As Cases Surge

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu and Kashmir State Executive Committee on Tuesday put Srinagar district in the orange category in view of the rising number of COVID positive cases. According to an order issued by Chief Secretary B V R Subrahmanyan, who is also the chairperson of the SEC, Srinagar district has been put in orange category while the areas on either side of Jawahar Tunnel -- the gateway to Kashmir -- has been placed in red zone. Lakhampur containment area has also been categorised in red zone with a buffer of 500 metre radius. The rest of the areas in the Union territory continue to be in the green zone as far as permitted activities are concerned. Srinagar has been the worst affected district of Jammu and Kashmir **More On P10**

SASB Invites Religious Heads For Upcoming Yatra

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: The Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board (SASB) on Tuesday extended invitations to two prominent Haridwar-based religious heads for the upcoming pilgrimage to the 3,880-metre-high cave shrine of Amarnath in the South Kashmir Himalayas.

The 56-day Amarnath Yatra is scheduled to start through the twin routes of Pahalgam and Baltal on June 28. Principal Secretary to the Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor and SASB Chief Executive Officer Nitishwar **More On P10**

Key PDP Leader From Jammu Quits Party

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: In a major setback to the PDP, its senior leader and former MLC Surinder Choudhary on Tuesday resigned from the basic membership of the party, saying it has been hijacked by "drawing-room politicians, land grabbers and land mafia" members.

He said he was leaving the party because it has been hijacked and not under the pressure of any government agency.

He claimed the Peoples Democratic Party president Mehbooba Mufti **More On P10**

Happiness Centre Inaugurated At IIM-Jammu

LG Calls Upon Youth To Find Inner Joy Through Meditation, Yoga

Observer Monitoring Desk

JAMMU: Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' inaugurated a happiness centre at the Indian Institute of Management (IIM)-Jammu virtually on Tuesday.

The minister said that incorporating happiness in the academic curriculum is a very crucial step towards empowering the nation, and congratulated the institute for the venture.

"Anandam - the Centre for Happiness' aligns with the National Education Policy 2020, aiming to achieve holistic wellbeing for all, he said.



"This step will take our education system to new heights, similar to the times of ancient Indian universities like Nalanda and Takshashila," the minister added. Jammu and Kashmir

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, who was present on the occasion, suggested that universities and institutes invest in well-being also and replicate the model of the IIM **More On P10**

MeT Predicts Widespread Rains In J&K On April 5

Agencies

SRINAGAR: After fresh rainfall, the minimum temperatures dropped across the Kashmir even as meteorological department has forecast widespread rainfall on April 5 in J&K.

A meteorological department official said that the Srinagar received 3.2mm of rain in 24 hours till 0830 hours while mercury settled at 8.6 degree Celsius against previous night's 11.2 degree Celsius in the summer capital. The temperature was above by 2.5 degree Celsius in Srinagar for this time of the year, the official said.

Qazigund, the gateway town of Kashmir, received 2.2mm of rain and recorded a low of 6.0

degree Celsius against 7.4 degree Celsius on the previous night, he said.

Pahalgam received 6.2mm of rain while mercury settled at 2.3 degree Celsius against 7.0 degree Celsius on the earlier night at the famous resort in south Kashmir.

Kokernag, also in south Kashmir, received 3.6mm of rain and recorded a low of 4.3 degree Celsius against previous night's 10.7 degree Celsius, the official said.

The minimum temperature settled at 6.0 degree Celsius in Kupwara against 8.7 degree Celsius on the previous night, the official said. The north Kashmir district received 5.7mm of rain **More On P10**

HC Orders Major Reshuffle, 175 Judicial Officers Shifted

Observer Monitoring Desk

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir High Court on Tuesday ordered a massive reshuffle in judiciary with 175 judicial officers transferred and posted at new places. Among them include 63 district judges.

As per an order by Registrar General, Mohan Lal Manhas, Principal District & Sessions Judge, Udhampur has been transferred and posted as Principal District & Sessions Judge, Jammu vice Sanjeev Gupta.

Mohd. Akram Choudhary, Principal District & Sessions Judge Samba has been transferred and posted as Principal District & Sessions Judge,

Srinagar vice Abdul Rashid Malik. Rajesh Sekhri, Special Judge Anti-Corruption (CBI) Cases, Jammu has been transferred and posted as Member J&K Special Tribunal, Jammu on deputation vice Ms. Bala Jyoti.

Sanjeev Gupta, Principal District & Sessions Judge, Jammu has been transferred and posted as Special Judge, Anti Corruption (CBI Cases), Jammu vice Rajesh Sekhri.

Abdul Rashid Malik, Principal District & Sessions Judge, Srinagar has been transferred and posted as Principal District & Sessions Judge, Pulwama vice Mohd. Ibrahim Wani. Kishore Kumar, Principal District & **More On P10**

'Immune system harmed by preservative used in popular processed foods'

Agencies

A food preservative that is used to prolong the shelf life of Pop-Tarts, Rice Krispies Treats, Cheez-Its and almost 1,250 other popular processed foods might cause harm to the immune system, suggest the findings of a new peer-reviewed study by Environmental Working Group.

For the study, published this week in the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, EWG researchers used data from the Environmental Protection Agency's Toxicity Forecaster, or ToxCast, to assess the health hazards of the most common chemicals added to food, as well as the "forever chemicals" known as PFAS, which can migrate to food from packaging.

EWG's analysis of ToxCast data showed that the preservative tert-butylhydroquinone, or TBHQ, has been found to harm the immune system both in both animal tests and in non-animal tests known as high-throughput in vitro toxicology testing. This finding is of particular concern during the coronavirus pandemic.

"The pandemic has focused public and scientific attention on environmental factors that can impact the immune system," said Olga Naidenko, Ph.D., EWG vice president for science investigations and lead author of the new study.

Naidenko added, "Be-



fore the pandemic, chemicals that may harm the immune system's defense against infection or cancer did not receive sufficient attention from public health agencies. To protect public health, this must change."

Human epidemiological studies show that PFAS suppresses immune function and decreases vaccine efficacy. Recently published research has also found a link between high levels of PFAS in the blood and the severity of Covid-19. Surprisingly, for most PFAS, the ToxCast results did not match previous animal and human test data. This illustrates the limitations of this new chemical testing method. More research is needed to understand how PFAS harms the immune system.

Using ToxCast, EWG analysed all publicly available studies that show how PFAS migrate to food from packaging materials or processing equipment. This is the first known compilation of available re-

search on PFAS migration from packaging to food. In 2017, nationwide tests showed that many fast-food chains used food wrappers, bags, and boxes coated with highly fluorinated chemicals.

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The Food and Drug Administration's approach to the regulation of food additives does not consider the latest science on the health harms of additives that may be legally added to

processed foods manufactured in the U.S. Last year, EWG published Food Additives State of the Science, which highlighted additives known to increase the risk of cancer, harm the nervous system, and disrupt the body's hormonal balance.

Chemicals linked to health harms can be legally added to packaged foods because the FDA frequently allows food manufacturers to determine which chemicals are safe. Additives like TBHQ were approved by the FDA decades ago, and the agency does not consider new science to reassess the safety of food chemicals.

"Food manufacturers have no incentive to change their formulas," said Scott Faber, senior vice president for government affairs at EWG.

Faber added, "Too often, the FDA allows the food and chemical industry to determine which ingredients are safe for consumption. Our research shows how important it is that the FDA take a second look at these ingredients and test all food chemicals for safety."

Processed foods can be made without these potentially harmful ingredients, so shoppers should read labels carefully. TBHQ is often, though not always, listed on the ingredient label. It will be listed if it has been added to the product during manufacturing. But it can also be used in food packaging, particularly plastic packaging, in which case it may migrate to food.

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT REGIONAL TRANSPORT OFFICER BUDGAM KASHMIR NOTICE

Whereas an application has been received from one. Shri : Ghulam Hassan Rather S/o: Mohammad Mustafa Rather R/o: Chandpora Budgam owner of vehicle bearing Registration No: JK04D-2322 for cancellation of hire purchase agreement with M/S State Bank of India B/U RASMECC Srinagar.

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

No. ARTO/ BUDGAM.3234
Dated 30/03/2021

mcb Assistant Regional Transport officer Budgam Kashmir



OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT REGIONAL TRANSPORT OFFICER BUDGAM NOTICE

Where as an application has been received from Nisar Ahamd Bhat S/o Abdul Aziz Bhat R/o Hardeewale Budgam owner of vehicle bearing registration No. JK04E-3302 for cancellation of hire purchase agreement with JK Bank Ltd B/U Baghat Bazrulla



Now, therefore, it is notified for the information of the general public that representation/ Objection, if any in connection with proposed cancellation of hire purchase agreement will be received within 12 days from the date of publication of this notice in the daily newspaper Kashmir Observer to the address of undersigned.

NOJK-RTOK --
Dated: 30-03-2021

Sd/-
Regional Transport Office, Budgam
gtw

The Jammu And Kashmir State Board Of School Education

New Campus Bemina Srinagar
Notice for General Public

The applicant/ candidate whose photograph is published in this notice and claiming to have lost her qualification certificate Havign the following description:-
Roll No:- 3159321

Class :- 10th
Year & Session 2014
Registration No:- N13441200050
Name:- Haroon Ramzan War
Father's Name Mohammad Ramzan War
Mother's Name Raja Begum
DOB 21-06-2000
R/o Zalooria Sopore
Now the candidate has approach to this office for issuance of Duplicate Qualification Certificate , so before the same is processed and provided to the candidate, under rules, anybody having any objection in this regard, shall bring into the notice of Assistant Secretary of Certificate as well as Assistant Secretary Examination Unit I & III KD within the period of 7 days respectively, from the date of publication of this notice.
(Besides the above referred "Qualification / Marks Certificate/s" bearing serial no: 14ARKAM -5025206 be treated as "CANCELLED")
No: F(Cer-I-DQC)/KD/21
Dated 15-03-2021

ams Assistant Secretary Certificates, KD.



OFFICE OF THE EXECUIVE ENGINEER PWD(R&B) DIVISION KUPWARA

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

NIT No. 74-Kupwara/9993-99 of 2020-21 e-tendering DATED: - 27-03-2021

For & on behalf of Lieutenant Governor of J&K Union Territory, e-tenders (in single cover system) are invited on item rate basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with Union Territory J&K Govt. CPWD, Railways and other state/Central Governments for the followings works:-

S. No	Name of Work	Est. Cost (Rs. In Lacs)	Cost of T/Doc. (In rupees)	Time of Completion in days	Time & Date of Opening of Bid	Class of Contractor	Major Head of Account
1.	Construction of Administrative block at Govt. Degree College Sogam	45.70	1100/-	60 days	21-04-2021	"A"YY"	Higher Education

Position of AAA/TS : Accored
Position of funds : Available

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

01. Date of issue of Tender Notice	27-03-2021
02. Period of downloading of bidding documents	From 27-03-2021 to 20-04-2021 (4.00P.M)
03. Bid submission start date	27-03-2021 from (10.00A.M)
04. Bid submission end date	20-04-2021 upto (04.00P.M)
05. Date & time of opening Bids (on line)	21-04-2021 at (11.00A.M) in the Office of the Executive Engineer RnB Division Kupwara

Terms and Conditions as per Circular issued by fiancé department vide No.A/Misc(2018)-III-895/J Dt.22-12-2020
The Bidders are advised to read all conditions laid down in the NIT carefully before uploading softcopy any short fall found in the soft copy the tender shall be rejected.

- The 1st lowest Bidder has to produce an amount equal to 3% of contract as performance security in shape of CDR/FDR within 02 days before fixation of contract and shall be released after successful completion of work
- GST Returns :- Only latest GST Monthly returns is accepted.
- All Bidders has to submit Bid Security Declaration Form instead of Earnest money deposit (EMD) as per the circular of Finance Department (Bid Security Declaration)
- Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in shape E-Challan (Under Account Head 0059) (E-Challan) must be purchased after tender date and Boldly written Name of Work, Name of Contractor with contact No, NIT No. & Sr. No of NIT) in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Division Kupwara (tender inviting authority)
- In case the L-1 fails deposit the requisite document, the action against the L-1 as per PWD rules leading to blacklisting of contractor
- On Opening of financial bid the L1 has to produce the Original CDR/FDR pledge to the opening Authority before allotting the work along with Cost of tender document in the shape of E-Challan .
- Upload Valid Registration CARD /Renewal, PAN Card , GST Certificate and latest GST clearance ending previous Month.
- It is mandatory for all bidders participating to submit all documents in terms of soft copies in e-tendering website and no documents in terms of Hard Copies shall be entertained. However, lowest bidder will be called for submission of CDR/FDR as well as E-Challan and CDR/FDR of the other participating tenderers/ bidders will be released only after surrender of E-Challan .
- Furnishing of Hard Copies of bids immediately after submission of e-tenders is dispensed with. The same should be obtained only from the Bidder who's declared 1st Lowest (L-1) after opening of financial bids.
- The department will not be responsible for delay in online submission due to any reasons.

DIPK-15709/20

Executive Engineer
PWD(R&B) DIVISION KUPWARA

ISLAMIA COLLEGE OF SCIENCE AND COMMERCE, SRINAGAR, KASHMIR- 190 002

UGC AUTONOMOUS
(NAAC ACCREDITED GRADE-A)

Phone No.2426819, Fax: 0194-2429014 Website:islamiacollege.edu.in Email:principal@islamiacollege.edu.in

NOTICE INVITING e-TENDERS NO.05 OF 2021

DATED 27-03-2021

For and on behalf of the Islamia College of Science and Commerce, Srinagar "Accounts officer, Islamia College of Science and Commerce, Srinagar" invites e-tenders through www.jktenders.gov.in as RFP in two cover format for supply and commissioning and testing of Chemicals/ Glassware/ Plasticware and Equipments etc., for the department of Bio Technology. The Bidding documents consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, bill of quantities (B.O.Q) set of terms and conditions and other details can be viewed/downloaded from the JK e-Tender website www.jktenders.gov.in as per the schedule of dates given below:

S. NO.	PARTICULARS	DATE	TIME
1.	e-Tender Notice No.05 of 2021 dated 27-03-2021		
2.	Date of issuance of Tender Notice	29-03-2021	
3.	Start of downloading of bid documents	30-03-2021	01:00 p.m.
4.	Bid/Tender submission start date	30-03-2021	03:00 p.m.
5.	Bid/Tender submission end date	08-04-2021	03:00 p.m.
6.	Deadline for receiving the hardcopies	10-04-2021	04:00 p.m.
7.	Opening of technical bid/tender	12-04-2021	02:00 p.m.
8.	Online financial e-Bid opening date and time (only of the technical qualified bidders)	To be notified after technical bid evaluation	
9.	Venue of opening technical and financial e-Bids	College campus	
10.	Cost of the e-Tender Document	Rs.500/-	
11.	Amount of Earnest Money (EMD) to be deposited in the form of Call Deposit Receipt (pledged to the Accounts Officer, Islamia College, Srinagar)	5000	

The interested bidders to submit their offers in terms and conditions, technical specifications and annexure forming part of this Tender Document. Further, any notification regarding this tender shall be available on the College website www.islamiacollege.edu.in and all bidders should be visiting the same to remain updated. The undersigned reserves the rights to accept or reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason thereof.

No. ICS/4090-96/E-33/A-35
Dated:27-03-2021

DIPK-NB-6762/20

Accounts officer

THE J&K BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL (BOPEE) ENTRANCE EXAMINATIONS

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

Subject: Extension of last date of admission to B.Ed. Course 2020 at Govt. College of Education, Canal Road, Jammu.

Reference: Notification No. 042-BOPEE of 2021 Dated 23-03-2021

Notice No.037-BOPEE of 2021
Dated: 30-03-2021

It is notified for the information of all those candidates provisionally selected for B. Ed Programme 2020 at Govt. B.Ed. College, Canal Road, Jammu vide Notification No. 042-BOPEE of 2021 dated 23-03-2021, the last date is hereby extended upto 03-04-2021 upto 04:00 P.M.). The head of the college shall send the details of the candidates, who do not complete their admission till the last date, as a SHORT FALL on 03-04-2021 upto 05:00 P.M. positively.

However, the other terms & conditions shall remain the same as notified by the Board vide Notification No. 042-BOPEE of 2021 dated 23-03-2021 & various Notices/Notifications issued by the Board from time to time on the subject.

E&OE.

DIPK-NB-6766/20

(Dr. Sunil Gupta)
Controller of Examinations
J&K BOPEE

No: BOPEE/Exam.-17/2021 Dated: 30-03-2021

As Covid Upticks In Srinagar, Admin To Disallow Big Gatherings

Observer News Service

Srinagar: As the COVID cases resurge in J&K especially in Srinagar, the administration has decided not to allow any programmes like the Badamwari festival to prevent the spread of the virus.

Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Syed Abdul Hanief Balkhi said that as of now, the administration has not considered another phase of lockdown or new guidelines for the holy month of Ramadan.

"Everything will be as it is, but, we are taking measures to ensure that events like Badamwari will not take place to prevent the virus

from spreading," Balkhi said. "People should avoid participating in any event where large gathering could be witnessed. As the pandemic still exists, there is a need to follow Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for our safety, even if the administration will not act tough," he said.

Balkhi said that people should come forward to help the administration in combating the virus by following set guidelines and SOPs, adding that imposing curbs will not bear fruit until and unless the people will not act responsibly and follow the preventive measures in letter and spirit—(KNO)

In 5 Days, 50,000 Visitors Befall Tulip Garden

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Tulip garden located in the foothills of Zabarwan mountain range overlooking famous Dal Lake in Srinagar has enthralled a recorded number of almost 50,000 visitors in just five days, officials revealed Tuesday. The sprawling garden having 15 lakh varieties of Tulips, spread over 35 acres of land, was officially thrown open on March 25 by LG's advisor Baseer Ahmed Khan. The garden witnessed arrival of 4500 visitors' tourists on day-one.

An official from the Floriculture Department said on the first day of opening of the Tulip nursery, around 4,500 guests visited the garden.

"In the past five days, almost 48,000 visitors including domestic and foreign tourists visited the garden. The full Tulip bloom is yet to happen and in the coming few days, the garden will present a breathtaking view," said the official, wishing not to be named.

He further said, the Tulip Nursery is attracting both locals as well as the tourists from different parts of the country.

An official in the Tourism Department said in collaboration with the Floriculture Department, they are going to organize a multi-day Tulip Celebration Festival in the first seven day stretch of April. "By then, the Tulips will be in almost full bloom that will attract more tourists," he said.

Amid tough winters of 2020-21, Floriculture Department had



DC Srinagar Reviews Arrangements For Tulip Festival

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Deputy commissioner Srinagar Mohammad Aijaz Asad Tuesday visited Tulip Garden to oversee arrangements for upcoming Tulip Festival which starts on 03.03.2021. The Tulip festival will involve a kaleidoscope of events aimed at presenting Srinagar as a Tourist destination.

During the spot review DC reviewed Traffic movement Plan, arrangements at the venue by Tourism and Floriculture Departments, security plan, adherence to Covid protocol, etc. It was decided

to have separate entrance and exit plan for visitors during the Festival days. Movement plan within the Tulip garden was also finalised. CMO Srinagar was told to ensure compliance to Covid appropriate behaviour in light of protocol set up by the Government.

Deputy commissioner was joined by SSP Srinagar Sandeep Chaudhary, Commissioner SMC Athar Amir Rather, Director Tourism Gulam Nabi Itoo, Director Floriculture Farooq Ahmed Rather, SSP Traffic Srinagar Javed Koul and officers from other line departments. (KNS)

planted around 15 Lakh Tulip Bulbs with 62 assortments this year. The nursery has nearly sprouted with around 50-60 per

cent Tulips and in coming days the nursery will be at the pinnacle of blossom, the official said—(KNO)

City Projects In Limbo As SMC's Council Meet Not Held Since 2019

Observer News Service

Srinagar: A series of steps that are scheduled to be taken under the much-hyped Srinagar Smart City have got delayed as the Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) Council headed by Mayor Junaid Azim Mattu has failed to fix a meeting since 2019.

Sources said that no meeting of council has taken place since 2019, thus the decisions that would have been taken a long time back, got delayed.

Deputy Mayor, Parvaiz Qadri said there are various development projects in

the loop but from 2019 no general council session has been held and nothing has been discussed till date.

Qadri said that so far the date has not been fixed.

"We are hopeful that a general council session will be called shortly to pass various resolutions vis-a-vis the development of Srinagar," he said.

Many projects including the beautification of Srinagar City and construction of passenger sheds and other projects have got unnecessarily delayed for the last two years.

"These decisions are to be taken in the council meeting," sources said—(KNO)

Seminar Organised To Mark Birth Anniversary Of Imam Mehdi (AS)



Maktab e Imamiya Tanzeemul Makatib Yakmanpora Haji Mohalla Sunday organised an event to mark the birth anniversary of Hazrat Wali Asr Imam Mahdi (AS). The event was attended by students of various Makatib, youth, elders and women of Yakmanpora and other adjoining areas.

The ceremony started with the recitation of the Holy Quran by Qari e Quran, Maulvi Aijaz Hussain.

Among others, Maulana Tanveer Hussain, Maulana Muzaffar Hussain, Maulana Muzammil Hussain, Maulana Ashiq Hussain and Maulana Aijaz Hussain were present on the occasion.

They enlightened the participants about the achievements of Imam Mehdi (as) and also prayed for the reappearance of Imam.

The members of Imam Khamenei Library and Ali Akbar Youth Committee also participated in the event.

The ceremony concluded with the Dua of Imam Zamana Ajaal Allah Taala Farja Al-Sharif.

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN DISTRICT LEGAL SERVICES AUTHORITY (Pr. District & Sessions Judge) SRINAGAR

NOTIFICATION

No: 09/cir/dlsa/sgr/21
Dated: 30-03-2021

District Legal Services Authority Srinagar is going to organize National Lok Adalat on 10-04-2021 in the premises of District Court Complex Moominabad Srinagar. Parties or their Advocates whose cases are pending before any Court at District Court Complex Moominabad Srinagar or before the Court of Additional Magistrate TFC Panthachowk and are desirous to settle their cases/ claims / matters through the Lok Adalat scheduled herein above shall approach the concerned Courts by or before 08-04-2021. Besides parties whose cases are not pending (i.e. Pre Litigation matters) in any court but desires to settle their disputes can also approach Secretary District Legal Services Authority Srinagar on cell no's 9419167570, 9797226035 and 9906921210 email id: dlsa.sgr@gmail.com by or before 08-04-2021. So that their cases, claims or matters can be settled amicably in the National Lok Adalat. Following types of cases (Pre litigation and pending in courts)

Pre Litigation

- i. NI Act cases under section 138;
- ii. Money recovery cases
- iii. Labour dispute cases
- iv. Electricity and water bills cases (excluding non compoundable)
- v. Maintenance cases
- vi. Other (Criminal compoundable, and other civil disputes)

Pending in Courts

- i. Criminal compoundable offence
- ii. NI Act cases under section 138;
- iii. Money recovery cases
- iv. MACT cases
- v. Labour dispute cases
- vi. Electricity and water bills cases (excluding non compoundable)
- vii. Matrimonial disputes (except Divorce)
- viii. Land acquisition cases
- ix. Service matters relating to pay and allowances and retiral benefits.
- x. Revenue cases (Pending in District Courts and High Courts only)
- xi. Other civil cases (Rent, easmentary rights, injunction suits, specific performance suits) etc.

(Abdul Rashid Malik)
Chairman
District Legal Services Authority
(Pr. Distt & Sessions Judge) Srinagar

DIPK-15754/20

No: 550/dlsa/sgr/20
Dated: 30-03-2021

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 - (Open)
- Mughal Road - (Closed)
- Srinagar- Leh - (Open)



HIJRI CALENDAR
16 SHABAN
1442

PRAYERS

FAJR	4: 56
ZUHR	12:36
ASR	5:04
Magrib	6:54
ISHA	8:14

This Day In History

- 1667 France & England sign anti-Dutch military accord
- 1683 - Holy Roman Emperor Leopold I and King John III Sobieski of Poland sign a covenant against Turkey, beginning of the Holy League
- 1814 - Forces allied against Napoleon capture Paris
- 1885 - Great Britain declares Bechuanaland a protectorate
- 1889 - Eiffel Tower officially opens in Paris. Built for the Exposition Universelle, at 300m high it retains the record for the tallest man made structure for 41 years.
- 1905 - Emperor Wilhelm II of Germany visits Tangier, Morocco and proclaims Germany's support of Moroccan independence and equal opportunity for all powers to trade there
- 1943 - US errantly bombs Rotterdam, kills 326
- 1951 - US tanks exceed 38° of latitude in Korea
- 1953 - UN Security Council nominates Dag Hammarskjöld for Secretary-General
- 1954 - USSR offers to join NATO
- 1958 - USSR suspends nuclear weapons tests, & urges US & Britain to do same
- 1966 - USSR launches Luna 10, 1st lunar orbiter
- 1970 - Explorer 1 re-enters the Earth's atmosphere after 12 years in orbit
- 1973 - Muhammad Ali suffers a broken jaw in a shock split-points decision loss to Ken Norton over 12 rounds in San Diego; Ali wins rematch in another controversial split decision
- 1978 - USSR launches Kosmos 1000 navigational satellite
- 1979 - The last British soldier leaves the Maltese Islands. Malta declares its Freedom Day (Jum il-Helsien).
- 1986 - 167 die when Mexicana Airlines Boeing 727 crashes
- 1988 - Pulitzer prize awarded to Toni Morrison for her novel "Beloved"
- 1991 - Albania offers 1st multi-party election in 50 years
- 1992 - UN Security Council voted to ban flights & arms sales to Libya

From KO Archives

Laughter balloon crosses LoC!

Agencies

NEW DELHI - A Pakistani theatre group is set to blitz, the Indian capital today with an explosive satire that debunks cricket mania, the pretensions of the American empire and the clichés of official diplomacy.

Lines Out Of Control, scripted by Imran Aslam and directed by Yasmin Ismail of the Karachi-based Grips Theatre Group, parodies official postures and foibles of the men who presume to run affairs of the world.

* Besides the situation in Iran, Iraq and India-Pakistan relations, the US also comes in for some irreverent swipes in the play that exposes the contradictions in its involvement in the Iraq war.

The play, to be staged at the India Habitat Centre here on Sunday, has attracted huge interest with most of the tickets for two shows of the play already sold.

The play's hard-hitting lines cut through the thicket of jargon, so much a part of pronouncements of the powerful. This laugh fest coming as it does a day after Holi should inject a healthy dose of playfulness in the growing relations between ordinary people of India and Pakistan.

Imran Aslam is known in Pakistan for his racy political satires that penetrate the core of social problems and hypocrisies and are refreshingly free of preaching. Says Aslam: "We love to laugh at the inanities of the establishment. That's why people love our brand of satire."

Aslam, the editor of the prominent Pakistan daily The News, believes in the redemptive power of laughter to keep us sane. A hearty laughter is worth more than a thousand official pronouncements is the credo that powers more than 30 plays he has penned over the years.

Like Aslam, director Yasmin Ismail is a multi-faceted woman who has kept hopes alive for Pakistani theatre through shifting ideologies and changing regimes. She has carved a niche for her sensitive direction of children's plays.

Faiza Kazi, a teacher by profession, has a starring role in the play and is now the chief mentor of Grips.

Brought to India by Routes 2 Roots, an NGO that promotes cultural ties between South Asian countries. Grips Theatre has been in the business of cleansing society - through laughter for the last two decades.

Cultural contacts between the two countries are growing with scores of intellectuals, artists and academics traversing across the border regularly, and forging new connections of the heart.

(Kashmir Observer, 31 March, 2005)

آزادیات چندوسہ
مضمون کاغذات درخوات منجانب نوید انجم ولد اقبال حسین قریشی ساکنہ سلطانپورہ کنڈی
برادعطا گی پہاڑی سٹیٹیک سرفٹیکسٹ
اشہار براد گاہی ہر خاص وعام
معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدور میں درخواست سائل دفتر پڑا میں زیر کاروئی ہے اس سلسلے میں پٹواری
حلقے سے رپورٹ بشمول ریڈر طلب کیا گیا ہے جس سے عیاں ہے کہ سائل پہاڑی بولنے والے
طبقے سے تعلق رکھتا ہے سائل کی مہماندہی 51108 کنڈی سائل بذیل فراد پر مشتمل ہے
اقبال حسین قریشی ملازم 90 سال
زرینہ بیگم گھریلو کام 80
نوید انجم زیر تعلیم 28
بشرفوید زیر تعلیم 25
سینو نوید زیر تعلیم 21
محمد ہیران زیر تعلیم 18
سرفٹیکسٹ اجرا کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص کوئی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ اپنا عذر یا اعتراض ساتھ ہی
اندرو دفتر پڑا میں پیش کرے معیار دگر نے بعد کوئی بھی عذر یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا
تاجب تحصیلدار
ajj

آزادیات چندوسہ
مضمون کاغذات درخوات منجانب فاروق احمد خان ولد محمد یعقوب خان ساکنہ نلسر
برادعطا گی پہاڑی سٹیٹیک سرفٹیکسٹ
اشہار براد گاہی ہر خاص وعام
معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدور میں درخواست سائل دفتر پڑا میں زیر کاروئی ہے اس سلسلے میں پٹواری
حلقے سے رپورٹ بشمول ریڈر طلب کیا گیا ہے جس سے عیاں ہے کہ سائل پہاڑی بولنے
والے طبقے سے تعلق رکھتا ہے سائل کی مہماندہی 8475 سائل کا کتبہ بذیل فراد پر مشتمل ہے
فاروق احمد خان ملازم 48 سال
خد بی بی بیگم گھریلو کام 42
جشید احمد زیر تعلیم 20
جنید احمد زیر تعلیم 18
شاہد احمد زیر تعلیم 16
سرفٹیکسٹ اجرا کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص کوئی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ اپنا عذر یا اعتراض ساتھ ہی
اندرو دفتر پڑا میں پیش کرے معیار دگر نے بعد کوئی بھی عذر یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا
تاجب تحصیلدار
ajj

آزادیات چندوسہ
مضمون کاغذات درخوات منجانب شاہد احمد و جہانگیر احمد و سمیعہ صاحبہ اولاد ان محمد صادق
خان ساکنہ نلسر برادعطا گی پہاڑی سٹیٹیک سرفٹیکسٹ
اشہار براد گاہی ہر خاص وعام
معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدور میں درخواست سائل دفتر پڑا میں زیر کاروئی ہے اس سلسلے میں
پٹواری حلقے سے رپورٹ بشمول ریڈر طلب کیا گیا ہے جس سے عیاں ہے کہ سائل پہاڑی
بولنے والے طبقے سے تعلق رکھتا ہے سائل کا کتبہ بذیل فراد پر مشتمل ہے
محمد صادق مزدوری 52 سال
کنیزہ بیگم گھریلو کام 48
شاہد احمد زیر تعلیم 23
جہانگیر احمد زیر تعلیم 22
سمیعہ صاحبہ زیر تعلیم 21
سرفٹیکسٹ اجرا کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص کوئی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ اپنا عذر یا اعتراض ساتھ ہی
اندرو دفتر پڑا میں پیش کرے معیار دگر نے بعد کوئی بھی عذر یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا
تاجب تحصیلدار
ajj

Over 500 Killed In Myanmar Military's Crackdown On Protesters



Agenceis

MYANMAR: The deaths in the Myanmar military's crackdown on protesters has passed 500, as armed rebel groups on Tuesday threatened the junta with retaliation if the bloodshed does not stop.

World powers have ramped up their condemnation of the military's campaign against the anti-coup movement that is demanding the restoration of the elected government and the release of civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

Washington suspended a trade pact with Myanmar and UN chief Antonio Guterres called for a united global front to pressure the junta after more than 100 protesters were killed in a bloody weekend.

Adding to that pressure campaign, a trio of ethnic rebel groups on Tuesday condemned the crackdown and threatened to fight alongside protesters unless the military reined in its violence.

Daily rallies across Myanmar by unarmed demonstrators have been met with tear gas, rubber bullets and live rounds.

The Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) said it had confirmed a total of 510 civilian deaths but warned the true toll was probably significantly higher.

On Tuesday, protesters in Yangon emptied rubbish bags in the streets as part of the latest action, while in the town of Muse in Shan state a 35-year-old protester was shot dead.

There was also another fatality at Myitkyina, Kachin state, rescue workers confirmed.

Rebel warning

Three of the country's myriad armed ethnic insurgent groups -- the Ta'ang National Liberation Army, the Myanmar Nationalities Democratic Alliance Army and the Arakan Army (AA) -- issued a joint statement threatening retaliation.

"If they do not stop, and continue to kill the people, we will cooperate with the protesters and fight back," the statement said.

If such groups take up arms, Debbie Stothard at the International Federation for Human Rights (IFHR) warned that the situation could degenerate into civil war.

Two dozen ethnic minority rebellions have flared in Myanmar since independence from British colonial rule in 1948, fighting over autonomy, identity, drugs and natural resources.

The military has sought to cut deals with some armed groups and earlier this month took the AA off the list of terrorist organisations.

But over the weekend it launched air strikes in eastern Karen state -- the first such strikes in 20 years -- targeting the Fifth Brigade of the Karen National Union (KNU) after the group seized a military base.

An estimated 3,000 people fled through the jungle to seek safety across the border in Thailand, according to local groups.

After Pakistan PM Imran Khan, President Arif Alvi and Defence Minister test positive for COVID-19



Agenceis

Pakistan President Dr Arif Alvi and Defence Minister Perviz Khattak have tested positive for COVID-19, it emerged on Monday, nearly a week after Prime Minister Imran Khan had contracted the disease. They are not alone, a day after his removal from the Pakistan Cabinet, former Finance Minister Abdul Hafeez Shaikh has also tested positive for COVID-19. The news was confirmed by the newly-appointed Finance Minister Hamid Azhar on Tuesday via Twitter.

"I have tested positive for COVID-19. May Allah have mercy on all COVID-affected. Had first dose of the vaccine but antibodies start developing after second dose that was due in a week. Please continue to be careful," the president tweeted on Monday. The exact date when Alvi, 71, contracted the disease or the day of detection was not made public.

First Lady Samina Alvi tested negative for COVID-19 and was quarantining. She said the president has "mild symptoms but is in good spirits".

Later, Sindh Governor Imran Ismail tweeted that Defence Minister Perwaiz Khattak, 71, had also tested positive for the virus. "Perwaiz Khattak is diagnosed with Covid positive. Get well soon PK," wrote Ismail, who himself contracted and recovered from the virus last year.

Several local leaders and foreign envoys expressed food wishes for the president. Chinese Ambassador Nong Rong wished President Alvi a "speedy and complete recovery" while British High Commissioner Christian Turner wished him a "speedy recovery".

Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi wrote: "Wishing President Arif Alvi and Defence Minister Perviz Khattak quick recoveries and the best of health." Pakistan is in the grip of a third wave of the coronavirus. The government has decided to impose fresh restrictions on social gatherings from April 5, with steady rise in cases and low supply of vaccines.

Prime Minister Khan, 68, tested positive for the coronavirus on March 20. His wife Bushra Bibi also tested coronavirus positive the same day. The coronavirus has claimed 14,256 lives, along with 659,116 confirmed infections in Pakistan so far.

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The Ever Given, a Panama-flagged cargo ship is accompanied by Suez Canal tugboats as it moves in the Suez Canal, Egypt.

Suez Canal Reopens After Nearly A Week As Stuck Cargo Ship Is Freed

Press Trust of India

SUEZ: Salvage teams on Monday finally freed the colossal container ship stuck for nearly a week in the Suez Canal, ending a crisis that had clogged one of the world's most vital waterways and halted billions of dollars a day in maritime commerce.

A flotilla of tugboats, helped by the tides, wrenched the bulbous bow of the skyscraper-sized Ever Given from the canal's sandy bank, where it had been firmly lodged since March 23.

The tugs blared their horns in jubilation as they guided the Ever Given through the water after days of futility that had captivated the world, drawing scrutiny and social media ridicule.

"We pulled it off!" said Peter Berdowski, CEO of Boskalis, the salvage firm hired to extract the Ever Given.

"I am excited to announce that our team of experts, working in close collaboration with the Suez Canal Authority, successfully re-floated the Ever Given, thereby making free passage through the Suez Canal possible again."

Navigation in the canal resumed at 6 p.m. local time (1600 GMT, noon EDT) said Lt. Gen. Osama Rabei, head of the Suez Canal Authority, adding that the first ships that were moving carried livestock.

From the city of Suez, ships stacked with containers could be seen exiting the canal into the Red Sea.

At least 113 of over 420 vessels that had waited for Ever Given to be freed are expected to cross the canal by Tuesday morning, Rabei added at a news conference.

Analysts expect it could take at

least another 10 days to clear the backlog on either end.

The Ever Given sailed to the Great Bitter Lake, a wide stretch of water halfway between the north and south ends of the canal, for inspection, said Evergreen Marine Corp., a Taiwan-based shipping company that operates the ship.

Buffeted by a sandstorm, the Ever Given had crashed into a bank of a single-lane stretch of the canal about 6 kilometers (3.7 miles) north of the southern entrance, near the city of Suez.

That created a massive traffic jam that held up \$9 billion a day in global trade and strained supply chains already burdened by the coronavirus pandemic.

Rabei said an investigation would determine why the Ever Given got stuck, and he estimated daily losses to the canal of between \$12 million to \$15 million.

"The Suez Canal is not guilty of what happened. We are the ones who suffered damage," he said.

At least 367 vessels, carrying everything from crude oil to cattle, had backed up to wait to traverse the canal. Dozens of others have taken the long, alternate route around the Cape of Good Hope at Africa's southern tip, a 5,000-kilometer (3,100-mile) detour that costs ships hundreds of thousands of dollars in fuel and other costs.

The canal is a source of national pride and crucial revenue for Egypt, and President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi praised Monday's events after days of silence about the blockage.

"Egyptians have succeeded in ending the crisis," he wrote on Facebook, "despite the massive technical complexity."

In the village of Amer, which overlooks the canal, residents cheered as the vessel moved along. Many scrambled to get a closer look while others mockingly waved goodbye to the departing ship from their fields of clover.

"Mission accomplished," villager Abdalla Ramadan said.

"The whole world is relieved."

The US Embassy in Cairo tweeted its congratulations to Egypt.

The breakthrough followed days of immense effort with an elite salvage team from the Netherlands.

Tugboats pushed and pulled to budge the behemoth from the shore, their work buoyed by high tide at dawn Monday that led to the vessel's partial refloating.

Specialized dredgers dug out the stern and vacuumed sand and mud from beneath the bow. The operation was extremely delicate.

While the Ever Given was stuck, the rising and falling tides put stress on the vessel, which is 400 meters (a quarter mile) long, raising concerns it could crack.

Rabei praised the team, saying they "achieved a very difficult mission in record time," without damaging the vessel or its cargo.

Berdowski told Dutch radio station NPO 1 the company had always believed it would be the two powerful tugboats it sent that would free the ship. Monday's strong tide "helped push the ship at the top while we pulled at the bottom and luckily it shot free," he said.

"We were helped enormously by the strong falling tide we had this afternoon. In effect, you have the force of nature pushing hard with you and they pushed harder than the two sea tugs could pull," Berdowski added.

India Withdraws Order Barring Shelter For Those Fleeing Myanmar

Agenceis

An Indian border state has withdrawn an order to refuse food and shelter to people from Myanmar fleeing bloodshed, two officials told Reuters on Tuesday, after the measure drew fierce public criticism.

More than 1,000 people, including Myanmar policemen and their families, have crossed into India since late February, most of them into the northeastern state of Mizoram, where the local government and civil society groups have supported them.

After people tried crossing into a second Indian state, Manipur, last week, the state government there told five districts bordering Myanmar to turn them away.

"District Administration should not open any camps to provide food and shelter," said the letter, a copy of which was reviewed by Reuters.

"People trying to enter/seek

refuge should be politely turned away," it said.

India's federal government had previously asked local authorities to stop the influx from Myanmar and deport anybody who had crossed over. But two federal government officials said on Tuesday the Manipur directive had been withdrawn on Monday.

The order, issued on March 26, had come under heavy criticism. "Beyond shame!" said Shivshankar Menon, India's former National Security Advisor, said on Twitter, reacting to a copy of the initial order circulating on social media.

Three Myanmar nationals have undergone treatment for gunshot wounds and other injuries in Manipur's capital Imphal since March 26, a senior doctor said.

"They had firearm injuries," Dr Lokeshwar Singh, medical superintendent of the Jawaharlal Nehru Institute of Medical Sciences told Reuters, adding

they were stable.

More than 500 people have been killed in Myanmar since February 1, when the country's powerful military staged a coup and deposed the civilian government, triggering a wave of protests.

Manipur and Mizoram are among the four Indian states that share a porous frontier with Myanmar, allowing for easy movement of people and goods. Refugees escaping the military crackdown on Myanmar's pro-democracy protesters have also begun fleeing to Thailand.

The government there has said people would be accepted on humanitarian grounds, but a Thai official on the border, who spoke on condition of anonymity, told Reuters the army was still sending most back because it was deemed safe on the other side. Nevertheless, more than a dozen people were allowed to cross into Thailand on Tuesday for medical treatment, Reuters witnesses said.

Female Polio Vaccination Workers Shot Dead In Afghanistan: Report



Gunmen have killed three female polio vaccination health workers in the eastern Afghan city of Jalalabad, two government sources have told the Reuters news agency.

It was not immediately clear who carried out the two separate shootings, a provincial government official said on Tuesday. A central government source confirmed the shootings, Reuters said.

The killings came on the second day of a new five-day door-to-door anti-polio vaccination drive launched in Afghanistan and neighbouring Pakistan on Monday to vaccinate millions of children despite the risks posed by the coronavirus.

In Afghanistan, the campaign intends to inoculate about 9.6 million children in 32 out of the country's 34 provinces, a health official said.

In the second anti-polio vaccination campaign this year, more than 55,000 workers would implement the vaccination for five days, according to the Afghan Health Ministry's polio coordinator, Mir Jan Rasikh.

However, there remains a big stumbling block in the Afghan polio drive. The Taliban, like in previous years, would not allow the home-to-home campaign in areas under their control.

According to Taliban spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid, the group is still in talks with the World Health Organization or WHO to reach an agreement about the programme in which workers go from door to door to carry out the inoculations.

In areas under Taliban control, the process is delayed because of security reasons, according to Mujahid. About three million children were deprived of the polio vaccine in the past three years, according to the Afghan health ministry.

So far this year, there have been about two dozen polio cases in the country, the ministry said. In Pakistan, the five-day anti-polio vaccination campaign that started on Monday will target more than 40 million children under the age of five.

Approximately 285,000 front-line workers will span out across

Pakistan's 156 districts to administer the oral drops while following COVID-19 safety protocols.

"COVID-19 continues to challenge us but we are committed to ensuring continuity of the essential public health services during these difficult times," the Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Health, Dr Faisal Sultan, said in a statement.

Pakistan and Afghanistan are the only two remaining countries in the world where polio is endemic, after Nigeria was declared free of the wild poliovirus last year.

Pakistan came very close to eliminating polio, but recorded 147 cases, a five-year high in 2019, amid vaccine boycotts and attacks on health workers.

Pakistan started a polio programme in 1994 but the work of the health workers was repeatedly hampered by violent attacks.

The United Nations-funded drive to vaccinate children under the age of five faces opposition from religious conservatives, who believe the vaccine, administered in multiple rounds, is intended to make Muslim children sterile. Pakistani armed groups also regularly stage attacks on polio teams and police escorting them, claiming the anti-polio drive is part of a Western conspiracy to collect intelligence.

These attacks increased after it was revealed that a fake hepatitis vaccination campaign was used as a ruse by the CIA in the hunt for al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden, who was killed by US commandos in 2011 in Pakistan.

Pakistan's second polio vaccination drive of the year comes as the country battles to bring down steadily rising daily infections of coronavirus, currently at more than 4,000 per day, amid a third wave of the pandemic.

On Monday, Pakistan put virus hotspots in more than two dozen cities with higher infection rates under lockdown and started the process of vaccinating people aged 50 and above.

But the vaccination campaign, which started last week, has so far received a lukewarm response. Pakistan has registered more than 659,000 coronavirus cases and 14,256 deaths.

Canadian Panel Recommends AstraZeneca Pause For Under 55

Agenceis

Canada's National Advisory Committee on Immunisation is recommending a pause on AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccinations for people under 55 for safety reasons, a person familiar with the matter told The Associated Press on Monday.

The person confirmed the recommendation on condition of anonymity as they were not authorised to speak publicly before the announcement. It remains a recommendation and it is up to each of Canada's provinces to decide to follow it or not.

It was not immediately clear

why that is being recommended but several European countries that had suspended using the vaccine over concerns it could cause blood clots have resumed administering it after the EU's drug regulator said the vaccine was safe.

Canada is expected to receive 1.5 million doses of AstraZeneca from the U.S. this week.

The vaccine is used widely in Britain, across the European continent and in other countries, but its rollout was troubled by inconsistent study reports about its effectiveness, and then more recently a scare about clots that had some countries temporarily pausing inoculations.

NEWSMAKERS

Google Maps To Start Directing Drivers To "Eco-Friendly" Routes

Agenceis

Google's Maps app will start directing drivers along routes estimated to generate the lowest carbon emissions based on traffic, slopes and other factors, the company announced on Tuesday.

Google, an Alphabet Inc unit, said the feature would launch later this year in the US and eventually reach other countries as part of its commitment to help combat climate change through its services.

Unless users opt out, the default route will be the "eco-friendly" one if comparable options take about the same time, Google said. When alternatives are significantly faster, Google will offer choices and let users compare estimated emissions.

"What we are seeing is for around



half of routes, we are able to find an option more eco-friendly with minimal or no time-cost tradeoff," Russell Dicker, a director of product at Google, told reporters on Monday.

Google said it derives emissions

relative estimates by testing across different types of vehicles and road types, drawing on insights from the US government's National Renewable Energy Lab (NREL). Road grade data comes from its Street View cars

as well as aerial and satellite imagery.

The potential effect on emissions from the feature is unclear. But in a study of 20 people at California State University, Long Beach, university researchers last year found participants were more inclined to consider carbon emissions in route selection after testing an app that showed estimates.

Google's announcement included additional climate-focused changes. From June, it will start warning drivers about to travel through low emissions zones where some vehicles are restricted in Germany, France, the Netherlands, Spain and the UK.

In the coming months, Maps app users will be able to compare car, biking, public transit and other travel options in one place instead of toggling between different sections.

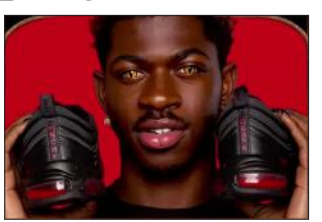
Nike Sues Company Over 'Satan Shoes'

Agenceis

Athletic shoemaker Nike Inc has sued a New York-based company that produced "Satan Shoes" purported to contain a drop of human blood as part of a collaboration with rapper Lil Nas X.

Nike said in the lawsuit on Monday that the company, MSCHF Product Studio Inc, infringed on and diluted its trademark with the black-and-red, devil-themed shoes, which went on sale online that day. Lil Nas X is not named as a defendant in the suit.

The shoes are customised Nike Air Max 97 sneakers that contain red ink and "one drop of human blood" in the sole, according to a website describing the 666 pairs of limited-edition shoes. The back



of one shoe says "MSCHF" and the other says "Lil Nas X."

Several media outlets reported that the shoes sold out in less than one minute at a cost of \$1,018 per pair. Lil Nas X said on Twitter he would choose the recipient of the 666th pair from among social media users who circulated one of his tweets.

Nike, in its lawsuit filed in federal court in New York, said the shoes were produced "without Nike's approval and authorisation,"

and the company was "in no way connected with this project."

"There is already evidence of significant confusion and dilution occurring in the marketplace, including calls to boycott Nike in response to the launch of MSCHF's Satan Shoes based on the mistaken belief that Nike has authorised or approved this product," the lawsuit said.

Nike asked the court to immediately stop MSCHF from fulfilling orders for the shoes and requested a jury trial to seek damages.

Representatives for Lil Nas X and MSCHF did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

The Grammy-winning rapper, 21, on Friday released a video for a new song "Montero (Call Me By Your Name)" in which he dances with a character wearing devil horns.

REREGISTRATION CIRCULAR

Car Dealers Protest Demanding Trade Protection

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The traders involved in the trading of cars on Tuesday asked the government to reconsider the decision that demands the reregistration of vehicles bearing non-local registration numbers.

The traders held a protest demonstration in Karanagar Srinagar and said that the government circular was impacting their businesses. The traders demanded that their trade be protected.

An order issued by the Regional Transport Officer on Monday has created a sense of insecurity among car dealers.

Protesting under the banner of Kashmir Economic Alliance, the car dealers said that the vehicles were being confiscated, and those who had bought vehicles from the car dealers were return-

ing them due to which their business is at stake.

Addressing a press conference after the protest, Kashmir Economic Alliance co-chairman Farooq Ahmed Dar said that if the government was taking steps to curb crime then they cannot interfere, but the jobs of those involved in the business must be protected.

He said that the taxes of vehicles exported to the valley from outside the states have already been paid, and they have to go through the initial stages again during their re-registration.

He said that there was a lot of confusion in this regard and asked the concerned authorities to launch an awareness campaign to provide information to the car buyers in other states. Dar said that the matter would be taken up with the concerned authorities. (CNS)

From Kashmir To Kanyakumari In 8 Days, Valley Cyclist Travels 3,600 Km In Extraordinary Feat

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Adil Teli a professional Kashmiri cyclist Tuesday created history covering the 3600 Kilometers distance between Kashmir to Kanyakumari within eight days, one hour and 37 minutes time duration.

Braving all odds including rough terrains, harsh climatic conditions, traffic snarls and other difficulties, Adil kept on riding with full energy to break the Guinness Book of World Record set by Om Mahajan, who covered the same distance within eight days, seven hours and 38 minutes last year.

Adil, a young cyclist from Narbal area of Budgam district started his journey on March-22 morning after flagged off by Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Pandurang K Pole from Lal Chowk area of Srinagar.

Passionate about cycling, Adil had already set a record in his name by covering 440 Kilometres distance from Srinagar to Leh in just 26 hrs, 30 min.

Abraq Agro which supported and sponsored Adil on the cycling expedition has lauded Adil on this great achievement. Abraq Agro also expressed its gratitude to the Divisional Administration Kashmir for its support throughout the Adil's journey in setting the new record.

For Adil, Srinagar - Leh Cycling expedition turned a turning point boosting him to go for more and set eyes on breaking the World Record; however, it was not easy and needed dedication, passion, stamina and proper guidance and training.

To chase his dream of setting the world record, Adil went to Amrit-



sar where he went under rigorous training for 4-5 months.

Adil, a fastest rider from Srinagar to Leh, did his training for cycling, at Gurunanak Dev University at Amritsar under coach Rajesh - H.O.D cycling Department.

He was trained at different levels, while in JNDU (University) trained for 10,000 kms of endurance and 20,000 kms. This training helped him to take up Kashmir to Kanyakumari Challenge. He was amongst the top 10 in the National Championship in the fixed Spring finish. In

the beginning of the pandemic, it was very difficult to arrange bicycle parts and due to the ban on imported parts but with the support of sponsors everything was managed.

Staring his journey from Srinagar, Adil pedalled through many states including cities which included Sanant Nagar NH44, Qazigund, New Tunnel Banihal, Nashri Tunnel, Lakhapur, Pathankot, Jalandar, Ludhiana, Delhi, Agra, Gwalior, Jhansi, Nagpur, Hyderabad, Gutti, Bangalore, Madurai and finally Kanyakumari.

Disproportionate Assets Case Registered Against AEE, J&K PCC



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Anti-Corruption Bureau Tuesday said that it conducted a verification into the allegations of accumulations of assets disproportionate to known sources of income by Bashir Ahmad Mir posted as AEE, JKPC Ltd.

In a statement, the ACB said that the suspect was found in possession of huge assets in the shape of immovable / movable properties on his own name as well as his family members.

"The properties include one double storey palatial house at 09-Hill View Colony Rangreth, Srinagar and two Luxurious Cars. He spent huge amount on education of his children outside the state. He was also found in possession of FDRs Bank Balances/Insurance Policies etc. The accused spent

huge money on purchase of gold, marriage of children and renovation of house."

The statement said the assets have been found disproportionate to his known sources of income, therefore constituting commission of offences punishable under section 5(1) (e), r/w 5(2) J&K P.C Act Svt. 2006.

It said a case under FIR No. 05/2021 P/S ACB(SBG) was registered against Bashir Ahmad Mir, son of Abdul Aziz, a resident of Pati Vethpora Pandrethan at present 9-Hill View Colony Rawalpora, Wanbal Rangreth, Srinagar presently posted as AEE JKPC Ltd Unit 5th Anantnag. "Searches were also conducted in the residential house of accused AEE after obtaining proper search warrants from the Court." Further Investigation in the case is going on.

No Case Of New Covid-19 Mutant In Kashmir: Dr Naveed 'Vaccination Only Lessens Chances Of Severity'

Ageenceis

SRINAGAR: Valley's leading Pulmonologist and head Chest Disease hospital, Dr. Naveed Nazir Tuesday said that no signs of the new coronavirus strain have been found in Kashmir valley as of now.

Dr Naveed said that among the tests that have been sent for genome sequencing, none has shown the mutant till date. Dr. Naveed, however, said, "It is not necessary that every vaccinated person is fully protected from Covid-19. They can get re-

infected by the virus. Vaccination is effective in decreasing the rate of severity of the infection and mortality."

He asserted that the number of positive cases and deaths related to Covid-19 have gradually increased since the past one week in the valley, adding that if required precautions are not taken there is possibility of heavy spike.

He added that there is no surety for how long the vaccine will be effective in humans and stressed upon strict adherence to Covid related SOPs. (KDC)

'Justice Delayed Is Justice Denied': CUK's Law Dept Organises Webinar

Observer News Service

GANDERBAL: Department of Law, School of Legal Studies (SLS), Central University of Kashmir (CUK) Tuesday organised an international webinar "Arbitration, Mediation, Negotiation and Conciliation: Opportunities and Challenges" at Tulumulla Campus here.

Prof. Farooq Ahmad Mir, Dean, SLS highlighted the status of pendency cases before courts in the country by referring to data and advocated the importance of alternative dispute resolution process. He suggested that out of box solutions have to be thought for resolving pending cases.

Prof. Viney Kapoor, Vice Chancellor, Dr. B.R Ambedkar National Law University, Haryana pointed out that in Indian traditional society there has been a practice of dialogue to resolve disputes among people. She added that what can be achieved in a peaceful manner cannot be achieved by fighting. She stressed on the importance of conciliation and mediation in family and property disputes and stressed that one should go for the solutions instead of dragging matters for years in civil courts.

Prof. Mehraj ud Din Mir, Vice Chancellor, in his presidential remarks focused on the importance of "Arbitration, Mediation, Nego-



tiation and Conciliation, in resolution of disputes." He pointed out that delay in delivery of justice ultimately amounts to denial of justice. He said that "various criminal syndicates have emerged in the metro cities that have emerged as off shoots of delays and backlogs as people consider these syndicates as means of speedy justice."

Justice Kannan Krishnamoorthy (Retd.) Judge, Punjab and Haryana High Court gave the overall figures under ADR and highlighted the need to improve the conventional tools and develop new ways to settle disputes. He highlighted the challenges faced by the awards of arbitral tribunals and said that there is a need to train the lawyers in negotiation so that there is negotiation before litigation.

Chief Guest, Justice Kurian Josep (Retd.) Judge, Supreme Court discussed the process of arbitration and said that arbitration is slightly expensive and time consuming. "To make it cost effective we have to go for sole arbitration rather than multiple number of arbitrators." Highlighting the role of mediator, he pointed out that a mediator needs to be involved and mediation needs to be evaluated and should serve the real purpose. He added that ADR lessens the burden of parties and protect their self-respect in terms of anybody not being subject to defeat but reaching to solution amicably.

In his address Dr. Jamal Chaykhouni CEO, AIMarsat UAE suggested some innovative methods of mediation which he called as hybrid mediation.

J&K Congress Chief, Workers Briefly Detained In Rajouri

Observer News Service

JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) president G A Mir was detained on Tuesday along with senior party leaders and workers during a protest against the hike in prices of petrol and other essential commodities in Rajouri district, a party spokesman said.

Prominent among those taken into preventive custody included JKPC vice president Raman Ballala, former legislators Ravinder Sharma and Ashok Sharma, former minister and District Development Council (DDC) vice chairman Shabir Khan, the spokesman said.

An official said dozens of Congress activists, including Mir, were detained briefly to maintain law and order.

JKPCC chief spokesman Ravinder Sharma said a contingent of police personnel stopped the Congress activists led by Mir from marching towards the office of Deputy Commissioner, Rajouri and later the top leadership along with hundreds of workers were arrested.

Earlier addressing the protesters, Mir said the BJP's claim of providing 'pro-people' governance stands exposed as the central government has allegedly failed miserably to address the issues affecting the public.

The common man is going through the worst sufferings under the current dispensation, which has sold its soul to few businessmen, ignoring the agonies of the country-

men, he alleged. The Congress leader said the country is presently going through a state of crisis.

The graph of the inflation is on a constant rise, the fuel prices have touched the sky, and lakhs of farmers across the country are protesting for repeal of three farm laws aiming to snatch their right over their own lands.

The victims of these three issues are the common men, the countrymen who are the true sons of the soil, he said. The JKPC chief dwelt upon a volley of subjects and expressed concern over vicious political environment across the country, describing division of people on the basis of religion for votes as dangerous.

The votes should be sought on the plank of nation building, development, upliftment of poor and not by exploiting religion, he said, adding the youth have to play a crucial role by negating and isolating all such forces which hoodwink them by generating fear about religion being in danger.

Expressing dismay over the functioning of the government in Jammu and Kashmir led by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, the party's J-K chief accused the administration of working against the interests of the people.

Jammu and Kashmir is passing through a most difficult phase with the insensitive BJP government pursuing anti-poor policies, he said.

Mir accused BJP of plunging Jammu and Kashmir into uncertainty and said their inherent contradictions can lead to unprecedented political crisis.

Kiln Owners In Anantnag Asked To Sell Bricks At Notified Rates



Observer News Service

ANANTNAG: On the directions of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Anantnag, a team of officers comprising STO, DMO and AD FCS&CA conducted raids and on spot inspection of various Brick kilns across the district.

The drive was conducted under the overall supervision of Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Anantnag, Sheikh Ghulam Hassan. The officers asked the Brick kiln owners to produce standard quality bricks of proper weight and dimensions besides complying with the standard rates.

The raids were conducted on Brick Kilns after reports had come into the notice of authorities regarding sale of bricks at exorbitant rates in the district in violation of the fixed rates notified by govt.

Meanwhile, the district administration has advised the general public to approach its offices regarding the overcharging of brick rates and violations of the govt. orders.

Chauhan Reviews Functioning Of Labour Department



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Commissioner Secretary, Labour and Employment (L&E), Sarita Chauhan Tuesday chaired a meeting to review functioning of the department at Civil Secretariat.

The meeting was attended by Labour Commissioner, J&K, Abdul Rashid War; Deputy Labour Commissioner, Kashmir, Ahmad Husain Bhat; Assistant Labour Commissioner of Kashmir division and other concerned officials of the department.

The meeting also discussed in detail implementation of various Welfare schemes on the ground.

Speaking on the occasion, Commissioner Secretary said that the department is committed to wel-

fare of the working class and empowerment of Labourers as they play a major role in the infrastructure building of J&K.

While reviewing the status of court cases, Chauhan directed the officers for early disposal of all pending cases. She asked them to put in place a mechanism to simplify the court cases of workers so that they do not suffer during settlement of their cases.

The Commissioner Secretary maintained that the J&K government has placed an institutional mechanism to implement welfare measures on ground to ensure workers are provided all benefits from government sponsored welfare schemes. She impressed upon the officers to work with added

zeal, in cohesion with present scenario and technological trends to yield better result on ground.

During the meeting, the Commissioner Secretary was informed that Rs 62 crore has been disbursed as financial assistance among active registered workers under BOC-WWD till February this year.

It was further given out that 57566 cases under different Welfare schemes including Education assistance, Medical assistance, Disability assistance, Death and Funeral assistance were also disposed off.

It was also informed that 2649 inspections were conducted under different Labour Acts besides Rs 1.70 crore were realised as revenue during the period.

NATIONAL EDUCATION SOCIETY FOR TRIBAL STUDENTS (NESTS)
(Autonomous organization Under Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Govt. of India)
GF Gate No. 3 A Jeevan Tara building, Parliament street New Delhi, 110001

EKLAHYA MODEL RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS TEACHING STAFF SELECTION EXAM (ETSSE) - 2021

National Education Society for Tribal Students (NESTS), an autonomous organization under Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India, registered under the Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860, invites online applications for the recruitment of the teaching staff viz. Principal, Vice-Principal, PGT and TGT for Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) across the states.

Details regarding the online application, educational qualifications, teaching experience (wherever applicable) and other eligibility criteria etc. for the ETSSE-2021 has been detailed in the Information Bulletin, which is accessible at <https://recruitment.nta.nic.in>.

The eligible and interested candidates can apply online up to 30.04.2021 (up to 23:50 Hrs. on the above-mentioned website by submitting the prescribed application-cum-examination fees mentioned there on). State-wise vacant positions are available in the Information Bulletin and vacant positions in a State are open to only those who are domiciled in the concerned State.

The candidates are advised to keep visiting the official website of National Testing Agency (<https://recruitment.nta.nic.in>) for the latest updates.

KASHMIR
OBSERVER

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K O V I E W

Vaccine not lockdown

As the coronavirus cases surge in Kashmir and across the country, there's again talk of fresh lockdown, albeit, the government both at the centre and in J&K are not in a hurry to impose one. This is because, the lockdowns have proved disastrous in their fallout on the economy. India's economy last year plunged by one-fourth. As the example around the world would have us believe, lockdown has only reduced the infections not controlled them. In J&K, the lockdown also crushed the economy, leaving thousands of people unemployed. It stopped the circulation of money and hit the marginalized sections very hard. In fact, the fallout of the lockdown has been far worse than that of the pandemic and on a much bigger scale. What was billed as a cure has turned out to be worse than the disease.

As things stand, we have moved past the stage where recourse to a lockdown is even an option. What the government can focus on instead is to strictly enforce the social distancing norms in public. And it can do so, considering the smaller population of Kashmir makes the infections more manageable than the densely populated states across India.

Kashmir economy is looking forward to a post-Coronavirus period and hopes it remains peaceful. The region has been through a long period of disruption. We can only hope that the world is able to get a handle on this deadly virus and get back to a normal life.

Meanwhile, the only thing that can defeat the pandemic is the vaccination. The urgency of administering jabs to people can't be over-emphasised. We can hardly afford the steep spike in the cases that could force the government to go for yet another lockdown. So the vaccination has to pick up in right earnest. In Kashmir too, there's a dire need that more and more people get shots. On Monday, the former Chief Minister Dr Farooq Abdullah also tested positive. J&K recorded 235 new positive COVID-19 cases, taking the infection tally to 1,30,228, even as no fresh death due to the disease was reported in the Union territory. A day earlier, on Sunday, the region had recorded 309 coronavirus cases, in the year's highest daily count. The death toll has reached 1,989 with four new fatalities in Kashmir. But the vaccination is not yet commensurate with the spread of the infection. It is time that the government speeds up the inoculation drive and sets up more vaccination centres. The Valley needs to be Covid-free for the businesses to return to normal and tourism to pick up in the warmer seasons ahead.

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

The China-Iran Axis

The latest sign is the weekend's pact between China and Iran, an example of U.S. adversaries uniting to advance their strategic ambitions.

The two sides signed what they described as a 25-year "strategic partnership" that amounts to a significant deepening of ties. China will invest several hundred million dollars in a variety of Iranian projects, including nuclear power, ports, and oil and gas development. In return China will get a steady supply of Iranian oil. The two will also deepen their defense cooperation as China will transfer some military technology.

Apologists for the 2015 Iran nuclear deal are saying this doesn't add up to more than the status quo, and thus shouldn't interfere with renewed U.S. courtship of Iran. Don't believe them. This is a big deal that advances the strategic interests of both sides—at the expense of the U.S. and stability in the Middle East.

The deal helps Iran dodge American sanctions, and the cash infusion will ease economic pressure on the Islamic Republic. Iran will have a long-time buyer for its oil exports that were reduced by U.S. sanctions. The foreign-exchange income, if that's how the payments are made, will finance the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and its proxy forces in Yemen, Syria and Iraq.

The countries will also form a Chinese-Iranian bank with the aim of evading the U.S. dollar dominance in world trade that gives U.S. sanctions their bite. Breaking the dollar's hold on global trade and finance is a major goal of Russia, China and Iran. China believes that U.S. fiscal profligacy is putting the dollar's role as the world's reserve currency at risk, and they want the Chinese yuan to replace it.

The China-Iran tie also complicates U.S. strategic interests. President Biden and Europe want Iran to rejoin the 2015 nuclear deal, but an Iran backed by China is under less pressure to do so. The same goes for aiding their Houthi's who want to take over Yemen. China and Russia can block any attempt to put more global pressure on Iran through the United Nations.

The deal expands China's influence in the Middle East, which it wants for access to energy and raw materials as well as to increase its economic sway. China has also been courting the Saudis and Gulf states with economic lures. As the shale revolution has made the U.S. less dependent on Middle Eastern oil, those oil exporters need access to the China market. If the U.S. is seen as unreliable, these countries can hedge their bets with China. American influence in the Persian Gulf is not a birthright.

Wall Street Journal



A Dialogue for Us?

No one in the region or the world is more concerned about the outcome of India, Pakistan talks than Kashmiris

RIYAZ WANI

So far there has hardly been a regional effort that works to resolve issues in a cooperative framework. Each country is looking to secure their respective interests rather than work together for a solution

The surprise thaw in India, Pakistan relations has become a major talking point in Kashmir: it figures in everyday social interactions, social media threads and whatsapp groups. People are curious to know what led to the sudden re-engagement between the two estranged countries, where could it lead to and more importantly whether it could usher in any change in Kashmir.

As for what led to the detente, it is anybody's guess. For clues, we need to look at the evolving geopolitical environment. China's incursions in Ladakh, the endgame in Afghanistan war and the emerging cold war between the US and China are redrawing geopolitics of the region. This has drawn the US closer to India and China to Pakistan.

In fact, Washington's priorities with India are no longer regional in their nature but their scope is the larger geo-politics. In recent years, the US-India engagement has been a direct outcome of the remaking of the global power equation with India not only being recognized as a global power in its own right but also as a countervailing force to China, the world's No 2 power. It goes without saying that India's 1.3 billion population with a value addition of a burgeoning middle class has become an ultimate attraction for the west.

On the other hand, the alliance between China and Pakistan has deepened. More so, at a time when China is staying put at the three friction points in Ladakh after sorting out Pangong Tso. While US and Pakistan are still reasonably good friends, it is the mutual expedience that keeps them tied together. The relationship will snap at the first opportunity the US outgrows the need to seek Pakistan's assistance in securing geo-strategic objective in the region. And this can happen sooner than later. Pakistan is already apprehensive about once again losing its leverage with the US following the latter's exit from Afghanistan. Things are likely to become more difficult, if the west sees Islamabad as an ally of China at a time when a new cold war is

breaking out, now between the US and the China.

India's situation is also difficult: The power differential between India and China is growing. Over the last three decades, China has become a far bigger power than India, both economically and militarily. So much so that China is now seen as a credible rival to the US which has otherwise been the sole superpower since the break-up of the USSR in 1989. India's choices are thus stark: It has to either co-operate with China in a subservient position. Or try standing up to Beijing

As for what led to the detente, it is anybody's guess. For clues, we need to look at the evolving geo-political environment. China's incursions in Ladakh, the endgame in Afghanistan war and the emerging cold war between the US and China are redrawing geopolitics of the region. This has drawn the US closer to India and China to Pakistan.

By entering into a formal alliance with the US and becoming an active member of Quadrilateral Security Dialogue - a grouping comprising the US, Japan, Australia and India - also called Asian NATO. Both choices have their consequences, more detrimental than favourable to India. So, New Delhi has so far been chary of committing itself to either side so as to maintain its strategic autonomy. This would involve negotiating its relations with Beijing and also engage with the US.

But this leaves out Pakistan. The long running estranged relationship between India and Pakistan has been the singlemost factor that has been complicating the matters in the region. The relationship plunged to its nadir after the withdrawal of J&K autonomy. So, if there has to be a stable South Asia, it will involve a broad reconciliation among the three major powers of the region: China, India and Pakistan. And this would need resolving the existing differences and reconciling the contending interests of the three countries which essentially keep the region destabilized.

Need is for a broader regional approach to reconcile the competing interests of the three countries and to work for an integrated solution to

the longstanding conflicts. Deferring the resolution is certain to aggravate the rivalries, especially the one between India and Pakistan.

So far there has hardly been a regional effort that works to resolve issues in a cooperative framework. Each country is looking to secure their respective interests rather than work together for a solution.

Is the recent disengagement with China at Pangong Tso and the talks Pakistan a step in this direction? We frankly don't know. All we know both the developments took place almost simultaneously. But

there are the other explanations too, as the reports and analyses in the media in India, Pakistan and the other international publications would have us believe. And it hardly matters what led to the engagement as long as it delivers to the benefit of all. If the history is any guide, such hopes have invariably been belied. The issues underlying the lingering distrust among the powers in the region, especially between India and Pakistan, are not amenable to a solution unless the countries are not only ready to stay the course but also willing to mutually concede.

No one in the region or the world is more concerned about the outcome of these talks than Kashmiris. For over seventy years, the region has been turned into an unremitting battleground for competing nation-hoods of India and Pakistan. And with every passing day, this conflict is getting messier and bloodier, something that has turned the lives of Kashmiris into a living hell.

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

The author is the Political Editor at Kashmir Observer



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All letters intended for publication must include the writer's name and address, even if a pseudonym is used. Letters are edited as clarity, space and accuracy of expression require. Our publishing a letter does not mean we agree with everything or even anything in it. -EDITOR

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Road, Rage and Risks

In the past few months I have witnessed a number of kids driving vehicles on road and this is a disturbing trend which should be immediately addressed by the government. I think besides the thrill that children get from undertaking such risks, what primarily prompts them is the peer pressure and the need to demonstrate their audacity. In the desperate attempt to look cool and win over friends children don't realise the fatal consequences that such reckless behaviour entails. The

incidence of road accidents involving children has risen and it is something that we should not take lightly, the laxity on the part of traffic police also serves to encourage children to get on the roads. The government should ensure an adequate presence of traffic police on the roads to deter children from venturing out recklessly. Besides this there is also a need to have road safety campaigns to apprise children of the mishaps that could take place because of their careless behaviour. Addition-

ally there should be counselling sessions in the schools for both parents and children to dissuade them from encouraging their children to drive before they reach 18 years of age and acquire a license. Besides this, there is also a need of an overhauling of the way that traffic police department works, the nonchalance to road rage and violation of traffic rules sets a bad precedent and kills innocent people. The salaries of traffic police department should be increased so that they don't fall prey to the bribes giv-

en by people to evade punishments. Sufficient funds should be allocated to enable this department to function properly, installation of CCTV cameras and traffic lights in absolutely necessary to allow the traffic police department to effectively monitor traffic movements and penalise those who defy the traffic rules.

.....
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7 Simple Habits to Protect Your Mental Health

Lifestyle changes to improve and prevent symptoms of depression and anxiety.

SARAH GREENBERG

A disposition that tends towards self-critical, or perfectionistic, can be a risk factor for anxiety and depression. This can include feeling like you must be perfect to be accepted, an inability to accept flaws within yourself, intense self-scrutiny, or an unrealistic sense of others' expectations and your capacity to meet them.

When a patient came to see me for long-standing symptoms of depression and anxiety (they often co-occur), he was hesitant at best. He wanted to feel better, but “getting treatment” didn’t fit with his narrative for what he was “supposed to be doing as a grown man” in his culture. He had a decent, consistent job, but felt his life lacked meaning and joy. He was so hard on himself and avoided others for fear of judgment.

I knew he’d run the other way if I jumped too quickly into a medical referral or diagnosis, so we started with the most human approaches — connecting about what was really going on for him, and exploring readily available lifestyle changes that aligned with his interest, motivation, and values.

Within weeks, his spark started to come back, and within months he felt he had a new lease on life. He wasn’t suddenly happy all the time. But he felt a new sense of his capacity to take charge of his mental health.

Will everyone have an outcome like that patient of mine from lifestyle changes? Definitely not — anxiety and depression are complex conditions with tremendous individual variation, varied underlying causes, and varied levels of severity.

But can everyone benefit from learning the foundation for how to care for their mind either separately or as an adjunct to professional treatment? I believe so.

The following seven health behaviors are key ones linked to prevention or symptom improvement of anxiety and depression.

While everything on this list is simple, it’s far from easy. Change is hard. And if you currently have depression or anxiety, it can be especially challenging. That’s why one of the key behaviors is being kind to yourself.

If moved to do so, choose one area to work on at a time, perhaps an area you feel especially motivated or confident to address, or an area that feels aligned with your most important values. Then take it one step at a time. The funny thing about change is we often don’t know it’s happening, we just keep rowing in the right direction, and usually after a few, or a few thousand, twists and turns, we look back in awe at how far we’ve come.

1. Sleep

While 10-18% of adults in the U.S. experience chronic sleep issues, this number jumps to 65-90% of those with depression, and over 50% of those with generalized anxiety disorder. Of those with depression, 65% had sleep issues first.

Addressing sleep issues can alleviate symptoms of mental health conditions, and given sleep problems are a risk factor for mental health conditions, can also help protect your mental health.

2. Self-Compassion

A disposition that tends towards self-critical, or perfectionistic, can be a risk factor for anxiety and depression. This can include feeling like you must be perfect to be accepted, an inability to accept flaws within yourself, intense self-scrutiny, or an unrealistic sense of others’ expectations and your capacity to meet them.

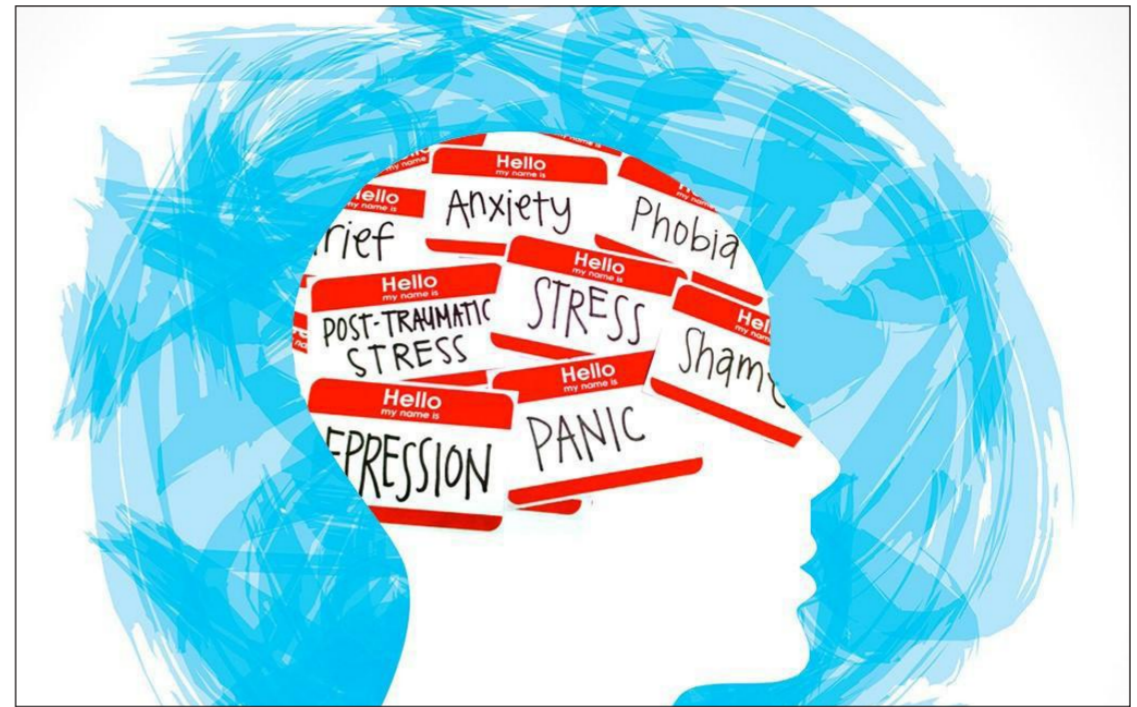
Despite the fear of many who have this characteristic, the antidote to perfectionism isn’t letting it all go, or saying goodbye to standards — it’s self-compassion.

According to researcher Kristen Neff, self-compassion has three components: self-kindness vs. self-judgment, common humanity vs. isolation, mindfulness vs. overidentification.

How we treat ourselves through the ups and downs of life can have a tremendous impact on health and mental health.

3. Social Connection

From the time we are born, we need social connection in order to thrive.



A recent study lead by researchers at Harvard sought to understand what could most protect us from depression that is within our control. After analyzing over 100 potential factors, they found that social connection was by far the most important protective factor.

It’s been a lonely year for many. And many are anxious at the prospect of going back to normal. But connection doesn’t mean a big party or bustling office. It can be confiding in one trusted person about how you’re really doing, listening to how someone else is really doing, giving a meaningful thank you, or having a (safe) visit with any family member or friend.

If this feels out of reach, try making a short list of people who at any point have given you a sense of belonging. Other studies have shown that just calling positive relationships to mind can have a positive impact on our capacity to tolerate stress.

4. Exercise

Exercise can be important for preventing depression since having a sedentary lifestyle is a risk factor. One study found that 15 minutes a day of vigorous exercise significantly prevents depression. Another study found that 12 weeks of vigorous exercise at 30 minutes, three to five times per week reduced symptoms by 47%.

For co-existing anxiety and depression, a 2020 study led by James Blumenthal, professor of psychiatry at Duke University, exercise was most effective when combined with medication. Otherwise, a high level of anxiety seemed to dull the effects of exercise for reducing depression.

What about anxiety? Research shows exercise can be a positive distraction, that higher levels of activity can protect against symptoms, and that a single session of exercise can have immediate benefits for reducing stress and worry.

5. Nutrition

A lot has been written on the link between food and mood. We have so many neurons and neurotransmitters in our gut that it’s been dubbed “the second brain.” In fact, 95% of the serotonin we produce is from neurotransmitters in the gut.

Traditional diets (like the Mediterranean diet) high in vegetables, whole grains, and good-for-your-brain fats are associated with a 25-35% reduced risk of depression compared to the typical western diet

which is higher in sugar, processed foods, and dairy.

Although we typically think of positive nutrition as a prevention habit, a 2020 study found significant reductions in depression symptoms, as well as co-occurring anxiety symptoms, after a 12-week intervention that offered nutritionist support to follow a modified Mediterranean diet. These findings suggest that nutrition therapy is a useful adjunct to treatment, and may one day be validated as a treatment in and of itself.

6. Meaning and Purpose

No list could be complete without a nudge to meaning and purpose. If we struggle with mood and negative emotions, it may be especially important to define happiness for ourselves. As Victor Frankl wrote in *Man’s Search for Meaning*: “For success, like happiness, cannot be pursued; it must ensue.”

It’s hard to control “happy.” It’s much easier to control “meaning.”

7. Mindfulness

Through mindfulness, you can shift how you relate to difficult thoughts and feelings. Many find that with continued practice, they still have difficult thoughts and feelings but they can observe them with a little more distance and a little less believing them as fact.

One study found that after eight weeks of mindfulness practice, practitioners showed increased grey matter concentration, which is associated with emotional regulation, among other benefits. Mindfulness is not a cure-all, but it can be quite a helpful tool for shifting how you experience challenges.

Which of these habits is most effective? Well, that really depends on what works for you! If someone tells you mindfulness is “the only way,” let that notion drift away like leaves on a river. As a 2021 review from the University of Cambridge found, for instance, mindfulness is helpful in most clinical settings but not necessarily more so than other wellness approaches, like exercise.

So really the best approach is: Get whatever support is in reach (for clinical levels of anxiety and depression, professional therapy and medical evaluation is the gold standard) and care for your mind based on what works for you.

Psychology Today

Are You a Lucky Person?

Whether you believe you are lucky or not may depend on your personality.

JESSICA SCHRADER

Fortuna, the Roman goddess of luck, is often depicted blindfolded and steering a ship. She is steering our lives, and she is doing so blindly.

Luck is a crucial component in our lives. Being born in either the right or the wrong side of the tracks, carrying these or the other genes in our chromosomes, or indeed taking this or the other turn on a seemingly unimportant day, will determine our future. Not everyone agrees: “When it comes to luck, you make your own,” said Bruce Springsteen. True to some extent, and yet I strongly suspect that there are countless hardworking potential rock stars out there whose talent remains undiscovered because they have never been in the right place at the right time. A creative gift and hard work play crucial parts in any success story, but sheer luck is equally critical.

Having accepted that there is such a thing as luck, there are two ways of assessing how lucky one is as a person. The first one is to consider how much luck one has had in life up to the present point. I, for instance, consider myself pretty lucky. I don’t delude myself into thinking that the good stuff I see in my life would have happened regardless of luck. To give an example, I was fortunate enough to find my life companion in a strange city in a foreign country, and it happened by chance. I had landed in that city after applying for the first job I saw advertised in a medical publication that week. I became the trainee doctor in a ward where she worked as a nurse. A different ad on a different magazine, or on a different week, would have taken me to an un-



doubtedly worse destiny. At the same time, there have been instances in my biography in which I was spectacularly unlucky, but they are too painful to recall. All of us have been both lucky and unlucky at different times, but I have no doubt that general

“luckiness” in life could be represented by a normal distribution graph, in which the bulk of us would be found around the middle, blessed with a more or less average amount of luck.

A second way of assessing luck is the belief in

“trait” luckiness; in other words, good luck as a personal attribute that not only has influenced events in one’s past, but that will also continue to determine events in one’s future. People who believe in luck as a general factor in life and those who believe that they are personally lucky tend to have very different personalities. Essentially, the former tend to be more neurotic and less happy than the latter. It is a good thing therefore to believe on one’s luckiness, but it is also absurd, as the following example illustrates.

Random is capricious and continues to operate randomly, whatever may have happened up to a given point. A roulette player may think that after five consecutive reds, the next spin must surely fall on black, following what has been named the “Monte Carlo Fallacy.” Of course, the odds for black will remain precisely 50% in every single spin, however many consecutive times the ball has landed either on red or on black. On August 18, 1913, the ball fell on black 26 successive times at the Monte Carlo Casino (hence the name of the fallacy). The odds of this happening were ridiculously low, so perhaps not surprisingly, gamblers in the casino bet heavily against the ball landing on black during this streak, some losing fortunes in the process.

I would argue that seeing yourself as a lucky person is itself lucky, as feeling confident that you will land on your feet whatever life throws at you must be very comforting. “Luck is believing you’re lucky,” said Tennessee Williams. I, like many others, prefer to stay on the good side of Fortuna and not tempt luck too much, lest I displease her.

Psychology Today

Study reveals differences between men's and women's brains

Agencies

How different are men's and women's brains? The question has been explored for decades, but a new study by researchers at Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science coalesced this wide-ranging research into a single mega-synthesis. And the answer is: hardly at all.

"Men and women's brains do differ slightly, but the key finding is that these distinctions are due to brain size, not sex or gender," Dr. Eliot said. "Sex differences in the brain are tiny and inconsistent, once individuals' head size is accounted for."

The unusually large study of studies, "Dump the 'dimorphism': Comprehensive synthesis of human brain studies reveals few male-female differences beyond size," published in *Neuroscience and Biobehavioral Reviews*, finds that size is the only clear-cut difference between male and female brains.

Women's brains are about 11% smaller than men's, in proportion to their body size. Smaller brains allow certain features, such as a slightly higher ratio of grey matter to white matter, and a higher ratio of connections between, versus within, cerebral hemispheres.

"This means that the brain differences between large- and small-headed men are as great as the brain differences between the average man and woman," Dr. Eliot said. "And importantly, none of these size-related differences can account for familiar behavioral differences between men and women, such as empathy or spatial skills."

This is not the story typically publicized about sex differences in the human brain.

"Since the dawn of MRI, studies finding statistically significant sex differences have received outsized attention by scientists and the media," said Dr. Eliot, whose books include "Pink Brain, Blue Brain: How Small Differences Grow Into Troublesome Gaps."

"Researchers have been quietly accumulating massive amounts of data comparing male and female brains, but it's only the differences that get hyped," Dr. Eliot continued. "Unlike other areas of health research, women have been equally included in brain imaging from the outset."

Dr. Eliot and her collaborators -- fourth-year Chicago Medical School students Adnan Ahmed, Hiba Khan and Julie Patel -- conducted a meta-synthesis of three decades of research, assimilating hundreds of the largest and most highly-cited brain imaging studies addressing 13 distinct measures of alleged sex difference.

For nearly every measure, they found almost no differences that were widely reproduced across studies, even those involving thousands of participants. For example, the volume or thickness of specific regions in the cerebral cortex is often reported to differ between men and women. However, the meta-synthesis shows that the regions identified differ enormously between studies.

Male-female brain differences are also poorly replicated between diverse populations, such as Chinese versus American, meaning there is no universal marker that distinguishes men and women's brains



across the human species.

"The handful of features that do differ most reliably are quite small in magnitude," Dr. Eliot said. "The volume of the amygdala, an olive-sized part of the temporal lobe that is important for social-emotional behaviors, is a mere 1% larger in men across studies."

The study also rebuts a longstanding view that men's brains are more lateralized, meaning each hemisphere acts independently, whereas women's two hemispheres are said

to be better connected and to operate more in sync with each other. Such a difference could make males more vulnerable to disability following brain injury such as stroke.

Here again, the consensus of many studies shows that the difference is extremely small, accounting for even less than 1% of the range of left-right connectivity across the population. This finding does agree with large datasets that have found no gender difference in aphasia, or the loss of language,

following a stroke in the left hemisphere, contrary to long belief.

A last focus of the new study is on functional MRI. This method allows neuroscientists to see areas that "light up" during particular mental tasks and has been widely used to look for male-female differences during language, spatial and emotional tasks.

Across hundreds of such studies, Dr. Eliot's team found extremely poor reliability in sex difference findings -- nearly all specific brain areas that differed in activity between men and women were not repeated across studies. Such poor reproducibility agrees with recent research out of Stanford University demonstrating "false discovery," or the over-publication of false-positive findings in the scientific literature on functional MRI sex difference.

"Sex comparisons are super easy for researchers to conduct after an experiment is already done. If they find something, it gets another publication. If not, it gets ignored," Dr. Eliot said. Publication bias is common in sex-difference research, she added, because the topic garners high interest.

"Sex differences are sexy, but this false impression that there is such a thing as a 'male brain' and a 'female brain' has had wide impact on how we treat boys and girls, men and women," Dr. Eliot said.

"The truth is that there are no universal, species-wide brain features that differ between the sexes. Rather, the brain is like other organs, such as the heart and kidneys, which are similar enough to be transplanted between women and men quite successfully."

'COVID might boost social inequality in society'

Even though the ongoing COVID pandemic is sometimes marked as 'great equalizer', a recent study by researchers from Utrecht and Wageningen University has shown that throughout history, most disasters and pandemics have boosted inequality instead of leveling it.

Whether such disastrous events function as levelers or not, depends on the distribution of economic wealth and political leverage within society at the moment of crisis. Their findings on the historical effects of crises on equality in societies are now published open access in *Nature HSS Communications*.

It is often thought that the main levelers of inequality in societies were natural disasters such as epidemics or earthquakes, and social turmoil such as wars and revolutions. The most salient example is the Black Death of 1347-1352, a large-scale pandemic that killed up to half of the Eurasian population. In several



European societies, wealth disparities seem to have been reduced afterward.

The suggested logic behind that equitable effect is the decimation of people while capital remained intact, thereby shifting the economic balance in favour of labour. Crises as windows of opportunity in most cases throughout history, the opposite is true.

Bas van Bavel said, "In spite of the marked differences in character and direct impact of the shocks we studied, most historical

disasters were followed by a widening of wealth gaps."

In their article, historian Bas van Bavel (Utrecht University) and ecologist Marten Scheffer (Wageningen University) critically review evidence of the effects of catastrophes such as the plague on inequality, from medieval times till the present. Van Bavel and Scheffer used empirical data to study the long-term effects of shocks on inequality.

Their research shows a twofold effect. First, the

wealth distribution and institutional outlay of these societies at the moment of the shock to a large extent shaped the impact. Subsequently, the distribution of political leverage in society came into play in determining the institutional responses.

Van Bavel explained, "Upon a crisis, rules tend to be rewritten. Social groups and organisations with the greatest leverage can therefore use that window of opportunity to adapt institutional rules, thereby shaping long-term wealth distribution. As most societies were historically unequal, in most cases the result was a further widening of disparities."

Power to the people: the importance of bottom-up organisations Over the centuries, exceptions have occurred in situations where the ordinary people had strong leverage in shaping the response to the crisis - through organisations such as guilds, fraternities, trade unions, cooperatives, and political movements.

Agencies

Coffee waste can boost forest recovery: Study

Agencies

Coffee pulp, a waste product of coffee production, could be used to speed up tropical forest recovery on post-agricultural land, suggests a new study.

In the study published in the journal *Ecological Solutions and Evidence*, the team spread 30 dump truck loads of coffee pulp on a 35-40m area of degraded land and marked out a similar sized area without coffee pulp as a control.

"The results were dramatic," said lead researcher Rebecca Cole from the University of Hawai'i in the US.

"The area treated with a thick

layer of coffee pulp turned into a small forest in only two years while the control plot remained dominated by non-native pasture grasses," Cole added.

After only two years, the coffee pulp treated area had 80 per cent canopy cover compared to 20 per cent in the control area. The canopy in the coffee pulp area was also four times taller than that of the control area.

The addition of the half metre thick layer of coffee pulp eliminated the invasive pasture grasses which dominated the land.

These grasses are often a barrier to forest succession and their removal allowed native and pioneer

tree species, that arrived as seeds through wind and animal dispersal, to recolonise the area quickly.

The researchers also found that after two years, nutrients, including carbon, nitrogen and phosphorus, were significantly elevated in the coffee pulp treated area compared to the control.

For the study, the researchers analysed soil samples for nutrients immediately prior to the application of the coffee pulp and again two years later.

They also recorded the species present, the size of woody stems, percentage of forest ground cover and used drones to record canopy cover.

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER CITY DRAINAGE CIVIL DIVISION SMC

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NOTICE INVITING TENDERS

Fresh_e_NIT NO. 26_CDC_SMC_OF_2020-2021

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor of J&K UT, e-tenders affixed are invited on item rate basis from the Registered / Approved PWD Civil Contractors, whose enlistment cards are valid in terms of standing rules, for the below mentioned works strictly as per the terms and conditions given hereunder:-

S. No.	Name of work	Estt. Cost of work incld. Deptt. Materials (Amt. in lakhs).	Class Of Contract	Time for completion	Cost of Tender Document in the shape of e-challan	Head of Account
1.	Clearance of drainage net work and Raising of depressed manholes at Khan Colony Channapora.	9.45	C&D	20 days	750=00	14 th F.c accorded vide No: SMC/Plg/2020-21/1633-38 Dtd:18.3.2021
2.	Re-Construction of drain near House of Manzoor Ahmad and Muzaffar Ahmad upto House of M.Sadiq Wani near J.L.Park Baghi Mehtab.	4.37	DEE	30 days	450=00	14 th FC authorization conveyed No:Smc/plg/2020-21 /972-79 dtd.12.10.2020

1. 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/downloaded from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in as per the schedule of date and time mention in the detailed e-NIT.

01-	Date of Issue of tender Notice	30.03.2021
02-	Period of down loading of bidding documents/Sale of tender document	31.03.2021 from 10 AM to 07.04.2021 upto 4.00 PM
03-	Bid Submission Start date	31.03.2021 from 10 AM
04-	Bid Submission End date.	08.04.2021 upto 4.00 PM
05-	Date and time of opening of Bids on line.	09.04.2021 at 10.30 AM. In the office of Executive Engineer, CDC-SMC.
06	List of Soft Copies to be uploaded.	Scanned copy of Treasury challan (Cost of tender document) with S.No. of NIT/work. Scanned copy of GST /Registration and PAN Card. Scanned copy of Enlistment card with its validity Scanned copy of bid declaration form instead of Earnest Money (EMD).

IMPORTANT CONDITIONS:- (2) TO (6).

- The bidders are advised to read all conditions laid down in the e-NIT carefully before uploaded soft copy and short fall found in the soft copy the tender shall be rejected.
- Note:- As per Circular issued by the Finance department JK UT vide No.A/Misc(2018) -III-895 /J dated:22.12.2020 with other communications which reads as under:-
- Furnishing of Hard copies of bids immediately after submission of e-tenders is dispensed with.
- The same should be obtained only from the bidder who's declared 1st lowest (L1) after opening of bids on line.
- The cost of tenderers should be collected by introducing E-challan/or simply uploading a copy of necessary Treasury challan/Receipt. Bids must be accompanied with cost of tender document in the shape of Treasury challan/in favour of Executive Engineer, City Drainage Civil Division SMC sgr (Tender inviting authority). may be credited to M.Head 0217 pledged to Executive Engineer, City Drainage Civil Division SMC.
- All bidders has to submit Bid security declaration Form instead of Earnest Money deposit (EMD) as per the circular of Finance department (Bid security declaration form) as mentioned below:-
- a) The 1st lower bidder has to produce an amount equal to 3% of contract as performance security in shape of CDR/FDR/BG with in 02 days before fixation of contract and shall be released after successful completion of work.
- The Bids shall be deposited in electronic format on the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in as per the scheduled date mentioned above.
- All other terms and conditions shall remain unchanged as laid down in the detailed e-NIT/Tender Document issued for the work which can be down loaded from www.jktenders.gov.in.
- The intending tenderers who may wish to submit his e-tender on line shall have to upload the following documents while submitting his tender on line:- i) GST No copy uploaded ii) Pan No. uploaded iii) iv) e-challan from Treasury in the shape of Cost of Tender documents. V) Photostat copy of Registration CARD. The cost of tender document in the shape of e-challan be credited to MH-0217 in favour of Executive Engineer City Drainage Civil Division SMC Srinagar.
- Further details can be had from the office of the undersigned on all working day upto 4.00 PM.

NO: CDC-SMC/6142-70
Dtd: 30.03.2021

DIPK-15740/20

Sd/====
Executive Engineer,
City Drainage Civil Division Sgr.

Office of the Chief Executive Officer Srinagar Smart City Limited

(A J&K Government Undertaking)

1st Floor, Budshah Building, Lalchowk, Srinagar, Kashmir, J&K

Email: - srinagarscl@gmail.com

(CIN: U70200JK2017SGC010107)

Open Auction Notice No. 01/AN-SSCL of 2021.

Dated: 29-03-2021

On behalf of Chief Executive Officer, Srinagar Smart City Limited, dismantled material/scrap/burned bricks/ burned wooden planks/ stones/debris is being put on open auction at Khalsa School, Magarmal Bagh Srinagar on dt:-08-4-2021 at 11:30 AM. All the interested bidders are hereby informed to deposit security deposit of Rs. 3000/- (Rupees Three Thousand Only) in shape of CDR/FDR drawn on any scheduled/nationalized bank pledged to CEO Srinagar Smart City Limited on 07-04-2021 up to 03:00 PM.

The auction committee reserves the right to accept/reject any bid without assigning any reason. If the date of the auction happens to be a holiday the auction shall be held on next working day at 12:00 Noon, and without CDR/FDR bids will be rejected. The minimum bid amount shall be Rs. 1.06 Lacs (Rupees One Lac Six Thousand Only). The successful bidder has to clear the site within 4 (Four) days from the date of commencement of work.

Further details can be had from the Office of Chief Executive Officer Srinagar Smart City Limited on any working day during office hours.

Sd/-

Chief Executive Officer
Srinagar Smart City Limited

No: SSCL/CEO/4108-09

Date: 29/03/2021

DIPK-NB-6778/20

Petrol Price Cut By 22 Paise, Diesel By 23 Paise

Agenceis

NEW DELHI: Petrol and diesel prices on Tuesday were cut for the third time within a week on the back of softening international oil prices.

Petrol price was cut by 22 paise per litre and diesel by 23 paise per litre, according to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers.

Petrol now costs Rs 90.56 per litre in Delhi and a litre of diesel

Fuel prices were reduced for the first time in six months on March 24, and thereafter on March 25 as well after international oil prices fell on prospect of speedy recovery in consumption getting clouded by the second wave of COVID-19 cases.

They had remained on freeze thereafter as global rates edged up after one of the world's most vital waterways clogged.



comes to Rs 80.87. Rates have been reduced across the country and vary from state to state depending on the local incidence of taxation (VAT).

In Mumbai, the petrol price was cut to Rs 96.98 a litre on Tuesday from Rs 97.19, while diesel rates were reduced to Rs 87.96 from Rs 88.20, the price notification showed.

The reopening of the Suez Canal cooled rates again. In three reductions, petrol price has come down by 61 paise per litre and diesel by 60 paise. Despite bouts of rate freeze, prices had gone up by a record Rs 21.58 per litre on petrol since the government raised excise duty in March last year.

Diesel prices had increased by Rs 19.18 a litre.

India Blocks Two Bank Accounts Of China's Bytedance In Tax Case: Report

Agenceis

Indian authorities have blocked bank accounts of ByteDance in the country for alleged tax evasion and the company has asked a court to quash the directive which it fears will hit its operations hard, two sources with direct knowledge told Reuters.

ByteDance in January cut its India workforce after New Delhi decided to retain a ban on its popular video app TikTok, first prohibited last year following a border clash between India and China. China has repeatedly criticized India's move and said it suspected it was against WTO rules.

ByteDance still has around 1,300 employees in India, most of whom service its overseas operations, including work on activities such as content moderation.

In mid-March, two of ByteDance India's bank accounts in Citibank and HSBC were ordered blocked by authorities for alleged evasion of certain taxes in online advertising dealings between the ByteDance unit in India and its parent entity in Singapore, TikTok Pte Ltd, the two sources said.

Other than the two accounts, the authorities also directed Citibank and HSBC to not allow ByteDance India to withdraw funds from any other bank accounts linked to its tax identification number, the first source said.

In a court filing which is due to be heard soon at a High Court in the financial capital Mumbai - ByteDance India has argued that while it had only about \$10 million in its accounts, the blocking decision was an abuse of the legal process and will make it hard for it to pay salaries and taxes, the source added.

Both the sources declined to be identified as the details of the bank freeze or company's court challenge were not public.

ByteDance India, as well as HSBC, Citibank and India's finance ministry, did not immediately re-



spond to a request for comment.

The TikTok app ban - part of dozens of other Chinese apps which were banned last year - in what India said was in interests of national security and sovereignty. The move was widely seen as India's broader pushback against Chinese businesses after clashes at a disputed Himalayan border site left 20 Indian soldiers dead.

The directive to freeze ByteDance India's bank accounts came after tax authorities last year inspected documents at the company's office, scrutinized documents and questioned some executives in relation to the advertising and other transactions with its parent entity, the first source said.

In its court document, which the source was privy to, ByteDance India has argued that its entire business had come to a standstill because of the bank freeze and that such an action violates its rights "to carry free trade and business".

"The company was already struggling with the India ban. This can hit employee salaries, vendor payments," the second source said.

TikTok had come under scrutiny around the world. During former U.S. president Donald Trump's administration, which alleged that the app posed national security concerns as personal data of U.S. users could be obtained by China's government, an allegation the company denied.

U.S. President Joe Biden's new administration has paused a government lawsuit that could have resulted in a de facto ban on TikTok's use in the United States.



Evening Flights To Srinagar A Major Boost To Kashmir Tourism: Director Tourism

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: In a much-needed boost to the tourism sector, night flight operations have started at Srinagar airport bringing cheers to the travel and hospitality sector in the Kashmir Valley.

The first direct evening flight of Indigo airline with 184 passengers on-board from Bangalore landed at Srinagar airport on March 29 which was warmly received by Director Tourism Kashmir Dr. GN Itoo along with Director AAL, Srinagar and senior officers from the tourism department.

Both the evening and the direct flight from a major city like Bangalore will go a long way in attracting more tourists to the Valley.

Welcoming the development, Director Tourism Kashmir said eve-

ning and also direct flights from major cities will give a major fillip to the Valley's tourism sector.

"We have been pursuing direct and the evening flights for a long time which has now got materialised. There are many travellers, especially business class who fly by evening flights to save time. These flights will further increase the tourists' influx to Kashmir and boost JK's economy," said Dr GN Itoo.

Earlier also GoAir ran a test trial for evening flights and successfully landed at Srinagar. The GoAir has also announced non-stop operations from major cities including Ahmedabad.

Director Tourism Kashmir said with the introduction of the evening flights, around 42 flights operate at Srinagar airport on a daily basis. "We are hopeful that more airlines will fol-

low the suit as we are expecting good tourist footfall in coming months. We have been promoting Kashmir's varied tourism products among travellers through our marketing campaigns across many cities of the country. We received a good response and tourists are flying in in good numbers."

Notably, after the travel restrictions were eased in India, Kashmir has witnessed an overwhelming footfall of tourists, especially during winter months due to frequent snowfall which acted as a major attraction for the travellers.

The department also organised many festivals and events at Srinagar, Pahalgam, Sonmarg, Doodhpathri, Badamwari in addition to organising around 20 roadshows in different cities in the country which helped promote the JK tourism sector in a big way.

India's 2021 Economic Output Likely To Remain Below 2019 Level: UN Report

Agenceis

NEW DELHI: India's economic output in 2021 is expected to remain below the 2019 level despite roll-out of the vaccine to deal with the menace of the coronavirus pandemic, said a report by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN-ESCAP) released on Tuesday.

India, according to the "Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2021: Towards post-COVID-19 resilient economies", is estimated to record an economic growth of 7 per cent in 2021-22, over a contraction of 7.7 per cent witnessed in the previous fiscal on account of the pandemic's impact on normal business activity.

Observing that India entered the pandemic with subdued GDP growth and investment, the report said, "Following one of the most stringent lockdowns in the world, the economic disruptions that the country experienced mounted in the second quarter of 2020." It added that a subsequent change in lockdown policies and success in reducing infection rates supported an impressive economic turnaround in the third quarter.

"However, the pace of recovery moderated in the fourth quarter with estimated year-on-year growth still close to zero."

"Despite a robust reduction in new COVID-19 cases and the start of vaccine roll-out, India's 2021 eco-



nom output is expected to remain below the 2019 level," it added.

Meanwhile, maintaining low borrowing costs while keeping non-performing loans in check would be a challenge, it added.

In its second advance estimates of national accounts, the National Statistical Office (NSO) has projected an 8 per cent contraction in 2020-21, showing the pandemic impact.

The report further said China's swift and effective response to COVID-19 enabled it to become the only major economy worldwide to achieve a positive annual economic growth rate in 2020. Supported by strong recovery in industrial production, infrastructure and housing investment, merchandise exports, and a modest recovery in private consumption, its 6.5 per cent year-on-year growth rate in the fourth quarter exceeded pre-pandemic growth levels.

The report forecasts that on an average, developing Asia-Pacific econ-

omies are expected to grow 5.9 per cent in 2021 and 5 per cent in 2022, after having experienced an estimated contraction of 1 per cent in 2020.

Despite a reasonably strong rebound expected in 2021, a "K-shaped recovery" is likely, with poorer countries and more vulnerable groups marginalised in the post-pandemic recovery and transition period," it said.

For a more robust and inclusive recovery, the report calls for a more synchronised COVID-19 vaccination programme across countries and highlights opportunities to leverage regional cooperation.

At the same time, it recommends that fiscal and monetary support should be sustained, as premature tightening could increase long-term scars.

Produced annually since 1947, the Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific is the oldest United Nations report on the region's progress.

FTSE Puts India, Saudi On Watchlist For Inclusion In Its Bond Index

Agenceis

India's efforts to include its bonds in global bond indices could fructify soon with FTSE Russell placing Indian and Saudi Arabian government bond markets on the watchlist for possible inclusion in its FTSE Emerging Government Bond Index.

FTSE Russell's semi-annual country classification review released on Monday said the market accessibility level of Indian and Saudi Arabian bonds will be considered for reclassification to 1 from 0.

Global index users have shown interest in Indian government securities issued through the Fully Accessibility Route (FAR), FTSE said, adding that it will start a version of its FTSE Indian Government Bond Index that tracks these securities in coming weeks.

The government and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has included a number of bonds that would qualify for the FAR route where foreign investors can invest without any limit. The government first notified this in the Budget for FY20-21, and the central bank subsequently in April notified five securities to be eligible for the list. Together, they had an outstanding of Rs 4.2 trillion.

Since then, "all new issuances of government securities of 5-year, 10-year, and 30-year tenors from the financial year 2020-21" were eligible as "specified securities" where foreign investors can take full exposure without any limit, along with resident individuals.

Technically, these securities are over and above the FPI investment

limit in the domestic market. The RBI in April raised the FPI limits for corporate bonds to 15 per cent, from 9 per cent, for 2020-21. However, the overall FPI limit in government securities remained unchanged at 6 per cent.

If the bonds get included in the global bond index, foreign investors could pour in huge amounts of money in the Indian markets considering the high yields on offer, with relatively stable political stability and a strong repayment track record.

"This is a very welcome first step. If the bonds are included in the FTSE index, other well-known indices will be inclined to include India and this would attract healthy FPI participation in Indian bonds," said Jayesh Mehta, Head of Treasury at Bank of America, India.

When a sovereign bond is included in a global index, the inflow in that country increases manifold. It could mean opening up avenues for at least \$50 billion of fresh investment in the country, as some fund houses are not allowed to invest in any bonds that are not included in bond indices. Those funds can be readily tapped if the bonds are included.

The Indian government is closely engaged with JP Morgan and Bloomberg-Barclays for inclusion of Indian bonds, but the indices need a minimum guaranteed investment limit of 15-20 per cent of the outstanding stock for foreign investors, which is not the case now. However, with new bonds getting included in the specified securities list, the inclusion could be just a matter of time, experts say.

Asian Countries Seek Vaccine Supplies After India Export Curbs Hit COVAX

Agenceis

Several Asian countries sought alternative sources for COVID-19 inoculations on Tuesday after export restrictions by manufacturer India left a World Health Organization-backed global vaccine sharing programme short of supplies.

The export curb deepens the problems facing the COVAX scheme, relied on by 64 poorer countries, and adds to previous setbacks that include production glitches and a lack of funding contribution from wealthy nations.

The shortage could leave poor countries further behind in inoculations, increasing the vaccine inequity, complicating global efforts to tame the coronavirus including more infectious variants, and exposing fresh pleas for a global treaty on pandemics as rather hollow.

South Korea, Indonesia, the Philippines and Vietnam are among countries to be hit by shipment delays to vaccines they have been promised under the COVAX programme, which was created mainly to ensure supplies for poorer countries.

"Our planned increase in daily vaccinations will be affected," Carlito Galvez, Philippines' vaccination chief, told reporters.

India, the world's biggest vaccine maker, put a temporary hold on exports of AstraZeneca's vaccine being manufactured by the Serum Institute of India (SII), as officials focus on meeting rising domestic demand.

The Serum Institute was due to deliver 90 million vaccine doses

to COVAX over March and April and, while it was not immediately clear how many would be diverted for domestic use, programme facilitators warned that shipment delays were inevitable.

In Indonesia, health ministry official Siti Nadia Tarmizi told Reuters that 10.3 million doses from COVAX were likely delayed until May.

South Korea confirmed it would only receive 432,000 doses of the 690,000 it had been promised and delivery of those would be delayed until around the third week of April.

"There's uncertainty over global vaccine supplies but we're working on a plan to ensure no disruptions in the second quarter and making efforts to secure more vaccines," Kim Ki-nam, head of South Korea's COVID-19 vaccination task force team. Officials said they were in talks with AstraZeneca to accelerate shipments procured through a separate deal.

Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte loosened government restrictions on private sector imports of vaccines, pleading with companies to obtain supplies no matter the cost, as his country battles a resurgence of the pandemic.

In Vietnam, officials have similarly asked the private sector to step in after their COVAX supplies were slashed by 40% to 811,200 doses and shipments were pushed back by weeks. India has not provided details on the length of its export curb but UNICEF, a distributing partner of COVAX, said at the weekend that deliveries are expected to resume by May.

NEWSMAKERS

Tata tussle: 'My conscience is clear,' says Cyrus Mistry on SC verdict

Agenceis

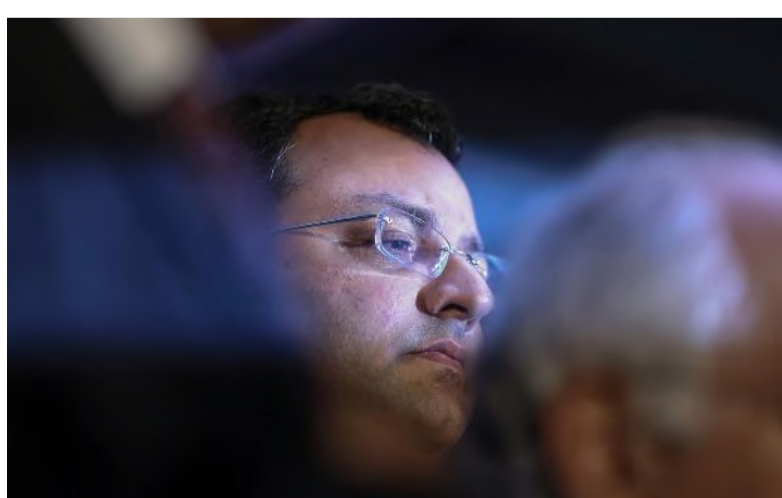
Cyrus P Mistry, former Tata Group chairman who lost a long-drawn legal battle in Supreme Court last week, on Tuesday said though he is personally disappointed with the ruling, his "conscience is clear" as he still believes the direction that he took to take the group to was with full conviction and sans any malafide intentions.

In a statement Mistry, who served as chairman of the salt-to-software conglomerate from December 27, 2012, to October 24, 2016, when he was unceremoniously sacked in a board room coup, said his conscience was clear and he sleeps with a clear conscience.

"Over the past four years, I've had the opportunity to reflect on my actions and on whether I could have handled the generational change in leadership better.

"In hindsight, while I may have had many imperfections, I have no doubt or erosion of conviction about the direction I chose, the integrity behind my actions and their consequences," he continued in the statement which did not mention his next move on exiting his 18.37 per cent stake in the group.

He said, although personally as a minority shareholder in the group, he is disappointed with the outcome of the case, he is grateful



for the opportunity to sever the Tata Group as chairman.

Thanking his team members "who all were bound together by the common value system embedded by the founders into the Tata Group," he said he will be eternally grateful for the fact that he got an opportunity to serve as the chairman of the iconic institution.

He said his effort from day one was to ensure that the group, that was undergo-

ing a generational change in leadership, had "a robust board-driven system of decision making and governance that is larger than any one individual... to enable directors on various boards to discharge their fiduciary duties without fear or favour, while still ensuring that shareholder views are reflected in strategy and actions." It continues to be my belief that it is by such a model, that one would protect value for all stakeholders in Tata Sons and its various group companies,

he added.

Admitting that he will no longer be able to influence the direction of governance of the group directly (having resigned from the board during the pendency of the case), I hope that the issues I have raised will cause deeper reflection and influence individuals concerned to catalyse change.

On March 26, the apex court set aside the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) order restoring Mistry as the Tata Group chairman ending the over four-year long legal battle. The apex court bench led by Chief Justice Sharad Arvind Bobde, justices AS Bopanna and V Ramasubramanian, also dismissed a plea of the Shapoorji Pallonji (SP) Group seeking separation of ownership interests in Tata Sons in which they hold 18.37 per cent stake now.

The top court had, on January 10, 2020, granted interim relief to the Tata Group by staying NCLAT order of December 18, 2019, by which Mistry was restored as the chairman of the conglomerate. The SP Group had earlier valued its holding in the Tatas at Rs 1.75 lakh crore. However, during the hearing before the apex court, the Tatas had, on December 8, said the valuation of the 18.37 per cent shares of the SP Group in Tata Sons was between Rs 70,000 crore and Rs 80,000 crore.

TATA Stocks Raise After Supreme Court Verdict



Agenceis

Tata Group stocks gained sharply, rising between 2 to 6 per cent after a favourable Supreme Court verdict in the matter of National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) reinstating Cyrus Mistry as chairman of Tata Group.

As the Supreme Court upheld Tata Sons' decision to remove Cyrus Mistry as the chairman of Tata Sons, shares of Tata Group companies started gaining.

Almost all listed companies shares closed in the green on NSE and BSE, the top gainers included Tata Steel (6.04 per cent),

Indian Hotel (5.29 per cent), Tata Power (4.87 per cent), Tata Communications (4.24 per cent), Tata Motors (3.8 per cent), Titan Company (3.79 per cent), Voltas (2.18 per cent), Tata Steel BSL (earlier Bhusan Steel) (4.96 per cent), Nelco (3.76 per cent).

Other gainers included Tata Investment Corporation (2.76 per cent), Tata Chemicals (1.79 per cent), Tata Consumer (2.19 per cent), and Tata Metaliks (3.26 per cent). Rallis India and Trent closed flat on profit-taking. Tata Group's flagship company Tata Consultancy Services shares also rose to a high of Rs 3118 after the news break but later saw profit-taking and closed flat at Rs 3,068.15 on BSE.

Imran Khan Sends

imperative for improvement in ties. Thanking PM Modi for his message, Khan said, "The people of Pakistan also desire peaceful, cooperative relations with all neighbours, including India."

However, Khan said that durable peace and stability in South Asia is contingent upon resolving all outstanding issues between India and Pakistan, particularly the Jammu & Kashmir dispute.

"Creation of an enabling environment is imperative for a constructive and result-oriented dialogue," he wrote.

The Pakistan prime minister also conveyed his best wishes to India in its fight against the Covid-19 pandemic. The recent ceasefire agreement between India and Pakistan has sparked hope of a thaw in ties.

Imran Khan and Army chief Gen Qamar Bajwa have reached out to India in the recent past with the latter saying earlier this month that it was time to bury the past and move forward.

While India too has toned down the rhetoric on terrorism, it wants to wait and see if the ceasefire holds before taking any decisive step to resume bilateral exchanges.

No Passport

section 6 (2) (c) of the Passports Act. Under this section, a passport is rejected by authorities if they feel that the applicant may engage outside India in activities prejudicial to the sovereignty and integrity of India or the departure of the applicant from India may, or is likely to, be detrimental to the security of the country.

A passport can also be rejected, under the section, if the presence of the applicant outside India may, or is likely to, prejudice the friendly relations of India with any foreign country.

This section can also reject an application if the central government is of the opinion that issuing a passport or a travel document to the applicant will not be in public interest.

There are other reasons in this section which bars processing any application where an applicant has been convicted or is facing criminal proceedings or has a pending summons, according to the Act. But this is not attracted in the case of Nazir, whose husband Mohammed Sayeed had served as Union home minister in the 1990s and later as chief minister twice of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir.

"...your application for issuance of passport is refused," said the letter issued by the passport officer to Nazir.

Mehbooba, a former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister, tweeted that the passport office has rejected her mother's passport application.

"CID (Criminal Investigation Department) claims that my mother who is well into her seventies is a "threat to national security" and therefore doesn't deserve a passport. Gol (Government of India) is employing absurd methods to harass and punish me for not toeing their line," she said.

Mehbooba's passport was also rejected under the same section of the Act and her petition in the Jammu and Kashmir High Court was also dismissed.

Dismissing the petition, Justice Ali Mohammad Magray had observed that Mehbooba's application for a passport was rejected by the passport officer, Srinagar, as the police verification report recommended against the issuance of the document to her.

"In such circumstances, I am of the considered view that no direction can be issued by this court for issuance of passport in favour of the petitioner," the judge said in his order.

"Even otherwise, the scope of this court in the matter of grant or otherwise of passport in favour of an individual is very limited in as much as the court, in this behalf, can only direct the concerned authorities to expeditiously consider the case of an individual in the light of the mandate of the scheme of law governing the subject," the order read.

In a letter to Mehbooba, the Regional Passport Office here had informed the PDP president on March 26 that her application for a passport was rejected on the basis of the "adverse" police verification report.

The passport officer also informed her that the CID of the Union Territory had recommended against granting a passport to her.

The letter said Mehbooba can appeal against the decision at a higher forum provided by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

Commenting on the rejection of her application, the PDP president had said it shows the level of normalcy achieved in Kashmir.

"The Passport Office refused to issue my passport based on CID's report citing it as "detrimental" to the security of India. This is the level of normalcy achieved in Kashmir since Aug 2019 that an ex-chief minister holding a passport is a threat to the sovereignty of a mighty nation," she had tweeted.

Injured Councillor

Choudhary told Kashmir Observer. BJP councillor Reyaz Ahmad Peer of Ningli and SPO Shafqat Nazir of Mundji were killed after militants opened fire upon them near the sub-district hospital Sopore on Monday afternoon. Shams-ud-Din, who was critically injured in the surprise militant attack, was taken to the district hospital Sopore for treatment. However, the doctors there referred him to Srinagar's SMHS hospital for advanced treatment.

According to a police spokesperson, Lashkar-e-Taiba militants, including a foreigner carried out the attack. The police identified one of the attackers as Mudasar Pandit.

"However, further investigations are rigorously going on. IGP Kashmir also took serious note of the poor and inappropriate retaliation by the PSOs of protected persons present on spot and directed SSP Sopore to put four PSOs under suspension," a police spokesperson said Monday.

PSOs Should Have

security lapse in Sopore attack. There were four PSOs present and had they retaliated, the militants would not have succeeded in their efforts," the IGP Kashmir said as per news agency KNO.

He said that Municipal Committee chairman of Sopore had not informed the police about the meeting. "So there was no additional deployment. But still four PSOs were enough to retaliate which they didn't," the Kashmir police chief said.

He said that police and other security forces will intensify the anti-militancy operations and those involved in Sopore attack will be either killed or arrested. "One OGW has been arrested already and after interrogating him, we have come to know that one LeT militant Mudasar along with a foreigner carried out the attack," the IGP said.

Asked whether vehicles with outside registration numbers are being used by militants in J&K, the Kashmir police chief said that a few vehicles seized recently were used by militants to carry out attacks on security forces including the one used for "Lawaypora attack."

"That's why RTO has issued an order making it mandatory for vehicles with outside registration to register the same within 15 days," IGP Kumar said, adding that police will plug the loopholes in the days ahead and also

conduct short-refresher courses for the PSOs.

Police To Revisit

the spokesman said in a statement. While interacting with the officers, IGP Kashmir urged upon them to revisit the existing security deployments including checkpoints/nakas at strategic locations, surprise nakas, limited surprise CASOs in crowded places etc.

"He also urged upon the officers to strategise the deployments on day-to-day basis to thwart the nefarious designs of (militants) and anti-national elements in view of huge rush of tourists and upcoming Amarnath Yatra."

The top police officer of Kashmir also stressed for better synergy and coordination with other security agencies deployed in their respective areas besides ensuring regular briefing of the manpower working under their command at all the levels on ground.

Highlighting the importance of the measures to be adopted post-militant attack, IGP Kashmir directed officers to formulate a proper SOP so that all proactive measures are adopted immediately which include CASOs, placing cut-off points on exit routes, use of drones etc. to avoid the escape of "culprits/suspects."

IGP Kashmir also directed the officers to review the existing security deployed with the PPs/vulnerable persons residing in their respective areas.

He also instructed officers to ensure better coordination and synergy with them, besides formulate a mechanism so that prior to their visit to any place or area they inform the local PCR/concerned Police Station, for their hassle free and secure movement, the spokesman said.

"It was also decided that a proper SOP regarding security of protected persons/vulnerable persons containing DOs/DON'Ts shall be formulated and issued shortly."

The IGP Kashmir also reiterated the need to enhance anti-militancy grid by generating specific intelligence and intensify CASOs or anti-militant operations in their respective districts and take all proactive steps for maintaining peace and stability in their respective areas.

"He also emphasized upon the officers to keep strict vigil over the (militant) associates and take all necessary measures under law against them."

10 KAS Officers

Housing and Urban Development Department, has been transferred and posted as Director, School Education, Jammu.

Shafiqat Iqbal (KAS), awaiting orders of appointment in the General Administration Department, has been posted as Registrar, Cooperative Societies, J&K.

O.P. Bhagat (KAS), awaiting orders of appointment in the General Administration Department, has been posted as Director, Geology and Mining, J&K, against an available vacancy, reads the order.

Nagendra Singh Jamwal (KAS), Administrator, Associated Hospitals, Jammu, has been transferred and posted as Registrar, Mata Vaishno Devi University, Katra, J&K, on deputation basis.

Tilak Raj Sharma (KAS), Additional Secretary to the Government, Jal Shakti Department, has been transferred and posted as Additional District Development Commissioner, Samba.

Rakesh Magotra (KAS), Additional Secretary in the Lieutenant Governor's Secretariat, has been transferred and posted as Additional Secretary to the Government, Youth Services and Sports Department, reads the order issued by Commissioner/ Secretary to the government, Manoj Kumar Dwivedi.

Coronavirus Spikes

359 cases detected Tuesday, officials said 266 were from Kashmir Valley and the remaining 93 from Jammu division, taking the total number of people infected by the virus across the Union Territory to 130587.

Giving the district wise details, they said, Srinagar reported 150, Baramulla 46, Budgam 19, Pulwama 12, Kupwara 5, Anantnag 10, Bandipora 3, Ganderbal 5, Kulgam 14, Shopian 2, Jammu 59, Udhampur 7, Rajouri 2, Kathua 19, Samba 1, Poonch 3 and Ramban 2 new cases of coronavirus.

Moreover, they said, 175 more patients have recovered and were discharged from various hospitals—20 from Jammu Division and 155 from Valley. There are 2293 covid-19 active cases—615 in Jammu and 1678 in Kashmir. (With GNS inputs)

Srinagar Placed

by the COVID pandemic, recording 471 deaths and over 28,000 positive cases.

The district has the highest number of active cases as on date at 985. The UT has nearly 2,300 active cases.

Srinagar district has recorded the highest number of cases among the 20 districts of the UT on a daily basis for most of last year, with Jammu city overtaking the summer capital occasionally.

The recent spike in positive cases has coincided with increasing number of tourist arrivals.

Dr Farooq Tests

the entire family's good health @OmarAbdullah," he tweeted. Omar Abdullah, also a former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister, promptly replied to Modi, saying, "My father and the rest of the family join me in thanking you for your wishes and prayers @narendramodi ji."

Farooq Abdullah (85), who received the first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine on March 2, is in isolation at his home. Doctors from the SKIMS Hospital checked his vitals and also took blood samples for testing, officials said.

In his tweet, Omar Abdullah said, "My father has tested positive for COVID-19 and is showing some symptoms."

"I will be self-isolating along with other family members until we get ourselves tested. I request anyone who has come in contact with us over the last few days to take all the mandated precautions," he said.

Former chief ministers N Chandrababu Naidu and Mehbooba Mufti, among others, also wished for Farooq Abdullah's speedy recovery.

Mehbooba replying to Omar Abdullah's tweet said, "Very sorry to hear that. Hope he (Farooq Abdullah) recovers soon."

"Saddened to learn about Farooq Abdullah Ji testing positive for COVID-19. I wish him speedy recovery and the best of health," Naidu said.

People's Conference leader Sajad Lone wished a speedy recovery for Farooq Abdullah. "Wishing Dr Farooq Sahib a speedy recovery in his fight against COVID," he tweeted.

SASB Invites

Kumar handed over invitations to Hindu Dharma Acharya Sabha president Swami Avdhesanand Giri Ji Maharaj and Akhil Bharatiya Akhara Parishad chief Swami Narendra Giri Ji Maharaj in Haridwar, a spokesperson said here.

Accompanied by Deputy CEO of SASB, Vikas Anand, Kumar is visiting Haridwar to invite acharyas and seers of Sanatna Dharma to the yatra, he said.

During a meeting of the SASB early this month, Lt Governor Manoj Sinha, who is also the chairman of the shrine board, had asked for extending special invitations to the Hindu Dharma Acharya Sabha, Akhara Parishad and prominent seers all over the country.

The spokesman said the government is already undertaking preparations for an expected six lakh pilgrims this year with all COVID-related precautions and SOP.

Key PDP Leader

is under the influence of such few leaders and was unable to distinguish between right and wrong and has deviated from the core agenda of 'peace with dignity' envisaged by party founder Mufti Mohammad Sayeed.

Flanked by dozens of his supporters whom he introduced as PDP functionaries from Nowshera and Sunderbani areas of Rajouri district, Choudhary said. We all are resigning from the basic membership of the party. Those present endorsed his announcement by raising their hands.

I am not leaving the PDP because of Mehbooba or under the pressure of (central) government or its agencies. The former MLC told reporters here.

We have been forced to take this step because the PDP has been hijacked by a few drawing-room politicians, land grabbers and land mafia (members) who have gathered around her (Mehbooba), he added.

He, however, did not name any PDP leader whom he dubbed as drawing-room politicians or land mafia (members).

Choudhary, who on March 17 resigned from the post of PDP general secretary and its political affairs committee within two days of the re-organisation of the party by Mehbooba after her re-election as party president, said the party post does not matter but the self-respect and honour do.

When the PDP was formed by Mufti Mohammad Sayeed in 1999, we joined him to strengthen his hands and within a few years, the party formed the government (2002). Those calling the shots in PDP today were nowhere at that time. His agenda was peace through dialogue and bridge the gap between the communities and the regions and sub-regions, he said.

He said Mufti's rule was the golden era in the history of Jammu and Kashmir and paved the way for the revival of business, tourism and even the cross-border routes which benefited the public.

His vision was supported by former Prime Minister A B Vajpayee and a ceasefire came into effect along the borders providing much-needed relief to the border residents, he said.

Mufti's vision that Indo-Pakistan dialogue was key to peace in J&K proved again as the Centre reached an agreement with the neighbouring country to adhere to the ceasefire after seven years of firing on the borders, he added.

He said Mufti left behind a party with grassroots-level supporters at every nook and corner of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh but the PDP today is fighting to survive and is on the verge of extinction.

When Mufti left, PDP had five MPs including two in Rajya Sabha, 28 MLAs and 14 MLCs. The present position in the party is because of those drawing-room politicians and land mafia (members) who are influencing Mehbooba's decisions and she failed to distinguish between right and wrong, he added.

He said a large number of leaders with mass support left the party after Mufti's death.

Mehbooba never bothered to ask leaders why they were leaving the party. I have resigned from the two posts but she did not try to reach me. I am feeling bad because Mufti's hard work is being wasted and his dream being shattered, Choudhary said.

He said nobody pressurised him to leave the party. Nobody can pressurise us. I am leaving because of the leadership and not under the pressure of the government or its agencies. With folded hands, I request Mehbooba not to defame us, we were your and Mufti's soldiers, he said, adding the leaders are leaving because they are not able to reach her and put forth their point.

On his future plan, Choudhary said he is meeting his supporters in his home town Nowshera and Sunderbani and will decide whether he will join any other party or remain independent. Nowshera is the constituency where PDP could only win one District Development Council (DDC) seat in the entire Jammu division in the recently held elections. This is the constituency which is considered as the stronghold of the BJP as its J&K president belongs to this place. I will return to my people and my future strategy will be the reflection of their desire, he said.

LG Calls Upon

educational centre. "In today's times, when higher educational institutions are preparing themselves for the post-COVID-19 world at both the external and internal levels, the coming up of Anandam Centre in IIM-Jammu is an important step towards a stress-free campus, he said.

Terming self-revelation an integral part of the "Gurukul" tradition of education, the Lt Governor said centres like Anandam have worldwide paved the way for education to become a vibrant force and to know oneself.

Sinha expressed his gratitude towards Prime Minister Narendra Modi for making untiring efforts in bringing a balance in education and professional life, in the routines of students and professionals through yoga and the Fit India Movement.

He called upon the young generation to find the inner joy and focus on 'Balanced Life' through Meditation and Yoga in order to meet the modern day challenges. Highlighting the significance of "Anandam- The Center for Happiness", the Lt Governor observed that the new center emphasizes on holistic well-being of students, just like the Center for Meditation.

If you are a teacher, your teaching method will change and if you are a student, your performance will be excellent. Competition, studies, and examinations will become a celebration rather than stress, said the LG.

He also termed the Module of Mindfulness at Workplace in the Management Development Program as important for developing perfect awareness amongst the students. (With agency inputs)

MeT Predicts

during the time, he said. Gulmarg, the world famous skiing resort in north Kashmir's Baramulla district, recorded a minimum temperature of 0.5 degree Celsius against 1.5 degree Celsius on the previous night and received 13.6mm of rain. The temperature was 1.3 degree Celsius above normal for the place during this time of the year, the official added.

The meteorological department has forecast "isolated light rain/thundershowers in Kashmir and Pirpanjal range of Jammu Division" in next 24 hours. "There will be mainly dry weather on the plains of Jammu division," the official said.

For next two days, the weather office has predicted "mainly dry weather." As per the weekly forecast, there is possibility of isolated showers on April 2 and 4 besides widespread rains with possibility of 76-100% on April 5. "There would be mainly dry weather till April 5," the MeT official added.

HC Orders Major

Sessions Judge Ramban has been transferred and posted as Additional District & Sessions Judge, Jammu vice Tahir Khurshed Raina.

Ms. Bala Jyoti, Member, J&K Special Tribunal Jammu has been transferred and posted as P.O. J&K Labour and Industrial Tribunal against the available vacancy. Shujat Ali Khan, Principal District & Sessions Judge Budgam has been transferred and posted as Member, J&K Special Tribunal, Srinagar on deputation vice Ms. Jeema Bashir.

Mohammad Yousuf Wani, Principal District & Sessions Judge Ganderbal has been transferred and posted as Principal District & Sessions Judge, Baramulla vice Sanjay Parihar.

Sanjay Parihar, Principal District & Sessions Judge Baramulla has been transferred and posted as Director, J&K Judicial Academy against the available vacancy.

Ms. Nighat Sultana, Additional District Judge, Bank Cases, Jammu has been transferred and her services are placed at the disposal of the Chief Justice for her appointment as Registrar Inspection, High Court of J&K, Jammu vice Shahzad Azeem.

Shahzad Azeem, Registrar Inspection, has been transferred and his services are placed at the disposal of Hon 'ble the Chief Justice for his appointment as Registrar Vigilance, High Court of J&K against the available vacancy.

Yash Paul Bourney, Special Judge Anti-Corruption, Jammu has been transferred and posted as Principal District & Sessions Judge, Udhampur vice Mohan Lal Manhas.

Jaffer Hussain Beigh, Principal District & Sessions Judge Rajouri has been transferred and posted as Principal District & Sessions Judge, Kathua.

"He shall take over the charge after the retirement of Pawan Dev Kotwal on 31.03.2021," reads the order.

Ashok Kumar, Principal District & Sessions Judge Baderwah has been transferred and posted as Principal District & Sessions Judge, Poonch vice Madan Lal.

Mohan Singh Parihar, Special Judge Anti-Corruption Court (CBI cases), Srinagar has been transferred and posted as Special Judge Anti-Corruption, Jammu vice Yash Paul Bourney.

Mohammad Ibrahim Wani, Principal District & Sessions Judge, Pulwama is transferred and posted as Principal District & Sessions Judge, Bandipora vice Shri Sarfaraz Hussain Shah.

Sham Lal Lalhal, Principal District & Sessions Judge, Kishtwar has been transferred and his services are placed at the disposal of the Chief Justice for his appointment as Registrar Inspection, High Court of J&K. Mohammad Ashraf Malik, Principal District & Sessions Judge, Kulgam has been transferred and posted as Principal District & Sessions Judge, Budgam vice Shujat Ali Khan.

Ravinder Nath Wattal, Special Judge Anti-Corruption, Srinagar has been transferred and posted as Principal District & Sessions Judge, Reasi vice Kamlesh Pandita.

Madan Lal, Principal District & Sessions Judge, Poonch has been transferred and posted as Principal District & Sessions Judge, Rajouri vice Jaffer Hussain Beg.

Yash Paul Kotwal, 1st Additional District and Sessions Judge, Jammu has been transferred and posted as Principal District & Sessions Judge, Kishtwar vice Sham Lal Lalhal.

Ms. Jeema Bashir, Member, J&K Special Tribunal, Srinagar is repatriated from deputation and posted as PO, Fast Track Court for POCO Cases, Srinagar against the available vacancy, the order said.

Haq Nawaz Zargar, 4h Additional District and Sessions Judge, Srinagar has been transferred and posted as Principal District & Sessions Judge, Ramban vice Kishore Kumar.

Tahir Khurshed Raina, Additional District and Sessions Judge, Jammu has been transferred and posted as Principal District & Sessions Judge, Kulgam vice Mohammad Ashraf Malik.

Shazia Tabassum, Additional District Judge, Pulwama has been transferred and posted as Principal District and Sessions Judge, Ganderbal vice Mohammad Yousuf Wani.

Tasleem Arif, 3rd Additional District Judge, Srinagar has been transferred and posted as Principal District & Sessions Judge, Kupwara against the available vacancy.

Ms. Sonia Gupta, Registrar Judicial, High Court Jammu Wing has been transferred and posted as Principal District & Sessions Judge, Samba vice Mohammad Akram Choudhary.

Rajinder Sapuro, 1st Additional District and Sessions Judge, Srinagar has been transferred and posted as 2d Additional District & Sessions Judge, Jammu vice Virender Singh Bahu.

Sobha Ram Gandhi, Additional District and Sessions Judge, Udhampur has been transferred and his services are placed at the disposal of the Chief Justice for his appointment as Registrar Judicial High Court Wing Jammu vice Ms. Sonia Gupta.

Ms. Kalpana Revu, Additional District Judge (Matrimonial), Jammu has been transferred and posted as Additional District & Sessions Judge, Rajouri vice Ms. Kusum Lata Pandita.

S.C Kattal, Presiding Officer MACT, Srinagar has been repatriated from deputation and posted as Additional District & Sessions Judge, Udhampur vice Sobha Ram Gandhi.

Jatinder Singh Jamwal, Additional District and Sessions Judge, Kathua has been transferred and posted as Special Judge, Anti Corruption (CBI Cases), Srinagar vice Mohan Singh Parihar.

Virender Singh Bahu, 2nd Additional District and Sessions Judge, Jammu has been transferred and posted as Principal District & Sessions Judge, Baderwah vice Ashok Kumar. Khalil Ahmed Choudhary, Additional District and Sessions Judge, Anantnag has been transferred and posted as P.O. Fast Track Court, Jammu against the available vacancy.

Chain Lal Bavoria, Additional District and Sessions Judge, Anti-Corruption, Jammu has been transferred and posted as Special Judge Anti-Corruption, Srinagar vice Ravinder Nath Wattal.

Ms. Masarat Shaheen, Registrar Judicial, High Court Srinagar Wing has been transferred and posted as Principal Judge, Family Court, Srinagar against the available vacancy.

Ritesh Kumar Dubay, One Man Forest Authority is repatriated from deputation and posted as Additional District & Sessions Judge, Anti-Corruption Jammu vice Chain Lal Bavoria.

Kamlesh Pandita, Principal District and Sessions Judge, Reasi is transferred and posted as Additional District and Sessions Judge, Kathua vice Jatinder Singh Jamwal.

Sarfaraz Hussain Shah, Principal District and Sessions Judge, Bandipora has been transferred and posted as Additional District Judge (Bank Cases), Jammu vice Ms. Nighat Sultana.

Balbir Lal, Additional District Judge (Bank Cases) Srinagar has been transferred and posted as P.O. Fast Track Court for POCO Cases, Jammu against the available vacancy.

Ashwani Kumar, Additional Sessions Judge, TADA/ POTA, Srinagar has been transferred and posted as 1st Additional District & Sessions Judge, Jammu vice Yash Paul Kotwal.

Ms. Kusum Lata Pandita, Additional District and Sessions Judge, Rajouri has been transferred and posted as Principal Judge, Family Court Jammu against the available

vacancy.

Abdul Nasir, Civil Judge (Sr. Division)/Sub-Judge upon his promotion as District Judge on adhoc basis has been posted as Additional District Judge (Bank Cases), Srinagar vice Balbir Lal

Surinder Singh, Civil Judge (Sr. Division)/Sub-Judge upon his promotion as District Judge on adhoc basis, has been posted as P.O. Fast Track Court (Cases against Women including rapes), Ramban against the available vacancy.

Javed Ahmed Geelani, Civil Judge, has been posted as P.O. Fast Track Court, Kupwara against the available vacancy.

Mohammad Amin Mir, Civil Judge, has been posted as District Judge, LRP, High Court Wing Srinagar.

Ajay Kumar Gupta, Civil Judge, has been posted as 1st Additional District & Session Judge, Srinagar vice Rajender Sapru.

Sudhir Kumar, Civil Judge, has been posted as 3 Additional District and Sessions Judge, Srinagar vice Tasleem Arif.

Om Prakash Thakur, Civil Judge has been posted as One Man Forest Authority on deputation vice Ritesh Kumar Dubey.

Gowher Majid Dalal, Civil Judge, has been transferred and his services are placed at the disposal of the Chief Justice for his appointment as Registrar Judicial, Srinagar Wing of the High Court vice Ms. Masarat Shaheen.

Javed Alam, Civil Judge has been posted as Additional District and Sessions Judge, Anantnag vice Khalil Ahmed Choudhary.

Mehraj-ud-din Sofi, Civil Judge, has been posted as Additional District and Sessions Judge, Pulwama vice Ms. Shazia Tabasum.

Surjeet Singh Bali, has been posted Additional District Judge, Matrimonial Cases, Jammu vice Ms. Kalpana Revu Om Prakash Bhagat, Civil Judge, has been posted as Additional District and Sessions Judge, Baramulla against the available vacancy.

Manjeet Singh Manhas, Civil Judge, has been posted as Additional Sessions Judge, TADA POTA, Srinagar vice Ashwani Kumar.

Naushad Ahmed Khan, Civil Judge, has been posted as 4 Additional District & Sessions Judge, Srinagar vice Haq Nawaz Zargar.

Som Lal, Civil Judge, has been posted as PO, Fast Track Court (Cases against available vacancy, Judge basis, vice dated on adhoc women including rapes), Kulgam against the available vacancy.

Mohammad Ashraf Bhat, Civil Judge, has been posted as 2nd Additional District and Sessions Judge, Srinagar against the available vacancy.

Pradeep Kumar, Civil Judge, has been posted as P.O. MACT Srinagar on deputation vice S.C Kattal.

Also, 63 Civil Judges (Senior Division)/Sub Judges) were promoted and transferred along with 22 Civil Judges (Junior Division)/Munsiffs) and Presiding officer of the JBs.

PIA Written Balloon

The cops seized the balloon and took it to the police station Mendhar to widen the probe about the frequent recovery of such aircraft shaped balloons.

Pertinently, this is the fourth such incident when the cops seized the PIA written balloon in Jammu region. On three occasions it was found in Jammu district. PIA stands for Pakistan International Airlines while the balloon was shaped exactly in the form of airplane with windows and doors painted on green and while background. (GNS)

Search Operation

said, was launched on the basis of inputs suggesting presence of militants in the village.

The joint team, reports said, carried out house to house searches after blocking all the entry and exit points.

"The search operation continued for several hours, they said--(KNO)

2 Hotels Damaged

Ahmad Tangha-and later spread to another hotel, creating panic among the locals and visitors who were staying there, news agency KNO reported while quoting unnamed official.

The report further said that fire tenders reached the spot and doused the flames before it could cause further damage.

The official told KNO that there was no loss of life or injuries reported in the incident

39 Vehicles Without

JK vehicles

Steve Smith Reveals He Might Be Interested In Captaining Australia Again



Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Steve Smith says he is interested in becoming Australia captain once again if the opportunity comes, asserting that he has learnt to live with the damage caused to his career and reputation by the 2018 ball-tampering scandal.

The 31-year-old Smith served a one-year ban from playing and was disqualified from leading Australia for two years because of his role in the incident in which Australians were caught using sandpaper to alter the condition of the ball against South Africa.

"I've certainly had a lot of time to think about it and I guess now I've got to a point where if the opportunity did come up again I would be keen," Smith told 'News Corp'.

The ball-tampering scandal led to a review of the team's win-at-all-costs approach to the game. Smith returned to help Australia win the Ashes in 2019 after his ban ended but has resolutely avoided the subject of captaining.

"If it was what Cricket Australia

wanted and it was what was best for the team at the time, it's certainly something I would be interested in now, that's for sure," he added.

Smith acknowledged that the scandal will forever be attached to his name and he will not let that get in the way of assuming leadership again.

"I'm always going to have to live with Cape Town regardless of whether I lead again or not. It's always there," he said.

"I've been through all that now. Time keeps moving forward, and I've learnt so much the last few years about myself and grown as a human being.

"I feel as though I'd be in a better place if the opportunity did come up. If it doesn't, that's fine as well and I'd support whoever is in charge the same way I've supported (Test captain) Tim (Paine) and Finchy (ODI captain Aaron Finch)."

Paine has been under fire ever since Australia lost a high-stakes Test series to an injury-plagued India earlier this year. Finch, on the other hand, has turned 34.

Pakistan Football Stares At Long Ban From FIFA After Forced Take Over

Press Trust of India

KARACHI: Pakistan football is staring at a long-term ban from the FIFA after a forced take over of the national federation headquarters in Lahore by a group which won the last elections but annulled by the world governing body of the sport.

The world body has now given until Wednesday for the PFF group, led by Ashfaq Hussain, to vacate the Football House and give its control back to the FIFA Normalization Committee headed by Haroon Malik.

"If the government's sports minister does not intervene and resolve this issue Pakistan football could be banned for a very long time from all international competitions," a member of the normalization committee said on Tuesday.

He said if FIFA imposes a ban, the PFF will not get any funds from the world body, leaving the sport in the country in a financial mess and development projects on hold.

Pakistan football has been in turmoil for the last three years ever since it was reported that government officials had started interfering in the affairs of the national federation.

FIFA had appointed a Normalization Committee in 2019 to hold elections after a long drawn out dispute between opposing groups in the PFF and a number of court cases.

Interestingly, politics came to the fore even in the Normalization

Committee and a new set-up was announced by FIFA late last year to hold elections by June 2021.

But last Saturday, things went out of control as a PFF group, led by Ashfaq Hussain, broke in and forcibly took over the Football House in Lahore.

According to sources, they also manhandled and harassed the staff, kept them under forcible confinement and took personal belongings and items by force.

According to the FIFA-appointed Pakistan Football Federation Normalisation Committee, all these actions were illegal and could lead to a long term ban on Pakistan football.

Ashfaq Hussain told a newspaper that he didn't care about any FIFA ban but only about reviving the game in Pakistan.

He also complained that the Normalization Committee had failed to hold elections on time and their members were involved in politics.

Haroon Malik, who heads the Normalization Committee, made it clear that FIFA only recognises them.

Soon after taking over the Football House, the Ashfaq group announced postponement of the National Women's Championships being held in Karachi and said it would be resumed under a new management and organizing committee.

A number of leading women players have voiced their concern over the damage being caused to Pakistan football.

Eight Members Of Indian Boxing Squad In Turkey Test Positive For COVID-19

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Eight members of an Indian boxing squad, including three pugilists, tested positive for COVID-19 during a competition trip to Turkey and have been quarantined in Istanbul.

Commonwealth Games silver-medallist Gaurav Solanki (57kg), Prayag Chouhan (75kg) and Brijesh Yadav (81kg) tested positive for the virus a week back, leading to them being quarantined following the event which ended on March 19.

Coaches Dharmendra Yadav and Santosh Birmole, physiotherapists Shikha Kedia and Dr Umesh along with video analyst Nitin Kumar are the others in isolation, a team source told PTI.

They were in Istanbul to compete in the Bosphorus Tournament. Solanki had claimed the lone medal—a bronze—among men.

Among women, Nikhat Zareen (51kg) had also fetched a bronze helping India finish with two medals overall.

The others who travelled



for the tournament were Lalith Prasad (52kg), Shiva Thapa (63kg), Duryodhan Singh Negi (69kg), Naman Tanwar (91kg) and Krishnan Sharma (+91kg). The women's group featured Zareen, Sonia Lather (57kg), Parveen (60kg), Jyoti Gre-

wal (69kg) and Pooja Saini (75kg). The ones who have tested positive will have to wait for at least one more week before they undergo a fresh COVID-19 test to ascertain their recovery and clear the passage for a flight home.

'Rohit Sharma-Shikhar Dhawan Best Option For T20 World Cup,' Says Former Selector

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: India should stick to the experienced opening combination of Rohit Sharma and Shikhar Dhawan in the T20 World Cup, feels former selector Sarandeep Singh, calling the duo the "best option" despite skipper Virat Kohli's recent interest in the slot.

Sarandeep, whose term ended with India's historic win in Australia earlier this year, also gave his take on split captaincy, asserting the issue was never even discussed in his time as Kohli performed in all three formats.

After the T20 series win against England, Kohli had said he will open in the IPL raising the possibility of him opening with Rohit in the World Cup. Dhawan was dropped after the opening game of the series and Ishan Kishan was picked ahead of him in one of the games. Kohli and Rohit opened in the final T20.

"It was surprising. He (Dhawan) did well in the IPL, he did well in Australia. Whenever he plays he performs. He is mentally very strong. May be they want to try out options but in my view the left-hand right-hand combination of Rohit and Dhawan is the best option for the India at World Cup," Sarandeep told PTI.

"You can't judge him on basis of one match. He did well in ODIs after that. The IPL will decide a lot of the team. There are no easy places in the team. Ishan Kishan too will need to do exceptionally well to make the team," he added.

He also said that K L Rahul should continue keeping in the ODIs and the in-form Rishabh Pant will have to wait for his turn when Shreyas Iyer returns.

The IPL beginning April 9 will decided bulk of the spots for the World Cup squad and Sarandeep feels Yuzvendra Chahal and Kuldeep Yadav, who became India's go to pair in the middle overs after the 2017 Champions Trophy, are no more sure starters in the T20 or ODI format. Kuldeep has also lost his place in the T20 squad.

"The two spinners can still do the job. They are proper spinners. Once Ravindra Jadeja is back from injury,



the trio remains the best option in limited overs format," Sarandeep said.

"Kuldeep, for example, has not got a lot of opportunities and seems down on confidence. He needs to be backed. Chahal was also replaced in the recent T20s against England by Rahul Chahar and did not play the following ODIs.

"Though there is a lot of competition, Chahal and Kuldeep should play together. They have still have a lot of potential," said Sarandeep, who played three Tests and five ODIs for India.

Pant has surpassed Wriddhiman Saha as the number one keeper in Tests and has also become the preferred option in T20s following his stellar success in all three formats in the last four months.

"No praise will be enough for Pant. He had some fitness issues, worked on that and worked on his shot selection. If you expect a 21-year-old to play like a 30-year-old, it is tough to start with. You see Hardik (Pandya), the way he bats now with experience, same thing has been seen in Pant now in the last six months or so.

"He was out of the team which was good for him. There is a right time and right ball to hit. The way he played in Australia, it shows he has gained a lot of experience. He is picking and choosing.

"He can give you 10 years in Test cricket, Saha cannot and has become the number one choice. In

ODIs, Shreyas got injured so Rishabh played. When he is back, KL should be the wicketkeeper because he has been keeping wickets for a long time and is doing a fine job."

Sarandeep also believes there is no place for Krunal Pandya in the ODI team if Hardik is not bowling.

"If we talk about ODIs, if Hardik is not bowling, Krunal can't be your fifth bowler. He batted beautifully but Krunal can't give you 10 overs, he is a good T20 player but when it comes to ODIs, he doesn't have the skill to challenge the batsmen.

"So, if Krunal plays, Hardik needs to bowl. If one bowler is hit or injured there is no extra option if Hardik doesn't bowl. His workload has to be managed too but you have to play proper bowlers," said the 41-year-old former off-spinner.

On the issue of split captaincy, Sarandeep said the it was not even discussed in his tenure.

"Split captaincy is needed when your captain is not performing but he (Kohli) is the only player to average more than 50 in all formats. If he isn't performing in one format you can take the leadership pressure off him and give it to someone else.

"Just because he has not won an IPL you can't remove him from India captaincy. He is also the fittest player and captain. Rohit is there to lead the side in his absence but there is no reason to replace Virat."

Japan Routs Mongolia 14-0 In World Cup Qualifying Fixture

Agencies

SEOUL: Japan stayed perfect in World Cup qualifying on Tuesday by routing Mongolia 14-0.

The Japanese scored five goals in the first half and added nine more in the second. The team leads Group F with 15 points from five matches. A victory over Myanmar in June will secure first place in the group and a spot in the third round of Asian qualifying.

Later Tuesday, Saudi Arabia will face Palestine in the only other qualifying match from the Asian region.

The eight group winners and four best second-place teams will advance to the third round of

qualifying, which is scheduled to start in September.

Takumi Minamoto, Yuya Osako, Daichi Kamada and Hide-masa Morita all scored in the first half, along with an own-goal from Mongolia defender Khash-Erdene Tuyaa.

Osako ended up with a hat trick, while Sho Inagaki, Junya Ito and Kyogo Furuhashi scored two goals each. Takuma Asano also scored.

The game had been scheduled to take place in Mongolia but was changed because of the coronavirus pandemic. The Asian Football Confederation decided this month to play all remaining Group F matches in Japan.

Chelsea To Face Porto In CL Quarter-Finals At A Neutral Venue In Spain

Agencies

NYON (SWITZERLAND): Chelsea and Porto will play both legs of the Champions League quarter-finals in neutral Spain because of travel restrictions related to the coronavirus pandemic.

UEFA said Tuesday the Ramón Sánchez-Pizjuán Stadium in Seville will stage the games on April 7 and 13. The venue is the home

of Sevilla and hosted Champions League games earlier this season.

Porto is technically the home team for the first leg. UEFA has previously said the away goals rule will apply even when games are played at neutral venues. Because of travel limits between England and Portugal, Arsenal and Benfica were previously forced to play in Rome and Athens when they met in the Europa League.

Virat Kohli-Led Royal Challengers Bangalore Sign Three-Year Deal With Puma



Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Indian Premier League (IPL) side Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) on Tuesday signed a strategic long-term partnership with global sports brand Puma.

Under the terms of the deal, Puma will be the official kit partner of RCB from the upcoming season of the league.

Puma already has an on-going association with RCB skipper Virat Kohli.

"It's great to welcome PUMA to the RCB family! A global brand with a strong sporting vision and great quality products, their extensive distribution network through offline and online channels will ensure fans have access to RCB merchandise across the country," Kohli was quoted as say-

ing in a media release.

Puma will now have exclusive retailing rights to RCB's take down and replica jerseys, adding pan-India merchandise reach for the franchise across retail and e-commerce channels.

"We are excited to partner with RCB, one of the most popular teams in the Indian Premier League. Our similar brand ethos coupled with the team's growing fan base and extensive social following makes RCB our ideal partner on the cricket pitch," said Abhishek Ganguly, managing director, Puma India and Southeast Asia.

RCB will take on defending champions Mumbai Indians in the tournament opener to be played at the MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai on April 9.

India Women Captain Harmanpreet Kaur Tests Positive For COVID-19



Press Trust of India

PATIALA: The Indian women's T20 team captain Harmanpreet Kaur has tested positive for COVID-19 and is experiencing mild symptoms.

Kaur, who did not play in the T20 series against South Africa in Lucknow after injuring herself in the fifth ODI on March 17, got herself tested on Monday after developing mild fever.

"She is self-isolating at home. She got tested yesterday and the

report came positive today morning. She had mild fever since four days so thought it was best to get tested. She is doing fine otherwise and should recover soon," a source close to the player told PTI.

"She was getting tested regularly during the South Africa series so she must have caught the virus after that only," the source added. Kaur had shown decent form in the ODIs scoring a half-century and a 40.

India, who returned to international cricket after 12 months, lost both the ODI and T20 series.

PCB CEO Wasim Khan Seeks One Year Extension, According To Reports

Press Trust of India

KARACHI: Pakistan Cricket Board CEO Wasim Khan has sought a one-year extension in his contract which ends in February next year.

According to a report in the "Daily Dawn" newspaper, the PCB Board of Governors at its meeting held in Karachi earlier this month discussed and reviewed Wasim Khan's move for a one-year extension in his original three-year contract.

The report said that the BOG are in favor of giving the extension but put off any final decision or announcement, till patron-in-chief Prime Minister Imran Khan decides about PCB chairman Ehsan Mani's future whether to extend his three-year tenure ending in September this year.

According to the contract signed with Wasim, the PCB can extend his tenure by one year before the end of his first tenure which ends in February 2022.

The PCB had to decide on his extension in February 2021, but it put off the matter because many members felt that if the Prime Minister didn't



ask Ehsan Mani to carry on after September this year it would create an awkward situation in the board.

The report said that BOG members felt it will not look appropriate if Mani gives the extension to Wa-

sim while the former himself cannot get extension as PCB chairman after September 2021.

"I have almost achieved the targets which I set in September 2018 and if I am asked to continue [as PCB

chief], I will think about it and will then decide," Mani had said when recently asked about his future plans.

"I will have to see if I can contribute anything further or not as I don't eye the seat."

A reliable source said Wasim Khan apparently wanted an extension as in 2021, 22 and 23 Pakistan has invited top teams like England, Australia and New Zealand to tour the country for a full series in the next two years and the CEO wants to be there to oversee this achievement.

England has not visited Pakistan since 2006 while Australia's last visit to Pakistan was in 1998.

Mani and Wasim, who is presently said to be visiting his family in the UK, are also awaiting an inquiry report from two top infectious disease specialists on Wednesday after the abrupt postponement of the PSL 6 on March 2 due to rising cases of Covid-19 among the franchise players and officials in Karachi.

All eyes are on the PCB bigwigs to see what action they take on the inquiry report as many believe that Pakistan cricket faced embarrassment due to the PSL 6 postponement because of the negligence of some officials in enforcing the bio-cure bubble properly.

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