



P3 CITY

## KTA CALLS 'RE-REGISTRATION OF VEHICLES' ORDER ARBITRARY

The Kashmir Trade Alliance members on Wednesday held a strong protest at Press Enclave in Srinagar against the recent order issued by the Regional Transport Officer...

P5 THINK

## LET THIS SPRING HELP YOU REFLECT, BE CURIOUS, AND FIND PURPOSE

In my private practice and with family and friends, recent conversations have been focused on loss, change, and renewal. This has been a long year, filled with sadness, fear, anxiety, uncertainty, and for many, loss. Many have lost family and friends...



P7 STATE

## PULWAMA RESIDENT MORTGAGES VILLAGERS' LAND TO AVAIL RS 86L LOAN

In a major fraud, a resident of South Kashmir's Pulwama district availed a loan of rupees 86 lakhs from a local branch of J&K Bank, 17 years ago, by mortgaging land...



## Widom Quote!

Tell the truth, or someone will tell it for you  
—Stephnie Klein

## NEWS DIGEST

### 2 OGWs Arrested In Budgam: Police

SRINAGAR: Police on Wednesday claimed to have arrested two Lashker-e-Taiba militant associates in central Kashmir's Budgam district. Aqub Ahmad Wani of Laloo Sheshgari Hyderpora and Aadil Manzoor of Nadirgund Humhama were arrested by a joint team of police, army's 53 RR and 43 Bn CRPF. [More On P2](#)

### BRO Worker Killed In Zojila Avalanche

SRINAGAR: A Border Roads Organisation (BRO) worker died on Wednesday after getting trapped under an avalanche near Zojila pass on the Srinagar-Ladakh highway. Ghulam Rasool Bhat, a resident of Gagangar in central Kashmir's Ganderbal district was buried alive under the snow avalanche that hit a beacon vehicle near Zojila pass. [More On P2](#)

### Minor Boy Goes Missing In Qazigund

SRINAGAR: A minor boy has gone missing in Chowgam area of Qazigund in south Kashmir's Kulgam district triggering fears that he may have been taken away by a wild animal. Four-year-old Nazakat Hussain Khan went missing on Tuesday night around 09:00 pm from his home in Chowgam village of the south Kashmir district, an official said. [More On P2](#)

### Man Nabbed With Explosives In Doda: Army

JAMMU: The army on Wednesday said that it arrested a man and recovered explosives from his possession in Doda district of Jammu province. In a statement issued to media, army said that explosive material was recovered on Tuesday during an operation conducted on the basis of specific intelligence at Gundna area of Doda district. It said that the recovery includes. [More On P2](#)

### Burglary Sparks Protest In Kupwara

SRINAGAR: The shopkeepers in north Kashmir's Kupwara district on Wednesday staged a protest after unknown burglars looted at least eight shops during the intervening night. The shops, as per an aggrieved shopkeeper, among others include two of footwear besides one each of textile, fast-food outlet, vegetable, stationary and hardware, belonging to Aftab Ahmad. [More On P2](#)

# 50 Students Of Two Schools Test Covid Positive



KO Photo: Abid Bhat

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: At least 50 students of two schools in Kulgam and Anantnag districts of Jammu and Kashmir tested positive for COVID-19 on Wednesday, forcing the

authorities to close the institutions for a week, officials said. Thirty-six students of Noorani Public School in Khull area of Damhal Hanjipora in South Kashmir's Kulgam district tested positive during a random sampling drive. [More On P2](#)

## Six Schools Ordered Shut

Agencies

Authorities on Wednesday ordered closure of six schools in central, south and north Kashmir after detection of Covid-19 positive cases from these institutions, officials said. An official said that the Noorani Public [More On P2](#)

## J&K Logs 373 New Cases, 4 More Deaths

Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday recorded 373 fresh COVID-19 cases, including 70 travellers, raising the tally to 1,30,960, while four more people succumbed to the infection, bringing the death toll to 1,994. [More On P2](#)

'DURBAR MOVE'

## Offices To Open In Srinagar On May 10

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: The Jammu and Kashmir government is shifting base to summer capital Srinagar as part of the biannual 'durbars move', and the civil secretariat, other move offices and the Raj Bhavan will start functioning there from May 10, officials said on Wednesday.

The practice of 'durbars move' -- under which the administration [More On P2](#)

## PLEA ON ISLAMIC BANKING

Agencies

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir High Court has granted three more weeks to the Union Finance Ministry as well as Reserve Bank of India besides Jammu and Kashmir government to respond to a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) seeking the introduction of Islamic Banking

in Jammu and Kashmir. A division bench of Chief Justice Pankaj Mithal and Justice Sindhu Sharma granted the time on the request by the counsel appearing for the parties. The J&K bank has already informed the court it has unnecessarily been made a party as it doesn't see a role for itself in Islamic banking. Jammu and [More On P2](#)



## Chhibber Gets 6 More Months Extension

Jammu & Kashmir Bank on Wednesday said the RBI has extended the term of RK Chhibber as the Chairman and Managing Director for a period of six months. "Pursuant to Regulation 30 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure [More On P2](#)

## Passport Denial Upsets Mehbooba

"Where Does One Go When Judiciary 'Wash Hands Off' Matters Involving Fundamental Rights?"

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: PDP president Mehbooba Mufti on Wednesday asked where does a person go when the judiciary, the only recourse left, "wash their hands off" matters involving fundamental rights "Under BJP's rule, Indian constitution is being undermined

time & again. Only option & recourse left is the judiciary. Once they too decide to wash their hands off matters which involve our fundamental rights where does one go?" Mehbooba wrote on Twitter. The PDP chief's remarks came after the Jammu and Kashmir High Court on Monday [More On P2](#)

## Army Chopper Makes Emergency Landing In Ramban

Press Trust Of India

BANIHAL: An Army chopper with eight people on board made an emergency landing on Wednesday in Ramban district of Jammu and Kashmir after developing some technical snag, a police officer said.

Senior Superintendent of Police, Ramban, P D Nitya said all the passengers are safe and the chopper later left for its destination after the fault was rectified. [More On P2](#)

## J&K Deporting 150 Detained Rohingyas

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: The process of deporting over 150 Rohingya Muslims detained here in a special drive against illegal immigrants early this month has been initiated in Jammu and Kashmir, an official spokesman said on Wednesday.

These people are presently lodged at a 'holding centre' in Kathua district, where all necessary facilities are being provided

to them, the spokesman said. He said Divisional Commissioner, Jammu, Raghav Langer on Wednesday visited the centre at Hiranagar and expressed satisfaction over the facilities being provided to the inmates. On March 6, about 168 Rohingyas were shifted to the holding centre after they were found living illegally in Jammu city during a verification drive. The Rohingyas are a Bengali-dialect [More On P2](#)

## Pak Militant Given 10-Years Jail Term

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: A special NIA court here has sentenced a Pakistani Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) militant to 10 years' imprisonment for conspiring to carry out militant attacks at different places in India, including Delhi, after crossing over to Jammu and Kashmir, an official said on Wednesday.

Bahadur Ali, the Pakistani Lashkar-e-Taiba militant, was convicted by the special judge for NIA cases in Patiala House Court on Friday [More On P2](#)



spokesperson said. He said that the guards deployed for the security of protected persons accommodated in the hotels were [More On P2](#)

## SOPORE ATTACK FALLOUT

## Guards Of VIPs Asked To Remain 'Extra Alert'

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Close on the heels of a deadly militant attack in Sopore town on Monday, the police in this capital city on Wednesday asked security guards of protected persons to stick to the standing operation procedures (SOPs) and remain in a state of alertness. The Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Srinagar, Sandeep Chaudhary on Wednesday reviewed security setup established in hotels across Srinagar city, a police

# Anguish, Anger In Kashmir Over 'Mass Detention' Of Non-JK Number Vehicles

Auqib Javed

Among 500 vehicles, reportedly seized within last five days across Kashmir, is a car of a Kashmiri trader on a home visit.

He frothed from his mouth as he turned up along with distressed dozens in Regional Transport Officer (RTO).

"This is a sheer discrimination against us Kashmiris," said Showkat Ahmad, a Kashmiri handicraft trader in Delhi. "They just need a pretext to do these inhuman experiments on us every now and then. This mass detention of cars is yet another move to cripple Kashmir."

Ire stemmed from the surging vehicle owners—standing in the



restive queue to re-register their seized vehicles.

The residential-style RTO office became a packed house

after a circular came from its top executive recently —directing all vehicle owners with outside registration mark to apply for a



new registration.

"The owners of such vehicles have been asked to submit the relevant documents of their

vehicle to the transport office within a period of 15 days of the circular failing which action warranted shall be initiated

against them," the order reads, a copy of which lies with Kashmir Observer.

Almost implemented on a war-footing, many in Kashmir believe that there was a clear security directive behind the move.

A top official in the RTO office confirmed that the circular cropped up due to security issues.

"The order came from the Chief Secretary's office and it asked police and our RTO department to do the needful," the official said.

But RTO Kashmir, Ikramullah Tak, the talk of the town at the moment, denied any security angle behind the order.

Inspector General of Police (IGP) Kashmir Vijay Kumar, however, told reporters on

March 30 that 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.

Once the circular came, South Kashmir's Anantnag district became one of the first districts to implement it.

"Four days ago, on my way to office, I was stopped at a checkpoint, and my Scorpio vehicle bearing New Delhi registration number was seized," said Hilal Bhat, a resident of Anantnag's Mattan area.

"The RC (Registration Certificate) was [More On P2](#)



# LG Attends Zee Salaam's Special Program "Naya Savera"

## e-offices to be made functional for seamless file flow and reducing record carriage burden of Darbar Move

**JAMMU:** The Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir is going to see massive infrastructural development across all sectors in the next one year. Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha made this remark while speaking at Zee Salaam's special program "Naya Savera".

Speaking on a host of issues with Zee Salaam's editor, Deepak Tiwari, the Lt Governor outlined the goal of establishing a responsive, citizen-centric administrative setup and accentuating the infrastructure across all sectors in the UT with special focus on connectivity, health and education sectors.

The Lt Governor spoke on the length and breadth of the government's initiatives for bringing development and prosperity in the UT and observed that the highest ever budget is envisaged for Jammu and Kashmir to make



the UT a model of Development.

At Rs 1,08,621 crore, the budget surpasses all previous allocations and 37% of the earmarked Budget to

be spent on development and infrastructure projects, the Lt Governor maintained.

For revamping the power sector in

J&K, short term, medium term and long term measures are being taken and in the coming two years J&K will get quality power supply round the clock, said the Lt Governor.

Regarding the development of the Education and Health sector, the Lt Governor observed that the health facilities in the UT have seen significant improvement. Seven new medical colleges and hospitals, 2 AIIMS, 2 Cancer Institutes, Bone Institutes and Child hospitals are being established in Jammu and Kashmir. Under the New Industrial Development Scheme, a provision of Medcity and Edcity is also kept for providing better medical facilities through private hospitals, he added.

The Lt Governor remarked that Jammu and Kashmir is the only region

in our country which has IIT, IIM, two AIIMS and two Central Universities. Task force has been made to implement the New Education Policy. For revamping school education and promoting vocational courses, 607 vocational labs have been set up in schools across the UT. There has been a significant increase in the number of enrollment in government run schools and higher education institutes, the Lt Governor said.

People of J&K are talented and have huge potential. They lacked platforms, which are now being made available to them. Keeping in view the developmental aspirations of the people of J&K and for providing smart transportation, Metro projects in Jammu and Srinagar cities will be completed in three years.

## DGP Dilbag Singh, Wife Test Covid-19 Positive

Press Trust of India

**JAMMU:** Director General of Jammu and Kashmir Police Dilbag Singh and his wife tested positive for COVID-19 on Wednesday, officials said.

Confirming it, Singh told PTI over phone, "Yes, unfortunately it's true and we have started medication for the same."

Both Singh and his wife were in self-isolation at home.

The police chief has appealed to those who had come in contact with him recently to isolate themselves and, if necessary, undergo test. Singh, a 1987-batch IPS officer, and his wife had taken the first dose of COVID-19 vaccine and were scheduled to get their second dose soon, the officials said.

Doctors were monitoring the health of the police chief and his family, they added. (PTI)

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

### 50 Students

DH Pora Block Medical Officer (BMO) Shugufat Salam said.

She said the report of a grandparent of a student who had come to the school to fetch his grandchild also came out positive.

All the contacts will be tested in the due course of time, the BMO said.

She said the Health Department will launch a door-to-door drive to trace the contacts of the students and conduct tests.

The official said the school has been closed for a week to contain the infection.

Meanwhile, 14 students also tested positive for COVID-19 at Government High School in Kathsoo area of the neighbouring Anantnag district, the officials said.

They said the school has been ordered to remain closed for a week.

In another case, two staff members at Kothibagh Higher Secondary School also tested positive for the virus, they said.

The institution has been closed till Saturday, they added.

### Six Schools

School in Damhal Hamjipora of Kulgam district has been closed for next one week as a precautionary measure after 36 students and a parent of one among the students tested positive for coronavirus.

Similarly, officials in Budgam said that Government Girls Higher Secondary School Budgam was closed for five days after a contractual teacher of the institution was declared positive for Covid-19 during a test drive held on Tuesday.

They further said that Government High School Durbal and Higher Secondary Narbal in Budgam were also closed for four days after some staff members were declared positive for the virus.

In Srinagar, Kothibagh Girls High School was closed till next Monday, after a teacher and a class IV employee tested positive for COVID-19.

In Bandipora, N.M Boys Higher Secondary School, a teacher and a student tested positive for Covid-19 during a mass testing campaign which was held in the institution.

Meanwhile, schools were closed as a precautionary measure to contain that spread of virus and all the teaching and non-teaching staff of the aforesaid institutions have been asked to go into self isolation. (KDC)

### J&K Logs 373

Officials said, Seventy-three of the new cases were from the Jammu division and 300 from the Kashmir division, they said.

The officials said Srinagar district recorded a maximum of 159 fresh COVID-19 cases, including 44 travellers, followed by 63 in Baramulla district and 45 in Jammu district.

Four districts did not report any fresh cases, while nine other districts had cases in single digits. Budgam, Kulgam, Kupwara, and Kathua were the other districts to register cases in double digits.

The number of active cases, which has been rising steadily over the past week, has now reached 2531 in the Union Territory, while 1,26,435 patients have recovered so far, the officials said.

In the past 24 hours, three deaths due to the pandemic were reported from Kashmir and one fatality linked to the virus was registered in Jammu, they said. (PTI)

### US Pulls Up

restricted in most parts of Jammu and Kashmir. The government began a process to redraw electoral constituencies but did not announce a timeline for local assembly elections. Local district development council elections took place in December in which a coalition of Kashmiri opposition parties won the majority of seats, the report said.

"Separatist insurgents and terrorists in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, the Northeast, and Maoist-affected areas committed serious abuses, including killings and torture of armed forces personnel, police, government officials, and civilians, and recruitment and use of child soldiers," it said.

The State Department in its report listed more than a dozen significant human rights issues for India. Prominent among them are unlawful and arbitrary killings, including extrajudicial killings perpetrated by police; torture and cases of cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment by some police and prison officials; arbitrary arrest and detention by government authorities; harsh and life-threatening prison conditions; political and prisoners or detainees in certain states.

India in the past rejected similar reports.

The US report mentioned restrictions on freedom of expression and the press, including violence, threats of violence, or unjustified arrests or prosecutions against journalists, use of criminal libel laws to prosecute social media speech, censorship, and site blocking.

"The government generally respected this right, although there were several instances in which the government or actors considered close to the government allegedly pressured or harassed media outlets critical of the government, including through online trolling.

"There were also reports of extremists perpetrating acts of killing, violence, and intimidation against journalists critical of the government, the State Department said.

"In certain cases local authorities arrested or filed cases against individuals under laws against hate speech for expressions of political views. The harassment and detainment of journalists critical of the government in their reporting or social media messaging continued, the report said.

The report also mentioned the conviction of lawyer Prashant Bhushan for criminal contempt of court for two tweets that criticised the chief justice and the role played by the Supreme Court in the past six years, and a complaint filed against news website 'The Wire' editor Siddharth Varadarajan for his tweet referencing a news report on Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath.

Among other human rights issues by the State Department include overly restrictive rules on nongovernmental organisations; restrictions on political participation; widespread corruption at all levels in the government and lack of investigation of and accountability for violence against women.

In its report, the State Department also talks about tolerance of violations of religious freedom; crimes involving violence and discrimination targeting members of minority groups including women based on religious affiliation or social status; and forced and compulsory child labour, as well as bonded labour.

### Pakistan To

cotton from India starting June this year.

"The import of cotton from India was banned and this has had a direct effect on our SMEs," he said. "However, at the recommendation of the Ministry of Commerce, we have also decided to resume the trade of cotton with India," he added.

The resumption of import of these goods will lead to partial revival of bilateral trade relations, the Dawn newspaper said.

India's move to revoke the special status of Jammu and Kashmir in August, 2019 angered Pakistan, which downgraded diplomatic ties with India and expelled the Indian High Commissioner in Islamabad. Pakistan also snapped all air and land links with India and suspended trade and railway services.

### Guards Of VIPs

checked and were briefed to remain extra alert.

"SSP Srinagar emphasised that more CCTV cameras and centralised surveillance of such guards is being enhanced to ensure safety of protected persons. Men deployed on guards were briefed to stick to SOPs very strictly and remain alert round the clock," he said.

SP South zone and other senior officers of Srinagar police accompanied Chaudhary during the security review.

Pertinently, militants on Monday carried out an attack in Sopore town of Baramulla district killing a BJP councillor and an SPO and injuring another councillor, who died at the Srinagar's SMHS hospital on Tuesday.

### HC Grants GOI

Kashmir People's Forum, a non-government organization, filed the PIL in 2018. The Forum also seeks direction to the J&K Bank to take immediate steps for the opening of Shariah-compliant windows to accomplish the objective of mass level participation in Shariah Banking.

It also seeks direction to J&K Bank Limited to place before the court the entire details of NPAs and the steps taken for the recovery of the outstanding amount in NPAs, saying the same is public money which cannot be allowed to be misappropriated either by the account holders or by the management of the bank.

In 2013, Ministry of Finance had requested RBI to give its considered opinion regarding feasibility of introducing Islamic banking in India after examining all the legal, technical and regulatory issues relating to the matter. Accordingly, an Inter-Departmental Group (IDG) on Islamic Banking was constituted in RBI and the report prepared by the Group has been submitted to the Government in February 2016," the Forum submitted.

"RBI has also forwarded a Technical Analysis Report based on the recommendation of the Group to the Government in December. (GNS)

### Chhibber Gets

Requirements) Regulations, 2015, we wish to intimate that the Reserve Bank of India has extended the term of Mr. R. K. Chhibber, Chairman and Managing Director of the Bank by a further period of six months with effect from 10th April, 2021 or till the appointment

of MD & CEO, whichever is earlier," Jammu & Kashmir Bank said in regulatory filing.

In June 2019, the RBI had approved the appointment of R K Chhibber as interim Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of the Bank, following the removal of Parvez Ahmed from the post by the erstwhile state government.

Chhibber got a few extensions as the interim CMD of the bank before being appointed as the full-time CMD with effect from October 10, 2019, for a period of six months. Thereafter, he has been approved by the RBI to continue as the CMD of Jammu & Kashmir Bank for various tenures. In October last year, the RBI had extended by half a year the term of Chhibber as the chairman and MD.

### Passport Denial

dismissed her petition seeking direction to passport authority for issuing a passport in her favour.

In a letter to Mufti, the Regional Passport Office here on March 26 rejected the application for her passport based on an "adverse" police verification report.

The Regional Passport Office has also rejected the application for a passport for Mufti's mother.

Meanwhile, in another tweet, the PDP president alleged that the Army raided the house of her uncle and senior party leader Sartaj Madni who has been under custody since December last year.

"Army from RR Camp Devsar raided the house of PDP's Sartaj Madni. The place was turned upside down and these personnel also thrashed boys. It's shameful that they violated all rules and code of conduct with such impunity," Mehbooba said.

Meanwhile, army refuted the allegations levelled by the former Chief Minister.

"Based on specific inputs about likely presence of militants in the area, search was carried out by Rashtriya Rifles and Police near Wissu village on night of 29/30 March. The allegations made in the tweet are not true," army spokesperson, Lt Col Emron Musavi said.

### Offices To Open

functions in Jammu during six months of winter and in Srinagar during summer -- was started by Maharaja Gulab Singh in 1872 to escape extreme weather conditions in the two regions.

"The move offices observing five-day week and six-day week will close in winter capital Jammu on April 30 and May 1 respectively. All the offices will reopen in Srinagar on May 10," an official spokesperson said.

Chief Secretary B V R Subrahmanyam, who chaired a high-level meeting to review the preparations for the move here, said there would be a substantial reduction in the transportation of records during the exercise.

"The government has taken concrete steps to switch to paperless offices by rolling out e-office in the moving departments. As such, most of the official record has been uploaded to the e-office, and training of employees has begun," he said.

He said the switch to online mode would help avoid wear and tear as well as any loss of official record during the bi-annual transit, besides saving the associated transportation costs.

The meeting reviewed the arrangements being made to transport employees and limited records on May 1 and 2 and May 8 and 9.

"The security/escort plan, availability of trucks and buses, recovery vans, mobile workshops, health facilities, and ambulances along the highway were discussed threadbare," the spokesman said.

The chief secretary directed the Traffic department to ensure a hassle-free movement of the convoy from Jammu to Srinagar.

The spokesperson said a mini-secretariat would be kept functional in Jammu during the summer season for safekeeping of official records, and accordingly, the Estates department was directed to ensure availability of adequate accommodation and facilities at the Civil Secretariat here, Jammu.

### Army Chopper

Officials said a patient was among the passengers on board the chopper who was being airlifted to Army base hospital in Udhampur. The chopper made the emergency landing at district police lines Ranbam.

"The ALH helicopter of Srinagar-based 15 corps was on its way to Udhampur from Mansbal in Bandipora district of north Kashmir and made the emergency landing at 10.45 am after developing some technical glitch," the SSP said.

She said eight people, including two pilots, two of technical staff and four other passengers were on board the chopper, which later left for its destination after the glitch was fixed.

### J&K Deporting

speaking Muslim minority in Myanmar. Many from the community fled to India after

violence in their country.

Several political parties and social organisations in Jammu have urged the Centre to take immediate steps for the deportation of Rohingyas and Bangladeshi nationals who were illegally living in the region, alleging that their presence is a "conspiracy to alter the demographic character" and a "threat to peace".

More than 13,700 foreigners, including Rohingya Muslims and Bangladeshi nationals, are settled in Jammu and Samba districts J-K, where their population has increased by over 6,000 between 2008 and 2016, according to government data.

As per the provision of Foreigners Act 1946, certain illegal immigrants have been kept at the notified holding centres by the authorities and the process for their deportation to the country of origin has been initiated, the spokesman said.

Accompanied by senior officers from Kathua including Deputy Commissioner Rahul Yadav, SSP R C Kotwal and Staff Officer to DG Prisons Saba Shawl, the divisional commissioner assessed the facilities being provided at the holding centre notified by J-K Home Department, the spokesman said.

The in-charge of the holding centre apprised the divisional commissioner about the facilities being provided to the inmates like telephone or interview facility, medical care and recreation, the spokesman said.

The divisional commissioner was informed that round the clock security arrangement is in place at the holding centre.

"All necessary facilities to maintain a standard of living in consonance with human dignity like clean drinking water, electricity with generator, proper sanitation and drainage system and accommodation with proper bedding and lighting are available in the holding centre, the spokesman said.

He was also informed that a special medical diet is being provided to pregnant women, old and infirm inmates, the spokesman said.

He said Langer took a round of various sections including school, vocational centre and playing area in the holding centre.

He also interacted with the inmates and inquired about their wellbeing, the spokesman said.

### Pak Militant

under sections of the IPC, the UA(P) Act, the Arms Act, the Explosives Act, the Explosive Substances Act, the Foreigners Act and the Indian Wireless Telegraphy Act.

The court sentenced him to 10 years' rigorous imprisonment and also imposed a fine.

The case, registered in July 2016, pertains to a larger conspiracy hatched by the LeT, a proscribed militant organisation based in Pakistan, to commit militant attacks in India, according to the NIA official.

As part of the conspiracy, Ali along with his two associates, Abu Saad and Abu Darda, all trained militants of the LeT, had illegally infiltrated into Jammu and Kashmir with the intention to carry out militant attacks at different places in India, including Delhi, according to instructions by their LeT handlers based in Pakistan and Pakistan-controlled Kashmir (PcK), the official said.

Ali was arrested from Kupwara and a large number of arms such as AK-47 rifle, Under Barrel Grenade Launcher (UBGL), ammunition, hand grenades, UBGL shells, military map, wireless set, GPS, compass, Indian currency, Fake Indian Currency Notes were seized from him, he said.

During investigation, Ali revealed details about recruitment, various LeT training camps, training to militants for handling weapons, explosives and modus operandi for motivating newly-recruited cadres for Jihad and militant acts in India by LeT leaders and also the details of LeT launching pads in PcK, the NIA official said.

The NIA had filed a chargesheet against Ali in January, 2017.

Later, two other Pakistani LeT militants, Saad and Darda, were killed in an encounter in February 2017 in Kupwara.

During investigation, two associates/supporters of Ali, Zahoor Ahmad Peer and Nazir Ahmad Peer, both residents of Jammu and Kashmir, were also arrested, the NIA official said, adding that further trial in the case against other chargesheeted accused was underway.

### Anguish, Anger

transferred in my name. I had license and other relevant documents too, but the vehicle was still seized by the cops."

Bhat approached a local court and secured the vehicle release.

"But," he said, "the police are yet to entertain the court order."

Apart from commoners, the car parlours selling the non-JK number plate vehicles are also feeling the heat due to the mandatory re-registration and 9 per cent tax clause.

"If a person has registered his vehicle outside J&K and has submitted the tax, why does he

need to submit it here again?" said Uzair Khan, who heads the Car Deals Association, Karan Nagar.

"Isn't this administration only defying One Nation-One Tax rule with this order?"

Even Kashmiri trade bodies are baffled. Amid the outcry, they too hit the road against the order.

"The authorities must revoke this arbitrary order as this is total injustice with the vehicle owners and also with the dealers as they now have to pay the tax amount twice at the rate of 9 per cent," said Ajaz Shahdhar, member of Trade Alliance (KTA), who led a protest against the order in Srinagar on March 31.

At the time of buying a vehicle, a customer pays 9 per cent tax for lifetime, Shahdhar said. "Now demanding another 9 per cent from a second buyer is total injustice."

But despite drawing raging flak, RTO Tak is sounding terse and tough.

"If the owner of the vehicle has paid tax in Delhi," Tak said, "he/she has to pay it again, if a vehicle is transferred to another state or union territory."

His junior, ARTO Sheikh Manzoor, said he can't comment on why the government implemented the order suddenly and on a short notice, "but I must say the law was there and people weren't obeying it".

The purchase of the non-local vehicle has to get NOC from the concerned ARTO, and it's valid for six months, he said. "Now if you don't re-register your vehicle in 6 months, whose fault is this?"

But if a person has purchased the vehicle outside J&K on his own name and address and he comes to Kashmir along with the vehicle, he needs not to worry, ARTO Manzoor said. "However, if he decides to stay in Kashmir he has to re-register it."

Amid anger and anguish, the government has given a 15-day time period for all vehicles with non-JK number plates for re-registration.

However, car dealer Uzair said the given time is too less and if anyone has the vehicle registered on his own name he should be exempted from the order.

"People are in panic mode because police don't ask for documents," he said. "They just seize the car on the spot even if you have the papers."

### 2 OGWs Arrested

for providing shelter, logistics and other support to the militants of Lashker-e-Taiba in Budgam, a police spokesperson said Wednesday.

The two alleged over-ground workers (OGWs), he said, have been in touch with PaK militant commanders through various social media platforms.

"Incriminating material of outfit Lashker-e-Taiba been recovered from their possession. A Case FIR number 68/2021 stands registered against the said OGWs at Police Station Budgam under relevant sections of law," he added.

### BRO Worker Killed

on Wednesday, officials said.

They said that police party rushed to the area and retrieved the body of the labourer with the help of BRO officials. (Agencies)

### Minor Boy Goes

He said that it is suspected that the boy has been taken away by a wild animal as blood stains had been traced in the forest.

The official said that police, wildlife and forest department have launched a search operation to trace the missing boy.

In-charge wildlife officer Kulgam, Imtiyaz Ahmad Naik said that searches are going on in the forests. "Nothing can be said at this time whether he has been taken away by wild animal or anyone else," he said—(KNO)

### Man Nabbed With

78 Gelatin sticks with explosive weighing 9.75 KGs, and Cordex-275 meters.

Army further said that one person has been arrested in this matter and further investigations was going on.

### Burglary Sparks

Showkat Ahmad, Ali Mohammad Lone, Nazir Ahmad Lone, Ghulam Nabi and Mushtaq Ahmad respectively.

"This is not an isolated incident as the area has witnessed thefts of several shops in the recent past as well" the shopkeeper said, adding that "However no one has been arrested yet."

Aghast over the incident, a group of shopkeepers staged a protest and also blocked the Tarathpora-Ramhall road for over an hour, demanding immediate tracing of the culprits involved in the act.

When contacted, SHO Villgam said that a formal case has been registered in this regard and further investigations taken up. "All those responsible for the theft will be identified and booked under law very soon", the official added. (GNS)



# KTA Calls ‘Re-registration Of Vehicles’ Order Arbitrary

Srinagar: The Kashmir Trade Alliance members on Wednesday held a strong protest at Press Enclave in Srinagar against the recent order issued by the Regional Transport Officer Kashmir for the re-registration of vehicles bought outside Jammu and Kashmir.

Kashmir Trade Alliance members led by Ajaz Shahdhar demanded exemption from what they called as "double

taxation" of vehicles purchased outside Jammu and Kashmir.

He said that the authorities must revoke this arbitrary order as this was total injustice with the vehicle owners and also with the dealers as they now have to pay the tax amount twice at the rate of 9 percent.

"A customer buys a vehicle and at the time of buying the vehicle, he pays tax amount at the rate of 9 percent for a

lifetime. Then after owning the vehicle for around 8 years, he sells the vehicle to another person. That same vehicle is bought to Kashmir, however, the first owner has already paid the tax at 9 per cent for a lifetime, now what RTO Kashmir is asking that they must re-register the vehicles bought outside J&K and pay the tax at the rate of 9 per cent one more time, which is total injustice," he said.

He questioned how can a customer pay the tax again when it is already paid by the first owner of the vehicle and they have already been paying the nominal charges, which was the norm.

"We demand that double taxation be exempted and only nominal rates should be charged for the vehicles bought outside for re-registration here," he demanded. (CNS)

## Dal, Nigeen And Other Kashmir Lakes To Be Declared Protected Wetlands

Observer News Service

JAMMU: The Chief Secretary, B V R Subrahmanyam Wednesday chaired the maiden meeting of Jammu and Kashmir Wetland Authority to chalk out strategy for conservation and management of wetlands.

Administrative Secretaries of Departments of Revenue, Rural Development, Housing and Urban Development, Agriculture Production and Farmers' Welfare, Forest, Ecology & Environment, Jal Shakti and Tourism, along with Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Director, Department of Ecology, Environment & Remote Sensing, Secretary, J&K Pollution Control Board, and other non official members of the Wetland Authority participated in the meeting.

The Chief Secretary directed the Forest Department which is the nodal department for preparation of digital inventory, documentation and development of geo-spatial database on wetlands; to profile various wetlands of Jammu

and Kashmir and subsequently recommend their notification under the Environment Protection Act, 1986 and Wetland (Conversation & Management) Rules, 2017.

The Department was asked to evolve a strategy for regulation of activities within the notified wetlands and their zone of influence, besides recommending conservation plans for sustainable use of water resources.

It was informed that there are a total number of 3754 water bodies in Jammu and Kashmir which are being regulated by different departments and agencies including Forest, Wildlife, Soil & Water Conservation, and local government bodies.

The Chief Secretary impressed upon the nodal department to identify the wetlands for conservation in accordance with the provisions of concerning rules and regulations. Directions were issued to bring Wular, Dal, Nigeen, Sanasar, Manasbal lakes and Purmandal under protection and conservation as Protected Wetlands.

## Fire Guts Business Unit, Engulfs Residential Houses In Old City

Observer News Service

Srinagar: A massive fire broke out on Wednesday evening in a business unit at Namchabal area of Fateh Kadal, officials said. They added that two residential houses close to the business unit have also caught fire while the efforts are on to douse the flames.

Officials said fire breaks out in the evening at around 07:30 PM in a business unit at Namchibal near Gandhi College. "The fire has engulfed two nearby residential houses after a business unit caught fire," they said, adding that the fire tenders have rushed to the spot to douse the flames.

The cause of fire was not ascertained when the report was last filed—(KNO)

ازعدالت ایگزیکٹو مجسٹریٹ درجہ اول (نائب تحصیلدار است ناگ) بااعلام زیرامتحش صاحب۔
درخواست نمٹا۔ ایجاز احمد بابا ایل غلام نجی الدین بابا سائنس حضرت علی ہاگ است ناگ بعض ابراہی تاریخ پیدائش سرٹیفکٹ ناظم عام دبا والد بااعلام ایجاز احمد بابا۔
استہار مرداد آگاہی ہر خاص و عام۔
معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں سائل/ سائلہ مذکور ہالان عدالت ہڈا میں ایک درخواست طعنیا چٹن کیا ہے
سائل کے پیر کا تاریخ پیدائش 17/08/2015 ہے اس ضمن میں سرٹیفکٹ پیدائش نکالنے کا خواہ ہے لہذا سرٹیفکٹ مذکور کا وراثہ کرے گی اگر کسی شخص کو کوئی بھی عدرا اعتراض ہو تو وہ ایک ہفتہ کے اندر اندر دوران دفتری اوقات میں چٹن کرے بصورت دیگر کوئی بھی اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔
mja

از دفتر نائب تحصیلدار است ناگ بااعلام زیرامتحش صاحب

درخواست نمٹا۔ نسیم بانو بیوہ عبدالرشید بٹ ساکن مرل است ناگ تحصیل ضلع است ناگ بعض حصول لیگل بیور سرٹیفکٹ

استہار عام

معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں سائلہ ایک درخواست بعض حصول لیگل بیور سرٹیفکٹ چٹن کیا ہے حسب رپورٹ پنداری حلقہ سے سائل کا شوہر سکی عبدالرشید بٹ ولد محمد شعیان بٹ مورثہ 07/08/2020 کو فوت ہو چکا ہے متونی ایک ریٹائر سہرکاری ملازم تھا اور متونی کے داروان بزیل ہیں۔

نام صاحب کنیمہ عدولیت	عمر	رشتہ برادر متونی	پیشہ
نسیم بانو بیوہ عبدالرشید بٹ	56 سال	بیوہ متونی	گھریلو کام
اردلی جان دختر۔۔۔	38 سال	دختر متونی	سہرکاری ملازم
غاید رشید بٹ۔۔۔	36 سال	پسر متونی	دوکانداری
صباحت رشید دختر۔۔۔	30 سال	دختر متونی	سہرکاری ملازم

اس کے علاوہ اور کوئی فرد کنیت میں موجود نہیں ہے لہذا اگر کسی شخص یا شخص کو مذکورہ سرٹیفکٹ اجرا کرنے میں کوئی عذر یا اعتراض ہوگا تو ایک ہفتہ کے اندر اندر دفتر ہڈا میں چٹن کریں بعد گزرنے میں عیاں کو ذرا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔

تحریر الصدر نائب تحصیلدار است ناگ

mja

## City Admin Constitutes Task Force To Implement Covid-19 SOPs

Observer News Service

Srinagar: District Administration Srinagar on Wednesday constituted a team of officials for the strict implementation of Covid-19 SoPs to contain the spread of pandemics and to deal strictly with the violators of guidelines in spirit.

An official said that as Srinagar is witnessing surge in Covid-19 positive cases and has been categorised as the Orange Zone, the district administration has constituted a team of officials which will ensure the strict implementation of Covid-19 SoPs and

guidelines while as the team has been authorised to impose the fine on spot if anyone is found violating the set guidelines.

He further said another team has been constituted and authorised to take legal action against business establishments like restaurants or food points that are found violating the COVID-19 protocols.

Earlier in the day, Deputy Commissioner Srinagar Aljaz Asad conducted an inspection at different malls and restaurants to check out the adherence of Covid-19 SoPs and guidelines. Officials said that

## Covid-19 Vaccination Drive For Residents Above 45-Years To Begin In Srinagar Today

Observer News Service

Srinagar: To strength response against Covid-19 pandemic, a vaccination drive for all eligible citizens above 45-year-old will be held across Srinagar city from today. Deputy Commissioner Srinagar Ajaz Asad urged all city residents above 45-years of age to get vaccinated at concerned centres.

He said that 76 vaccination centres have been established from where 8700 people will be vaccinated in 8 days.

He added that covid vaccine is necessary for people as we see number of positive cases have been showing a rising trend from last few days in Srinagar city and requested all citizens to take extra precautions for health. (KNS)

از نیابت ناگام بااجلاس جناب نائب تحصیلدار صاحب ناگام		
متوان: متعون درخواست عمر فاروق و دانش فاروق و رینا فاروق و فرخندہ فاروق و سمیعہ فاروق اولادان فاروق احمد شیخ سائلہ رحمن پورہ برادر علی بیگلازہ ابراہیم سرٹیفکٹ تحت SRO294		
استہار برادر آگاہی ہر خاص و عام		
معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں سائل نے ایک درخواست برادر بیگلازہ ابراہیم سرٹیفکٹ چٹن کی ہے۔ جو کہ فخر ہڈا میں زیر کاروائی ہے اور اجرا کرنے مطلوب ہے کہہ سائل ہڈا میں التوا پر منتقل ہے		
فاروق احمد شیخ ملہ غلام محمد شیخ	ماہزجکpo	48 سال
عاشق بیگم زوجہ فاروق احمد	گھریلو کام	48
عمر فاروق پیر	زیر تعلیم	24
رینا فاروق دختر	زیر تعلیم	28
دانش فاروق پیر	زیر تعلیم	22
فرخندہ فاروق دختر	زیر تعلیم	20
سمیعہ فاروق دختر	زیر تعلیم	14
شفیق بیگم زوجہ فاروق	گھریلو کام	32
انکے علاوہ ہمہ کی مہارت آمدنی زریعہ و غیر ذریعہ 4884 ہے سرٹیفکٹ زیر بحث ادا کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص یا شخص کو کوئی عذر یا اعتراض ساتھ ہم کے اعدہ چٹن کریں۔ عیاں گزرنے کے بعد کوئی عذر یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔		
نائب تحصیلدار ناگام	sult	

## از دفتر نائب تحصیلدار است ناگ بااعلام زیرامتحش صاحب

درخواست نمٹا۔ شوکت احمد میر ولد محمد یوسف میر ساکن اولیوگ ناظم تحصیل ضلع است ناگ بعض حصول لیگل بیور سرٹیفکٹ

### استہار عام

معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں سائل نے ایک درخواست بعض حصول لیگل بیور سرٹیفکٹ چٹن کیا ہے حسب رپورٹ پنداری حلقہ سے سائل کا والد سکی محمد یوسف میر ولد اکرم میر مورثہ 20/02/2019 کو فوت ہو چکا ہے اور متونی کے داروان بزیل ہیں۔

نام صاحب کنیمہ عدولیت	عمر	رشتہ برادر متونی	پیشہ
سارہ بانو بیوہ محمد یوسف میر	58 سال	بیوہ متونی	گھریلو کام
شوکت احمد میر۔۔۔	38 سال	پسر متونی	سہرکاری ملازم
عاقب احمد میر پیر۔۔۔	29 سال	۔۔۔	مزدوری
ایجاز احمد میر پیر۔۔۔	39 سال	۔۔۔	۔۔۔
نقی جان دختر۔۔۔	34 سال	دختر متونی	شادی شدہ
دند جان دختر۔۔۔	33 سال	۔۔۔	۔۔۔
عایہ جان دختر۔۔۔	25 سال	۔۔۔	گھریلو کام

اس کے علاوہ اور کوئی فرد کنیت میں موجود نہیں ہے لہذا اگر کسی شخص یا شخص کو مذکورہ سرٹیفکٹ اجرا کرنے میں کوئی عذر یا اعتراض ہوگا تو ایک ہفتہ کے اندر اندر دفتر ہڈا میں چٹن کریں بعد گزرنے میں عیاں کو ذرا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔

تحریر الصدور نائب تحصیلدار است ناگ

mja

## PUBLIC NOTICE

We the following persons runs an NGO with name and style "Roses of nation" at Pattan Baramulla, now we are applying for No objection Certificate (NOC) in this regard if anybody have any kind of objections may file the same to Deputy commissioner office Baramulla with in the period of Seven days from the date of publication of this notice.

Name of persons :-

- (1) Nisar Ahmad najar S/o Mohd Subhan najar R/o Hardushoora Kunzar.
- (2) Mohd Yaseen tantray S/o Sonaulah tantray R/o Devbugh kunzar
- (3) Kulsuma Akther D/O Ab. Ahad Najar R/o Nehalpora Pattan
- (4) Rameeza Khaliq D/o Ab. Khaliq Najar R/o Nehalpora Pattan
- (5) Umreena Qadir D/o Gh. Qadir Najar R/o Hardushoora Kunzar
- (6) Irshad Ahmad dar S/o Mohd Subhan dar R/o Palpora Pattan
- (7) Javid Ahmad najar S/o Mohd Maqbool najar R/o Hariwatnoo Tangmarg
- (8) Wahid Bashir Lone S/o Bashir Ahmad lone R/o Thindama Kreeri

Chairman, Roses of nation  
H/O Pattan Baramulla

GMS

## Public NOTICE

I, Sheikh Fayaz Ahmad, residing at west jamia masjid gani mohalla want to change my daughter's name from aatiya to aatiya fayaz studying in viii c, presentation convent school rajbagh. anybody having any objection can file it within seven days from the date of publication of this notice. no objection can be entertained after seven days.

Sheikh Fayaz Ahmad  
CONTACT NUMBER:- 9796777064

INF

# نیابت منٹگرگ بااعلام بشیر احمد حجام صاحب نائب تحصیلدار منٹگرگ

متوان: متعون درخواست بلال احمد بٹ ولد اسد اللہ و انعام جن شایڈل آئی پورہ زبکار تحصیل شہر ناگ برادر عطا بیگ بیگلازہ ابراہیم سرٹیفکٹ تحت SRO126/294

## استہار برادر آگاہی ہر خاص و عام

معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں سائل نے ایک درخواست برادر بیگلازہ ابراہیم سرٹیفکٹ چٹن کی ہے۔ جو کہ فخر ہڈا میں زیر کاروائی ہے اور اجرا کرنے مطلوب ہے اس ضمن میں پنداری حلقہ سے رپورٹ طلب کی گئی ہے جس سے عیاں آئی پورہ زبکار تحصیل شہر ناگ میں رہائش پذیر ہے کہہ سائل ہڈا میں التوا پر منتقل ہے

اسد اللہ بٹ ولد غلام محمد بٹ	زمینداری	67 سال
راجہ بیگم زوجہ	گھریلو کام	65
شاہ لال احمد پیر	دکانداری	38
فیروزہ بیگم بہو	گھریلو کام	36
انعام شاہ لال پتی	زیر تعلیم	16
انعام بن شاہ لال پتا	زیر تعلیم	14
افغانی شاہ لال پتی	زیر تعلیم	13
بلال احمد پیر	ڈرائیور	34
مسعودہ بیگم بیو	سہرکاری ملازم	30
سارہ بلال پتی	زیر تعلیم	11
دیشان بلال پتا	زیر تعلیم	07
ریان بلال پتا	شہر خوار	01

انکے علاوہ ہمہ کی مہارت آمدنی زریعہ و غیر ذریعہ 50425 ہے سرٹیفکٹ زیر بحث ادا کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص یا شخص کو کوئی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ اپنا عذر یا اعتراض ساتھ ہم کے اعدہ چٹن کریں۔ عیاں گزرنے کے بعد کوئی عذر یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔

نائب تحصیلدار znk

اطلاع عام
ہر خاص و عام کو مطلع کیا جاتا ہے کہ غلطی سے میری گاڑی ماروقی کار زیر نمبر (JK05A852) ایجنسی نمبر 2772378 (چیسر نمبر 1990883) کے کاغذات کہیں گم ہوئے ہیں بہت کوشش کے بعد ابھی گاڑی کے کاغذات نہیں ملے۔ اب میں گاڑی کے ایجنسی کاغذات نکالنے کا خواہ ہو اگر کسی شخص یا شخص کو کوئی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ ایک ہفتہ کے اندر اندر (RTO) سوپور میں اپنے اعتراض جمع کریں بعد گزرنے کے بعد کوئی اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا
Fayaz Ahmad Bhat S/o Late Ghulam Hussain Bhat
ams_r

### 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 )

<p><b>HIJRI CALENDAR</b> 17 SHABAN 1442</p>	<p><b>PRAYERS</b></p> <table> <tr> <td>FAJR</td><td>4: 55</td></tr> <tr> <td>ZUHR</td><td>12:36</td></tr> <tr> <td>ASR</td><td>5:05</td></tr> <tr> <td>Magrib</td><td>6:55</td></tr> <tr> <td>ISHA</td><td>8:15</td></tr> </table>	FAJR	4: 55	ZUHR	12:36	ASR	5:05	Magrib	6:55	ISHA	8:15
FAJR	4: 55										
ZUHR	12:36										
ASR	5:05										
Magrib	6:55										
ISHA	8:15										

## This Day In History

- 374 - Comet 1P/374 El (Halley) approaches within 0.0884 AUs of Earth
- 527 - Byzantine Emperor Justin I names his nephew Justinian I as co-ruler and successor to the throne
- 705 - Greek pope John VII chosen as successor to John VI
- 1515 - Portuguese fleet under Afonso de Albuquerque captures the Persian fortress of Ormuz, renaming it the Fort of Our Lady of the Conception
- 1865 - Battle at Blakely Alabama
- 1873 - British White Star steamship Atlantic sinks off Nova Scotia, 547 die
- 1924 - Hitler sentenced to 5 years labor for "Beer Hall Putsch" but General Ludendorff acquitted
- 1927 - 1st automatic record changer introduced by His Master's Voice
- 1931 - Earthquake devastate Managua Nicaragua, kills 2,000
- 1939 - US recognizes Francisco Franco's government in Spain at end of Spanish civil war. Pope Pius XII congratulates Generalissimo Franco's victory in Spain
- 1941 - Pro-German Rashid Ali al-Ghailani grabs power in Iraq
- 1942 - Allied air raid on harbor city Kupang Timor
- 1943- Jan Dieters, Dutch politician and resistance fighter who was the head of the Communist Party of the Netherlands, is arrested by the Nazis
- 1944 - Japanese troops conquer Jessami, Eastern India
- 1945 - World War II: Canadian troops free the Dutch cities of Doetinchem, Enschede, Borculo and Eibergen
- 1945 - World War II: The Ruhr Pocket of German forces are encircled by the US Ninth Army and US First Army, eventually leading to the capture of 317,000 German troops
- 1945 - Battle of Okinawa: US ground forces invade Okinawa during World War II in the largest amphibious assault of the Pacific theatre
- 1952 - Big Bang theory proposed in Physical Review by Alpher, Bethe & Gamow
- 1954 - Earthquake/tsunami ravage Aleutians, 200 killed
- 1955 - EOKA-bomb attacks against British government buildings in Cyprus
- 1957 - World's firsted glass oven used
- 1971 - US/Canada ISIS 2 launched to study ionosphere
- 1971 - United Kingdom lifts all restrictions on gold ownership
- 1973 - Japan allows its citizens to own gold
- 1973 - OPEC increases price of petroleum by 5.7 percent
- 1974- Ayatollah Khomeini calls for an Islamic Republic in Iran
- 1979 - Iran proclaimed an Islamic Republic following fall of Shah
- 1980 - Failed assassination attempt on Iraqi vice-premier Tariq Aziz
- 1980 - France performs nuclear test
- 1982 - Anguilla (dependent territory of UK) adopts constitution
- 1982 - US formally transfers Canal Zone to Panama
- 1983 - Anti-nuclear demonstrators link arms in 14-mile human chain in England
- 1983 - Iraq increases missile attacks on Iran
- 1986 - World oil prices dip below \$10 a barrel

## From KO Archives

## Valley Eyes More Flights To Meet Tourist Rush

Air Deccan Exploring Srinagar-Jammu Flights

Observer News Service

JAMMU- Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed has said Kashmir is ripe for increased frequency of air services and could be more viable for private airline companies.

Mufti Sayeed was talking with senior executive of the Air Deccan Mr R Ramaswami who called on him here this morning to discuss possibilities of operating air services between Srinagar and Jammu.

The Chief Minister said in view of the increased tourist inflow and disruption of road traffic on the National Highway during inclement weather, the rush for air passengers has increased several times. He said air travel to and from Srinagar has become a necessity compared to the past, when it was considered a luxury of the wealthy only.

Mufti Sayeed said he has taken up with the civil aviation ministry the need to increase frequency of air service to Srinagar add stressed on the operation of additional flights also.

He said private airlines like Air Deccan could operate viable air service between Srinagar and Jammu. Srinagar and Leh and Jammu and Leh. He asked the airline to also explore air service to Kargil and Rajouri.

Ramaswami assured the Chief Minister that his airline would plan new services in view of the topographic and geographic difficulties in Jammu and Kashmir.

Later, Ramaswami had a meeting with Director, Civil Aviation, Mr. S. Katoch on the infrastructure availability at the three civil airports in Jammu and Kashmir.

(Kashmir Observer, 01 April, 2005)



## KASHMIR OBSERVER

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### K O V I E W

## Bengal elections

In the ongoing elections in four states and one union territory in India, the BJP is pulling out all stops to win. More so, in West Bengal where the saffron party's vaunted electoral machine is busy in an aggressive campaign to replace Mamata Banerjee's Trinamool Congress Party. On Tuesday, the home minister Amit Shah held three roadshows in the state, one in the volatile Nandigram. Shah, is already confident that BJP will win over 200 seats in Bengal. Nandigram constituency is important as Banerjee is contesting from here and is up against her former protege, now a BJP leader, Suvendu Adhikari. Banerjee also held a roadshow in the constituency on Tuesday. It is as yet unclear which way the wind will blow. Despite being one of the cradles of the hardline nationalist politics, the BJP and its earlier avatar Jan Sangh have struggled to find a foothold in the state. But this time the BJP is putting everything in the fight and it is now in the reckoning as a strong contender for power. And should the BJP pull it off, it will be victory with a profound resonance for the country. It will be first time after independence that will have fallen to the lure of the politics on the right. Bengal has so far been a bastion of Left-Liberal politics in the country. So, a win in the state would be one of the greatest triumphs of the Hindutva ideology. And this is why also the BJP wants it so bad.

But Banerjee remains a redoubtable leader who is so far blocking the BJP juggernaut. She has already been elected to office twice and it could very well be her third term. It is a tough contest between Banerjee's popularity and that of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi. And both are very popular in the state. The ongoing campaign in the state will go down as one of the most acrimonious and vindictive in the history.

As for the campaigning in other three states of Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Assam, the BJP doesn't stand much of a chance in two Southern states. In Assam it is the ruling party and might be facing anti-incumbency factor. In any case, the outcome of the five elections will have a significant bearing on the politics of the country. More importantly, the win in Bengal for either party would be expected to make a massive difference to their political fortunes going forward. A Banerjee back in Bengal would certainly halt the BJP in its tracks, momentarily though.

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

## A new high

Indian cricket team's triumphs against England were spirited. They will reinforce self-belief.

The most satisfying aspect of the triumph against England is that the team has had to think on their feet, tweaking strategy as they went along.

The triumph, across formats, of the Indian team against England was the perfect culmination to possibly the greatest cricketing season India has had in recent memory. The odds were stacked against them in the two series in Australia and at home — injuries, bio-bubble restrictions, captaincy changes, loss of the entire bowling attack at one point. But they chugged along to win five of the six series played with both teams. At home, after losing the first Test to England, they rallied to win the Tests, T20s, and ODI series.

The most satisfying aspect of the triumph against England is that the team has had to think on their feet, tweaking strategy as they went along. The pre-series talk suggested India's best chance would be on flat batting pitches in Tests — why give a chance to England's spinners was the argument, but it had to be jettisoned after Joe Root's double hundred helped England to a comfortable win. Backs to the wall, they went for spin tracks which could have backfired but showed great skill and resolve to steamroll England in the three Tests. They kept losing the toss and were forced to chase in two crucial games in the T20 series, considered an almost hopeless cause, but they quashed that argument in imperious style. All in all, they lost 16 tosses in 22 matches against Australia and England, but won 13 games. Broken bones didn't squash their spirits in Australia and they didn't let up against a strong England team at home.

If winning games after batting first was the creditable achievement in T20s against England, the fact that they regrouped from a near-loss situation in the first ODI with a bunch of youngsters will reinforce self-belief. Nearly every puzzle is falling in place in the T20 World Cup year. The only uncertain thing was the spinners, but considering the return of Ravindra Jadeja and more options after the upcoming IPL, that won't remain a headache for too long.

Indian Express

# Labour Codes: The only hope for J&K's consolidated workers

DR RAJA MUZAFFAR BHAT

Afroza has been a part-time sweeper in the Jammu and Kashmir Health Department for more than 22 years. Her engagement order, issued on 27 January 1998 by the Block Medical Officer at Pulwama, says that she has to keep the sub-center at Tiken clean "at the dues of Rs. 100 per month".

If the wages were not already low enough, what is shocking is that even after more than two decades, her services have not been regularised — though she was hired against a vacant sweeper position — and her wages have not changed either. Afroza is not even paid wages as per the Minimum Wages Act, 1948. At present, she is working at the Government Sub-Health Center, Chewa Kalan, in Pulwama district of South Kashmir. In violation of all labour laws, Afroza and hundreds of other workers, who are known as "consolidated health department workers" are being paid very meager monthly remunerations. This author learned of the injustice being committed by the government of the J&K Health Department, particularly in the Kashmir valley, after researching Afroza's case.

### Unfulfilled promises

The sweepers who work in the sub-centers, primary health centers (PHCs), sub-district hospitals (SDHs), and district hospitals in almost all the districts of J&K, particularly in the Valley, have the same fate.

When Article 370 was repealed a lot was said about how it would give the Valmiki community of Jammu the rights due to them. This community, which has lived in Jammu for the last more than 64 years, is mostly employed as sanitation workers in the Jammu Municipal Corporation or in private institutions. However, their conditions are still being neglected despite the miserable lives they are forced to live. The challenges they face at the workplace are not even recognised or documented.

Ironically, the rest of the country is hardly aware that even Kashmiri Muslims work as sweepers and sanitation workers. They, too, are paid as little as Rs. 100 or Rs. 500 per month. The government must identify all such neglected and exploited workers and address their grievances. If on the one hand, the government enacts laws to ensure social justice and empower disadvantaged communities, how can people then be used as bonded labourers in government institutions?

As she belongs to a community that has traditionally been made to perform menial tasks, Afroza accepted the job she got, but with the hope that one day her position would be regularised as she was appointed against a "clear vacancy", but that did not happen.

"Getting regularised is only a dream now. I ruined my youth for the government and got nothing in return. I am already 42 years old. I and hundreds of sweepers and others who work in the health department are not even paid the minimum statutory wages of Rs. 225 a day [Rs. 6,750 a month]. In Delhi the pay is higher, Rs. 596 a day [Rs. 15,492 a month]," Afroza told this author.

Afroza was made to work in many government-run health institutions in Pulwama district. She was posted at the Sub-Health Centre at Tikin for six years, then asked to work as a sweeper at the PHC at Manghama for five years. She was then sent to the PHC at Puchal where she worked for two years, after which she was posted at the PHC, Newa, where she even worked during the night shift. Since 2010, she has been working at the Sub-Health Center at Chewa Kalan.

"During the last 20 years, I have spent huge money on travelling [to work] using public transport. Had



the doctors and other paramedical staff not been cooperative and helpful, I would have left the job long back. They have helped me a lot. On holidays and Sundays, I work on local farms to make ends meet. My husband does menial jobs like removing dung from the cattle sheds and carrying it to the fields. Even in our abject poverty, we did not compromise on our children's education," she says. Her sons are in classes X and III and her daughters study in classes IV and VII. "I have only one dream now, and that is to give my children the best education," Afroza says.

### Consolidated workers get organised

The consolidated workers of the health department who are mostly the sweepers were not organised, but six months back, some workers initiated attempts to organise their tribe. Gulzar Ahmad, Abdul Ahad Sheikh and dozens of other workers have united to fight this long battle under the aegis of the Consolidated Health Workers Union J&K. They went to several districts of Kashmir Valley to get actual details of these health department workers and the remuneration they get.

Gulzar belongs to an economically and socially backward community and is employed as a driver in the Health Department, Budgam, also on a meagre wage of Rs. 3,000 per month for 15 years. As a skilled worker, he is supposed to be paid Rs. 350 per day [Rs. 10,500 per month]. Abdul Ahad Sheikh, who is 54, belongs to the border district of Kupwara and is paid Rs. 100 per month.

"Had my sons not been running a small dhaba it would have been a miserable life. I am already 54 and have suffered a lot in the last 25 years of service, but I will now fight for the other people who should not be discriminated against. Even if we have to go to the Supreme Court we will fight against this injustice and bonded labour," says Abdul Ahad.

Earlier, Gulzar had been fighting for consolidated workers alone, but now he feels stronger, having got the support of colleagues and as the patron of their united front. In 2011, he met the then Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, who sought a detailed report from the J&K Finance Department. The Finance Department issued a circular asking the Health Department to provide details of people working on a consolidated basis. After a long struggle, the department prepared a list of 1,541 persons (mostly sweepers and helpers).

"We have no update on how many are working in the Jammu region as consolidated workers but we are trying our best to organise this

[information] as well," Gulzar says.

Initially, the Finance Department raised the query whether these 1,541 workers are employed part-time or full-time. The Directorate of Health and the Drawing and Disbursing officers (DDOs), such as the Chief Medical Officers (CMOs) and Block Medical Officers (BMOs), clarified that all 1,541 were full-time workers in the Health Department, on the job from 9 am to 5 pm, and many at night too.

The Finance Department once again asked the Director, Health Services, Kashmir, about the accounting head under which these consolidated workers were being paid wages. The director responded that the workers were paid "wages", and not "salary" in terms of the accounting head, says Gulzar Ahmad.

In 2016, the Health Department civil secretariat [Communication No: HD/NG/06/2011 dated 4 August 2016] recommended a hike in the wages of the consolidated health workers. Workers being paid Rs. 100 were supposed to get Rs. 500 a month, those paid Rs. 500 a month were recommended wages of Rs. 1,000 a month and a wage of Rs. 1,500 was fixed for the workers who were already being paid Rs. 1,000 per month. The maximum wages were fixed at Rs. 3,000 a month, which would be paid to only a handful of drivers.

However, even this small increase has not been implemented by the government, except for a handful of drivers who now get paid Rs. 3,000 a month. On 26 October 2017, the J&K government notified [under SRO 460] the revised wages under the Minimum Wages Act. Then onwards, unskilled labourers became entitled to a minimum wage of Rs. 225 a day, skilled workers to Rs. 350 a day, and highly-skilled workers to Rs. 400 per day.

As the revised wages were not implemented for the consolidated health workers, Gulzar Ahmad gave a written representation to the Secretary, Finance, J&K government, with demand for implementation. The Finance Secretary forwarded the case to the Health Department and sought an update. The Director forwarded a detailed report and recommended the implementation of the Minimum Wages Act for part-time workers as well as consolidated cleaners and helpers.

### Director, Health Services intervenes

The Director, Health Services, Kashmir, sent an official communication on 12 October 2020 requesting the Administrative Department to implement the Minimum Wages Act. He told the Financial Commissioner, Health and Medical Education, that as per the Budget Estimates for the financial year 2021-22, submitted by

the subordinate drawing and disbursing officers of the department, there are 1,541 consolidated safaiwalas, part-time workers and helpers in the department, who fall in the category of unskilled labourers.

"These workers do menial work like sweeping and scavenging and are paid remuneration rates ranging from Rs. 30 (thirty only) to Rs. 4,000 a month and are regularly pleading for payment of remuneration as per the rates applicable under the Minimum Wages Act," says his letter.

As of now, the government only provides Rs. 1.50 crores annually to the Directorate of Health, Kashmir, for this purpose. Some officers in the Finance Department claim that consolidated workers such as sweepers and helpers are part-time employees and do not fall under the definition of "scheduled employment". However, the respective Drawing and Disbursing Officers have already made it clear that all 1,541 workers were employed full-time and even during night hours.

During the Novel Coronavirus pandemic, sanitation workers were at the forefront of fighting the dreaded COVID-19 disease. These workers, helpers, and drivers risked their lives when most of the country did not even dare come out of their homes. These workers, along with medics and paramedics, fought COVID-19 bravely, yet their services go unrecognised.

### Bonded labourers

According to section 22A of the Minimum Wages Act, any employer found in violation of the act in regards to minimum wages, working hours can be penalized for five years of imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 10,000. The government of J&K is not only violating this act but also the human rights of these workers as per the provisions of the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976.

How sanitation workers, helpers, and drivers working on a "consolidated basis" in the J&K Health Department are being made to work on a pitance for the last 15-20 years or more is simply criminal. The authorities can be held liable under the Bonded Labour Abolition Act for this.

The government had claimed that people belonging to the weaker sections of society would get justice after the abrogation of the special status of Jammu and Kashmir. However, people like Afroza and Abdul Ahad in Kashmir, and thousands of others who belong to the so-called sweeper community, continue to face gross neglect and discrimination.

### Conclusion

If central laws have been applicable in J&K for more than 20 months since 5 August 2019, then why are people being denied their benefits? Afroza does not want a government job for the sake of it. She wants to get paid as per the Minimum Wages Act, which is her right. If this right is also snatched and she remains tied to a bonded-labor-like situation for 22 years and counting, who will take the government to task for violating its own laws? The central government proposes to replace 29 existing labour laws with labour codes namely Industrial Relations Code, Code on Social Security, Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code. It seems that the objective is to simplify and modernise labour regulation in India. The consolidated workers have only one hope which is the proposed changes being made in existing labour laws. It is expected that by the monsoon session of parliament the bills will become full-fledged laws...

Dr Raja Muzaffar Bhat is an Acumen Fellow and Chairman of Jammu & Kashmir RTI Movement



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## Kashmir Still Lacks Proper Destitution Management

Kashmir for over three decades has been embroiled in turmoil. Estimates put the number of deaths at 70,000 since the armed conflict started in the 90s. However, amidst all the chaos and politics, one group that has suffered the most is the orphans who are generally at the bottom of the privileged chain in the valley.

To tackle this conflict-created load, many orphanages have cropped up over the years. They help these

children in many socio-economic ways. Some of these orphanages run a program called Wedding Assistance in which they provide a wedding kit comprising of ladies suits, footwear and cosmetics products worth Rs. 15,000 to orphans.

Another strife-hit group is of the women whose spouses have disappeared and are referred to as half-widows. They don't know whether their husbands are alive or not. Under Indian law, a person is con-

sidered to be dead if they have disappeared for more than seven years. Before that period, no assistance is provided to these women, leaving them financially vulnerable.

A 2005 study by Médecins Sans Frontières revealed that the Kashmiri women are one of the most repressed groups around the world, with almost 11.6 per cent of the respondents claiming that they faced situational abuse. There has been a 57 per cent increase in crimes against women between 2013-18.

So far as the government efforts have not been up to the mark to tackle this situational destitution in the valley, the policies need to be drastically improved.

An umbrella needs to be created where all the independent organisations can work in tandem for the orphans and widows of Kashmir.

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# Let This Spring Help You Reflect, Be Curious, and Find Purpose

Spring brings feelings of hope. It is also a metaphor for change.

MEGAN DELANEY

**This has been a long year, filled with sadness, fear, anxiety, uncertainty, and for many, loss. Many have lost family and friends, some to the virus, perhaps without the ability to say goodbye or have a funeral, missing the built-in rituals that help us ease into a new world without our loved ones. Others have lost jobs, careers, housing, and other necessities for survival. Some have lost visits with parents, grandparents, kids, grandkids; longed-planned vacations; ceremonies such as weddings, birthdays, and family parties.**

In my private practice and with family and friends, recent conversations have been focused on loss, change, and renewal.

This has been a long year, filled with sadness, fear, anxiety, uncertainty, and for many, loss. Many have lost family and friends, some to the virus, perhaps without the ability to say goodbye or have a funeral, missing the built-in rituals that help us ease into a new world without our loved ones. Others have lost jobs, careers, housing, and other necessities for survival. Some have lost visits with parents, grandparents, kids, grandkids; longed-planned vacations; ceremonies such as weddings, birthdays, and family parties.

So many have lost normal routines, watched their children suffer, felt fatigued by virtual meetings, or uncertain about the future. Many clients and friends speak about the loss of control over what the virus still brings to daily life and what it has done to our sense of normal.

With many of us soon to be vaccinated, what does the “new normal” bring? Will we go back to “business as usual?” Can we? Do we even want to?

These are the questions that we all might want to think about. How has the pandemic influenced your daily life and what are ways that you want to recreate yourself and your daily routine going forward?

Can you reframe the losses of the pandemic into gains? Have you been able to spend more time with your family since you’ve been working from home? Have you been forced to reckon with family boundaries that may have gone unnoticed or violated for years? Have you discovered a new part of yourself that may have been dormant? Do you just feel sad and overwhelmed and realize that you might need help from a therapist through major changes in your life?

As we grapple with this, I want to acknowledge the gravity of this shared experience and grant us the time, compassion, and support that we all need to move forward. I encourage you to show kindness and compassion for others. We need to support each other.

In the meantime, the natural world continues to provide examples of resiliency and hope. Spring is a perfect metaphor for regeneration and rebirth. It literally unfolds in front of our eyes. As an eco-therapist and nature-lover, I encourage you to incorporate the natural world in your self-care and self-discovery.

Here are a few ways nature can support you (and vice versa) during spring:

#### Sit and observe nature from one spot

Watch the miracle of nature by taking the time, each day, to sit in the same place. Preferably in the morning, as a way to start the day. Watch as nature unfolds its beauty around you over time.

Use your senses to discover your place in space. What does that air smell like, what sounds do you hear, what new things can you touch and what change can you see?

Use this time to take deep breaths and set an intention for the day. Maybe it is just to be a little more present or a little calmer or a little more self-compassionate. Document your place in nature with a picture and watch, over the weeks, how the



**Reciprocity is an important component of all healthy relationships, including one with nature. Altruistic behaviors also improve our mood and our pro-environment tendencies.**

natural world blooms into life around you.

#### Plant flowers

Plant a small patch of hardy flowers in your yard or in your house. Pansies are a wonderful flower that can transition from early spring to summer. Pansies can bounce back, even from a light frost. They need water, and by removing faded flowers, they will regenerate.

Pansies are a great metaphor for our own transition into spring and post-COVID. Maybe we too can survive a frost and with some water and care, find ways to regrow.

#### Take a walk in nature without your phone

Start by with a five-senses grounding technique (take a deep breath and take the time to focus on 5 things you can see, 4 things you can hear, 3 things you can smell, 2 things you can touch and 1 think you can taste, take another deep breath).

If you find your mind racing, stop and take a few breaths. Try to focus on your surroundings and senses. When you get home, you can let all the racing thoughts come back – although I suspect with some greater sense of peace.

#### Give back to the natural world

Reciprocity is an important component of all healthy relationships, including one with nature. Altruistic behaviors also improve our mood and our pro-environment tendencies.

One way to give back to the natural world is to volunteer at a local park or garden; plant bulbs, till the earth, pull out invasive species, clean paths for others to enjoy. Time spent in this way also gets us outside and into the fresh air, perhaps even with some much-needed human interactions.

If you do not have the time to volunteer, just picking up a few pieces of trash on your daily walk goes a long way. Take a bag with you but don’t get hyperfocused on the trash or you will ruin the experience. If we all take a few pieces on every walk, the impact is greater.

There are so many amazing ways that nature can help you and you can help nature. Any way that feels right to you, and is caring to the environment, is just fine.

Spring makes me feel hopeful and recharged; it is also a metaphor for change. I hope it brings you new clarity and feelings of hope.

*Psychology Today*

## Working Too Much?

Why the grass isn’t necessarily greener in other societies.

PROF. RAHUL BHUI

Is the grass greener in other societies? If you are working seemingly endless hours in an industrialized society, would you have more leisure time if you packed up and moved to a remote village in the Amazon?

It’s not a crazy question, given that anthropologist Marshall Sahlins called hunter-gatherers the “original affluent society.” He argued – based on limited evidence – that hunter-gatherers enjoy abundant leisure time because they are unburdened by commercial markets, which cause people to spend more time working to pursue material things.

His theory contradicted earlier claims asserting that people in less socioeconomically complex societies work endlessly just to survive. They maintained that fewer work hours are required in market-based societies due to greater productivity.

So, who is right? Is it worth moving to a remote hunter-gatherer community for more leisure time, or are we better off staying in industrialized society?

With patterns of work changing because of the pandemic, the question of how we work – and how much we work – stands out as particularly relevant. To better understand ourselves, we want to look at what life is like across diverse communities and back into history.

To answer these questions, my colleagues and I looked at the role of markets in how much we work.



We conducted two analyses to address this question. First, within eight small-scale societies, we analyzed a high-quality data set to see whether the proportion of work time spent on commercial activity is associated with greater total work time on an individual level. Second, we incorporated time allocation data from 14 industrialized countries compiled by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and

**With patterns of work changing because of the pandemic, the question of how we work – and how much we work – stands out as particularly relevant. To better understand ourselves, we want to look at what life is like across diverse communities and back into history.**

Development (OECD) to look at whether the commercial proportion of work time is associated with greater aggregate work time across a wide spectrum of societies.

We defined work as inclusive of commercial activities, food production, housework, manufacturing, food preparation, education, and childcare.

The results of the study were intriguing: Within and across societies,

men whose work was largely commercial tended to work more overall. Men with noncommercial labor worked an average of 45 hours a week, and men with jobs linked to the market worked an average of 55 hours a week.

In other words, the more men’s tasks are linked to the market, the more they work. Men whose work was based on subsistence labor – like hunting and gathering – worked about 10 hours less a week than men in market-based jobs.

A possible explanation for the time disparity is the type of labor. Men doing more physically intense labor may work fewer hours because of the toll their work takes on their bodies. They are expending more metabolic energy to do their jobs.

Interestingly, these findings do not apply to women. In contrast to men, women across these societies already worked an average of 55 hours per week regardless of the type of work. Even in remote communities, they worked as much as highly commercial men. This finding could be a result of how we defined work, as prior studies like Sahlins’ ignored tasks like household labor and food processing, which we included.

Does this mean the grass is greener in a subsistence-oriented society? Though Sahlins was clearly onto something, you are probably going to work a lot harder than he envisioned. The original affluent society may not be quite as affluent in leisure time as he argued, particularly for women.

*Psychology Today*



# Cyberbullying linked to social media addiction

Agencies

The findings of a recent study suggests that adolescents are spending more of their time online navigating a complex virtual world, as social media platforms like Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, and others continue to grow in popularity.

New research suggests that these increased hours spent online may be associated with cyberbullying behaviors. According to a study by the University of Georgia, higher social media addiction scores, more hours spent online and identifying as male significantly predicted cyberbullying perpetration in adolescents.

"There are some people who engage in cyberbullying online because of the anonymity and the fact that there's no retaliation," said Amanda Giordano, principal investigator of the study and associate professor in the UGA Mary Frances Early College of Education. "You have these adolescents who are still in the midst of cognitive development, but we're giving them technology that has a worldwide audience and then expecting them to make good choices."

Cyberbullying can take on many forms, including personal attacks, harassment or discriminatory behavior, spreading defamatory information, misrepresenting oneself online, spreading private information, social exclusion, and cyberstalking.

The study surveyed adolescents ranging in age from 13-19 years old. Of the 428 people surveyed, 214 (50 per cent) identified as female, 210 (49.1 per cent) as male, and four (0.9 per cent) as other.

Exploring social media addiction

When adolescents are online, they adapt to a different set of social norms than when they're interacting with their peers in person. Oftentimes, they are more aggressive or critical on social media because of the anonymity they have online and their ability to avoid retaliation. Additionally, cyberbullies may feel less remorse or empathy when engaging in these behaviours because they can't see the direct impact of their actions.

"The perpetrator doesn't get a chance to see how damaging their bullying is and to learn from their mistakes and do something different," said Giordano. "It's a scary situation because they don't have the natural consequences they do with offline bullying."

Teenagers who are addicted to social media are more likely to engage in cyberbullying, as well as those who spend more time online. Participants in the study reported spending on average over seven hours online per day, and



the reported average maximum hours spent online in one day was over 12 hours.

"Social media addiction is when people crave it when they're not on it, and continue their social media use despite negative consequences," said Giordano. "Some negative consequences could be they're tired during the day because they're scrolling all night long, they're having conflicts with their parents, they're getting poor grades in school or they're engaging in actions online that they later regret, but they still continue to use social media."

Social networking sites are designed to give people a dopamine hit, she added, and some people compulsively look for that hit. "It's feeding into that addictive behaviour, and they may be using cyberbullying as a way to get

likes, shares, comments and retweets," she said. "That's the common thread you see in behavioural addictions-people start relying on a rewarding behaviour as a way to make them feel better when they're experiencing negative emotions. And so, I think the social media addiction piece is really interesting to show that there's another factor at play here in addition to the number of hours spent online."

The study also found that adolescent males are more likely to engage in cyberbullying than females, aligning with past studies that show aggressive behaviors tend to be more male-driven. More research on the socialization process of men can help determine what's leading them to engage in more cyberbullying behaviors.

Next steps for counselors and clinicians

Giordano believes that counselors need to start assessing adolescents for social media addiction if they are engaging in cyberbullying and to provide treatment plans to help redefine their relationship with technology. These interventions may include helping adolescents examine how they define their self-worth and restricting the amount of time they spend on social media platforms.

"There's quite a few strong and reliable assessments for social media addiction for adolescents that have good psychometric properties," said Giordano. "I think when clinicians see cyberbullying happen, they really need to explore the individual's relationship with social media and to address social media addiction, not just the cyberbullying."

Often, school counsellors are not aware of cyberbullying until after an incident occurs. To address this issue, Giordano recommends that schools start educating students earlier about cyberbullying and social media addiction as a preventive method instead of waiting to repair the damage. Whether it's through an awareness campaign or support group, schools can help students talk about cyberbullying to give them a chance to understand the consequences of their actions and prepare them for potential risks.

"We need schools and school counsellors to do this preventative work early and educate students about the risk of addiction with some of these rewarding behaviours like gaming and social media," said Giordano. "We need to teach them the warning signs of behavioural addiction, what to do if they start to feel like they're losing control over their behaviours and help them find other ways to manage their emotions, rather than turning to these behaviours. There are a lot of programs already moving in this direction, and I think that's amazing and there needs to be more of it."

Counsellors can help decrease the risk of some of these addictive behaviours at a young age by teaching and equipping children with emotional regulation skills and other ways to cope with their feelings.

"If you think about it, adolescents are not only figuring out who they are offline, but they're also trying to figure out who they want to be online," said Giordano. "We're giving them, even more, to do during this developmental period, including deciding how they want to present themselves online. I think it's a complex world that we're asking adolescents to navigate."

# 'Long-term space travellers will need high-intensity exercise to protect heart health'

Agencies

Long periods of time spent in space will require travellers to engage in high-intensity exercise to maintain their heart health, according to a new study.

The findings of the study were published in the American Heart Association's flagship journal Circulation.

As NASA seeks to build a lunar outpost, visit Mars and commercialise spaceflight, the long-term effects of weightlessness on the human heart are of critical importance, according to researchers.

By analysing data from astronaut Scott Kelly's year in space and comparing it to information from extreme long-distance, which simulates weightlessness, swimming of Benoit Lecomte, researchers found that low-intensity exercise was not enough to counteract the effects of prolonged weightlessness on the heart.

Each time a person sits or stands, gravity draws blood into the legs. The work the heart does to keep blood flowing as it counters Earth's gravity helps it maintain its size and function. Removing gravitational effects causes the heart to shrink.

Researchers examined data from retired astronaut Scott Kelly's stint aboard the International Space Station from 2015 to 2016 and elite endurance swimmer Benoit Lecomte's swim across the Pacific Ocean in 2018.

In this new study, researchers evaluated the effects of long-term weightlessness on the structure of the heart and to help understand



whether extensive periods of low-intensity exercise can prevent the effects of weightlessness.

"The heart is remarkably plastic and especially responsive to gravity or its absence. Both the impact of gravity as well as the adaptive response to exercise play a role, and we were surprised that even extremely long periods of low-intensity exercise did not keep the heart muscle from shrinking," said Benjamin D. Levine, M.D., the study's senior author and a professor of internal medicine at UT Southwestern Medical Center and director of Texas Health Presbyterian's Institute for Exercise and Environmental Medicine, both in Dallas.

The research team examined the health data of Kelly's year in space aboard the International Space Station and Lecomte's swim

across the Pacific Ocean to investigate the impact of long-term weightlessness on the heart. Water immersion is an excellent model for weightlessness since water offsets gravity's effects, especially in a prone swimmer, a specific swimming technique used by long-distance endurance swimmers.

Kelly exercised six days a week, one to two hours per day during his 340 days in space, from March 27, 2015, to March 1, 2016, using a stationary bike, a treadmill, and resistance activities.

Researchers hoped Lecomte's 159-day swim from June 5 to November 11, 2018, of 1,753 miles from Choshi, Japan, during which he averaged nearly six hours a day swimming, would keep his heart from shrinking and weakening.

Doctors performed various tests to measure the health and effectiveness of both Kelly's and Lecomte's hearts before, during, and after each man embarked on his respective expeditions.

The analysis found:

- Both Kelly and Lecomte lost mass from their left ventricles over the course of the experiences (Kelly 0.74 grams/week; Lecomte 0.72 grams/week).
  - Both men suffered an initial drop in the diastolic diameter of their heart's left ventricle (Kelly's dropped from 5.3 to 4.6 cm; Lecomte's reduced from 5 to 4.7 cm.).
  - Even the most sustained periods of low-intensity exercise were not enough to counteract the effects of prolonged weightlessness.
  - Left ventricle ejection fraction (LVEF) and markers of diastolic function did not consistently change in either individual throughout their campaign.
- This case study examined two extraordinary feats by two unique individuals. While it is important to understand how the body responds to extreme circumstances, more study is required to understand how these results can be applied to the general population.
- Analysis of Lecomte's cardiac MRIs from before and after his swim is forthcoming and will also be helpful for the researchers to further understand whether long-term effects of weightlessness can be reversed. Kelly did not receive cardiac MRIs, and currently, there are no further follow-up plans for him.

# Study links exposure to environmental chemicals with autistic behaviour in kids

Agencies

A novel study found correlations between increased expressions of autistic-like behaviours in pre-school aged children to gestational exposure to selected environmental toxicants, including metals, pesticides, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), phthalates, and bisphenol-A (BPA).

The study led by Simon Fraser University's Faculty of Health Sciences researchers was published today in the American Journal of Epidemiology.

This population study measured the levels of 25 chemicals in blood and urine samples collected from 1,861 Canadian women during the first trimester of pregnancy. A follow-up survey was

conducted with 478 participants, using the Social Responsiveness Scale (SRS) tool for assessing autistic-like behaviours in pre-school children.

The researchers found that higher maternal concentrations of cadmium, lead, and some phthalates in blood or urine samples was associated with increased SRS scores, and these associations were particularly strong among children with a higher degree of autistic-like behaviours. Interestingly, the study also noted that increased maternal concentrations of manganese, trans-Nonachlor, many organophosphate pesticide metabolites, and mono-ethyl phthalate (MEP) were most strongly associated with lower SRS scores.

The study's lead author, Josh Alampi, notes that this study primarily "highlights the relationships between select environmental toxicants and increased SRS scores. Further studies are needed to fully assess the links and impacts of these environmental chemicals on brain development during pregnancy."

The results were achieved by using a statistical analysis tool, called Bayesian quantile regression, which allowed investigators to determine which individual toxicants were associated with increased SRS scores in a more nuanced way than conventional methods.

"The relationships we discovered between these toxicants and SRS scores would not have been detected through the use of a means-based method of statistical analysis (such as linear regression)," noted Alampi. "Although quantile regression is not frequently used by investigators, it can be a powerful way to analyze complex population-based data."

# Google Maps to start directing drivers to 'eco-friendly' routes

Agencies

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

Google, an Alphabet Inc unit, said the feature would launch later this year in the U.S. 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 trade-off," Russell Dicker, a director of product at Google, told reporters on Monday.

Google said it derives emissions relative estimates by testing



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.

across different types of vehicles and road types, drawing on insights from the U.S. 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 U.K.

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.



## Khundru Ammunition Depot Fire Victims Await Compensation

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** The Comptroller Auditor General of India in its report revealed that an amount of Rs 3.55 crore as a part of compensation for fire victims in Anantnag, where the army ammunition depot gutted on August 11 in 2007 causing damage to the local population has not been released yet.

The information was shared by the Comptroller Auditor General (CAG) India in the report about the compensation to the fire victims of Khundru Achabal in Anantnag after an Army ammunition depot back in 2007 was engulfed by fire.

According to the report, consequent to the fire incident of Khundru Army Ammunition Depot on 11 August 2007, Ministry of Defence, Government of India (GoI), released Rs 26.74 crore in favour of Deputy Commissioner, Anantnag for disbursement among the victims of the fire incident.

CAG said that the scrutiny of the records (February 2020) revealed

that compensation amounting to Rs 23.19 crore had been disbursed to the affected population under different categories up to December 2009.

"Thereafter, no payment on account of compensation was made," it said.

It said that the balance amount of Rs 3.55 crore towards compensation remained un-disbursed as of March 2019 in the Bank Account of the DDO for almost a decade and had accumulated to Rs 5.41 crore including interest.

The CAG also said that the specific reasons for the compensation remaining un-disbursed were neither on record nor provided to audit by the DDO concerned.

As the funds were provided by the Ministry of Defence, the un-disbursed, un-utilised funds were required to be refunded to GoI, the CAG maintained.

"Although this was brought to the notice (February 2020) of the Department/ State Government, their replies were awaited (September 2020)," the report reads—(KNO)

## As Covid Cases Surge, Hoteliers Oppose Lockdown

'It Will Affect Tourism'

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** The hoteliers on Wednesday said that the government must not make hue and cry over the re-surge in the COVID-19 cases, saying that the virus is there from last more than a year now and can be combated by following Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) properly.

Addressing a news conference, the hoteliers association headed by its president Mushtaq Ahmad Chaya, said that the hoteliers will ensure strict adherence to the COVID guidelines to prevent the virus from spreading.

"We have been already following the SOPs in spirit and we will cooper-

ate with the government in preventing the virus from spreading," Chaya said.

However, he said that there is a need not to make hue and cry over the re-surge in the cases as the situation in Kashmir is not too bad. "The situation is still not bad. There is a need to follow the SOPs and other COVID guidelines in spirit. The vaccine is already there and we must have to prevent the cases by following SOPs," he said.

The hoteliers also stated that only preventive measures like following SOPs can help in preventing the virus from spreading, adding that the government must not go for a lockdown again as it will have adverse effect on tourism sector yet again at a time when the tourist influx is increasing—(KNO)

## DIPR Jammu Bids Adieu To Retiring Officials

Observer News Service

**JAMMU:** Department of Information and Public Relations, Jammu division today accorded affectionate farewell to three officials Bodh Raj, Shashi Paul Sharda on their superannuation. Joint Director Information Jammu, Namrita Dogra; Dep-

uty Director Information (PR), Minakshi Vaid; Deputy Director (HQ), Dr. Rehana Akhtar Bijli; Cultural Officer, Parul Khajuria and other senior officers/officials were present on the occasion. The speakers highlighted the role of officials during their service and wished them a healthy and happy post retirement life.

## Govt To Notify New Power Schedule In Three Days

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** The government on Wednesday said that the new power schedule for Kashmir consumers is being prepared and that the schedule will be announced in two-three days.

Chief Engineer Kashmir Power Distribution Corporation Limited (KPDCL), Aijaz Ahmad Dar, said that the fresh power is being prepared by the officials at present. "The winter schedule presently in force will be changed within two to

three days," he said.

Dar had earlier said that the power schedule will be changed at the end of March. He had stated that with the end of winter season, the department is taking steps to change the schedule.

Dar today said that the season would be free of curtailment, adding that the electricity may get affected only when there is any bottleneck.

He added that the schedule would have been changed in case the people could have cooperated with the department—(KNO)

## Pulwama Resident Mortgages Villagers' Land To Avail Rs 86L Loan

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** In a major fraud, a resident of South Kashmir's Pulwama district availed a loan of rupees 86 lakhs from a local branch of J&K Bank, 17 years ago, by mortgaging land that he never owned.

The owners of the land, residents of Sanzan Shahooria area of Pulwama said that they were shocked to know that the land measuring 65 Kanals belonging to them had been mortgaged by an unknown person back in the year 2004 and had availed rupees 86 lakh on producing the papers of said land before a bank verification team.

The loan amount now stands mounted to one crore and 26 lakhs after the defaulter failed to pay back the said amount in stipulated period of time.

One of the land owners Khurshid Mir said that a person namely Bashir Ahmad Dar son of Abdul Aziz Dar, a resident of Shal-Takuna village of Pulwama had delinquently availed the loan from J&K Bank's Awantipora branch in 2004 after mortgaging his land and of seven others.

The land as per Khurshid belongs to him and Abdul Hamid Mir, Bushan Lal Pandit, Sanjay Dhar, Sultan Magray, Muhammad Rafiq Bhat and Muhammad Ramzan Mir, all residents of Sanzan Shahooria village.

Abdul Hamid Mir said that they



came to know about this major 'fraud' some ten days back after they brought a local Patwari for measurement of the land and they were shocked to know that their land had been mortgaged in 2004.

He alleged that the 'fraud' has been done by the person in connivance with the then Patwari, Tehsildar and other concerned officers.

After all this the owners approached the bank to know the exact details pertaining to the major irregularity and were at first denied access to such details on account of "secret deed" of the bank.

Lately they approached the local court and they were then able to access the details about all this. The details revealed that the then Sub-Registrar at Pulwama

court authenticated the fraudulent documents of the accused and had remarked the documents as verified.

Questioning the loopholes in the then administration of Pulwama, the owners said, "How come they authenticated the land documents which never belonged to the defaulter."

Land owners have now approached Deputy Commissioner Pulwama, who has sought a report in this regard within five days.

The land owners requested the intervention of Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Deputy Commissioner Pulwama, SSP Pulwama, and other probing institutions to thoroughly investigate the matter and bring the culprits to book. (KDC)

## ACB Files Chargesheet Against Retired Executive Engineer, Six Others Over Corruption Charges

Observer News Service

**JAMMU:** The Anti Corruption Bureau Wednesday produced charge-sheet against former Executive Engineer of Public Works Department (R&B), then Assistant Accounts Officer in the office of Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Spl. Sub. Div. Mahore, Reasi and private beneficiaries (all contractors) in a case registered under FIR No.17/2013 under section 5(1) (d) r/w 5(2) J&K PC Act Svt. 2006 & Section 120-B, 201 RPC registered in P/S VOJ (now ACB) before the Court of Special Judge Anti-Corruption Udhampur.

In a statement, the Anti-Corruption Bureau said that the chargesheet has been filed against Sunil Kumar Gupta then Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Spl. Sub. Division Mahore, Reasi (now retired as SE), Lakhdeep Singh Jamwal, the then Assistant Accounts Officer in the office of Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Spl. Sub. Div. Mahore, Reasi and private beneficiaries Chatter Singh, Abdul Hamid, Muhammad Haif, Farman Ali and Muhammad Afzal.

The statement said that an instant case was registered on the basis of outcome of verification conducted by VOJ (now ACB) into the allegations that XEN (R&B) Special Division Mahore has shown executed 162 works departmentally during financial year 2010-11 involving total amount of Rs

2,53,87,520/- without inviting any tenders, thereby defeating the purpose of rationality of rates and got works executed through professional contractors and made payment without deducting service tax.

During verification, information received from Executive Engineer R&B Special Sub Division, Mahore revealed that the works were executed departmentally on emergent basis through the agency whose land/houses were coming under the alignment of road constructed in the division. During the course of verification, it has been found that most of the works were found executed through Chatter Singh, Abdul Hamid, Muhammad Haif and Farman Ali who are regular contractors.

The statement said that verification further revealed that Gupta had abused his official position and allotted the works amounting to Rs.2.53 crores approximately to contractors under the garb of departmental execution and further benefited them by not deducting service tax while releasing payments in their favour. The works were executed departmentally by XEN R&B Special Sub Division Mahore, Reasi by deliberately fragmenting them in parts so as to bring them within financial competence and undue benefits has been conferred upon blue eyed contractors by first allotting them

work without inducing any competition and further releasing payments in their favour without deducting service tax from their payments. The payments worth Rs.2,53,87,520/- have been released without deducting service tax.

Further investigation conducted by the Anti-Corruption Bureau Rajouri has established accused persons Sunil Gupta and Lakhdeep Singh by abuse of their official position and in furtherance of criminal conspiracy with each and with contractors named above had manipulated the official record and had not deliberately charged the service tax which was admissible @ 10% for their own pecuniary wrongful gain and have caused huge loss for an amount of Rs.18,23,396/ to the state exchequer.

"After completing the investigation of case, sanction for launching of prosecution of the accused in-service public servant was also obtained from the competent authority and accordingly Anti-Corruption Bureau produced charge sheet against Sunil Kumar Gupta, Lakhdeep Singh and private beneficiaries Chatter Singh, Abdul Hamid, Muhammad Haif, Farman Ali and Muhammad Afzal before Court of Special Judge Anti-Corruption Court Udhampur.

The next date of hearing in the case has been fixed for 01.05.2021

## GMC Anantnag Awaits Completion Four Years After Inauguration

**ANANTNAG:** The main campus buildings of Government Medical College (GMC) Anantnag are still awaiting completion even the foundation stone was laid in May 2016.

The GMC which has got the approval of 100 MBBS seats in the year 2019 from NMC has now two batches but it continues to function from Janglat Mandi hospital.

Officials working at the GMC said that they are facing a lot of problems in working at an erstwhile district hospital building due to space crunch.

They said that many block structures have been already completed but the interior work is still pending which executing agency must clear at an earliest.

Officials said that next year national medical college will conduct another inspection next year after which they will decide about the recognition to the college.

"If JKPCC fails to speed up the work, there are chances that we may lose a chance of recognition," officials said.

Principal GMC Anantnag Dr

Showkat Jeelani said that JKPCC has given the final deadline to complete all main campus buildings up to June 2021.

He said they are facing a lot of problems due to space crunch at existing accommodation.

"We are hopeful that JKPCC will further speed up work and hand over buildings before June," he said.

Deputy General Manager JK-PCC Er Mohammed Hussain said that work is going at full pace and this year all building campuses will be handed over to GMC.

He said that due to the condition after August 2019 and Covid lockdown, the project got delayed, "otherwise it would have been completed earlier."

"It is an Rs 133 crore project and campus will be equipped with all those facilities mentioned in DPR," Hussain said.

The foundation stone of the GMC was laid by then Union Health Minister J P Nadda and then Chief Minister of J&K Mehbooba Mufti at Dailgam Anantnag in May 2016—(KNO)

## Budgam Admin Launches Drive Against Covid-19 SOP Violators



**Rs 39,000 Fine Realised From People Without Masks**

Observer News Service

**BUDGAM:** Acting upon the instructions of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, a massive drive under the supervision of ADC Budgam, Dr. Nasir Ahmad was today launched at all hot spots around district headquarters to check the spurt of Covid-19 pandemic spread.

The drive was held at vulnerable spots where public gatherings are always expected including bus stand, passenger transport, business establishments and malls besides pedestrians, shopkeepers to ensure that the public in general adheres to all SOPs, guidelines envisaged to curb Covid-19 pandemic spread.

ADC Budgam Dr. Nasir Ahmad, Tehsildar Budgam, EO MC, SHO Budgam along with contingent of policeman and other officials of municipality launched a massive campaign/drive to ensure that people of any age category shall follow all guidelines and SOPs strictly so that apprehension of any fresh spread could be averted and curbed before it can cause mass spread.

During the drive people without masks were fined on spot up to rupees 500/-.

Speaking on the occasion, ADC Dr. Nasir said that drive launched

is simultaneously going on at all tehsil headquarters where concerned magistrates accompanied by police personnel, municipality staff and other officials are carrying out checking of all passengers vehicles, all public places, hospitals other vulnerable spots to ensure that persons coming out of their homes for any engagements shall wear mask, keep social distancing, follow all SOPs.

The ADC further said that the aim and objective of the drive is to ensure wearing of face masks and following other mandated SOPs, besides the focus shall be to encourage maintenance of hygienic environment.

He said in addition temperature screening shall be mandatory for every one entering and exiting the work places such as all business establishments, malls, shops, shopping complexes and health institutions etc.

The drive was equally cooperated and coordinated with MVD Budgam whose officials under the supervision of ARTO Jamsheed Chowdhary put Nakas at vulnerable spots to carry out necessary checking of all vehicles and during the process an amount of Rs. 9200 was on spot realized from the drivers, other occupants for not wearing masks.

The ARTO said, for the strict precedence 117 vehicles were challaned on spot for violating Covid-19 precautionary norms/guidelines.

## Government Working On Making J&K A Hub For Filmmaking: LG

### Releases 'Tujhe Bhoorna Toh Chaha' Album

Observer News Service

**JAMMU:** Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha Wednesday released renowned singer Jubin Nautiyal's music album 'Tujhe Bhoorna Toh Chaha' at General Zorawar Singh Auditorium, University of Jammu.

Made under the banner of T-Series and filmed in the picturesque settings of Kashmir valley, the song also features Abhishek Singh, an IAS & actor, and Samreen Kaur.

Speaking on the occasion, the Lt Governor termed the occasion as yet another milestone in the direction of making J&K - a preferred shooting destination for the film-makers.

"The aesthetic beauty of J&K has been beautifully captured through the song. It also marks



the revival of J&K's halcyon days of being a cinematographer's delight," he added.

The Lt Governor observed that J&K has always been a famous film-shooting destination. The golden era is back and many film-makers are ready to shoot their movies, web series and music albums in the UT.

J&K Government is all set to

welcome the film-makers from all over the world again. We want to bring back the 1980s era to the film industry in J&K, and make Union Territory the most favourite destination of film-makers worldwide, said the Lt Governor.

Highlighting the measures being taken by the UT Government for making J&K a hub for filmmaking, the Lt Governor observed that

the UT Government has developed one of the finest Film Policies which will revive J&K's incredible glory in Indian Cinema. For facilitating the film-makers, and encouraging the local talent, besides providing more livelihood opportunities to the youth, the J&K Administration has recognised Film as an industry, he added.

Government has assured Sin-

gle Window Clearance, security and world-class facilities to the film-makers coming to the UT, the Lt Governor maintained.

The Lt Governor also felicitated the artists of the music album on the occasion and asked the youth to take inspiration from them and follow their own passion. He congratulated the entire team and wished them huge success.

## Govt To Develop Patnitop Into Scenic Spot

Observer News Service

**JAMMU:** Advisor to Lieutenant Governor, Baseer Khan Wednesday said that Jammu has a huge scope and phenomenal potential for Tourism sector and directed the concerned authorities to take serious efforts to tap that potential.

Advisor Khan made these remarks while chairing a review meeting for the development of Patnitop into a tourist scenic spot at Civil Secretariat here today.

Speaking during the meeting, the Advisor directed the officers to chalk out modalities for overall development of famous tourist hill station, Patnitop.

Advisor Khan said that the area is under main focus of the government and development of the whole circuit is under consideration for promotion of tourism.

The Advisor said that tourism being the backbone of economic development plays an important role in raising the economic standards of people.

Advisor Khan added that Patnitop is one of the famous hill resorts of J&K and there is a need to attract more tourists to this place during all seasons, adding that government is having focused at-

tention on development of Patnitop and other areas as major tourist attractions.

He directed the authorities to identify the prerequisites for developing the place into a scenic spot and come with a Detailed Project Report in this regard. He also asked them to explore the possibility of adventure tourism like trekking, paragliding, river rafting and other sports in the area.

In order to make the tourist spot all weather friendly, the Advisor said that snow clearance should be done on time and said that additional machines will be designated for snow clearance at Patnitop as in the coming time, it will witness a huge footfall of tourists.

Regarding the electricity, the Advisor was informed that the works on underground electric wiring are on final stage.

Regarding various other issues like adequate provision for drinking water, proper collection of garbage, repair and black topping of Patnitop circular road, upgradation of road networks, functioning of public utilities, fire tenders and ATM facilities, medical facility, functioning of sewerage treatment plant etc, the Advisor passed on necessary directions to the concerned authorities for timely disposal of these issues.



## 26 Athletes At NIS Patiala, 4 In Bengaluru Test Positive For Coronavirus



Press Trust of India

**NEW DELHI:** Thirty sportspersons and support staff across disciplines were found to be COVID-19 positive after 741 precautionary tests were conducted at the National Centres of Excellence in Patiala and Bengaluru, the Sports Authority of India (SAI) said on Wednesday.

However, the positive results in both the centres do not include any Tokyo Olympic-bound athlete. India's men's boxing chief coach CA Kuttappa and shot put coach Mohinder Singh Dhillon are among those who have tested positive for the virus in the recent drive at the National Institute of Sports (NIS), a SAI source confirmed to PTI.

Later, SAI also issued a statement which said that 313 and 428 tests were conducted in Patiala and Bengaluru respectively. While 26 were found to be positive in Patiala, the Bengaluru count stood at four.

"Keeping the safety of Olympic-bound athletes, coaches and support staff in mind, the SAI conducted precautionary RT-PCR tests at National Centre of Excellence in Patiala and Bengaluru.

The reports received today indicate that all Olympic-bound athletes at both centres are COVID negative," the SAI statement read.

It is learnt that out of 26 positive cases in Patiala, 16 are sportspersons and rest are support staff. The 16 positive result include 10 boxers and six track and field athletes, the SAI source said.

In Bengaluru, a race walking coach has tested positive for the virus.

"...the good thing is that all positive cases are not Olympic-bound athletes. The positive athletes have been isolated and the entire campus has been sanitised." All weightlifters housed at the premier sports institute have returned negative for the virus.

The NIS Patiala is primarily the base of Olympic-bound boxers, track and field athletes and weightlifters along with sportspersons from some other disciplines.

The boxers who have tested positive include Asian silver-medallist Deepak Kumar and India Open gold-medallist Sanjit.

"Some more test results are awaited at this point," another source stated.

## 'Captaincy Will Make Rishabh Pant A Better Player,' Says DC Coach Ricky Ponting

Press Trust of India

**MUMBAI:** Delhi Capitals head coach Ricky Ponting is convinced that leading the side in the upcoming season of the Indian Premier League will make swashbuckling wicketkeeper-batsman Rishabh Pant an even better player.

Pant was named the captain of Delhi Capitals for the upcoming IPL after regular skipper Shreyas Iyer was ruled out of the tournament after he injured his left shoulder during the recently-concluded England's tour of India.

"Unfortunately that Shreyas will miss the tournament, but looking forward to seeing @RishabhPant17 grab his opportunity. It's well deserved for his recent performances and he's coming in with a lot of confidence. I'm convinced captaincy will make

him an even better player," Ponting tweeted. The highly-rated Pant has been in sensational form across formats this year. He played match-winning knocks of 97 and unbeaten 89 in the third and the fourth Test against Australia to help India clinch the Border Gavaskar Trophy Down Under.

He followed that up with a brilliant century against England in the fourth Test in Ahmedabad, forcing the selectors to include him in the white-ball squads.

Making a comeback into the Indian white-ball side, Pant was promoted to No. 4 in the series against England, and the 23-year-old did not disappoint. He scored half centuries in the two ODIs he featured in.

This season will mark the wicketkeeper-batsman's debut as IPL captain. Pant has led Delhi's state team in the past.

# Inter-Departmental Football Tournament 2021 Kicks Off At IUST



Observer News Service

**AWANTIPORA:** A 7-A-Side Inter-Departmental Football Tournament, organised by the Directorate of Physical Education, Islamic University of Science and Technology kicked off at the University Campus here on Tuesday.

Registrar, IUST Prof. Naseer Iqbal, while inaugurating the tournament

as Chief Guest, congratulated and encouraged the students for their active participation in sports. He assured every possible support to students and department as well.

The inaugural match of the tournament was played between Department of Management Studies and Department of Food Technology. The high-scoring and electrifying match was won by the students

of Management Studies by 5 goals to Food Technology's 1.

Earlier, Assistant Director Physical Education, Dr Hilal Rather welcomed the Chief Guest and briefed those present on the occasion about the sporting activities that the Directorate will be conducting during the year 2021. He also hailed the hard work of the staff assisting in sports activities.

## DDC Flags-Off Cross Country Run At Pulwama



Observer News Service

**PULWAMA:** The District Development Commissioner (DDC) Pulwama, Baseer Ul Haq Choudhary on Wednesday flagged-off a cross country run of various age groups of students, at Pulwama.

The run was organised by the Department of Youth Services and Sports in which students of age groups (U-14, U-16 and U-19), par-

ticipated. The event witnessed a huge participation of students who started the long distance run from Peaks Automobile, Pulwama and concluded at Drussu.

While interacting with the students, the DDC urged the student groups to imbibe the qualities of leadership and initiative in life. He said that such events will pave a way towards fitness and sportsmanship.

He asked the students to be the

active participants in community development and volunteerism. The DDC also directed the organisers to provide enough sanitizers and other logistics to the students during the run.

Later, winners and runner ups were felicitated with trophies and consolation prizes. District Sports Officer Noor Mohammad, other concerned officers and officials were present on the occasion.



FIFA WORLD CUP 2022 QUALIFIERS

## Ronaldo Scores For Portugal, Belgium And Netherlands Earn Huge Wins

Agencies

**MADRID:** Belgium and the Netherlands scored 15 goals combined in big routs in World Cup qualifying, while Portugal got one from Cristiano Ronaldo in its victory against a Luxembourg team that tinkered with another shock result. Belgium crushed Belarus 8-0 to stay at the top in Group E, while the Dutch trashed Gibraltar 7-0 to go second behind Turkey in Group F.

Monday night saw now Luxembourg, which opened with a surprising win against Ireland, looked on its way to pulling off another upset after it took the lead against Portugal, but the visitors came from behind to stay at the top of Group A along with Serbia, which earlier defeated Azerbaijan with another double by Fulham forward Aleksandar Mitrovic.

It was a difficult first half," Portugal midfielder Renato Sanches said. "Luxembourg started well, but I think we controlled the game. They had a set piece and scored, but I think that from that point on we controlled the game.

RONALDO SCORES AGAIN

After being held scoreless in the first two qualifiers this year, Ronaldo scored his 31st goal in World Cup qualifying early in the second half in Portugal's victory at Luxembourg. He has now scored for Portugal in every calendar year since his first international goal in 2004, and moved six away from tying the all-time scoring record for a men's national team. The record of 109 goals is held by former Iran striker Ali Daei, the only other male soccer player to surpass the 100-goal milestone.

Gerson Rodrigues had put the hosts ahead in the 30th minute but Diogo Jota equalized for Portugal in the second minute of stoppage time before Ronaldo and Joao Palhinha added second-half goals.

Portugal was coming off a 2-2 draw against Serbia. Both teams are tied with seven points each from three matches.

Ireland, the other Group A team, played a friendly against World Cup host Qatar and was held to a 1-1 draw, staying winless in 11 games under coach Stephen Kenny.

BELGIUM CRUISES

Hans Vanaken and Leandro Trossard both scored a pair of goals as Belgium trounced Belarus with four goals in each half. I'm delighted with what I've seen from every player," Belgium coach Roberto Martinez said.

I've seen players taking decisive roles, I was very pleased with the performance of the young guys and how this group works together.

The home victory left Belgium three points ahead of the Czech Republic, which lost 1-0 at Wales thanks to a late Daniel James goal after an assist by Gareth Bale.

Wales and Belarus are a point behind the Czech Republic with a game in hand.

DUTCH ROUT

Gibraltar, ranked 195th in the world, kept the Netherlands largely at bay before the break but collapsed in the second half on the artificial turf of Victoria Stadium.

The visitors added to their 1-0 halftime lead with four goals by the 64th, then got two more closer to the end. Memphis Depay had a double for the Dutch, which trails Turkey by a point after three matches.

The goals came later than we had hoped, but at least they came, Depay said. "We remained positive, and things came good in the end. The team spirit is great, and we have belief in ourselves. Turkey missed a chance to earn its third straight win after squandering a 2-0 lead in a 3-3 draw with Latvia.

MITROVIC THRIVING

Mitrovic continued his hot streak by scoring a double in Serbia's win at Azerbaijan.

He has scored five goals in the first three qualifiers. He also had a double in the opening 3-2 win against Ireland, and found the net once in the 2-2 draw against Portugal.

Mitrovic opened the scoring in the 16th and netted the winner in the 81st after Azerbaijan had scored in the 59th.

RUSSIA LOSES

Like Turkey, Russia also missed a chance to win three straight to start its qualifying campaign, losing 2-1 to Slovakia. The result left the Russians tied at the top of Group H with Croatia, which got its second victory by beating Malta 3-0.

Cyprus earlier defeated Slovenia 1-0 for its first win in the group. It was the fifth consecutive away loss for Slovenia in World Cup qualifying.

## 'MS Dhoni Helps Players Improve Their Game,' Says CSK's Moeen Ali

Press Trust of India

**NEW DELHI:** Chennai Super Kings all-rounder Moeen Ali on Wednesday vouched for Mahendra Singh Dhoni's captaincy and said most cricketers look forward to play under him as he helps them improve their game.

Dhoni is gearing up to lead the CSK franchise in the upcoming edition of the IPL starting April 9.

"I've spoken to players who have played under MS and they tell me how he improves their game. I believe a great captain does that," the England all-rounder was quoted as saying by the CSK website.

"I think it's something on every player's wish list to play under MS. I think it's the confidence and the clarity he gives people. It's exciting," he added.

Moeen, who said he was looking forward to playing under Dhoni, said it is very important to have strong leadership and coaches who stay calm.

"It's very important to have strong leadership and coaches who stay calm, who take the pressure off the players as much as they can and are consistent. We are very lucky we have that," he added.

"At CSK I feel the reality is there for us to win the competition. I'm excited about playing with the players we have here," the 33-year-old left-hand batsman cum off-spinner, who was picked up at the IPL auction in February, further said.

Moeen, who previously turned out for Royal Challengers Bangalore, said, "I think what differentiates CSK from other teams is actually how they structure everything, from the squad they have to the way they do things. They look a very calm franchise that doesn't panic."

The CSK players are currently training in Mumbai, where they play their first five matches of IPL-14, beginning with a game against Delhi Capitals on April 10.

The Dhoni-led side had commenced practice in Chennai on March 8 before shifting base to Mumbai.

## Virat Kohli Stays On Top Of ICC ODI Rankings While Jasprit Bumrah Slips To Fourth

Press Trust of India

**DUBAI:** India captain Virat Kohli retained his top spot in the ICC rankings for ODI batsmen, while pacer Jasprit Bumrah slipped a place to fourth position in the bowler's list released on Wednesday.

Kohli, who had scores of 56 and 66 in the first and second ODIs against England, has 870 points in his kitty.

Bumrah, who was rested from white-ball series against England, slipped a place to fourth among

Shardul Thakur's haul of four for 67 in the same match has enabled him to move up to 80th spot from 93rd.

For England, all-rounder Ben Stokes has advanced four places to 24th, scoring 99 off 52 balls in the second ODI and is up to second among all-rounders, while Jonny Bairstow has retained the seventh place after touching a career-high 796 rating points with his player of the match effort of 124 in the same match. Moeen Ali is up nine places to 46th among bowlers.



bowlers and has 690 points.

India limited overs vice-captain Rohit Sharma is ranked third, behind Pakistan's Babar Azam, while KL Rahul has moved up from 31st to 27th spot.

All-rounder Hardik Pandya has achieved a career-best 42nd position among batsmen after scores of 35 and 64, and Rishabh Pant has entered the top 100.

Seam bowler Bhuvneshwar Kumar, who took three for 42 in the final match, has gained nine slots to reach the 11th position, which is his best since being 10th in September 2017.

In the T20 batting list, both Rahul and Kohli have dropped a rung and are now placed fifth and sixth respectively. No other Indian featured in the top-10 among bowlers and all-rounders in the latest T20I rankings. In the Test rankings, spinner Ravichandran Ashwin retained his second spot behind Australia's Pat Cummins.

In the all-rounders' list, Ravindra Jadeja is ranked third with Ashwin occupying the fourth spot.

Kohli remained fifth among batsmen while swashbuckling wicketkeeper batsman Pant and Rohit shared the seventh spot.

IPL 2021

## Mumbai Indians - Full Squad List, Strengths, Weaknesses And Form Analysis

Press Trust of India

**MUMBAI:** A batting line-up dotted with power-hitters coupled with a solid pack of death bowlers make five-time champions Mumbai Indians a formidable unit in the upcoming IPL.

But the absence of quality spinners could hurt them in pursuit of a hat-trick of title wins.

Here is a look at what works and what doesn't for the outfit led by Rohit Sharma, which opens its campaign by taking on Royal Challengers Bangalore in Chennai on April 9.

STRENGTHS:

After lifting the trophy in 2019, Mumbai once again won in 2020 when the lucrative league was shifted to UAE due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The win was built on the team's strength—their core has remained the same over the years and this is one of the biggest reasons for the side's dominant run.

MI's batting is their biggest strength and they possess a solid opening duo in the form of skipper Rohit Sharma and South African Quinton De Kock, and if needed, have an option in Australian hard-hitting batsman Chris Lynn.

The ever-improving Suryakumar Yadav, young Ishan Kishan, both of whom starred on their India debuts, the Pandya brothers—all-rounders Hardik and Krunal—and West Indian Kieron Pollard, make for a very strong middle-order.

On the fast bowling front, the team possesses one of the finest in Jasprit Bumrah, and the India pacer would be raring to go once again after a break from the game.

Last season's new addition, New Zealand's Trent Boult proved his worth by taking wickets in the powerplay, including in the big final. Add Australia's Nathan Coulter-Nile to the mix and it becomes a superb pace attack.

WEAKNESSES:

Their problems could lie in the spin department, which is a bit light, especially on Chennai's Chepauk track. Lack of a wicket-taking spinner could hurt the Mumbai Indians' prospects.

With Lasith Malinga bidding adieu to franchise cricket, MI have been left to fill up a huge void.

Left-arm spinner Krunal, who was taken to the cleaners by the visiting England side in the ODI se-

Mumbai have a strong A side but don't have enough replacements for each slot and have relatively young players as their bench strength.

OPPORTUNITY:

Given that all of Mumbai middle-order batters are big-hitters, this could give the side an advantage over others, especially while chasing big totals at places like Chennai and Bengaluru.

THREAT:

All this might ensure that Pollard will have to contribute with the ball too, and play the role of the fifth or the sixth bowler, depending on the playing XI that is fielded.

Pollard, who has been with Mumbai Indians for a considerable amount of time, is their second highest run-scorer (3,023 runs) after Rohit Sharma (5,230 runs) and has grabbed 60 wickets.

Pollard has also smashed 198 sixes and is the second highest for his franchise after Rohit, who has hit 213 sixes.

The opponents could fancy their chances but MI definitely have the team to go for a sixth title and third on the row.

SQUAD:

Rohit Sharma (Captain), Adam Milne, Aditya Tare, Anmolpreet Singh, Anukul Roy, Arjun Tendulkar, Chris Lynn, Dhawal Kulkarni, Hardik Pandya, Ishan Kishan (wicket-keeper), James Neesham, Jasprit Bumrah, Jayant Yadav, Kieron Pollard, Krunal Pandya, Marco Jansen, Mohsin Khan, Nathan Coulter-Nile, Piyush Chawla, Quinton De Kock (wicket-keeper), Rahul Chahar, Saurabh Tiwary, Suryakumar Yadav, Trent Boult, Yuvraj Singh, Mahela Jayawardene (Head Coach).