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# KASHMIR OBSERVER

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P3 CITY

## FOR SEVEN YEARS GOVT FAILS TO REPAIR DAMAGED WATER TANK IN HABBA KADAL

The Jal Shakti department (Public Health Engineering-PHE) has failed to repair a damaged water tank in Gadood Bagh area of Habba locality here with locals alleging that the ...

P5 NOT ABOUT HUNGER

THINK The questions about Ramadan are always pretty much the same. First there is interest in how we observe the sacred month, which began this week. Then there is shock at how intense the requirement of fasting is: "Wait, so you fast all the way from before...."



P7 STATE

## ANANTNAG BRICK KILNS DEFY GOVT ORDER, SELL BRICKS AT EXORBITANT PRICES

Last year the brick kiln owners hiked the prices of bricks by around 10000 Rupees citing the government's denial of permission to bring the labour from outside states....



**Widom Quote!**

There are no mistakes, only opportunities  
—Tina Fey

**2<sup>ND</sup> RAMAZAN**

	Iftar TODAY	Sehri TOMMOROW
FIQAH HANAFIYA	07:06	04:32
FIQAH JAFARIYA	07:12	04:31

Illustration of a mosque dome and crescent moon.

## FD Seeks Details Of Projects Completed In Last Fiscal

Agencies

**SRINAGAR:** The administration of Jammu & Kashmir Union Territory has sought details of all the works / projects completed by the different departments in the last financial year.

The Finance department has written to all the administrative secretaries to submit the details of all works completed during the last fiscal under the capital expenditure budget along with the list of projects expected to be completed during the ongoing financial year.

In a letter dated April 8, 2021, Director General, Development Expenditure Division-11, Finance department has requested the departments to submit the requisite information by or before April 20.



The departments have been directed to submit details like name of the work with location, department/organization, executing agency, block/district, total expenditure incurred, project initiation year, date of completion and number of beneficiaries.

The exercise, according to the communiqué is aimed to compile and consolidate the list/details of all works/projects completed during the financial year 2020-21 under capex budget together with list of works/projects which are expected to be completed during 2021-22.

In the past two years, the Finance department headed by senior bureaucrat Arun Kumar Mehta has initiated a number of [More On P6](#)



Adhering to the government issued Covid-19 guidelines; devotees offer Zuhr prayers on the first day of Ramazan in Srinagar on Wednesday. KO Photo, Abid Bhat

## Indian Soldier Injured In LoC Firing

**SRINAGAR:** A soldier was injured in a firing incident along the Line of Control (LoC) in north Kashmir's Kupwara district, sources said Wednesday.

They said that army personnel manning "Anil Post", around 30-33 km from Kupwara, observed some suspicious movement last night prompting the sentry to fire some shots.

One army personnel identified as Jasvir Singh (46) was injured and removed to 92 Base Hospital Srinagar for treatment, the sources told news agency GNS.

It was not however known if the soldier sustained injuries due to fire by suspected infiltrators or due to mistaken firing.

## Rs 50 Cr Worth Drugs Seized In Tangdhar



Press Trust Of India

**SRINAGAR:** The Army said on Wednesday it has foiled an attempt to smuggle narcotics into Tangdhar sector from Pakistan-controlled-Kashmir and seized contraband worth around Rs 50 crore.

"The Indian Army, BSF along with JKP foiled a narco smuggling attempt in forward areas of Tangdhar sector last night and recovered today 10 kg of narcotics estimated to be worth approximately Rs 50 crore," an army official said on Wednesday.

The official said this is the second busting of "Pakistan-sponsored narco-militant module" in the past one week. A 10-kilogram heroin consignment was recovered from the same general area a week ago in a joint operation, he said. "However, [More On P6](#)

## NEWS DIGEST

### Rape Accused Held After 9 Years: Police

**JAMMU:** A man on the run for the last nine years after registration of a rape-cum-abduction case against him in Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district was arrested on Tuesday. The absconding accused Mohd Mushtaq was arrested from the Arnas area in the district on a specific tip-off, an official said. The case against Mushtaq was lodged at the Reasi police station, after the commission of the crime in 2012 but he never joined the [More On P6](#)

### Lightning Kills Youth In Anantnag

**SRINAGAR:** A youth was killed when lightning struck a residential house in Ashmuqam area of south Kashmir's Anantnag district on Wednesday. 25-year-old Junaid Shafi Wani was killed on the spot after lightning struck his house at Thokerpora village in Ashmuqam around 6:30pm Wednesday, a police official said.

### Cardiac Arrest Kills Cop

**SRINAGAR:** An on duty policeman died after suffering a massive cardiac arrest in south Kashmir's Awan-tipora, reports said Wednesday. Aijaz Ahmad, a resident of Ladhoo in Pampore suffered a cardiac arrest during the Tuesday night at the District Police Lines (DPL) Awantipora, where he was posted, reports said. Ahmad, reports said, lost his battle with life before he could be removed to the hospital. [More On P6](#)

### Youth Drowns In Kishanganga River

**SRINAGAR:** A youth died on Wednesday after falling into Kishanganga river in Gurez Valley of north Kashmir's Bandipora district. 20-year-old Muzamil Samoon, a resident of Khandyal lost control and slipped into Kishanganga river near Dawar area of Gurez on Wednesday, an official said. The youth, he said, was immediately rescued by the villagers and removed to the nearby hospital for treatment. However, the doctors there declared him dead on arrival. "After [More On P6](#)

### Teen Vehicle Lifter Arrested

**JAMMU:** A 19-year-old vehicle lifter was arrested in Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district on Wednesday in a theft case of motorcycles, police said. A case was registered after one Krishan Singh of Bhaga village in the district lodged a complaint that his motorcycles were stolen, they said. During the investigation, many suspects were rounded up and their questioning led to the recovery of vehicles from Khawas area of Rajouri district. The accused identified as Mohammad Mukeem (19) was later arrested, they said. Mukeem is a notorious and habitual offender against whom four [More On P6](#)

# J&K Reports 5 Deaths, 1086 New Corona Cases



Observer Monitoring Desk

**SRINAGAR:** With the growing number of tests, Coronavirus cases

are showing an upwards trend in Jammu and Kashmir as 1086 more people tested Covid-19 positive on Wednesday, while [More On P6](#)

## 1,84,372 New Cases India Sees Highest Daily Spike

The number of new coronavirus cases in India hit a record daily high with 1,84,372 infections pushing the total tally of cases to 1,38,73,825, while the active cases surpassed the 13-lakh mark, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Wednesday. The death toll increased to 1,72,085 with 1,027 new fatalities, the highest since October 18, 2020 the data updated at 8 am showed. Registering a steady increase for the 35th day in a row, the active cases have increased to [More On P6](#)

## Modi More Likely To Respond With Military Force To Pak Provocations: US Intel Report



Press Trust Of India

**WASHINGTON:** India, under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, is more likely than in the past to respond with military force to perceived or real Pakistani provocations, the US intelligence community has told

Congress in a report.

The Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) in its Annual Threat Assessment report to the US Congress, said although a general war between India and Pakistan is unlikely, crises between the two are likely to become [More On P6](#)

## Militant, 3 OGWs Held In Kulgam: Police

**SRINAGAR:** Police on Wednesday claimed to have arrested a militant of Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) outfit and three over-ground workers (OGWs) in south-Kashmir's Kulgam district. An official said that the arrests were made during a joint naka laid by police alongside Army's 9 Rashtriya Rifles at Bogund of Kulgam. "The militant and the three OGWs were intercepted while travelling in a vehicle", the official said. Identifying the [More On P6](#)

## No Let Up in Wet Weather

## MeT Predicts Widespread Rains Across J&K

Agencies

**SRINAGAR:** The meteorological department on Wednesday predicted "widespread light to moderate rain, snow or thundershowers" for next few days across Jammu and Kashmir, even as night temperatures rose by several notches in the Valley.

The weatherman has forecast "widespread and fairly widespread" light to moderate rain, snow and

thundershowers from April 15 to 18. On April 19 and 20, the weatherman forecast isolated rains.

The weather office has also issued 'yellow warning for "isolated thunder/lightning with gusty wind 30-40 kmph" for both Jammu and Kashmir divisions from April 14 to 17.

There are four types of colour codes signifying the level of caution: green which means no action, yellow—situation to be watched), [More On P6](#)

## Snow-Clearance On Zojila In Full Swing

The snow-clearance operation at the Zojila pass along the Srinagar-Leh national highway is in full swing and likely to be completed before next week, officials said on Wednesday. This year, the 434-km strategic highway linking Ladakh with Jammu and Kashmir was opened on February 28, much ahead of the schedule, after remaining closed for 58 days due to snowfall. This was the earliest reopening of the high-mountain [More On P6](#)

## NHPC To Develop 850-MW Hydro Project On Chenab River

Press Trust Of India

**NEW DELHI:** State-owned hydro-power giant NHPC will form a joint venture with Jammu & Kashmir State Power Development Corporation Ltd (JKSPDCL), "Ratle Hydroelectric Power Corporation Ltd", to implement a 850-mega-watt (MW) hydroelectric project in Chenab river basin.

"A promoter agreement was signed on April 13, 2021, between NHPC Ltd, JKSPDCL and the Government of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir," according to a BSE filing.

Under the pact, the parties have decided and agreed to jointly establish a company under the

name of "Ratle Hydroelectric Power Corporation Limited" for the implementation of Ratle hydroelectric project. It will have an installed capacity of 850 MW in the Chenab river basin and any other project that may be entrusted to the company in the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir.

The joint venture (JV) shall be formed in the shareholding ratio of 51 per cent (NHPC Ltd) and 49 per cent (JKSPDCL).

According to the pact, the company shall have an authorised share capital of Rs 1,600 crore divided into 160 crore equity shares of the face value of Rs 10. The initial [More On P6](#)

## Miscreants Poison Fish Farm, Farmer Loses Lakhs

Agencies

**SRINAGAR:** In an apparent case of enmity, a fish farmer in north Kashmir's Bandipora suffered a loss of lakhs of rupees after some miscreants allegedly poisoned his fish farm.

Aijaz Ahmed Mir, a resident of Nakhin Chitibandy area of Bandipora had set up a fish feeding farm two years back. His farm had nearly 20000 fish each weighing over a kilogram and Mir was expecting to sell the first produce of the farm this summer to earn his bread and butter, reports said.

However, before he could sell his produce and earn his living,



some unknown persons allegedly put some poisonous substance into his fish farm resulting in the death of huge number of fish besides causing huge financial losses to the owner.

Meanwhile, a police team from Aragam [More On P6](#)



# COVID patients with physical inactivity, less exercise more likely to die: Study

## Agencies

Among COVID patients, a lack of exercise is linked to more severe symptoms and a higher risk of death, according to a study covering nearly 50,000 people who were infected with the virus.

People physically inactive for at least two years before the pandemic were more likely to be hospitalised, to require intensive care, and to die, researchers reported on Tuesday in the British Journal of Sports Medicine.

The study found said that as a risk factor for serious COVID disease, physical inactivity was surpassed only by advanced age and a history of organ transplant. Indeed, compared to other modifiable risk factors such as smoking, obesity or hypertension, "physical inactivity was the strongest risk factor across all outcomes," the authors concluded.

The pre-existing conditions most associated with severe COVID-19 infection are advanced age, being male, and having diabetes, obesity or cardiovascular disease. But up to now, a sedentary life-

style has not been included.

To see whether a lack of exercise increases the odds of severe infection, hospitalisation, admission into an intensive care unit (ICU), and death, the researchers compared these outcomes in 48,440 adults in the United States infected with COVID-19 between January and October 2020.

The average age of patients was 47, and three out of five were women. On average, their mass-body index was 31, just above the threshold for obesity.

### Intensive care

Around half had no underlying illnesses, such as diabetes, chronic lung conditions, heart or kidney disease, or cancer. Nearly 20 percent had one, and more than 30 percent had two or more. All of the patients had reported their level of regular physical activity at least three times between March 2018 and March 2020 at outpatient clinics.

Some 15 per cent described themselves as inactive (0-10 minutes of physical activity per week), nearly 80 percent reported

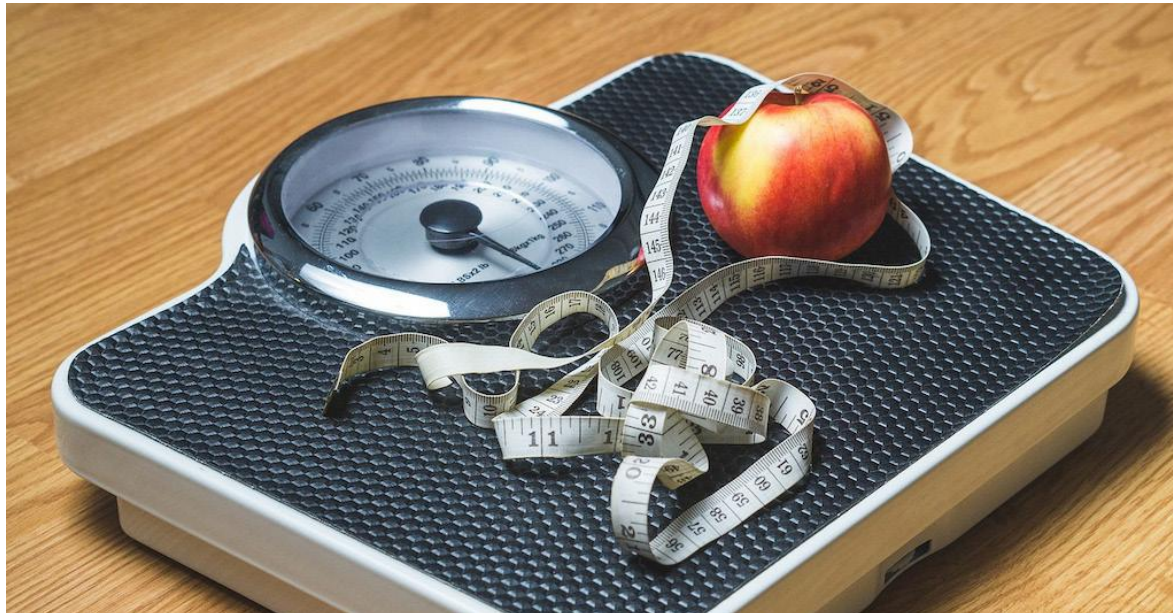
"some activity" (11-149 minutes/week), and seven percent were consistently active in keeping with national health guidelines (150+ minutes/week).

After allowing for differences due to race, age and underlying medical conditions, sedentary COVID-19 patients were more than twice as likely to be admitted to hospital as those who were most active. They were also 73 percent more likely to require intensive care, and 2.5 times more likely to die due to the infection.

Compared to patients in the habit of doing occasional physical activity, couch potatoes were 20 percent more likely to be admitted to hospital, 10 percent more likely to require intensive care, and 32 percent more likely to die.

While the link is statistically strong, the study -- which is observational, as opposed to a clinical trial -- cannot be construed as direct evidence that a lack of exercise directly caused the difference in outcomes.

The findings also depend on self-reporting by patients, with a potential for bias.



**Some 15 per cent described themselves as inactive (0-10 minutes of physical activity per week), nearly 80 percent reported "some activity" (11-149 minutes/week), and seven percent were consistently active in keeping with national health guidelines (150+ minutes/week).**

## Mars did not dry up all at once, says study

### Agencies

Mars had drier and wetter eras before drying up completely about three billion years ago, says a new study which suggests that the Red Planet did not dry up all at once.

The findings are based on data from NASA's Curiosity Mars rover which continues to explore the base of Mount Sharp on the Red Planet.

"A primary goal of the Curiosity mission was to study the transition between the habitable environment of the past, to the dry and cold climate that Mars has now," said Roger Wiens, a coauthor on the paper and scientist at Los Alamos National Laboratory, where he is on the ChemCam team.

"These rock layers recorded that change in great detail," Wiens said.

ChemCam is the rock-vaporising laser that sits on the mast of the Curiosity rover and analyses the chemical composition of Martian rocks.

William Rapin, a researcher with the French National Centre



for Scientific Research (CNRS), led the study published in the journal Geology.

Using the long-range camera on ChemCam to make detailed observations of the steep terrain of Mount

Sharp, a team including Wiens and other researchers at Los Alamos discovered that the Martian climate alternated between dry and wetter periods before it went completely dry.

Spacecraft in orbit around Mars

had previously provided clues about the mineral composition of the slopes of Mount Sharp.

Now, ChemCam has successfully made detailed observations of the sedimentary beds from the planet's surface, revealing the conditions under which they formed.

Moving up through the terrain, Curiosity observed that the types of bed change drastically.

Lying above the lake-deposited clays that form the base of Mount Sharp, sandstone layers show structures indicating their formation from wind-formed dunes, suggesting long, dry climate episodes, said the study.

Higher up still, thin alternating brittle and resistant beds are typical of river floodplain deposits, marking the return of wetter conditions.

These changes in terrain show that the climate of Mars underwent several large-scale fluctuations between wetter and dryer periods, until the generally arid conditions observed today took hold.

## Study sheds light on rate of anxiety for fathers during perinatal period

### Agencies

In the study, the researchers from the Colorado School of Public Health on the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus studied the prevalence of anxiety among fathers during the perinatal period, which includes pregnancy through the first year of postpartum.

"The transition to parenthood is a major life event that's often accompanied with new challenges related to financial, relationship, and work-life balance concerns. Despite those changes happening for both men and women, not much is known about the prevalence of anxiety among new fathers," said Jenn Leiferman, PhD, professor at the Colorado School of Public Health.

Leiferman added, "To our knowledge, our study is the first meta-analysis to explore the prevalence rates of anxiety among both fathers and mothers during the perinatal period."

The researchers reviewed eligible studies representing more than 40,000 participants

that have published between 1995-2020. The researchers found that the overall estimate of anxiety among men during the perinatal period was nearly 11 per cent, with rates being lower during pregnancy (9.9 per cent) than dur-



ing the first year postpartum (11.7 per cent).

These rates are considerably higher than the global WHO regional prevalence rates for anxiety among men that range between 2.2 to 3.8 per cent, suggesting the transition into parenthood may increase the risk for anxiety in men.

In terms of anxiety among mothers, the researchers

found an estimated 17.6 per cent of women experience it during the perinatal period. This is also substantially higher than global WHO regional preferences for anxiety among women but in line with estimates for maternal anxiety from other meta-analyses.

"The prevalence of anxiety and depression among men is talked about less as a society, even though research shows men are more likely to commit suicide or abuse alcohol than women. It's important that we create more transparency around men's mental health issues. Our hope is by creating awareness, we can help people get help earlier when needed," said Leiferman.

The researchers suggested that many men suffer anxiety during the transition to parenthood, starting as soon as the first trimester throughout the first year postpartum. Given this, identifying appropriate support for new fathers as well as early identification and treatment efforts for paternal anxiety are needed.

## Non-uniformity of Himalayas foresees significantly large earthquake events

### Press Trust Of Inida

Scientists have found that the Himalayas are not uniform and assume different physical and mechanical properties in different directions which could result in significantly large earthquake events.

The northwest region of India, an area covering Garhwal and Himachal Pradesh, has been hit by four destructive moderate to great earthquakes since the beginning of the 20th century -- the Kangra earthquake of 1905, the Kinnaur earthquake of 1975, the Uttarkashi earthquake of 1991, and the Chamoli earthquake of 1999.

These seismic activities manifest large-scale subsurface deformation and weak zones, underlining the need for deeper insights into the ongoing deformation beneath these tectonically unstable zones.

Researchers from the Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology (WIHG), Dehradun, an institute under the Department of Science and Technology, and Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur (IIT KGP) used the data from WIHG to show that the North-West Himalayan region exhibits a peculiar characteristic present in crystals.

"They found that the Himalayas are not uniform and assume different physical and mechanical properties in different directions - a property present in crystals called anisotropy which could result in significantly large earthquake events in the Himalayas," the DST said in a statement.

The joint study using seismic waves from 167 earthquakes recorded by 20 broadband seismic stations deployed in the western Himalaya suggested that the major contribution of the anisotropy is mainly because the strain induced by the Indo-Eurasia collision which is going on since 50 million years and deformation due to the collision is found



**They found that the Himalayas are not uniform and assume different physical and mechanical properties in different directions - a property present in crystals called anisotropy which could result in significantly large earthquake events in the Himalayas**

to be larger in the crust than in the upper mantle. It has been recently published in 2020 in the Journal 'Lithosphere' (GSA).

The inhomogeneity along the Himalayas influences the stressing rate is because of variation in the geometry of the Main Himalayan Thrust (MHT) system, and it controls the rupture size during the earthquake.

This lack of homogenous physical and mechanical properties of the Himalayas could help explore new perspectives about deformations taking place at the Himalaya-Tibet crustal belt involved in the formation of the Himalayan Mountains, the DST said.

## SAD DEMISE

With profound grief and sorrow we inform the demise of our beloved mother Mrs. Hamida W/O Late Ghulam Nabi Khan R/O Lachmanpora, Batmaloo Srinagar who passed away on Tuesday April 13, 2021. Her Congregational Fateh Khawani will be held on Thursday April 15, 2021 at 10.30 am at their ancestral graveyard Peer Shah, Shaheed Gunj, Srinagar near CA&PD Office. Mourn will remain for three days only.

### BEREAVED

Mushtaq Ahmed Khan & Brothers  
7006932025/990644024

inf

## GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR J&K SERVICES SELECTION BOARD

Hema Complex, Sector -3, Channi Himmat,  
Jammu www.ikssb.nic.in

Subject: Notice regarding commencement for submission of online applications for District/Divisional /UTCadre posts of various Departments issued vide Advertisement Notification No. 02 of 2021 Dated:26.03.2021.

### NOTICE

The J&K Services Selection Board has advertised District/Divisional/UT Cadre posts of various Departments vide Advertisement Notification No.02 of 2021 Dated: 26.03.2021.

It is notified for information of candidates that the date of commencement for submission of online applications for aforementioned Notification shall be 16.04.2021 instead of 12-04-2021.

The other terms & conditions as provided under the aforesaid notifications shall remain the same.

(Sachin Jamwal)KAS,  
Secretary,  
J&K Services Selection Board,  
Jammu.

DIPK-481/21

No.SSB/Secy/Advt./3441-49

Dated:12/04/2021





**WORSHIPPERS, MAINTAINING SOCIAL DISTANCE,** offer mid-day prayers at Masjid Bilal on The Bund in Srinagar on Wednesday. KO Picture By Abid Bhat.

## For Seven Years Govt Fails To Repair Damaged Water Tank In Habba Kadal

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** The Jal Shakti department (Public Health Engineering-PHE) has failed to repair a damaged water tank in Gadood Bagh area of Habba locality here with locals alleging that the persistent leakage for the past over seven years has caused damage to their residential houses while the concerned department is acting as mute spectator.

"It has been over seven years, since the water tank supplying water to nearly 10-20 localities got damaged. There is no end to the leakage since then," the local residents said.

They said that they have approached the officials concerned many times. "In 2018, we wrote to the concerned officials in this regard. We were only promised of redressal from time to time while no steps were taken on the ground," Muneer Ahmad said.

He said that many of the residential houses have suffered damages now due to the persistent leakage of the water tank, adding that almost 30 per cent of water is getting waste every day but the concerned authorities don't bother to look into the matter.

The locals appealed to the authorities to look into the

matter and fulfill their demands at an earliest.

When contacted, Chief Engineer PHE, Ifhtikhar Ahmad Wani, said that he will look into the matter.

However, AEE concerned, Zubair Ahmad Naqash admitted the delay in the renovation process. He said that the survey has been conducted in this regard and the estimation is also completed.

"The tender for the renovation process will be issued within a few days. The renovation process will be started at an earliest as the department has kept this project in current year's program," he said—(KNO)

**IT HAS BEEN OVER SEVEN YEARS, SINCE THE WATER TANK** supplying water to nearly 10-20 localities got damaged. There is no end to the leakage since then," the local residents said.

## Three-day Asian Parliamentary Debate Competition Concludes At KU

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** A three-day debate competition for School and College students concluded at the University of Kashmir.

The 'War of Words—Asian Parliamentary Debate Competition' was organized by DIQA Unit of the varsity's School of Law in collaboration with an NGO named 'God's Lap'.

Dean of Academic Affairs Prof Shabir A Bhat was the chief guest at the valedictory function, where Registrar Dr Nisar Ahmad Mir was a guest of honour.

Prof Bhat said debates encourage critical-thinking among students while raising their level of confidence to speak logically and publicly.

Dr Mir said debates enable the students to express their thoughts in a structured manner. "Debates also provide an opportunity to students to learn the opposing points of view and also how to make their arguments constructively and in a decent manner," he said, assuring the varsity's full support to extra-curricular activities involving the student community.

In his welcome address, Head and Dean School of Law Prof Mohammad Ayoub said they used a format practiced in parliaments across Asia and the teams de-

bated on diverse set of topics including capitalism-socialism dilemma, imperatives of co-education, biased versions of history as part of school curriculums and regulation of internet.

The final round took place between teams from Kashmir Harvard Educational Institute (KHEI) Srinagar, who debated whether the university education should be made free or not. A team comprising Abina Arshad, Aliza Altaf and Basit Bashir from KHEI was adjudged the winners of the competition while a team comprising Syana Warsi, Syed Minaam Vajahat and Mohammad Ibrahim Ahanger from the same institution was adjudged as runners-up.

For the pre-final rounds, Mehnaz Khan from Kashmir Law College Nowshera won the third best speaker award while Mohammad Ibrahim Ahanger from KHEI won the second best speaker award and Abina Arshid also from KHEI won the best speaker award.

In the final rounds, Aliza Altaf from KHEI won the best speaker award while Mohammad Ibrahim Ahanger from the same institute won the second best speaker award. Dr Mohammad Yasin Wani, Assistant Professor, School of Law delivered a vote of thanks.

## Shikara Rally Organised In Dal Lake

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Directorate of Tourism Kashmir Wednesday organised a Shikara rally in Dal Lake in which over 50 Shikara boats participated.

Director Tourism Kashmir Dr G N Ittoo flagged off the rally at Sher-i-Kashmir International Conference Centre (SKICC) which culminated at Nehru Park.

The spectacular view of the Shikara in the Dal Lake was a feast to the eyes for the locals and tourists who also participated in the event with full zeal and enthusiasm.

The Director Tourism Kashmir further said Shikara rally is also an invitation to the traveller that Kashmir is open and travellers are enjoying their holidays.

Expressing satisfaction over the good tourist flow, the Director Tourism Kashmir said they are expecting the travel flow to



continue for the summer season also as all SOPs are in place for the safety of the travellers.

"The SOPs which are being implemented here have encouraged travellers to visit Kashmir. All travellers are tested at the entry points and the hoteliers were also given training on implementing the SOPs," he said.

Deputy Director Tourism (Registration) Ahsan ul Haq Cheti was also present on the occasion.

## 16 Vehicle Owners Fined For Plying On Dal Lake Embankment

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** In order to ensure smooth and hassle free movement of the traffic in Srinagar City particularly on Boulevard road, the Traffic Police, City Srinagar Wednesday challaned 16 vehicles which were found wrongly plying or parked on the footpaths of Boulevard road thus committing an offence under Motor Vehicles Act and creating obstruction in smooth flow of traffic.

Meanwhile, the matter was brought into the notice of Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Mohammad Aijaz Asad, who is also the Chairman Road Transport Authority, who asked the SSP Traffic to take legal action against the violators. He also appealed to the general public, Transporters as well as the owners of the business establishments to adhere to the rules and regulations strictly, and desist from plying vehicle on fragile embankment on the Dal Lake

## Teacher 'Thrashes' Student At Private Coaching Centre, Admin Takes Cognisance

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** District Administration Srinagar has taken cognisance of a viral video showing a teacher of "Hope Classes" slapping a student. The teacher repeatedly slaps the child and asks the student about the permission in the video.

Media Advisor of Hope Classes Coaching Institute Parraypora, Nayeem Ahmad said that the management was yet to seek explanation from the teacher.

"In the coaching institute, there is a good teacher-student relationship but I won't say the beating of the student is justified as well. As of now we have not taken any action and have not sought any explanation so far," he said.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, ADC Syed Haneef Balki said that the government is verifying the authenticity of the video.

"We are verifying the authenticity of the video. We

## Covid-19: Nine Srinagar Localities Notified As Micro Containment Zones

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** With 49 active covid positive cases, the district administration Srinagar on Wednesday notified nine more localities as micro containment zones.

The nine micro containment zones fall under the jurisdiction of twin medical zones including Zadibal and Batamalo.

Five localities fall under Zadibal medical zone while four others fall under Batamalo medical zone.

The fresh micro containment zones include Nawab Bagh near Bahar hospital Lal Bazar (7 active cases), Umer Colony-A Lal Bazar Lane No 01 near Rah Masjid (7 active cases), Umer

Colony-A Lal Bazar Lane No 03 near Goenka School (5 active cases), Kathi Darwaza near Zainshah Masjid (5 active cases), Sangeen Darwaza Hakka Bazar Gulshan Mohalla Usman Colony (5 active cases), Wazabagh Hyderpora, Sutrashahi near Civil Secretariat (5 active cases), S. D Colony Batamalo near Talent School (5 active cases) and Qamarabad Bemina near Siddique lane Abubakr Masjid (5 active cases).

A total of 49 positive cases have been detected in these localities from April 10-April 12, a detailed copy shared by Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar in his tweet reads—(KNO)

## Classwork Suspended At Aakash Institute After 9 Students Test Covid Positive

Observer News Service

Chairman District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA), Muhammad Aijaz Asad, who is also Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar Wednesday ordered immediate suspension of class work at Aakash Institute Rawalpore after nine of its students were tested positive for COVID-19. The students tested positive during a random sampling by the Medical team deputed by District Admin Srinagar. "A total of 182 samples of students of the institute were collected, nine among them tested positive," an official handset said, adding that the Chairman DDMA Srinagar has ordered suspension of Class Work at the institute. A team headed by Sub Divisional Magistrate Owais Ahmed sealed the premises of Aakash institute for five days in the first instance to break the transmission chain. Meanwhile, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar has asked the management of all the coaching institutes to ensure strict adherence to the COVID protocols and also go for testing of all the faculty and students.

## Admin Discusses Measures To Contain Spread Of Covid-19

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Keeping in view the surge in COVID-19 cases, the Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Mohammad Aijaz Asad Wednesday convened a meeting with senior functionaries of Health Department to review the prevailing Covid-19 situation and controlling measures undertaken in Srinagar district. Mission Director NHM, Chowdhary Mohammad Yasin was also present on the occasion.

The meeting held threadbare deliberations on issues and measures undertaken to effectively contain and manage the spread of COVID-19 pandemic.

During the meeting, the concerned officers of health department apprised the meeting about the zone and block wise situation of positive cases, contact tracing, home isolation and other measures being taken for containment of Covid-19 spread. They also flagged the issues about the requirement of kits, man power, lab technicians and funds. While status regarding overall sampling and testing being carried out at Airport, hotels and other places was also discussed.

The Deputy Commissioner stressed on intensive contact tracing of positive cases. He also

emphasised on rigorous testing and vaccination drive to be conducted in all areas and pasting posters outside the houses of positive cases for information of public. He called for strict implementation of COVID-19 protocols as per laid down SOPs, strengthening of COVID-19 checkpoints, sample handling, managements with regard to quarantine of positive cases. The Deputy Commissioner called for doubling the efforts for controlling the spread of a new wave of the virus in the district. He asked for close coordination among line departments to keep close vigil and effective monitoring of travellers including tourists visiting Kashmir valley particularly at Airport and Lower Munda.

Mission Director NHM, Chowdhary Mohammad Yasin also suggested several preventive and precautionary measures to be taken for the management and containment of new covid-19 wave. He also assured that all possible support with regard to additional manpower etc would be made available to district administration.

Among others, the meeting was attended by BMO, Srinagar, Incharge Nodal Officer COVID-19, Srinagar, Incharge Nodal Officer Covid, Srinagar International Airport, ZMOs.

### DIAL-EMMA



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

### AIRPORTS

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311 ✈️

### RAILWAYS



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

### HIGHWAY STATUS



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

## This Day in History

- 1632 - Battle of Rain; Swedes under Gustavus Adolphus defeat Count Tilly of the Holy Roman Empire during the Thirty Years' War.
- 1654 - England & Netherlands sign peace treaty
- 1689 - French King Louis XIV declares war on Spain
- 1697 - Charles XII succeeds Charles XI as King of Sweden
- 1788 - Britain, Netherlands & Prussia sign peace treaty
- 1858 - Battle of Azimghur, Mexicans defeat Spanish loyalists
- 1865 - Abraham Lincoln dies 9 hours after he is shot attending the play "Our American Cousin" at Ford's Theatre in Washington
- 1892 - General Electric Company formed by merger of Thomas Edison's General Electric Company with Thomson-Houston Electric Company, arranged by J. P. Morgan and incorporated in NY
- 1902 - Rioting and arson continue in Russia with peasants plundering estates to find food.
- 1902 - Russian minister of interior and head of secret police, Sipyengin, is assassinated by the 'Terror Brigade' of the Socialist Revolutionaries
- 1912 - RMS Titanic sinks at 2:27 AM off Newfoundland as the band plays on, with the loss of between 1,490 and 1,635 people
- 1918 - Georges Clémenceau publishes secret French/Austrian documents
- 1923 - Insulin becomes generally available for diabetics
- 1927 - Switzerland & USSR agree to diplomatic relations
- 1940 - British troops land at Narvik, Norway
- 1945 - British Army liberates Nazi concentration camp Bergen-Belsen
- 1945 - US troops occupy concentration camp Colditz
- 1948 - 1st Jewish-Arab military battle, arabs defeated
- 1948 - Indian territory of Himachal Pradesh created
- 1959 - Fidel Castro begins US goodwill tour
- 1969 - North Korea shoots at US airplane above Japanese sea
- 1974 - Military coup in Niger, president Diori Hamani deposed
- 1978 - Great Britain performs nuclear test
- 1982 - Apollo Computer announces DN400, DN420, & landscape display
- 1983 - Tokyo Disneyland opens
- 1984 - USSR performs nuclear test at Eastern Kazakh/Semipalatinsk USSR
- 1991 - Europe foreign ministers lift most remaining sanctions against S Afr
- 1992 - The National Assembly of Vietnam adopts the 1992 Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

## From KO Archives

## PM AGREES TO MEET HURRIYAT LEADERS

**NEW DELHI** - Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh has agreed to meet All Parties Hurriyat Conference leaders either tomorrow or on Friday. The meeting, however, has not been fixed yet because the Hurriyat leaders are insisting on time on April 17 to flag-off the prime minister is scheduled to meet Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf.

Interestingly, the Hurriyat leaders had earlier agreed to meet Dr Singh on either of the two dates proposed by his office. What made them suddenly change their mind is not known. "The decision of the prime minister meeting the, Hurriyat leaders on April 14 or 15 was taken before he went to Kashmir on April 7 to flag-off the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service," sources in the prime minister's office said. The dates "were convened to APHC Chief Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and he accepted the same."

Now, however, the Mirwaiz has expressed his inability to be in Delhi before April 16 because of a religious ceremony back home.

Sources say Hurriyat leaders want to meet General Musharraf before interacting with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh as they want to have Pakistan's backing for the proposals they intend to present to GOI.

Officials in New Delhi said the new dates have to be decided depending on the prime minister's availability.

The Hurriyat had adopted a similar approach at the time of the Agra Summit in 2001.

The then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee had given them time to meet before the summit but the separatist conglomerate had expressed desire to meet Musharraf first As a result of which no meeting could take place between them and Vajpayee.

Mirwaiz Farooq told reporters in Srinagar today that the Hurriyat leaders wanted to meet the leaders of India and Pakistan and while Musharraf has given them time on April 17, there was "no positive response" from the Prime Minister's Office as yet.

Farooq, who was speaking after meetings of the Hurriyat's executive committee and general council, said the amalgam wanted to avail the opportunity to impress upon the two countries that a "permanent, honourable and just solution to without the inclusion of representatives of Kashmiris in the dialogue process. Significantly the meeting was abstained by the People's Conference leader Bilal Gani Lone.

(Kashmir Observer, 15 April, 2005)



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## KO VIEW

## Grim Covid situation

The Covid situation in the country is becoming grimmer by the day. The daily tally is on the way to touch two lakh with Maharashtra recording the highest number of over sixty thousand cases. Similarly, the deaths have begun to spike exponentially in India, easily passing the numbers recorded during last autumn's peak. This is burdening the country's medical infrastructure. Hospital beds are running short and so are vaccine doses. Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Tuesday announced severe, curfew-like restrictions on public movement for the next 15 days across the state. Thackeray, however, stopped short of imposing a complete lockdown. All establishments, public places, activities and services have been closed while the essential services have been exempted. Apart from Mumbai, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi are also recording their highest number of cases.

At the national level, there is so far no plan to go for another lockdown. The government is conscious of the havoc wrought by the lockdown last year. Lakhs of people lost their jobs as economy contracted by one-fourth. But as is apparent now, the government has been caught unawares by the devastating third wave, much like it was during first two waves. The country had got a reprieve during winter with daily cases going drastically down but the period was not used to accelerate vaccination. Instead the government chose to donate vaccines to other countries to increase the country's diplomatic clout. As a result, the vaccination was slow to pick up in the country creating conditions for the third wave. Although the government has halted all vaccine exports, many states have only a few days' supply left in stock. Now the union government is trying to make up for the lost time by approving more foreign vaccines for emergency use. India wants Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson to seek licence for their COVID-19 vaccines as soon as possible. Besides, the centre has given approval to Russian vaccine Sputnik V. The Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF) has said it expects over 50 million doses of Sputnik V vaccine to be manufactured in India by this summer. Centre will assess the first 100 beneficiaries of such foreign vaccines for seven days for safety outcomes before they are rolled out for further immunization programme within the country. With these vaccines the union government will be in a position to expand inoculation program in the country.

Going forward, together with vaccination, both the union government and the state governments have to also ensure a strict implementation of the Standard Operating Procedure in public life. The people have to be forced to wear masks and observe precautions and those not following the SOP should be subjected to a penal action. This alone will make people engage in responsible behaviour and obviate the need for a fresh lockdown.

## OTHER OPINION

## Stop public rallies, now

India is in the middle of its most serious public health emergency — more serious and severe than last year, when the coronavirus pandemic first struck. Each day brings in a new record of the number of cases (on Sunday, daily cases crossed 170,000). Each day brings in a new set of alarming figures from some of India's largest, politically sensitive, and economically crucial states. Each day brings in more reports of the impact of the new variants of Sars-Cov-2. And each day brings in tragic stories of human suffering, isolation, even fatalities, devastating for those who have lost their loved ones to Covid-19.

There are only two known ways to beat the pandemic. The first is vaccination. The second is Covid-19-appropriate behaviour — which either stems from a strong sense of citizen responsibility or government diktats, or both.

But this will not work out unless India's national leaders — political figures who inspire citizens, who have the power to take life-altering decisions, and who have political organisations at their disposal with unprecedented mass outreach — can credibly communicate the need for social distancing. This credibility is today missing, either because governments have happily allowed mega religious congregations or because political leaders are still — even in the middle of this nightmarish pandemic — addressing hundreds of thousands of people, many of whom are unmasked and jostling for space with each other, in public rallies. To be sure, democracy is a non-negotiable and so is the right of citizens to elect their representatives at regular intervals and the right of political parties to propagate their views. But political communication must happen in ways that don't risk people's lives, and send out a message of complacency and irresponsibility at a time when caution and responsibility needs to be exercised. Lives are at stake. An all-party consensus on reconfiguring the tools of campaigning for the remaining phases of Bengal's polls to make it Covid-19-appropriate is worth considering.

Hindustan Times

Public hearings on  
FRA Implementation

Newly posted Secretary Tribal Affairs has to play an effective role

DR RAJA MUZAFFAR BHAT

Public hearings are open gatherings of Government officials and citizens where-in the citizens and Government come face to face to deliberate on public issues. In most of the cases many grievances are addressed on the spot. This is the essence of good governance. The Back to Village programme conceptualized in Jammu & Kashmir for Govt –citizens interaction in rural areas is also a kind of public hearing but as these hyped programmes are held only once or twice a year, they are not sustainable models of good governance. Public hearings should be held at regular intervals without any pomp and show. It is the duty of public spirited citizens, civil society organisations and NGOs to facilitate frequent citizen-Govt interactions. The elected representatives like panchayat or district council members or Chairpersons of block councils can also facilitate these meetings. If the senior officers of the state or central Government are part of these public hearings, then such programmes are more fruitful and workable.

## Public hearing and FRA

Recently, a four member expert committee that looks into the recognition and vesting process of the habitat rights of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) and access of seasonal resource to nomadic and pastoralist communities constituted by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA) visited various areas of Kashmir valley. This expert group is headed by former Secretary of Tribal Affairs Ministry Mr Hrusikesh Panda. The group's main aim was to see the implementation of the Forest Rights Act (FRA) in J&K. A team of four members visited Kupwara, Budgam, Anantnag, Pulwama districts and interacted with various stakeholders like Govt functionaries, public representatives, NGO's and aggrieved Gujjars and other forest dwellers.

On March 30th Jammu & Kashmir RTI Movement in association with an NGO Koshish acted as a bridge to facilitate one such public hearing on Forest Rights Act (FRA) implementation in Dragger village of Khansahib sub division in Budgam.

The members of Sub Division Level Committee (SDLC) headed by Sub Divisional Magistrate (SDM) of Khansahib area, local forest Range Officer and officials of Rural Development Department were also present in the programme. A two members team from Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA) namely V Gri Rao and Priya Tyde were also present in the meeting. In addition to Sarpanches of neighboring villages, the members of Forest Rights Committees (FRC's) and representatives from Scheduled Tribe (ST), Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (OTFD) particularly the pastoralist group of Chopans were also present as well as the members of some NGOs were also present. Several issues were discussed during the meeting. There was confusion among forest officers and the village Forest Rights Committee's (FRC's) about various aspects of Forest Rights Act (FRA). The Chopan community representative Master Abdul Ahad while deliberating upon the FRA

said that in many areas forest officers were telling Chopans that they won't get any right under the Forest Rights Act (FRA). But when Mr Giri Rao who also heads the Vasundhara an Odisha based action research and policy advocacy organization explained the rights of pastoralist communities, Chopans present during the meeting got a sigh of relief. He also explained the rights of Gujjars who migrate to local bahaks (pasturelands) in summer months. Similarly, when Gujjar women heard that they get priority under FRA claim finalization, the women Sarpanch of neighboring village Gurwaith Haneefa Begum who belongs to Gujjar community seemed overwhelmed.

*"I should have got more women to the programme, I didn't know it would be such a fruitful meeting", she said while deliberating during the meeting.*

## Rights of Pastoral communities

Bakerwals, Gujjars and Chopans are traditional pastoral-nomadic communities that live in Jammu and Kashmir. Before 1990, when there was no armed militancy in the region, they would travel through the length and breadth of Jammu and Kashmir, exploring the summer pastures and meadows to graze their sheep and goats. Due to

ing land around their villages, continue the activity until November. The Chopan community is socially, educationally, and economically underdeveloped. Despite being pastoral and tribal, they are not included in the ST category by the central government. The Kashmiri Chopan is similar to the Changpa community of Ladakh or Gaddis of Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand. Only the Changpas and Gaddis are recognised as a Scheduled Tribe. The Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, in 2000, passed a resolution to include the Chopan community in the list of tribes, but the Centre never took it seriously. Early this year this author met with Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha to bring this to his notice. He assured me he would take up the issue with the government.

During the public hearing at Dragger Khansahib the Chopan Welfare Association also submitted a detailed memorandum to the visiting team from the Ministry. The association again demanded that Chopans be declared as Scheduled Tribe (ST) community so that they get benefits of various Govt programmes aimed at empowering tribal and other deprived classes of society. The visiting team from the Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA) during the public hearing got a first-hand account of the issues faced by these neglected communities.

**More public hearings on Forest Rights Act (FRA) should be held in villages located near forests in the months to come so that Gujjars, Bakerwals and other traditional forest dwellers are sensitized about their rights under FRA. The Department of Tribal Affairs has to play an active role now in view of being the nodal agency on implementation of FRA**

heavy military presence on the border areas of North Kashmir and parts of Poonch and Rajouri of Jammu Division from 1990 onwards, several traditional travel routes and meadows became inaccessible to these communities. Now the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir has been carved into two Union Territories (UTs) post the abrogation of Article 370. This summer, these pastoralist communities may have to suffer once again as there are apprehensions about whether they would be able to move freely inside the Ladakh region. The Bakerwals regularly visit pastures in Ladakh in search of fodder and grasslands. On the other hand, the Forest Rights Act (FRA) 2006, which was inapplicable in Jammu and Kashmir in the past, has been implemented in the newly carved out regions. This gives these communities some legal protection to travel and graze their flock. The Chopan, also known as Pohul in Kashmiri, live a laborious life. This pastoralist community usually owns no livestock, unlike the Gujjars and Bakerwals. They take care of sheep that belong to local farmers. It is not uncommon to see Chopan shepherds dotted across the hilly rangelands of Jammu and Kashmir. In the summer, they negotiate the treacherous mountains to reach the alpine meadows, also called "bahaks". In bahaks, Chopan shepherds graze sheep from June until autumn. The farmers pay them Rs. 350 to Rs. 400 per sheep to look after them for a season that lasts five to six months. Some Chopans, who have graz-

## Conclusion

I would suggest that more such public hearings on Forest Rights Act (FRA) be held in villages located near the forests in the months to come so that Gujjars, Bakerwals and other traditional forest dwellers are sensitized about their rights under FRA. Department of Tribal Affairs has to play an active role now in view of being the nodal agency on implementation of FRA. The newly appointed Secretary Tribal Affairs Dr Shahid Iqbal Chowdhary has to make sure his department reaches out to more and more people this summer through a massive awareness campaign on Forest Rights Act (FRA). The department having a dearth of staff and manpower must involve panchayats, NGOs and even the education department for awareness building on FRA. Government must facilitate awareness programmes to be held in forests and meadows of J&K as tribal populations mostly Gujjars, Bakerwals or Chopans migrate to these places in summers.

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

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OBSERVER  
MAIL

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

## MAIL YOUR LETTERS

P.O.Box # 337, GPO, Srinagar-190 001  
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## Ramadan: A lesson in sensitisation towards PWDs

The religion of Islam preaches about equality and fairness. No human being is superior to another. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) himself stated as such on the Mountain of Arafat in His last sermon: "No Arab has superiority over a Non-Arab and no Non-Arab has superiority over an Arab."

The concept of charity was designed for the very purpose of helping those who cannot support themselves or their families. The needy disabled

and those who are in debt are one of the eight types of people who can receive Zakat donations. Some people with disabilities are often in greater need of humanitarian assistance.

There are persons with disabilities that are either in rest homes or their own homes who go long periods without any visitors, no one to ask about them or know about their hardships and requirements. They are living, but don't feel alive. One of the best things we can do is stop by and

visit these people, ask about them, their history, help them feel important again. Even if you spare only one hour a month, it will be time well spent for them.

One doesn't always need to donate cash. There are other ways we can help them. We can take care of their medical requirements, education, monthly financial requirements, necessary living assistive devices. We can pay their electricity and water bills, catering to home, home barrier envi-

ronment and improvement of residential evaluation.

On the other hand, one can simply contribute financially to either them or to the institutions which are designed to help them.

M Ahmad  
Principal (I/C), Abhedananda Home  
Higher Secondary Institution for  
Specially Abled Children



# Not About Hunger

Ramadan fasting isn't about hunger. It's about living mindfully

OMAR SULEIMAN

**The physical discipline of fasting also helps us to be more mindful of our spiritual consumption as well: The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) taught, for instance, that God has no use for the one who refrains from food but not from false speech, or lying and gossip**

(RNS) — The questions about Ramadan are always pretty much the same. First there is interest in how we observe the sacred month, which began this week. Then there is shock at how intense the requirement of fasting is:

“Wait, so you fast all the way from before sunrise to sunset?”

“You can't even drink water?”

“I could never do that.”

Don't worry, it doesn't cause us self-doubt, nor do we get offended. In fact, it's pretty cool when your friends think you have superhuman abilities.

The reality, though, is that fasting is very doable, and rewarding. There are, of course, those Muslims who should not fast, due to illness or some other temporary condition; they are excused, and they make it up if and when they can. If someone is permanently unable to fast, they are required to feed a poor person for every day missed.

But most of us are able to overcome the effects of fasting within the first few days of Ramadan. You may miss your coffee, and fatigue and hunger still happen, but the body does adjust.

One question remains: Why do we fast during the month of Ramadan?

Firstly, it is a requirement in the Quran and pillar of Islam. The Quran states, “Oh you who believe, fasting has been prescribed upon you as it has been prescribed on those who came before you so that you may attain God-Consciousness.”

Fasting, in other words, has been the way of prophets and nations before us and is specifically intended to make us more conscious of our Lord. When we become mindful of our physical intake of blessings we otherwise mindlessly consume, we become more mindful of the one who bestowed those blessings upon us.

This has numerous intended benefits. The physical discipline of fasting also helps us to be more mindful of our spiritual consumption as well: The Prophet Muhammad (peace be



upon him) taught, for instance, that God has no use for the one who refrains from food but not from false speech, or lying and gossip.

Besides denying ourselves what is prohibited spiritually, fasting helps us live positively as well. Since sin is born out of ingratitude, fasting makes us more aware of our blessings, hence more grateful and driven to good. The end result of Ramadan mentioned in the Quran is that you “complete the term of fasting and glorify your Lord for what He has guided you to, and so that you may be amongst the grateful.”

This is what makes us more conscious of God: We become more conscious of his blessings. When we become more conscious of His blessings upon us, we become more conscious of how we use those blessings

ourselves. We in turn become more conscious of those who don't have regular access to those blessings that we are voluntarily refraining from. We become more intentional about channeling those blessings to those we may have otherwise forgotten.

The great Muslim scholar and sage Imam Ibn Rajab once said, “Some of the pious predecessors were asked, “Why has fasting been instituted? They responded, ‘So that the rich will taste hunger and thus will not forget the hungry.’”

So what may be lost on many of us regarding the fasting of Ramadan is that it's just as much about filling our souls and transforming our society with goodness as it is about restraining our bodies from food and drink. We live our best selves in Ramadan;

we fall in love with it despite its restrictions.

What may surprise some is that most Muslims actually enjoy Ramadan so much that they grieve when the month comes to an end. We miss reading the Quran throughout the day and in long nights of prayer, and pushing ourselves to be charitable through it all: charitable with our wealth, with our words and with our spirits to everyone around us.

We come to the realization that true happiness is in feeding the soul and being satisfied with your sustenance, that prayer is better than sleep and that charity is better than consumption.

Religion News

## The Second Wave

JYOTSNA MOHAN

The gut wrenching images of a man breaking down as he speaks of his ordeal to buy the Covid drug Remdesivir in the black market is the story of countless citizens across the country today. The panic and anger as patients stand in a long queue even to get admitted into hospitals is simmering at the surface.

Grief is a powerful emotion. In Gujarat the sons of a woman who lost the Covid battle tried to set the hospital on fire. In Maharashtra, relatives gathered in anger at a hospital after the death of 7 patients, blaming the doctors for the lack of oxygen supply.

For at least the past week, cases in the country have risen exponentially yet the export of the drug was temporarily halted only on Sunday. By then patients were being given oxygen in waiting rooms, lobby areas in hospitals were being converted into covid wards, doctors in the country's top hospital were sick, en masse and the gas furnace grills at crematoriums were melting with bodies piling up at cremation centres.

### Relentless outrage and questioning

It has taken relentless outrage and questioning- from citizens and the Congress alike for the government to finally fast track approvals for foreign made vaccines but with countries already placing their orders at the right time, procuring at this late stage may be far from easy.

The first doses of the Russian vaccine Sputnik V are also not expected for weeks. April 2021 is on course to leave a line of devastation. Even now there is barely any talk from the health ministry on the new variants- both imported and home grown that experts say are driving the second wave. India's genome sequencing should perhaps have been part of an election manifesto.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, there has been one constant- more control and negligible transparency. Most experts agree that the second wave is hitting the young the hardest but there is no data forthcoming on a section of the population that even before the vaccine shortage was being denied the jab.

### A jab for everyone

A doctor says that out of the last 5 death certificates he has signed, three are of those under the age of 40. The government still insists that “only those who need the vaccine and not those who want it” will be given the jab. When a country has 1.2 million active cases, those who espouse this wisdom must know its secret.

Perhaps if our top leaders paused from their election campaign they will



**It has taken relentless outrage and questioning- from citizens and the Congress alike for the government to finally fast track approvals for foreign made vaccines but with countries already placing their orders at the right time, procuring at this late stage may be far from easy**

realise that the desperation of winning power in West Bengal in these elections may come at a grave cost- away from the surreal political rallies, the country resembles a house of cards.

Daily cases are at the cusp of two lakhs, cities after cities are reporting shortage of ICU beds, a doctor says they are being forced to ‘beg, borrow and steal’ vaccines and a gardener is now collecting samples in a hospital.

The Prime Minister though is addressing three rallies in a day in West Bengal, the Home Minister is constantly showcasing the big turnout during his rallies, politicians across parties have campaigned without a mask or a care- for the masses. Why have public events still not been banned?

The Election commission with 8- phase election in West Bengal could have a tragedy of immense proportions

on its hands. The mass political gatherings in rural India will finally allow the pandemic to breach the hinterland, something that was in control during the first wave.

With a healthcare system already busted what hope do those in the villages have? The migrant exodus last year may not even be the tip of the iceberg to the humanitarian crisis that could unfold in our villages and small towns. Those cam-

paing have no accountability, and they will not look back after the results on May 2.

They are also looking the other way as the Kumbh Mela will most certainly become a super spreader in the days to come, if it isn't already. Millions- most without a mask took part in the shahi snan on the banks of the river Ganga in Haridwar on Monday, reports say many have tested positive yet the silence at this travesty is deafening. As a famous proverb goes, “fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me.”

In the constant obsession with headline management we can expect advertisements galore on how India is the fastest to reach 100 million vaccinations. It is convenient to not mention the percentage of citizens vaccinated or that it is all relative when the country's population is 1.36 billion.

Even at the present rate, experts say barely 75% or less of the country will be vaccinated in a couple of years, assuming that vaccines are available. Before that there are elections in Uttar Pradesh.

But if everything fails we have yet another slogan. ‘Tika Utsav’ or a vaccination festival has now been launched by the Prime Minister, urging Indians over 45 to vaccinate at empty centres. But in India, a slogan a day keeps the image at play.

### A country on the edge

Unlike last year, there is real fear today. The country is in complete meltdown. The complacency that ‘it doesn't happen to us’ has finally been pricked- although not at the Kumbh- and we are paying a big price for the carelessness and disregard for social distancing.

Bollywood has fallen like nine-pins, judges have the virus, the variants are more critical than we realise and we are staring at lockdowns and frantic pleas for help. But what about the politicians at mammoth rallies and the administration that allowed the Kumbh at such a precarious time? Will they ever be held accountable- those who lead not by example. The onus unfortunately is always on the common man.

There is a feeling of déjà vu, the migrants are sandwiched again on a train or a bus back home. It is Yesterday once more. Only this time, we saw it coming and yet we didn't do anything. As bodies continue to pile up in hospitals, our leaders are busy fighting elections and soon they may win the vote but lose the voter.

This one is also on us, it's the cost of being an Indian.

...  
Gulf News



## Shahi Snan In Haridwar: Lakhs Ignore Covid Concerns To Take Holy Dip

**DEHRADUN (UTTARAKHAND):** Throwing caution to the wind amid rising cases of coronavirus, lakhs of people congregated Wednesday on the ghats in Haridwar to take a dip in the Ganga during the third shahi snan of the Kumbh mela.

Over 13.5 lakh people, including sadhus from 13 akhadas, had bathed in the Ganga by the end of a day on which the authorities faced another scare - a fire at one of the tents in the sprawling mela area.

Five people suffered minor injuries when a pandal in Vivekananda Ashram caught fire, Kumbh mela's chief fire officer Narendra Singh Kunwar said. The ashram is at Kankhal, a few kilometres away from the main Har ki Pauri ghat.

Wednesday's 'royal bath' marked Mesh Sankranti and Baisakhi, and fell two days after a similar convergence of seers and other devotees for the second shahi snan mammoth events where following social distancing norms appears almost impossible.

Uttarakhand Chief Secretary Om Prakash said the number of devotees at the third shahi snan said to be the most important in a series of four -- was much less than expected due to the coronavirus pandemic.

On Mesh Sankranti day during the last Kumbh mela in 2010, about 1.6 crore people bathed in the Ganga at Haridwar, an official said.

Random tests among the sadhus at the akhadas indicate a coronavirus positivity rate of nearly 4 per cent. So far, 19 of the 500 samples from the mela site have come back positive.

Police personnel were seen

distributing masks in the mela area.

But social distancing norms were violated openly by the seers when they and their followers descended the steps at Har ki Pauri to wade into the river.

No masks were worn by a large proportion of them.

The sadhus from the akhadas took the dip along with their revered deities, carried in ornate palanquins, at Har ki Pauri, which was reserved exclusively for them. Lakhs of ordinary devotees bathed at the other ghats of the river in Haridwar and Rishikesh.

Seers and Naga sanyasis of the Niranjani Akhada led by Acharya Kailashanand Giri were the first to bathe along with Anand Akhada seers. They were followed by the Joona Akhada, which has the highest number of sadhus led by Swami Avadheshanand.

The Mahanirvani Akhada seers came next, as the batches followed one another according to their allotted time slots.

All akhadas had to complete the snan at Har ki Pauri before sunset so time management is very important, Mela Inspector General Sanjay Gunjal said while the snan was still underway.

The shahi snans have triggered concerns over their role in possibly adding to rising coronavirus cases in the country.

Uttarakhand recorded its highest single-day spike in Covid cases this year on Wednesday with 1,953 people testing positive.

Dehradun with 796 cases and Haridwar with 525 were the biggest contributors to the day's tally followed by Nainital 205, Udham Singh Nagar 118, Almora 92, Pauri 79 and Tehri 78.

## Over 500 Fall Ill In Delhi After Consuming Food Prepared With Buckwheat Flour



Press Trust of India

**NEW DELHI:** Over 500 people who had eaten food prepared with buckwheat (kuttu) flour were taken ill in different parts of east Delhi, officials said on Wednesday.

Prima facie, it appears to be a case of food adulteration or sale of spoiled flour, they said.

A case has been registered against the owner of a general store in Kalyanpuri area in connection with the incident, Deputy Commissioner of Police (east) Deepak Yadav said.

Around 526 people were reportedly admitted to hospitals. They complained of uneasiness, stomach ache and vomiting after they ate food prepared using 'kuttu' flour to break their 'Navratri' fast on Tuesday, a senior East Delhi district official said.

"We visited the area and Lal Bahadur Shastri Hospital, where many such people were admitted. All of them except four-five people have been discharged,"

he said.

Reports of people falling ill were received from Kalyanpuri, Trilokpuri and other areas. Prima facie, it appears to be a case of food adulteration or sale of spoiled 'kuttu' flour during 'Navratri', another official said.

A case under sections 273 (sale of noxious food or drink), 284 (negligent conduct with respect to poisonous substance) and 337 (causing hurt by act endangering life or personal safety of others) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) has been registered at Kalyanpuri police station against the proprietor of Bunty General Store, DCP Yadav said.

In a similar incident, six members of a family from ward number 2, Mehrauli were hospitalised in the early hours of Wednesday after consuming buckwheat flour, police said. Information was received that the family had been admitted to Fortis Hospital, they said.

During inquiry, it was found that one Raghuvinder Kumar

had purchased buckwheat flour from a shop named Raghubir Son and Sons, Mehrauli, on Tuesday. He and his family consumed it around 10 PM, a senior police officer said. Later, they felt uneasy and started vomiting. They went to Fortis Hospital around 3 am and were discharged in the morning. The family is back home now, the police said.

A case has been registered against the owner of Raghubir Son and Sons, they said.

"The case under sections 273, 284 and 337 of the IPC has been registered at Mehrauli police station on the basis of a complaint received from Raghuvinder. Further investigation continues," Deputy Commissioner of Police (south) Atul Kumar Thakur said.

No such complaint was received from any other customer who bought the flour from Raghubir Son and Sons. The food and adulteration department is also looking into the matter, he said.

## Not Surprising That China Operating In Indian Ocean: Navy Chief

Press Trust of India

**NEW DELHI:** Navy Chief Admiral Karambir Singh on Wednesday said it is not surprising that China has been making forays into the Indian Ocean region as its energy sources, markets and resources are located to the west.

In an address at the Raisina Dialogue, he also said his force is ready to do its bit to contribute to the security and stability of the Indo-Pacific, and referred to India's emergence as a more confident nation on the global stage.

Asked about the possibility of military cooperation among the Quad countries, Admiral Singh did not give a direct reply but said there is no dearth of issues that it can handle and that there has been a robust engagement among the navies of the member nations of the grouping.

Last month, the top leadership of the Quad grouping of India, the US, Japan and Australia vowed to expand cooperation in the Indo-Pacific at a time China was increasing its military assertiveness in the region.

Admiral Philip Scot Davidson, Commander of the US's Indo-Pacific Command, said the Quad has tremendous potential for cooperation, going far beyond the security sphere.

Admiral Singh said there is a "natural desire" among most nations in the region to cooperate and collaborate for greater prosperity, adding the Indo-Pacific provides tremendous opportunities for "issue based convergences".

"Convergence, as you know, can lead to cohesion," he said, adding Indo-Pacific is going through churn.

Admiral Singh said the opportunities for cooperation in the Indo-Pacific can outweigh the challenges that are being faced, noting that the "oceans connect and they don't divide".

Referring to China's attempts to expand presence in the Indian Ocean, the Navy Chief said its energy sources, markets and resources are located to the west.

He said it is not surprising that China has come into the Indian Ocean as it is often said "the flag follows trade".

The Indian Ocean, considered the backyard of the Indian Navy, is critical for India's strategic interests. China has been making concerted efforts to increase its presence in the region.

Indian Navy has been ramping up presence in the Indian Ocean to keep a hawk-eyed vigil over Chinese activities.

Admiral Singh said most threats in the maritime domain are transnational in nature and that there has been a realisation that it is not possible for one nation to go it alone.

He said India has several areas of convergence and alignment with other nations in the Indo-Pacific.

The Navy Chief said Indian Navy has been working with regional navies to build their capacities to secure their interests and also cooperating with like minded navies to build interoperability and trust.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

### FD Seeks Details

reforms for fast-tracking development process and ensuring transparency and accountability in spending of public funds.

It has also put details of projects completed during 2019 under different sectors in public domain for ensuring transparency.

### J&K Reports 5

the deadly infection also claimed five more lives during the last 24 hours.

In the second highest spike in this year, as many as 1086 fresh cases of coronavirus were reported from J&K— 402 from Jammu division and 684 from Kashmir Valley, taking the overall case tally to 141736, officials said.

Regarding the deaths, they said, three of the victims were from Jammu division and two from the Valley, taking the death toll to 2042—757 in Valley and 1285 in Jammu.

Providing district-wise break-up of the new cases, they said, Srinagar reported 388, Baramulla 107, Budgam 53, Pulwama 12, Kupwara 23, Anantnag 29, Bandipora 23, Ganderbal 19, Kulgam 19, Shopian 11, Jammu 199, Udhampur 37, Rajouri 12, Doda 1, Kathua 23, Samba 19, Poonch 19, Ramban 7 and Reasi 85 fresh cases of coronavirus.

The number of active cases has now reached 9,390 in the Union Territory, while 1,30,304 patients have recovered so far, they said.

### India Sees

13,65,704, comprising 9.84 per cent of the total infections, while the national COVID-19 recovery rate has dropped to 88.92 per cent.

The active caseload was at its lowest at 1, 35,926 on February 12 and it was at its highest at 10,17,754 on September 18, 2020.

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 1,23,36,036, while the case fatality rate has further dropped to 1.24 per cent, the data stated.

India's COVID-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, 30 lakh on August 23, 40 lakh on September 5 and 50 lakh on September 16. It went past 60 lakh on September 28, 70 lakh on October 11, crossed 80 lakh on October 29, 90 lakh on November 20 and surpassed the one-crore mark on December 19.

According to the ICMR, 26,06,18,866 samples have been tested up to April 13 with 14,11,758 samples being tested on Tuesday.

The 1,027 new fatalities include 281 from Maharashtra, 156 from Chhattisgarh, 85 from Uttar Pradesh, 81 from Delhi, 67 each from Gujarat and Karnataka, 50 from Punjab, 40 from Madhya Pradesh, 29 from Jharkhand, 28 from Rajasthan, 20 each from Kerala and West Bengal, 18 from Tamil Nadu, 16 from Haryana, 14 from Bihar, 13 from Uttarakhand, 11 from Himachal Pradesh and 10 from Andhra Pradesh.

A total of 1,72,085 deaths have been reported so far in the country including 58,526 from Maharashtra, 13,008 from Karnataka, 12,945 from Tamil Nadu, 11,436 from Delhi, 10,434 from West Bengal, 9,309 from Uttar Pradesh, 7,609 from Punjab and 7,321 from Andhra Pradesh.

The health ministry stressed that more than 70 per cent of the deaths occurred due to comorbidities.

"Our figures are being reconciled with the Indian Council of Medical Research," the ministry said on its website, adding that state-wise distribution of figures is subject to further verification and reconciliation.

### Rs 50 Cr Worth

this time smugglers were spotted carrying

the narcotics along the Line of Control. The Indian Army and BSF's strong anti-infiltration posture denied the smugglers accompanied by Pak-based militants, the opportunity to cross the fence. It forced them to abandon their consignment and flee on being challenged," the official said.

He said the operation to identify individuals of Karnah Tehsil involved in this activity was in progress.

The official said narco-militancy has been Pakistan's long espoused model to culturally degrade the social fabric of the border areas of Kashmir and Punjab.

"This attempt of Pakistan to support smugglers with armed militants has exposed the nexus. Pakistani handlers controlling the nexus get money in lieu of Narco supplied which is in turn used to fund militant organisations," he said, adding Pakistan Army is a key stakeholder in this narco-militancy nexus which involves using of civilians on both sides of the LoC as cannon fodder.

### Modi More Likely

more intense, risking an escalatory cycle.

"Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India is more likely than in the past to respond with military force to perceived or real Pakistani provocations, and heightened tensions raise the risk of conflict between the two nuclear-armed neighbours, with violent unrest in Kashmir or a militant attack in India being potential flashpoints," it said.

India and Pakistan are without high commissioners in each other's capital since the relations between the two countries nosedived after India withdrew the special status of Jammu and Kashmir and bifurcated the state into two union territories in August 2019.

India has said it desires normal neighbourly relations with Pakistan in an environment free of terror, hostility and violence and that the onus is on Islamabad to create such an environment.

According to the ODNi report, the fighting in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria has a direct bearing on US forces, while tensions between nuclear-armed India and Pakistan remain a concern for the world.

The iterative violence between Israel and Iran, the activity of foreign powers in Libya, and conflicts in other areas including Africa, Asia, and the Middle East have the potential to escalate or spread, it said.

In Afghanistan, the ODNi report assessed that prospects for a peace deal will remain low during the next year.

"The Taliban is likely to make gains on the battlefield, and the Afghan Government will struggle to hold the Taliban at bay if the coalition withdraws support. Kabul continues to face setbacks on the battlefield, and the Taliban is confident it can achieve military victory, it said.

"Afghan forces continue to secure major cities and other government strongholds, but they remain tied down in defensive missions and have struggled to hold recaptured territory or reestablish a presence in areas abandoned in 2020, the report said.

### 'China-India Border

political and military presence abroad, while trying to reduce waste and exploitative practices, which have led to international criticism.

The BRI is a multi-billion-dollar initiative launched by Chinese President Xi Jinping when he came into power in 2013. It aims to link Southeast Asia, Central Asia, the Gulf region, Africa and Europe with a network of land and

sea routes.

"China-India border tensions remain high, despite some force pullbacks this year. China's occupation since May 2020 of contested border areas is the most serious escalation in decades and led to the first lethal border clash between the two countries since 1975, the report said.

"As of mid-February, after multiple rounds of talks, both sides were pulling back forces and equipment from some sites along the disputed border, it said.

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

As a result of a series of military and diplomatic talks, the two sides completed withdrawal of troops and weapons from the North and South banks of Pangong lake in February in line with an agreement on disengagement. India has been insisting that a resolution of outstanding issues including in Depsang, Hot Springs and Gogra is essential for overall ties between the two countries.

According to the report, China seeks to use coordinated, whole-of-government tools to demonstrate its growing strength and compel regional neighbours to acquiesce to Beijing's preferences, including its claims over disputed territory and assertions of sovereignty over Taiwan.

In the South China Sea, Beijing will continue to intimidate rival claimants and will use growing numbers of air, naval, and maritime law enforcement platforms to signal to Southeast Asian countries that China has effective control over contested areas. China is similarly pressuring Japan over contested areas in the East China Sea.

China has been fast expanding military and economic influence in the Indo-Pacific region, triggering concern in various countries of the region and beyond. It is engaged in hotly contested territorial disputes in both the South China Sea and East China Sea.

Beijing has built up and militarised many of the islands and reefs it controls in the region. Both areas are stated to be rich in minerals, oil and other natural resources and are vital to global trade. China claims almost all of the South China Sea. Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan have counter claims over the strategically vital area.

Beijing will press Taiwan authorities to move toward unification and will condemn what it views as increased US-Taiwan engagement, the report said.

China views Taiwan as a rebel province that must be reunified, even by force.

"We expect that friction will grow as Beijing steps up attempts to portray Taipei as internationally isolated and dependent on the mainland for economic prosperity, and as China continues to increase military activity around the island, it said.

China's increasing cooperation with Russia on areas of complementary interest includes defence and economic cooperation, it added.

China will try to increase its influence using vaccine diplomacy, giving countries favored access to the COVID-19 vaccines it is developing. It will also promote new international norms for technology and human rights, emphasising state sovereignty and political stability over individual rights, the ODNi said.

China will remain the top threat to US technological competitiveness as the Chinese Communist Party targets key technology sectors and proprietary commercial and military

technology from US and allied companies and research institutions associated with defence, energy, finance, and other sectors.

Beijing uses a variety of tools, from public investment to espionage and theft, to advance its technological capabilities, it said.

According to the report, China will continue expanding its global intelligence footprint to better support its growing political, economic, and security interests around the world, increasingly challenging the United States' alliances and partnerships.

Across East Asia and the western Pacific, which Beijing views as its natural sphere of influence, China is attempting to exploit doubts about the US commitment to the region, undermine Taiwan's democracy, and extend Beijing's influence, it said.

Beijing has been intensifying efforts to shape the political environment in the United States to promote its policy preferences, mold public discourse, pressure political figures whom Beijing believes oppose its interests, and muffle criticism of China on such issues as religious freedom and the suppression of democracy in Hong Kong, it said. (PTI)

### Militant, 3 OGWs

arrested alleged militant as Zaheen Javid Dar son of Javid Ahmad Dar of Ushkura in Baramulla district belonging to JeM, the official in the meantime identified the accomplices as Zahid Nazir, Umer Yousaf and Muzaffar Ahmad, all residents of Shopian district.

"The affiliation of the three OGWs is being ascertained", the official said.

### MeT Predicts

amber -government agencies need to be prepared for severe weather and red -action needed by the agencies.

Meanwhile, a MeT department official said that the minimum temperature settled at 9.4 degree Celsius against 8.6 degree Celsius on the previous night in Srinagar. The temperature in the summer capital was 1.8 degree Celsius above normal for this time of the season, he said.

Qazigund recorded a low of 7.8 degree Celsius against 5.8 degree Celsius on the previous night, the official said.

Pahalgam recorded a minimum of 4.2 degree Celsius against 2.1 degree Celsius on the earlier night while the famous resort in south Kashmir received 1.4mm of rain overnight, he said.

Kokernag, also in south Kashmir, recorded a low of 7.5 degree Celsius against previous night's 5.2 degree Celsius, the official said.

Kupwara recorded a low of 7.0 degree Celsius against 6.5 degree Celsius on the previous night, the official said.

Gulmarg, the world famous skiing resort in north Kashmir, recorded a low of 2.5°C against minus 0.5 degree Celsius on the previous night which was 1.5 degree Celsius, the official said.

### Snow-Clearance

Zojila pass and also the shortest closure period.

However, snowfall over the past one-and-a-half month led to the closure of the highway once again, prompting the BRO to launch a fresh operation to clear the road.

"The snow-clearance operation is in full swing and it will take a couple of days to reconnect the Srinagar-Kargil-Leh highway for vehicular traffic subject to fair weather conditions," said Sanjiv Kumar, junior engineer, 55 Road Construction Company (RCC) Project Vijayak of the BRO. Kumar was briefing Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC), Kargil, Tsering

Motup who inspected the road clearance work at Zero Point, Zojila.

The ADC interacted with the engineers and operators involved in the operation. He hailed their tireless efforts for completing the operation up to the Zero Point despite the recent heavy snowfall and hostile weather conditions, an official spokesperson said.

Later, he said, the ADC took stock of arrangements for the establishment of COVID-19 screening points at Meenamarg check-post, including the setting up of a structure for conducting RT-PCR tests for all inbound passengers.

Motup directed the concerned officers to ensure that all necessary facilities like heating and other logistics should be made available soon so that COVID-19 screening activities can be carried out in a smooth and hassle-free manner, the spokesperson said.

### NHPC To Develop

paid-up share capital shall be Rs 100 crore divided into 10 crore equity shares of the face value of Rs 10 each, which shall be subscribed by the promoters as early as possible but not later than 90 days from the date of incorporation of the company.

"The chief executive officer (CEO) shall be responsible for day-to-day management of the JV. The post of CEO shall be below board level and shall be the nominee of NHPC," it added.

Initially, the board shall comprise seven directors. JKSPDCL nominated three part-time directors, including chairman, and NHPC nominated four part-time directors on the board of the company.

JKSPDC is also a party to another JV of NHPC — Chenab Valley Power Projects Private Ltd.

### Miscreants Poison

and the officials from the Fisheries Department visited the fish farm to take stock of the situation.

An official said that an investigation has been taken up. He said prima facie it seems an act of mischief committed by someone on the basis of personal animosity with a design to cause major financial losses to the owner. (With KNT inputs)

### Rape Accused

investigation or was arrested, they said.

A warrant was issued by court of Reasi's chief judicial magistrate against the accused.

The accused had been constantly evading arrest by frequently changing his hideouts both in and out of J&K, they said.

In the same case, the police are on the hunt for another accused Mohd Sharief, the official said, adding a third accused Mohd Rafiq, who was arrested earlier, is out on bail.

### Cardiac Arrest

for treatment.

Meanwhile, the body will be handed over to family after conduct of necessary medico-legal formalities, an official added.

### Youth Drowns

completion of legal formalities, the body was handed over to his relatives for the last rites," the official said.

He further added that police have registered a case in this regard.

### Teen Vehicle

FIRs of theft stand registered in Reasi, police said. He is being questioned further in an attempt to bust the gang that he is involved with and recover more such vehicles, they said. (PTI)



## Vegetable, Fruit Prices Soar As Ramzan Begins

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** With the arrival of the Holy month of Ramzan the prices of fruits and vegetables have soared with people questioning the administration for failing to keep a check on prices.

However the fruit vendors attribute the price hike to increase of wholesale rates by dealers in Mandis.

A fruit vendor selling fruits on Srinagar- Baramulla highway said that the increase in the price of fruits and vegetables is because of the rates decided by the wholesale dealers in the Mandi.

"We get the fruits at high rates and sell it accordingly", he said.

A senior citizen said that fruit vendors decide the rates on their own as there is no checking parameter for them.

"All around the valley most of these fruit vendors have

made mafia. Enforcing agency is merely making tall claims but on grounds, nothing is happening," he said.

President of the Fruit Mandi Association Bashir Ahmad Bashir said the fruits and vegetables are sold at reasonable wholesale rates and as per the demand and supply, the concerned department has to check the retail vendors who are selling at high rates.

"The items which one gets in the mandi at the price of Rs 50 is being sold in the retail market at the price of Rs 100 hundred. To regulate the rates in the market the concerned department has to come forward to enforce the genuine rates," he said.

Director FCS&CA KASHMIR, Bashir Ahmad Khan, did not respond to repeated calls and messages to comment on the issue—(KNO)

## Notorious Drug Peddler Arrested In Bandipora

Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** Jammu and Kashmir Police in Bandipora Wednesday arrested a drug peddler and recovered psychotropic substance from his possession.

A police party of Police Station Sumbal at a checkpoint established at Nesbal Crossing intercepted a person identified as Muhammad Asif Wagay @ Asif Yalgaar, a resident of Hilalaabad Nesbal Sumbal. "On checking, police party were able to recover 14 bottles of codeine phosphate from

his possession," a police spokesperson said in a statement.

The spokesperson said that he has been arrested and shifted to police station where he remains in custody. "A case FIR number 47/2021 under relevant sections of law stands registered in Police Station Sumbal and investigation was initiated."

During preliminary investigation, it came to fore that the accused is a notorious drug peddler and is involved in two cases registered by Jammu and Kashmir Police in Ganderbal.

## People Of J&K Being Sidelined Systematically: NC



Observer News Service

**SRINAGAR:** The Jammu and Kashmir National Conference on Wednesday said that New Delhi's compelling narratives of progress, modernity and development justifying its unconstitutional actions in J&K have fallen flat and has in fact hurt its development path and its economy.

"Historically being ranked well than the national average in terms of various HDI indicators, the GOI's actions have undone the development progress and relative economic stability, which was achieved by the successive NC led governments," said Party's General Secretary Ali Muhammad Sagar while addressing workers at Party Head quarters Nawa e Subha.

Sagar said that the ruling dispensation at New Delhi is on a mission to disenfranchise the native population of J&K with its selective policies and a coterie of federally appointed officers,

bereft of democratic bearings, calling the shots.

"Ignoring local youth in job selections, he said is a case in point. He said under the guise of unleashing Kashmir's development potential, indigenous populations of Jammu and Kashmir: Kashmiris, Dogras, Gujjars, Paharis and others are being systemically sidelined and squeezed by heavy toll taxes, power tariff and also being denied due share in the decision making bodies at every level."

He further said the so called Naya Kashmir programme of Ruling dispensation is only confined to shoddy propaganda. "The flood of fresh investments, job extravaganza, and infrastructure augmentation is nowhere visible on ground. Far from delivering on much touted development promises, the people of Jammu and Kashmir are continuously being denied their rights," he said.

Addressing the workers Dr Kamal said the new normal in J&K has cost it its jobs, tourism, industry, handicraft and horticulture. He maintained that the people are seeing no light at the end of the tunnel and that the government is busy in crowding-out the local indigenous population from local government and every sphere of public life including government jobs. "The new selection lists of India post, and J&K Bank were a telling indictment of shrinking job avenues of local indigenous youth from jobs in the government sector," he said.

## Anantnag Brick Kilns Defy Govt Order, Sell Bricks At Exorbitant Prices

Observer News Service

**ANANTNAG:** Last year the brick kiln owners hiked the prices of bricks by around 10000 Rupees citing the government's denial of permission to bring the labour from outside states. The government granted the permission to outside labourers after the brick kiln owners assured the authorities that they will bring down the prices of bricks.

However, the kiln owners continue to sell bricks at the same rates as before triggering public outcry. The authorities in most of the districts including Anantnag later fixed the rate for a truck load of bricks at 22000 rupees excluding carriage.

However, more than a year later, the bricks in the district continue to sell at 28000 to 30000 rupees.

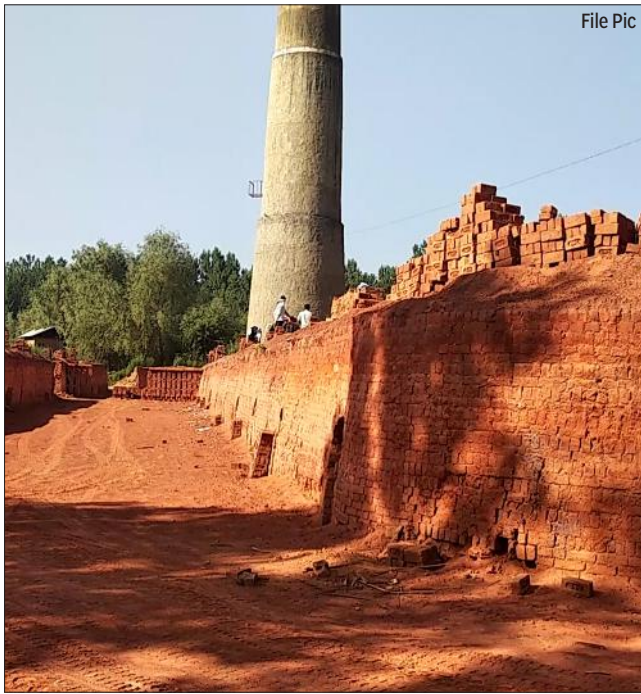
With brick kiln owners not giving damn to the government fixed prices, people belonging to middle class or lower middle class have been forced to delay or halt their constructions.

Tariq-ul-Islam from Dachigam Srigufwara has completed the plinth of his house in June and since then has been waiting for the brick prices to come down.

"After completing the plinth level of my house I decided to wait for brick work till the brick rates come down. Later when the district admin fixed 22000 Rs as the rate for truck load of bricks I had a sigh of relief. But since then I have been visiting all almost all the brick kilns but they clearly refuse to sell the bricks at government fixed rates," Tariq said.

Three of the brick kiln owners, he said, asked him to go to district administration to get bricks at 22000 Rupees.

Another resident, Javed Ahmad Shah from Bijbehara who has also halted the construction



File Pic

of his house due to the skyrocketing of brick prices rued the non-seriousness of authorities in implementing fixed rates.

"I have a small business and had started constructing a small house out of my hard earned money. But if the brick rates continue to sell at same prices I don't think I will be able to restart the construction. Authorities should stop this loot on part of brick kiln owners. If they fail to do so it will be impossible for labor class to even think of constructing houses," Shah said.

The brick kiln owners refused to speak over phone when asked about the rates.

"I spoke to three brick kiln owners and asked them about brick rates but all of them told me to come to the office and that rates are not discussed on phone. They fear that their calls may be recorded which will

land them in trouble later. They are playing very smart," said Sameer Mushtaq of Anantnag town whose house is under construction for the last one year.

An officer of the district administration who is part of the committee to check the violation said that they have started a drive against such brick kiln owners.

"We have taken a strong cognisance of the matter and the enforcement team will be directed to go tough against the brick kiln owners violating the government fixed rates," the officer said.

The Deputy Commissioner Anantnag last week, acting on the public complaints ordered the implementation of the brick sale rates fixed and notified vide no. 325 of 2020. Deputy Commissioner in the order constituted a committee headed by AD, CA and PD to ensure the implementation of the brick prices. (CNS)

**“AFTER COMPLETING THE PLINTH LEVEL OF MY HOUSE I decided to wait for brick work till the brick rates come down. Later when the district admin fixed 22000 Rs as the rate for truck load of bricks I had a sigh of relief. But since then I have been visiting all almost all the brick kilns but they clearly refuse to sell the bricks at government fixed rates,”**

## Pulwama Villagers Protest As Admin Plans To Set Up Waste Disposal Facility In The Village

Observer News Service

**PULWAMA:** The residents of Parigam village in South Kashmir's Pulwama district are up against district administration for choosing state land in the village for construction of waste disposal facility.

The locals said that the land which has been identified is very close to a residential area and solid waste management plant can severely take a toll on locals along with their farmland.

"Yes, it is state land but government should start such a project here that won't harm locals along with their agriculture and horticulture sector," they said.

Sajad Ahmad, a local resident said that apple, almond orchards, saffron and other agricultural fields are in its close vicinity and a waste disposal plant would impact the produce to a great extent.

He said that the government

**“YES, IT IS STATE land but government should start such a project here that won't harm locals along with their agriculture and horticulture sector,” they said.**

should come up with such a plant or industry that would generate employment opportunities for local youth.

Locals said that they have taken up the issue with Lieutenant Governor and district administration and are hopeful that they will revisit their decision and a solid waste disposal plant will be shifted to the alternative site far from the residential area.

A senior official of the revenue department said that in order to mitigate all issues related to the solid waste management plant, there is no alternative site available other

than Parigam.

"There is no site available in Pulwama town and its peripheral area after proper survey, this site is best," an official said.

An official of the Municipal Committee Pulwama said that they have already measured the land in Parigam which is around 33 Kanals and around Rs 80 lakh have been already spent for the fencing of the site.

He assured that it won't be a garbage dumping site but a modern solid waste management plant and there will be no impact on the locals and their produce due to the plant.

District Magistrate Pulwama, Baseer Ul Haq Choudhary, said that the site would have been chosen after proper survey.

Choudhary said that a local delegation had recently visited him and he assured that all parameters will be once again taken into consideration before taking any decision in this regard—(KNO)

## Athwatoo Village In Bandipora Awaits Mobile Connectivity

Observer News Service

**BANDIPORA:** Two decades after the launch of mobile telephony in Jammu and Kashmir, the residents of Athwatoo village in North Kashmir's Bandipora district are still craving for mobile connectivity.

The locals said though the network tower has been installed it is yet to be made functional.

"Phone connectivity is running all over the country, but our village still lacks this facility due to which the people are facing a lot of problems here," they said.

A group of students of the village said that they don't have access to the internet as the village

lacks even basic mobile connectivity due to which their studies get affected.

"Whenever we have to fill out some form or take an online exam, we have to come down from our village only then we come in touch with the rest of the world," Rameez Lone, a local said.

"Nowadays mobile connectivity is also running in remote areas of Gurez but we don't know if the administration has put our village on the back-burner," Lone said.

Meanwhile, locals appeal to the administration to provide the basic network facility in their area as soon as possible—(KNO)

## E-bidding For Liquor Licenses To End Monopoly: Excise Commissioner

Press Trust Of India

**JAMMU:** Amid the ongoing stir by wine traders, Jammu and Kashmir Excise Commissioner Rahul Sharma on Wednesday defended the new policy as "transparent" and said e-bidding for liquor licenses was introduced to end monopoly.

However, the protesting traders accused the department of hoodwinking the public by its "false narrative".

In an advertisement in a local daily, Sharma highlighted various points of the new policy and also tried to allay apprehensions of the wine traders that people from outside the Union Territory would be accommodated and provided contracts under the garb of the new policy.

The e-bidding for liquor licenses is confined to the domiciles of J&K only and it will therefore provide employment only to locals. It ends monopoly," Sharma said, adding equal opportunity to all has been provided to participate in the e-auction process for allotment of liquor licenses and to stop perpetual transfers within family.

"One individual-one vend will restrict the practice of monopoly. Solvency certificate of immovable property equivalent to bid amount provides due safeguard that only residents of J&K can participate. Further, it will also check proxy and speculative bidding," he said.

The excise commissioner said the new policy is only an attempt to implement law of the land and judgments of the high court. "The new policy is completely transparent and no functional in UT can favour or disfavour any prospective bidder. It ends favoritism."

Sharma said auction of liquor vends only on existing locations which have been functioning for past many years ensures that public sentiments are fully tak-

en into account.

The Jammu Wine Traders Association (JWTA) accused the excise department of misleading the public through the advertisement and challenged it to justify each point before them.

"The new policy is full of flaws and is a death knell for the Jammu wine traders who cannot compete in e-auction to save their decades old business the high court judgment clearly mentions that the renewal of license of the trade in liquor is permissible under law," JWTA member Devender Singh told reporters here.

He said the department is boasting of transparency, "which cannot be guaranteed as in 2005 one of its own employees was involved in the fraud during the introduction of the e-lottery system."

"The department is speaking about ending monopoly. By the new policy, a family can manage to get multiple licenses. The solvency certificate is only meant to safeguard the government revenue instead of providing safeguards to a trader, who, in case of any untoward incident, cannot transfer the license to his or her family member," he said.

Traders Federation president Deepak Gupta extended his support to the agitating wine traders and urged Lt Governor Manoj Sinha and Union Minister Jitendra Singh to personally look into their demands and safeguard their livelihood by reviewing the new policy.

Hundreds of wine traders are on streets over the past one month in protest against e-auction of liquor vends under the new excise policy.

The JWTA said 30,000 families are directly or indirectly involved in earning their livelihood from this business and most of the present licensees are widows, senior citizens and unemployed youth who have no other source of income.

## Six Vehicles Seized In Bandipora For Illegal Mining

Observer News Service

**BANDIPORA:** Jammu and Kashmir Police in Bandipora Wednesday seized six vehicles allegedly used in the transportation of raw materials illegally extracted during different raids.

A police spokesperson said that Police teams along with the teams of Mining & Geology department conducted raids on different Nallah/Streams across the district to check illegal extraction and transportation of

raw materials.

During the raids, six vehicles (tipper) were seized from Turkpora Bandipora and SK Bala Ajas. These vehicles were being used in transportation of raw materials illegally extracted. The drivers managed to flee from the spot and efforts are on to nab them.

"In this connection legal proceedings under relevant sections of law against the violators has been initiated and further investigation has been taken up."

### LOST OF DRIVING LICENSE

I have lost my Driving License Bearing Registration No. JK0320080005042. Now applied for its duplicate if anybody has any objection in this regard may file at ARTO Anantnag within Seven (7) days after that no objection shall be entertained.

**Name:-Amir Hussain Malik  
S/O Ab Hamid Malik  
R/O TB Shah Anantnag**

### LOST OF CHARACTER & SCHOOL LEAVIN CERTIFICATE

I have lost my Character & School Leaving Certificate of Class 8th under Roll No.913047 Now applied for its duplicate if anybody has any objection in this regard may file at Office of the Principal Government High School Tailwani Anantnag within Seven (4) days after that no objection shall be entertained.

**Name:-Obaid Mushtaq Mir  
S/O Mushtaq Ahmad Mir R/O Tailwani Anantnag**

#### NEWS MAKERS

## Adv Khan Instructs DCs To Ensure Availability Of Essential Items During Ramzan

**SRINAGAR:** Advisor to Lieutenant Governor, Farooq Khan Wednesday visited the Dargah Hazratbal Shrine to pay obeisance. He prayed for the end of Covid Pandemic and good health of the people and invoked the blessings of Holy month.

Later, Advisor Khan reviewed the arrangements for providing necessary facilities for the Holy month of Ramzan.

He reviewed availability of electricity, water supply, status of roads leading to religious places and sanitation at the mosques and shrines.

While taking the review, Advisor issued directions for strict observance of Covid-19 SOPs including use of face masks, sanitizers, maintenance of physical distance and discouraging large gatherings. He said the government has given

relaxation during the prayer times but obeying of Covid-19 SOPs are imperative to fight second wave of the Pandemic.

He impressed on Wakaf authorities, shrine management, Imams of J&K to arrange volunteers to facilitate people so that social distancing would be maintained.

He instructed for provision of standby transformers and generators and mobile water tankers as a backup at important religious centers.

Moreover, he directed SMC authorities to ensure thorough maintenance of cleanliness besides lighting arrangements at all the Shrines in Srinagar. Similar instructions were given to Municipal Committees in other districts for conducting sanitation drives for containment of Covid-19 and other diseases.

Advisor directed SMC, Com-

missioner to take serious measures to curb the stray dog menace with immediate effect besides asked him to conduct cleanliness drive there.

Meanwhile, Advisor impressed on Director Food Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs to mobilize the Enforcement Wing of the department for frequent market checking and quality control of essential food items besides ensuring availability of food items in the markets across the Kashmir Division.

He issued strict directions for booking the erring traders and imposition of fine for overcharging and profiteering. Advisor also set a three days deadline for distribution of hundred percent ration available with FCS&CA department among the people so they don't suffer due non availability of ration.

Advisor directed RTO Kashmir

to ensure adequate number of vehicles from various stops to facilitate movement of devotees who intend to perform Friday prayers at shrines and mosques in Srinagar and other districts.

He also instructed the concerned authorities to ensure adequate transport and parking facilities besides hassle-free movement of traffic on the important routes during Fridays.

The Director Health Services Kashmir was told, to keep vigil to contain spread of virus and put a proper mechanism of covid testing at every such place which has a significant number of devotees. Advisor Khan directed for setting up dedicated ambulances with paramedic staff in districts for rapid testing besides making arrangements for thermal scanning for the safety of the people.

Further, Advisor issued di-

rections to all the DCs to put a proper mechanism and arrangements in place to check the price and availability of essential items in the market places besides to conduct market inspections to have check and control on the activities of unscrupulous elements and hoarders.

DCs were also asked to depute enforcement wing and checking escort in main markets of respective districts and in rural areas so that black marketing, hoarding and profiteering could be controlled and those who are found guilty be strictly dealt as per the law.

He also directed them to ensure uninterrupted electricity and water supply at the religious places, mosques and shrines in their respective districts during the blessed month to facilitate the general public.



## IPL 2021, RR VS DC, PREVIEW

## Without Ben Stokes, Beleaguered Rajasthan Royals Bank On Sanju Samson



Press Trust of India

**CHENNAI:** Coming off a heart-breaking loss and hit by star all-rounder Ben Stokes' injury-forced ouster, a beleaguered Rajasthan Royals would hope for another inspirational knock from new skipper Sanju Samson when it faces a confident Delhi Capitals in an IPL match in Mumbai on Wednesday.

While DC made a superb start under new captain Rishabh Pant, clinching a seven-wicket win over Chennai Super Kings in their opening contest, RR suffered a four-run defeat against Punjab Kings in a high-scoring match on Monday night.

Chasing a mammoth 222 for win, Samson (119 off 63 balls) played a blinder of an innings in his debut as captain but couldn't get his side over the line as he was dismissed in the final ball of the innings while going for a maximum with RR needing five runs off the last delivery.

The loss completely shattered Samson, who single-handedly kept RR in the contest, playing some delightful strokes during his blistering knock, which included 12 boundaries and seven sixes.

As if the loss was not enough, RR were dealt a severe blow on Tuesday when Stokes was ruled out of the remainder of the tournament with a broken finger. He sustained that injury during the agonising defeat.

In his absence, the pressure would be on the likes of Jos Buttler, Shivam Dube and Riyan Parag to deliver the goods and provide ample support to their young skipper, who has been sensational in the first match.

The likes of Manan Vohra (12), Buttler (25) Dube (23), Parag (25) all got starts but failed to lend the

much-needed support to Samson.

The major worry for RR team management would be the performance of its bowling unit.

RR bowling unit looked rusty and completely out of sorts in their opener.

Barring young Chetan Sakariya (3/31), who had a fantastic debut, all other RR bowlers went for runs and looked completely clueless against opposition batsmen.

Mustafizur Rahman, Chris Morris, Stokes, Shreyas Gopal, Rahul Tewatia -- all went for big runs and need to pull up their socks quickly.

Last edition's runner-up side DC, on the other hand, had a perfect start to their campaign as they defeated three-time champions CSK with consummate ease.

Opting to field, DC had allowed CSK to pile up a competitive 188 for 7 but Shikhar Dhawan and Prithvi Shaw made a short walk of the target with a 138-run opening partnership, that laid the foundation for the win.

Both Dhawan (85 off 54) and Shaw (72 off 38) played their strokes from the word go and looked in complete control during their knocks.

Pant (15 not out) and Marcus Stonis (14) did the rest as DC comfortably reached home with eight balls to spare.

On the bowling front, Chris Woakes (2/18) and Avesh Khan (2/23) had a good outing in the first game and would look to carry on their form but the likes of Ravichandran Ashwin, Tom Curran, Amit Mishra and Stoinis had a forgettable outing and would be desperate to make amends on Thursday.

The contest will also witness test of wits of two new captains in Pant and Samson.

## J&amp;K Roller Hockey Team Wins Gold At 58th National Roller Skating Championship



Observer News Service

**JAMMU:** The star studded Masters Roller Hockey Team of Jammu and Kashmir clinched gold medal in the recently concluded 58th National Roller Skating Championship held at Chandigarh.

In the league matches of the championship, J&K defeated teams of Punjab and Chandigarh while they had a draw with Haryana team.

For team J&K, Ankush, Krish Raibrinder, Sanjeev played exceptionally well throughout the tournament while as goal keeper of the team J&K Gagan Singh Jamwal saved the crucial goals in the Final match against Chandigarh and eventually his team emerged victorious.

Other members of the gold medal winning team were Param veer singh bhatia, Ramneesh Sharma, Arvin Singh, Sourab bakhshi, Mohit and Narinder Malhotra.

This is for the second time in a row that team J&K has won Gold medal at the championship.

Meanwhile, President of Jammu and Kashmir Roller Skating Association (JKRSA), GS Khurmi has congratulated all the medal winning skaters for their brilliant performance at national level. He said, it is a proud moment for JKRSA that both masters and senior mens roller hockey team again shined at this national level tournament.

## Babar Azam Dethrones Kohli From Top Of ICC Men's ODI Rankings

Press Trust of India

**DUBAI:** India captain Virat Kohli's long reign at the top of the ICC rankings for batsmen was on Wednesday brought to an end by his Pakistan counterpart Babar Azam, who became only the fourth from his country to attain the position.

The 26-year-old right-hander's player of the match effort of an 82-ball 94 in the last game of the series against South Africa in Centurion helped him gain 13 rating points to reach 865 points.

He now leads the Indian captain by eight points, the ICC said in a statement.

Babar, a star of the Under-19 World Cups in 2010 and 2012 and who has been playing ODIs since 2015, had started the series against South Africa at 837 rating points but moved up to 858 (ahead of Kohli) after his score of 103 in the first match.

He dropped to 852 by the time of the last weekly rankings update with a score of 32 in the second ODI.

By ending Kohli's 1,258 day-supremacy, which adds up to over three years, Babar has emulated compatriots Zaheer Abbas (1983-84), Javed Miandad (1988-89), and Mohammad Yousuf (2003) as the



number one ODI batsman.

In Tests, Babar has attained a best of fifth position and is currently ranked sixth while in T20s he is third but has been number one in the past.

Left-handed opener Fakhar Zaman is another Pakistan batsman to move up the ODI batting charts, gaining five slots to reach a career-best seventh position after his knock of 101.

Left-arm fast bowler Shaheen Afridi (up four places to a career-best 11th) and left-arm spinner Mohammad Nawaz (up 29 places to 96th) have progressed, thanks to their three-wicket hauls in the match.

Kohli's deputy, Rohit Sharma has maintained his second spot with 825 points ahead of New Zealand's Ross Taylor. No other Indian features in the latest top 10 batting chart.

Among bowlers, Indian pacer Jasprit Bumrah has held on to his fourth position behind top-ranked Trent Boult of New Zealand, Afghanistan's Mujeeb Ur Rahman and another Kiwi pacer Matt Henry.

Ravichandran Ashwin is the lone Indian to find a place in the top 10 all-rounders' list at the number nine spot.

Bangladesh's Shakib Al Hasan leads the pack ahead of injured England all-rounder Ben Stokes and Afghanistan's Mohammad Nabi.

## Chelsea, PSG Lose Yet Seal Champions League Semifinals Spot



Agencies

**LONDON:** Paris Saint-Germain and Chelsea on Wednesday qualified for the semifinals of the Champions League.

Chelsea suffered a 0-1 defeat against Porto in the second leg quarterfinal here at the Ramon Sanchez-Pizjuan Stadium but Thomas Tuchel's side managed to qualify for the semifinals after having won the first leg 2-0.

The Blues progressed to the semifinals after winning 2-1 on aggregate. Chelsea conceded a late acrobatic goal from Mehdi Taremi but the side managed to hold on to progress to the semifinals.

Chelsea qualified for the semifinals for the first time since 2014 and will now meet either Real Madrid or Liverpool for a place in the final.

"I can imagine that both games were not the nicest games to watch on the television for spectators who look for entertainment," Tuchel said.

"I can totally accept that, but it's very hard to play your best

game against Porto."

On the other hand, PSG advanced to the semi-finals on away goals after a 3-3 aggregate result in the quarterfinal match against German champions, Bayern Munich.

In the second leg, Bayern Munich defeated PSG 1-0 after a goal from Eric Maxim Choupo-Moting. Mauricio Pochettino's men will meet either Borussia Dortmund or Manchester City in the semifinals.

While Tuchel doesn't have the star quality of PSG at his disposal at Chelsea, just a young, hard-working squad which is outperforming expectations -- albeit despite a spending spree of around USD 300 million in the last off-season.

"We take it like an adventure," he said.

"It's a big step to be in a semifinal for them. This is a very, very big achievement.

"You see the last time Chelsea has been in a semifinal, so we are not used to being there ... We need every minute to learn, to

## Rohit Sharma Hails MI's 'Excellent Fightback' Against KKR

Press Trust of India

**CHENNAI:** A pleased Mumbai Indians skipper Rohit Sharma lauded his team for an "excellent fightback" against Kolkata Knight Riders, saying that one doesn't get to see these kind of tantalisingly close games.

Mumbai Indians came back strongly in the last 10 overs of the match to defend a meagre total of 152 against KKR which managed only 20 runs in the last five overs.

"It was an excellent fightback by each one of them. You don't see a game like this often. We will take lots of confidence from this game as we move forward," Rohit said at the post-match presentation ceremony. The MI skipper called the win a complete team effort on a difficult track.

"KKR batted brilliantly in the Powerplay. Rahul (Chahar) came and

got us crucial wickets in the middle. Krunal (Pandya) bowling those overs at the end was vital as well.

"It was a complete team effort and credit to all the bowlers. As batters, you need to carry on. The trend in Chennai is you can't hit from ball one. You have to plan before you go into bat. We were 15-20 runs short," he said.

Losing captain Eoin Morgan was unhappy that his team didn't play "bold cricket" in the final 10 overs.

"Yes, disappointing (to lose). We played some really good cricket for most parts of the game, we looked comfortable in the chase, but they are a strong team, came back well and said that it didn't work out for us," he said.

"We made a few mistakes and will need to sort that out. A perfect game needs to be bold, it came to cost us in the last 10 overs of the game," said Morgan.

## 'Fear Of Failure Has Often Pushed Me To Focus More,' Reveals AB de Villiers



Press Trust of India

**CHENNAI:** The high-risk game that he plays involves a "fear of failure" which has pushed the talismanic AB de Villiers to focus even more on dealing with the various challenges of T20 format.

Playing his first game in almost five months, de Villiers brought back his hey days with a match-winning knock for Royal Challengers Bangalore against defending champions Mumbai Indians in the IPL opener.

Asked how he manages to do that year after year, de Villiers replied: "It's not always very enjoyable. I try and play the situations that I am confronted with in the best possible way, sounds pretty simple. But fact of the matter is that when you bat in the middle order, the situation changes every time."

"It's a matter of adapting and trying to make most of it...It comes off more often than not," the Proteas legend told RCB 'Bold Diaries'.

But one can't escape the reality that there will be failures.

"But you always know that its possible that you are going to fail. Fear of failure always pushes me to focus more on the ball and do basics better. Try and get a start. It is important to start the first 20 balls well," he said.

Having retired from interna-

tional cricket, the 37-year-old de Villiers admitted that when one plays top-level cricket with big gaps in between, getting back to rhythm takes time.

"I must say the work to get back to decent form was lot harder than before and the last match I played was in last IPL," he said.

"It doesn't mean that I didn't put in the hard yards and I started about two months ago. I had 2-3 months off, stayed fit in the gym and I started hitting cricket balls. Enough to get me to space, to get me going," de Villiers said.

De Villiers is confident that RCB will be able to capitalise on Sunrisers Hyderabad's lack of depth during their IPL game on Wednesday.

"It is a nice attack (SRH) to face, it is a great challenge. I always enjoy playing against Sunrisers Hyderabad. They can challenge you with their skill and they are always smart.

"It is a matter of us making sure that we get some partnerships and once we get on top of them, they are a kind of a team we can really dominate," he said.

"They do not have as much depth as some of the other teams in the IPL. If we get hold of them, we have to make sure that we do not allow them to make a comeback because that's where they are really dangerous," he concluded.

## Minister Rijiju Expecting Double Digit Medal Haul At Tokyo Olympics

Press Trust of India

**NEW DELHI:** Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju is expecting an unprecedented double digit medal haul from the Indian athletes in the upcoming Tokyo Olympics. On Wednesday, Rijiju said the government has provided all possible support to the country's athletes in preparation for the Olympics, and it is now their job to make the Games a "memorable" one for India.

"We want to make this Olympics very, very memorable and it is the athletes who would ensure that the Tokyo Olympics becomes one of the most cherished Olympics for India.

"From ministry's end we have tried to provide everything required for Olympic-bound athletes and athletes who are participating in qualifying events. Our priority was to fulfil all needs of our athletes," the minister said.

He was speaking during a virtual webinar organised to mark the 100 days countdown to the Tokyo Games, which is scheduled to begin on July 23.

"We ensured that there is no shortcomings or shortages of any sort for athletes representing India in Tokyo Olympics. But we will have to set a record in Tokyo Olympics. India must cross double digit.

"We are doing everything for you, you just bring home double digit medal haul. We will give everything you want but there shouldn't be any lacking in efforts from your side," he said in his message to the sports persons who will represent India in the quadrennial extravaganza.

Rijiju asked the athletes who have



already qualified for the Games, to remain cautious in view of the surging coronavirus cases in the country and across the world.

"100 days countdown and from here we have to make sure that everyday is important now. From now onwards everything has to be as per your plan and as per the programme set by the coaches.

"There are many challenges ahead. If a player in a team tests COVID positive it may affect the entire team. So we have to be extremely careful in this situation. We need to strictly follow the protocols of Sports Authority of India and National Sports Federations," he said.

The sports minister reiterated that India needs to play a bigger role

in the Olympic movement and the only way it can do so is by making its presence felt in the medals tally.

"We should make the Olympic movement more rigorous in India. India has a long history of Olympics and as a large nation, India must play much more important and greater role in the Olympic movement and we can do this by winning more medals," Rijiju said.

"Our share of Olympic medals must increase. India is an emerging nation and this must be reflected in sporting arena also."

The webinar was also attended by sports secretary Ravi Mittal, Indian Olympic Association president Narinder Batra and secretary general Rajeev Mehta, among others.