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P3 CITY

FREQUENT POWER OUTAGES IN SRINAGAR, IRK RESIDENTS

The Kashmir Power Distribution Corporation Limited (KPDCL) has failed to adhere to the power schedule even in the holy month of Ramadan, leaving the residents across Srinagar...

THINK

FASTING AND HEALTH IN RAMADAN

Ramadan is a month of self-regulation and self-training. Muslims fast in accordance with our religious requirements, but there are medical benefits as well. Generally, fasting has been used by patients for weight...



P5 STATE

PUBLIC SERVICE DEPARTMENTS SHOULD FOCUS ON EFFICIENT SERVICES: ADV BHATNAGAR

Advisor to Lieutenant Governor, Rajeev Rai Bhatnagar Thursday chaired a meeting to review the Summer...



Quote!
Humour is mankind's greatest blessing
—Mark Twain

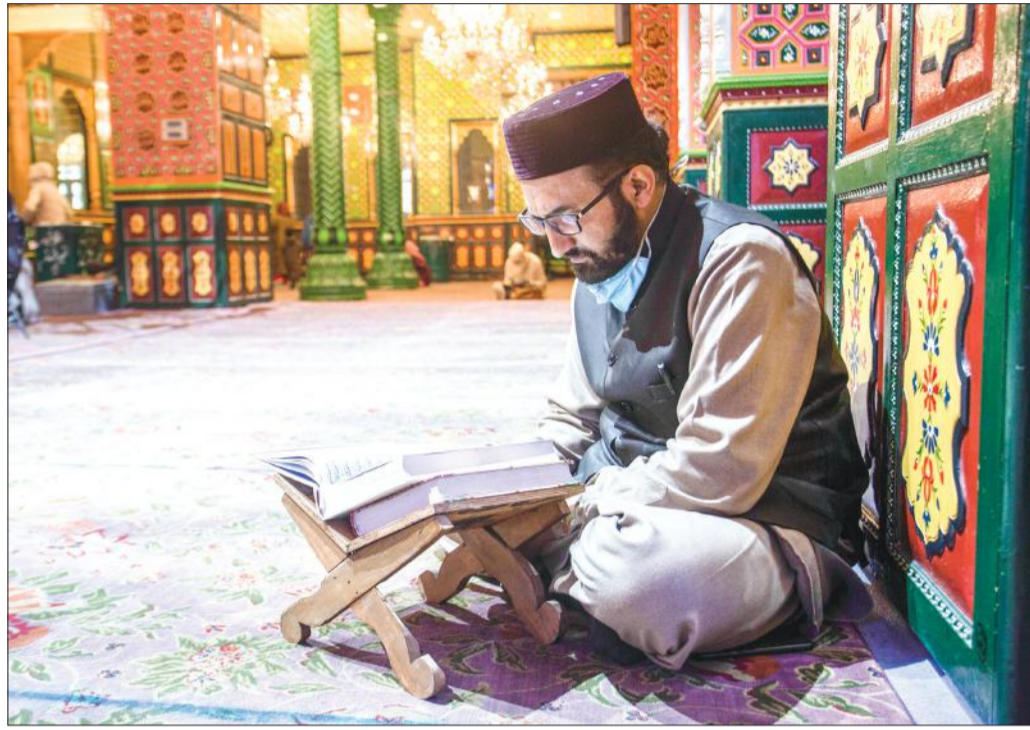
Govt Defers Durbar Move Over Covid-19 Surge

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: The Jammu and Kashmir government on Thursday deferred the biannual darbar move to Srinagar saying that the civil secretariat, which is the seat of the Union Territory administration, shall function both in Srinagar and Jammu cities.

As part of the biannual darbar move and the civil secretariat's shift, other move offices and the Raj Bhavan were scheduled to close in Jammu on April 30 to May 1 and set to begin functioning in the summer capital from May 10.

The practice of darbar move - under which the administration functions in Jammu during six months of winter and in Srinagar during summer -



A man recites holy Quran inside the shrine of Sufi saint Hazrat Sheikh Syed Abdul Qadir Jeelani (RA) in Khanyar locality of the Old City on Thursday. KO Photo, Abid Bhat

Active Corona Cases In J&K Cross 10,000 Mark

1141 More Test Positive, Four More Die

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday recorded 1,141 new coronavirus infections that pushed the number of active cases in the union territory past the 10,000-mark for the first time this year, officials said.

With the fresh cases, Jammu and Kashmir's cumulative tally has risen to 1,42,877. The death toll climbed to 2,046 with four new

fatalities, they said.

Of the fresh cases, 707 were reported from the Kashmir division and 434 from the Jammu division.

The officials said Srinagar district recorded the highest number of fresh cases at 418, including 71 travellers, followed by 215 in Jammu and 136 in Baramulla.

The number of active cases in Jammu and Kashmir stands at 10,040 while 13,0971 patients

SCHOOLS, COACHING CENTRES CLOSED TILL APRIL 30

As coronavirus cases show no sign of decline, the Jammu and Kashmir government on Thursday ordered closure of all coaching centres in the Union Territory besides extending closure of all schools till April 30. "All schools in J&K shall continue to remain

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED THAT ALL COACHING and tuition centers imparting in-person teaching to Students shall remain closed in the entire J&K till 30.04.2021."

Police Files Case Over Hartal Call

Fake Tweet Claimed Geelani Had Called For A Shutdown: Police

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: Police in Budgam district of Jammu and Kashmir have registered a case under Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) against unidentified people for posting false information about veteran separatist leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani on social media, an official said on Thursday.

A twitter account, claiming to be the official handle of Geelani,

posted a press release allegedly issued by the separatist leader wherein he purportedly called for a general shutdown against what he alleged as "killing of children and desecration of religious places".

The press release, allegedly signed by Geelani, was referring to the killing of 12 militants in four encounters since last Friday. One of the encounters took place inside a mosque which was extensively damaged during the operation.

"According to family sources of SAS Geelani, the tweet is fake and issued by someone from Pakistan. Police is taking action against

India, Pak Held Secret Talks On Kashmir: Report

Observer Monitoring Desk

SRINAGAR: Before a surprise ceasefire announcement by India and Pakistan on February 25, the top intelligence officers from the two nuclear countries held secret talks in Dubai in January in a new effort to calm tensions over Kashmir, the Reuters news agency reported.

Quoting two unnamed people with close knowledge of the matter, the report said that officials from India's Research and Analysis Wing, the external spy agency and Pakistan's



Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) travelled to Dubai for a meeting facilitated by the United Arab Emirates government. "There is a lot that can still go wrong, it is fraught," one of the

people in New Delhi told Reuters. "That is why nobody is talking it up in public, we don't even have a name for this, it's not a peace process. You can call it a re-engagement," one of them said.

Both countries have reasons to seek a rapprochement.

The report also said that the Indian foreign ministry did not respond to a request for comment. Pakistan's military, which controls the ISI, also did not respond.

"There is a recognition there will be attacks inside Kashmir, there has been

UAE HELPED DE-ESCALATE TENSIONS: ENVOY

RE-REGISTRATION OF NON-J&K VEHICLES

Court Lists Case For Next Hearing On April 19

Agencies

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir High Court Thursday adjourned the case of re-registration of non-JK vehicles and listed it for the next hearing on April 19.

The Jammu and Kashmir High Court had sought the response of the Government by 15 April over the matter after the case was heard on 7 April.

The United Arab Emirates played a role in bringing down the tension between India and Pakistan and getting their bilateral ties back to a "healthy functional relationship", Emirati ambassador to the US Yousef al-Otaiba has said. "They might not sort of become best friends but at least we want to get it to a level where it's functional, where it's operational, where they are speaking to each other," al-Otaiba said during a virtual discussion with Stanford University's Hoover Institution on Wednesday. India and Pakistan in a surprise announcement said on February 25 that they have agreed to strictly observe all agreements on ceasefire along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir and other sectors. Al-Otaiba himself brought up the issue while responding to a question, acknowledging his country's role in "bringing Kashmir

Mercury Plummets As Rain Lashes Kashmir

'Erratic' Weather To Continue Till weekend: Sonam Lotus



Agencies

SRINAGAR: Intermittent rains lashed Kashmir Valley and

parts of Jammu division on Thursday bringing down mercury, even as the local meteorological

Mughal Road Closed Despite Snow Clearance

Despite the snow clearance, the historic Mughal road, connecting south Kashmir's Shopian district with Poonch, continues to remain closed for traffic movement. Officials within the mechanical department said that the snow clearance work which was started in the month of March has been completed and traffic could be restored on the road. People from

NIA Arrests School Teacher Over Militancy Links

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Thursday arrested a school teacher for his alleged involvement in recruiting young boys for Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) in north Kashmir's Bandipora district.

Altaf Ahmad Rather, a resident of Jammu and Kashmir's Bandipora district, was wanted in a case registered in West Bengal last year following the arrest of a woman, Tania Parveen, for her association with the group, a spokesman of the NIA said.

Investigation has revealed that Rather is a school teacher in Bandipora and was a sympathiser of the LeT. Parveen had come in contact with him over social media platforms and he was instrumental in introducing her to LeT members based in Pakistan, in pursuance of a conspiracy to radicalise, motivate and recruit youths for violent Jihad (holy war) on India, he said.

The spokesman said Parveen was arrested by the West Bengal Police last year for her association with the LeT.

An FIR was registered against her at the Badurai police station in West Bengal's North 24 Parganas district under various sections of the Indian Penal Code, the Unlawful Activities (Prevention)

Govt Transfers 19 Police Officers

Observer Monitoring Desk

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir government on Thursday ordered transfer and postings of at least 19 police officers in the Union Territory.

According to the order issued by the Home department, Atul Kumar Goel (IPS), DIG, South Kashmir Range, has been transferred and posted as DIG, Jammu-Samba-Kathua Range, against an available vacancy, relieving Vivek Gupta (IPS) of the additional charge. Sujit Kumar (IPS), DIG, Udhampur-Reasi

Recording Of Mehbooba's Mother's Statement By ED Deferred

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: The recording of PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti's mother Gulshan Nazir's statement by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) has been deferred due to Ramadan and the prevailing COVID-19 situation, officials said on Thursday.

The ED was conveyed about the same through an informal channel by Nazir, they said and added that recording of her statement is now expected to take place after a few weeks. Nazir, in her seventies, was supposed to appear before the agency at its office here on



Thursday in a case related to money laundering. The agency would fix the next date of hearing after a few weeks, the officials said. Mehbooba, 61, was also questioned in

Woman's Death During 'Night Raid' Sparks Protest

Observer Monitoring Desk

SRINAGAR: Protests broke out Thursday in Habak area of this capital city after a woman died of heart attack allegedly after government forces carried out a nocturnal raid at her house, even as the police said they were looking into the matter.

According to the reports, scores of people, including women and children hit the streets in Mirakshah colony in Habak on Thursday morning and staged a protest over the death of an elderly woman allegedly after government forces

raided her house and tried to arrest her son.

The slogan shouting protesters, including the family of the deceased woman, demanded stern action against police personnel who were part of it.

"I along with my mother used to sleep in a particular room. There was some knocking sound outside our residence and I informed my mother accordingly. I opened the door and saw policemen. They pushed me aside and entered inside," daughter of the woman told reporters at the spot. "Then they asked for my brother and told

ISJK Operative Held In Jammu: Police

JAMMU: The Jammu and Kashmir police have claimed to have arrested an operative of Islamic State Jammu and Kashmir, a J&K-based militant outfit named after the Islamic State. The fresh arrest of the militant outfit's operative followed ten days after the apprehension of its top commander Malik Umair alias Abdullah from Jhajjar Kotli near here. Jammu zone Inspector General of Police Mukesh Singh

Govt Cancels Ongoing Class X Exams

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir administration on Thursday cancelled ongoing exams of J&K BOSE for remaining subjects of Class X and postponed class XII exams. "In view of rising cases of COVID19, Class X ongoing exams for remaining subjects has been cancelled and their promotion to class XI will be decided on the basis of their performance in subjects already undertaken in present exam and internal assessment," Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha's office said in a tweet as per GNS.

Searches Conducted Along IB In Jammu

JAMMU: The Border Security Force (BSF) and Jammu and Kashmir police on Thursday conducted a joint search operation along International Border (IB) in Phargwal sector area of Jammu district. Searches were conducted by joint teams of police and BSF after observing suspicious movement along border in Gadhkal area of Phargwal, officials said. "Search operation was called off in late noon hours while domination teams are still present in the area for area clearance," officials said—(KNO)

Global warming making Indian monsoon seasons stronger, more chaotic: Study

Press Trust of India

Climate change will make summer monsoon rainfall in India stronger and more erratic, according to a study that predicts extremely wet years in the future, with potentially grave consequences for over a billion people's well-being, economy, food systems and agriculture.

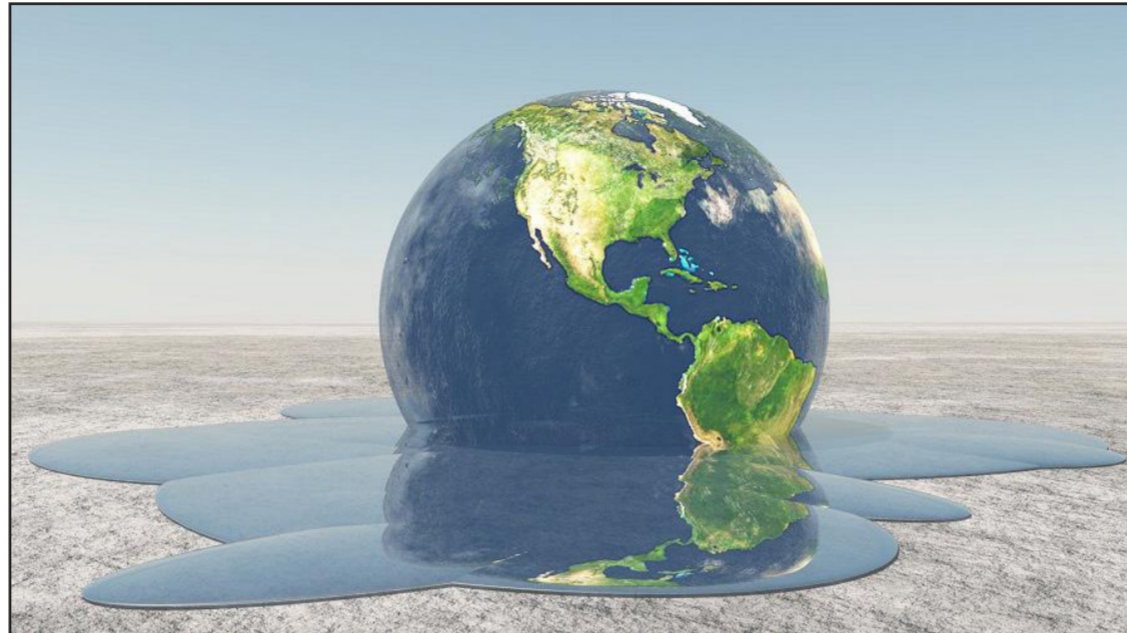
The study, published in the journal Earth System Dynamics, compared more than 30 state-of-the-art climate models from all around the world.

"We have found robust evidence for an exponential dependence: For every degree Celsius of warming, monsoon rainfalls will likely increase by about 5 per cent," said study lead author Anja Katzenberger from the Potsdam-Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK) in Germany.

"Hereby we were also able to confirm previous studies but find that global warming is increasing monsoon rainfall in India even more than previously thought. It is dominating monsoon dynamics in the 21st century," Katzenberger said.

The researchers noted that more rainfall is not necessarily a good thing for the farming sector in India and its neighbouring countries.

"Crops need water especially in the initial growing period, but too much rainfall during other growing states can harm plants—including rice on which the majority of India's population is depending for sustenance," said study co-author Julia Pongratz from Ludwig-Maximilian University (LMU) in Germany.



"This makes the Indian economy and food system highly sensitive to volatile monsoon patterns," said Pongratz.

A look into the past underlines that human behaviour is behind the intensification of rainfall, according

to the researchers.

Starting in the 1950s, human-made forcings have begun to overtake slow natural changes occurring over many millennia, they said.

At first, high sun-light blocking aerosol loadings led

Crops need water especially in the initial growing period, but too much rainfall during other growing states can harm plants—including rice on which the majority of India's population is depending for sustenance

to subdued warming and thus a decline in rainfall.

However, from 1980 onwards, greenhouse gas-induced warming has become the deciding driver for stronger and more erratic monsoon seasons.

"We see more and more that climate change is about unpredictable weather extremes and their serious consequences," said group leader and co-author Anders Levermann from PIK and Columbia University in the US.

"Because what is really on the line is the socio-economic well-being of the Indian subcontinent," Levermann said.

He explained that a more chaotic monsoon season poses a threat to the agriculture and economy in the region and should be a wakeup call for policymakers to drastically cut greenhouse gas emissions worldwide.

انتقال پر ملال

یہ خبر انتہائی دکھ کے ساتھ دی جاتی ہے کہ حاجی عبدالحق بٹ ساکنہ پدگام پورہ اوتی پورہ مورخہ 14 اپریل 2021ء بروز بدھوار اس دارفانی سے رحلت کر گئے۔ مرحوم محکمہ اطلاعات میں سینئر کلچرل اسٹنٹ کے عہدے سے سبکدوش ہوئے تھے۔ اللہ تعالیٰ مرحوم کو جنت الفردوس نصیب کرے۔ مرحوم کی فاتحہ خوانی مورخہ 18 اپریل 2021ء بروز اتوار کو انجام دی جائے گی۔

سوگواران

In the Court of Collector (Additional Deputy Commissioner Sopore)

email: adcsopore@gmail.com

In the case of: Mst. Hajrah Beg (Applicant) VS Mahda & Others (Non-Applicants)

In the matter of: Appeal against the mutation No. 689 dated 03-01-2004 attested by the Naib Tehsildar Baramulla for setting aside the same.

Notice

Whereas, an appeal with regard to Mutation No. 689 dated 03-01-2004, of estate Shutloo Tehsil Baramulla is pending disposal before this court.

Whereas, respondent No. 01 Mahada Dar S/o Subhan Dar R/o Shutloo Tehsil Rohama Rafiabab was time and again called to appear before this court.

Whereas, the report furnished by Tehsildar vide No. 225/ROQ dated 01-07-2019, reveals that the whereabouts of the said respondent are not known, as he has migrated since 48 years back.

Now, therefore through the medium of this notice Shri Mahada Dar S/o Subhan Dar R/o Shutloo Tehsil Rohama Rafiabab is called upon to appear to cause his presence before this court on 11-05-2021 at 10:00 AM.

No: 331ADC/SPR/P/2021-22
Dated: 12-04-2021

Collector, Addl. Deputy Commissioner, Sopore

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, TLMD-VI (6), BEMINA, SRINAGAR

Tele No: 0194-2492429 Fax: 0194-2492429
Email: tlcdistpdd@gmail.com

NOTICE INVITING TENDER (RE-TENDER)

e-NIT No: TLMD-VI/01 of 2021-22
Dated: 12/ 04 / 2021

Executive Engineer, TLMD-VI, Bemina Srinagar on behalf of the Lt. Governor of Jammu & Kashmir UT invites e-tenders (In Two Cover System) valid for 180 days from reputed, experienced and financially sound Contractors and Executors fulfilling the eligibility criteria specified in the standard bidding documents for the work detailed below. As per Govt Circular No: A/Misc (2018)-III-895/J Dt:22.12.2020. Bids need not to be accompanied by EMD however the bidder has to submit declaration as per format given in standard bidding document.

The complete bidding process is online. However, hardcopies are to be submitted only by the Lowest Bidder in the office of Executive Engineer, TLMD-VI Bemina Srinagar, on the day which will be communicated to lowest bidder. Financial bids must be submitted online only as per prescribed format.

The Standard Bidding Document is available at website <http://jktenders.gov.in>.

S.No	Scope of work	Qty	Estimated Cost in Lacs	Time of Completion
1	Digging of borewell, Supply and fixing of all accessories required for faithful pumping and availability of water as per detailed SBD/BOQ	Refer BOQ for details	4.60 Lacs	15 days

The information regarding schedule of downloading of the tender document and submission dates thereof is as per the table below:

CRITICAL DATES :-

1.	Issue of NIT.	12-04-2021
2.	Downloading of bidding documents (Start).	14-04-2021 (10 am)
3.	Downloading of bidding documents (End).	26-04-2021 (4 pm)
4.	e-Bid submission (start) date & time (Submission).	15-04-2021 (10am)
5.	e-Bid submission (end) date & time (Submission supporting documents in PDF formats).	26-04-2021 (6 pm)
6.	Online Techno-Commercial e-Bid opening date and time.	28-04-2021 (2pm)
7.	Venue of opening of Techno-Commercial-Bids.	Office of the Executive Engineer, TLMD-VI, Bemina, Srinagar
8.	Cost of e-Bid document (to be submitted in the form of DD Pledged to executive engineer TLMD-VI, JKTPL Srinagar).	Rs 500/-

- Only the bidders possessing the qualifying criteria as mentioned in the SBD should participate in the bidding process.
- Clarifications can also be sought from the office of the under signed on E-mail tlcdistpdd@gmail.com or fax 0194 - 2492429.
- Before participating in the bids, the bidder shall acquaint himself with the site of work and local conditions.
- The department reserves the right to reject any or all the bids without assigning any reason thereof.

No: TLMD-VI/112-14
Dated: 12-04-2021

DIPK-NB-261/21

---S/D---
Executive Engineer
TLMD-VI, Bemina Sgr.

AFFIDAVIT

I Ira Urvashi Domun D/O Harsha Nan Domun R/O H. No 1210 Ff Sector 57/B Chandigarh Do Hereby Solemnly Affirm And Declare As Under:

- That I am the absolute owner of Beat Model 2013 with Regd NO: CH01AU0549 bearing Chassis No: MA6BFBF2 DDT001896, Engineer No B12010AIVZ131620139 Colour White
- That I have sold the said vehicle to Mohammad Ishaq Dar S/O Ghulam Mustafa Dar R/o Gund Khawaj Kasim, Gund Khawaja Kasim, Baramula J&K
- That the above vehicle is without any encumbrances.
- That the above vehicle is not involved in any accident/ case/ challan. If any I will be responsible.
- That I will be liable for any financial liability if any.
- I will also be responsible for all kind of taxes or tax difference to be paid if any.
- That please transfer above said vehicle in the name of purchaser DEPENDENT

Verification
Verified that the contents of paras 1 to 7 of my above affidavit are true and correct.

BMG

PUBLIC NOTICE

I have purchased a vehicle bearing regd no: CH01AU0549 from Ira Urvashi Domun R/o Chandigarh Sector 37/B. Now I want the said vehicle to be registered in my name (Mohd Ishaq Dar) if anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in this regard he/she may file the same in the Office of RTO Sopore within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Mohd Ishaq Dar
S/O Ghulam Mustafa Dar
R/o Gund Khawaj Kasim

bmj

Office of the Excise Commissioner, J&K Govt.

Rail Head Complex, Panama Chowk, Jammu

ALERT NOTICE

Subject: e-Auction of Liquor Shops in J&K

The General Public/prospective bidders interested in participating in the e-Auction of Liquor Vends (Retail Shops), through the medium of this notice, are hereby informed that:-

- Beware of any misleading information being floated in public domain. For factual and reliable information/clarification, log on to following official websites Contact No. only:
 - www.jkexcise.nic.in
 - <https://jkexcisedept.auctiontiger.net> and
 - Help Desk No.'s: 0191-2475686 and 9796081001
- No Digital signatures are required for registration/e-bidding.
- Force Majeure clause has been considered by the government.
- Solvency certificate is to ensure participation of domicile of J&K only.
- Solvency certificate is not to be uploaded at the time of creation of User id and Password for participation in bids.
- The payments of EMD and Registration fee regarding e-auction process are being entertained in online mode only, on portal <https://jkexcisedept.auctiontiger.net>
- Excise Department is not making any calls to prospective bidders, asking for any information. All such fraudster calls should not be entertained. For any clarification/confirmation, call the helpline numbers given above.
- Registration is already open on the portal. However registration can be made anytime during the auction process.

Sd/-
(Rahul Sharma) KAS
Excise Commissioner, J&K.

DIPK-499/21

Government of Jammu & Kashmir

Office of the Sr. Aquaculture Engineer (XEN) Fisheries Deptt Srinagar

Notice Inviting Tenders

ABRIDGED SHORT TERM E-NIT No 01 OF 2021-22

For and on behalf of the Governor of Jammu and Kashmir State, e-tenders are invited by Sr. Aquaculture Engineer (XEN), Fisheries Department J&K Srinagar by e-tendering mode on item rate basis from approved and the eligible registered Contractors registered with J&K State Government of the classes mentioned here under in strict accordance with conditions noted below.

S. No	Name of work	Approx. Cost (Rs. in lacs)	Class of Contract	Cost of Tender Document	Time of opening of bid	Time of completion
01	Construction of Earthen Brooder Pond at National Fish Seed Farm Manasbal (Balance Work)	Rs. 3.09 lacs	"D"	Rs 300/-	23-04-2021 at 10:00 AM	20 Days

Position of AA= Accorded Position of Funds = Available

The bidding documents consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, bill of quantities (B.O.Q), set of terms & conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from www.jktenders.gov.in under ASH/Director Fisheries / Engineering Wing as per the schedule of dates given below.

1.	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	15-04-2021
2.	Period of downloading of bidding documents	15-04-2021 from 2:00 pm to 22-04-2021 upto 4:00 pm
3.	Bid submission Start Date	15-04-2021 from 2:00 pm
4.	Bid submission End Date	22-04-2021 upto 4:00 pm
5.	Date & Time of opening Bids (Online)	23-04-2021 at 10:00 am

In the Office of the Sr. Aquaculture Engineer (XEN) Fisheries Deptt Suleiman Complex Dalgate -Srinagar

Sd/
Sr. Aquaculture Engineer (XEN)
Fisheries Department
Srinagar

No:SAE/D/2021-22/76-80
Dated:-15-04-2021

DIPK-509/21

LMD Srinagar Fines Erring Traders

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Legal Metrology Department (LMD) Srinagar today recovered a penal sum of Rs. 10,300 from 14 erring traders during market inspection conducted across various City markets.

The LMD had constituted two teams for conducting market inspections and during the course of action the erring traders including Vegetable, Fruit, Kiryana and Poultry Sellers besides other Miscellaneous were booked for violating Legal

Metrology Laws for which the penal sum was collected on the spot.

The nature of offences was mainly use of unstamped commercial weights and measures. The use of un-reverified weights and measures is illegal under the Legal Metrology Act.

Meanwhile, the consumers have been asked to contact the department on toll-free No: 1800-180-7114 during office hours in case any trader is using non-standard weight or measure or indulges in short-weight or measurement.

NIT Hosts Lecture On 'Building New Start Ups'



Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Department of Humanities, Social Sciences & Management (HSS&M), National Institute of Technology (NIT) Srinagar Thursday hosted a virtual lecture on process of 'building a start-up'.

Director NIT Srinagar, Prof Rakesh Sehgal who was the chief guest on the occasion, said the key objective of holding such sessions are that students will learn and will know how to work and execute ideas for processing new start-ups.

"After proper guidance and research, a successful entrepreneur will find the proper solution to establish a suitable business model, he said.

Sehgal said there is a need to boost more such sessions in the future for students and I appreciate the department for conducting such market-oriented sessions.

Registrar NIT, Prof. Kaiser Bukhari said the idea and realization of a startup is a vital step and such things are important to be taken into account to make a startup effective.

"The vision of startup

and needs of people are more important than a business plan," he said.

Budoo is currently Director of Zipcho Entertainment Company and is Qualified Company Secretary. He is also an associate member of the Institute of Company Secretaries of India and has vast expertise in his respective field.

During the interaction with students, Budoo deliberated upon the challenges and opportunities for start-ups in Kashmir. The understanding market is a key to success and if new startups will not consider such features then efforts will be in vain, he said.

The speaker stressed new start-ups should explore both local and regional markets and urged students not to start anything with which they are not familiar. Keep the market trends under consideration, he said.

While concluding the lecture, Head of the Department of Humanities Social Sciences and Management, Prof. Abdul Liman thanked the guest and expressed gratitude to Director NIT Prof. Sehgal for supporting such interactions in the institution.



Devotees offering prayers inside the Shrine of sufi saint Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jeelani (RA) in Khanyar locality of Srinagar's Old City on Thursday. KO Photo, Abid Bhat

Frequent Power Outages In Srinagar, Irk Residents

People Resort To Overloading: CE

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Kashmir Power Distribution Corporation Limited (KPDCL) has failed to adhere to the power schedule even in the holy month of Ramadan, leaving the residents across Srinagar to suffer.

People in most parts of Srinagar have complained of inadequate electricity, saying that the department has failed to ensure adequate electricity even in the holy month of Ramadan.

"We are facing erratic power cuts despite being assured adequate electricity in the ongoing holy month of Ramadan," the locals from different Old City and

Uptown areas like Natipora, said.

"The department has even failed to ensure the electricity during Sehri and Iftari time," the locals residents from Old city areas said.

Jehangir Ahmad, a local resident from Natipora said that unscheduled power cuts especially at the time of Sehri and Iftar has added to the miseries of people. "Despite being promised high and tall, the local consumers are being pushed to the wall by forcing them to reel under darkness."

Meanwhile, Chief Engineer KPDCL Aijaz Ahmad Dar said the department could have provided uninterrupted power supply to the consumers in case

there would have been cooperation from their (consumers) side.

"We are being forced to go for a curtailment as the people resort to overloading especially during Sehri and Iftar times," he said, adding that they have limited capacity to provide electricity and thus people should understand and cooperate.

"They must not resort to the overload so that the department is able to provide adequate electricity especially in the ongoing holy month of Ramadan."

He said that against the agreement load of 250 MW in Srinagar, the department is providing 650 MW for the district—(KNO)

Beating Of Student: 'Hope Classes' Coaching Centre Apologises Accepts Legal Action Against The Teacher

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The court of district magistrate Srinagar on Thursday recorded the statements of both the parties in connection with a viral video wherein a student was beaten by a teacher in a private coaching institute.

An official said that the district magistrate Srinagar had asked the management of Hope Classes Coaching Institute to appear before the court to record their statement in connection with viral video.

He said that the district magistrate while hearing the case

today listened to the both the parties including institute authorities and parents of the student and recorded their statements.

Additional district magistrate, Srinagar said that after the video went viral cognisance was taken and the management of the coaching institute and parents of the student were summoned today and their statements were recorded.

He said that the proceedings of the case has been initiated under section 107 and other relevant laws and the teacher in question has already been arrested by the Police Station Saddar.

"Authorities of the Hope

Classes have also tendered apology for the act done by their faculty member and they have assured to extend their full support in the investigation process," he said.

Meanwhile, an official said that during the proceedings of the case in the court of district magistrate Srinagar, Managing Director Hope Classes while accepting the incident said "Its very unfortunate that such incident took place in our premises, any legal action by the authorities is acceptable. We apologise for the incident to the society and the student in particular."—(KNO)

DIAL-EMMA

- TRAFFIC POLICE : 9419993745, 01998-266686
- PCR: 0194-2452092,2455883
- PDD: 0194-2450213
- FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES : 2479488,245222,2452155
- CAPD: 18001807011
- SMC HEALTH OFFICER: 9469409081
- Ambulance: Kashmir EMS Service: +91 94841 00200

AIRPORTS

SHIEKH UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311 ✈️

RAILWAYS

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

HIGHWAY STATUS

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

PRAYERS

HIJRI CALENDAR
03 Ramazan
1442

FAJR	4: 32
ZUHR	12:32
ASR	5:10
Magrib	6:05
ISHA	8:31

This Day In History

- 1799 -- Napoleonic Wars: The Battle of Mount Tabour - Napoleon drives Ottoman Turks across the River Jordan near Acre.
- 1865 - Battle of Columbus & West Point, GA (Ft Tyler)
- 1913 - The Bulgarians and the Turks agree to an armistice that will be accepted by the other nations involved
- 1917 - Lenin arrives back from exile in Russia at Finland Station, Petrograd to join the Russian Revolution
- 1921 - Liberal Freedom League forms in The Hague
- 1922 - German-Russian treaty signed in Italy, Soviet Union recognized
- 1922 - Rapallo Agreement, between Germany and Russia, is signed
- 1939 - Stalin requests British, French & Russian anti-Nazi pact
- 1943 - 40 NZ bombers attack Haarlem, Netherlands (85 killed)
- 1945 - Red Army begins Battle of Berlin
- 1945 - US troops enter Nuremberg, Germany
- 1946 - 1st US launch of captured V-2 rocket, White Sands, NM; 8 km alt
- 1953 - British royal yacht Britannia launched by Queen Elizabeth II
- 1957 - USSR performs atmospheric nuclear test
- 1972 - Two giant pandas arrive in US from China
- 1972 - Apollo 16 launched; 5th manned lunar landing (Decartes Highlands)
- 1974 - USSR performs nuclear test at Eastern Kazakh/Semipalatinsk USSR
- 2003 - Treaty of Accession is signed in Athens admitting 10 new member states to the European Union
- 2007 - Virginia Tech massacre: The deadliest mass shooting in modern American history. The gunman, Seung-Hui Cho, kills 32 people and injures 23 others before committing suicide.
- 2012 - At least 55 people are killed in the Syrian uprising despite UN presence to oversee ceasefire
- 2012 - For the first time since 1977 no Pulitzer Prize is awarded for fiction
- 2013 - 37 people are killed by a 7.8 magnitude earthquake in Khashkhon, Iran
- 2014 - South Korean ferry MV Sewol sinks on route Incheon to Jeju, 304 down, mostly students. National controversy erupts over rescue efforts and actions of crew and owner.
- 2017 - Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdo an wins referendum on 18-article constitutional reform package

From KO Archives

Pervez Visit To Begin With Prayers

India to fire new CBMs At Pak

New Delhi - Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf will begin his two day India visit Saturday with prayers at dargah of Sufi saint Khwaja Moinudin Chisti at Ajmer before commencing extensive talks with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on all outstanding issues, including Kashmir, on Sunday.

Seeking to break fresh ground, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh is expected to place new confidence building measures to carry forward the peace process in his talks with Pakistan President, who visits India on his first visit after the failed 2001 Agra Summit.

Singh, who will hold parleys with Musharraf after witnessing the last one-day Indo-Pak cricket match for over an hour in the morning, is likely to suggest opening of additional bus routes and ways to promote tourism in Kashmir to enable people-to-people contacts. A joint statement after the talks is not ruled out.

Official sources said that Musharraf, who will be accompanied by his wife Seeba and a 40-member delegation, has conveyed Singh's suggestion that providing full security to the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service was the "joint responsibility" of the two countries and signals from that side have been "positive".

On the eve of Musharraf's visit, the Prime Minister told a Chief Ministers' conclave here that "it is the joint responsibility of the Governments of India and Pakistan." to provide full security to the bus passengers. The two countries should fight the scourge of terrorism in the region, he added.

FIGHTING TERROR TOGETHER: India and Pakistan can work together in fighting the sources of terrorism in the region making it clear it was their joint responsibility to ensure full security to the passengers of Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service.

He said "I do believe that it is the joint responsibility of the Governments of India and Pakistan, and of the local authorities on both sides of the line of control, to work together in providing full security cover to the bus service which is a service for peace and for promotion of reconciliation."

"I sincerely hope we can work together in protecting the lives of innocent people and in lighting the sources of terrorism in the region," Singh said.

(Kashmir Observer, 16 April, 2005)

CONDOLENCE

SKUAST Kashmir mourns on the sudden and untimely death of one employee Mr Bashir Ahmad Wani Security Guard who left for heavenly abode. Honble Vice Chancellor Prof J P Sharma conveyed his deepest condolences to the departed soul. May Allah place the departed soul in Janatul Firdous and patience to the bereaved family .Aameen

PRO
Skuast Kashmir

از دفتر نائب تحصیلدارت ناگ با اہل اساتذہ صاحب

درخواست نمائند: محمد اقبال میر ولد غلام حسن میر ساکن شہر پورہ پانچ تھانہ تحصیل ناگ با اہل اساتذہ صاحب ناگ با اہل اساتذہ صاحب ناگ

بہر تہنیک

اشتمار عام

معاہدہ مندرجہ عنوان الصد میں سائل نے ایک درخواست بڑھ وصول لگیں میر سر تہنیک پیش کیا ہے حسب رپورٹ پنداری حلقہ سے پایا گیا ہے کہ غلام بی گمانی جو غیر شادی شدہ تھا کو کوئی بھی وارث جو کوئی نہیں تھا اور اس نے اپنی جائیداد منقولہ وغیرہ منقولہ نامہ میں محمد اقبال میر کے نام کر دیا ہے اس کا وارث محمد اقبال میر ہے غلام بی گمانی مورخہ 28/09/2020 کو فوت ہو چکا ہے اس کے علاوہ اور کوئی فرد نہایت میں موجود نہیں ہے لہذا اگر کسی شخص یا اشخاص کو کوئی وارث یا اشخاص کے نام سے کوئی وارث یا اشخاص کا نام لکھا گیا ہے تو اس کے لئے اندر اندر دفتر بازہ میں پیش کریں بعد گزرنے معیا کو کوئی وارث یا اشخاص قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔

تحریر الصد نائب تحصیلدارت ناگ

MJA

(GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR)

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (R&B) ELECTRIC DIVISION SRINAGAR

Short Term Tender Notice No. :- 07 of 2021-22/R&B Dated: 12.04.2021

For and on behalf of The Lt. Governor of Union Territory Jammu and Kashmir sealed tenders affixed with 5/- rupees revenue stamps are invited for the below mentioned works from approved and eligible Electrical contractors registered with J&K Govt. , CPWD, Railways and other state /Central Govt. as per specification and detailed mentioned in the BOQ.

S.No	Name of Work	Approx Cost (lacs)	Earnest Money (Rs.)	Class Of Contractor	Time of Completion	Cost of tender document	M.H.of Account
01.	Renovation of Electrification room 2nd on right side of professor colony Lane Room No.122 in IPD 1. No Doctors room in old blood bank of SMHS Srinagar	0.51 lacs	1020	"A" Class Electrical	(05) days)	200	4210
02.	Renovation of electrification ICCU IPD Block of SMHS Hospital Srinagar	0.36 lacs	720	"A" Class Electrical	(03) days	200	4210

AAA/TS - Submitted
Position of Funds :- Demanded

- The tender should be addressed to the Executive Engineer (R&B) Electric Division Srinagar and should reach in the office by or before 22.04.2021 upto 4.00 PM. The tenders /bids will be opened on the same day or any other day convenient to tender opening authority in presence of the contractors who may like to be present. In case the last date of receipt of tenders happens to be a holiday /Hartal /curfew day the tenders will be received on next working day.
- The tender document shall be issued by this office from 15.04.2021 upto 21.04.2021 against receipt of treasury challan received from the eligible Electrical contractor and should enclose following documents Viz: valid registration with latest renewal certificate, Pan Card, valid GST registration with latest GST clearance certificate, valid contact No./E-Mail ID in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Electric Division Srinagar. (Tender inviting authority).
- The bidders shall be a liberty to send their bids either in person or through registered post but shall super scribe the following in front of the envelopes.
- i.) Name of work ii) cost of work iii) Full name of contractor with contact No .iv) Ref. to CDR No & Date v) Date of receipt of tenders vi) Ref. to NIT No.
- The bidder Should enclose CDR/FDR
- The bidder should sign each page of tender document enclosed with their bid.
- All other Terms and conditions shall remain same as laid down in PWD form 25.

Sd/-
Executive Engineer (R&B) Electric Division Srinagar

NO- ERB/ 121-28
Dated:- 12.04.2021

DIPK-539/21

Iran's Supreme Leader Says Offers Made In Vienna Are 'Not Worth Looking At'



Agencies

ARAB EMIRATES — Iran's supreme leader on Wednesday dismissed initial offers at talks in Vienna to save Tehran's tattered nuclear deal as "not worth looking at," attempting to pressure world powers after an attack on the country's main nuclear enrichment site.

The comments by Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who has final say on all matters of state in the Islamic Republic, came after a day that saw Iran's president similarly ratchet up pressure over the accord. European powers meanwhile warned Tehran its actions were "particularly regrettable" and "dangerous."

The talks already have been thrown into disarray by a weekend attack on Iran's main Natanz nuclear enrichment site suspected to have been carried out by Israel. Tehran retaliated by announcing it would enrich uranium up to 60% — higher than it ever has before but still lower than weapons-grade levels of 90%.

"The offers they provide are usually arrogant and humiliating (and) are not worth looking at," the 81-year-old Khamenei said in an address marking the first day of the holy Muslim fasting month of Ramadan in Iran.

He also criticized the U.S. and

warned time could be running out. "The talks shouldn't become talks of attrition," Khamenei said. "They shouldn't be in a way that parties drag on and prolong the talks. This is harmful to the country."

Speaking to his Cabinet, an impassioned Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said the first-generation IR-1 centrifuges that were damaged in Sunday's attack would be replaced by advanced IR-6 centrifuges that enrich uranium much faster.

"You wanted to make our hands empty during the talks but our hands are full," Rouhani said.

Rouhani added: "60% enrichment is an answer to your evilness. ... We cut off both of your hands, one with IR-6 centrifuges and another one with 60%."

Rouhani also accused Israel of being behind the Natanz attack and threatened to retaliate.

In Jerusalem at a Memorial Day commemoration, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu appeared to reference Iran.

"We must never remain apathetic to the threats of war and extermination of those who seek to eliminate us," he said. Israel has not claimed the attack, though it rarely does in its ongoing shadow war against Tehran.

The talks in Vienna are aimed at finding a way for the United States to re-enter Tehran's nuclear agreement with world powers and have Iran comply again with its limits. The accord, which former President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew the U.S. from in 2018, prevented Iran from stockpiling enough high-enriched uranium to be able to pursue a nuclear weapon in exchange for the lifting of economic sanctions.

Late on Wednesday, the European Union said formal negotiations would resume Thursday in Vienna.

France Asks Its Citizens To Leave Pakistan, Cites 'Serious Threats'



Agencies

The French embassy in Pakistan on Thursday advised all French citizens and companies to leave the country amid the ongoing protests against France.

Pakistan's Dawn quoted a French embassy email as saying, "Due to the serious threats to French interests in Pakistan, French nationals and French companies are advised to temporarily leave the country... the departures will be carried out by existing commercial airlines."

Anti-French sentiment had risen drastically since last year after French President Emmanuel Macron refused to condemn controversial cartoons that appeared in a French magazine. The cartoons depicting Prophet Mohammed were perceived as being offensive by many Muslims.

In recent days, the Tehreek-i-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP), an Islamic group, had been holding protests seeking the expulsion of the French ambassador by April 20. On Wednesday, Pakistan's government moved to

ban the TLP. The detention of TLP leader Saad Rizvi on Monday brought thousands of his supporters out on the streets across Pakistan.

The action to ban TLP was taken under the country's anti-terrorism law.

At least seven people had been killed and 300 policemen injured in the TLP protests.

Pakistani leaders, including Prime Minister Imran Khan, had spoken out against Macron and accused the French president of encouraging Islamophobia.

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"Time To End Forever War": Joe Biden To Begin US Afghanistan Exit On May 1

President Joe Biden said on Wednesday he will begin withdrawing US troops from Afghanistan on May 1 to end America's longest war, rejecting calls for US forces to stay to ensure a peaceful resolution to that nation's grinding internal conflict.

In a White House speech, Biden acknowledged that US objectives in Afghanistan had become "increasingly unclear" over the past decade. He set a deadline for withdrawing all 2,500 U.S. troops remaining in Afghanistan by Sept. 11, exactly 20 years after al Qaeda's attacks on the United States that triggered the war.

But by pulling out without a clear victory, the United States opens itself to criticism that a withdrawal represents a de facto admission of failure for American military strategy.

"It was never meant to be a multi-generational undertaking. We were attacked. We went to war with clear goals. We achieved those objectives," Biden said, noting that al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden was killed by American forces in 2011 and saying that organization has been "degraded" in Afghanistan.

"And it's time to end the forever war," Biden added.

The war has cost the lives of 2,448 American service members and consumed an estimated \$2 trillion. U.S. troop numbers in Afghanistan peaked at more than 100,000 in 2011.

The Democratic president had faced a May 1 withdrawal deadline, set by his Republican predecessor Donald Trump, who tried but failed to pull the troops out before leaving office in January. Instead, Biden said the final withdrawal would start on May 1 and end by Sept. 11.

In withdrawing, Biden is embracing risks at the start of his presidency that proved too great for his predecessors, including that al Qaeda might reconstitute



itself or that the Taliban insurgency might topple the U.S.-backed government in Kabul.

"I am now the fourth American president to preside over an American troop presence in Afghanistan. Two Republicans. Two Democrats," Biden said. "I will not pass this responsibility on to a fifth."

Meeting NATO officials in Brussels, Secretary of State Antony Blinken said foreign troops under NATO command in Afghanistan will leave in coordination with the U.S. withdrawal by Sept. 11, after Germany said it would match American plans.

Blinken also spoke by phone with Pakistan's army chief on Wednesday and discussed the peace process, the media wing of Pakistan's military said.

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani wrote on Twitter that he spoke with Biden and respects the U.S. decision. Ghani added that "we will work with our U.S. partners to ensure a smooth transition" and "we will continue to work with our US/NATO partners in the ongoing peace efforts."

A conference is planned on Afghanistan starting on April 24 in Istanbul that would include the United Nations and Qatar.

The Taliban, ousted from power in 2001 by U.S.-led forces, said they would not take part in any meetings involving decisions about Afghanistan until all foreign forces have left. Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid on Wednesday called on the United States to adhere to the deal the group reached with Trump's administration.

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J&J Covid-19 Vaccine In Limbo As US Panel Delays Vote On Resuming Shots

Johnson & Johnson's Covid-19 vaccine remained in limbo on Wednesday as a US health panel called for more data before making a decision on how and whether to resume use of the one-dose shot, putting off a vote for a week or more.

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) advisory panel decided to delay a vote on how best to use the J&J shot even after a US Food and Drug Administration scientist told advisers he believed warnings could mitigate the risk of extremely rare but serious blood clots.

The panel is reviewing six reported cases of rare brain blood clots in women who received the J&J vaccine, a day after the FDA and CDC jointly recommended pausing its use to assess the issue.

Dr Lynn Batha, an epidemiologist at the Minnesota health department, and several others spoke in favor of extending the pause to gather more safety information.

"By having more robust information, I think we can be more confident about how we talk about the safety of this vaccine," she told other members of the advisory panel.

Earlier, the FDA's deputy director for vaccine development, Doran Fink, told the panel that his current thinking was that warning statements and communications from the federal agency would allow doctors to weigh risks and benefits of the vaccine.

Other panel members and advisers, however, expressed concern that extending the pause could worsen issues related to equitable access to the vaccine, which is seen as important for serving hard-to-reach communities because it



can be stored at normal refrigerator temperatures and given as one dose instead of two.

"Any extension of the pause will invariably result in the fact that the most vulnerable individuals in the United States will remain vulnerable," Nirav Shah, director of the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention and a representative of the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials told the panel. Shah is not a voting member.

Several panel members wanted to vote to extend the pause by as much as a month, but Dr. Beth Bell, a global health expert at the University of Washington, argued that would send a signal globally of a major issue with the vaccine.

"I don't want to send the message that there is something fundamentally wrong with this vaccine, which I don't agree with," she said.

"It's a very rare event," Bell said of the cases of blood clots in the brain, known as cerebral venous sinus thrombosis (CVST), along with low blood platelets. "Nothing is risk-free."

The six cases, all in women under age 50, were reported out of 7.2 million doses of the J&J vaccine administered in the United States — a risk federal health officials and immunology experts said was extremely low, especially when weighed against the potential ravages of Covid-19.

One of the six women died and three remain hospitalized. So far, more than 562,000 people in the United States have died from Covid-19.

Bell argued in favor of postponing a vote and gathering more information, which the panel decided to do.

The FDA is charged with weighing evidence on a vaccine's safety and effectiveness, and could add warnings to existing labeling. The panel's role is to advise public health officials and the CDC director on how best to use vaccines once they are approved.

The FDA in an email to Reuters said it is continuing to review the vaccine safety data, in partnership with the CDC, and will provide updates on additional scientific evidence as they become available.

"It's important that these deliberative processes that protect patients are followed so that the American public has confidence in vaccine safety and effectiveness," the FDA added. REUTERS

US Expels Russian Diplomats, Imposes New Round Of Sanctions

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

The Biden administration on Thursday announced the expulsion of 10 Russian diplomats and sanctions against nearly three dozen people and companies as it moved to hold the Kremlin accountable for interference in last year's presidential election and the hacking of federal agencies.

The actions, foreshadowed for weeks by the administration, represent the first retaliatory measures announced against the Kremlin for the hack, familiarly known as the SolarWinds breach.

In that intrusion, Russian hackers are believed to have infected widely used software with malicious code, enabling them to access the networks of at least nine agencies in what US officials believe was an intelligence-gathering operation aimed at mining government secrets.

Besides that hack, US officials last month alleged that Russian President Vladimir Putin authorized influence operations to help Donald Trump in his unsuccessful bid for reelection as president, though there's no evidence Russia or anyone else changed votes or manipulated the outcome.

The measures announced Thursday include sanctions on six Russian companies that support the country's cyber activities, in addition to sanctions on 32 indi-



viduals and entities accused of attempting to interfere in last year's presidential election, including by spreading disinformation.

The 10 diplomats being expelled include representatives of Russian intelligence services, the White House said.

The White House also said Biden was using diplomatic, military and intelligence channels to respond to reports that Russia encouraged the Taliban to attack US and allied troops in Afghanistan based on the best assessments of the intelligence community.

Reports of alleged bounties surfaced last year, with the Trump administration coming under fire for not raising the issue directly with Russia. The White House did not publicly confirm the reports. The safety and well-being of U.S. military personnel, and that of our allies and partners, is an absolute priority of the United States, the White House said Thursday.

NEWS MAKERS

Canada Will Grant Permanent Residency To 90,000 Students And Foreign Workers

Agencies

Canada will grant permanent residency to more than 90,000 foreign students and workers who helped treat patients during the pandemic, the immigration minister announced on Wednesday.

The program, in effect from May 6, is intended for workers with at least one year of work experience in health care or dozens of other sectors deemed essential — from grocery store cashiers and shelf stockers to truck drivers and farm workers — as well as graduates who've completed a post-secondary degree within the last four years.

Immigration Minister Marco



Mendicino said the measure should help Canada reach its target of welcoming more than 400,000 immigrants this year, compensating for a drop in immigration last year when the border was closed.

"The pandemic has shone a bright light on the incredible contributions of newcomers,"

he told a news conference.

"These new policies will help those with a temporary status to plan their future in Canada, play a key role in our economic recovery and help us build back better," he said.

"Your status may be temporary, but your contributions are lasting — and we want you to stay."

Queen Ends Row Over Royal Outfits For Prince Phillip's Funeral: Report

Agencies

Britain's Queen Elizabeth has stepped in to settle a problem over what senior royals should wear to her husband's funeral, because of concerns about whether Prince Harry and Prince Andrew should wear military uniforms, media reported on Thursday.

Prince Philip died aged 99 last week and his funeral will be held at Windsor Castle on Saturday.

Traditionally at such formal occasions, members of the royal family wear military uniforms, often reflecting honorary titles they hold.

However, according to British newspapers, there have been debates behind the scenes over what the queen's son Andrew



and grandson Harry should wear. Harry, 36, the Duke of Sussex, quit all his royal duties and lost all his military patronages in January after moving to Los

Angeles with wife Meghan and son Archie, but wanted to wear the dress uniform he wore for his wedding day.

Andrew, 61, the Duke of York,

stepped away from official engagements because of his "ill-judged" association with the late disgraced U.S. financier Jeffrey Epstein.

Papers reported that he wished to attend the funeral in the uniform of admiral, a honorary rank he was awarded to mark his 60th birthday but he deferred until his return to public life.

Compounding the issue was the fact that the two royals are the only ones to have seen active service — Harry in Afghanistan and Andrew in the 1982 Falkland Islands conflict.

Buckingham Palace has declined to comment on the reports but according to the Daily Mail, the 94-year-old queen had now decided all royals should wear mourning suits to avoid any embarrassment.

Operation Of Eight Medical Shops Suspended In Kulgam

Licenses Of Two Shops Cancelled

Observer News Service

KULGAM: The Drug Control Organisation Anantnag / Kulgam Thursday ordered the suspension of the operation of eight medical shops across the district for non-maintenance of sales records and unhygienic conditions.

These shops were disallowed under the relevant sections of Drugs & Cosmetic Act by the sleuths of Drug Control Organisation Anantnag-Kulgam during supervisory checks of retail sale outlets of various areas viz. Kund, Oril, Razloo, Nigeen-Pora, Kanchloo, Kraloo, That-hoo, Nagrus, Botengo, Devsar, Shoodevsar, Chowgam, Pahloo, Kilam, Akhran, Kulgam Main Market, Chadder, Frisal, Kader, Quimoh, Khudwani, Yarpipora and other areas.

The licenses of two medical

shops were also cancelled during the drive by these teams and the reason for the suspension ranged from non-maintenance of sales records, impersonation, unhygienic condition and improper storage conditions of medicines.

Meanwhile, the suspended firms were warned to rectify the deficiencies within stipulated period of time. The statutory drug sample of over 18 formulations was lifted randomly.

The aim of the drive was to ensure that the medical stores operate strictly in consonance with the mandate of law and in the best of patient care.

The Assistant Drug Controller informed that the department is going to carry out more similar action in the district in the future to ensure that no firm indulges in any unfair or unethical trade practices.

Police Warn YouTube Channel After 'Encounter Enactment Video'

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: A YouTube channel being operated from Baramulla district was ordered to take down a video enacting a recent encounter.

Quoting a Police statement, Hindustan Times reported that the army and police counselled the channel's administrators, but no action was taken considering their young age. It added "misguided youth and social media influencers" of the channel uploaded the video "replicating/enacting" the gun battle and circulated it on WhatsApp. A senior police officer confirmed that the administrators were asked to delete the video and the incident was also re-

ported to YouTube.

"The incident received quick attention of Baramulla Police and 46 Rashtriya Rifles [of the Army]... the youth involved were identified and caught within no time. The video was deleted immediately from YouTube handle ensuring timely containment of radical thoughts," the statement said.

It cited an investigation and added it came to the light that the YouTube channel has been uploading videos on problems such as drug menace. "The subscribers of their channel were on [the] rise, and in the mad race for more subscription, they uploaded the inappropriate content that could provoke radical ideas."

THE INCIDENT RECEIVED QUICK attention of Baramulla Police and 46 Rashtriya Rifles [of the Army]... the youth involved were identified and caught within no time. The video was deleted immediately from YouTube handle ensuring timely containment of radical thoughts,"

WUCMA's Dredging Work Creating 'Flood-like Situation' In Saderkoot, Residents Protest

Observer News Service

BANDIPORA: The residents of Saderkoot-Payeen area in North Kashmir's Bandipora district on Thursday staged a protest against Wullar Conservation

WE COULDN'T even pray in the mosque this morning. When we went out, there was a flood of water everywhere," Abdul Rahim a local said.

and Management Authority as its dredging project is creating a flood-like situation in the village.

The Wullar Conservation and Management Authority (WUCMA) is conducting dredging operations in the Wullar-Lake for its restoration.

The protesters said that the village is facing a flood-like situation over the past few weeks as the Wullar dredging working agency dumps all the dirt, debris and water in their area

through heavy pipes.

The locals also blamed the WUCMA for the deteriorating environment around the village which is already having a shortage of basic amenities.

"We couldn't even pray in the mosque this morning. When we went out, there was a flood of water everywhere," Abdul Rahim a local said.

"We informed the relevant authorities about this problem several times but in return, we were silenced by threats from them," he said.

Basheer, another local said that he repeatedly told the dredging contractor to relocate the drainage pipes to a non-residential area.

"These pipes are being laid deliberately towards their village which caused flooding in the area," he said.

Locals have appealed to the district and WUCMA authority to relocate the drainage pipes.

Despite repeated attempts, no concerned official could be contacted for the comments regarding the matter—(KNO)

With Spike In Covid Cases DAK Urges Admin To Rope In Private Hospitals

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Doctors Association Kashmir (DAK) Thursday urged the administration to rope in private hospitals to treat corona patients.

In a statement, DAK said it would reduce the burden on government-run hospitals.

"We are back in the eye of the storm, with the second wave of Covid-19 causing surge in cases and hospitalisations too. The virus has once again become dangerous and is behaving aggressively," DAK said.

The statement said today "we have more patients in hospitals than what we saw during the first wave and we are finding it hard to cope with the rush of patients," DAK President said in the statement.

He said hospitals are running full and are at the risk of becoming overwhelmed. Patients are struggling to get a bed in ICU. Even oxygen support beds are occupied and patients have to use cylinders to maintain their oxygen levels.

"We should include private hospitals in the fight against Covid-19," he said.

He said there is an urgent



need for private hospitals to take part in the management of Covid-19 patients. "That would ease the pressure on public hospitals, and would relieve the strained staff," he said.

The DAK president said the number is expected to rise further in coming days as there are still massive number of people in the population who are susceptible to the virus. "Hospitals should prepare for dealing with any eventuality," he said. "Public safety will depend on hospital preparedness."

He said hospitals should have separate negative pres-

sure isolation wards for corona patients, he said. "The negative pressure would prevent contaminated air from escaping the ward. These wards should have dedicated ventilators and HEPA filters that would reduce the risk of transmission of the virus. They should have separate entrance so that infected patients don't risk other patients and staff in the hospital."

"In order to ensure safe environment for patients, hospitals should adopt strict infection prevention and control measures and vaccination to staff," said the President.

WE ARE BACK IN THE EYE OF THE STORM, WITH THE SECOND wave of Covid-19 causing surge in cases and hospitalisations too. The virus has once again become dangerous and is behaving aggressively," DAK said.

Public Service Departments Should Focus On Efficient Services: Adv Bhatnagar



Observer News Service

JAMMU: Advisor to Lieutenant Governor, Rajeev Rai Bhatnagar Thursday chaired a meeting to review the Summer preparedness of Jal Shakti Department for Jammu division at Civil Secretariat.

The Advisor took detailed review of the department focusing on water supply scenario during the upcoming summer season as well as monsoon season besides in depth discussion was held on the Action Taken Reports of previously held meetings on the same matter.

Highlighting that the Lieutenant Governor is particular about delivery of services to the public, the Advisor stressed upon the officers that efficient services to the public should be resolved of public service departments on the ground.

He impressed upon them to focus on delivery, outcome and grievances redressal system so that people do not face any kind of inconvenience.

Speaking during the meet-

ing, Advisor Bhatnagar emphasised upon the officers to provide uninterrupted water supply to the people besides making all possible arrangements to provide extra drinking water supply to the consumers during the critical times of COVID-19.

He called upon the officials to increase their visibility on ground and take proactive initiatives during the pandemic besides having a 24/7 complaint redressal mechanism to address the problems of general public.

Advisor Bhatnagar impressed upon the officials to reduce time taken for restoration of supply, close monitoring of complaints received on Helpline numbers, keeping reserve stock of critical components, making workshops functional, improving quality of water supplies and addressing issues of sedimentation. He also delved upon the officers to ensure that tankers are effectively used to fill gaps of increasing drinking water supply

demand.

Highlighting the need of extra water supply during peak summer season, the Advisor directed the department to put in place a mechanism by which adequate supply of potable water is provided to the consumers in the areas, which record increase in demand in the summers.

He asked them to chart out provision for hiring of tankers to deal with any kind of eventuality during the peak summer season.

Advisor Bhatnagar impressed upon the officers that there should be visible improvement in the plan of execution of various activities as compared to last year. He asked them that machinery and other necessary equipments should be maintained and serviced well in advance for effective use.

He also directed the concerned Superintending Engineers to sent monthly progress reports regarding execution of different works.

Covid: Eight Baramulla Villages Declared Micro Containment Zones

Observer News Service

BARAMULLA: At least eight villages in north Kashmir's Baramulla district Thursday were declared as 'Micro Containment Zones' to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, the officials said.

The villages designated as 'Micro Containment Zones' include Khawaja Bagh lower petrol pump to jetty road, Chak Kanispora, Sangri colony, Kanli Bagh, Dewan Bagh, Delina (Qazi-Mohalla) Rawatpora, Delina ghat, Milat colony, Sherwani Colony and Lone-Mohalla Farozpora.

An order issued by Deputy Commissioner Baramulla in this regard, reads that whereas, in view of emerging situation due to COVID, the state Executive Committee of Department of Disaster Management, Relief Rehabilitation & Reconstruction vide Government Order No 11-JK (DMRRR) of 2021 dated 30/3/2021, has empowered the District Magistrate to take local preventive measures for checking spurt in infections.

It reads, "whereas, it has been to appear to me, in view of the situation emerging due to COVID-19 in locations mentioned below in District Baramulla, that there is sufficient ground for proceeding under section 144 of CrPC for immediate prevention and speedy remedy is desirable to prevent danger of human life, health or safety."

The other further reads, "Now, therefore, I, Bhupinder Kumar, IAS, District Magistrate, Baramulla hereby order that the above mentioned location shall be Micro Containment zones and the following restrictions shall be in place with immediate effect and

till further orders."

It said that the above mentioned areas shall be under strict lock down and tight perimeter control, except for essential needs. There shall be no movement, whatsoever, in and out of the Micro Containment Zone except essential services and medical emergency for any medical emergency, individual can contact 24x7 control room at 01952-22343, 7006493646 and necessary facilitation shall be done.

The order further stated that it shall be mandatory for the person's residing in designated Containment Zones to get themselves tested and any refusal in this regard shall invite action including lodging of FIR under relevant provisions of Disaster Management Act. Duty Magistrate, BMO and SHO concerned of the area shall ensure that 100% sampling and testing is done.

It added that it is further ordered that: "Tehsildar concerned shall be the overall in-charge for enforcing of Micro Containment SOPs in the notified zones. He shall also deploy a Duty Magistrate, Administrator and Nodal officer for each containment zone.

That the BMO concerned shall ensure deployment of sufficient teams for sampling and surveillance of the designated MCZs.

"Since, it is not possible to serve prior notice of this order, it is as such being issued ex-parte.

Any violation of this order shall invite punitive action under section 188 of Indian Penal Code and other relevant sections of Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897 and the Disaster Management Act, 2005," it reads—(KNO)

Erring Traders Fined In Ganderbal

Observer News Service

GANDERBAL: The Additional Deputy Commissioner (Adjudicating Officer) Ganderbal, Farooq Ahmad Baba today imposed a fine of Rs 11000 on various food outlet owners, shopkeepers, traders and wholesale dealers for violating various provisions of Food Safety & Standards Act in the district.

The fine was imposed on the erring traders, during the proceeding of cases of various blocks of district Ganderbal related to the food safety and standards, listed before the adjudicating officer.

He also warned them to abide by the legal regulations adding that non-compliance of FS&SA and rules thereunder by the food business operators of the district will be dealt more strictly in coming time.

CUK's DSW Holds Extension Lecture On Tegh Bahadur

Observer News Service

GANDERBAL: Directorate of Students Welfare (DSW), Central University of Kashmir (CUK) Thursday organised an extension lecture on Tegh Bahadur on the commemoration of his

and teachings of the Guru. He pointed out that the Guru dedicated his whole life for spreading the message of Guru Nanak. His works included in the Guru Granth Sahib, covers a wide range of topics such as Nature of God, Human Attachments, Body



400th Birth Anniversary, to highlight the teachings, values and principles of the Guru.

Vice Chancellor, Prof. Mehraj ud Din Mir, was the Chief Guest on the occasion.

Dr. Somanpreet, Assistant Professor, Department of Physical Education, presented an extensive discourse about the life

, Mind, Sorrow, Dignity, Service, Death, and deliverance.

Vice Chancellor, Prof. Mehraj ud Din Mir in his speech described Tegh Bahadur as a great Guru who dedicated his life for the cause of Truth and Humanity.

Director DSW, Prof. Mehraj ud Din Shah was also present during the lecture.

NEWS MAKERS

J&K Bank Financial Services Opens Branch In Anantnag

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Expanding its network in the region to facilitate investment services to the people, J&K Bank Financial Services Limited (JKBFSL) - a wholly owned subsidiary of J&K Bank - today opened a branch at Cluster Office, Cluster I Anantnag.

Speaking on the occasion, Executive President Sunil Gupta said, "The purpose of having a company like FSL is more focused on meeting our social obligation of providing ease of access to whole array of financial products and services to the people of JK and Ladakh. Considering the deep penetration of J&K Bank branches in JK and Ladakh, it is our endeavour to use the network and make these services accessible to the people across the two UTs."

"It is very heartening to see Anantnag Branch formally inaugurated as part of the expanding avenues of investment facilities for people of the region in general and our customers in particular. It is also an indicator of the success of JKB



FSL that has reworked its business model and aligned it completely with customer expectations. There are many more such branches in the pipeline," he added.

While addressing the participants he further said, "I would like to advise you to make best use of the services being rendered by JKBFSL so that you plan your investments well for better returns. The branch heads, I am sure would sensitize their customers well and make them aware about the services of JKBFSL and help them make prudent investment decisions. It is our collective responsibility to use JKBFSL services to reinforce the trust of our customers in brand JKB."

In his remarks, Zonal Head said that he was very happy that JKBFSL Anantnag would provide customers of the zone easy access to the financial services products.

"With changing times the expectations of the customers are changing. We have a relationship based business model which is our USP. However, the young generation is tech savvy and does not believe that much in relationships but they demand quality services through mobile apps. I am sure JKBFSL would put in all their efforts to meet customer expectations. The market here is quite huge and so is the busi-

ness potential for the products offered by JKBFSL. I am sure the team is capable enough and would strive hard to tap that potential," he said.

Expressing his views MD JKB FSL said "Anantnag Branch gives Financial Services access to the people of South Kashmir. We are committed to expand our branch network to all district headquarters of JK and Ladakh in next few months besides enabling ease of access to these services across all J&K Bank branches"

Notably, the JKBFSL is a wholly owned subsidiary of J&K Bank to function as a financial intermediary for providing investment services other than banking to its' customers. Regulated by SEBI, the Company is registered with NSE and BSE as a Stock Broker and Self-Clearing Member and with Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI) for distribution of Mutual Fund products. It has also special desks for the service spread across 53 prominent branches of J&K Bank.

DC Baramulla Allots Land For Construction Of ARTO Office At Sopore

Observer News Service

BARAMULLA: District Administration Baramulla Thursday allotted land for the construction of ARTO office at Sopore.

Officials said that after a long wait Deputy Commissioner Baramulla Bupinder Kumar allotted four kanals of State Land Under Survey No 1863 to Transport Department for Construction of ARTO office at Seerjagir (Tulibal) Sopore. Meanwhile, after identification of the land the revenue papers were prepared by Tehsildar Sopore and were also vetted by ARTO Sopore. According to Order No DCB/SQ/TRF/247-53 issued by Deputy Commissioner Baramulla in Exercise of Powers vested to Deputy Commissioner the State Land identified by Tehsildar Sopore is hereby Transferred to Transport department Baramulla (ARTO) for Construction of ARTO office. (CNS)

Absconder Arrested After 8 Months

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Police in Kulgam Thursday arrested an absconder who was evading his arrest for the last eight months for his involvement in many cases of drug peddling.

A police spokesperson said that acting on information regarding an absconder, a Police party headed by SHO PS Qazigund under the supervision of SDPO Qazigund raided a location and subsequently arrested the absconder from Qazigund area. He has been identified as Zahoor Ahmad Sheikh son of Muhammad Jamal Sheikh, a resident of Drian Qazigund.

"He was wanted by law for his involvement in case FIR number 251/2020 U/S 15, 18 NDPS Act & 48 Excise Act of PS Qazigund pertaining to the recovery of huge quantity of Illicit Liquor, Charas and Poppy Straw from a hotel at Drian crossing. Five other drug peddlers arrested in the said case are already facing trial before the Court. Further investigation is in progress."

KASHMIR
OBSERVER

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Legal Counsel: Tasaduq Khwaja

Switchboard: (0194) 2106304

Editorial: (0194) 2502327

Email editorial: editor@kashmirobserver.net

K O V I E W

Afghan endgame

The United States President Joe Biden on Wednesday announced that all American troops would be withdrawn from Afghanistan by September 11 this year, thus bringing to end America's longest war, spanning two decades. The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation which has aided US war effort is also pulling out its troops from Afghanistan.

The US decision to withdraw comes in the wake of a deal with Taliban in Doha on February 29, 2020. Under the pact, the U.S. agreed to withdraw all its soldiers from Afghanistan in 14 months. Now, the deadline to do so has been extended by a few months more.

Biden has asked the countries neighbouring Afghanistan, "especially Pakistan", to play supportive roles. He also sought cooperation from Russia, China, India and Turkey but conspicuously omitted mention of Iran. Around 2,400 US soldiers have lost their lives in the war, along with tens of thousands of Afghan troops, Taliban militants and Afghan civilians.

However, as underlined by Biden himself, eventually the peace and stability in Afghanistan will have to be the responsibility of the regional powers. And it is unlikely to happen if the regional powers pursue their disparate interests in the war-torn country. The US will also need to make some subtle adjustment in its Afghanistan policy to make it work in the long term. In its current form, the policy almost entirely neglects the regional geo-politics, prevailing issues and the contending interests of the neighbouring countries like India and Pakistan which also keep the conflict going in Kabul. So rather than an exclusively Afghanistan-centric policy, US also needs a broader regional approach to work for an integrated solution to the conflicts and the competing interests that in turn fuel the war.

The conflict in Afghanistan is now so much enmeshed with the regional rivalries and the issues that it appears improbable that there would be long term stability in Kabul unless steps are taken to get the regional countries co-operate to end the forty year long bloodshed in the country. The deeply challenging project of a peaceful Afghanistan, therefore, demands a broader regional cooperation, more so, between India and Pakistan. It is only to be hoped that New Delhi and Islamabad realizing the momentous changes sweeping through region will co-operate to not only steer the region through the fraught transition of a post-US Afghanistan but also take concrete steps to address their lingering differences which alone will be the guarantee for a sustainably peaceful South Asia and the broader region. It is here that a renewed engagement between the two neighbours offers some promise. Here's hoping that it lasts.

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

Crack the Virus

On Tuesday, the Pune-based National Institute of Virology shared a significant piece of information on the recent surge of the coronavirus in Maharashtra. Sixty-one per cent of the COVID-19 samples, collected from the state by the premier virology institute between January and March had the double mutation, now classified as the B.1.617 lineage.

Mutation is quintessential to viruses. Such changes in the pathogen can be inconsequential, deadly or even beneficial. Genome sequencing can help us understand how fast the virus will spread and how lethal it could turn out to be. Even if a mutant is not more virulent, it could be more infectious and that could put pressure on an area's health infrastructure. We know, for example, that healthcare facilities in most of the COVID hotspots in the country, including Maharashtra, are badly stretched. It also seems that the infection is spreading faster than last year. But we need to track the virus's genome sequence to understand if this is because the pathogen turned more infectious. Hospital-level analyses can help ascertain if the mutant is deadlier or more debilitating than the virus's original avatar.

It's now apparent that getting the better of the coronavirus will require multiple strategies. Inoculation, of course, remains the best bet against the scourge. Studies indicating that the South African variant can evade vaccines do point to a new challenge. Vaccine developers have reported early signs of success in plugging this gap. Also, a negligible number of people in India have, so far, been infected by this mutant. The potency of the vaccines currently in use in the country against B.1.617 is another cause of assurance. Even then, the need to be vigilant cannot be overstated. There can, therefore, be no compromise on COVID-appropriate behaviour.

The Indian Express



Feature image credits: Tauseef Mustafa / AFP

In Medias Res

Deadly Tourism

TOOBA TOWFIQ

Even following SOPs are only individual efforts which will ultimately prove wanting in the absence of systematic measures by the administration. The government needs to evaluate if it can risk the lives of Kashmiris as well as the tourists in the absence of ensuring access to health care for all

Jammu and Kashmir has witnessed an unprecedented spike in Covid-19 cases since the past two weeks.

Yesterday, the Union territory recorded a total of 1086 cases and 5 Covid-19 related deaths. Of all the districts in the region, Srinagar has had the highest number of cases and is also the district that hosts tourists as they arrive.

The rising covid-19 cases has a contender in numbers—the rising number of tourists that have arrived in Kashmir since the abrogation of Article 370. Kashmir has hosted about 1 Lakh tourists since December alone. What has given a tough time to covid-19 in making the news is the "news-worthy" arrival of popular faces from the Indian entertainment industry. Additionally, tulips are being touted as the panacea to the pandemic. In only the first week after being opened to the public, Kashmir's tulip garden hosted over 50,000 visitors.

Additionally, mega events are being organised even as Kashmir is at war with the second wave. These events have interestingly invited criticism especially the infamous fashion show that was recently organised in SKICC. People on each side of the debate are busy weighing the merits and demerits of this enterprise without sparing a thought at the sheer grotesqueness of having organised such avoidable indulgences. Schools have been closed down in Kashmir which undoubtedly is a more pressing institution than recreation, tourism and entertainment.

The contradiction in tourism and avoidable events still having the green signal from the adminis-

tration is quite disappointing. But it isn't perplexing.

Tourism as an industry isn't merely relevant because of its economics. Its reputation is as dark as history. Through awareness of these residues of reputations, many in Kashmir are of the opinion that the administrative sanction to tourism may be an exercise in showcasing a promising picture post the Abrogation of Article 370 in 2019. "Normalcy" is a word that is relevant in this context as it has evolved in Kashmir to mean only a semblance or even a facade of the situation being normal.

Therefore, once again, the dig-

provide them safety? What infrastructural preparations has the administration made to ensure that locals don't face the brunt of such laxity?

As far as the economic underpinnings of tourism are concerned, the government has to find a sustainable way to strike a balance between the dignity of life and the necessity of livelihood. Countries around the world have hosted people only after they've cleared strict medical scrutiny. We need similar strict measures in Jammu and Kashmir to ensure that we avoid more infections at all costs. The number of tourists

Our hospitals are already running on full capacity and our health infrastructure is poor. Can a place like Kashmir then be fit enough to host tourists and provide them safety? What infrastructural preparations has the administration made to ensure that locals don't face the brunt of such laxity?

nity of life has taken a backseat in Kashmir. What is unfortunate is that no concern is being shown by the administration towards the lives of the tourists as well; many of whom have even succumbed in Kashmir after contracting covid-19.

The government is perfectly aware of the limitations of the health care infrastructure in Kashmir. Our hospitals are already running on full capacity and our health infrastructure is poor. Can a place like Kashmir then be fit enough to host tourists and

that arrive must be regulated. Perhaps, mandatory institutional quarantine upon arrival needs to be reinstated as well. Additionally, tourist places as well as high-risk public places must also be monitored and only a certain number of people must be allowed at one time. Local crowds in public places need to be regulated as well. In case the cases increase further, the government must think of strategic lockdowns.

However, the road ahead isn't the one where poorly planned bans and lockdowns are hurled at people who would be at the risk of losing livelihood. Neither is stigmatising tourists the way out of the issue. Even following SOPs are only individual efforts which will ultimately prove wanting in the absence of systematic measures by the administration. The government needs to evaluate if it can risk the lives of Kashmiris as well as the tourists in the absence of ensuring access to health care for all. It also needs to proactively regulate the industry and leave no scope for complacency at any stage. This urgency is cardinal and overlooking it is likely going to prove deadly.

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

The author is the Opinion Editor at Kashmir Observer



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FRA Benefits to Deserving

This is in reference to a write-up titled "Public Hearings on Forest Rights Act Implementation" by Dr Raja Muzaffar Bhat (Kashmir Observer 9th April). Public hearings are part of many Govt sponsored schemes. In MG-NGREGA also there is an inbuilt mechanism of social audit which can be compared with public hearing.

But how many social audits have been held in villages to see the implementation of MG-NGREGA in J&K? Rolling out Forest Rights Act is a welcome step but its benefits should only go to those gujjars and forest dwellers who live in the forest areas for the last many decades and are not into Govt jobs. I have observed that many Gujjars are well settled in Jam-

mu and Srinagar and now they may claim to get rights under FRA which should not happen. These influential people will try to grab land in their ancestral villages which should not be allowed at all. The rights under FRA should be given to poor and economically weaker sections of society only. Media has to play an important role to expose any such wrongdoings

with regard to FRA implementation. I appreciate Kashmir Observer for highlighting these public interest issues which otherwise are not highlighted by mainstream media.

Sajad Hussain Mir
sajad.journalist1@gmail.com

Fasting and Health in Ramadan

AEJAZ IQBAL

Islamic fasting is different from these diet plans because in Ramadan fasting, there is no malnutrition or inadequate calorie intake. The calorie intake of Muslims during Ramadan is typically at or slightly below the nutritional requirement guidelines. In addition, the fasting in Ramadan is voluntarily taken and is not a prescribed imposition from the physician

Ramadan is a month of self-regulation and self-training. Muslims fast in accordance with our religious requirements, but there are medical benefits as well. Generally, fasting has been used by patients for weight management, to rest the digestive tract, and for lowering lipids. There can be adverse effects of both total fasting and crash diets.

Islamic fasting is different from these diet plans because in Ramadan fasting, there is no malnutrition or inadequate calorie intake. The calorie intake of Muslims during Ramadan is typically at or slightly below the nutritional requirement guidelines. In addition, the fasting in Ramadan is voluntarily taken and is not a prescribed imposition from the physician. And there is hope that this training will last beyond the end of Ramadan.

The difference between Ramadan and total fasting is the timing of the food; during Ramadan, we take an early pre-dawn breakfast and do not eat until dusk. The fast is from both food and liquid intake. Abstinence from water for eight to 10 hours is not necessarily bad for health. In fact, it causes concentration of all fluids within the body, producing slight dehydration. The body has its own water conservation mechanism. It has even been shown that slight dehydration and water conservation, at least in plant life, improve their longevity.

The physiological effect of fasting includes lowering of blood sugar, lowering of cholesterol, and lowering of the systolic blood pressure. In fact, Ramadan fasting could be an ideal recommendation for the treatment of mild to moderate, stable, non-insulin diabetes, obesity, and essential hypertension. It is important to note that patients who are suffering from severe diseases, such as Diabetes or coronary artery disease, kidney stones are exempt from fasting and should not be allowed to fast.

There are psychological effects of fasting as well. There is a peace and tranquility for those who fast during the month of Ramadan. Personal hostility is at a minimum, and in areas of the world where Muslims are living in large numbers, the crime rate decreases. This psychological improvement could be related to



better stabilization of blood glucose while fasting; hypoglycemia after eating can aggravate behavior changes.

There is a spiritual beneficial effect of extra prayer at night. This not only helps with better utilization of food, but also helps in energy output. It has been calculated that there are 10 extra calories output for each unit of the prayer. This would particularly be connected to the extra prayers that are performed during the last 10 nights of Ramadan, when the believer is seeking the night of power, when worship during this night is said to be worth a thousand months.

It is important to emphasize that Muslims are not performing prayers for exercise, but a mild movement of the joints with extra calorie utilization can be a better form of exercise. Similarly, recitation of the Quran not only produces a tranquility of heart and mind, but it has also been shown to improve memory. Fasting is a special act of worship which

is ultimately between the believer and the Creator Himself, as no one else knows for sure if this person is actually fasting. In a hadith of the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Allah says, "Fasting is for Me and I only will reward it." In another hadith, the Prophet reminds us, "If one does not give up falsehoods in words and actions, Allah has no need of him giving up food and drink."

Fasting not only purifies a Muslim's soul but also his body. Fasting helps reduce weight and rejuvenate the body as food consumption is modified and the body gets a chance to cleanse itself of unwanted impurities and toxins.

Ramadan brings with itself countless blessings and benefits. Observe fasting in Ramadan to be rewarded in this world and the Hereafter.

The author is a Microbiologist and can be reached at ajazsmile@gmail.com

Navigating Grief During Ramadan

ZIMARINA SARWAR

One of the most bewildering aspects of navigating grief is how unaffected the rest of the world seems to be by your anguish. Despite the void you are struggling to cope with, the sun still rises each day, the night still falls, and others around you slot back into the routine of the day. The pace of living continues seemingly indifferent to the intense pain within you.

The rhythmic cycles of the world do not stop for anyone or anything, so you deal with loss by carrying it through both the literal and metaphorical seasons of life. Some of these seasons, however, provide windows of opportunity to nurse your grief, and Ramadan is a particularly opportune one in this regard.

When your soul is already worn down with the unspeakable pain of loss, Ramadan provides a doorway to sit with your heartache within a valley of intense Divine Mercy.

This month is all about stripping away the noise, distractions, and mental debris that collect within us, and returning to a primordial – yet vulnerable – state. During Ramadan, we are more cognizant of our own mortality, and somewhat strangely, more comfortable with it too. Experiencing the loss of loved ones powerfully reminds us of the reality of death in a way that reading hundreds of books on the subject never could.

When you witness the departure of someone you love, the transition to the Hereafter instantly feels closer, more immediate, and more possible for you.

You wonder what they saw, what they experienced, in what form the Angel of Death came to them, and more. You think of the actual moments of their death – perhaps you were present – and how you shared the room with the Angel of Death. He carried out his service at an appointed time as commanded per Divine Instruction. Unsettlingly, you reflect about how he also has an appointment booked with you, too – something we may be more keenly aware of as the Fasting of Ramadan awakens us to our limitations.

For all the bravado, energy, and boldness of our day-to-day life outside the month, Ramadan shows us what we are reduced to when we go a portion of our day without food and drink. This vulnerability in the human condition laid bare is universal, as no human being can sustain their own mortal shell and must rely on external provision to survive. The humility this should inculcate within us averts our focus back to the One who continually provides for us each and



When your soul is already worn down with the unspeakable pain of loss, Ramadan provides a doorway to sit with your heartache within a valley of intense Divine Mercy

every moment of our conscious and unconscious existence.

For the grieving person, Ramadan allows the pain of loss to meet with heightened spiritual introspection, culminating in a bittersweet experience.

It is a moment where one is granted the mental and spiritual space to sit with one's loss to try and place it within the divine order of life. Ramadan provides a vehicle to load up with the heaviness of your heart and set out on a journey to reach Allah. The pain you feel may now be a permanent fixture of your internal landscape, even if time might dull some aspects of it. The loss may forever define you and there is no escaping this reality. What you do have control over, however, is what you use that pain as a conduit for and where you allow it to take you.

There are unique opportunities to channel the transformative experience of loss and use it as a catalyst to invite the abundant blessings of this month:

Engage in conscious dua

Dua is an especially intimate act when performed with presence of heart and stillness. It is unlikely that there is any other human being who fully appreciates what your loss means to you, and certainly no one who wields the power to relieve its pain. Therefore, articulating the state of your heart to Allah is not only the most rational thing to do, but also a matter of your heart's survival. In the act of actually verbalising how you feel and asking for relief – and for strength and the ability to bear your circumstances – you have already secured Divine care for your soul.

Set aside specific times when you commit to raising your hands and speaking to Allah about your pain in a state of absolute vulnerability.

Ramadan is replete in Divine Mercy that descends at this time including the specific times when we know supplications are more likely to be accepted such as the time of breaking the fast, the last third of the night, and an hour between A r and Maghribon Jumu ah.

When you ask, ask big. Ask not only for a reunion with your loved ones who have passed in the best of places, but ask for eyes and a heart that can see His Mercy in all things.

Ask for His Blessings to pour into your own life as a result of patiently bearing the

trial you are in. There is nothing too big to be asked of Allah, so think big and ask with determination and certitude. Allah is shy to return the hands of His supplicating slave empty, so when you do raise them, have certainty that He will fill them with an abundance of Divine Provision.

Give sadaqah jariyah for their sake

The connection between you and the one you have lost does not end with the end of their worldly life. They have merely passed through one stage in a longer journey, and you still have the ability to benefit them despite their having passed on.

On the authority of Ab Hurairah (ra iy All hu anhu), the Messenger of Allah (sall All hu alayhi wa sallam) said, "When a person dies, his deeds come to an end except for three: sadaqah jariyah (a continuous charity), knowledge from which benefit is gained, or a righteous child who prays for him". [1]

We have been given the tools to transcend the boundaries between this life and the next through ongoing charity that can bring relief and reward even after death. Your sadaqah jariyah does not necessarily require a huge financial investment, only a

firm intention and active effort. From digging a well for thirsty people to supporting the education of children in impoverished communities, Ramadan presents not only the opportunity to attain further rewards for normally multiplied good deeds like charity, but there is also the increased generosity of fellow Muslims during this month to take advantage of.

Sadaqah jariyah gives you a practical, active, and pragmatic means to put into motion a blessed legacy for your loved one. It is one that you both will find delight in as you witness the abundance of ongoing reward when you finally meet again in the Hereafter.

Instil active gratitude for what remains

Gratitude is not only about looking back, but also about taking stock of life now including the people you are still blessed to have. The time we have with one another and our families is limited, and so we should see this narrowing window of time for the immense blessing that it is. Losing someone you love forces you to see time like a clock running down with each passing day. One day you may look back on your life now and consider it the best time of your life, so actively look for the blessings that remain and truly enjoy and experience them with a sense of active gratitude. Tell the people you are sharing Ramadan with that you are grateful to have them in your life. Say the things people need to hear, but so often don't. Make what remains meaningful and fill it with love and presence. You will never look back and regret strengthening your closest relationships, so use this month of heightened awareness to increase in gratitude for the blessings we so often take for granted.

This year, take Ramadan and use it as a balm to soothe the anguish you carry.

As the loss of your loved one has already shown you the fleeting nature of this world, take that knowledge and combine it with recognition that this month contains great opportunities to exercise gratitude and draw nearer to Allah.

Like everything in life, this Ramadan will come and go with startling speed. So, strive to extract every drop of nourishing mercy you can from the heavy clouds of Divine relief this month. The pain of loss you carry now may well be what earns you entry into His Everlasting Mercy, where there will be no such thing as pain or separation ever again

'Social Isolation May Reduce Face Recognition Ability'

Agencies

A solitary lifestyle can have profound effects on the brains' abilities to recognise faces, finds a study on wasps with implications on humans facing social isolation due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Paper wasps -- a social insect -- recognises the brightly coloured faces of other paper wasps. But, when reared in isolation, they tend to lose the ability, according to researchers from Cornell University in New York, US. The wasps' ability to remember faces is similar to primates and humans, but unlike other social insects, they noted.

The findings, published in the journal *Biology Letters*, revealed that when adult wasps are housed in solitude, visual areas of their brains -- especially



those involved with identifying nuanced colour patterns and shapes -- are smaller and less developed than their peers who lived with other wasps.

"The wasps provide us with a simple insect brain that offers a system for understanding the basic constructs of how neural circuits work and how social interactions shaped the brain," said Michael Sheehan, Assistant professor at the varsity's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

"To my knowledge, this is the first empirical study to propose a candidate brain region in an insect that is involved with individual identity processing," said Christopher Jernigan, a postdoctoral researcher in Sheehan's lab.

The study has implications on human patients forced to isolate themselves from family and friends due to the coronavirus pandemic, which has so far infected 138 million people and claimed 2.97 million lives globally.

Study discusses impact of chemotherapy on immune cells

Agencies

The findings of recent research from Queen Mary University of London revealed novel insights into the effects of chemotherapy on the tumour microenvironment (TME).

The study, published today in *Cancer Immunology Research*, a journal of the American Association for Cancer Research, found that chemotherapy enhances the anti-tumour actions of immune cells within the TME and their ability to support immune responses against cancer.

Cancers are not just a mass of cancerous cells but are rogue organs made up of many different cell types, including cells that form connective tissue and blood vessels, and immune cells. These non-cancerous cells have been recruited and corrupted by cancer to help it grow and spread, and constitute what is known as the TME.

When treating cancer cells with chemotherapy, the cells within the TME are also impacted and previous research has shown that chemotherapy may activate immune cells within the TME to fight against cancer. In this study, the team, led by Professor Fran Balkwill, investigated the effects of chemotherapy on immune cells called macrophages, which are associated with poor survival across a variety of cancer types. The study focused on high-grade serous ovarian cancer (HGSOC) - the most common type of ovarian cancer.

Chemotherapy switches immune cells to anti-tumour mode

By comparing biopsy samples taken from the omentum (most common site of cancer spread in HGSOC) of 26 patients prior to and after chemotherapy,

the team found a significant reduction in the number of macrophages present in the tissues following treatment. Further investigations in samples from other HGSOC patients revealed that chemotherapy switched the remaining macrophages from a pro-tumour to an anti-tumour mode, which may stimulate the patient's immune response against cancer.

The effects of chemotherapy on macrophages ob-



served in patient samples were also seen in preclinical mouse models of HGSOC previously developed by the team, which recapitulate many aspects of the human omental TME.

As macrophages are associated with poor survival in cancer, the team took their research a step further to determine whether eliminating all macrophages from the TME after chemotherapy could prolong disease-free survival in the preclinical mouse models. To their

surprise, removing all macrophages shortly after the completion of chemotherapy caused the mice to relapse quicker. Following three doses of chemotherapy, the macrophages had switched to an anti-tumour mode, and so eliminating the macrophages from the TME actually inhibited the immune response against the tumour and resulted in poorer survival outcomes.

The research was funded by Cancer Research UK, the Wellcome Trust, and Wellbeing of Women.

Implications for ovarian cancer treatment

Chemotherapy and surgery are currently the main treatment options for patients with ovarian cancer. Despite chemotherapy working well initially, many patients experience relapse due to the development of resistance against these drugs.

Professor Balkwill from the Queen Mary University of London said: "This study enhances our understanding of the impact of chemotherapy on macrophages and other aspects of the immune response. As our work was driven by results first obtained in patient samples and we were able to replicate the findings in our mouse models, we could investigate hypotheses and obtain data that have translational significance.

"We now have effective preclinical models of treatment and relapse that can be used to help identify treatments that build upon the tentative immune response triggered by chemotherapy."

Ultimately, the team hopes that their models could help to identify new drug combinations that harness the initial immune-boosting effects of chemotherapy to reduce the number of required chemotherapy doses, minimise toxic side effects and improve survival for patients with ovarian cancer.

Study reveals glaucoma may be more than eye pressure issue

Agencies

A new study conducted in rats shows that chemical known to protect nerve cells also slows glaucoma, the leading cause of irreversible blindness.

Led by researchers at NYU Grossman School of Medicine, the study centers on the watery fluid inside the eye on which its function depends. Fluid pressure can build up in patients with glaucoma, wearing down cells in the eye and the nerves connecting them to the brain, researchers said.

However, past studies have shown the condition to continue to worsen even after eye pressure has been controlled. The connection between pressure buildup and impaired vision remains poorly understood.

Published in *Neurotherapeutics*, the new study showed that ingesting the compound citicoline restored optic nerve (neural) signals between the brain and eye to near-normal levels in the study rats. Naturally produced in the brain but also available commercially, citicoline is a major source of choline, a building block in the membranes that line nerve cells and enhance nerve cell communication.



While the study results confirmed past findings that elevated eye pressure contributes to nerve damage in glaucoma, it also showed that citicoline reduced vision loss in rats without reducing fluid pressure in the eye.

"Our study suggests that citicoline protects against glaucoma through a mechanism different from that of standard treatments that reduce fluid pressure," said senior study author Kevin Chan, PhD, an assistant professor in the Department of Ophthalmology at NYU Langone Health. "Since glaucoma interrupts the connection between the brain and eye, we hope to strengthen it with new types of therapies."

According to the National Glaucoma Foundation, over 3 million Americans have glaucoma, but only half know they actually have it. In the US, more than 120,000 individuals are blind from the disease. In addition, the World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that over 60 million individuals suffer from glaucoma worldwide.

The findings are helping scientists better understand how glaucoma works and add to past evidence that citicoline may counter the disease, said Chan, also the director of the Neuroimaging and Visual Science Laboratory at NYU Langone. Previous studies had shown that humans and rodents with glaucoma have lower than normal levels of choline in the brain. Until now, Chan said, there has been little concrete evidence of the effectiveness of choline supplements as a therapy for glaucoma or why choline occurs in lower levels in glaucoma patients.

Chan and his team tested whether increasing levels of that chemical would slow or even stop the degradation of the optic nerve and other regions of the brain involved in vision. Using a comprehensive study of the eye-brain connection in glaucoma, his team found that giving rats oral doses of citicoline over a three-week period protected nerve tissues and reduced vision loss sustainably even after the treatment stopped for another three weeks.

Govt. of Jammu and Kashmir

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER SUBTRANSMISSION DIVISION BIJBEHARA KPDC

Tel No: - 09132-233002 Fax No: - 09132-234397
xensstb@bijbehara@gmail.com

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

e-NIT/NO. STB/03 of 2021-22 ; Dated: 12-04-2021

For and on behalf of the Lt Governor, Jammu and Kashmir State, e-Tenders are hereby invited from "A" Class Electrical Contractors issued by the Electrical Inspectorate of Govt of Central Inspectorial organization of Govt. of India/ other state Govt. In case bid submitted joint venture firm, any of partner should possess "A" class electrical license for Stage Contract for Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of Key materials required for maintenance of 33/11KV receiving stations along with their Lines under the jurisdiction of STD Bijbehara during the year 2021-22 as per terms, conditions, technical specifications and schedules forming part of this tender document. Intending bidders are requested to submit their offer along with terms, conditions, technical specifications and annexure forming part of this tender document. The details are as under:

S #	Description	EMD Rs in lacs	Cost of Document in Rs.	Last date for submission of e-Bid
1	Stage Contract for Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of Key materials required for maintenance of 33/11KV receiving stations along with their Lines under the jurisdiction of STD Bijbehara during the year 2021-22.	0.50	1000.00	3 rd May 2021; 1400 Hours

The tender document is available at website <http://jktenders.gov.in>. Interested bidders may view, download the e-Bid document, seek clarification and submit their e-Bid online up to the date and time mentioned in the table below.

A	Date & Time of downloading of Standard Bidding Document	The Standard Bidding Document can be downloaded over http://jktenders.gov.in from 12-04-2021; 16:00 Hour
B	Clarifications start date	12-04-2021; 16:00 Hours
C	Clarifications end date	17-04-2021; 16:00 Hours
D	Pre Bid Conference Date & Venue	15-04-2021 in The Office of Ex Engg STD Bijbehara at 1400 Hours
E	e-Bid submission (start) date & time (Submission of e-tender fee, EMD in pdf)	17-04-2021; 16:00 Hours
F	e-Bid submission (end) date & time	03-05-2021; 14:00 Hours
G	Online Commercial and Technical e-Bid opening date & Time	04-05-2021; 14:00 Hours
H	Online financial e-Bid opening date & time (Only of the technically qualified bidders)	Will be communicated to the Technically Qualified Bidders
I	Venue of opening of technical & financial e-Bids	Office of Ex Engineer STD Bijbehara
J	Cost of e-Bid document (Bid Processing Fees)	INR 1000.00 (Rupees One Thousand Only)
K	Amount of Earnest Money Deposit	INR 0.50 Lacs (Rupees Fifty Thousand Only)

2. There is no need of furnishing of hard copies of bids after submission of e-tenders. The same should be obtained only from the bidder who is declared as LI after opening of financial bid as per the instructions of Finance Department issued vide O.M No. A/24(2017)-65; Dated: 07-06-2018

3. All the e-Bids must be accompanied by the scanned copy of cost of tender document. The cost of tender document should be paid through e-challan/treasury challan /receipt.

4. All the e-Bids must be accompanied by the scanned copy of EMD in the form of CDR/FDR/Bank Guarantee only, pledged to the Executive Engineer Subtransmission Division Bijbehara. No Interest would be payable on Earnest Money deposited with the Department. However the bidder who is declared LI after opening of financial bid has to submit the original EMD to the office of the Executive Engineer Subtransmission Division Bijbehara through speed post, Courier or by hand.

The e-Bids will be electronically opened in the presence of bidder's representatives, who choose to attend at the venue, date and time mentioned in the above table or any subsequent day to the convenience of the Tender Opening Committee. An authority letter of bidder's representative will be required to be produced.

The Department reserves the right to cancel any or all the e-Bids/ the e-Bid process without assigning any reason thereof. The decision of department will be final and binding.

In the event of date specified for e-Bids opening being declared a holiday for department's office then the due date for opening of e-Bids shall be the following working day at the appointed time and place.

All the required documents excluding Price Schedule/BOQ should be uploaded by the e-Bidder electronically in the PDF format, whereas Price Schedule/BOQ should be uploaded electronically in the same BOQ sheet provided with the SBD.

To participate in e-bidding process, bidders have to get 'Digital Signature Certificate (DSC)' class III (b) as per Information Technology Act-2000, to participate in online bidding.

DIPK-NB-265/21

NO:STB/ 51-55; Dated: 12-04-2021

Executive Engineer
Sub Transmission Division
Bijbehara

Office of the Executive Engineer, KPDC, ED-2nd, Rajbagh, Srinagar

Email ID : xened2nd@gmail.com , Tel/ Fax No. 0194-2311374

e-NIT No: ED-II/02 of 2021-22

Notice Inviting e-Tender

Dated : 12/04/21

For and on behalf of Lieutenant Governor of UT of J&K, e-bids are invited (in two cover system) from Registered Class-"A" Electrical Contractors for "Creation of 100 kVA, 11/0.433 Sub-Station along with laying of HT/LT network at Green Lane, Azad Basti, Budshah Nagar, Sub-Division Chanapora of KPDC, ED-2nd, Rajbagh in order to relieve critically overloaded existing sub-station - (Key Materials shall be Provided by the Department)"

1	Name of Work	Creation of 100 kVA, 11/0.433 Sub-Station along with laying of HT/LT network at Green Lane, Azad Basti, Budshah Nagar, Sub-Division Chanapora - (Key Materials shall be Provided by the Department)
2.	Authorization of Work	Accorded
3.	Position of Funds	Available with the Department
4.	Estimated Cost	Rs 2.25 Lacs

The tender document is available on website <http://jktenders.gov.in>. Interested bidders may view or download the e-Bid document, seek clarification and submit their e-Bid online up to date as per the details mentioned in the table below.

A	Date & Time of Downloading of Standard Bidding Document	The Standard Bidding Document can be downloaded over http://jktenders.gov.in from 13/04/21; 10:00 AM
B	Clarifications Start Date	15/04/21; 10:00 AM
C	Clarifications End Date	16/04/21; 12:30 PM
D	e-Bid Submission (Start) Date & Time (Submission of e-tender fee, EMD and other supporting documents in PDF/XLS format)	16/04/21; 12:35 PM
E	e-Bid Submission (End) Date & Time (Submission of e-tender fee, EMD and other supporting documents in PDF/XLS format)	30/04/21; 04:00 PM
F	Online e-Bid Opening	03/05/21; 12:30 PM
G	Venue of Opening of Technical & Financial e-Bids	Office of the Executive Engineer, KPDC, ED-2nd, Rajbagh, Srinagar
H	Cost of e-Bid Document	Rs. 200/- (Rupees Two Hundred Only) (Non-Refundable)
I	Amount of Earnest Money Deposit	Rs 4500/- (Rupees Four Thousand and Five Hundred Only)

1. The bidders need to submit the proof/Cost of e-Bid document as stated in the above table through e-Challan/Treasury Receipt pledged to Executive Engineer, KPDC, ED-2nd, Rajbagh, Srinagar to be Credited to M.H-0801-Power payable at Srinagar. The scanned copy of the e-Challan/Treasury Receipt must be enclosed along with the e-Bids. No Demand Draft shall be accepted.

2. All the e-Bids must be accompanied by the scanned copy of EMD in the form of CDR/ FDR/Bank Guarantee only, pledged to the Executive Engineer, KPDC, ED-2nd, Rajbagh, Srinagar. No Interest would be payable on Earnest Money deposited with the Department.

3. Hard Copy of original instrument of EMD needs to be submitted only by the Lowest Tenderer instantly after Opening of e-NIT and must be pledged to the Executive Engineer, KPDC, ED-2nd, Rajbagh, Srinagar.

4. The e-Bids will be electronically opened in the presence of bidder's representatives, who choose to attend at the identified venue on indicated date and time mentioned in the above table or any subsequent day to the convenience of the Tender Opening Committee. An authority letter of bidder's representative will be required to be produced.

5. The Department reserves the right to cancel any or all the e-Bids/ the e-Bid process without assigning any reason thereof. The decision of department will be final and binding.

6. In the event of date specified for e-Bids opening being declared a holiday/closed day for department's office then the due date for opening of e-Bids shall be the following working day at the appointed time and place.

7. All the required documents excluding Price Schedule/BOQ should be uploaded by the e-Bidder electronically in the PDF format, whereas Price Schedule/BOQ should be uploaded electronically in the same BOQ sheet provided with the SBD. Also, Signed and Stamped Copy of SBD is required to be uploaded.

8. To participate in e-bidding process, bidders have to get 'Digital Signature Certificate' - (DSC) Class-III (b) as per Information Technology Act-2000, to participate in online bidding.

9. Hard Copy of requisite documents shall be required to be submitted only by the Lowest Tenderer with original CDR and e-Challan/Treasury Receipt instantly after opening of e-NIT pledged to Executive Engineer, KPDC, ED-2nd, Rajbagh, Srinagar.

10. The Name of the Work/Job along with e-NIT reference should be superscripted in Bold letters on the envelope and the Name/Firm of the Lowest Bidder should be clearly written on the cover.

It may be noted that the hard copy should be an exact replica of the uploaded offer documents by the Lowest Tenderer. Documents uploaded on the website shall be treated as final.

11. Other details can be seen in the bidding documents.

No: ED-II/205-209/TS
Dated: 12/04/21

DIPK-NB-283/21

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
KPDC, ED-2nd, Rajbagh
Srinagar

Amazon India Launches \$250mn Venture Fund For Agri, Healthcare And SMB Startups

Agenceis

Amazon India on Thursday launched a \$250 million venture fund that will invest in startups and entrepreneurs focused on technology innovations in agriculture, healthcare and digitising small and medium businesses (SMBs).

"The venture fund will independently invest in startups, building solutions to empower SMBs to launch, manage, and grow their business online, automate and digitise their operations, and expand their business globally by exporting to customers worldwide. These investments will help seed and scale up innovation in the sector," the e-commerce giant said.

The fund will also be investing in healthcare and agri startups. It aims to invest in companies that are making agri-inputs more accessible to farmers, offering so-

clinics among others.

The first such investment by the fund will be in M1xchange, a startup focusing on invoice discounting marketplace exchange for micro, small and medium enterprises. M1xchange is raising \$10 million through the funding round in which BEENEXT and existing investor Mayfield are also participating, apart from Amazon.

As a part of its push to digitise SMBs, Amazon runs a Local Shops on Amazon platform, for onboarding thousands of small merchants. The company is scaling up this programme and aims to bring 1 million retailers and neighbourhood stores online by 2025.

The programme was launched in April 2020 at a time a complete lockdown had been announced in India in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Last month, Amazon had said that over 50,000 offline retailers and neighbourhood stores were now a part of this programme.



lutions to improve productivity, distribute credit and insurance or are building efficient farm-to-fork supply chains to reduce food wastage. It also aims to back companies that are using technology for doctor's assistance, telemedicine, e-diagnosis and companies that are digitising primary care

Amazon on Thursday also launched a Spotlight North East initiative, through which it aims to bring e-commerce access to 50,000 weavers, artisans, and local small businesses in the region by 2025. A dedicated northeast storefront will also be launched on Amazon India's marketplace.

A Flaw in WhatsApp's Online Status is Aiding Stalkers

Agenceis

WhatsApp is the most popular messaging app in the world with over two billion active users daily. An oversight with the platform's online status system has, in turn, led to creation of services that track the indicator and tell you whether a person is online or not.

This works because the information is public and can be viewed by anyone. When you open WhatsApp, you are considered 'online' and this is shown to everyone, even outside of your contact list.

This oversight allows the existence of status monitoring services that allow you to see who is online by just entering their phone number. As reported on by Traced, there are several services that take advantage one of which allows you to spy on a spouse or give frequent updates to parents on a child's WhatsApp activity.

You can even enter a second phone number and compare the times the two were 'online' to figure out if they were messaging each other.

A Reddit user going by the handle 'lollygagme' tried this out and watched her partner's activity for a week. She found that she was able to pick up on "patterns where he's actually having an in-depth back and forth conversation with someone versus him checking in over and over to see if she's replied back yet."

The important thing to note here is that your 'last seen' status is different and can be turned off by going to Privacy-Last Seen and selecting 'Nobody'. The problem your last seen status is different from your online status which will always tag you as 'online' when you interact with the app.

There is absolutely no way to turn this off and there is no way to know if someone is using a tracker on you. The only defence is changing your phone number.



Tupperware India Expands Homeshops To Kashmir

Agenceis

SRINAGAR: Tupperware India, a global premium homeware brand based out of Orlando, US, today announced its launch in Srinagar in Jammu and Kashmir through its innovative channel, the HomeShop. Since its transformation into becoming a multi-channel brand in 2019, Tupperware has been expanding its direct presence across the length and breadth of the country. Opening an official HomeShop in Kashmir marks a special milestone in the brand's journey as the brand was not present in the valley earlier. Aabroo Ratta will be running the newly launched HomeShop by Tupperware. It is the company's first HomeShop in the valley amongst 157 HomeShops across the country. It is located at Raj Bagh at Rather Complex near New Era School.

HomeShops are an innovative way to power up the Direct Selling channel. It is a unique combination of Direct Selling and Retail channels that gives the best of both worlds along with a homely environment. It extends ease of doing business to the seller as well as potential buyers. As part of the arrangement, the seller sets up a small product demonstration area within their home and invites their acquaintances to showcase the magic of Tupperware, on the lines of famous Tupperware house parties and sell directly to interested consumers. So far, there are 157 HomeShops across 116 cities in India. As Tupperware completes 25 years this year, the brand aims to expand its footprint further through its multi-channel sales approach to reach newer milestones and further extend its concept of HomeShop to more cities.

The brand has nurtured entrepreneurial spirit and focused on women empowerment since its inception in 1996. In face of challenges, COVID and otherwise, Tupperware came up with new ways of doing business in the valley and is receiving encouraging response. With an existing network of over 70,000 women sellers across India, Tupperware has increased focus on training and upskilling programmes as well.

Kupwara Tales: Huts Worth Crores Lie Idle For Want Of Tourists



Agencies

KUPWARA: Despite having high potential and rich natural resources the authorities in North Kashmir's Kupwara province have failed to generate revenue from the assets constructed by the Development Authority to attract tourists and visitors for the last couple of years. The border district Kupwara has a separate Lolab Bangus Drangyari Development Authority (LBDDA) that has built around a dozen of assets worth crores in the past.

Residents while expressing their resentment against the Development Authority told the news agency, that even after spending a hefty amount of money from the government exchequer for the construction of huts for tourists and visitors, it has failed to serve the purpose as many of the huts are left unattended for a long time now.

Official sources said that the LBDDA has its huts in Diver Lolab, Chandigam, Lalpora, Khumriyal, Zangli, Reshwari, Gaddaji, Summulla, and Drangyari but are closed for a long now without generating any revenue.

Locals said the concerned developmental authority is acting as a mute spectator and has not initiated any concrete steps to promote these places. A local contractor said that the LBDDA recently issued very high bidding charges for the huts that have not opened for long now and even people of this district are not well aware of those structures.

"These assets need the attention of authorities at the earliest since they have not served any purpose by far. Many of them are out of bounds for locals. The administration must promote these places to give tourism a flip," he said.

A student said, "this is high time for the government to promote tourism on this frontier district which has high potential to generate revenue," he said.

Meanwhile, the Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC), Nazir Ahmad, who holds the additional charge of LBDDA Chief Executive Officer (CEO), said that the huts can only generate revenue when tourists visit the district.

He maintained that all these huts are functional--(KNO)



High Inflation Adds To Lockdown Worries

Agenceis

NEW DELHI: The wholesale price index (WPI) inflation rate stood at 7.39 per cent for March 2021, the highest since October 2012, when it was 7.4 per cent, according to the provisional data released by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade of the Commerce Ministry.

Besides WPI inflation touching a 96-month high, most of its sub-sets also touched recent highs. Primary articles inflation jumped to a 13-month high of 6.4 per cent; fuel, power, light inflation rose to 28-month high of 10.3 per cent;

and manufactured products inflation was at a nine-year high of 7.3 per cent.

But the Ministry said the WPI for March last year was computed with a relatively low response rate and, therefore, the difference between the corresponding period this year has recorded a larger gap.

Inflation related woes, that are likely to last till August, come on top of a second Covid wave sweeping the country. Besides the badly affected Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and UP, news is coming of the elections having acted as super spreaders. West Bengal has recorded a 450

per cent increase in active caseload in a fortnight, Tamil Nadu 309 per cent and Kerala 111 per cent.

The day also saw the rupee turning into Asia's worst-performing currency and is poised for more losses as localised lockdowns and restrictions begin hitting the economy.

As a result, Goldman Sachs has downgraded the GDP growth forecast for 2021 to 10.5 per cent from 10.9 per cent.

The ministry said the prices of crude oil, petroleum products and basic metal substantially increased last month as compared to the corresponding month of last year.

Airlines Gain Altitude, But Will Fly Into Losses This Fiscal, Too

Agenceis

NEW DELHI: Domestic airlines are expected to log net losses in FY22 on the back of lower domestic air traffic compared with pre-pandemic levels, together with high fuel prices, ratings agency Crisil said.

However, the agency said that these net losses will be 35-40 per cent below the ones reported for fiscal 2021 mark at Rs 9,500- Rs 10,000 crore.

A Crisil Ratings study of the top three airlines, which account for 78 per cent of total passenger traffic, noted: "A resurgence of Covid-19 infections across the country -- especially in Mumbai and Delhi, which account for 36 per cent of overall air traffic - is expected to stall the recovery seen over the past six months."

"In fact, average daily domestic passenger air traffic has fallen in April by almost 20 per cent to 2.35 lakh compared to February 2021."

Nonetheless, it said that domestic traffic, which accounts for 75 per cent of airline revenues, is expected to surge 120-130 per cent this fiscal on a low base though it will still be significantly lower at 70 per cent of fiscal 2020 level.



"Domestic traffic fell 85 per cent in the first half of last fiscal due to lockdowns and restrictions on operations," said Gautam Shahi, Director, Crisil Ratings.

"Despite the second wave-induced fresh curbs, which will temper recovery, domestic traffic in the first half of this fiscal is likely to be 3.5-4 times higher on-year, on a low base. The second half should see good recovery in traffic, supported by acceleration in the vaccination drive and people gradually taking to travel after prolonged stay at home."

Besides, a gradual recovery in

international operations in the second half of fiscal 2022 will also boost traffic, it said.

But, airlines have also seen their cost of operations spurt due to a rise in the price of aviation turbine fuel (ATF), a key cost head for them.

"The price, which remained low until November 2020, limiting their losses, has shot up 30 per cent since then," the report said.

"This will offset the benefits from some of the initiatives the carriers undertook to reduce cost - employee costs, rentals, etc. - last fiscal, and which are being carried forward into the current fiscal."

NIT Srinagar Hosts Virtual Lecture On 'Building New Start Ups'

Agenceis

SRINAGAR: Department of Humanities, Social Sciences & Management (HSS&M), National Institute of Technology (NIT) Srinagar Thursday hosted a virtual lecture on process of 'building a start-up'.

According to a statement issued by the news agency, the event was presided over by Director NIT Srinagar, Prof. Rakesh Sehgal who was the chief guest on the occasion and the virtual lecture was delivered by the Director of Zipcho Entertainment Company, Mohammad Younus Budoo (ACS). On the occasion, Prof. Rakesh Sehgal said the key objective of holding such sessions are that students will learn and will know how to work and execute ideas for processing new start-ups.

"After proper guidance and research, a successful entrepreneur will find the proper solution to establish a suitable business model, he said.

Dr. Sehgal said there is a need to boost more such sessions in the future for students and I appreciate the department for conducting such market-oriented sessions. Registrar NIT, Prof. Kaiser Bukhari said the idea and realization of a startup is a vital step and such things are important to be taken into account to make a startup effective.

"The vision of a startup and needs of people are more important than a business plan," he said. Budoo is currently Director of Zipcho Entertainment Company and is Qualified Company Secretary. He is also an associate member of the Institute of Company Secretaries of India and has vast expertise in his respective field.

During the interaction with students, Budoo deliberated upon the challenges and opportunities for start-ups in Kashmir. The understanding market is a key to success and if new startups will not consider such features then efforts will be in vain, he said.

The speaker stressed new start-ups should explore both local and regional markets and urged students not to start anything with which they are not familiar. Keep the market trends under consideration, he said.

SBI Clarifies On Transaction Charges In Zero-Balance Accounts

Agenceis

The State Bank of India (SBI) on Thursday released a clarification on the recent media reports based on the outcome of a study by IIT Bombay. A study by IIT-Bombay has claimed that State Bank of India and several other banks in the country have been imposing excessive charges on certain services which are provided to those with zero-balance accounts or Basic Savings Bank Deposit Accounts (BSBDA), according to reports. SBI collected over 300 crore by

accounts w.e.f 15.06.2016 with prior intimation to the customers," India's largest lender clarified.

During August 2020, the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) advised banks to refund the charges collected, if any, on or after 01.01.2020 on transactions carried out using the digital mode and not to impose charges on future transactions carried out through such modes.

Following the directives, SBI has refunded the charges recovered in respect of all the digital transactions to the BSBDA customers w.e.f. 01.01.2020 to 14.09.2020, the lender mentioned.



levying service charges during the period 2015-20, the study claimed.

In August 2012, Reserve Bank of India said that banks are free to levy charges in BSBDA accounts beyond four free transactions. The availing of such additional services shall be at the option of the customers.

"Accordingly, SBI introduced charges for debit transactions beyond four free transactions in BSBDA

"SBI has stopped recovering charges in such accounts on all digital transactions w.e.f. 15.09.2020, while retaining charges on cash withdrawals over and above four free withdrawals allowed per month," the bank said.

"The objective is also to encourage BSBDA account holders including PMJDY account holders to adopt digital payment through the prescribed modes vis-à-vis the cash transactions," it added.

Gold Prices Jump To Rs 46,545/10 Gm On Safe-Haven Appeal; Silver Surges Rs 1,178 a kg

Agenceis

Gold prices advanced by Rs 276 to Rs 46,545 per 10 gram in the Mumbai retail market on firm global cues. The yellow metal rose on surging coronavirus cases globally and decline in bond yields increasing safe-haven appeal.

The rate of 10 gram 22-carat gold in Mumbai was Rs 42,852 plus 3 percent GST, while 24-carat 10 gram was Rs 46,782 plus GST. The 18-carat gold quoted at Rs 35,087 plus GST in the retail market.

Bullion has been stuck in the \$1,670-1,750/oz range amid mixed trade in the US dollar index.

US government's budget deficit surged to an all-time high of \$1.7 trillion for the first six months of the budget year, nearly double from the previous record.

The US dollar trades marginally lower at 91.65, or down 0.02 percent against a basket of six rival currencies. The US 10 year treasury yields trade weaker at 1.61 percent, down 2 basis points in the evening session.

Gold holdings in SPDR Gold Trust, the world's largest gold-backed exchange-traded fund decreased by 3.2 tonnes to 1,022.86, the lowest since April 2020.

Spot gold rose by \$10.24 to \$1,746.62 an ounce at 12:02 GMT in London trading.

MCX BullDesk increased 55 points or 0.38 percent, at 14,660 at 17:33. The index tracks the real-time performance of MCX Gold and MCX Silver futures.

"Gold prices rose as a weaker dollar and US yields boosted the safe-haven metal's appeal, while investors awaited the release of weekly jobless claims and March retail sales data in the US. later in the day. The dollar held near a three-week low against a basket of currencies on Thursday, as US bond yields levelled off following a surge last month", said Navneet Damani, Vice President, Motilal Oswal.

Governor Powell mentioned in his speech yesterday that the US economy accelerated into the spring based on rising consumer sentiment and the country is on track for faster growth and hiring in the coming months. US health panel called for more data before making a decision on whether to resume Johnson & Johnson's. Both US retail sales and weekly jobless claims will be important to watch for as it could trigger further volatility in the market.

The broader range on COMEX could be between \$1720- 1750 and on the domestic front, prices could hover in the range of Rs 46,580- 47,070.

"COMEX gold trades higher near \$1748/oz. Gold has been trading in a broad range between \$1,730 to \$1,760. Weighing on the gold price is increasing optimism about the US economy and continuing ETF outflows. However, supporting price is Fed's emphasis on keeping interest rates low and



worsening virus situation.

"Gold is struggling to sustain above \$1755-1760/oz amid mixed factors however rising virus cases and loose monetary policy stance may continue to support prices", said Ravindra Rao, VP- Head Commodity Research at Kotak Securities. The gold/silver ratio currently stands at 68.77 to 1, which means the number of silver ounces required to buy one ounce of gold.

Silver prices climbed by Rs 1,178 to Rs 68,021 per kg from its closing on April 14.

In the futures market, the gold rate touched an intraday high of Rs 46,896 and an intraday low of Rs 46,680 in the Multi-Commodity Exchange (MCX). For the June series, the yellow metal touched a low of Rs 44,108 and a high of Rs 51,924.

Gold futures for June delivery gained Rs 263, or 0.56 percent, at Rs 46,871 per 10 gram in evening trade on a business turnover of 11,668 lots. The same for August jumped Rs 247, or 0.53 percent, at Rs 47,078 on a business turnover of 2,021 lots.

The value of June and August's contracts traded so far is Rs 1,801.55 crore and Rs 51.74 crore, respectively.

Similarly, Gold Mini contract for May edged higher Rs 263, or 0.57 percent at Rs 46,580 on a business turnover of 17,356 lots.

Gold prices traded higher on dollar decline which fell to three-week lows despite some uptick in bond yields. The higher inflation concerns and worries over rising virus cases have supported buying in the yellow metal.

We expect gold prices to trade sideways to up for the day with COMEX spot gold support lies at \$1,730 and resistance at \$1,760. MCX Gold June support lies at Rs 46,500 and resistance lies at Rs 47,100.

Axis Securities

Axis Securities advised its clients to buy June Gold at Rs 46,700 with stop loss at Rs 46,500 and a target of Rs 47,000.

Kshitij Purohit, Product Manager, Currency & Commodities, CapitalVia Global Research Limited

International gold is trading in bullish momentum. Prices are resisting below \$1,750-1,760 levels. On the domestic front, MCX Gold June has been trading with a marginal sideways and positive bias. We may expect prices to continue to trade in a choppy manner and resist below Rs 47,000 levels during the evening session.

LG Calls For Institutionalizing Transparent, Efficient; Pro-People Administrative Set Up Across The UT

JAMMU: Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha chaired a meeting with all Deputy Commissioners and Senior Superintendents of Police of the Jammu Division to review the developmental scenario, law and order situation, besides assessing the Covid containment and mitigation efforts across the districts, at the Civil Secretariat here on Thursday.

Outlining the agenda of establishing a transparent, efficient, pro-people administrative set up across the Union Territory, the Lt Governor called upon the district officers to be sensitive towards the issues, problems and needs of the common public, an official spokesperson said.

The LG, he said, exhorted them to make on-ground assessment of area-specific developmental needs of the district and formulating realistic District Development Plans that touch the lives of ordinary citizens and focus on the broad contours of enhancing employment, augmenting health and education sector, besides ensuring availability of basic amenities of a progressive society.

"At the outset, the Lt Governor was briefed by every Deputy Commissioner and Senior Superintendent of Police regarding the COVID situation in the district viz. - the status of testing, containment, vaccination, availability of oxygen and required medicines etc; progress on the establishment of offices, staff, residences and security of DDCs and other PRIs; progress of works taken up under Back to Village programme; status of Languishing projects; status of available online services among certain specific issues of the districts," the official spokesperson said.

While reviewing the preparations made by the districts regarding the on-going festival season, the Lt Governor directed the officers to ensure proper supply of water, electricity and ration items to the public so that people can observe their religious activities smoothly.

Taking stock of the mechanism put in place by different districts to deal with the second wave of Covid and the progress of vaccination drive, the Lt Governor called for intensifying the testing, besides vigorous tracing and

tracking of Covid contacts.

The Lt Governor directed the Health Department to share all data related to Covid with the Deputy Commissioners so as to facilitate district-wise achievement of vaccination and other targets. "Scale-up the vaccination drive in all the Districts by sensitizing people and providing every possible assistance", he added.

The Lt Governor also took a district-wise assessment of the availability of medicines, oxygen supply, and number of beds. He also called upon the officers to make dynamic plans as per the evolving situation.

While taking stock of the status of on-line services, the Lt Governor impressed upon the Deputy Commissioners for implementation of latest online technologies and best practices in citizen-centric governance for improving the public service delivery, and making the administration effective, transparent, accountable, and citizen-friendly.

The Lt Governor directed the Deputy Commissioner, Poonch for constructing Toilets on Mughal road and asked him to identify viable spots for the

same at the earliest. He also directed the Deputy Commissioners of other districts for proper maintenance and upkeep of Community toilets that are coming up along the National Highway.

Regarding the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) SEHAT scheme, the Lt Governor asked the Deputy Commissioners to speed up the registration process and called for the promotion of the scheme in each and every district for public welfare. "Ensure 100% coverage and delivery of SEHAT cards to the public", he asserted.

The Lt Governor also took stock of the district-wise availability of minor minerals and directed the concerned officers to speed up pending allotments, besides taking immediate action against all those indulging in overcharging.

While interacting with the Senior Superintendents of Police of various districts, the Lt Governor directed them to keep a strict check on illegal mining of sand and minerals, the menace of drug abuse, bovine smuggling besides facilitating the public through various

public welfare initiatives. He further directed Kathua district officers to ensure hassle-free movement of travelers in and out of UT at Lakhampur.

Underlining the importance of Block Diwas, the Lt Governor directed the officers to use the platform optimally for public service delivery and redressing public grievances. He instructed the officers to chalk out rational plans with adequate publicity before organizing the Block Diwas so that maximum number of people could benefit from it. He also asked them to audit the grievances received and settled in their respective districts.

The Lt Governor also directed the district officers to lay specific thrust on identification of beneficiaries under the MUMKIN scheme, developmental needs of border villages, utilization of funds under Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA), implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission, and ensuring employment of locals in all major projects going on in their respective districts.

MHA Orders 50% Attendance In Work, Staggered Timing At Its Offices

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: In view of the "unprecedented rise" in number of COVID-19 cases in Delhi, the Union Home Ministry Thursday said its officers up to the level of Under Secretary can work from home and only 50 per cent staff need to attend office.

In an office memorandum, the home ministry said all officers who attend the office can stagger timings with entry into the office spread between 9 AM to 10 AM with corresponding office exit timings and those living in containment zones be exempted from attending office.

"In view of the unprecedented rise in the numbers of Covid-19 cases in Delhi, it has been decided to take measures to prevent its spread," the home ministry said.

The home ministry said officers of the level of Under Secretary or equivalent and below be allowed to work from home and their physical attendance in office be restricted to 50 per cent of the actual overall strength.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Govt Defers

was started by Maharaja Gulab Singh in 1872 to escape extreme weather conditions in the two regions.

"In view of sharply rising cases of COVID-19, the government has taken few important decisions ensuring safety of employees. Darbar move deferred because of COVID. Secretariat to function in both #Srinagar & #Jammu. Office functioning not to be affected because of eOffice," Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said in a series of tweets on Thursday.

Jammu and Kashmir had recorded 1,086 fresh COVID-19 cases on Wednesday taking the infection count to 1,41,736 while five deaths due to the virus raised the toll to 2,042 in the UT.

As Jammu and Kashmir is witnessing a surge in the number of COVID cases, the threat it poses to people and staff on the move and the implementation of eOffice software in both the secretariat and move offices, it has been decided to defer the darbar move this time, the LG said.

"However, Secretariat will function in both Srinagar & Jammu with staff equitably split between two Secretaries will function from both locations in an equitable manner", Sinha's office tweeted.

He said office functioning will not be affected as files will move electronically between both the secretariats through eOffice software.

India, Pak

discussions as to how to deal with it and not let this effort derailed by the next attack," said one of the people Reuters talked to.

There is as yet, however, no grand plan to resolve the 74-year-old Kashmir dispute. Rather both sides are trying to reduce tensions to pave the way for a broad engagement, all the people Reuters spoke to said.

Quoting Ayesha Siddiqi, a noted Pakistani defence analyst, the report said that she believed Indian and Pakistan intelligence officials had been meeting for several months in other countries.

"I think there have been meetings in Thailand, in Dubai, in London between the highest-level people," she told Reuters.

Such meetings have taken place in the past as well, especially during times of crises but never been publicly acknowledged.

Active Corona

have recovered so far, they said.

Moreover, they said, 487 more COVID-19 patients have recovered—116 from Jammu Division and 371 from Kashmir.

In view of the rising number of COVID-19 cases in the union territory, the administration has cancelled the ongoing board examinations for Class 10.

Schools, Coaching

closed for imparting on-campus / in-person education to the students of all classes (i.e., up to and including Class 12), till 30.04.2021," reads an order issued by Simrandeep Singh, member Secretary State executive Committee (SEC).

"It is further ordered that all Coaching and tuition centers imparting in-person teaching to Students shall remain closed in the entire J&K till 30.04.2021," the order adds.

The decision, Singh in the order said was taken after a detailed review of the current COVID situation in Jammu and Kashmir was conducted with the Financial Commissioner Health; Administrative Secretary School Education; Divisional Commissioner, Jammu/Kashmir and other officers.

The decision was taken in view of the trend in new cases particularly the recent spike in the number of daily reported cases of infection in some districts of J&K, the order said.

Police Files Case

those who are circulating it through social media to instigate violence," a spokesperson of the Budgam Police said on Twitter.

Meanwhile, Inspector General of Police, Kashmir Zone, Vijay Kumar asked people not to pay heed to social media rumours.

"People are requested to carry out their normal activities in the holy month of Ramzan & need not to pay any heed to rumours on social media," Kumar tweeted on official Twitter handle.

UAE Helped

escalation down" between the two neighbours.

"We try to be helpful where we have

influence with two different countries. So, India and Pakistan was the most recent one," he said.

"We don't think they are going to become the most favoured nation to each other, but I think it's important for them to have a healthy functional relationship," he added.

In New Delhi, asked about media reports that backchannel talks between India and Pakistan were going on for more than a year, External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Arindam Bagchi did not give a direct reply.

"If you talk about channels of communication on this issue, let me just recall that our respective high commissions exist and are functioning. So that is a very effective channel of communication," Bagchi said on April 9.

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

On the same day, Pakistan Foreign Office spokesman stopped short of categorically denying its involvement in some kind of back-channel talks with India.

Foreign Office spokesperson Zahid Hafeez Chaudhry at the weekly press briefing on April 9 was asked by several journalists about reported backchannel talks with India.

Instead of rejecting it outrightly he said: States have their ways and means to communicate which remain available even during wars. Therefore, whether any talks are taking place between India and Pakistan is not important.

He added that the real issue was what should be discussed between the two countries and how the dialogue could be made meaningful and result-oriented dialogue.

Ties between India and Pakistan nose-dived after a militant attack on the Pathankot Air Force base in 2016 by militants.

Subsequent attacks, including one on Indian Army camp in Uri, further deteriorated the relationship.

The relationship dipped further after India's war planes carried out an airstrike at Jaish-e-Mohammed training camp on February 26, 2019 in response to the Pulwama suicide attack in which 40 CRPF jawans were killed.

The relations deteriorated after India announced withdrawing special powers of Jammu and Kashmir and bifurcation of the state into two union territories in August, 2019.

Last month, Pakistan's powerful Army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa said that it was time for India and Pakistan to "bury the past and move forward as he asserted that the peace between the two neighbours would help to unlock the potential of South and Central Asia.

The powerful army, which has ruled Pakistan for more than half of its 70 plus years of existence, has hitherto wielded considerable power in the matters of security and foreign policy.

Gen Bajwa's remarks came a day after Prime Minister Imran Khan made a similar statement.

Court Lists Case

vehicles and had sought the response of the Government on the matter by or before 15 April so that the controversy is set at rest.

In support of his submissions, the senior counsel Faisal Qadri had also referred to and relied upon the judgment of the High Court of Karnataka delivered in case title Jagdev Biradar V/s State of Karnataka.

During the proceedings on the matter on April 7, senior Council Faisal Qadri for the petitioner Advocate Zahoor Bhat, invited the attention of the Court to section 46, 47 and 50 of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, to indicate that the scheme of law provides that when a motor vehicle registered in one State has been kept in another State, for a period exceeding twelve months, the owner of the vehicle shall, within such period and in such form containing such particulars as may be prescribed by the Central Government, apply to the Registering Authority, within whose jurisdiction the vehicle then is, for the assignment of a new registration mark.

While hearing the matter on April 7, by a single Bench Court headed by Justice Ali Mohammad Magray, the Court had observed, "Prima facie there appears to be a consensus over the fact that while adhering to the provisions of law, the Competent Authority can seek such response from the owners whose vehicle remains in the State other than the one from where the vehicle is purchased for a period exceeding 12 months, but the question is raised as to who that Competent Authority is?"

"Feeling it appropriate", the court asked that to file their response so that the controversy is

set at rest by or before April 15.

"The appearance of the Advocate General in the matter is expected to take care of the apprehension that the senior counsel for the petitioner has projected vis-à-vis seizure of the vehicles at the hands of the Police under the garb of the impugned circular," the 7th April Court order reads.

Regional Transport Officer (RTO) Kashmir had ordered the people in the valley to re-register their vehicles bought from outside Jammu & Kashmir with Nine per cent as fresh Tax amount for the remaining life of the vehicle within fifteen days, failing which the enforcing agencies will act.

The government has filed the response directed earlier by the Court on 7 April 2021.

Meanwhile legal experts and taxation experts had also questioned the legal sanctity of the circular issued by the RTO Kashmir—(KNO)

Mercury Plummets

department here said that the 'erratic weather' will continue till the weekend.

A meteorological department official said that Srinagar received 3.3mm of rainfall in the last 24 hours till 0830 a.m. while the minimum temperature settled at 7.8 degree Celsius against 9.4 degree Celsius on the previous night in the summer capital of J&K. The mercury was 0.2 degree Celsius above normal for this time of the season, he said.

Qazigund received 0.8mm of rain and recorded a low of 6.2 degree Celsius against 7.8 degree Celsius on the previous night, the official said.

Pahalgam received the highest rainfall of 26.4mm while the famous resort in south Kashmir recorded a minimum of 2.9 degree Celsius against 4.2 degree Celsius on the earlier night, he said.

Kokernag, also in south Kashmir, received 3.8mm of rain and recorded a low of 5.5 degree Celsius against previous night's 7.5 degree Celsius, the official said.

Kupwara received 1.0mm of rain while the north Kashmir district recorded a low of 6.6 degree Celsius against 7.0 degree Celsius on the previous night, the official said.

Gulmarg, the world famous skiing resort in north Kashmir, received 10mm of rain and recorded a low of 0.5 degree Celsius against minus 2.5 degree Celsius on the previous night which was 1.5 degree Celsius, the official said.

Jammu district received 0.0mm of rain, Banihal 0.4mm, Batote 4.4mm, Katra 0.0mm, Banihal 2.6mm and Kathua 0.0mm, the official added.

Director Meteorological department Sonam Lotus said that erratic weather shall continue till the weekend.

"Expect light to moderate rain/snow on higher reaches at many places of Kashmir and at scattered places of Jammu."

He said rain will be accompanied by thunderstorm, lightning and hail at isolated places. "During lightning, stay inside any shelter and stay away from trees, metallic wire etc."

The weather department has also issued 'yellow warning for "isolated thunder/lightning with gusty wind 30- 40-kmph" for both Jammu and Kashmir divisions till April 18.

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

Mughal Road

Shopian as well as Poonch and Rajouri have been demanding to reopen of the road for traffic as they are forced to reach Jammu first from where they can to Kashmir or Rajouri or Poonch.

They said that the closure of the road has badly hit the business and other activities of the residents of Shopian, Hirpora, Dubjan, Pir-Ki-Gali and Buffiaz, Thanamadi and other villages.

Pertinently, despite getting the national highway status in the year 2016, the Mughal road has no mechanical division of its own besides a tunnel was proposed to make it a full-time road as it is seen as an alternative to the National Highway.

The 84-kilometre stretch that connects Shopian in the Kashmir division with Poonch and Rajouri in the Jammu division remains closed for about four to six months due to the heavy snowfall. About 10 to 20 km are prone to high danger avalanches.

The distance between Shopian town and Poonch town has reduced to 126 from 588 kms

due to Mughal road.

Meanwhile, businessmen and locals have requested the government authorities to either construct a tunnel on it or create a full-fledged separate mechanical division with modern machinery and technical staff for the Mughal road.

Official sources said that few vehicles are running on the road but officially it hasn't been reopened yet.

They said that any decision regarding it will be taken by higher ups.

District Magistrate, Shopian, Sachin Kumar Vaishya said that any decision regarding the reopening of Mughal road will be taken by UT administration.

"As of now no decision has been taken," he said—(KNO)

NIA Arrests

Act and the Information Technology Act, he said.

The NIA had re-registered the case on April 5, 2020, and taken over the investigation in it from the state's police. The agency has already filed a charge-sheet against her, the spokesman said.

Further investigation in the case continues, he said.

Woman's Death

me that they want to interrogate him. I told them he was sleeping and was not keeping well from yesterday. Some of them (police-men) in the meanwhile went upstairs and carried searches," she said, adding, "Then they took my brother but my father did not let them take him and told them to take him along also. Then they went outside and my mother fell on Varanda. A policeman told our relative (a woman) to take care of her and she responded that my mother is no more. Soon after hearing the same, they left my brother and fled. They took away his mobile."

Javed Ahmad, the deceased woman's son said the police came to his house around 2:30 am.

"They were talking to my father outside while I was sleeping. They woke me up and sought my phone. I gave them and showed them the pattern," he said, adding, "There was my laptop. First they tried to take it along but then told me to leave it there. My father and mother held me up and took me outside. In the meantime my mother had fallen."

Javed said that policemen told him to come to Zakura police station "even as our house falls within the jurisdiction of police station Nigeen."

The protesters demanded justice and those guilty be brought to book. "Today it has happened with us, it can happen with somebody else tomorrow," they said and reiterated demand for justice. "Is police accountable to none and are there no rules to be followed?" they said.

Meanwhile, police refuted the allegations and said that a joint cordon and search operation was carried out at her house and the team left once the searches were conducted.

"On basis of an input, a joint CASO of Police& CRPF was launched in Meerak Shah Colony last night. Search was conducted. The search parties left after completing the search," police said in a tweet.

"In the morning it was learnt that one lady Mst Khatija Putoo resident of the same locality died because of a heart attack. Police is looking into the matter." (With GNS inputs)

Recording Of

this case on March 25 in Srinagar.

After her five-hour-long questioning that day, Mehbooba had told reporters that central agencies like the NIA, CBI and the ED were being "misused" to silence the opposition.

The case has been filed under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

It is linked to the recovery of at least two diaries by the ED in which some purported payments made from the CM's discretionary fund were made in alleged contravention of rules.

The recoveries were made during raids on an alleged associate of Mehbooba, who is a former chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir.

These funds are alleged to have been diverted during the tenure of Mehbooba as chief minister.

Few lakhs of rupees from these funds are alleged to have been transferred into the accounts of Nazir and some others about which the ED wants to question her.

The Jammu and Kashmir Police's CID had recently rejected the passport applications of

Nazir and Mehbooba following adverse police reports against them.

Govt Transfers

Range, has been transferred and posted as DIG, North Kashmir Range, vice M. Suleman Choudhary (IPS).

Suleman Choudhary (IPS), DIG, North Kashmir Range, has been transferred and posted as DIG, Udhampur-Reasi Range, vice Sujit Kumar (IPS).

Abdul Jabbar (IPS), DIG, Doda-Kishtwar Range, has been transferred and posted as DIG, South Kashmir Range, vice Atul Kumar Goel (IPS). Udayabhaskar Billa (IPS), awaiting orders, has been posted as SP, Doda-Kishtwar Range, vice Abdul Jabbar (IPS).

Rahul Malik (IPS), awaiting orders, has been posted as AIG (Tech), PHQ, against a vacant post.

Shridhar Patil (IPS), awaiting orders, has been posted as SSP, CID, CI, Jammu, vice Tahir Sajad Bhat.

Amod Ashok Nagpure, IPS, awaiting orders, has been posted as SSP, CID, SB Kashmir, against an available vacancy.

Mohita Sharma (IPS), upon her promotion, has been posted as SP North Jammu, against an available vacancy.

Nikhil Borker (IPS), upon his promotion, has been posted as Addl SP Hqrs Anantnag. "He will hold the charge of the post of Addl SP, Anantnag in addition to his duties, till further orders," reads the order.

Haseeb Mughal, awaiting orders, has been posted as SSGP, PCR, Jammu, vice Kulbir Singh.

Haseeb ur-Rehman, awaiting orders, has been posted as CO, SDRF, 1st Bn, Srinagar, against an available vacancy. "He will hold the charge of the post of Div. Comdt. HG Kashmir, in addition to his own duties, till further orders."

Abdul Qayoom, awaiting orders, has been posted as CO, IR 9th Bn, against an available vacancy.

Rajinder Gupta, Principal, PTTI Vijaypur, has been transferred and posted as AIG (P&T), PHQ, against an available vacancy.

Rahul Malik (IPS) has been asked to hold the charge of the post of Principal, PTTI, Vijaypur, in addition to his own duties, till further orders.

Ramesh Angral, awaiting orders, has been posted as AIG (Personnel), vice Rajeshwar Singh. "He will hold the charge of the post of AIG (Trainings & Policy), in addition to his own duties, till further orders."

Harmeet Singh, awaiting orders, has been posted as SSP, Railways Kashmir, against an available vacancy.

Khalil Poswal, awaiting orders, has been posted as CO, IR 1st Bn, against an available vacancy.

Javid Iqbal, awaiting orders, has been posted as CO, IR 17th Bn, vice Benam Tosh.

Rajeshwar Singh, Tahir Sajad Bhat, Kulbir Singh and Benam Tosh have been asked to report to the PHQ and await further orders.

CRPF Officer

doctors declared him brought dead on arrival.

Army Repatriates

they said.

The officials said the handover of Qadri, a resident of Ghim village in PCK's Nikial area, took place around 11:55 am on Thursday at the crossing point on the Line of Control.

Qadri, who inadvertently entered India on April 11, was sent back on humanitarian grounds, they said.

ISJK Operative

identified the newly arrested ISJK operative as Aqib Bashir Parrey alias Assadullah, a resident of Unisoo village of Handwara in north Kashmir's Kupwara district.

He was working as an ISJK operative in Kashmir on the directions of his ISJK commanders, Singh said in a brief statement.

Abdullah, a resident of Yaripora village of south Kashmir's Kulgam district was arrested by special operations group of Jammu police from Jhajjar Kotli on Jammu-Srinagar national highway.

He was arrested on April 4 and was found in possession of a pistol, eight live cartridges and Rs 1.13 lakh in cash.

Assadullah was arrested following Abdullah's interrogation, IGP Singh said.

Govt Cancels

"In case of ongoing XII exams, it has been postponed and it will be reviewed after one month."

Mohammed Siraj Heaps Praise On RCB Teammate Shahbaz Ahmed



Press Trust of India

CHENNAI: Royal Challengers Bangalore pacer Mohammed Siraj feels that spin bowling all-rounder Shahbaz Ahmed has justified his selection in the playing eleven, following a match-winning performance against Sunrisers Hyderabad in the IPL in Chennai.

Ahmed picked up three wickets in an over to stage a remarkable turnaround for RCB on Wednesday night as the team defended 149 for eight for its second win in as many games.

Ahmed even came out to bat at number three ahead of Glenn Maxwell and AB de Villiers, a reflection of Virat Kohli's faith in the ability of the left-hander.

"Both Shahbaz Ahmed and Rajat Patidar (who played the last game as Devdutt Padikkal was unavailable) have been brilliant in the practice games," Siraj said in the post-match press conference.

"Shahbaz, as an all-rounder, gives us that extra option with his

left-arm spin. The wicket was slow and turning also. Shahbaz Ahmed fitted into it for this game and did the job for us," he added.

Ahmed removed the right-handers in Jonny Bairstow, Manish Pandey and Abdul Samad in the 17th over to change the course of the game.

"We had overs left of Washington Sundar too. But Virat bhai thought with two right-handers at the crease, a left-arm spinner could be brought.

"He created a chance with Manish Pandey in his first over, and that's why he bowled another, and that changed the game for us," said Siraj.

The pacer himself was also impressive, conceding just 25 runs in his four overs and took two wickets.

"I just try to swing the ball with the new ball. I got swing the first ball and I thought to do more of that and get a couple of wickets.

"The dew factor is also there and we have to overcome that. I always aim to hit back of length and let the batsmen make mistake," he added.

Virat Kohli Named Wisden Almanack's ODI Cricketer Of 2010s



Press Trust of India

LONDON: India captain Virat Kohli has been named Wisden Almanack's ODI player of the 2010s, while England all-rounder Ben Stokes was declared the 'Cricketer of the Year' for a second successive time by the highly-rated annual publication.

The 32-year-old Kohli, who made his ODI debut in August 2008 against Sri Lanka, is among the finest batsmen of all time, and has amassed a staggering 12,169 runs from 254 ODIs.

"To commemorate the 50th anniversary of the first One-Day International, five ODI cricketers of the decade have been named in the 2021 edition of the Wisden Cricketers' Almanack," the reference book, often described as Bible of Cricket, stated.

"One cricketer has been named

for each of the decades between 1971 and 2021, with India captain Virat Kohli taking the award for the 2010s," Wisden said on its website.

Kohli, who was part of the 2011 World Cup winning Indian team, made more than 11,000 runs in the 10-year stretch, averaging over 60 and scoring 42 centuries.

Apart from Kohli, Wisden also named legendary Sachin Tendulkar as the ODI Cricketer of the 1990s. The right-handed India opener, in 1998, made nine ODI hundreds, more than any other batsman in a single calendar year.

India's World Cup winning former captain Kapil Dev, too, featured on the list when he was named as the ODI Cricketer for the 1980s.

Kapil led India to its first ODI World Cup win in 1983. He also claimed more wickets than any other in the decade and scored at

the highest strike rate of any batsman with over 1,000 runs.

Meanwhile, Stokes was declared the 'Leading Cricketer in the World' for the second year in a row.

"His haul of 641 Test runs at 58 in the calendar year was more than anyone else, while his 19 wickets cost just 18 apiece. He did it all against a backdrop of personal tragedy: his father, Ged, died in December at the age of 65," Wisden editor Lawrence Booth said.

Dom Sibley, Zak Crawley, West Indian Jason Holder, Mohammed Rizwan and Darren Stevens were named Wisden Cricketers of the Year in the 2021 edition of Wisden Almanack.

Also, Australia's Beth Mooney was awarded 'Leading Women's Cricketer in the World' while West Indian all-rounder Kieron Pollard was named the Leading T20 Cricketer in the World.

'RCB Not Getting Over-Excited After Back-To-Back Wins,' Says Skipper Virat Kohli

Press Trust of India

CHENNAI: Chasing a maiden title, Royal Challengers Bangalore skipper Virat Kohli on Wednesday said his team has plans in place and is "not getting over-excited" with two wins in as many outings in the ongoing Indian Premier League.

Kohli's side defeated Sunrisers Hyderabad by six runs here.

RCB managed only 149 for eight but the Kohli-led team stopped SRH at 143 for nine to notch up their second consecutive win of the tournament and go top of the points table.

"To be very honest, we are not over-excited with wins this season. We have plans. We traded Harshal (Patel) from Delhi, gave him a specific role and he's doing a great job," Kohli said at the post-match presentation.

Kohli, who used seven bowlers against Mumbai Indians last week and Sunrisers on Wednesday, said the luxury of having extra options has helped the team.

"Not as exhausted as I am proud (of the team). You are never really out of the game in these conditions. The extra bowling options



made those impact performances in the middle overs.

"I told the guys don't think that we struggled to get to 149. If it was tough for us, it will be tough for them as well. Our execution under pressure was spot on. It kept getting tougher and tougher with the old ball. I think Maxi's innings was the difference for us," he added.

Losing captain David Warner commended his bowlers but rued the missed chances with the bat.

"Our bowlers were fantastic to restrict them. Maxwell batted well and set the platform. We needed two set batsmen at the end, but we failed to do that. We needed to build a partnership and play proper cricket shots.

"We played cross batted shots, and that's not the way to play here. This hurts. We know how to approach in the upcoming games. We have another three games here and I think the wickets are going to get better," he added.

Kohli Reprimanded For Showing Frustration After Dismissal



Press Trust of India

CHENNAI: Royal Challengers Bangalore captain Virat Kohli has been reprimanded for breaching the IPL's Code of Conduct after he was seen kicking a chair in frustration following his dismissal in the game against Sunrisers Hyderabad here.

Kohli was not at his fluent best in the game on Wednesday and ended up with 33 off 29 balls. His team won the game by six runs.

"Kohli admitted to the Level 1 offence 2.2 of the IPL's Code of Con-

duct. For Level 1 breaches of the Code of Conduct, the Match Referee's decision is final and binding," the IPL said in a statement.

Vengalil Narayan Kutty was the match referee in the game while Nitin Menon and Ulhas Gandhe were the on-field umpires.

Kohli had top edged a short ball off Jason Holder to be caught in the deep by Vijay Shankar.

Following his dismissal, TV replays picked up footage of Kohli kicking a chair in the dugout in frustration.

'Bitcoin Transactions New Challenge For Anti-Corruption Unit,' Says ICC's Integrity Head

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Former Zimbabwe captain Heath Streak's shocking admission of cricket corruption has also shone a light on cryptocurrency finding a place in the bookies' list of enticements -- a brand new challenge for the ICC's Anti-Corruption Unit, which claims to be ready for the battle.

Streak was on Wednesday banned by the ICC for eight years after admitting to disclose inside information to a suspected Indian bookie during his coaching stints in Zimbabwe, Bangladesh as well as the IPL, Afghanistan Premier League and the Bangladesh Premier League.

Till date cash has been the most preferred mode of payment for bookies, who also pay in kind with cars, jewellery and high-end phones.

However, Streak's case has thrown up the use of bitcoin in corrupt payments. The ICC's detailed judgement in the case has revealed that Streak once received two "bitcoins" from a corruptor in 2018, valued at USD

35,000 at that time.

"It is a new phenomenon for us, but we have staff capable of investigating it. Corrupters try to use all modes including cash and 'hawala', which are not easy to trace either. Bitcoins pose a similar challenge," ICC ACU General Manager Alex Marshall said in an email reply to PTI's query on Thursday.

So what is cryptocurrency?

In layman's language, 'Cryptocurrency' is virtual money. It is the purchase of a digital asset based on an algorithm.

The bitcoins that are generated aren't regulated by any central banking authority in any country (like the Reserve Bank of India) and in many countries like India, it is still an illegal tender.

In simpler words, it is a "Blockchain Industry" where a financial transaction between two people sitting in two different parts of the world will not have any intermediaries.

The valuation of one bitcoin is staggering. One bitcoin's INR value

currently stands at Rs 46.83 lakh or USD 62,453.

However, the bigger challenge is that coding of "cryptocurrency" is believed to be watertight. There are elaborately programmed vaults (digital) and the tracking can be infinitely more difficult when compared to paper tenders like INR, USD or GBP.

Marshall said that ICC is up for the challenge in the coming days now that a new method of corruption has emerged.

"Tracking bitcoin transactions may not be easy but we have the right people with the right expertise, understanding and network needed to ensure we stay ahead of the corruptors," Marshall said.

Even BCCI's new head of Anti Corruption Unit (ACU) Shabbir Hussain Shekhdam Khandawala said that he heard of payment through bitcoins for the first time.

"Yes, I was going through the details of the Heath Streak case. I have also heard about bitcoin transaction for the first time," the former DGP of Gujarat Police told PTI.

However, Hussain feels that tracking of corrupt people is not always

about the keeping a vigil on the mode of transactions.

"We always catch the people not by the amount or how the money is paid (bitcoins in this case). Our clues are different. We keep a watch on them and their activities and telephonic calls," Hussain said.

"Some things happen underground also," he said, adding "Everything has to be on the basis of the solid information received from sources.

"So if someone has accepted money or been involved in graft in any form, once you start investigation, you are able to reach that," he said.

He, in fact, played down the prospect of cryptocurrency gaining ground in the world of cricket corruption.

"...well it's fine for the person in question to keep his money safely. It is like safe parking of money where no one can see it. But does it come in the way of investigation of this case? Perhaps not."

"I still don't think it will become a trend and even those indulging in such activities will always leave a trail," Hussain concluded.

IPL 2021, PK VS CSK, PREVIEW

CSK Eye Improved Bowling Effort Against Formidable Punjab Kings



Press Trust of India

MUMBAI: Chennai Super Kings would look for inspiration from skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni and a much-improved bowling effort when they take on a power-packed Punjab Kings in the IPL here on Friday.

The two sides experienced contrasting fortunes in their respective tournament opener.

While CSK lost by seven wickets against Delhi Capitals, Punjab Kings eked out a four-run win over Rajasthan Royals in a high-scoring thriller.

With the dew playing a crucial role at Wankhede, the side winning the toss would want to bowl first.

In their first match here, CSK posted a competitive 188 for seven, riding on fine contributions from Suresh Raina (54), Moeen Ali (36), Sam Curran (34), Ravindra Jadeja (26) and Ambati Rayudu (23).

Despite failures from the opening duo of Rituraj Gaikwad and Fa' du Plessis besides skipper Dhoni, CSK managed to put up a decent total on the board.

But the Chennai outfit's bowling unit looked completely out of sorts and clueless against the DC opening duo of Shikhar Dhanwan and Prithvi Shaw, who were ominous from the word go and stitched a 138-run stand to take the game away from CSK.

The likes of Deepak Chahar, Sam Curran, Shardul Thakur, Jadeja and Moeen Ali all went for big runs and looked rusty.

And come Friday, the onus would be on master tactician Dhoni to inspire his teammates to lift their performance and give

Punjab a run for their money. But for that to happen, the CSK skipper himself needs to lead from the front after failing to score against DC.

Punjab Kings, on the other hand, had a narrow escape against RR the other despite posting a mammoth 221 for 6 on the board.

Opening the batting, KL Rahul played a captain's knock of 91 off just 50 balls. He was ably supported by big-hitting Chris Gayle (40 off 28) and Deepak Hooda (64 off 28).

For Punjab Kings and Rahul, batting is not at all area of concern as they showed with their performance in the opener, but just like CSK, the bowling unit remains a major worry despite spending big money at the auction.

RR skipper Sanju Samson almost single-handedly took the game away from Punjab Kings with his whirlwind 63-ball 119-run knock in their opener, but fell short just by four runs in the end.

And Rahul definitely won't be a happy man with the performances of his bowlers.

Young Arshdeep Singh (3/35) eventually emerged as Punjab's saviour. Needing 13 runs off the last over, the left-arm pacer gave away just eight runs to pull off a fine win for his team.

Besides Arshdeep, veteran Mohammad Shami (2/33) too had a decent outing with the ball but the performance of Australian pace duo of Jhye Richardson (1/55) and Riley Meredith (1/49) should be a concern for Punjab, having shelled out Rs 22 crore for their services.

Debutants FC Goa Hold Laurent Blanc's Al Rayyan To 0-0 Draw In AFC CL

Press Trust of India

MARGAO: FC Goa, the first team from India to compete in the group stage of the AFC Champions League, punched above their weight to hold Qatar's Al-Rayyan, coached by renowned French World Cup winner Laurent Blanc, to a goalless draw in Margao, Goa on Wednesday.

FC Goa produced a commendable performance to keep the side coached by the former Paris Saint-Germain manager at bay for the full duration of the match.

Rising to the occasion were the likes of Ishan Pandita and young goalkeeper Dheeraj Singh Moirangthem, who, among others, made a brilliant save in the 87th minute and a crucial tackle before that to deny the fancied visitors. As expected, Al Rayyan looked the dominant

team from the beginning, creating the best chances of the match with Yacine Brahimi leading the attack at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium.

However, finishing let the visitors down on the day. The Indian Super League team deserves credit for the manner in which it thwarted the opposition attacks in the first half and managed to match Al-Rayyan in terms of possession.

FC Goa's disciplined defending frustrated the opponent and coach Juan Ferrando would be a satisfied man.

It has been a good debut outing for Ferrando's side in the premier competition as it managed to keep a clean sheet and maintain possession against a fancied opponent.

Having won the ISL League Winners' Shield in the 2019/20 season, FC Goa qualified for the 2021 AFC Champions League group stages.

Real Madrid Cruise Past Liverpool To Return To Champions League Semis

Agencies

LIVERPOOL: Zinedine Zidane has shown Jürgen Klopp just how to turn a season around.

Zidane is leading Real Madrid into the semifinals of the Champions League. Klopp will finish the season without a trophy.

A 0-0 draw at Anfield in the quarter-finals on Wednesday protected a 3-1 advantage from the first leg for Madrid. The record 13-time European champions are back in the semifinals -- where Chelsea awaits -- for the first time since 2018 when Zidane lifted the European Cup for a third consecutive season by beating Klopp's Liverpool in the final.

"We're all pulling together," Zidane said, "and this side always does that and it always wants more."

The victory in the 2018 final was Zidane's last game before ending his first stint in charge. He was tempted back in 2019 following disappointing results, but this season looked to be unraveling just a few months ago.

Trailing Atletico Madrid by 10 points in La Liga in January, the defending champions are now

just a single point behind and the double is on.

"We have to be really happy with what we're doing at the moment," Zidane said. "It's been a complicated season."

For Liverpool, it's turning into a miserable season -- which is now sure to end without a trophy.

It's quite a comedown for Klopp's side, which won the Champions League in 2019 -- after losing the 2018 final to Madrid -- and ended a 30-year English championship drought by winning the Premier League by an 18-point margin in 2020.

Now Liverpool is struggling to even make the Champions League places, sitting three points outside the top four with seven games to go.

Liverpool created chance after chance but Mohamed Salah, Roberto Firmino and Sadio Mane could find no way past goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois and a makeshift defense that stifled a front three that has endured a season of frustration.

"We knew we had the first leg advantage, but we played to win," Madrid midfielder Casemiro said. "They played with a lot of intensity,

they've got a great team and coach, but we worked hard. We didn't rest on our laurels, and that's ultimately what decided it."

A scene of many memorable European comebacks, Anfield lacked the fans who have so often inspired Liverpool in similar situations.

"You can't not take the chances we had tonight," said Liverpool midfielder James Milner, who had an early shot pushed over by Courtois.

"We had more than enough chances to do what we needed to and we didn't take them." The only way Liverpool supporters could make their presence felt was outside the stadium with a red haze of flares greeting the teams before the game -- and one of the Madrid buses being hit by an object that smashed a window.

"We condemn unequivocally the actions that led to Real Madrid's team bus being damaged during its arrival to Anfield this evening," Liverpool said in a statement.

"It is totally unacceptable and shameful behaviour of a few individuals. We sincerely apologise to our visitors for any distress caused."

Declare Journalists Frontline Workers, Get Them Vaccinated On Priority: Editors Guild To Govt



NEW DELHI: The Editors Guild of India on Thursday urged the Union government to declare journalists as frontline workers and they be allowed priority vaccination against coronavirus, along with other frontline workers, it said.

Without the protection of vaccination, media persons are finding it very difficult to discharge their professional responsibilities, the Guild pointed out.

The EGI said therefore, it calls upon the Union government to immediately get all journalists, regardless of age, vaccinated so that there is no disruption in their work during this critical time.

India saw its highest single-day rise of 2,00,739 COVID-19 infections, pushing the country's tally of cases to 1,40,74,564, according to official data released Thursday. PTI

The Editors Guild of India (EGI)

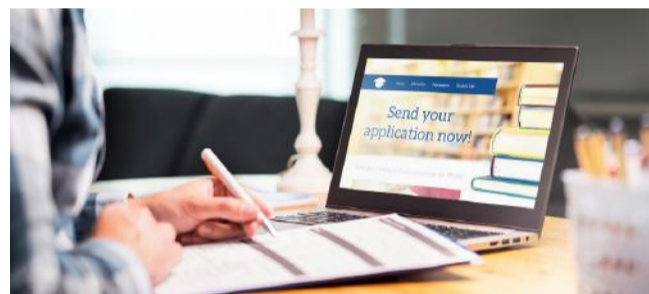
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JNU Extends Date For Thesis Submission By M Phil, M Tech, Ph D Students



NEW DELHI: The Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) on Thursday announced extension of the last date for submission of thesis by M Phil, M Tech and Ph D students.

The university in December last year had given an extension of six months till June 30 for submission of thesis by the research scholars.

In a notice dated April 9, the university announced that all the terminal M Phil, M Tech and Ph D students will be able to submit their thesis by December 31 this year.

"In pursuance of UGC Public Notice No.F.1-10/2020 (CPPP-1), dated 16 March, 2021 and in continuation of JNU Circular No. Eval./10/AC/2020, dated 10 December, 2020, a further extension

of six months beyond 30.06.2021, i.e. till 31 December, 2021 has been granted for submission of thesis by terminal M.Phil/M.Tech/Ph.D students of the university, including students registered under 9(b).

"In addition, the extension will also be applicable to all other terminal M.Phil/M.Tech/Ph.D students, whose thesis are due for submission by 30 June, 2021," it said.

The varsity has also granted extension of six months for submission of "evidence of publication and presentation in two conferences, wherever applicable".

However, the tenure of fellowship of M.Phil/Ph.D will remain the same, it added.

NEET Postponed In View Of Rising Number Of Covid-19 Cases: Vardhan



Agenceis

NEW DELHI: In view of a spike in the number of COVID-19 cases, the National Eligibility-Cum-Entrance test (NEET), which was scheduled to be held on April 18, has been postponed, Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan said on Thursday.

"In light of the surge in #COVID19 cases, Govt has decided to postpone #NEETPG2021 exam which was earlier scheduled to be held on April 18. Next date to be decided later. Decision has been taken keeping wellbeing of our young medical students in mind," he said in a tweet.

US, NATO Pull-Out Of Afghanistan Raises "Tremendous Concerns" For India: Experts



Agenceis

WASHINGTON: After the withdrawal of the US and NATO troops from Afghanistan by September 11, India will have tremendous concern on the resurgence of the Taliban and Afghanistan being used as a safe haven for terrorists, according to experts in Washington.

US President Joe Biden on Wednesday announced that all American troops would be withdrawn from Afghanistan by September 11 this year to end the country's longest war. Following suit, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) said it will also pull out its troops from Afghanistan.

President Biden said his administration will ask other countries in the region to do more to support Afghanistan, especially Pakistan, as well as Russia, China, India, and Turkey. "They all have a significant stake in the stable future for Afghanistan," Joe Biden said.

"We will not conduct a hasty rush to the exit. We'll do it responsibly, deliberately, and safely. And we will do it in full coordination with our allies and partners, who now have more forces in Afghanistan than we do," he said.

But, US experts said regional countries, especially India will view the complete withdrawal of American troops from Afghanistan with tremendous concern and the role of the Taliban terrorists after the pull out of the Western forces from the war-torn country.

"Regional countries, especially India, will have tremendous concerns about the US pullout from Afghanistan and the likelihood of a Taliban resurgence in the country. Lisa Curtis, who was Deputy Assistant to the President and NSC Senior Director for South and Central Asia from 2017-2021 under the previous Donald Trump administration, told news agency Press Trust of India.

"When the Taliban controlled Afghanistan in the late 1990s, they welcomed militants and terrorists of all stripes to train, recruit, and fundraise from Afghanistan. Many of those terrorists, including the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), trained for operations in India, such as the 2001 attack on the Indian Parliament," Ms Curtis said.

An eminent foreign policy and national security expert with over 20 years of service in the US government, Ms Curtis now is a senior fellow and director of the Indo-Pacific Security Program at the Center for a New American Security think-tank.

"Indian officials also remember the close cooperation between the Taliban and terrorists who in December 1999 hijacked an Indian airliner. India may seek to use its role in regional efforts to bring peace and stability to Afghanistan, like the recent UN effort, to press its goal of ensuring Afghan territory cannot be used by anti-India terrorists," Ms Curtis said.

"India will worry about Taliban

controlled territory being a safe haven for terrorists again," former Pakistan Ambassador to the US, Husain Haqqani, who is now Director for South and Central Asia at the Hudson Institute think-tank, told news agency Press Trust of India.

The real question now is whether after withdrawing its troops, the US will continue to help the government in Kabul and will the Afghan people be able to keep the Taliban at bay, Mr Haqqani said.

"India and Pakistan do not have the luxury of distance that the US has and will remain involved in Afghanistan. Pakistan is too deeply tied to the Taliban to stop supporting them now though it should be concerned about the adverse impact Taliban ideology would further have on Pakistan," Mr Haqqani said in response to a question.

India has voiced grave concern over the volatile situation in Afghanistan. "Violence and bloodshed are daily realities and the conflict itself has shown little sign of abatement, whatever may be the promises," External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said at the Ministerial Conference of Heart of Asia - Istanbul Process on Afghanistan in Dushanbe on March 30.

"For a durable peace in Afghanistan, what we need is a genuine double peace, that is, peace within Afghanistan and peace around Afghanistan. It requires harmonising the interests of all, both within and around that country," he said at the conference hosted by Tajikistan.

Decision On Emergency Use Applications For Foreign Covid Vaccines In 3 Days

Agenceis

NEW DELHI: India's drug regulator will take a decision on applications seeking approval for restricted emergency use of foreign produced COVID-19 vaccines within three working days from the date of submission, the government said on Thursday.

The moves comes at a time when India is battling a surge in COVID-19 cases with over two lakh cases reported in a single day on Thursday, taking the total number of cases to 1,40,74,564.

The Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO), which is headed by the Drug Controller General of India (DCGI), will process applications for registration certificate (registration of overseas manufacturing site and product; in this case COVID vaccine) and import license within three working days from the date of approval of restricted use in emergency situation.

The CDSCO has issued detailed guidelines specifying regulatory

pathway for approval of foreign approved COVID-19 vaccines after the central government on Tuesday decided to fast-track emergency approvals for all coronavirus jabs that have been given a similar nod by the WHO or regulators in the United States, Europe, Britain or Japan.

The Union Health Ministry on Thursday issued regulatory pathways for foreign produced COVID-19 vaccines according to which the CDSCO has prepared detailed guidelines specifying regulatory pathway.

Applicants for grant of approval for restricted use in emergency situation may be submitted to the CDSCO and the application can be made by the foreign manufacturer through its Indian subsidiary or through its authorised agent in India (in case it does not have an Indian subsidiary), the ministry said.

"The CDSCO will process such applications for restricted use in emergency situation and the DCGI will consider and take a decision within 3 working days from date of submission of complete appli-

cation by the applicant," it said.

The DCGI will issue permission for restricted use in emergency situation with the condition that the vaccine shall be used as per guidelines prescribed under the National COVID-19 Vaccination Programme.

The first 100 beneficiaries of such vaccines shall be assessed for 7 days for safety outcomes before it is rolled out for further vaccination program and the applicant shall initiate conduct of post approval bridging clinical trials within 30 days of such approval.

Applications for restricted use in emergency situation for such vaccines may be accompanied by bridging trial protocol, application for import registration certificate and application for import license, according to the pathway issued.

As per the existing protocol of CDSCO for batch release of vaccines, each batch of the vaccine will be released by the Central Drugs Laboratory (CDL), Kasauli before it can be used as per the guidelines prescribed under the National COVID-19 vaccination programme.

Over 1,700 Test COVID-19 Positive At Haridwar Kumbh Over 5 Days: Official



Agenceis

HARIDWAR: A total of 1,701 people have tested positive for COVID-19 in the Haridwar Kumbh Mela area from April 10 to 14 confirming fears that one of the world's largest religious gatherings may contribute further to the rapid rise in coronavirus cases.

The numbers include both RT-PCR and Rapid Antigen Test reports of devotees and seers of different akharas (ascetic groups) over the five-day period in the entire Mela Kshetra extending from Haridwar to Devprayag, Haridwar Chief Medical Officer Shambhu Kumar Jha said today.

More RT-PCR test reports are awaited and the trend shows that the number of infected persons in the Kumbh Mela Kshetra is likely to climb to 2,000, he said.

The Kumbh Mela area is spread over 670 hectares covering parts of Haridwar, Tehri and Dehradun districts, including Rishikesh.

A majority of the 48.51 lakh people who took part in the last two royal baths (Shahi Snan)

held on the occasion of Somwati Amavasya on April 12 and Mesh Sankranti on April 14 were seen openly violating COVID norms like wearing of face masks and social distancing.

Despite their best efforts, the police could not impose the standard operating procedures (SOPs) on the seers of akharas and the ash-smeared ascetics thronging Har Ki Pauri ghat on the two major bathing days due to severe time constraints.

As the 13 akharas had to take their holy dip at Har Ki Pauri in accordance with their allotted time slots before sunset, the police and paramilitary personnel were hard-pressed to ensure each of them vacated the ghat before the arrival of the next akhara in line to prevent chaos.

As seers were averse to undergoing RT-PCR tests till the Mesh Sankranti Shahi Snan of April 14, both testing and inoculation in the Kumbh Kshetra including the areas allocated to the akharas are likely to be stepped up in the coming days, Mr Jha said.

Arvind Kejriwal Announces Weekend Curfew In Delhi



Agenceis

NEW DELHI: Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday announced sweeping restrictions, including a weekend curfew and the closure of malls, gymnasiums, spas and auditoriums, in a bid to break the chain of the COVID-19 infection in the national capital.

He also said there is no shortage of hospital beds in Delhi and over 5,000 are still available for COVID patients.

There will be no in-house dining in restaurants and cinema halls will be allowed to operate with only 30 per cent capacity, the chief minister said at an online press conference a day after the city recorded the biggest single-day jump of 17,282 COVID-19 cases.

Kejriwal said the essential services and weddings will not be affected by the weekend curfew and passes will be provided to those attending weddings.

Those going to hospitals, railway stations and airports will also be issued curfew passes, he added.

Kejriwal said the reason behind the weekend curfew was that on these days, people often indulged in recreation and other such activities that could be "curtailed" and "curbed" without much inconvenience to them.

"Therefore, the weekend curfew is being imposed to break the

chain (of COVID-19) and prevent contact among people.

"But we will not allow any inconvenience to those involved in essential services like going to hospitals, railway stations or airports and also weddings. We will issue passes for their movement quickly and without harassment," he said.

The government has already imposed a night curfew in the city from 10 pm to 5 am till April 30 in a bid to check the spread of the coronavirus.

Kejriwal also said there is no shortage of hospital beds in Delhi and over 5,000 are still available for COVID patients.

Efforts to increase the number of beds on a large scale will be made, he said and appealed to people not to "insist" on beds in particular hospitals.

Restaurants will be allowed to do home delivery, Kejriwal announced, adding that only one weekly market in a zone will be allowed to open per day and steps will be taken to control the crowds in those.

The government scaled down the occupancy of restaurants and cinema halls to 50 per cent of their seating capacity last week in view of the rising number of COVID-19 cases. Kejriwal said the number of cases is rising every day in Delhi and the restrictions were needed to check the spread of the virus.

Google Pledges Funds For 250K Vaccinations Towards Vaccine Delivery In Low, Middle Income Countries

Agenceis

WASHINGTON: Google on Thursday pledged funds for 250,000 COVID-19 vaccinations and technical assistance towards vaccine delivery in low- and middle-income countries amidst a surge in infections across the world.

The internet search giant also announced that it is helping to fund pop-up vaccine sites in the US and committing an additional USD 250 million in Ad Grants to connect people to accurate vaccine information.

"We're also announcing that Google Cloud is launching a virtual agent where people without internet access can schedule vaccine appointments and ask questions about eligibility and availability over the phone - in up to 28 languages and dialects," it said.

The announcement came as Google's Chief Health Officer Dr Karen DeSalvo joined an event co-hosted by Gavi - the

vaccine alliance - and the US Secretary of State Antony Blinken to kick off a campaign to fund vaccines for low and middle income countries.

In a blog post, Google said more people have access to the COVID-19 vaccine, it is making it easier to learn why, when and where one can get immunised.

"Today, you can now find vaccination locations on Google Maps and Search in the US, Canada, France, Chile, India and Singapore," it said.

Acknowledging that overcoming the pandemic will require a coordinated effort on a global scale, Google said that to do its part it is providing 250,000 COVID-19 vaccines to countries in need, helping fund pop-up vaccine sites in the US, and committing an additional USD 250 million in Ad Grants to connect people to accurate vaccine information.

The announcement came as Gavi, The Vaccine Alliance, launched a drive for addi-



tional funding to secure vaccines for people in low and middle-income countries.

Google.org is funding 250,000 vaccinations and providing Gavi with pro bono technical assistance to accelerate global distribution.

"We're also kicking off an employee giving campaign, and both the Gavi Matching Fund and Google.org will match each donation to triple the impact," it said.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, hundreds of Google employees have

helped organisations connect people with up-to-date information - particularly in communities that are not typically reached by mainstream public service announcements.

"For example, we're working with UnidosUS on a bilingual vaccination campaign that to date has reached more than two million people in hard-hit communities in Miami, Chicago, Houston, NYC and LA. We've conducted research with the World Health Organisation on what information improves vaccine confidence, and governments worldwide are using these insights to inform their public service announcements," Google said.

To expand this work, Google said that it is committing an additional USD 250 million in Ad Grants to governments, community and public health organisations, including the WHO, that will fund more than 2.5 billion vaccine-related PSAs. This brings Google's total commitment for

COVID-related public service announcements to more than USD 800 million.

"As we've learned throughout the pandemic, no one is safe from COVID-19 until everyone is safe. Getting vaccines to everyone around the world is a challenging, but necessary, undertaking. We'll keep doing our part and working together until we get there," Google said.

The World Health Organisation has warned that the world needs a "reality check" on the state of the pandemic, as countries abandon restrictions despite four weeks of rising deaths and seven weeks of rising cases globally.

Over 4.4 million COVID-19 infections have been recorded across the world last week. New deaths have increased by 11 per cent, the WHO said.

There have been 138,284,275 confirmed COVID-19 cases globally and the death toll stands at 2,973,179, according to Johns Hopkins University.