



P3 CITY

SRINAGAR TRADERS SUBMIT MEMORANDUM OF DEMANDS TO ADV KHAN

A traders delegation Tuesday called on Advisor to Lieutenant Governor, Farooq Khan in his office chambers and submitted a memorandum demanding several measures to be taken by the...

P6 THINK

BENEFITS OF FAIR COMPENSATION LAW YET TO REACH J&K POST ARTICLE 370

Several commitments were made to the people of J&K on the floor of Parliament when J&K Reorganisation Bill 2019 was passed on August 5th 2019 which led....



P5 STATE

NATIONAL CONFERENCE NOT AGAINST DELIMITATION: DR FAROOQ

The Jammu and Kashmir National Conference President and Member of Parliament Dr. Farooq Abdullah on Tuesday said that the party will uphold the interests...



When you have a dream, you've got to grab it and never let go.

—Carol Burnett

NEWS DIGEST**Fire At Vaishno Devi Shrine Complex**

JAMMU: A fire broke out at Vaishno Devi shrine complex in Jammu Kashmir's Reasi district on Tuesday, damaging a cash counter, even as the 'yatra' to the famous temple in Trikuta hills remained unaffected, officials said. No one was injured in the fire, which broke out at the structure adjoining the 'Bhawan' (sanctum sanctorum), they said. "At around 4 pm, ● [More On P10](#)

Soldier Found Dead In Jammu

JAMMU: An army soldier posted in a camp near the Line of Control in Akhnor sub-division area of Jammu district was found dead with mysterious bullet injuries on Tuesday. An official said that the army soldier of Havaldar rank was posted in the army camp at Jogwan in Akhnor, where he received bullet injury under mysterious conditions, ● [More On](#)

Electric Shock Kills Teen Student

SRINAGAR: A teenager died on spot after receiving electric shock in Sumbal area of north Kashmir's Bandipora district, reports said Tuesday. 16-year-old Zahid Ahmed Teli, son of Abdul Hamid, a resident of Nesbal Sumbal was watering vegetables when he came into contact with a live wire of the electric motor, news agency KNT reported. Teli, a 10th class student died instantly due to the electric shock.

Youth Slips To Death

SRINAGAR: In a tragic incident, a 22-year-old youth died after he accidentally fell into the waterfall in Aharbal area of Darnhal Hanjipora in South Kashmir's Kulgam district on Tuesday afternoon. An official said that a youth identified as Suhaib Ahmad Dar (22) son of Shabir Ahmad Dar of Nowgam Shangus visited Aharbal waterfall along with his friends and fell accidentally into the waterfall. "Rescuers immediately swung into ● [More On P10](#)

Panch's Brother Fires Shot In Kupwara

KUPWARA: Brother of a Panch allegedly fired from his 12-Bore rifle after unknown persons pelleted stones on the house of Panch in Kalaroos area of North Kashmir's Kupwara district. The incident occurred during the intervening night of 7 and 8 June. Sources told news agency Kashmir News Trust that some unknown persons pelleted stones on the house of a Panch at Shundi Thayen ● [More On P10](#)



KO Photo: Abid Bhat

Srinagar Sizzles At 34.3 Deg Celsius, Hottest Day Of The Season

4- Day Wet Spell From Friday To Bring Mercury Down: MeT Dept

ZAID BIN SHABIR

SRINAGAR: This capital city on Tuesday witnessed the hottest day of the season with mercury settling at 34.3 degree Celsius even as the weather department predicted a relief from the scorching heat wave from Friday with a

four day wet spell.

According to the Meteorological Department (MeT) officials, Srinagar recorded on Tuesday the hottest day of the season with mercury touching 34.3 degree Celsius mark. The temperature, officials said was

6 degrees above normal and is likely to fall after a three-day wet spell beginning June 11.

Deputy Director, Meteorological Department (MeT), Mukhtar Ahmed told Kashmir Observer on Tuesday that the Union Territory has enjoyed the hot weather conditions for the past ● [More On P10](#)

Cop Booked For Using Forged Documents To Get Job

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: The Crime Branch of Jammu and Kashmir Police on Tuesday registered a criminal case against a policeman for forging documents related to his date of birth and academic qualification to secure a job in the armed police 23 years ago.

Constable Vijay Kumar, a resident of Nowshera area of Rajouri district, was booked under relevant sections of law after a preliminary verification into a complaint substantiated the allegations of fraud committed by him, a spokesman of the Crime Branch Jammu said.

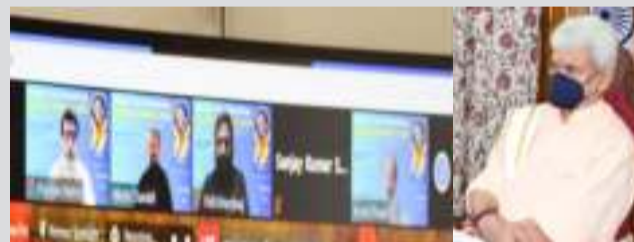
He said a written complaint was received in Crime Branch from Roshan Lal, also a resident of Nowshera, claiming that Kumar who is presently working as constable in J-K Police and serving in the second battalion of the Indian Reserve Police got appointed in police department by producing fake ● [More On P10](#)

J&K Number 2 In The Country In Fight Against Corona: LG

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir has achieved the number two slot in the country in availability of medicines, hospital beds and in the vaccination process in its fight against the coronavirus pandemic, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said Tuesday.

The LG made these remarks while delivering a keynote address at the Project Yug Parivartan Global Summit-2021 being held from June 4th - 8th through virtual mode, here at Raj Bhavan, an official spokesperson said Tuesday. While addressing



the summit, the LG said that any challenge can be met by strengthening community participation and equity.

"Whether it is a natural disaster or a man-made crisis, the community will have to be empowered and self-reliant for it and that can be done by strengthening health and economic security. We are

making sure that transparent, accessible, and responsive governance works for the upliftment of every citizen of J&K," Sinha said, as per an official spokesperson.

Giving details of handling the response and recovery process in J&K, the LG said that after Kerala, Jammu and Kashmir is at ● [More On P10](#)

Union Road Secretary Calls On LG

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha said on Tuesday that all major road and highway projects under execution in the Union Territory shall be completed within the set timeframes to facilitate the trade and smooth movement of the public. The LG made these remarks during a discussion with Giridhar Aramane, Secretary, Road Transport ● [More On P10](#)

Troop Movement Triggers Rumours In Kashmir

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: The return of around 6,000 paramilitary personnel to Jammu and Kashmir after election duty elsewhere has triggered large-scale rumours, ranging from further bifurcation of the union territory to announcement of elections after realigning districts, for the last three days.

The wave has not left

even mainstream politicians untouched with People's Conference chief Sajjad Lone, who has again found himself in favour with quarters in the central government, tweeting, "Seems all rumours rumoured to b rumours are rumoured to have been rumours after all. But rumours r still rumouring." The rumours started spreading after the return of around 60 companies ● [More On P10](#)

Ladakh Reserves Jobs Exclusively For Locals

Agencies

Srinagar: Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh on Tuesday announced recruitment rules for the newly established Union Territory, reserving the jobs exclusively for the locals.

"No person shall be qualified for appointment to the Service unless the person is a

Resident of Union territory of Ladakh," reads the clause 11 of the Union territory of Ladakh Employment (Subordinate) Service Recruitment Rules, 2021 issued by the Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh in exercise of the powers conferred by S.O 282(E) dated 21.01.2020.

Service have been defined to mean "service ● [More On P10](#)

Saint, Sovereign, Souvenir: The Legend of Ruins

Romaan Arora

MALSHAHI BAGH, Ganderbal –He may be a man of few words, but Abdul Rashid Wani's devotion for the elapsed "spiritual powerhouse" makes him a vocal countryside campaigner.

In commoner's robes, the native in his mid-fifties has been religiously traversing the heart of wilderness to prevent the royal's relic from becoming another faded piece of history.

The sharp-nosed guardian grapples with human greed, usurping attempts, and the routine rustic intrusions to safeguard the remnants of Kashmir's Mughal era.

Be it sun, snow or shower, Rashid has been making his way through the dense orchard for a



moral duty driven by the transcendent reality of the ruins. The caretaker of crumbled heritage is also a chronicler of a devotional prince and his

platonic Kashmir connection.

"It was once a grandiose structure," says Rashid, the guardian bearing stark resemblance with the tumbledown Mughal-era mosque.



"But now, it has become a crumpling gallery of our glorious past."

Near the rumbling Srinagar-Leh highway, the Malshah Masjid

sits unruffled at the foothills of lush-green Dignibal mountains. The meditative calm of the place gets sporadically shattered by the crowing of roosters and the

mowing of cows.

The perfect pastoral picture, however, turns poignant with the sight of the Mughal marvel—whose multi-storey Hamam has now become a rundown glory.

The 380-year-old structure sits in the middle of a 360-kanal apple orchard and has shades of Pather Masjid of Old Srinagar.

But unlike the imposing heritage signpost on Jhelum, the Ganderbal mosque has failed to captivate attention of explorers and travellers.

In a poetic lament, this grandeur of yore seems to have long lost its soul. And what's left now is a shell shadowed by the self-styled custodian.

The heritage demise is also visible through extensive cracks in the 'house of god' hardly

witnessing any faith footfall now.

But back in the day, the heritage symbol had established a thriving hamlet by the name of Malshahi Bagh. As per Rashid, the homestead was established after the mosque was constructed around 1650 AD.

Malshah Masjid was constructed on the orders of Mughal prince Dara Shikoh for his spiritual leader, Mullah Shah Badakhshi, popular in Kashmir as Akhund Mullah Shah, in the middle of 17th century.

Legend has it that the favourite son of Mughal emperor Shah Jahan wanted to enter the Qadriya order of Sufism under the patronage of Mian Mir, the faith-healer of emperor Jahangir, grandfather of Dara Shikoh.

By the time ● [More On P10](#)



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

**OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT
REGIONAL TRANSPORT OFFICER
BUDGAM KASHMIR
NOTICE**

Whereas an application has been recieved from one.

Shri: Abdul Rashid Dar
S/o: Ghulam Ahmad Dar
R/o: Checkpora Kralpora Chadoora Budgam
owner of vehicle bearing
Registration No: JK04C-5173 for cancellation of
hire purchase agreement with M/S J&K Bank B/
UMoving Sectt. Srinagar.

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

No. ARTO/ BUDGAM.653
Dated 08/06/2021

Assistant Regional Transport officer
Budgam Kashmir

**OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT
REGIONAL TRANSPORT OFFICER
BUDGAM KASHMIR
NOTICE**

Whereas an application has been recieved from one.

Shri: Nisar Ahmad Lone
S/o: Ab Rahman Lone
R/o: Nigeen Colony Paripora Magam owner of vehicle bearing
Registration No: JK04F-5794 for cancellation
of hire purchase agreement with M/S J&K Bank B/U Tangmarg .



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

No. ARTO/ BUDGAM.654
Dated 08/06/2021

Assistant Regional Transport officer
Budgam Kashmir

mc b

**OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT
REGIONAL TRANSPORT OFFICER
BUDGAM KASHMIR**

NOTICE

Whereas an application has been recieved from one.

Shri : Mohammad Jabar Bhat
S/o: Ali Mohammad Bhat
R/o: Ichigam Budgam owner of vehicle bearing

Registration No: JK04E-6139 for cancellation of hire purchase agreement with M/S J&K Bank B/U Ichigam.



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

No. ARTO/ BUDGAM.651
Dated 08/06/2021

Assistant Regional Transport officer
Budgam Kashmir

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT REGIONAL TRANSPORT OFFICER BUDGAM KASHMIR

NOTICE

Where a application for transfer of ownership has been recieved from one. Shri : Nusrat Ali Hakak S/o:
Ali Mohammad Hakak



R/o: Qamarwari Srinagar (Transferor) of LMV alto . Vehicle bearing registration number JK04A - 0142. Chasis number 00401393 Engine no. 4050854 Model 2004. in favour of

Shri.. Abdul Majeed Najar S/o. Khazir Mohammad Najar R/o Hatmula Kupwara (Transferee)



Now therefore it is notified for the information of the general public that objections if any to the proposed transfer of ownership shall be filed in writing in the office of the Assistant Regional Transport office ARTO Budgam within a period of 7 days from the date of publication of this notice in the daily newspaper Kashmir Observer.

No. ARTO/ BUDGAM.656
Dated 08/06/2021

mc b

Assistant Regional Transport officer
Budgam Kashmir

زعدالت اگیز کیلئے جسٹس ریٹ درجہ اول (تخصیص اراست ناگ) (بالا اجلاس
خواست منجانب: محمد رفیق حجام ولد عبدالرحیم حجام سہ ماہہ کوہ اراست ناگ
بغرض اراستی تاریخ پیدائش سرٹیفکیٹ بنام عنایار رفیق دختر محمد رفیق حجام
استیثار برادر ادا گاہی چرخ خاص وعام
حاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدہ میں سالانہ سلسلہ مذکورہ بانے عدالت میں ایک
خواست حلفی بیان پیش کیا ہے سال آخر کا تاریخ پیدائش 03-04-2020 ہے
ضممن میں حقیقت پیدائش کا لے گا خواہ ہے ہذا اثباتیہ مذکورہ کو اجرا کرنے
میں کسی شخص کو کوئی بھی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ ایک ہفتہ کے اندر اندر دوران دفتری
وقوت میں پیش کرے بصورت دیگر کوئی بھی اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔
تخصیص اراست ناگ

نائبت ساگام یا اجلاس نائب تحصیلدار ساگام

نمون درخواست منجاب : شاہد احمد کارولگل محمد کار ساگام تحصیل کوکر ناگ ضلع اینت ناگ

بمراہ حصول SC سرٹیفکیٹ

عالم مند رجسٹران الصدر میں ساکن ہے ایک درخواست بغرض حصول SC سرٹیفکیٹ دفتر بذاتیں کیا ہے۔ اس بارے میں عملہ فیلڈ سے رپورٹ طلب کیا گیا جس سے عیاں ہے کہ اس کے پچھلے درجہ سالوں سے مسلسل سکونت پزیر ہے اور ساکن / سائیل کا کتبہ بدل ہے۔

نمبر شمار	نام افراد کتبہ	عمر	پیشہ	آمدنی
01	مسماة رفیقہ یا نو بیوہ گل محمد کار	40 سال	گھر بیوہ کام	
02	عشش دخت گل محمد کار	20 سال	گھر بیوہ کام	
03	شاہد احمد کارولگل محمد کار	19 سال	زیر تعلیم	
04	یا در احمد کارولگل محمد کار	14 سال	=	

طو س کتبہ چار افراد پر مشتمل ہے لہذا زیر بحث سرٹیفکیٹ اجراء کرنے میں اگر کسی شخص کو دینی عذر یا اعتراض ہو تو وہ سات دن کے اندر اندر اپنا اعتراض معوجہ جوبات پیش کرے مبعاد گذرنے کے بعد کوئی عذر یا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا۔

نائب تحصیلدار ساگام

RNA



GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR

**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER,
MECHANICAL IRRIGATION DIVISION SRINAGAR,**

NEAR J&K BANK (ZALDAGAR)

Telefax No. 0194-2503195 e.mail Id: xenmidsrinagar@gmail.com

Sub:- *Extension in bidding time for this office Short Term e-NIT No. 02 OF 2021-22, Dated: 03-05-2021 for below mentioned work:-*

“Execution of various Electrical Works at LIS Dod Mohalla”.

Ref:- JK Government official e-Procurement portal Tender ID No. **2021_IFC_123660_3**

EXTENSION NOTICE 5

Due to **no** response to this office above referred e-NIT for the subject work, the critical dates are once again extended as under:-

Bid submission/ Document download / sale end Date	12/06/2021 at 1400 hrs
Date and time of Bid opening	14/06/2021 at 1400 hrs

Rest of the terms and conditions shall remain un-altered as laid down in the original e-NIT.

DIPK-2627/21

No. MIDS/Ts/ 840-45
Dated:- 07-06-2021

Sd/-
**Executive Engineer,
Mechanical Irrigation Division,**

The image shows the official logo of the Srinagar Development Authority (SDA) on the left, featuring a stylized mountain and cityscape. To the right of the logo, the text reads: "SRINAGAR DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY", "Bemina Bye Pass Near SKIMS Medical College, Srinagar, Kashmir-190018", and "TEL: 0194-24931911, FAX: 0194-2493180, EMAIL:srinagardevelopmentauthority@gmail.com". Below this, the heading "EXPRESSION OF INTEREST" is centered. The main body of the notice describes the authority's intention to empanel consultancy firms for urban infrastructure development projects, inviting Expression of Interest (EOI) from firms with requisite resources and experience. It lists the types of services required, including planning, design, and cost estimation. The notice also states that interested firms must have at least five years of experience in similar work. At the bottom, it provides information on how to obtain the EOI form, the registration fee, and the deadline for submission.

(Government of Union Territory Jammu & Kashmir)

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (R&B) LANDSCAPE DIVISION

NOTICE INVITING e-TENDERS

Fresh NIT No.e-15 /LSD/2021-22/153-158 DATED:-07-06-2021.
(Double Cover System) (Fresh of NIT 03)

For and on behalf of the President, of India e-tenders (In Double cover system) are invited on

Percentage basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with J&K **UT** Govt. CPWD, Railways and other

State/UT/Central Government Departments for the following works: -

S. No	Name of Work	Est. Cost (Rs. In Lacs)	Cost of T/Doc. In Rs.	Time of completion	Time & Date of Opening of tender (Technical Bid)	Class of Contractor
1	2	3	4	6	7	8
1	Face lifting by way of Painting (Carbonated Paint) on concrete work underneath deck slab/piers of Jhangir Chowk Flyover, Jhangir Chowk Flyover (old), Hyderabad Flyover, and TRC Flyover (Grade separator).	316.25	5500/-	(02 Cal Months)	15-06-2021	"AAY"/MSME

Position of AAA = Accorded
Position of funds = Available

1. Date of Issue of Tender Notice	07-06-2021
2. Period of downloading of bidding documents	From 07-06-2021 04:00 P.M to 14-06-2021 4.00 P.M.
3. Bid submission Start Date	08-06-2021 from 10:30 A.M
4. Bid Submission End Date	14-06-2021-2021 up to 4.00 P.M
5. Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	15-06-2021 at 11:00 AM in the Office of Superintending Engineer (SE, CRP) PWD(R&B) Kashmir Srinagar
6. Date & time of opening of Financial Bids (Online)	To be notified after technical bid evaluation is completed

SpeSpecial Conditions: -

- A. The Successful Bidder is bound to take up the work in multiple Shifts.**
- B. The Consultation Charges of about 02 % of the project cost for color designs shall be borne by executing agency.**
- C. The work on all Sites(Flyovers) should start simultaneously**

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

Note:-The Bidders are advised to read all conditions laid down in the NIT carefully before uploaded softcopy any short fall found in the soft copy the tender shall be rejected .

Note:- As per Circular issued by the Government of Jammu and Kashmir Civil Section Finance department vide No.OM No.A/24(2017)-651 dtd.07-06-2018 which reads as under :-

a) Furnishing of Hard Copies of bids immediately after submission of e-tender is dispensed with. The same should be obtained only from the Bidder who's declared 1st Lowest (L-1) after opening of financial bids.

b) The Cost of tenders should be collected by introducing E-challan/ or simply uploading a copy of necessary Treasury Challan/Receipt.

Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document fee in shape of Treasury Challan/ in favour of Executive Engineer (R&B) PWD(R&B) Landscape (tender inviting authority).

- 1. All Bidders has to submit Bid Security Declaration Form instead of Earnest money deposit (EMD) as per the circular of Finance Department (Bid Security Declaration Form is as per Annexure "A" below).**
- 2. The 1st lowest Bidder has to produce an amount equal to 3% of contract as performance security in shape of CDR/PDR within 07 days before fixation of contract and shall be released after successful completion of work.**

3. The date and time of opening of Bids shall be notified on Web Site www.jktenders.gov.in and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. **The bids of Responsive bidders shall be opened online on same Web Site in the Office of SE, CRP (tender receiving authority).**
4. The bids for the work shall remain **valid for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of bids.**
5. **Instruction to bidders regarding e-tendering process.**
- 5.1. Bidders are advised to download bid submission manual from the "Downloads" option as well as from "Bidders Manual Kit" on website www.jktenders.gov.in acquaint bid submission process.
- 5.2. To participate in bidding process, bidders have to get 'Digital Signature Certificate (DSC)' as per Information Technology Act-2000. Bidders can get digital certificate from any approved Vendor.
- 5.3. The bidders have to submit their bids online in electronic format with digital Signature.
No bid will be accepted in physical form.
- 5.4. Bids will be opened online as per time schedule mentioned in Para-1.

5.5. Bidders must ensure to upload scanned copy of all necessary documents with the bid.

Note:- Scan all the documents on 100 dpi with black and white option.

6. The department will not be responsible for delay in online submission due to any reasons.
7. Scanned copy of cost of tender document in shape of Treasury /E-Challan in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Landscape Division.
- 8. Bidders are advised not to make any change in BOQ (Bill of Quantities) contents. In no case they should attempt to create similar BOQ manually.**
9. **Price escalation and Taxes:-**The unit rates and prices shall be quoted by the bidder entirely in **Indian Rupees** and the rates quoted shall be deemed to include **price escalation and all taxes upto** completion of the work, unless otherwise specified. Deduction on account of taxes shall be made from the bills of the contractor on gross amount of the bill as per the rates prevailing at the time of recovery.

10. Bidders are advised to use "My Documents" area in their user on R&B E-Tendering portal to store such documents as are required.

11. In case of CRP and any other specified project, the relevant guidelines / standard bidding document shall be followed.

No. LD 904-RIO
DATED: 07-06-2021

DIPK-2594/21

Sd/-
Executive Engineer,
R&B Landscape Division Kashmir

Huge Internet Outage, Some Of World's Biggest Sites Go Down



NEARLY 21,000 Reddit users reported issues with the social media platform, while more than 2,000 users reported problems with Amazon, according to outage monitoring website Downtdetector.com.

Multiple outages hit social media, government and news websites across the globe on Tuesday morning, with some reports pointing to a glitch at US-based cloud computing services provider Fastly.

Reuters could not immediately confirm the issue affecting the sites.

Fastly said it was investigating "the potential impact to performance with our CDN services," according to its website.

Most of Fastly's coverage areas were facing "Degraded Performance", the website showed. Separately, Amazon.com Inc's

retail website also seemed to be down. Amazon was not immediately available to comment.

Nearly 21,000 Reddit users reported issues with the social media platform, while more than 2,000 users reported problems with Amazon, according to outage monitoring website Downtdetector.com.

Amazon's Twitch was also experiencing an outage, according to Downtdetector's website.

Websites operated by news outlets including the Financial Times, the Guardian, the New York Times and Bloomberg News also faced outages. -REUTERS

Pakistan Train Crash Death Count Rises As Rescuers Comb Through Wreckage



Agence France-Presse

DAHARKI, PAKISTAN: Pakistani engineers Tuesday combed the mangled wreckage of two trains that collided in a remote farming region, an accident that killed dozens and highlighted huge safety problems on the nation's dilapidated rail network.

At least 63 people were killed early Monday when a high-speed passenger train knifed through carriages of another express that had derailed minutes earlier near Daharki in Sindh province.

Army and civil engineers have cleared much of the wreckage of carriages crushed like tin cans in the collision, and welders were finalising repairs to the damaged rails.

A heavy stench of diesel, sweat and blood hung over the scene, with workers saving bodies were still being pulled overnight from mangled carriages.

"This is the most colossal accident I have seen in about 10 years of service," railway engineer Jahan Zeb told AFP, his eyes puffy from sleeplessness.

The Millat Express was heading from Karachi to Sargodha when it derailed, its carriages strewn over the tracks as the Sir Syed Express from Rawalpindi arrived minutes later in the opposite direction, smashing into it.

The accident has reignited

debate about the parlous state of Pakistan's public transport system -- particularly a rail network that has seen little investment in decades.

It is not known what caused the Millat Express to jump its tracks, but Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid -- a former railways minister -- described that section of the line as "a shambles", while current minister Azam Swati called it "really dangerous".

Usman Abdullah, the deputy provincial commissioner, said that 63 people had died in the accident, issuing two lists that named 51 victims and marked 12 others as unidentified.

They ranged from a months-old infant to a woman who was 81.

Khan Mohammad, station master at nearby Reti junction, said more lives could have been saved if they had just a few more minutes after the derailment.

"I saw a six- or seven-year-old girl trapped underneath the locomotive, her knee stuck in the track," he said.

"We somehow rescued her, and she was miraculously alive."

But then the oncoming train hit. "If there had been a delay of about 10 minutes, this accident could have been averted," he said.

The double accident happened around 3:30 am (2230 GMT) when most of the 1,200 passengers aboard the two trains would have been dozing.

US Report Concluded COVID-19 May Have Leaked From Wuhan Lab: Report



A report on the origins of COVID-19 by a US government national laboratory concluded that the hypothesis claiming the virus leaked from a Chinese lab in Wuhan is plausible and deserves further investigation, The Wall Street Journal reported on Monday, citing people familiar with the classified document.

The study was prepared in May 2020 by the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in California and was referred by the State Department when it conducted an inquiry into

the pandemic's origins during the final months of the Trump administration, the report said.

Lawrence Livermore's assessment drew on genomic analysis of the COVID-19 virus, the Journal said.

Lawrence Livermore declined to comment on the Wall Street Journal report.

President Joe Biden said last month he had ordered aides to find answers to the origin of the virus.

US intelligence agencies are considering two likely scenarios - that the virus resulted from a laboratory accident or

that it emerged from human contact with an infected animal - but they have not come to a conclusion, he said.

A still-classified US intelligence report circulated during former President Donald Trump's administration alleged that three researchers at China's Wuhan Institute of Virology became so ill in November 2019 that they sought hospital care, US government sources said.

US officials have accused China of a lack of transparency on the virus' origin, a charge Beijing has denied. -REUTERS

US Pullout From Afghanistan Half Done, But Questions Remain

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

The US withdrawal from Afghanistan is more than half done, and US officials say that while it could be completed by July 4, the final exit of equipment and troops more likely will be later in the summer.

As early as this week, the top US commander for the Middle East, Gen. Frank McKenzie, will give Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin a range of military options for securing the US embassy in Afghanistan and providing counterterrorism support from outside the country once the withdrawal is complete, officials said.

The number of American troops needed for the overall security missions inside Afghanistan will depend on a variety of requirements, and could range from roughly a couple hundred to a bit less than 1,000, officials said.

McKenzie's deliberations are a reminder that much about US postwar support for Afghanistan remains uncertain, including how to protect Afghans who worked with the US government from reprisals and how to avoid an intelligence void that could hamper US early warning of extremist threats inside Afghanistan.

At stake is not just a political verdict on President Joe Biden's judgment about the risk posed by renewed instability in Afghanistan, but also the legacy of an American war that was launched 20 years ago in re-



sponse to the September 11 terrorist attacks and that imperceptibly morphed into what Biden calls this forever war.

McKenzie is expected to provide options on the amount of aerial surveillance and drones needed to keep an eye on any potential resurgence of al-Qaida, Islamic State or other militant groups. Those options will involve US aircraft from ships at sea and air bases in the Gulf region, such as Al Dhafra air base in the United Arab Emirates. And they could range from persistent US overwatch to a more minimal presence.

The officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss planning details, said there are no options yet for basing US troops or aircraft in nations neighboring Afghanistan, because those possibilities require diplomatic negotiations. Any agreements with countries such as Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan or Uzbekistan would be difficult because there would be Russian opposition.

McKenzie told reporters Monday that the withdrawal from

Afghanistan is on pace and continuing very smoothly. He said it was about halfway finished, but provided no details. Other officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the pullout was more than half completed but provided no specifics.

Officials acknowledge that the withdrawal so far has largely involved removing or otherwise disposing of the mountain of equipment, gadgetry, aircraft and other war materials that accumulated in Afghanistan over the years -- not the departure of troops. Officials say the troops who are needed to secure and execute the withdrawal will be among the last to leave.

McKenzie will give Austin estimates on how many troops will be needed to secure the embassy and the airport. Turkish troops have provided security at part of the airport, and negotiations are underway to determine if that will continue. At least some American troops are likely to be needed at least in the near term to ensure that diplomats can come and go safely from the airport.

China To Offer COVID-19 Vaccine To Children As Young As Three

Agence France-Presse

BEIJING, CHINA: China has approved the emergency use of a Covid-19 vaccine for those as young as three, the drugmaker confirmed Tuesday, making it the first country to offer jabs to young children.

Since the coronavirus first emerged in central China, Beijing has mostly managed to bring the country's outbreak under control, and has administered over 777 million vaccine doses after a sluggish start.

A spokesperson for Sinovac told AFP its vaccine had been approved for use on children.

"In recent days, the Sinovac vaccine was approved for emergency use in three- to 17-year-olds," the spokesperson said.

But he did not confirm when the young children would be able to start receiving the shots, saying the schedule for the rollout will be decided by the National Health Commission "according to China's current epidemic prevention and control needs and vaccine supply".

The company has completed early phase trials of the vaccine in children and adolescents, with results to be published shortly in the Lancet scientific journal, the spokesperson added.

State broadcaster CCTV reported over the weekend that an unnamed official in the State Council's epidemic response task force had said vaccines had



been approved for children, and "the safety and effectiveness" had been proven.

A spokesperson for China's other major vaccine, Sinopharm, said that experts had demonstrated the effectiveness of its vaccine in children, but didn't confirm whether it had been approved for use.

Chinese officials have said they are aiming to inoculate 70 percent of the population of 1.41 billion by the end of this year.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has approved both the Sinopharm and Sinovac vaccines for emergency use in adults aged 18 and older, and both jabs are being administered in several countries around the world.

While the WHO does not currently recommend vaccinating children against coronavirus, the United States, Britain, Singapore and the European Union have approved the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for those as young as 12.

China reported 33 new Covid-19 cases Tuesday, including 19 in southern Guangdong province where authorities have been battling a local outbreak.

Canada Truck Driver Kills Muslim Family Of 4 In Hate Attack: Police

Agence France-Presse

OTTAWA: A man driving a pick-up truck slammed into and killed four members of a Muslim family in the south of Canada's Ontario province, in what police said Monday was a "premeditated" attack.

A 20-year-old suspect wearing a vest "like body armor" fled the scene after the attack on Sunday evening, and was arrested at a mall seven kilometers (four miles) from the intersection in London, Ontario where it happened, said Detective Superintendent Paul Waight.

"There is evidence that this was a planned, premeditated act, motivated by hate. It is believed that these victims were targeted because they were Muslim," he told a news conference.

The names of the victims were not released, but they include a 74-year-old woman, a 46-year-old man, a 44-year-old woman and a 15-year-old girl -- together representing three generations of the same family, according to London mayor Ed Holder.

A nine-year-old boy was also hospitalized following the attack and is recovering.

"Let me be clear, this was an act of mass murder perpetrated against Muslims, against Londoners, rooted in unspeakable hatred," said Holder. Identified as Nathaniel Veltman, the suspect has been charged with four counts of first degree murder and one count of attempted murder.

"Out for a walk"

Waight said local authorities are also liaising with federal police and the attorney general about adding



"possible terrorism charges."

At about 8:40 pm on Sunday (0040 GMT Monday), according to police, the five family members were walking together along a sidewalk when a black pick-up truck "mounted the curb and struck" them as they waited to cross the intersection.

Waight offered few details of the investigation, but noted that the suspect's social media posts were reviewed by police.

The attack, which brought back

painful memories of a Quebec City mosque mass shooting in January 2017 and a driving rampage in Toronto that killed 10 people in April 2018, drew swift reactions.

The National Council of Canadian Muslims said in a statement it was "beyond horrified and demands justice" for the family who were just "out for a walk" on a warm spring evening.

"Hate and Islamophobia have NO

place in Ontario," tweeted Ontario Premier Doug Ford. "These heinous acts of violence must stop."

Four years ago, a skinny 27-year-old white supremacist burst into a Quebec City mosque and unleashed a hail of bullets on worshippers who were chatting after evening prayers, killing six men and seriously wounding five others.

NEWS MAKERS

On Camera, France's Macron Slapped By Man He Tried To Shake Hands With

Agence France-Presse

PARIS, FRANCE: A bystander slapped French President Emmanuel Macron across the face during a trip to south-east France on Tuesday on the second stop of a nation-wide tour.

Images on social media and broadcast on the BFM news channel showed Macron approach a barrier to greet a man who, instead of shaking hands, slapped the 43-year-old across the face.

Macron's bodyguards quickly intervened and two people were arrested afterwards, local officials said.

"The man who tried to slap the president and another individual are currently being questioned by the gendarmerie," the regional prefecture said in a statement.

The incident in the village of



Tain-l'Hermitage in the Drome region represents a serious security breach and overshadows the start of Macron's tour which he said was designed to "take the country's pulse."

"Around 1:15 pm (1115 GMT),

the president got back into his car after visiting a high school and came back out because onlookers were calling out to him," the prefecture said.

"He went to meet them and that's where the incident happened," it added.

The centrist is widely expected to seek re-election in next year's presidential elections and polls show him with a narrow lead over far-right leader Marine Le Pen.

Around a dozen stops had been planned over the next two months, with Macron keen to meet voters in person after more than a year of crisis management linked to the Covid-19 pandemic.

- 'Never violence' - Shortly before being slapped, Macron had been asked to com-

ment on recent remarks from far-left leader Jean-Luc Melenchon who suggested at the weekend that next year's election would be manipulated.

"Democratic life needs calm and respect, from everyone, politicians as well as citizens," Macron said.

In July last year, Macron and his wife Brigitte were verbally abused by a group of protesters while taking an impromptu walk through the Tuileries gardens in central Paris.

"Politics can never be violence, verbal aggression, much less physical aggression," Prime Minister Jean Castex told parliament after the latest incident.

Macron has undertaken several other tours since his 2017 electoral triumph over the traditional parties of government on the left and right.

South Africa: Mahatma Gandhi's Great-Granddaughter Jailed In Fraud Case

A 56-year-old great-granddaughter of Mahatma Gandhi, who was an accused in a six-million rand fraud and forgery case, has been sentenced to seven years in jail by a Durban court.

Ashish Lata Ramgobin was found guilty by the court on Monday.

She was accused of defrauding businessman S.R. Maharaj after he advanced R6.2 million to her for allegedly clearing import and customs duties for a non-existent consignment from India. He was promised a share of profits.

Lata Ramgobin, who is the daughter of noted rights activists Ela Gandhi and late Mewa Ramgobind, was also refused leave to appeal both the conviction and the sentence by the Durban Specialised Commercial Crime Court.



When trial in the case against Lata Ramgobin started in 2015, Brigadier Hangwani Mulaudzi of the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) had said that she allegedly provided forged invoices and documents to convince potential investors that three containers of linen were being shipped in from India.

At that time, Lata Ramgobin was released on a bail of 50,000 rand.

On Monday, the court during the hearing was informed that Lata Ramgobin had met Maharaj, director of the New Africa Alliance Footwear Distributors, in August 2015.

The company imports and manufactures and sells clothing, linen and footwear. Maharaj's company also provides finance to other companies on a profit-share basis. Lata Ramgobin had told Maharaj that she had imported three containers of linen for the South African Hospital Group NetCare.

"She said she was experiencing financial difficulties to pay for import costs and customs and she needed the money to clear the goods at the harbour," NPA spokesperson Natasha Kara said on Monday. -PTI

'20 Bandipora Villages Fully Vaccinated'

85% Eligible Population Vaccinated In The District So Far: DC



Observer News Service

BANDIPORA: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Dr. Owais Ahmad on Tuesday said that the district administration has been able to administer one lakh doses and vaccinate the 100 per cent population of the eligible age group in 20 villages of the district.

Briefing the media regarding the management of COVID-19 in the district, Dr Owais said the administration launched an intensive vaccination drive in the district after a sustained awareness campaign that bore fruit. He said the field staff and the village level teams trekked several kilometers to reach certain inaccessible areas to vaccinate the people above the age of 45 years.

While appreciating the efforts of ground workers, he said 85 percent of the target age group of the district has been vaccinated so far and crossed the one lakh mark of doses administered to the people.

Earlier, Dr Owais inaugurated a special vaccination drive for specially-abled persons at mini-secretariat wherein the specially-abled persons will be provided to and fro transport facility to get vaccinated at these centres. The DC said that these special coun-

ters will be established in Sumbal and other areas also to ensure that the specially-abled don't face any problems in this regard.

A medical kit containing immunity booster medicines were also provided to the specially-abled persons. Chief Medical Officer Dr Bashir Ahmad, Block Medical Officer and Medical Superintendent DH Bandipora was also present on the occasion.

While briefing the media about the covid19 cases in the district, Dr Owais said there are 538 active Covid-19 positive cases in the district out of which 50 patients are under hospital isolation in different covid hospitals of the district while 22 patients are in newly established Covid Care Centres (CCCs). He said only three patients are admitted in tertiary care hospital in Srinagar.

Dr Owais said the positivity rate has drastically decreased in the district while the recovery rate has increased to above 92 percent in the past few weeks.

He said ease in restrictions should not be taken as victory over viruses as the fight against the pandemic is still going on and there is no room for any sort of laxity. He said the infection is still there and we need to be extra cautious now to avoid getting infected by the disease.

He urged people to follow the COVID-19 guidelines religiously and adopt the covid-appropriate behaviour strictly. He said the administration has relaxed the lockdown and allowed opening of shops on rotational basis to avoid large crowds in the market. He appealed to people to visit markets only in case of emergencies and avoid unnecessary visits to the markets.

CJ Calls For Coordination To Ensure Hassle Free Justice Delivery System

Observer News Service

ANANTNAG: Chief Justice, High Court of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh, Justice Pankaj Mithal Tuesday called for greater coordination among judiciary, civil and police authorities for ensuring the justice delivery becomes smooth and hassle free.

Justice Mithal was taking stock of functioning of District Court and other subordinate courts in Anantnag.

Justice Mithal held a detailed meeting with Judicial, Civil and Police officers and reviewed the infrastructural and administrative set up and functioning of courts in the district.

Chief Justice directed the Principal District and Sessions Judge, Naseer Ahmad Dar, to establish a Vidhik Seva Kendra (Legal Service Centre) at the District Headquarter observing the centre will give timely relief to the litigant public/lawyers and other stakeholders for filing of their cases by e-mode while being at their respective places without approaching the courts physically. He also exhorted for following all directions and orders issued by High Court regarding resolution of cases in Covid times.

Deputy Commissioner, Dr. Pi-yush Singla, informed the Chief Justice that out of 56 kanal of state land identified for the proposed District Court Complex at Sarnal, 40 kanal has been allotted and the allotment for the rest is under process.

While directing the concerned officers and executing agencies to expedite the process of allotment and construction work on the complex, Justice Mithal said that the development of Judicial Infrastructure and provision of all requisite facilities to Courts in J&K is being pursued as a matter of priority.

Later, Chief Justice held an inter-active session with the members of District Bar Association who thanked him for visiting the district. President of the Bar, Fayaz Ahmad Saudagar, raised few demands which among others included development of infrastructure in subordinate courts, provision of Chambers to lawyers and establishment of matrimonial courts.

Justice Mithal passed on spot directions for redressal of certain issues and assured all their genuine demands would be fulfilled in a time bound manner.

National Conference Not Against Delimitation: Dr Farooq

'Method Adopted Not In Tandem With Procedure'

Observer News Service

JAMMU: The Jammu and Kashmir National Conference President and Member of Parliament Dr. Farooq Abdullah on Tuesday said that the party will uphold the interests of the people at all costs in every forum.

He was addressing the National Conference functionaries of the Jammu Province through virtual mode. He said the political issues post August 5, 2019 have been challenged by the party in the apex court of the country.

Asserting that the National Conference is not against the delimitation process in Jammu and Kashmir, the party President Dr Farooq Abdullah said the method adopted, however, is not in tandem with the procedure.

Addressing the day-long



meet, NC Vice President Omar Abdullah while expressing concern over the uncertainty looming large in J&K, urged the cadre to remain steadfast in their resolve to fight for

ABDULLAH STRESSED THE NEED OF FURTHER strengthening the party at the grass-roots level by launching a door to door campaign and to prepare the people for meeting the challenges faced in Jammu and Kashmir.

Projects Worth Rs 512 Cr Earmarked For Pulwama, Shopian Districts

Observer News Service

PULWAMA: Mission Director, Jal Jeevan Mission Jammu and Kashmir, Dr Syed Abid Rashid Shah, Tuesday said the government has earmarked an amount of about 512 crore under 232 schemes to be spent in twin districts of Shopian and Pulwama where some schemes have been completed in all respects and others are at different phases of execution.

He conducted a tour of Pulwama to take stock of implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission in the district.

He inspected various Water Supply Schemes and filtration plants in the district and sought detailed assessment of the status and working of these public assets.

MD inspected WSSs Chandrahara, Gundipora and Uzampathri Nikas and other schemes



where he interacted with the general public and sought feedback regarding the implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission.

On the occasion, locals of Gundipora village apprised Dr Abid of the non availability of iron removal plant at the WSS. He directed the concerned Executive Engineer to initiate the process of tendering for works and ensure adherence to project timeline so that potable drinking water will be provided to the locals.

MD said that Jal Jeevan Mission has been launched with an aim to provide portable drinking water facility to every

Stress, Life Skills Management Workshop Organised At CUK

Observer News Service

GANDERBAL: School of Social Sciences in collaboration with Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) of the Central University of Kashmir (CUK), organised a special extension online lecture by trainer and educationist, Dr. Kanchan Negi on "Dealing with Stress, Enhancing Personality and Life Skills Management" here on Tuesday.

Dr. Kanchan Negi discussed in detail about the various forms of stress which people in general and students in particular are going through since the outbreak of pandemic and subsequent lockdowns. She pointed out that all indi-

viduals are different and the nature of stress which they experience vary from one person to another. She said that there is a dire need to have the counselling sessions with the trained experts who can interact with the students in a cordial manner.

Dr. Kanchan Negi pointed out that in contemporary times one of the major reasons of stress for students is not only the workload of classes and examinations but the worries about career choices. "There is a lot of pressure from the society and the parents on the students to face the competitions and take up the limited career options in medical, engineering and other profes-

sional courses." In this manner, Dr. Negi said, "we are doing injustice to them".

She opined that the parents and teachers should support the career options of students and respect their inborn and hidden talents. The best way to handle stress, according to her, is motivation.

She also talked about the role of teachers at school, college and at the university level. It is not only the various forms of exercises that will help the students to cope against the stress, but one has to learn various life skills. Among the various skills, it is the communication which is going to help the students in the achievement of their long term goals.

Jammu Railway Station To Be Converted Into Heritage Site

Observer News Service

JAMMU: Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Dr Raghav Langer Tuesday said that the government is planning to develop historical Bikram Chowk Railway Station as a heritage site to attract tourists visiting the City of Temples.

He was on a visit to the site of the Railway station which was built in 1897 but was abandoned after the partition as the railway link to Sialkot was broken. The Div Com assessed the renovation requirements and issued instructions for starting the preliminary work to materialise the restoration plan.

He was accompanied by Director Tourism Jammu, Additional CEO, Jammu Smart City Limited; Tehsildar Jammu South besides officials of JDA and other concerned officers.

"Development of new attractions and up-gradation and improvement of the existing infrastructure for promotion of tourism is one of the priority sectors of the government", the Div Com said.

During the visit, the Div Com along with other officers took a round of various blocks of the heritage station and observed that different landmarks and remnants are still available at the site. He said the railway station has a historical and heritage significance and extraordinary efforts should be made for restoring its past grandeur. He said that the refurbishment of the railway station would add another dimension to the Heritage Tourism in Jammu and Kashmir.

He directed the concerned officers to go through the pictures



available of the historic railway station as it had existed earlier, so that it is restored to its pristine glory.

Pertinently, the old Jammu railway station was on the Jammu Sialkot Line which had train services from Jammu to Sialkot (vice-versa) by passing through R S Pura, Miran Sahib and Suchetgarh.

The Divisional Commissioner directed the Tehsildar South and JDA to conduct a demarcation exercise and submit complete report along with survey numbers involved, land title-ship and other revenue details of the site. He also directed the concerned to take drone shots of the station and mark the buildings, area which could be renovated.

The public representatives apprised the Div Com that the land belonging to the Railways Department of the erstwhile state was supposedly transferred to the Transport department in 1954 and presently the yard and workshop of JKRTC is located there.

The Tourism department and JSCL were directed to make a project report (proposal) for the renovation of the railway station including all the important components of the project.

Budgam Records 90 Percent Covid Recovery Rate: DC

Observer News Service

BUDGAM: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Shahbaz Ahmed Mirza Tuesday said that the recovery rate of Covid-19 positive cases has touched 90 percent in the district.

The DC said this during a press briefing to present a detailed status of Covid-19 situation in the district, besides ap-prise of containment measures taken to prevent further spread of the virus in the district.

Giving details, the DC said that Budgam has recorded 90% recovery rate as there are only 1459 active covid positive cases out of total 12785 cases till date in the district. He in- formed that the positivity rate has gone below 5 percent and stands at 4.93 percent at present in the district.

He said presently RAT and RT PCR testing is being aggressively conducted at all containment zones and other requisite locations. He said, 437 level 2 beds, in addition to 299 beds equipped with oxygen facilities have been kept in ready mode in case of an emergency.

Mirza said that Covid-19 control rooms have been set up in all 10 medical blocks and till date 4967 phone calls have been received from the public inquiring about Covid-19 related queries besides other medical issues.



Regarding oxygen supply, the DC said that construction of an oxygen plant at Beerwah has started while a team from Directorate of Health services has inspected other sites at Char Sharief. Efforts are on to set up oxygen plants at Magam and Chadoora as well, he added.

The DC said that 70,000 tests have been conducted in the containment zones to boost the process further. Also Mobile teams have been deployed and door to door surveillance is being carried out in order to trace the vulnerable old age and senior citizen patients, he added.

On Vaccination drive, he said with relentless efforts from all concerned, Budgam has achieved 74 percent vaccination for 45 above age group and for the rest of the age group the vaccination shall be held at an earliest.

Red Cross Distributes Oxygen Concentrators In Kashmir

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: As part of the fight against Covid-19, the Jammu & Kashmir Union Territory Branch of Indian Red Cross Society handed over 55 Oxygen Concentrators to 03 prominent NGOs of Kashmir region.

The concentrators were handed over by the Honorary General Secretary, IRCS JK, Kifayat Hussain Rizvi in presence of former General Secretary, IRCS JK, Mohammad Shafi Rather, Additional Commissioner, Kashmir Qazi Sarwar, Honorary Treasurer, IRCS JK G.A. Qureshi, Honorary Secretary, IRCS Kashmir Region, Mohammad Yousuf Zargar, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Shopian Dr. Abdul Aziz Sheikh, Rouf Panjabi prominent of Red Cross, representatives from NGOs and other life members and volunteers of IRCS.

The concentrators shall be offered to the needy Covid Patients through these NGOs.

In his inaugural speech, Honorary General Secretary, welcomed



all the participants in the event and informed that the Red Cross, which is an international movement, has been reaching out to the needy wherever required.

Rizvi directed the NGOs to offer the concentrators as per the guidelines issued by the District Disaster Management Authority free of cost. He informed that the purpose of handing over the material to the NGOs was done in the interest of Covid patients residing in remote areas of the valley.

He further informed that IRCS JK shall hand over the Oxygen Concentrators to prominent NGOs in Jammu

Division on the same lines once the details are finalised.

The Honorary Treasurer informed that IRCS J&K UT branch has been distributing Food kits, hygiene kits, Surgical face masks, soaps and other essential items during the second wave of Covid-19 through the Union Territory of J&K.

Meanwhile, the IRCS, JK has further dispatched food kits, hygiene kits and masks to far flung areas of Shopian, Bandipora, Budgam and Tangdhar in Kupwara district. The Red Cross shall continue with the process of reaching out to the poor and needy in future also, he added.

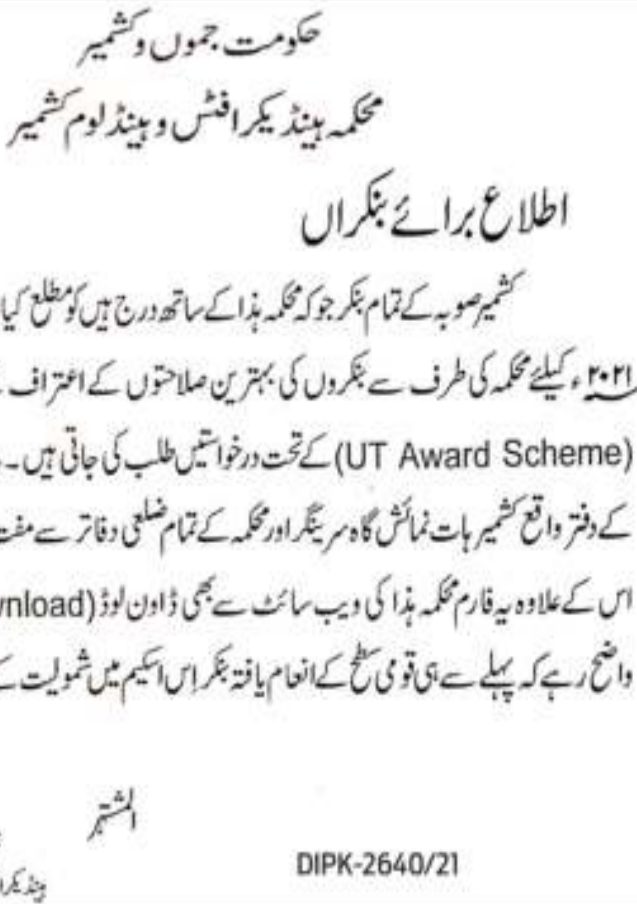
VC SKUAST-J Nominated For Award

Observer News Service

JAMMU: Vice Chancellor, SKUAST-Jammu, Prof. JP Sharma, has been selected for award by National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE) Hyderabad for his Book entitled "Yes, You can Launch Your Own Enterprise: Beginners Guide" for the academic Year 2020.

"Prof. Sharma is being felicitated with the Certificate and cash prize of Rs.50,000/- on 34th Foundation day of MANAGE Hyderabad at 11.00 am on June 11, 2021 through virtual mode," a statement said.

The SKUAST-Kashmir fraternity extended its heartiest congratulations to Prof. JP Sharma for achieving this academic feat.



KASHMIR OBSERVER

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K O V I E W

Stalled back-channel?

After a period of some noise about a back-channel dialogue between India and Pakistan, things have gone a bit quiet. More so in India where senior ruling party leaders have stopped talking about the ongoing thaw in the relations with Pakistan. This could also be the result of the devastating third Covid-19 wave that has by now infected millions and killed thousands of people.

Pakistan, on the other hand, has taken a more overt stance about the putative secret dialogue with New Delhi. In an interview to Reuters on June 5, Pakistan prime minister, Imran Khan once again called on India to reverse the withdrawal of Kashmir's semi-autonomous status for the dialogue between the two countries to resume. Short of doing that, Khan has sought "a roadmap" towards restoring the previous status of Kashmir. He called the move to repeal Kashmir's autonomy illegal and against international law and United Nations resolutions.

Significantly, there has been no response to the interview by New Delhi. Nor has there been a response to earlier effusive statements by Khan and Pakistan Army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa who conspicuously advocated burial of the past between the two countries.

But after re-affirmation of the 2003 ceasefire agreement in February, the two neighbours have failed to build on the goodwill. There have been no further measures, nor does it look likely there will be in the near future. New Delhi seems in no hurry to do this. If anything, this only goes on to show that India feels little pressure to relent. Nor does it want to push the current engagement with Islamabad beyond a point. The unmistakable signal to Pakistan is to temper its expectation about the extent to which India can accommodate it on Kashmir. As always, India wants the terrorism to be the central issue and wants Pakistan to stop supporting militancy in Kashmir. Pakistan doesn't accept it backs terrorism.

Anyways, if last year's figures for infiltration and the killings of foreign militants in Kashmir are anything to go by, Islamabad has held back from supporting the local militancy. New Delhi, it seems, is unlikely to reverse the revocation of J&K autonomy. It remains to be seen whether it restores statehood anytime soon. A sustained, meaningful dialogue between the two countries has the potential to lead to a positive outcome. So, the neighbours should restore it sooner than later.

But the challenge once again for the two countries would be to sustain a dialogue should it start. In the past many such attempts have been aborted by a major attack in India traced to elements in Pakistan or sometimes due to the rigid negotiating positions of the two countries. It would be interesting to see how the two countries negotiate their respective conditionalities before reaching out to each other. The dialogue that will follow, as a result, will go a long to usher in peace in the region and turn the LoC into a line of cooperation.

OTHER OPINION

Correcting the vaccine course

In an address to the nation on Monday evening, Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi declared that the Centre would take over the responsibility of procuring 75% of the vaccines (from the current 50%), and provide them free to the states for all those above the age of 18 (and thus relieve states of the responsibility of procuring and paying for vaccines) from June 21. The Centre and the states, he said, would together work out the guidelines. The Centre also imposed a 150 cap on the service charge on each dose that will apply to the remaining 25% of vaccines which can be sourced and distributed by the private sector. The new framework is a much-needed correction in the vaccine policy.

The PM's announcement marks yet another dramatic shift in the country's vaccine policy. Mr Modi said that the arrangement between January 16 to April 30 — which was based on a phased rollout for priority groups, with the Centre procuring vaccines — was altered from May 1 due to the demand of states and other stakeholders for greater decentralisation. He claimed that states then began understanding the complexities of the vaccination process and asked for a reversal to the older system, citing it as the basis for Monday's shift. But the truth is more complex, for it involves the fundamental issue of inadequate supplies, although the PM did speak of how, going forward, more vaccines will be available in the country. India did set up an expert group on vaccines last April, but did not place any advance orders for vaccines, Indian or foreign. The resulting supply crunch, most evident in May, caused the Supreme Court to criticise the government for its "arbitrary and irrational" vaccine policy.

Hindustan Times



Benefits of Fair Compensation Law yet to Reach J&K Post article 370

J&K High Court 's fresh order stays construction of Srinagar Ring Road, fruit trees axed in lieu of rates applicable 26 years back ?

Dr Raja Muzaffar Bhat

Several commitments were made to the people of J&K on the floor of Parliament when J&K Reorganisation Bill 2019 was passed on August 5th 2019 which led to abrogation of article 370. The Prime Minister, Home Minister and other leaders of the Bharatiya Janata Party have been saying that the extension of the central laws to J&K would confer upon its people benefits. Unfortunately, the practice of depriving people of their rights persists in J&K which is only leading to further alienation.

The Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006, was not rolled out until people protested. Instead, forest-dwellers were issued eviction notices and their properties and apple orchards damaged last year around November and December. Similarly, the Prevention of Atrocities Act, 1989, is not being rolled out in J&K and with respect to the Right to Fair Compensation Act, 2013, the government is engaging in legal deceptions by invoking an 87-year-old repealed and outdated law that applied to the erstwhile state, which is depriving marginal farmers of Kashmir their rights.

Is it not a denial of justice that the farmers of J&K are being made to accept compensation for fruit trees at a rate that was applicable more than 26 years ago? In 2017, the National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) had said in a communication to the J&K government that it had no objection to paying compensation according to the central Land Acquisition Act if that law was adopted by the J&K government. But ever since this law was automatically extended to J&K after the abrogation of special status, the NHAI has not uttered a word. How can they, when there is no political will in the government to come to the aid of these farmers? The High Court of Jammu & Kashmir gave several orders asking the Government to issue fresh notification under central land acquisition law, but the Government is adamant to conclude the land acquisition proceedings in several cases under the old law (JK Land Acquisition Act 1934) which was repealed along with article 390 on October 31st 2019. Very recently the High Court division bench gave one more order in favour of affected people. Will the Govt act ?

The Marginal Farmers in J&K

The farmers in Jammu and Kashmir are officially recognized as marginal. This is because of small agricultural landholdings. The average landholding in J&K as per 2015-2016 agriculture census was estimated to be around 0.55. The unofficial sources from J&K's agriculture and land revenue departments say it is much smaller (0.45 hectares) on average. In Kashmir Valley, the size is even smaller. During the 2010-2011 Agriculture Census, the average size of operational land holdings in India was 1.15 hectares. This figure was also lower, at 0.62 hectares, for Jammu and Kashmir.

Districts in Kashmir Valley had even lower landholding sizes than the state as a whole: Anantnag 0.39 hectares, Kulgam 0.39, Shopian 0.56, Pulwama 0.48, Srinagar 0.31, Budgam 0.43, Baramulla 0.51, Ganderbal 0.37, Bandipora 0.48, and Kupwara 0.51. This figure fell during the 2015-16 Agriculture Census. In the Valley, where most farmers own less than an acre of land, any government policy related to land acquisition, especially for "development projects", needs to take into account the fragile mountainous environment and climatic conditions as well.

Land Acquisition under Repealed Law

On 13 August 2020, the Financial Commissioner (Revenue) issued a communication (letter No: FC-JS/LA-4577/2017) conveying to the Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir, approval for the rates at which land would be acquired in six villages of Budgam district, namely, Gund-e-Kuzwera, Wathoora, Jawaharpura, Ichgam, Dharmuna, and

Waterwani.

The Financial Commissioner (Revenue), who has been made the "competent authority" in the matter, approved the rates under the repealed 1934 Act. He did so after the awards were prepared by the Collector, Land Acquisition, Budgam. This approval was given by the "competent authority" after a gap of almost three-and-a-half years, which violates the 1934 Act and the Right to Fair Compensation Act, 2013, which is applicable in the Union Territory of J&K ever since the abrogation of Article 370.

Ironically, the approved rates are much lower than even the government's stamp rates for 2020. Section 11 of the 1934 Act mandates the acquiring authority to complete acquisition proceedings within two years of declaring an intent to acquire the land under section 6 of the Act. If it fails to do so, the notification and proceedings lapse according to section 11-B of the 1934 Act (now repealed). For instance, the notification under section 4 was issued on 20 March 2017 regarding village Wathoora in Budgam and the declaration under section 6 was made in August 2017. It was thus mandatory for the Collector, Land Acquisition, Budgam, to finalise the acquisition process and make an award before August 2019. It was also incumbent upon the collector to notify the award according to the repealed Act, which says, the award of the collector would be final when:

(1) Such award shall be filed in the Collector's office and shall, except as hereinafter provided, be final and conclusive evidence, as between the Collector and the persons interested, whether they have respectively appeared before the Collector or not, of the true area and the value of the land, and the apportionment of the compensation among the persons interested.

(2) The Collector shall give immediate notice of his award to such persons interested, as are not present personally or by their representatives when the award is made.

However, the Collector, Land Acquisition, Budgam, did not at any point notify the aggrieved farmers that any award was made by him in respect of their land intended to be acquired within two years beginning 1 August 2017, by the Financial Commissioner's communication dated 13 August 2020. Not even an oral notice was issued to the affected people to attend the collectorate to receive the award. Therefore, for this reason, as well, a fresh notification has to be issued for the acquisition and compensation.

Letter from DC Budgam

On 18 May 2020, an official communication (No: DCB/LAS/20/300-10) was sent by the Deputy Commissioner, Budgam, to the Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir. The letter contains a comprehensive village-wise status report about the acquisition of land for the construction of the Srinagar Ring Road.

The DC Budgam clearly discloses in his communication that in several villages, no approval of the award has been received from the competent authority. He also admits that the land acquisition proceedings for these villages have lapsed.

The Deputy Commissioner, Budgam, then seeks instructions from the Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir, to initiate fresh proceedings under the Central Land Acquisition Act in the following terms:

"Guide if the land acquisition matters of villages detailed at (a) of the communication are to be initiated afresh as per the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act 2013."

Moreover, section 24, subsections 1 and 2, of the Right to Fair Compensation, 2013, is applicable in the Union Territory of J&K with effect from 31 October 2019, also has a similar provision: "...in any case of land acquisition proceed-

ings initiated under the Land Acquisition Act, 1894, (a) where no award under section 11 of the said Land Acquisition Act has been made, then, all provisions of this Act relating to the determination of compensation shall apply."

Pertinently, the 1894 Land Acquisition Act was applicable across India (except J&K) before the enactment of the Right to Fair Compensation Act, 2013. In J&K, the 1894 law can be equated with the 1934 Act.

Suicide in Jammu

After the abrogation of Article 370 and enactment of the J&K Reorganisation Act, 2019, several laws of J&K were repealed and some central laws, including the Right to Fair Compensation, 2013, were extended to the newly-created Union Territories, on 31 October 2019. The 1934 Land Acquisition Act, having been repealed, figures at Serial No. 73, Table 3 in Schedule 5 of the J&K Reorganization Act, 2019, while the 2013 Act, having been extended to J&K, figures at Serial No. 94, Table 1 of the same schedule.

It is important to note that the affected landowners in Jammu have already been deprived of fair compensation during the construction of the Jammu Ring Road project as the land acquisition process was completed under the repealed law when Article 370 was intact. One affected farmer, an ex-serviceman named Harbans Lal of Bishnah tehsil in Jammu, committed suicide last year as the government paid him a mere Rs. 11 lakh for his house and half a Kanal of land that fell in the way of the Jammu Ring Road.

Recent High Court stay order

Jammu & Kashmir High division bench recently in one more case stayed the proceedings of land acquisition for Srinagar Ring Road and its proposed construction. The case titled G A Paul v/s Government of J&K was listed for hearing before the division bench of Chief Justice Pankaj Mittal and Justice Vinod Chatterji Koul on June 4th 2021. The court said that until further orders the parties are directed to maintain the status-quo with regard to nature and possession of land in dispute

Conclusion

Government knows farmers in J&K have meager landholding. Technically the affected farmers / landowners here should be given more compensation during land acquisition. If affected people in Rajasthan or Haryana get 3 to 4 times more than market value of land as per the Right to Fair Compensation Act, how can marginal farmers of Budgam or Pulwama be forced to accept land compensation even less than the market rate? The fruit growers whose land is coming under the alignment of Srinagar Ring Road were forced to take compensation as per the rates applicable in 1996. They took the money under protest a few years back, but they got a stay order from high court against axing of the trees. The assessment for compensation to apple and plum trees which are to be cut down during the road project was made as per Rs 16 and Rs 13 / Kg of fruit. How can the Govt justify this? Will any Deputy Commissioner or Secretary to Government or any IAS officer accept to take salary as per the 4th pay commission applicable in 1996? If they can't do that, how can they expect the poor farmers of Kashmir would be forced to get such a meager compensation for their fruit trees?

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

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An Era of New-age School Student Assessments

Vijay GarG

Attempts should be made to integrate regular in-house examinations with additional parameters of assessment such as communication abilities, critical thinking, creativity, ability to use knowledge for problem-solving, as well as collaborative social and citizen skills. The key idea behind such an evaluation is to understand the level of a student's achievement of the objectives of the subject

The government's decision to cancel the class 12 board examinations, conducted by the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), in the backdrop of the devastating impact of the pandemic and public outrage, comes as a relief for thousands of anxious students and their parents.

The issue now is about the parameters on which students will be assessed and marked this year. Equally important is the methodology that would be used to ensure objectivity in assessment. There is an old saying — one can, albeit with difficulty, defy the effects of bad teaching, but escaping the impact of bad assessment is onerous indeed.

In the immediate context, boards can think of different permutations and combinations, prioritising student interests. It can, for example, set up panels to grade each student, and, after eliminating marks given at both the lower and higher ends, come out with an average score. To do so, it can rely on historical data of the students' performances, particularly of their best year.

Additionally, marks obtained in the class 10 boards, and in the internal assessments and practical examinations in class 12 may be looked into. Fortunately, most CBSE schools have conducted practical examinations and have uploaded the results. And in cases where all practicals may not have been conducted, it may well liberally extrapolate marks from subjects for which examinations may have been conducted. Not much would be gained by assessing performances in classes 9 and 11 as students in these grades tend to be more focused on honing their co-curricular skills and social networks. For objectivity, fairness and transparency, the results of a particular school may be required to be vetted by a partner school.

Irrespective of any decisions that CBSE may come up with, there will be dissenting voices. However, this being a unique year all stakeholders will need to deal with the outcome with patience, trust and understanding. Universities, boards and schools need to come together in the best interest of the students.

That said, given the fact that institutions of teaching and learning — both schools and colleges — will have to undergo cyclic phases of closure and opening, they may have to adhere to hybrid learning. Working out a renewed assessment and evaluation system that, in being objective, is also simultaneously flexible, to cater to hybridity, is most pertinent in the long-run.

Attempts should be made to integrate regular in-house examinations with additional parameters of assessment such as communication abilities, critical thinking, creativity, ability to use knowledge for problem-solving, as well as col-



laborative social and citizen skills. The key idea behind such an evaluation is to understand the level of a student's achievement of the objectives of the subject. While, in the early stages, these objectives could be set by teachers, students could be allowed to have some say, as they move on to higher classes. Evaluators can then correlate objectives to student performance. Multiple methods of assessments need to be used so that each child is assessed at her own level and potential, to help develop self-esteem and confidence.

The board exams will have to be flexible in their approach, dissuading rote learning. This learner development can only take place if assessment is sequential and continuous with application to real life, through case studies, open book testing, multiple choice questions, research and project-based learning.

Interestingly, the National Education Policy or NEP (2020) has provisions on regular formative assessments, designed to test conceptual clarity, analytical abilities and competence in terms of critical thinking. It also stresses on assessments, defining and identifying learning outcomes throughout the year through formative evaluation. Additionally, the provisions for stage-based assessments in classes 3, 5 and 8, in addition to board examinations in classes 10 and 12, and the idea of a national assessment centre, Parakh, to set benchmarks in standards are novel indeed.

This new-age assessment, as NEP describes it, aims to bring big shifts. But to be consistent

both in approach and analysis, it necessitates multiple pedagogical approaches enabling differential learning. At the most fundamental level, however, it will be dependent on the extent to which the capacity of teachers is enhanced. Empowering them to develop internal assessment models that deal with competency-based learning, skills, attitudes and values, instead of standardised pen-paper testing systems is a must. An attempt has to be made to integrate periodic and continuous evaluation with un Google able questions which focus on critical thinking, creativity, problem-solving and decision-making skills. Most importantly, schisms have to be laid at rest, mindsets will need change, training in pedagogy, technology and classroom transaction will have to be done on a war-footing failing which we will never be able to break the stranglehold of rote-based, pencil-paper-oriented colonial systems of learning.

Evaluating the performance of students is not just an external obligation, but is increasingly motivated by those who are involved in shaping it — faculty, staff, and institutional leadership. The need to put an alternative mechanism of assessment in place, robust enough to yield results both in normal times as well as in times of exigencies, is most imperative. Let us create an assessment system that is underlined by expertise and the ethics of trust

The author is a retired Principal, Government Girls Senior Secondary school MHR malou

Post-Pandemic Whiplash Awaits The World's Poor

Kaushik Basu

The world is currently transfixed by the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic sweeping through many regions, especially Asia, Africa, and South America. But, focused as we are on the public-health crisis, we risk overlooking pandemic-related economic problems that could plague developing countries long after the wave has receded.

At the global level, the International Monetary Fund has warned of a "Great Divergence", whereby rich countries recover strongly while others flounder. Recent evidence suggests that several advanced economies, notably the United States, and a few developing countries, like Vietnam, Thailand, and Bangladesh, seem to be pulling out of the crisis and could grow faster than they did before the pandemic. But many emerging economies and low-income countries are likely to languish for a long time.

A Great Divergence is visible even within economies. The pandemic has punished sectors such as hospitality, travel, and tourism, and boosted others like pharmaceuticals, digital platforms, and networking technology. It is therefore not surprising that many rich people, including those who are good at navigating equity markets, have actually emerged from the crisis better off, while the poor have borne the brunt of its impact.

Therein lies the real danger. Unlike a pandemic that puts rich and poor alike at risk, the kind of economic crisis currently simmering in much of the developing world does not affect the rich as much and therefore does not generate headlines and is easy to disregard — that is, until it can no longer be ignored.

Sure enough, evidence of trouble is beginning to mount. Emerging economies everywhere face rising debts, and some, like Zambia and Argentina, have already defaulted. In 2020, Latin America's economy contracted by 7.7 per cent; the Philippines and India took even bigger hits, registering growth rates of -9.5 per cent and -9.6 per cent, respectively. And the World Bank estimates that the pandemic may have pushed up to 40 million people in Africa into extreme poverty.

The current wave of Covid-19 that began in India became discernible only in late March. Although systematic data regarding its economic impact are not yet available, anecdotal evidence paints a gloomy picture. According to the Cen-



Providing the poor with cash support to make sure they can meet their basic survival needs will mean that the price of the good rises until the rich have what they want. The poor will thus be back at square one

tre for Monitoring Indian Economy, the seven million jobs lost in April caused the national unemployment rate to jump to 8 per cent, from 6.5 per cent in March. Moreover, youth unemployment in India already reached an all-time high of 23.75 per cent last year.

The regular reports of dead bodies being dumped into the River Ganges and washing up in small Indian towns and cities indicate the tragic severity. But they are also tell-tale signs of a brewing economic crisis. For Hindus, not being able to acquire logs and find space to cre-

mate the dead is a desperate situation. Only in cases of extreme poverty would they abandon this effort and throw corpses into the river.

Another sobering account comes from the two women who run Nanritam, a remarkable NGO that operates a school

and an eye hospital in a remote part of West Bengal. They told me how registration at their school is down to nearly half its normal level. Furthermore, the pandemic has forced thousands of the region's tribal chhau dancers and jhumur singers — whose only regular income is the Rs1,000 (\$14) per month they receive from the state government — to resort to begging. When Nanritam recently announced its usual simple relief dole for the poor living around their campus, the NGO was taken aback by some who walked and cycled for miles to get it.

But, aside from such evidence, official data are also beginning to flash warning signs. Last month, Indian wholesale price inflation climbed to 10.5 per cent, the highest rate in 11 years. This reflects mismatches in demand and supply, which, if not corrected soon, could become a major crisis, causing macroeconomic imbalances that can affect trade and financial flows. India has a highly capable central bank, but many of the country's current problems will be difficult to rectify through monetary policy alone, because they arise from poor governance.

India therefore urgently needs policy blueprints for dealing with the crisis. Policymakers should recognise that when basic goods such as medical oxygen, vaccines, or food are in short supply, pure financial interventions may not work, because the rich will be prepared to spend whatever it takes to get what they need (and more as a precautionary buffer). Providing the poor with cash support to make sure they can meet their basic survival needs will mean that the price of the good rises until the rich have what they want. The poor will thus be back at square one.

We see this kind of problem at both the micro and the international levels, notably with Covid-19 vaccines. Whereas many rich countries are buying up doses to secure ample stocks that go well beyond their basic needs, poor countries, including large parts of Africa, are left without any access to supplies.

Just as national governments in India and other developing countries have a lot to do, multilateral organisations such as the World Bank, the IMF, and the G20 also must act quickly to build up policy buffers and help coordinate support. Otherwise, today's looming economic threat will be tomorrow's front-page news.

Project Syndicate

‘High caffeine intake linked to increased risk of blinding eye disease’

Agencies

You might want to keep a check on your daily intake of caffeine as a new study has found that consuming large amounts of daily caffeine may increase the risk of glaucoma more than three-fold for those with a genetic predisposition to higher eye pressure.

The findings of the study were published in the journal 'Ophthalmology'.

The research led by the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai is the first to demonstrate a dietary-genetic interaction in glaucoma. The study results may suggest patients with a strong family history of glaucoma should cut down on caffeine intake.

The study is important because glaucoma is the leading cause of blindness in the United States. It looks at the impact of caffeine intake on glaucoma, and intraocular pressure (IOP) which is pressure inside the eye.

Elevated IOP is an integral risk factor for glaucoma, although other factors do

contribute to this condition. With glaucoma, patients typically experience few or no symptoms until the disease progresses and they have vision loss.

"We previously published work suggesting that high caffeine intake increased the risk of the high-tension open angle glaucoma among people with a family history of disease. In this study we show that an adverse relation between high caffeine intake and glaucoma was evident only among those with the highest genetic risk score for elevated eye pressure," said lead/corresponding author Louis R. Pasquale, MD, FARVO, Deputy Chair for Ophthalmology Research for the Mount Sinai Health System.

A team of researchers used the UK Biobank, a large-scale population-based biomedical database supported by various health and governmental agencies. They analyzed records of more than 120,000 participants between 2006 and 2010. Participants were between 39 and 73 years old and provided their health records along with DNA samples, collected to generate data.



They answered repeated dietary questionnaires focusing on how many caffeinated beverages they drink daily, how much caffeine-containing food they eat, the specific types, and portion size. They also answered questions about their vision, including specifics on if they have glaucoma or a family history of glaucoma. Three years into the study later they had their IOP checked and eye measurements.

Researchers first looked at the relationship between caffeine intake, IOP and self-reported glaucoma by running multi-variable analyses. Then they assessed if accounting for genetic data modified these relationships. They assigned each subject an IOP genetic risk score and performed interaction analyses.

The investigators found high caffeine intake was not associated with increased risk for higher IOP or glaucoma overall; however, among participants with the strongest genetic predisposition to elevated IOP - in the top 25 percentile - greater caffeine consumption was associated with higher IOP and higher glaucoma prevalence.

More specifically, those who consumed the highest amount of daily caffeine - more than 480 milligrams which is roughly four cups of coffee - had a 0.35 mmHg higher IOP.

Additionally, those in the highest genetic risk score category who consumed more than 321 milligrams of daily caffeine - roughly three cups of coffee - had a 3.9-fold higher glaucoma prevalence when compared to those who drink no or minimal caffeine and in lowest genetic risk score group.

pared to those who drink no or minimal caffeine and in lowest genetic risk score group.

"Glaucoma patients often ask if they can help to protect their sight through lifestyle changes, however this has been a relatively understudied area until now. This study suggested that those with the highest genetic risk for glaucoma may benefit from moderating their caffeine intake. It should be noted that the link between caffeine and glaucoma risk was only seen with a large amount of caffeine and in those with the highest genetic risk," said co-author Anthony Khawaja, MD, PhD, Associate Professor of Ophthalmology University College London (UCL) Institute of Ophthalmology and ophthalmic surgeon at Moorfields Eye Hospital.

"The UK Biobank study is helping us to learn more than ever before about how our genes affect our glaucoma risk and the role that our behaviors and environment could play. We look forward to continuing to expand our knowledge in this area," concluded Khawaja.

‘Men make more extreme choices, decisions’

Agencies

According to a new study, men make more extreme choices and decisions in comparison to women.

This is the main finding of the new research involving more than 50,000 participants in 97 samples, published in the prestigious journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America (PNAS).

The findings show that the more extreme choices and decisions of men can be both positive and negative.

"The question of whether men and women make systematically different choices and decisions is one on the most fundamental (and controversial) questions in psychological research," Associate Professor Stefan Volk from the University of Sydney Business School said.

"We found men were much more likely than women to be at the extreme ends of the behavioural spectrum, either acting very selfishly or very altruistically, very trusting or very distrusting, very fair or very unfair, very risky or very risk averse and were either very short-term or very long-term focused," Volk added.

The findings could impact policies aimed at regulating extreme behaviours such as the recent GameStop trading frenzy after retail traders on Reddit heavily

shorted the stock.

"Our research suggests policies aimed at reducing extreme behaviours should be more tailored towards men," said Dr Volk.

The researchers suggest the differences might have evolutionary roots, but there are also alternative explanations for the existence of what is often referred to as greater male variability.

"Parental investment theory explains that men, in contrast to women, invest less in parenting, are less selective in their partner choice, and compete more for sexual partners," Associate Professor Volk explained.

"This evolutionary theorising suggests that men had to deviate from the average to stand out and be attractive to women to reproduce, while women were able to attract sexual partners without deviating from the average," Volk added.

"Another explanation could be norms and expectations of acceptable gendered behaviour and that men's extreme behaviours are socially constructed and reinforced," Volk further said.

"This alternative theory suggests that the socially constructed patriarchy in many societies has managed to constrain women and the opportunity for them to display the same level of variability as men," Volk noted.

Associate Professor Stefan

Volk, worked with an international team to examine sex differences in altruism, cooperation, trust, fairness and attitudes towards time and risk in economic decision-making. The researchers found systematic evidence for greater male variability.

He added these gender differences in variability are difficult to detect in research focused on gender differences in average behaviours. This is why they have been overlooked in most previous research, which traditionally focused on mean gender differences rather than the range of behaviours. But we need to look at differences in extreme behaviours to understand what might be driving those outliers.

The PNAS paper is the second in a series by Associate Professor Volk on greater male variability; the first was just published in the internationally leading psychological journal Psychological Science.

This earlier research involved two large-scale meta-analyses of economic decision-making studies and studies of organisational citizenship behaviour with more than 20,000 participants.

While the researchers found no differences in the degree to which men and women behaved cooperatively on average, they did find strong evidence for greater male variability in cooperation.

'Embryos of many species use sound to prepare for the outside world'

Agencies

It's well known that reptiles depend on temperature cues while in the egg to determine a hatchling's sex. Now, researchers writing in the journal Trends in Ecology and Evolution say that embryos of many different animal species also rely on acoustic signals in important ways. They call this phenomenon "acoustic developmental programming."

"Acoustic developmental programming occurs when a sound informs embryos about the environment they'll encounter postnatally and changes their development to better suit this environment," said Mylene Mariette of Deakin University in Australia.

Because this is a newly discovered phenomenon, the evidence is just beginning to accumulate. And, yet, it seems to be rather widespread among animals.

"We have found evidence of this happening in birds, where parental calls can warn embryos about heatwaves or predators," Mariette says. "Before that, there was also evidence that cricket nymphs use male songs to predict the level of competition for mates. However, what is most striking from the evidence we've gathered is how common it is for embryos across species to rely on sound information."

"For example," she adds, "across all animal groups that lay eggs, such as insects, frogs, reptiles

and birds, embryos use sound or vibration to know when the best time is to hatch. This suggests that acoustic developmental programming is likely to happen in many animal species and for a whole range of conditions. But, until recently, we did not know it was happening."

Mariette got interested in acoustic developmental programming while studying how zebra finch parents communicate with each other through calls to coordinate parental care duties. "I noticed that when a parent was alone incubating, it would sometimes produce a strange high-pitched call," she says.

She wondered if those calls had further implications for the developing embryos. To find out,

she captured many audio recordings in nests and played them to eggs incubated artificially in the lab. It turned out that the finch parents only produced that particular call when it was very hot out. Upon hearing it from inside the egg, nestlings adjusted their development to prepare for the heat.

"I became very curious about how just hearing a sound before hatching could alter development," Mariette says.

She started searching for evidence in the literature of embryos using sound in other animals. She also dug into neurobiology to try and understand how it could happen. So far, it's not clear exactly how it works, but the new report identifies some likely mechanisms.

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

Tele/Fax: 0194-2433590, 2437647 (Srinagar); 0191-2479371, 2470102 (Jammu)
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Subject: Provisional Merit List of candidates for admission to (10th Based) Paramedical Diploma (FMPHW/MMPHW) Courses-2021: inviting of objections, thereof.

References:

- Notification No. 054-BOPEE of 2021 dated 15-04-2021
- Notice No. 046-BOPEE of 2021 dated 05-05-2021
- Notice No. 050-BOPEE of 2021 dated 25-05-2021
- Notice No. 052-BOPEE of 2021 dated 04-06-2021

**Notification No. 064-BOPEE of 2021
Dated 07-06-2021**

In pursuance of Notification No. 054-BOPEE of 2021 dated 15-04-2021 read with Notice No. 046-BOPEE of 2021 dated 05-05-2021, Notice No. 050-BOPEE of 2021 dated 25-05-2021 and Notice No. 052-BOPEE of 2021 dated 04-06-2021 Online Application Forms were invited from the eligible applicants for admission to (10th Based) Paramedical Diploma (FMPHW/MMPHW) Courses-2021 in the Government/Private Paramedical Institutions of the Union Territories of J&K/Ladakh.

In view of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Board vide the above referred Notifications /Notices gave ample time to the applicants for filling up the Online Application Forms for Paramedical Diploma Courses-2021 and thereafter removing deficiencies in their Online Application Forms after observing that many of these Online Application Forms were deficient for want of one or more prerequisite documents which were either not uploaded or wrongly uploaded by the applicants; gave one time opportunity to the applicants, who had inadvertently filled up the Online Application Forms for (10th based) Paramedical Diploma Courses- 2021 instead of (12th Based) Paramedical Diploma Courses-2021, to change their candidature from (10th Based) Paramedical Diploma Courses to (12th Based) Paramedical Diploma Courses including GNM Lateral Entry Course for which the candidates must have completed their [10th based] Paramedical Diploma Courses like FMPHW/MMPHW/ANM; Cancelled the Online Applications Forms for (10th based) Paramedical Diploma Courses of such applicants on their request who were not interested in the said course. Such applicants are therefore not reflected in the Provisional Merit List.

In view of the deficiencies being cleared by the applicants during the stipulated time allotted for the said purpose, the Provisional Merit List of the eligible applicants for (10th based) Paramedical Diploma Courses-2021 is hereby notified and is annexed as Annexure "A" to this notification, which shall be available on the BOPEE website www.jkbopee.gov.in only, with the intent to Call for Objections, if any, in this regard which shall be addressed to COE, J&K BOPEE. In case no objections are raised / received within the stipulated cutoff date/time, the Provisional Merit List shall be deemed to be as the final.

Note:

- the, objections , if any, against Annexure-A in the Provisional Merit List can either be submitted to the Board in person at BOPEE office Jammu/Srinagar during the working days or communicated through email (to: bopeehelpdesk@gmail.com) till 15th of June, 2021 upto 4.00 P.M. failing which no claims of the applicants shall be entertained thereafter, in any circumstances, by the Board.
- Keeping in view for lesser number of competing candidates for the (10th based) Paramedical Diploma Courses of (FMPHW/MMPHW), the Board has prepared the Provisional Merit List (PML) of the candidates taking into account the merit/marks scored by these applicants in their qualifying examination i.e. matriculation.
- The applicants having equal marks/percentage in the qualifying examination the resolution of this tie has been decided to be on the basis of their date of birth, followed by the first alphabet of their name.
- the applicants whose result is awaited have been included at end of the Provisional Merit List; however their actual Merit shall be reflected in the Provisional Merit List once the Board receives their 10th Class Marks Certificates issued by their respective Boards before the time of counselling failing which their candidature shall be treated as cancelled.
- It is impressed upon the candidates that the selections for these courses shall be made in pursuance of S.O.127 Dated 20-04-2020.
- the candidates in the Provisional Merit List are advised to keep ready their Domicile Certificates, issued by the Competent Authority, to be presented at the time of counselling.
- In case no objections are raised / received within the stipulated cutoff date/time, the Provisional Merit List shall be deemed to be as the final.
- The candidates must remain in touch with the official web site of the Board i.e. www.jkbopee.gov.in to remain informed about the Counselling Schedule which shall be notified separately.

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

No. BOPEE/Exam-11/2021
Dated: 07-06-2021

DIPK-NB-1113/21

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER MUFFASIL (R&B) DIVISION BUDGAM

NOTICE INVITING e-TENDERS

(Modified as per Circular No. A/Misc(2018)-III-895/J Dt.22-12-2020
Issued by Finance Department).

NIT No. 33/e-tendering /MDB/2021-22/3307-27, DATED.05 -06-2021

For and on behalf of the President, of India, e-tenders (In Single cover system) are invited on Item rate basis from approved and eligible Approved/Registered and eligible firms/surveyor for conducting survey with the Electronic Total Station(ETS).

S No.	Name of work	Cost of Tender/ document (in Rupees)	Time of completion	Earnest Money
1.	Total Station Survey of Mujpathri to Doodpathri road via Sochal-pathri.	Rs.300/-	07 days	Rs.10000/-

Relevant Information

- Position of AAA-under process.
- Position of Funds-demanded.
- Position of T.S-Under process.
- The bidding documents consisting of qualifying information, Eligibility criteria, specifications, bill of quantities (B.O.Q), set of terms and conditions of contract and other can be seen/downloaded from the Department website WWW.Jktenders.gov.in, from.....
- The bidding documents consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, bill of quantities, set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the Department website www.jktenders.gov.in.
- The Technical bids uploaded on the website shall be opened on the due date. In case of holiday or office happens to be closed on the date of opening of the bids, the bids will be opened on the next working day at the same time and venue.
- Critical dates:

1.	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	05.06.2021 4.00 P.M.
2.	Period of downloading of bidding documents	05.06.2021 10:00 4.00 P.M.
3.	Bid submission Start Date	05.06.2021 from 4:00 P.M.
4.	Bid Submission End Date	11.06.2021 upto 4.00 P.M.
5.	Date & time of opening of Bids (Online)	12.06.2021 at 11:00 AM in the Office of the Executive Engineer, Muffasil (R&B) Division Budgam

Note: The Cost of tender document shall have to be deposited

- Instructions to bidders regarding e-tendering process:
- Bidders are advised to download bid submission manual from the download option as well as from bidders manual kit on website www.jktenders.gov.in into acquaint bid submission process.
- To participate in bidding process, bidders have to get Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) as per Information Technology Act 2000. Bidders can get DSC from any approved vendors.
- The bidders have to submit their bids online in electronic format with Digital Signature.
- No financial bid will be accepted in physical form.
- Bids will be opened online as per time schedule mentioned as above.
- Bidders must ensure to upload scanned copy of all necessary documents like CDR/PAN/Treasury challan /Bank receipt and Performance Security (if any).
- The Department will not be responsible for delay in online submission due to any reasons.
- Bidders are advised to use "My Documents" area in their user on e-tendering portal to store such documents as are required.
- Scanned copy of cost of tender document in favour of

No duplicity shall be entertained on account of above documents and such bidders found guilty shall be black listed without making any correspondence.

DIPK-2610/21

No: 3307-27.

DATED: 05.06.2021.

Sd/-
Executive Engineer,
Muffasil (R&B) Division Budgam

Choudhary Flags Off Vans Carrying Cherry Fruit Produce For Airlifting



KO NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR: Principal Secretary, Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare and Horticulture departments, Navin Kumar Choudhary on Tuesday flagged off the vans carrying Cherry produce of various sellers of Kashmir valley which will be subsequently airlifted to Delhi and Mumbai from Srinagar airport.

Director Horticulture, Aijaz Ahmad Bhat; senior officers of NAFED, officers of Horticulture department, prospective sellers and other concerned officials of the department were also present during the flagging off ceremony.

Speaking on the occasion, the Principal Secretary said that it is the historic event for the horticulture sector of J&K and is a path breaking start for the marketing of perishable fruits and organic vegetables of J&K. He added that today almost five tons of perishable fruit produce will be airlifted to different cities like Mumbai and Delhi which will reach these destinations within hours.

Navin Choudhary further said that this significant step will empower the fruit growers of Jammu and Kashmir and will increase their income as well as boost the rural economy. He added that it will also address the transportation hiccups for the horticulture produce especially the highly perishable items like Cherry, Plum, Apricots etc.

Speaking on the occasion, Director Horticulture, Aijaz Ahmad Bhat said that under this

scheme the Department will facilitate all the prospective sellers of cherry and other perishable fruit produce and will provide them suitable platform for selling their produce. He added that the sellers can contact their district horticulture offices and avail the benefits of this unique scheme.

The Jammu and Kashmir Horticulture Department had recently signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with airline carrier Go-Airlines for transportation of perishable horticulture and agricultural produce to various destinations across the country.

Under this MoU, the airline will charge Rs. 24, Rs. 34, Rs. 47, Rs. 48 and Rs.50 for transportation of perishable fruit produce from Jammu and Srinagar to Delhi, Mumbai/Pune, Chennai, Kolkata and Bengaluru respectively.

Meanwhile, Navin Kumar Choudhary also inaugurated Advanced Centre for Horticulture Development at Rajbagh here.

Speaking during the inauguration ceremony, the Principal Secretary said that this Centre is the back bone of Horticulture Department, where the high yielding, precious and valuable exotic plant material and rootstocks imported from foreign countries are being propagated on the modern scientific lines for economic upliftment of the farmers and fruit producers of J&K to boost their economy.

Importantly, the centre will boost the Production of High-density clonal rootstocks, Production of quality plant material on Clonal rootstocks, Management of water conservation through different methods viz. Plastic- culture, Acclimatization and adoption of various kinds of exotic fruit cultivars, clonal stocks of Kiwi plants, imparting training to Basic Horticulture workers/ Farmers/interested Orchardists, etc.

Director Agriculture Kashmir visits Potato SMF Yarikah, Tangmarg

KO NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR: The Director Agriculture Kashmir, Chowdhary Mohammad Iqbal Tuesday visited Potato Seed Multiplication Farm (SMF) Yarikha Tangmarg.

During the visit, the Director inspected different plots of the Farm and interacted with the concerned officers and technical experts of the Farm.

The Director on the occasion highlighted the importance of using the latest interventions and technologies during the production of Potato Seed Crop.

He asked the concerned to put in all the efforts for a successful cropping season so that the division becomes self reliant in terms of Potato Seed requirement and also reaches the position to export seed (Potato Seed) to the other parts of country as in valley is having one of the best climatic conditions for seed production in the country.



Earlier Manager, Potato SMF gave a detailed description of different activities that are being carried out in the farm. He also informed the visiting Director about this year's crop and expected yield.

He said this year 7.2 hectares of land is under cultivation of Kufri Himali variety and 1152 quintals of seed potato yield is expected. He also informed that 34 kanals of land is under the cultivation of breeder seed.

The Director during the visit was accompanied by Joint Director Agriculture Extension Mohammad Qasim Gani and other senior officers of the department.

Historic Initiative To Bring A New Revolution In The Farming Sector Of J&K: LG

J&K Government Taking Reformative Measures For The Sustainable Development Of Agriculture & Horticulture Sectors: LG



KO NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR : Taking a giant leap in the agriculture sector & adopting environment-friendly farming practices across the UT, Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha on Tuesday flagged off the first consignment of IFFCO's Nano Urea (Liquid) from Kalol area of Gujarat, through virtual mode.

"I express my heartfelt gratitude to the Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi for encouraging the agricultural scientists and farmers, for the last many years, to reduce the use of urea. His vision has made this into a reality, which will bring reforms in the agriculture sector of J&K", added the Lt Governor.

The Lt Governor also congratulated Dr. U. S. Awasthi, Managing Director, (Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative Ltd) IFFCO and his entire team members for developing the world's first Liquid Nano Urea, which will enhance crop yield, protect crops from seasonal damage while maintaining soil quality. The historic initiative aimed at saving the environment and keeping the soil of the agricultural fields fertile.

It was informed that 15,000 bottles of Liquid Nano Urea are leaving Kalol, Gujarat today for the farmers of Jammu and Kashmir. Out of this, 7500 bottles will be distributed to the Jammu division and 7500 to the farmers of Kashmir division. The total consignment of liquid nano-urea will be equivalent to 675 metric tonnes of conventional urea.

While highlighting the immense scope of growth in agriculture sector of the UT and the impact the new initiative will bring in the sector, the Lt Governor observed that with the introduction of Liquid Nano Urea to the farmers of the UT, J&K's agriculture sector can contribute to Prime Minister's campaign for self-reliant India. In Jammu and Kashmir, along with the promotion of traditional agriculture, horticulture, emphasis is being laid on value addition farming, so that the farmers get a fair price for their crops. 70 percent population of the UT is dependent on agriculture. This liquid Nano Urea can bring about a new revolution in the farming sector of J&K, said the Lt Governor.

Citing the positives of the use of Liquid Nano Urea, the Lt Governor maintained that it will bring a reformative change in farming practices and benefit the farmers, especially those involved in traditional and high value crops. Now, only half a litre of liquid nano urea will replace one sack of manure. There are many such hill farms in many

districts, where farmers have to travel several kilometers to reach their agriculture fields. Instead of carrying a bag of urea, now the farmers have to carry only half a litre bottle of urea, he added.

The excessive use of urea is resulting in making the soil barren across the country. It has not only affected the nitrogen cycle but also harms the environment and people's health. Initially, many farmers may get benefitted due to its excessive use, but later the same urea destroys the fertility of the fields, the Lt Governor said.

On the financial aspects of the new initiative, the Lt Governor observed that the Liquid Nano Urea will subsequently bring down the cost of farming. Cost of one bottle of this urea is 10% less than that of a 45 kg of urea bag. Since, Nano Urea does not require subsidy, the government will save about Rs 27,000 crore, besides providing a benefit of Rs 28,000 crore to the farmers by reducing their cost on agriculture, he added.

In 2017, the Prime Minister had said that when India celebrates 75th anniversary of Independence in 2022, we should reduce the use of urea by half. I sincerely hope and believe that the way IFFCO is working on the call of the Prime Minister, soon we will be successful in realizing his vision, said the Lt Governor.

On the occasion, the Lt Governor also added that the J&K Government is intended to increase the productivity of Basmati agricultural land.

The Jammu and Kashmir administration has taken a policy decision for converting 60,000 hectares of Basmati agricultural land into more productive one, and for this, very good quality seeds are also being made available for farmers at cheaper rates, said the Lt Governor.

In current financial year, we have decided that at least 7.5 lakh farmers would be provided good seeds at a cost of Rs 16 crore. In this entire campaign, farmers are being encouraged to switch over to organic farming, he added.

The UT Government is putting in its best efforts to provide all facilities like harvesting, management and processing to the farmers of Jammu & Kashmir and providing linkages for their products to national and international markets.

Highlighting various initiatives undertaken by the J&K Government to bring reforms in the horticulture sector, the Lt Governor observed that the UT administration has signed an MoU with NAFED through which 5500 hectares of high density Apple, Walnut, Mango, and Litchi would be cultivated in the next five years. For this, an investment of about Rs 1700 crore will be made in the Union Territory. Three cold

storage clusters will also be set up at Kathua, North Kashmir and South Kashmir with an investment of Rs 500 crore which will provide more convenience to the farmers.

GI tagging of regional products is being done to further empower the farmers through effective marketing of their products. The quality of many of our products like Saffron, Walnut, Cherry, Strawberry, Plum, Almond, and Apricot is no less than those produced in other countries. Kashmir's Saffron was launched in Dubai in December after GI tagging. The world market was dominated by the Iranian Saffron, but now Kashmir's Saffron is making its mark in the global market, remarked the Lt Governor.

Underscoring the reformative measures taken by the UT Government for the sustainable development of agriculture sector, the Lt Governor observed that the Government is focused on increasing the income of farmers and providing employment to more and more youth in collaboration with the administration and scientists, researchers related to agriculture. To promote agriculture and horticulture in Jammu and Kashmir, this year's budget has been increased to Rs 2008 crore, which is Rs 695 crore more than the previous year, he added.

Agricultural Universities of Jammu and Kashmir are being roped in for promoting food processing units and agriculture related start-ups. Despite the corona pandemic, scores of agricultural programmes have been organized in the past ten months. With the help of Krishi Vigyan Kendras, we are trying to reach every farmer to ensure the use of innovation and technology in agriculture and allied sectors, said the Lt Governor.

In order to take technology to the fields of farmers, it has been decided that this year, we will provide machinery worth Rs 65 crore to the identified 30,000 farmers, besides providing modern irrigation facilities to 25,000 farmers at a cost of Rs 91 crore.

Further, the state-of-the-art training will also be imparted to around 35,000 farmers to implement new experiments in agriculture with the changing environment for which provision of Rs 26 crore has been kept, he continued.

Speaking on the Skill development and Employment generation opportunities of rural youth, the Lt Governor said that this has been one of the focus areas of the J&K Government, for which special provision has been kept in this year's budget. We have made a provision of Rs 74 crore to increase the capacity of cold storage as well as provide employment opportunities to our youth, he added.

Hafeez Discusses Tourism Development With Stakeholders

KO NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR: Secretary, Tourism & Culture, Sarmad Hafeez, on Tuesday held detailed deliberations with tourism stakeholders from Kashmir regarding present status of tourism sector in the region.

The meeting was attended by Director Tourism Kashmir, G N Ittoo; Director SKICC, Bakshi Javed Humayun; Deputy Director, Tourism (Registration), Ahsan-ul-Haq Chisthi, representatives of travel and tour operators, white water rafting, mountaineering, hiking and trekking besides cycling and other concerned.

The representatives put forth different issues and suggestions for tourism promotion with respect to their concerned fields in the Kashmir valley.

Speaking on the occasion, Secretary impressed upon the stakeholders to use social media platforms as marketing and promotional tools and rope in social media influencers and bloggers to promote our tourist destinations worldwide.

Sarmad Hafeez maintained that J&K has a huge potential in terms of tourism and recreational activities where the local stakeholders from the tourism sector would offer and advertise tourist destinations to people outside so that the Union Territory would be number one tourist destination in the country.

He asked the stakeholders to organize events like cycling; mountain biking, hiking, mountaineering, recreational water sports and related activities so that national as well as international players would be invited for such events in order to promote J&K tourism.

He said visiting tourists could be facilitated in such activities at different destinations through information brochures, hiring shops, recreational equipments among other facilities.

Events like marathon cycling will have international value where the best people from the country could be invited to take part, he said.

He said both the department and the stakeholders should work together for betterment of tourism sector as the intent of the government is to help local stakeholders to take maximum benefit through these tourism activities.

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Revive Dying Crafts; Link Students To Industries: Dr Samoon To DI

KO NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR: In its 28th Executive Committee meeting of Craft Development Institute (CDI), Principal Secretary, Skill Development Department, Dr Asgar Hassan Samoon on Tuesday emphasised upon the faculty and administration of CDI to revive crafts that are nearing extinction. He asked them to work for innovations to renew these crafts afresh here.

Director National Institute of Design, New Delhi and Additional Secretary Finance participated in the meeting through video conferencing.

Dr Samoon who is also the chairman of the Executive Committee impressed upon the administration of the Institute to modernise the crafts to reduce drudgery and for improved outcomes. He asked them to link the students enrolled in the institute with the industries so that their skill sets are relevant to their requirements and they find jobs at the end of training.

The Principal Secretary urged the institution authorities to develop marketing techniques that

are in consonance with the current trends. He asked them to take full advantage of the digital marketing platforms that have added significance in view of prevailing covid protocols.

Dr Samoon advised them to act as facilitators for the artisans and create skilled manpower for industries to hire from. He asked them to recruit faculties in specific crafts especially master craftsmen who are well-versed with the craft and its nuances. He asked them to create the facility of certification laboratory here so that artisans have not to go outside for the purpose.

Dr Samoon maintained that craft development is an informal sector with immense potential in generation of employment. He asked the officers to look for successful models elsewhere so that same technology and interventions are introduced here. He asked them to work for customer-friendly solutions to match the competition in the global market. He asked for ironing out the mismatch between the requirements from industry and training imparted by the institution.

Covid-19 Decline: 50% E-Commerce Service Recommence In Valley

Agencies

SRINAGAR: After the Covid-19 pandemic engulfed Kashmir in March last year, the conventional shopping in the valley got disrupted, pushing the consumers to embrace e-commerce.

In the past year, consumers have switched from shops, supermarkets, and shopping malls to online portals for the purchase of products, ranging from basic commodities to branded goods.

However, the stakeholders associated with the e-commerce and the online service industry in the valley say the Covid-19 lockdowns has badly affected their business, compelling them to close the postal codes for delivery.



“CURRENTLY, E-COMMERCE IS covering 50 per cent in the valley. As of now, around 50 per cent of postal codes are active. We are hopeful by the end of this month we will give 100 per cent delivery coverage in the entire valley,”

"Around 40 per cent of people associated with the industry lost their jobs. However, after the relaxations were announced, with opening of the postal code slots for shipment deliveries, the business showed signs of improvement, but due

to active red zone categories the delivery is not possible," they said.

President Kashmir Courier and Cargo Association (KCCA), Zahoor Ahmed Qari while speaking with the news agency, said that due to back to back Corona lockdowns, online trade and e-commerce have shrunk to 25 per cent now.

However, Qari said with the gradual relaxations in corona lockdown more and more postal codes are being opened, and the business is also gaining momentum.


"Currently, e-commerce is covering 50 per cent in the valley. As of now, around 50 per cent of postal codes are active. We are hopeful by the end of this month we will give 100 per cent delivery coverage in the entire valley," he said.

Qari said after the authorities imposed the Covid-19 restrictions in the valley, although the e-commerce was exempted at a later stage, "but they had to face of problems while delivering the shipments".

"Our men were not allowed to move and the authorities were also not allowed to open the office, as the covid-19 situation was surging in the valley, with the result the load was getting piled up. We apprised the authorities about the shipments we receive which comprise of medical products as well," he said.

"However after the gradual relaxation, we started the services again, and are expecting to gain the momentum once further relaxations are given," he said—(KNO)

REMEMBERING YOU



Hakim Iftikhar Hussain
1954-2021

Eight days have passed since you left for heavenly abode leaving us behind in grief. Ammi's demise, a week earlier, had already shattered us and we were looking at you to console us. But God almighty has His own plans and we submit before His will. We miss both of you and pray for your Magfirah.

**Hakim Ali Asgar- Son
Kaneez Sakina- Daughter**

Directorate of Handicrafts & Handloom Condole Staff Member’s Untimely Death

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Director Handicrafts & Handloom Kashmir and the employees of the department on Tuesday expressed deep shock over the untimely death of an assistant training officer.

In a meeting held on Tuesday, the Director Mahmood Ahmad Shah and his staff expressed grief over the death of Javid Ahmad Kawa, Assistant Handicraft’s Training officer,

who died in harness on Monday. The meeting expressed sincere condolences and deepest sympathy to the family as well as the fraternity of young, dynamic, and noble staff member.

“We pray to almighty Allah for forgiveness to the departed soul and for granting fortitude to the family of the deceased to bear this irreparable loss. The heart of all the officers and officials of the department goes out with the bereaved family,” the participants said in the meeting.

Srinagar Sizzles

few days and will continue to experience the same for the next two days till June 10.

“But from June 11, we are ready to hit a switch where sporadic periods of rain will lower the mercury below 20 degrees during the day time,” he said.

“On the first day, the intensity of precipitation will be high while later for the next two days, lower intensity of precipitation will be witnessed across the valley. In addition, there is a possibility of lightning and thunderstorms across different parts of the Valley,” he added.

He further said in Kashmir, the maximum temperature is likely to remain somewhere between 31-33 degree Celsius for the next two days. However, from June 11-June 14, Ahmed said, the temperature is expected to settle around 12-14 degree Celsius.

“After June 15, we expect a temperature above 25 degree Celsius in the Valley,” he said.

Last week, as the temperature started soaring in J&K, the MeT had issued excessive-heat warnings and heat advisories for the people in J&K. Following the same, the officials of the department had advised the people to take note of the given advisories.

“We have advised the people to stay hydrated, limit outdoor exposure and be mindful of any signs of heat-related illnesses such as heat stroke and heat-exhaustiveness, Ahmed said.

Giving an extended weather forecast, the MeT Deputy Director said that Kashmir is likely to have a temperature between 32 to 35.5 degree Celsius that will lead to several days of heat wave.

“A period of hot temperatures in the mid-June to early August is expected where the heat index could reach as high as 35.5 degrees. This probability for above normal temperatures will witness July as the hottest month. In this given time frame, the combination of hot temperatures and high humidity will combine to create a situation in which heat-illnesses are very much possible,” he said.

He further added that unlike Kashmir, the temperature in Jammu may soar up to 44.5 degrees during the same period.

J&K Logs

COVID-19 patients have recovered, 996 from Jammu Division and 1884 from the Kashmir, leaving the number of active positive cases to 21817 in J&K—8143 in Jammu division and 13674 in the Valley.

Also, one new confirmed case of mucormycosis (black fungus) has been reported today, bringing the cumulative cases to 17 in J&K.

Meanwhile, police on Tuesday claimed to have recovered over Rs 2 lakh fine from violators for breaching coronavirus related rules and guidelines.

In a statement issued to media here, a police spokesperson said that during the last 24 hours, police have realized a fine to the tune of Rs 2,05,400 from 1968 people throughout the Kashmir valley for violating the various guidelines, rules and SOPs regarding Covid-19.

“The special drive against the violators of Covid-19 guidelines and rules continued throughout all the districts of Kashmir Valley to ensure that people adhere to SOPs and guidelines envisaged by the government to curb COVID-19 pandemic,” the spokesperson said.

Govt Orders

now, the Union Health Ministry said.

“In immediate follow-up of the prime minister’s announcement of these changes in the Guidelines of National COVID Vaccination programme yesterday, the Centre has placed an order with Serum Institute of India for 25 crore doses of Covishield and with Bharat Biotech for 19 crore doses of Covaxin.

“Additionally, 30 per cent of the advance for procurement of both the COVID-19 vaccines has been released to Serum Institute of India and Bharat Biotech,” an official said.

In an address to the nation on Monday, the prime minister announced that the central government would take over the 25 per cent state procurement quota and provide free coronavirus vaccines to states and union territories for inoculation of all above 18 years of age from June 21.

Asserting that vaccine supply would be increased significantly in the coming days, Modi said the Centre has now decided to buy 75 per cent of jabs from vaccine makers for free supply to states, while private sector hospitals will continue to procure the remaining 25 per cent.

The government has also set the maximum price private hospitals can charge for the three COVID-19 vaccines currently available in the country -- Covishield Rs 780 per dose, Covaxin Rs 1,410 and Sputnik V Rs 1,145.

In a letter to all states and union territories on Tuesday, the Health Ministry suggested that appropriate strict action be taken against private vaccination centres for overcharging.

The maximum price of Covishield for private COVID-19 Vaccination Centres (CVCs) has been fixed at Rs 780 per dose, while that of Covaxin is Rs 1,410 per dose and Sputnik V Rs 1,145 per dose, it said.

The official said the Centre has been supporting the efforts of states and union territories for an effective vaccination drive under the “whole of government approach” since January

16 this year.

Based on various representations received by the Centre, the vaccination for all adults above 18 years of age was opened in the Phase III of vaccination strategy beginning May 1.

“Now with the aim to further universalise the countrywide vaccination drive, all citizens above 18 years of age can receive the COVID-19 vaccine doses free of cost at government health facilities,” the official said.

Detained Rohingya

positive for the deadly infection during a special screening camp on May 25.

The officials said the woman was suffering from co-morbidities, including heart ailment, and she was shifted to the Government Medical College (GMC) hospital in Kathua from the holding centre on May 31 after her condition deteriorated.

Her COVID-19 test returned negative during the treatment, they said, adding that she suffered a massive heart attack which resulted in her death.

The body was shifted to the mortuary and is likely to be handed over to her community members on Tuesday, the officials said.

The Rohingyas are a Bengali-dialect speaking Muslim minority in Myanmar. Following persecution in their country, many of them entered India illegally through Bangladesh and took shelter in Jammu and other parts of the country.

According to government data, over 13,700 foreigners, including Rohingya Muslims and Bangladeshi nationals, are settled in Jammu and Samba districts of Jammu and Kashmir, where their population has increased by over 6,000 between 2008 and 2016. (PTI)

Cop Booked

school and date of birth certificates. He had alleged that Kumar’s his real date of birth is May 21, 1973 and his qualification is 6th pass as per school records of Government High School Langer (Nowshera).

On the receipt of the complaint, a preliminary verification was initiated by Crime Branch Jammu and during the course of enquiry the allegations levelled in the complaint were substantiated as the evidence collected so far is contrary to the certificates and documents submitted by the accused in the police department at the time of his appointment wherein his date of birth has been mentioned as February 4, 1978 and his qualification as class 8th pass, on the basis of which he obtained constabulary job in J& K Police (Armed), the spokesman said.

The accused has used fake documents as genuine and thus has committed the offences of forgery and cheating, thereby obtaining illegal monetary benefit in the shape of salary and causing wrongful gain to himself and corresponding loss to the government exchequer, the spokesman said.

He said the investigation of the case has been set in motion for in depth probe.

J&K Number 2

number two in the country in availability of medicines, hospital beds and in the Vaccination process.

“Today, in four of our districts, the 100% eligible population of above 45 years age group has got the first dose of vaccination. Efforts are afoot to achieve 100% saturation in other districts as well,” he said, as per official spokesperson.

“The foundation of our model of reconstruction is public participation. And I think it can act as a framework for the whole world. I made it clear to my officers that reconstruction does not mean erecting buildings as before. Therefore, reconstruction was focused on long-term planning having public-centric policy at its core,” he added.

Giving an example of decentralization, the LG said that during the challenging times of Corona, we have decentralized the community’s health and strengthened the panchayats from a health security point of view.

“This is a unique model in which the Covid Care Centres are connected to the Block and Primary Health Centre, and when needed, people can directly go to the hospitals attached to the districts. Thus, their dependence on centralized institutions is being eliminated,” Sinha said.

“It was during the war against Corona, we decided that the families who lost the sole earner in this terrible tragedy would be given pension for life and the children who lost their parents would be given special scholarships. Later, it was adopted by many other states, which is a welcome step. I believe that the policies that are made in the disaster are necessary for the subsequent reforms and for the smooth running of the governance system,” he added.

As per the official spokesperson, the LG further said that keeping in mind the needs of the people, many such policy decisions have been taken, and more will follow which can spur new investments, rapidly improve digital connectivity and bring the safety net of social security to the last person in the queue which will be beginning of the real rebuilding.

“The Lt Governor recalled that in Jammu and Kashmir, a small experiment was started in the direction of public participation in September

last year when everyone’s participation in the work of administration was ensured and responsibility was fixed not only for implementing future plans but their time limit was also fixed with the consent of people. As a result, we have been able to handle the tragedy of Corona together, and are also walking on the path of progress,” he said.

He further said that the LG informed that development, employment, skills, and equity are needed to initiate inclusive socio-economic reform.

“We worked in all these areas through public participation. By identifying young boys and girls as entrepreneurs from every Panchayat, we have created a strong link of more than 20 thousand such entrepreneurs in the last 7-8 months, which will improve the lives of at least one lakh people. And its direct effect on the unemployment rate of Jammu and Kashmir can be seen,” the LG said, as per official spokesperson.

He further said that referring to the report of Sustainable Development Goals of NITI Aayog, the LG said that compared to last year, this year Jammu and Kashmir has been kept in the category of “Performer”.

“In all the 16 benchmarks that were prepared, our ranking has improved. And this has been possible only because of public participation. We have driven public participation like a revolution in the core sectors including manufacturing, technology development, agriculture, infrastructure, human resource development, health, and public service delivery, which is showing favourable results,” Sinha said, as per official spokesperson.

He said that the LG underlined the importance of the policy of ‘People First’ in political, economic, and social institutions for success of any system and said that Emergency Health Response is short-term but the policies that are made during the same period always prepare a new road map for long-term development.

In today’s time, humanity is continuously engaged in reconstruction. People in the field of science and technology are working hard. Some actions may not be visible, but their effect will soon be in front of all of us,” he said.

Emphasizing the importance and immense potential of science, the LG said that the biggest lesson the pandemic has taught us is that no country can afford to remain in isolation, away from science. We all have to face the challenges together, through our strengths.

“For the regeneration and reconstruction of the nation and the world, it is most important that all the powers of the world should work together in harmony. The science of the future will be the science of service to mankind, the technology of the future will serve the needs of the people,” Sinha said, as per official spokesperson.

“The amount of work done in the health sector across the world in one year has never happened in human history. The way the whole world is working together to save lives is living example of compassionate humanity,” he added.

The official spokesperson further said that the LG lauded the roles of Frontline warriors and Healthcare workers said that doctors, nurses, ward boys, ambulance drivers, people working in oxygen plants, ASHA and ANM personnel, scientists, engineers, public representatives of PRIs, social workers, professionals who were trying to reach out to the needy, transcending boundaries across the country physically and through social media, worked with great determination and selflessness.

“The Lt Governor said that people have realized that there are heroes in real life too and they are the personnel related to Healthcare sector. People saw the reflections of the angels in the faces behind the PPE kits,” he said.

Referring to a Shloka in Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, the LG as per official spokesperson said that the only way to remove darkness is to strengthen the capacity to see the light.

“The light that we saw in this tragedy is not only because of medicine, oxygen, and vaccines, but because of the efforts of the people who are behind it, our corona warriors, front line workers, scientists, and engineers,” Sinha said.

The LG, as per official spokesperson also said that the whole world is navigating through a crisis. It has, however, come at a time when science and technology is at the peak of its exploration. It is in less than a year that a vaccine was invented and governments were able to mobilize more facilities for the treatment of the people.

“It is my personal experience that only by giving birth to a new consciousness in every individual, we can move forward in the direction of change in the society, nation, and the world and the direction of change in the human being should be towards making people’s lives prosperous and secure,” the LG added.

The official spokesperson further said that the LG expounded on the three things important for any nation or province after a crisis viz. - Response, Recovery, and Rebuilding and said that J&K started working on it in August last year.

“Effectively utilizing the time before the start of the second wave, 23 oxygen plants were installed within 6 months. Eventually, there was no shortage of medical oxygen in Jammu and Kashmir even in the terrible tragedy of the second wave. We have more than 40 Oxygen Plants operational, and their number will increase to 99 in the coming days,” he said, as per official spokesperson.

He further said that the LG termed the intense discussion as necessary for building a compassionate society and congratulated Hitesh Chandel, Managing Director and Chief Mentor of Defined Values Consultants Pvt Ltd and Sanjay Sharma, Additional Associate Leader-L3, Defined Values Group for organising the Global Submit and hoped that more such discussions would happen in future.

Union Road Secretary

and Highways, Government of India, who met Sinha at the Raj Bhavan here on Tuesday, an official spokesperson said. Union Secretary and LG, he said, held a detailed discussion on the execution of various major road and tunnel projects in the UT of J&K.

“Strong road connectivity is the vital component of socio-economic development of any region. All major road/highway projects under

execution in J&K shall be completed within the set timeframes to facilitate the trade and smooth movement of the public,” Sinha said, as per official spokesperson.

The LG, he said, further stressed on timely maintenance of Highway stretches, especially those with high frequency of transportation.

Arun Kumar Mehta, Chief Secretary; Shailendra Kumar, Principal Secretary, Public Works (R&B) Department, and other concerned officials were present during the meeting.

Troop Movement

of the paramilitary force who had been stationed in the union territory since August 5, 2019, the day Jammu and Kashmir’s special status was revoked and the state was bifurcated into union territories.

Officials said that these paramilitary companies were returning to their stations after completing election duty in West Bengal and Tamil Nadu.

However, the movement of troops and a series of meetings, including Lt Gov Manoj Sinha’s deliberations with Home Minister Amit Shah and officials in Delhi since Saturday, fuelled the rumours and repeated attempts by officials were failing to put an end to it.

Additional Director General of Police Mukesh Singh, who is at present holding the charge of Jammu region, took to Twitter to rule out any fresh deployment of forces but his assertion found no takers on social media.

Many social media users talked about further splitting of Jammu and Kashmir, with Jammu being given a status of state and Kashmir remaining as a union territory.

Residents of Kashmir Valley repeatedly enquired about the possibility of any shutdown of internet and phone services, the steps taken by the Centre before the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Bill was placed in Parliament and Article 370 was virtually abrogated.

The sudden visits of JK Apni Party chief Altaf Bukhari and Lone to Delhi have added fresh fuel to the rumours.

Lone returned to Srinagar quietly on Friday evening, and tweeted on Saturday “woke up to a lovely morning in Srinagar only to find out on Twitter that I am in Delhi” and attempted to dismiss the conjectures.

Some politicians were seen enquiring whether the reports about the MLA hostel in Srinagar being cleaned up for their fresh lodging were true.

Senior National Conference leader Tanvir Sadiq tweeted, “While rumours are flying thick and fast - should we be ready for second semester? MLA’s hostel 2.0?”

The MLA hostel was a sub-jail where politicians had been detained for several months after the Centre’s action of August 2019.

Journalist Fahad Shah tweeted, “Top police officers, bureaucrats, officials (who were part of recent meetings) all say rumours in Jammu and Kashmir are baseless. Only time will tell though. People are reminded of August 2019 every time there are such rumours. Back then the governor had said everything was fine.”

The return of paramilitary forces is also attributed to the annual Amarnath Yatra scheduled to start from June 28 this year.

It was not immediately clear whether the pilgrimage will be held this year considering the coronavirus pandemic situation or curtailed or cancelled altogether.

Last year, the pilgrimage was cancelled due to the pandemic and in 2019, it was curtailed because of the Centre’s decision of August 2019.

Ladakh Reserves

as constituted under these Rules.” The Rules, defined under section (j) means the Union territory of Ladakh Employment (Subordinate) Service Recruitment Rules.

However, this Rule shall not apply to persons allotted service in Union territory of Ladakh under the provisions of section 89(2) of Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Act, 2019, or such Rules as may be prescribed by the Administration, it said.

Appointment to the Service shall be made by direct recruitment; or by promotion provided that the terms and manner of appointment by absorption shall be as notified by the Administration by a general or special order. It is further provided that the competent authority to appoint a person to the Service by absorption shall be the Administration.

However, on the date of commencement of these Rules, persons who have already been appointed substantively to a post in the cadre of J&K Employment (Subordinate) Service and finally allotted for service in the Ladakh in accordance with the provisions of section 89(2) of the J&K Reorganization Act, 2019, shall be deemed to have been appointed to the Service at the initial constitution.

It is also provided that a person appointed by a competent authority substantively to a post in the cadre of J&K Employment (Subordinate) Service on the recommendations of a Board after the appointed day shall also be deemed to have been appointed to the Service at the initial constitution and the services rendered by him prior to the commencement of these Rules shall count for the purposes of rules regulating his conditions of service.

Regarding eligibility, the age limit and other qualifications for direct recruitment shall be as prescribed by the Administration. “A person already in Government service would be required to apply through proper channel for direct recruitment against a vacant post in the Service, if he possesses the educational and other qualifications prescribed for recruitment to such posts,” read the Rules.

Regarding interpretation, the notification says that if any question arises relating to the interpretation of these Rules, the matter shall be referred to the Administrative Department whose decision thereon shall be final and binding. (GNS)

Saint, Sovereign

prince Dara decided to meet him, the saint left for the heavenly abode.

The heartbroken young prince would then visit Kashmir to meet Mian Mir’s successor — Akhund Mullah Shah.

The revered saint known for his mystic influence on Kashmiri life impacted Dara Shikoh to an extent that the young prince went to build

three massive structures in the praise of his “murshid”.

The monuments came in the form of Pari Mahal at Zabarwan Hill, Akhund Mullah Mosque at Koh-e-Maran, and the third one at Malshahi Bagh.

For the next few decades, the elegant mosque at Malshahi Bagh remained full of faithful.

As the rush grew, a locality was carved out on the foothills of Dignibal mountains, thus laying the foundation of the beautiful hamlet.

However, while the other architectural pieces established by Dara Shikoh in Kashmir prospered to attract visitors till this day, the Malshah Masjid failed to overcome the negligence and fell to despair.

“There weren’t any human settlements here before this masjid,” Rashid continues, as he takes the walk inside the royal ruins. “People started living here under the guidance of the pious soul.”

But as soon as the saint left, the locals, for whom the mosque came as a blessing, started deserting it.

“And since 18th century,” the guardian says, “the mosque became defunct, with no worshipper turning up for prayer.”

After the mosque was deserted, it started attracting the force of nature, in the form of bushes and grasses.

The ‘eco-invasion’ driven by creepers soon covered the regal walls and made it look like a haunted house in a jungle.

For the next 200 years, the expanding arms of nature appeared as a mark of occupation over the once-revered structure.

But, it wasn’t only nature’s strike that damaged the mosque.

Post-2010, the ruined structure faced human greed. A few people tried to fence over the mosque along with its land.

“People started fencing the border first and then the mosque,” the caretaker says. “It created ruckus in the area.”

The timely intervention of the Waqf Board saved the mosque from being razed to the ground and its land to get encroached by some ‘powerful’.

Equally alarming were the efforts to make the premises as a grazing land and shelter for livestock.

In the vicinity of the heritage structure lies the padlocked office of Waqf Board—the official custodian of the waning heritage.

“The board just earns a whopping annual amount from the apple orchard of this mosque,” the caretaker says.

“They could’ve managed it like the Jamia Masjid of Srinagar, but they aren’t willing to spend a penny on it. They could’ve also promoted it as a tourist destination. But they’re just sitting over it and waiting for its demise.”

This reporter tried to contact the board managers for the official version, but many seemed oblivious of the structure and its status, while others just passed the buck.

However, an official from the Archaeological Department said they’ve lately taken a notice of the mosque “but so far no plan has been formulated to conserve or revamp the mosque”.

But Rashid sees no help in sight.

The caretaker now fears that the medieval mosque will be eventually consumed by the greed and apathy.

However, Rashid takes solace from the past when students along with their teachers would come to see the mosque and study its history and architecture.

“But since the tumultuous 1990s, those small yet helpful educational visits have stopped too,” the caretaker laments.

“Now hardly anyone turns up to see the sovereign’s souvenir for his saint who once founded and flourished life here.”

Fire At Vaishno

a fire incident took place at Bhawan. The fire hydrants were pressed into service and the fire was brought under control by 4.25 pm,” an official of the Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board said.

He said there has been no hindrance to the yatra (pilgrimage) which is progressing smoothly.

Union minister Jitendra Singh, who is also the Lok Sabha MP from Udhampur in Jammu and Kashmir, said he spoke to the Reasi Deputy Commissioner over the incident.

“Spoke to DC #Reasi, S. Charandeep Singh just now and inquired about the fire that broke out near the #VaishnoDevi shrine some time back. Thankfully, everything brought under control. No major loss reported. However, keeping a close track for the next few hours,” he tweeted.

Earlier, the officials said a short circuit triggered the fire which was completely brought under control by 5 pm.

Visuals from the scene showed thick smoke billowing out of the building as firefighters worked to douse the flames.

The fire fighting squad of the shrine immediately swung into action after CRPF personnel raised an alarm, the officials said.

Some cash and records were gutted in the fire, they added.

Soldier Found

as per news agency KNO.

“The soldier died following which police have started an investigation into the matter,” the official said.

Youth Slips

action but couldn’t save his life,” the official said.

He said the body of the deceased will be handed over to his legal heirs after completion of all legal formalities—(KNO)

Panch’s Brother

area of Kalaroos.

Ward Number 2, Thayen B, Panch has been identified as Muhammad Maqbool Malik son of Abdul Aziz Malik.

Local sources added that some window panes of the house were damaged in a stone-throwing incident. They said that the brother of the Panch in self-defense fired a single shot in the air from his 12-Bore rifle.

Police rushed to the spot to assess the situation, while the stone-throwers fled from the area.

When contacted a police official said that matter is being investigated. (KNT)

Sri Lanka Board And Cricketers Reach Temporary Truce, Salvage England Tour



Press Trust of India

COLOMBO: The Sri Lankan cricketers have agreed to compete against England on a tour-specific contract but would not sign the annual contracts unless governing body SLC explains the evaluation process.

Sri Lanka are scheduled to tour England for three Twenty20s and as many ODIs between June 18 and July 4.

Following a stormy round of talks, the players were told by the management that they would either call off the England tour or send a third string side.

The players told the management they would sign a tour-specific contract but need more time to sign the annual contracts.

The players had defied a June 3 deadline to sign the contracts, citing lack of transparency in the process.

While defying the deadline the players said they were willing to play for the country even if the administration decided not to pay salaries due to their refusing to

enter contracts.

At the height of the dispute and negotiations last month, the players said remuneration proposed to players were more than 3-fold lower than payments made to players of other counties.

The SLC had by then announced that 24 of the leading players had been offered contracts under four categories and they had been given a deadline until 3 June to sign them.

In the categories released only six players featured in the category A and their annual pay ranges between 70,000 to 100,000 US dollars.

The batsman, Dhananjaya de Silva draws highest – 100,000 with the rest of them were to receive 70-80,000 US dollars.

The players then took exception to the decision by the SLC to make public specific payment details of players saying the disclosures amount to a grave security concern to each and every player.

They claimed that the SLC decision to make public pay details of players had affected their self-confidence and peace of mind.

Faf Du Plessis Defends His Quetta Team-Mate Azam Khan's Selection In Pakistan Team



Press Trust of India

ABU DHABI: Not every guy has to have six-pack abs to be successful in cricket, said the supremely fit and well-built Faf du Plessis after Azam Khan's selection in the Pakistan team raised questions about his fitness.

A controversy erupted after Pakistan last Thursday named uncapped Azam, son of former captain Moin Khan, in the T20 squad for the tours of England and West Indies, with many believing that his father is behind his selection.

That Azam weighs more than 100kg was also pointed out by the fans before du Plessis came to the rescue of the big-hitter, with whom the former South African captain shares the dressing room in Pakistan Super League franchise, Quetta Gladiators.

"When it comes to fitness, every guy has a responsibility to try and improve every day," du Plessis said at a virtual press conference in Abu Dhabi ahead of the PSL.

"That looks different for every single person. For me, at an older age, I don't stop thinking about how I can improve myself as a cricketer, how I can improve my fitness, how I can improve my body, how I can improve my mind," he was quoted as saying by 'ESPNcricinfo'.

Many in the Pakistan cricket community believe that Azam was picked because of his father who

is a former national team skipper and coach of Quetta Gladiators.

Fans also questioned the fitness of the player who weighs more than 100kg.

Du Plessis said, "The difference between guys who do it for a very short period and guys who do it for longer, it's just improving, it's smaller gains right throughout your career. For someone like him (Azam), no, he doesn't have to look like me to be successful.

"It would just be small improvements every day. Right now, it might be something like fielding he could focus on, getting quicker to the ball, making sure (the) hands are good, taking all the catches and gradually putting in the work to become a better version of himself, or myself, or someone."

A clean striker, Azam hits a boundary every four balls and has so far scored 743 runs in 36 T20 matches.

"It's unfair to compare different people, we're comparing two different players. He's a guy who will always come and be a power hitter and hit it a long way.

"I'm certainly not a believer that every guy has to have a six-pack to be a successful cricketer. You work with what you have.

"You look at the greats in the game before, there's been guys long before me and after me and him, who will all look different but had the skillsets to perform," du Plessis said.

Refugee Team Of 29 Athletes Picked For Tokyo Olympics

Agencies

LAUSANNE: The refugee team for the Tokyo Olympics has 29 athletes competing in 12 sports, including a medalist at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Games who left Iran citing institutional sexism.

The team selected by the International Olympic Committee on Tuesday was drawn from 55 athletes who fled their home countries and got scholarships to train for the games in a new home country.

Kimia Alizadeh is among them five years after she became the first Iranian women to win an Olympic medal. She took bronze in taekwondo at age 18.

Alizadeh is based in Germany

after she defected from Iran and criticized wearing the mandatory hijab headscarf.

"I have a great feeling to have made a decision for my life that would definitely change my future," she told reporters in Germany in January last year.

The 29 athletes – a rise from 10 in the inaugural refugee team at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympics – are also originally from Afghanistan, Cameroon, Congo, Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Iraq, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Venezuela.

They will compete in swimming, athletics, badminton, boxing, canoeing, cycling, judo, karate, shooting, taekwondo, weightlifting, and wrestling.

To Address Mental Fatigue, Team India To Get Break After WTC Final



Press Trust of India

LONDON: The Indian team management has decided to give a three-week break to its players after the World Test Championship final in a bid to address the mental fatigue that might be triggered by lengthy spells in a bio-bubble.

The WTC final against New Zealand will be held from June 18-22 at the Ageas Bowl in Southampton and the members of the Indian squad will disperse for close to three weeks (20 days) before regrouping on July 14 to prepare for the five-match series against England starting in Nottingham from August 4.

"As skipper Virat Kohli and coach Ravi Shastri had told the media at the pre-departure press conference, there will be a break. There is a six-week gap between WTC final and opening Test against England, so we had to address the issue of players' well-being. Within UK, they can disperse off, go for a holiday, meet friends and family," a

senior BCCI official told PTI.

Obviously, there could be some team get-togethers also but players would be free to choose how they want to spend their time.

"Most of them have come to UK for multiple times and have friends and acquaintances around the country. It's only fair that they can switch off," said the source.

In fact, skipper Kohli on June 2, during the pre-departure, had answered a PTI query if the 42-day gap between the two assignments would affect the team's preparations.

Kohli had termed it a welcome break for the team.

"I feel like after you are done with WTC, I think it's a great opportunity to refresh and restructure. Hopefully, if things are okay, out in England, we would have finished our quarantine period and just for the guys to be normal for a few periods of time just disconnect again," Kohli had said back then.

"...understanding that we have a pressure of a five-match series so

like in Australia if we had to compete inside a bubble, for that long a period of time, it would have been very tough.

"Fact that we had little bit of freedom to go out and access things gave us a bit more space and time to reset and refresh. So, I think it's absolutely fine as it gives us time to re-group as a side and prepare again for a long series," the skipper had explained.

The break can rejuvenate them as a series against England can be very daunting.

"That kind of set-up is very important before we go into a lengthy series. Test series in England can be challenging and daunting so we want to have most amount of time before that series," Kohli had said back then.

Head coach Shastri had also echoed his skipper's sentiments.

"Five Tests in six weeks is no joke. Not only the physical side but also the mental side of it. You can be destroyed mentally being asked to do same things day in day out."

One More England Player Under Scanner For His Old Racist Tweets: Report

Press Trust of India

LONDON: One more current England player is being investigated by the country's cricket board for his allegedly racist remarks on Twitter as a teenager after Ollie Robinson was suspended for similar conduct.

The old tweets of the player in question were unearthed by wisdom.com, which did not reveal the identity of the cricketer since he had not reached the age of 16 at that time. The website posted screenshots of the tweet without revealing the player's identity.

".....your going out with a asian," the player seem to have posted with hashtags of #asian-throughhandthrough # hweollo #chinky.

The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) is now investigating the matter.

"It has been brought to our attention that an England player has posted historic offensive material on their social media account. We are looking into it and will make a further comment in due course," an ECB spokesperson was quoted as saying by the website.

The offensive posts came to fore



hours after the ECB suspended Robinson pending an investigation into his racist tweets in 2012 and 2013.

Robinson, who scored 42 runs and took seven wickets on his Test debut against New Zealand, has already apologised for his behaviour after his old tweets emerged.

England's Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden, however, criticised the ECB's decision to suspend Robinson, calling it "over the top". The country's Prime Minister Boris

Johnson also agreed with him.

Dowden contended that Robinson's tweets were a decade old, "written by a teenager" but agreed that they were offensive and wrong. England head coach Chris Silverwood earlier emphasised on the need of proper education in fight against discrimination.

"We all get things wrong at times. It's what we do and how we act. That's where education comes in," he said.

ICC Player Of The Month: Mushfiquur Rahim, Hasan Ali, Praveen Jayawickrama In Fray



Press Trust of India

DUBAI: Pakistan pacer Hasan Ali, Sri Lankan spinner Praveen Jayawickrama and Bangladesh wicket-keeper batsman Mushfiquur Rahim were on Tuesday nominated for the ICC men's Player of the Month award for May.

Besides, the ICC also nominated Kathryn Bryce of Scotland and Irish duo of Gaby Lewis and Leah Paul for Women's Player of the Month honours.

Ali played two Tests against Zimbabwe where he took a total of 14 wickets, while from Sri Lanka's camp, debutant Jayawickrama played one Test against Bangladesh and took a total of 11 wickets at 16.11.

Jayawickrama bowled Sri Lanka to victory in the second Test against Bangladesh with the best match figures by any Sri Lankan bowler on Test debut.

Bangladesh's Mushfiquur played one Test and three ODIs against Sri Lanka. He helped his team win their first ODI series against Sri Lanka by

scoring 125 in the second ODI.

Among women, all-rounder Bryce is the first player from Scotland, male, or female, to make it to the top 10 of the batting or bowling lists in the rankings released recently. She played four T20Is against Ireland where she scored 96 runs and took 5 wickets with an economy rate of 4.76.

Ireland's Lewis also played four T20Is against Scotland where she scored 116 runs at 29.00 with a strike rate of 116.00. She became the leading run-scorer in the series between Ireland and Scotland, with innings of 47 in the second match and 49 in the fourth. Her compatriot Paul took nine wickets at 4.44 with an economy rate of 4.44 against Scotland and became the leading wicket-taker in the T20I series between Ireland and Scotland.

The three nominees for either category are shortlisted based on on-field performances and overall achievements during that month (the first to the last day of each calendar month), the ICC said in a statement.

ISL Clubs To Field Minimum 7 Indian Players At One Time Under New Regulation

Press Trust of India

MUMBAI: The Indian Super League's 2021-22 season will witness an increase in local players' on-field participation thanks to a new set of guidelines that mandates clubs to field a minimum of seven footballers at one time from the previous six.

A rise in the number of Indian players means one spot less for foreign stars which will now be capped at four.

"Hero Indian Super League 2021-22 season will witness an increase in number of Indian players in the playing XI, as the new Coach & Player Selection Guidelines of Football Sports Development Limited (FSDL) now mandates clubs to have a minimum of seven (7) Indian players on the field at any point of time," the ISL said in a release on Tuesday.

The inaugural edition in 2014 had witnessed a playing composition of six foreigners and five Indian players.

Over the years, the league has gradually increased the spots for Indian players, with ISL 2017-18 having a minimum six Indian players on the field, which now has been further increased to seven for the next season.

"The latest changes in player guidelines are incorporated with the League's philosophy of bringing constant improvement to India's premier football event," it said in the release.

The cap on foreign players to a maximum four is in accordance

with the Asian Football Confederation's club competitions' regulations.

With the changes, clubs can sign a maximum of six foreign players of which one is required to be from an AFC member nation.

A club also has an option to sign a foreign marquee player within the League-approved classifications.

Starting this season, FSDL (Football Sports Development Limited, which runs the league) will mandate clubs to increase their development player signing from minimum two to four, while continuing to have two of such development players be part of the match-day squad.

"The league witnessed a significant improvement in the performance of developmental players last season with the likes of Akash Mishra, Apuia, Jeakson Singh, Rahul KP, Ashish Rai, etc. delivering breakthrough performances underlining the testament to the growth of young footballers in India."

A club can have a maximum squad strength of 35 players, with three registered goalkeepers.

A club can also have an injury replacement for an Indian player (outside of the maximum 35 registered players).

The squad salary cap remains at Rs 16.5 crore for the upcoming season.

Indian football's transfer window will open from Wednesday, giving the clubs a chance to aggressively chase the players of their choices.

SUNIL CHHETRI Overtakes Messi, One Goal Away From Entering All-Time Top 10

Press Trust of India

DOHA: Indian football talisman Sunil Chhetri has surpassed Argentina's global superstar Lionel Messi to become the second-highest active international goal-scorer with 74 strikes, adding another feather to his illustrious career.

The 36-year-old Chhetri achieved the staggering feat with his brace against Bangladesh in the joint preliminary qualifying round match for 2022 FIFA World Cup and 2023 AFC Asian Cup here on Monday night.

The seasoned striker, who helped India register their first win in six years in World Cup qualifiers, now stands only behind Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo (103) in the active international goal-scorer list.

"I do not count the number of goals. 10 years later, we will sit together, have a chat and then count," Chhetri said after the match.

Chhetri leads Barcelona star Messi by two goals and sits a place above Ali Mabkhout of the UAE, who is third on the list with 73 strikes to his name.

Messi scored his 72nd international goal in a World Cup qualifier against Chile last Thursday, while Mabkhout added to his tally against Malaysia, also last week.

At the Jassim Bin Hamad Stadium on Monday, Chhetri broke the deadlock in the 79th minute when he headed in Ashique Kuruniyan's cross from the left, and then sealed the victory by curling in a shot from long range in added time.

The India captain is also just goal away from entering world football's all-time top-10. He is behind Hungary's Sandor Kocsis, Japan's Kunishige Kamamoto, and Kuwait's Bashir Abdullah, who all have 75 goals.

Delighted with the team's victory and Chhetri's record, All India

Football Federation (AIFF) president Praful Patel lauded the captain for leading from the front.

"Our @IndianFootball skipper Sunil Chhetri adds another feather to his illustrious cap as he overtook Lionel Messi to become the second-highest active international goalscorer with 74 goals.

"A big congratulations to Captain Fantastic & wishing him many more accolades in the future," Patel tweeted.

The AIFF boss also praised the team on the convincing win that was built on Chhetri's brilliance.

"Congratulations #BlueTigers on an awesome win over Bangladesh today & fabulous performance by skipper @chhetrisunil11 who lead from the front & paved the path to victory.

"Your hard work & determination was visible on the field. Wishing you all the very best in the upcoming game!"

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