



P3 CITY

CITY RESIDENTS DEMAND CLOSURE OF LIQUOR SHOPS

Dozens of youth from Dalgate and Sonwar areas of Srinagar city on Monday morning staged a peaceful protest at Press Enclave in Srinagar demanding closure of all liquor shops at the tourist hub

P5 THINK

'TURKISH' TASTEMAKER IN WAZWAN TOWN

THE window that once opened into the "Venice of East" now offers a bustling sight on a bludgeoned blacktop privy to Kashmir's polemic past. But while the scene stays static, both Nallamar and its showmen have...



P7 STATE

BANDIPORA VILLAGERS PROTEST AGAINST WATER SHORTAGE

Dozens of residents from Usman Colony Shahgund area of North Kashmir's Bandipora district Monday staged a protest against the Jal Shakti department over shortage of drinking



Quote!
If you don't risk anything, you risk even more.
— Erica Jong

Gupkar Alliance Seeks Statehood Before Polls



'Disappointed At Outcome Of All-Party Meet'

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: The PAGD on Monday expressed

disappointment over the outcome of the June 24 meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, citing the absence of any confidence building measures and concrete steps to end the "siege and atmosphere of suppression" that have "choked" the people of Jammu and Kashmir since August 2019. The People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) also reminded the BJP-led central government to honour its commitment made in Parliament to restore the statehood to

PAGD 'Undecided' On Meeting Delimitation Panel

The People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) on Monday said no joint decision has been taken over participating in the proceedings of the delimitation commission and it was left to the individual parties of the alliance to decide whether to meet the members of the body or not. "As far as the PAGD is concerned, our stand is that these

Congress To Meet Delimitation Commission

J&K Pradesh Congress committee (JKPCC) members will meet the delimitation commission as per schedule in Jammu and Srinagar, officials said. Congress has asked its district units and senior leaders to seek time to meet the commission in order to represent their respective districts but regretted the short notice to those from far-flung areas. JKPCC has announced that

LG Rolls Out LGSD Fellowship For J&K Graduates

- Every year 10 scholars/graduates from IIT Jammu, IIM Jammu, NIT Srinagar, and other National Institutes to be selected
- Each selected graduate to get a fellowship of Rs. 60,000 per month along with field travel allowance and other incidentals



SRINAGAR: Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha Monday rolled out the "Lieutenant Governor's Sustainable Development Fellowship (LGSDF)" for the engineering, management and other graduates of the Union Territory of J&K. The programme, which shall be funded by the J&K Government and implemented in collaboration with IIT, Jammu, will focus on providing immediate catalytic support to improve government service delivery, removing gaps in policy implementation, and generating valuable insights for policymakers and implementing agencies, an official spokesman said. LGSDF is providing a unique and exciting opportunity for young professionals from Premier Institutes of UT to work towards promoting outreach, transparency, efficiency, and improving delivery of various Government Programmes, besides providing a fulfilling

NEWS DIGEST

CRPF Man Killed In Accidental Fire

SRINAGAR: A Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) on Monday died after his service rifle accidentally went off near Bakshi Stadium in this capital city. Constable Sachin Yadav died on the spot after his service rifle accidentally went off near Bakshi Stadium in Haft Chinar area of the city this evening, reports said. A CRPF spokesman told a local news agency GNS that

Cop Injured In Doda Grenade Attack

BHADERWAH: A policeman was injured on Monday when some unidentified men hurled a grenade in Jammu and Kashmir's Doda district, officials said. The incident took place when the victim Zahoor Ahmed (45) working with SOG of J&K Police, along with another jawan, was on duty at the district police lines (DPL) at Doda, said SP (Operation-Doda) Raj Kumar. He said the attack

Teen Falls From Tree, Dies

SRINAGAR: A teenager on Monday died after falling from a poplar tree in Magam area of central Kashmir's Budgam district. 17-year-old Hassan Sofi lost control and fell from the poplar tree in Arampora village of Magam on Monday afternoon, officials said. The teenager died on the spot due to the impact of the fall, officials added.

Bears Injured Two In Banihal

BANIHAL: A woman was among two people injured in attack by wild animals in Jammu and Kashmir's Ramban district, officials said Monday. The first incident took place in Chapnari Guddar area of Banihal when Wafers Begum returning to her house was attacked by a wild bear, they said. She is being treated at a hospital here, they said. In the other incident, Mohammad Sharief was attacked by a wild bear in the upper reaches of Kharpora Banihal. He was

Hideout Busted In Tral

SRINAGAR: Government forces on Monday busted a militant hideout in Tral town of south Kashmir's Pulwama district. The old hideout in Midora village was busted by forces during a cordon and search operation on Monday, news agency KNT reported. The hideout, report said, was found abandoned in the orchards of the village. Quoting sources, the report said that some clothes including camouflage uniform

ECI Panel Arrives Today On 4-Day Visit

The Delimitation Commission led by Justice (ret'd) Ranjana Prakash Desai will arrive here on a four-day visit on Tuesday to interact with political leaders and civil society groups, among others, to gather first-hand inputs to carve out new constituencies in Jammu and Kashmir, officials said. The commission's visit comes within a fortnight of the high-level meeting of eight political parties from Jammu and Kashmir with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Delhi on June 24. Barring the Congress and the BJP, all other major political parties including the National Conference (NC), the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), the CPI(M)

J&K Records 6 Covid Deaths, 274 New Cases

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir on Monday recorded six COVID-19 deaths and 274 fresh cases, taking the number of fatalities and infections to 4,343 and 3,17,250 respectively, officials said.

Out of the new cases, 113 were reported from Jammu and 161 from Kashmir, they said.



Reasi district recorded the highest number of cases at 72 all travellers, followed by Srinagar at 53, they added.

The number of active cases has dropped to 3,774 in the union territory, while 3,09,133 patients have recovered from the infection so far, according to the officials.

Sikh Bizman Leads Delegation To Delhi, Hails Art-370 Abrogation, CAA



Demands Awantipura-Mattan Pilgrim Corridor, Job Reservation; Minority Status

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Amid the recent controversy over interfaith marriages in Kashmir, a delegation of Sikh activists led by a prominent businessman of Srinagar, met Union Home Minister Amit Shah at his residence in New Delhi and sought his immediate intervention

to prevent 'imminent large scale migration' of Sikhs from Kashmir Valley.

While hailing the repeal of Article 370 and enactment of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), the delegation of Sikhs led by Baldev Singh Raina, Chairman All Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee, also extended an invitation to Sikhs and Hindus from outside India to settle in the Kashmir valley.

Heaping praise on BJP leadership for abrogation of Article 370, Raina presented a four page letter to Home Minister which read: "A dawn has begun-a terror free and corruption free state which you

promised has already started. Sir we are proud Sikhs of the Valley with a heritage which is forgotten by all successive central and state governments."

The letter by Raina, who also heads Peaks Auto, a Maruti dealership here listed nine demands for a "betterment and welfare of the community".

The meeting of Sikh delegation was confirmed by the Home Minister on his Twitter handle.

"Met a delegation from All Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee-Kashmir," Shah posted on Twitter.

"We Kashmiri Sikhs welcome the CAA and the revocation of

Nearly 2.5 Kg Of RDX Used In Bombs Dropped On IAF Station



Press Trust Of India

Jammu: Nearly 2.5 kg of RDX was used in the two bombs suspected to have been dropped by Pakistan-based militants of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) on the Indian Air Force (IAF) station

here through drones on June 27, officials said on Monday.

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) took over the investigation into what was the first instance of Pakistan-based militants deploying drones to strike vital

Mughal, Sinthan Roads Open For Traffic After Two Years

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: The historic Mughal and Sinthan roads, connecting Kashmir valley to Poonch-Rajouri and Chenab Valley regions respectively, were thrown open for vehicular traffic on Monday after remaining closed for nearly two years following the abrogation of Jammu and Kashmir's special status in August 2019.

"Light motor vehicles as well as heavy motor vehicles were allowed to ply on Mughal road on Monday. The road was reopened for civilian movement after two years," an official said.

The historic Mughal road connects Shopian in south Kashmir to Poonch and was the route used by the Mughal kings

to reach Kashmir.

The Sinthan-Kokernag road, which connects Anantnag district to Kishtwar, was also opened for civilian traffic.

The roads were closed on August 4, 2019 as a precautionary measure as the Centre abrogated Article 370 that provided special status to Jammu and Kashmir while bifurcating the then state into two union territories.

The opening of the roads comes four days after Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha made an announcement to this effect.

"In the past few days, many delegations from Rajouri, Poonch, Kishtwar, Doda met me. Today, we've decided that Mughal Road and Sinthan Road will be opened for the common public from



A teacher holding a community class at an open field in central Kashmir's Budgam district on Monday. KO Photo, Abid Bhat



MASSIVE TRAFFIC JAMS WERE WITNESSED on Monday in Capital City Srinagar leaving commuters stranded. KO Photo Abid Bhat

City Residents Demand Closure Of Liquor Shops



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Dozens of youth from Dalgate and Sonwar areas of Srinagar city on Monday morning staged a peaceful protest at Press Enclave in Srinagar demanding closure of all liquor shops at the tourist hub Boulevard Road and Sonwar areas of Srinagar city. The protesting youth were

carrying placards seeking an end to drugs and wine shops in Kashmir.

'We Won't Allow Outsiders To Disturb Peace', Close Down Liquor Shops', the placards read. Speaking to media persons at Press Enclave, the protesting youngsters said the Government wants to make the valley of Sufis a liquor hub by granting licenses for sale of liquor at

“YOU ARE claiming to wage a war against drugs but allowing liquor shops to function normally,”

dozens of places. Sameer Ahmad, one of the protesters, said drunkards have created nuisance in Dalgate and Sonwar areas. “You are claiming to wage a war against drugs but allowing liquor shops to function normally,” he said.

He added that drunkards are creating ruckus on a daily basis, making the movement of womenfolk difficult. While pleading with the government to stop liquor shops, they said that liquor and drugs have destroyed the lives of Kashmiri youth. This menace has triggered suicides in the Valley. (CNS)

Srinagar Resident Booked In Embezzlement Case

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Crime Branch Kashmir (CBK) on Monday produced a challan against a Srinagar resident for his alleged involvement in embezzlement, on account of salaries and General Provident Fund (GPF) released from treasury.

In a statement, CBK said that a challan was produced against Absar Ahmad Dar, son of Abdul Aziz Dar of Solina Srinagar in a case under FIR number 86/2004 under section 409 RPC 5(2) PC Act of Police Station Shaheed Gunj before the Court of Special Judge Anti-Corruption Srinagar.

The case pertains to embezzlement, on account of salaries and General Provident Fund (GPF) released from treasury, by the accused person, the statement said.

“The brief facts of the case are that the officials of District Police Lines (DPL) Srinagar reported non-disbursal of their salaries/ GP fund by the cashier of DPL namely Absar Ahmad Dar,” the statement said.

It added that consequent upon the complaint by the employees of District Police Lines Srinagar, the IGP Kashmir Zone ordered to carry out the audit of accounts of DPL Srinagar.

“The audit so conducted for the period from 02/2001 to 09/08/2004 observed that an amount of rupees 44, 90,486 was not disbursed by the concerned cashier among the employees of DPL Srinagar as he allegedly had embezzled the said amount.”

Accordingly, CBK said that a case under FIR number 86/2004 under section 409, 467, 468, 471 RPC was registered against the accused in Police Station Shaheed Gunj



Srinagar and investigation was taken up.

“The case was transferred to Crime Branch Kashmir vide PHQ order No. 3404 of 2004 dated 09-10-2004 for further investigation. During the course of investigation it transpired that accused Absar Ahmad No.04/S posted as cashier DPL Srinagar was assigned the work of disbursing of pay/ supplementary pay/ arrears /GP Fund/General arrears of Executive Police. The accused remain posted as cashier at DPL Srinagar from 2001 up August-2004 when the embezzlement came to fore,” the statement said.

“Investigation conducted substantiated that the total amount misappropriated by the accused cashier, worked out to the tune of Rs. 44, 90,486/- out of which Rs.26, 03,125 were recovered and disbursed. Accordingly offences U/S 409 RPC & 5(2) PC Act were found established against the accused Absar Ahmad Dar son of Abdul Aziz Dar, a resident of Solina, Srinagar. Investigation with regard to the role of other suspects is underway and a supplementary charge sheet will be produced before the Court of law in due course of time,” CBK added.

“THE BRIEF FACTS OF THE CASE ARE that the officials of District Police Lines (DPL) Srinagar reported non-disbursal of their salaries/ GP fund by the cashier of DPL namely Absar Ahmad Dar,” the statement said.

Searches Continue To Trace Drowned Youth's Body

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The river police continued searches for the fifth consecutive day to trace the body of a youth who drowned five days ago.

Officials said that the body of Mohammad Ashraf Zulla who drowned at

Zaina Kadal is yet to be traced but the river police has continued its searches for the fifth consecutive day.

Sameer Ahmad who was part of searching group said, “we are making strenuous efforts to trace the body of the drowned person but we haven't succeeded yet”

Union Additional Secretary Assures Support To Boost Organic Sector Visits Organic Vegetable Market In Srinagar

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Additional Secretary, Union Ministry of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare, Vivek Agarwal, concluded his five day visit to Kashmir Valley with inspection of organic vegetable market Lalmandi, Srinagar.

Agarwal visited and inspected different organically grown vegetable and exotic vegetable markets set up by the Directorate of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Kashmir.

Speaking on the occasion, Union Additional Secretary said that organic farming is being acknowledged as a viable crop production system which can sustain soil health, eco system and people by combining tradition, innovation and improved farm technology. He said this region having best agro climatic conditions for organic farming can also increase employment opportunities for farmers as well as educated unemployed youth. He added that Union Ministry of Ag-

riculture will provide all support and help to boost organic sector in the valley.

Vivek Agarwal said these centers are providing better opportunities to sellers and consumers for bringing right product at right price.

Director, Agriculture, Chowdhary Mohammad Iqbal, briefed Additional Secretary about the need of setting up of these centers which is being acknowledged by all in the society, as they can purchase organic as well as exotic vegetables from here at a reasonable price.

While elaborating on success rate of organic production in the valley, Director said that organic vegetables are becoming an integral part of regular food consumption, for which the department is taking various initiatives, such as providing space to the growers is a hand holding initiative. He added that for the first time since establishment of Organic Vegetable Market Lalmandi, black cumin (Kala Zeera), pulses and honey from Gurez Valley will be available for sale from today.

Training Course Begins At IMPARD



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Director General Institution of Management & Public Administration and Rural Development (IMPARD), Saurabh Bhagat inaugurated three training course at JK IMPARD, Srinagar campus on Monday.

Dr K Islam gave the outline of his training course on Career Counselling while as Dr M Ashraf informed the participants about the critically important training course on orientation on Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) and Dr Shafia Wani highlighted the importance of objec-

tives of Swachh Bharat Mission in J&K.

While inaugurating the courses, DG IMPARD has emphasized on the critical importance of all the three scheduled training courses. He summed up the objectives and motive behind organizing these courses.

While referring to the recently concluded 2-day Regional Conference, he informed the officers that they will be exposed to the new paradigm shifts in governance and planning.

He also emphasised on new initiatives to be taken by J&K IMPA for building the capacity of new entrants to the civil administration and good governance.

Illegal Structures Demolished In Srinagar

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: At least four illegal structures were demolished by the Enforcement wing of Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) on Monday in ward 26 in its jurisdiction.

Officials said that out of four illegal constructions, two were pulled down at the initial level and two structures that had come up beyond the initial level ille-



gally were demolished after necessary formalities.

According to SMC officials the demolitions took place in Mujgund and Lawaypora areas of Srinagar district. “An action in this regard has also been initiated

against the concerned official for dereliction of duties with regard to building activities to check on unauthorised/illegal constructions.”

Meanwhile the officials of the SMC warned people of raising illegal structures and the concerned Chief enforcement official Mudassir Bhanday said that illegal structures will be raised to the ground and necessary legal action will be taken.

Office of the Assistant Regional Transport Officer Kupwara

NOTICE

Where as application has been received from Gulzar Ahmad Lone S/O Ab Gani Lone R/O Magam Distt Kupwara Vehicle DL3CBR-3677 And registered owner of vehicle namely Nisar Ahmad S/O Noor Mohd Bhat R/O Lmaripal Pumen Delhi Distt, Delhi Vehicle Type I-10 chassis no MAL-BB51BLAM249288 engine No GYLAAM565322 having NDC certificate to ARTO Office Kupwara for re-registration purpose.

Now it is notified for general information that objection if any or the proposed of the said vehicle shall be filled in written in the office of the Assistant regional Transport Officer Kupwara within the period of 7 days from the publication of this notice in Daily Newspaper Kashmir Observer

NO: ARTO 1940/2021 Dated 30/7/21

Assistant Regional Transport Officer Kupwara

اطلاع عام

پرخاش و عام اطلاع کیا جاتا ہے کہ سائل کی اپوزیشن سرنگٹیک

کائے مطلب ہے اس بارے میں کسی شخص کو کوئی

خبر یا اعتراض ہو تو ایک ہفتے کے اندر لکھنا اور اپنا اعتراض

متعلقہ شخص سے آگے کر کے اپنی ہدایت کے ساتھ لکھ کر

اپنا اعتراض قابل قبول نہیں ہوگا

موجودہ ہدایت کے مطابق

فاضل امور و رولڈر اور سرنگٹیک

دیہانت ڈپٹی سرنگٹیک

سائل کوئی شکایت نہ کرے

info

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR

J&K SERVICES SELECTION BOARD

Hema Complex, Sector -3, ChanniHimmat, Jammu

www.jkssb.nic.in

NOTICE

Subject:- Withdrawal of Provisional Shortlist for the post of Assistant Information Officers.

It is notified for the information of all the concerned candidates that the provisional shortlist for the posts of Assistant Information Officers, issued vide this office notice No. SSB/Secy/Sel/2021/3367-73 dated 08-04-2021, shall be deemed to have been withdrawn ab-initio.

By Order

Secretary
J&K Services Selection Board,
Jammu

No. SSB/Secy/Sel/2021/4814-24
Dated: -05.07.2021

DIPK-4105/21

DIAL-EMMA

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

AIRPORTS

SHIEK UL ALAM AIRPORT: 01942303311 ✈️

RAILWAYS

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

HIGHWAY STATUS

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

This Day in History

- 1044- The Battle of Ménéf takes place.
- 1189- Richard the Lionheart is crowned King of England.
- 1253 - Mindaugas is crowned King of Lithuania.
- 1348 - Papal bull of Pope Clement VI issued during the Black Death stating Jews not to blame and urging their protection
- 1415 - Jan Hus is burned at the stake.
- 1483 - England's King Richard III crowned
- 1484 - Portuguese sea captain Diogo Cão finds the mouth of the Congo River.
- 1491 - Opening ceremony of Daitokuji's Shinju at subtemple
- 1495 - Battle of Fornovo, near Parma: French King Charles VIII beats Holy League
- 1560 - England and Scotland sign Treaty of Edinburgh
- 1573 - Pacificatie of Boulogne: new peace treaty with huguenots
- 1573 - Córdoba, Argentina, is founded by Jerónimo Luis de Cabrera.
- 1621- Dutch governor general John Pieterszoon Coen takes Banda islands, 15,000 dies
- 1630- Swedish troops under Gustaf II Adolf land at Peenemunde
- 1673- French troops conquer Maastricht as part of the Franco- Dutch War
- 1770- Battle at Cesme: Russian fleet beats Turkish
- 1776- American Declaration of Independence announced on front page of "PA Evening Gazette"
- 1782- British-French sea battle at Negapatam (off India)
- 1801- Battle at Algiercas: French fleet beats British
- 1848- Mexican-American War ended with the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo
- 1885- Louis Pasteur successfully tests an anti-rabies vaccine
- 1892- Dadabhai Naoroji elected as first Indian Member of Parliament in Britain.
- 1898- US Senate agrees to annex Hawaii
- 1904- Two Russian cruisers move into the Red Sea and begin to stop ships of Britain, Germany, and other nations they believe friendly to Japan
- 1923-The Central Executive Committee accepts the Treaty of Union, signed in Moscow in December 1922, and the Russian Empire becomes the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
- 1924 -1st photo sent experimentally across Atlantic by radio, US-England
- 1928- Worlds largest record hallstone 1.5 lbs (7 inches in diameter) at the time falls in Potter, Nebraska
- 1947- The AK-47 goes into production in the Soviet Union.
- 1959-Saar becomes part of German Federal Republic
- 1961- Portuguese ship explodes near Mozambique, kills 300
- 1975- Comoros declare independence from France (most of them)
- 1976- Soyuz 21 carries 2 cosmonauts to Salyut 5 space station
- 1977-France performs nuclear test at Mururoa Island
- 1978- Israeli jet fighters swooped over mostly Muslim West Beirut
- 1987- 1st of 3 massacres by Sikh extremists takes place in India
- 1986 - Premier Nakasone's Liberal Democratic Party wins Japan's election
- 1987 - Pakistan cricket all-rounder Imran Khan reaches 300th Test wicket milestone, during 3rd Test vs England at Leeds
- 1987 - USSR performs nuclear test

PRAYERS

FAJR
3: 41

ZUHR
12: 35

ASR
5:35

MAGRIB
7:49

ISHA
9:29

From KO Archives

Country-Wide Security Alert

NEW DELHI - An alert was sounded today in major capitals and sensitive towns across India following the terror attack on the makeshift temple in Ayodhya this morning. Security was particularly tightened around important temples and other place, if worship across the country in view of the targeting of the makeshift shrine where once the Babri Masjid structure stood and the possible repercussions it may have.

In Delhi, security was beefed up near the temples and the RSS headquarters in Jandewalan area in a crowded area in the central part.

Additional personnel of police and para-military forces have been mobilised in Delhi and patrolling has been intensified.

In Mumbai, the scene of serial blasts and riots after the December 1992 demolition of the disputed structure in Ayodhya, security was beefed-up.

“We have taken special measures outside temples and other religious places in the city following the the Ayodhya incident, Police Commissioner A N Roy, said.

Additional forces have been deployed at prominent temples and other places of worship. Security has also been beefed up an the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) installations across the country, Chief Security Officer of DAE N C Gop, said.

Security was also alerted across West Bengal with special emphasis on communally-sensitive areas.

In Surat, where the RSS is holding a conclave, a security cordon was thrown around the venue of the meeting.

A high alert was also sounded in the Char Dham shrine circuit comprising Badrinath, Kedarnath, Yamunotri and Gangotri m Uttaranchal and Krishna Janmabhoomi. “Our police force has been put on high alert,” Deputy Inspector General of Police R Singh Meena, said in Dehra Dun.

Police have been asked to be on patrol day and night in Badrinath temple area as it is one of the famous shrines in Uttaranchal, he said. Uttaranchal is attracting hundreds of pilgrims as the Chardham Yatra is going on.

(Kashmir Observer, 06 July, 2005)

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K O V I E W

Afghan endgame

Ever since the United States and the NATO forces announced their withdrawal from Afghanistan by September this year, The Taliban's march through the war-torn country has been gaining momentum. In recent weeks many more districts have fallen under Taliban control. The Taliban now rule roughly a third of all 421 districts and district centres in Afghanistan. On Sunday, the Taliban's strides in Badakhshan province forced several hundred fleeing Afghan forces to cross over into Tajikistan.

This has created a grim situation. Afghanistan seems very likely edging towards yet another spell of a devastating civil war. And at the rate at which Taliban seem to be advancing, it looks but certain that they may once again take over the country in the near to medium term. And such a prospect could once again confront India and Pakistan with serious security challenges. One solution for this would have been for the two neighbours to talk to each other to resolve their issues. This would have included cooperating on Afghanistan. As of now, the two countries are working at cross-purposes. Pakistan wants a pro-Islamabad regime in Kabul to achieve its goal of strategic depth as a cushion against India. India, on the other hand, seeks a pro-New Delhi government to deny Pakistan this advantage.

There are several factors at play: One is the larger geopolitics of the region with the progress of the war in Afghanistan at its core. The unfolding situation in Kabul, where the Taliban are now dominant has suddenly reduced India's capacity to influence the outcome in the country. Accordingly, Pakistan is suddenly in a greater position of leverage. The long-standing rivalry and suspicion between the two nations make the matters worse. It persuades them to act at cross-purposes in Kabul. And they would continue to do so until they reach an understanding between themselves.

It is in this context that the recent back-channel dialogue between them had raised some hopes. The dialogue had generated more hopes when the two countries reaffirmed their 2003 ceasefire agreement along the Line of Control in February. But ever since the talks seem to have unraveled. The two governments have obviously failed to act, consolidate and build upon the process. As things stand, this could only further complicate the security situation in the region. Hence the urgent need for them to return to engagement.

The challenge before the two countries is not only to establish a dialogue to address their mutual issues but also to bring their divergent policies and positions on Afghanistan in line. With stakes in Kabul getting bigger and bigger with every passing day, much hinges on how the neighbours are able to handle and steer their relationship in the weeks and months to come.

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

Battling Inflation

India was lucky last year with the monsoon, which enabled the farm sector to grow even amid a pandemic-induced economic contraction. The bumper harvests also ensured that soaring international food prices from around October didn't translate into higher domestic inflation, barring in import-dependent commodities such as edible oils and, to an extent, pulses. India's annual consumer food inflation in May, at 5 per cent, stood way below the corresponding global rate of 39.7 per cent. This year, however, looks to be different. While rainfall was 74 per cent above normal in May and 33 per cent in the first half of last month, the southwest monsoon has since stalled. There has been no advance of its northern limit after June 19 and the India Meteorological Department (IMD) sees no favourable conditions for revival in the next 4-5 days.

That is bad news. Mid-June to mid-July is the peak season for kharif plantings. Punjab is witnessing power outages now, as the state government is diverting supplies to farmers who are struggling to keep their transplanted paddy crop alive. They may be luckier compared to farmers in other states, where the extended dry spell has delayed sowings of not only paddy (which requires continuous standing water for 40-50 days after transplanting of seedlings), but also pulses, oilseeds and coarse cereals. The Rs 16-17 per litre increase in diesel prices is a double-whammy. For most farmers, who have no three-phase electric tubewell connections or solar pumps, irrigation using diesel engines is simply unaffordable today. A lot, then, hinges on the monsoon reviving sooner than later. One can only hope that the "negative" Indian Ocean Dipole conditions — the abnormal warming of sea waters off Australia and Indonesia, causing increased cloud-formation activity there at the expense of the ocean's western part closer to India — do not intensify during July-September, as many global weather agencies are predicting. Even the IMD has pointed to that possibility in its July 1 forecast update.

The Indian Express

A Tale of Two Communities

Muhammad Tahir

While there are forces that seek to harm the Muslim-Sikh relations to consolidate their ideological project, there are also brave voices of moderation and resistance which seek to build a society based on fairness and justice and create solidarities across caste, religion and gender

As the dust settles, it has become clear that the Zoya (Manpreet Kaur) affair was an orchestrated political drama whose purpose was to polarize communities and prepare ground for the upcoming elections in Punjab and Delhi. This was Shiromani Akali Dal's experiment with the right-wing model of electoral success. The main protagonist of this political drama flew from New Delhi with a bunch of his supporters, sat in a protest in Srinagar against a fabricated case of forcible conversion of Sikh girls and went away, for his supporters, as savior of the Sikh community.

No doubt the Delhi Sikh leader got a lot of political mileage out of the Manmeet Kaur affair. But while he made a triumphant return to Delhi — parading gloomy Manpreet (Zoya) before the media and declaring victory "against forced Nikah and Conversions happening in Kashmir", he and his supporters left behind them a trail of ill-feelings. By invoking the bogey of 'Love Jihad' and resorting to Islamophobic tropes and remarks, the Delhi Sikh leader and his supporters (from outside and within Kashmir) have inflicted damage on the cordial relations between Muslims and Sikhs in Kashmir. In one stroke, the political opportunists have sowed seeds of mistrust between the two communities who have for long maintained inter-community harmony and solidarity because they both have been at the receiving end of the majoritarian state.

When the case of two Sikh women emerged for the first time around 28 June, there were discussions on the Club House on the issue. I found some of my Kashmiri Muslim friends and acquaintances trying to reason out with the members of the Sikh community, assuring them of unconditional support and solidarity. 'We stand with our Sikh brethren' was a common refrain/hashtag in many social media posts of Kashmiri Muslim netizens, who reminded each other that Sikhs supported and helped in February 2019 when Kashmiri Muslims were targeted in Indian cities and towns and we must reciprocate at this moment, though full details of the case were not known. On 29 June, social activist Mohammed Afaaq Sayeed wrote in his Facebook post, "I reiterate, we stand in solidarity with our Sikh brethren. Their daughters



"Outsiders are trying to exploit the situation between the two communities in the region": Jagmohan Singh Raina, local sikh leader

wing narratives by targeting Kashmiri Muslims. So, through a few political opportunists, the Sangh successfully managed to trigger ill-feelings between the two communities which soon boiled over into a series of vicious exchanges.

Nonetheless, while Sirsa and the gang hogged the limelight (with the help of right-wing aligned electronic media), there were voices from within the Sikh community who understood the larger political game and took a stand against Sirsa's communal politics and politicization of a marriage between individuals belonging to two different faiths. On 30 June, Khushhal Singh, general secretary of Kendri Singh Sabha (KSS), an organization of Sikh intellectuals, took exception to Sikh leaders in Delhi intentionally stoking "a religious frenzy over the issue." On 2 July, KSS issued another statement where the organization called out Delhi Sikh leaders for being willing instruments of the Sangh's sectarian agenda. The KSS statement criticized the involvement of the Jathedar in the issue and said that "Most Sikhs feel their religious sensibilities have been hurt as some self-proclaimed Delhi Sikh leaders aligned with the ruling BJP made the Jathedar write the letter which fits into the Sangh Parivar's political programme of projecting a certain minority as an 'aggressor' and pitting other minorities against that."

Jagmohan Singh Raina, president of All Parties Sikh Coordination Committee, also condemned Delhi Sikh leaders, whom he accused of using Kashmiri Sikhs for elections. Describing Kashmir as a sensitive state, he cautioned against politicizing the issue which can burn Kashmir once again. In a press statement on 30 June, he said "The Sikh community in Jammu and Kashmir has been living in harmony with the majority Muslim community. Over the years many attempts were made to create a wedge between the two communities by the vested interests. However, the nefarious designs got defeated due to the strong bond that exists between the two communities."

While Raina displayed moderation and condemned communal politics, his twin demands of implementing Inter-Caste Marriage Act and Anti-Conversion Law in Jammu and Kashmir was problematic. His rationale was that these laws "would stop the forcible conversion of people belonging to any religion whatsoever." This statement implies that there were forcible conversions in J&K. But is there any evidence to back up the claim? Also, has he weighed in the implications of these laws for Muslims who are the target of the right-wing? At present, three BJP-ruled states have promulgated anti-conversion law which criminalizes conversion during marriage: Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh. Is it too difficult to understand which particular community is the target of this law? Is it not clear what they imply when the law is projected as anti-Love Jihad?

In her investigative report published in The Print (12 Jan 2021), Ananya Bhardwaj shows that under Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Ordinance 2020, "86 people have been booked in 16 cases involving allegations of conversion for love or marriage among Hindus and Muslims. In all, 54 people have been arrested — including friends and family members of the

main accused. The key accused in all the cases are Muslims."

Senior advocate and executive director of Centre for Law and Policy Research, Jayna Kothari, has termed UP's anti-conversion law as "draconian" and violative of fundamental rights because it imposes onerous requirements on the couples who seek inter-faith marriage. Another problematic aspect of the anti-conversion laws (currently in operation in BJP-ruled states) is that they put burden of proof on persons who facilitated the conversion. In case a magistrate is not satisfied with the proof, the facilitators or those who caused the conversion can be booked for criminal offence. Facilitators could mean family members, friends, relatives, a religious cleric who solemnized the marriage or the conversion. Thus, asking for a law that could potentially be used against a specific community is not wise.

Raina's demand for Inter-caste Marriage Act has been criticized by some members of the Sikh community. Research scholar Preetika Nanda wrote on her Facebook: "Kashmiri Sikh leaders are now demanding an anti-conversion law and inter-caste marriage act to uphold caste endogamy which is in direct contravention of Sikh ethos and principles. Ironically, they want new laws but refuse to accept a woman's statement in Court." Similarly, National Vice-President of All India Students' Association, Kawalpreet Kaur, has termed the demand for anti-conversion and inter-caste marriage act as "obnoxious, unjust and inhuman." She further wrote on Twitter (2 July) that those asking for inter-caste marriage act are doing "major disservice by going against its [Sikhism's] fundamental tenants of casteless society. Sikhism doesn't believe in Caste."

While there are forces that seek to harm the Muslim-Sikh relations to consolidate their ideological project, there are also brave voices of moderation and resistance which seek to build a society based on fairness and justice and create solidarities across caste, religion and gender. The fascists will try to sow discord, pit communities against each other and exploit situations to justify their ideological project, those on the right side of history will resist in multiple ways. There are genuine grievances of Kashmiri Sikhs that must be heard and addressed, but one thing needs to be understood: the binary of majority-minority does not follow neatly in the context of Kashmir. Muslims despite being in numerical majority do not possess any real power. The power lies elsewhere, in New Delhi. New Delhi is the majority. Muslims have been politically disempowered, subjected to an array of unjust laws and legislations. Any new law that contributes to their further marginalisation and persecution (from the backdoor) should be resisted and opposed by those who believe in justice. In the future, if origination of any unjust law is traced to the demands of the Sikh community, that is bound to create hard-feelings among those who are at the receiving end of that unjust law.

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

The author is an independent scholar



"Sikhs part and parcel of Kashmiri society, no place in Islam for forcible conversion": Grand Mufti

are our daughters. We as a society shall never allow anyone to exploit their daughters." He and other social media influencers also extended their solidarity to Sikh community directly on Club House and at the same time cautioned against outside elements who were trying to create a wedge between the two communities.

Club House discussions were fruitful to some extent. I heard a diasporic Sikh acknowledging that his misconceptions were cleared through direct communication with Kashmiri Muslims on CH where he was apprised of the facts of the case. That was the good part of the story. But the bad part was that some heated arguments were also exchanged when discussion veered off to religion and history, and when a few Sikhs made objectionable remarks. Soon a CH room was created with the name "Unapologetically Muslim". The moderators of this room emphasized that solidarity was a two-way process, and it was not acceptable that despite offering solidarity and support some members of the Sikh community continue to indulge in Islamophobia and parrot the right-



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

MAIL YOUR LETTERS

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Response to Red Cross Forced Donations Report

This in regards to the report published by Kashmir Observer titled, "Admin faces flak for forced Red Cross Donations in Kashmir". We are thank-

ful to your organisation for highlighting this issue.

This has been a nuisance since weeks now. Even people following SOPs are being forced to pay dona-

tions. One wonders, why everything is about coercion here. Be it forced vaccination to forced donations, nobody seems to care about educating, empowering and just policies.

It is my request to your organisation, to keep highlighting this issue till it is resolved completely.

Zara Shabir
zarash@rediffmail.com

‘TURKISH’ Tastemaker in Wazwan Town

In the heartland of Kashmiri Wazwan makers, a native is trying to create his niche as a Turkish tastemaker.



Auqib Javeed



The Pandemic Lockdown came as a spoiler for Shadab. But once the viral wave thawed, he opened the padlock, dusted his birthplace, and started what has now become ‘Kardesler: The Kashmir Café’ (Kardesler, in Turkish, means brother)

THE window that once opened into the “Venice of East” now offers a bustling sight on a bludgeoned blacktop privy to Kashmir’s polemic past. But while the scene stays static, both Nallamar and its showmen have long proceeded as legends in the political amphitheater of the valley. However, the lasting signs—like a clan of classic goldsmiths—continue to make it a “Jewel Street” of Kashmir.

Watching this old-world charm enhanced by the pigeon-lofted heritage houses in his hometown, a native who recently returned with a new-age avatar gets alerted by another order at his door.

In the busy stretch of Old Srinagar, between Bohri Kadal and Saraf Kadal, Shadab Chashoo, 29, has lately established himself as a new tastemaker.

The tall and handsome man has set up his eatery in the place where the raging spark would mostly discourage many to go for branding based on a popular culture.

But the native whose family moved from the place during Kashmir’s tumultuous years not only returned, but demonstrated a steely resolve to introduce popular culture in his café.

Inspired by the Turkish television show *Dirili: Ertu rul*, Shadab has started his own café and restaurant based on the Ertugrul theme in Downtown. The decision, he says, was driven by his belief of serving the tastes with a difference.

Inside the café, the epic drama’s characters have become a wall of fame. A throne, Turgut bay’s iconic axe, flags of Kayi tribe, Turkish lights and swords are uplifting the dramatic mood.

“The idea was to create that feel,” Shadab, a man of few words, says. “At the end of the day, whatever initiative one is taking has to have a certain distinct feel and flavour.”

That feel and flavour might be barely a couple of fortnights old, but the downtown—long awaiting a popular culture based hangout place—has already started responding to the native’s cause.

“The response is overwhelming,” Shadab says, while helping his staff to ensure a timely delivery of online orders. “Most of the time, I myself act as a delivery boy.”

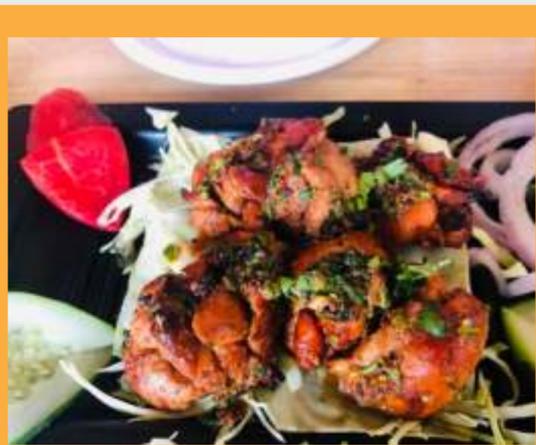
But creating a niche in the old city — that takes a certain pride for housing some finest Wazwan chefs of Kashmir — doesn’t appear to be a cakewalk for the native son. At a stone’s throw from his café, there live some legendary Wazas by the name of Khosas and Bandaris, besides an entire neighbourhood of chefs called Wazpora.

“People have a sense of taste here,” Shadab says. “So, in a way, it’s a bit challenging, but I’m up for it.”

But unlike others getting swayed by the new-age café wave around the city of seven bridges, Shadab has an advantage of a spry street housing some top merchants and their full of go clientele.

Prior to this theme-based café, the area was merely known for the celebrated ice-cream sellers of Bohri Kadal and some random street barbeque stalls. It lacked a good eatery, especially for the family dining and special outings.

Before his return with a “business with difference” mindset, Shadab as a young boy had walked away from the place in 1995. In his new home in Srinagar’s Naseem Bagh, he soon lost his father



Shadab again sits on the window where his forefathers used to watch Nallamar meandering through the heritage city. But unlike others, he doesn’t seem nostalgic about it. He’s only eager about striking some fresh change. “At the end of the day all glories fade away with time,” he smiles. “But that shouldn’t stop us from creating new ones.”

to a critical disease. Along with his mother and siblings, he lived a quintessential “life of uncertainty” in the valley.

By the time he joined Islamia College, he would make rounds of his birthplace and often wonder about the ways to infuse a new life in what had then become a rundown residence. After an MBA degree and a job stint in Pune, Shadab decided to revive his roots.

But even then, there was no clarity about what to do with that ancestral piece of property before New Delhi enforced communication clampdown in the valley.

“As everything was shut after the abrogation of Article 370 in August 2019, I along with my friends once went for a pizza outing,” Shadab, sitting on the window of his ancestral house turned trendy café, says. “We ended up visiting a small pizza shop in a very narrow

lane in Srinagar. The idea struck me there that if this man can run his business in that small space and during such a challenging time when everything had come to a grinding halt in Kashmir, I can also do that.”

But his resolve still needed a eureka moment. It came when he saw his cousins, friends and acquaintances consuming Turkish drama at length during lockdown.

“I thought, why not to start something on the theme which had suddenly become a pan-Kashmir lockdown engagement,” Shadab recalls. “It had a huge fan-base, especially among youth delivering the Turkish warrior series to each other through pen-drives amid internet blockade.”

The series featuring Ertugrul Ghazi, warrior and father of Ottoman Empire founder Osman, depicts the struggles, tyranny, oppression, suffering, identity and justice of Kayi, a minor group of Turkish tribe of 2,000 people.

However, the pandemic lockdown came as a spoiler for Shadab. But once the viral wave thawed, he opened the padlock, dusted his birthplace, and started what has now become ‘Kardesler: The Kashmir Café’. (Kardesler, in Turkish, means brother.)

Apart from Turkish theme, the young café owner is also introducing the Turkish taste in his hometown.

“Things just got delayed because of this second viral wave,” he says. “We’re introducing Turkish dishes soon on our platter to create a distinct flavour.”

Once confirming some quick online orders, Shadab again sits on the window where his forefathers used to watch Nallamar meandering through the heritage city. But unlike others, he doesn’t seem nostalgic about it. He’s only eager about striking some fresh change.

“At the end of the day all glories fade away with time,” he smiles. “But that shouldn’t stop us from creating new ones.”



Board exams 2022: CBSE announces special assessment scheme, two term-end exams to be conducted

Agenceis

New Delhi: Bifurcating the academic session, holding two term-end exams and rationalising the syllabus were part of the special assessment scheme for class 10 and 12 board examinations in 2021-22 announced by the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) on Monday in view of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The term one exams will be conducted by the Board in November-December, 2021 while the second term exams will be conducted in

March-April, 2022, as per an official order by Joseph Emmanuel, Director (Academic) of the CBSE.

The syllabus for the board examination will be rationalised, similar to that of the last academic session, and will be notified in July 2021, it said and also announced plans to make the internal assessment and project work more "credible" and "valid".

At the end of the first term, the board will organise exams in a flexible schedule between November-December 2021 with a window period of 4-8 weeks for schools situated in different

parts of the country and abroad.

"The exams will have Multiple Choice Questions (MCQ) including case-based MCQs and MCQs on assertion-reasoning type. Duration of test will be 90 minutes and it will cover only the rationalised syllabus of the first term. The question papers will be sent by the CBSE to schools along with the marking scheme."

"The exams will be conducted under the supervision of the external center superintendents and observers appointed by CBSE. The responses of students will be captured on OMR sheets

which, after scanning may be directly uploaded at the CBSE portal or alternatively may be evaluated and marks obtained will be uploaded by the school on the very same day," he added.

At the end of the second term, the board would organise Term II or year-end examination based on the rationalised syllabus.

"This examination would be held around March-April 2022 at the examination centres fixed by the board. The paper will be of two hours duration and have questions of different formats (case-based/situation based, open ended-short

answer/long answer type).

"In case the situation is not conducive for normal descriptive examination a 90-minute MCQ-based exam will be conducted at the end of the second term also," Emmanuel said.

The CBSE has decided that in case the situation of the pandemic improves and students are able to come to schools or centres for taking the exams, the board would conduct Term I and II examinations at schools or centres and the theory marks will be distributed equally between the two exams.

Airlines can operate maximum of 65 pc pre-Covid domestic flights: Govt

Agenceis

New Delhi: Airlines can now operate a maximum of 65 per cent of their pre-Covid domestic flights instead of the 50 per cent allowed till date, the civil aviation ministry said on Monday.

The carriers have been operating only 50 per cent of their pre-Covid domestic flights since June 1 in accordance with a May 28 order of the ministry. Before June 1, the cap was at 80 per cent.

The May 28 decision to bring down the cap from 80 to 50 per cent was taken "in view of the sudden surge in the number of active COVID-19 cases across the country, decrease in passenger traffic and the passenger load (occupancy rate) factor", the ministry had said.

It issued a fresh order on Monday, wherein it modified the May 28 order stating that "50 per cent capacity may be read as 65 per cent capacity".

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Gupkar Alliance

Jammu and Kashmir and said assembly elections must only be held once this is done.

The PAGD is an alliance of six mainstream parties -- National Conference, Peoples' Democratic Party, CPM, CPI, Awami National Conference and Jammu and Kashmir People's Movement -- that was cobbled after the Centre abrogated the special status of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir on August 5, 2019 and divided it into two union territories (UTs).

"To this end (restoration of statehood to J-K), the People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration has decided to reach out to other political parties in Jammu and Kashmir with a view to take a common position on the issue," PAGD spokesperson and CPM leader M Y Tarigami said in a statement.

The PAGD issued the statement after holding an emergency meeting late on Sunday night at the residence of its chairperson and former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Farooq Abdullah.

The PAGD meeting, which was called to discuss the all-party meeting with PM Modi held in Delhi, came a day before the visit of the Delimitation Commission to the Kashmir valley. The commission headed by retired Supreme Court judge Ranjana Desai along with Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sushil Chandra and J-K's chief electoral officer will hold meetings with representatives of political parties in Kashmir and Jammu starting Tuesday.

"All the members of the PAGD expressed their disappointment at the outcome of the Delhi meeting especially at the absence of any substantial Confidence Building Measures such as releasing political and other prisoners from jails and taking concrete steps to end the siege and atmosphere of suppression that has choked JK since 2019," the PAGD statement said.

It said the confidence building measures would have initiated the much-needed process of reaching out to the people of Jammu and Kashmir, who are the biggest stakeholders and sufferers.

On the abrogation of Jammu and Kashmir's special status by the Centre and its subsequent bifurcation into two UTs, the PAGD reiterated its commitment to fight together to reverse the unconstitutional and unacceptable changes "foisted" on the people of the erstwhile state "using all constitutional, legal and political means at its disposal".

"The PAGD's struggle for undoing these changes will continue as long as it takes while striving to achieve this objective as early as possible," it said.

As far as the restoration of statehood is concerned, the PAGD said, it has been the BJP's commitment on the floor of Parliament and it must honour its word.

"So, any assembly election must be held only after the restoration of full statehood for JK," it added.

The PAGD's meeting was attended by its vice chairperson and PDP president Mehbooba Mufti, Tarigami, NC leader Hasnain Masoodi, People's Movement chief Javed Mustafa Mir and Awami National Conference senior vice president Muzaffar Ahmed Shah.

The June 24 meeting that was chaired by PM Modi was the first outreach by the Centre to the leaders of Jammu and Kashmir since the abrogation of the erstwhile state's special status. Fourteen leaders from eight different political parties including four chief ministers -- Abdullah, his son Omar, Mehbooba and Congress leader Gulam Nabi Azad -- had participated in the meeting.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah, National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla were also present at the meeting.

PAGD 'Undecided' On are autonomous bodies and the respective political parties will decide over it. Whatever the parties think is suitable for them, they will take steps accordingly," PAGD spokesperson and CPI(M) leader M Y Tarigami told reporters here.

The delimitation commission has invited the leaders of all national, regional and registered political parties of Jammu and Kashmir for separate meetings during its visit to the Union

Territory from Tuesday.

The commission, led by Justice (ret'd) Ranjana Prakash Desai, will undertake a four-day visit to Jammu and Kashmir from July 6-9 and interact with the leaders of political parties and officials to gather first-hand inputs on the conduct of the mega exercise to carve out new electoral constituencies in the Union Territory. (PTI)

Congress To Meet

it would send delegations to both Srinagar and Jammu to meet the commission, its spokesperson said.

Seven districts of Jammu region have been allotted one hour each while five districts of Kashmir half hour each, JKPC Chief spokesperson Ravinder Sharma said.

The commission should consider suggestions of the congress party in the larger interests and invite more suggestions and requests directly apart from routing through Deputy Commissioners (DCs) or District Education Officers (DEOs), he added.

The commission, which was constituted in March last year with a one-year time frame, should consider giving reasonable time and space to all, according to Sharma. (PTI)

ECI Panel Arrives

and the National Panthers Party (NPP) are indecisive about meeting the commission's members.

People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD), an amalgam of six parties including the NC and the PDP, on Monday said no joint decision has been taken on taking part in the proceedings of the commission and it was left to the individual parties to decide whether they want to participate.

"As far as the PAGD is concerned, our stand is that these are autonomous bodies and the respective political parties will decide about it (participating in commission's meeting). Whatever the parties think is suitable for them, they will take steps accordingly," PAGD spokesperson and CPI(M) leader M Y Tarigami said.

The commission has invited the leaders of all national, regional and registered political parties of Jammu and Kashmir for separate meetings during its visit to the union territory.

J&K Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPC) has announced that it would send delegations to both Srinagar and Jammu to meet the commission, which was constituted in March last year with a one-year time frame.

Seven districts of the Jammu region have been allotted one hour each while five districts of Kashmir half hour each, JKPC chief spokesperson Ravinder Sharma said, adding that the commission should consider giving reasonable time and space to all.

The commission members are also likely to hold separate meetings with civil society groups and similar organisations after they obtain prior approval and are allotted time slots by their respective deputy commissioners (DCs).

During the June 24 meeting with 14 leaders from Jammu and Kashmir, PM Modi had said the delimitation exercise has to happen quickly so that polls can be held to install an elected government in the union territory that will give strength to its development trajectory.

The delimitation, therefore, has attained an urgency amid indications that the Centre is keen to hold early assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir. There is speculation that the polls could be held in the next six to nine months.

Officials said the commission has asked JK chief electoral officer to ensure that representatives of each registered, national and regional political party are provided a separate time slot so that separate discussions can be held with each of them.

The commission will meet leaders of political parties in Srinagar on July 6 and in Jammu on July 8.

The three-member commission, with the JK CEO being the third member, will also hold separate interactions with the DCs, the officials said.

Earlier, the Delimitation Commission had said in a statement that during its visit, it will interact with political parties, public representatives and union territory administration officials including district election officers/deputy commissioners of 20 districts to gather first-hand

information and inputs concerning the ongoing process of delimitation as mandated under the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019.

The commission expects that all stakeholders will cooperate in this endeavour and provide valuable suggestions so that the task of delimitation is completed timely, it said.

Once the delimitation exercise is completed, the number of assembly seats in Jammu and Kashmir will go up from 83 to 90.

Twenty-four seats of the assembly continue to remain vacant as they fall under Pakistan-controlled Kashmir (PcK).

LG Rolls Out

experience to the scholars through extensive work in the field followed by use of analytical tools/brainstorming to come up with solutions under the guidance of IIT Jammu task force, he said.

The objective of the programme is to provide an institutional platform for research related to enhancing delivery of Government Programmes for the graduates from Premier Institutes like IIT Jammu, IIM Jammu, NIT Srinagar, and other institutes who wish to pursue a career in development sector and have an attitude of "giving back" to the society, the spokesman said.

Under the programme, every year 10 scholars/graduates from IIT Jammu, IIM Jammu, NIT Srinagar, and other National Institutes shall be selected, who would have requisite work experience and have qualified GATE, MAT, NET examinations.

Initially, the tenure of fellowship will be for 2 years, which shall be further extendable by 3 years. The rate of fellowship shall be Rs. 60,000/- per month. The field travel and other incidentals will be reimbursed as per the adopted policy.

The Programme shall be monitored by the three-member committee consisting of the Chief Secretary, Principal Secretary to the Lt Governor, and Director, IIT Jammu. The deliverables and accountability of the projects shall be clearly defined and evolved. The committee shall identify specific departmental projects and delivery targets for each specified area for the scholars under the scheme.

The applications shall be invited through online mode once a year through advertisement in leading newspapers and employment news from the candidates fulfilling the eligibility conditions under the scheme.

J&K Planning To

change to millions of people, besides transforming lives for the better. The well-being of all the citizens is my first & foremost duty and mission," Sinha said, as per an official spokesperson.

He made these remarks after inaugurating the induction of the 12th Batch (PG Programme in Management) of Indian Institute of Management - IIM, Rohtak through virtual mode.

"We are building a future on the promise and potential of the youth of Jammu & Kashmir, thus creating better prospects for our younger generation," he added.

On the future framework of the development and growth of J&K, the LG, as per official spokesperson said that the UT Government is planning to generate 3500 megawatt electricity, introducing reforms through Land laws, organising more structured apple farming through high-density plantation, bringing industry reforms through the new industrial policy, attracting 20 thousand crores rupees in investment and creating 5 lakh jobs.

Sinha, he said, drew similarities between management and good governance which is inclusive & responsive and observed that as the LG of J&K, his role is to manage the UT as a constitutional authority.

"Strategic Planning principles of management like Goal-setting, Situational analysis, Strategy formulation, Strategy implementation, Evaluation and Control - all being critical parts of the governance process, we are replicating in J&K," the LG said.

"By working day and night actively with a solution-oriented approach, over 150 new initiatives and reforms have been introduced in a short period of time, providing plenty of opportunities for all. A solid platform has been laid for the young entrepreneurs

including extending financial assistance to them at Panchayats, besides engaging youth with the various stakeholders and putting all their resources together for a common purpose," he added.

The official spokesperson further said that the LG also underscored the reformative measures taken by the administration like Back to Village, My Town My Pride, Jan Abhiyan programs, Block Diwas, JK-IGRAMS, LG Mulaqaat, for making the governance process more transparent and participatory.

"Engaging, Informing, and Empathising with the people, we have created enabling environments across governance, services and delivery, besides empowering and celebrating the uniqueness which is enshrined in the very fabric of Jammu & Kashmir," Sinha said.

"Increasing the budgetary allocation to over 1 lakh crores rupees must be seen as a holistic approach focusing on the Human Development Index and an investment in the future of Jammu & Kashmir bringing sustained peace and opportunity in the UT," he added.

The LG, as per official spokesperson said that strengthening democratic institutions was his topmost priority.

"I want young business minds to look at J&K as a great business opportunity that offers abundant raw material for Agro & Food Processing, strategic location which is truly blessed by nature in its abundance, home to handloom and handicrafts, responsive governance, minimum government, timely policy reforms & rapid single window clearances and Industrial Infrastructure," he added.

As per the official spokesperson, the LG termed the new Industry policy of J&K as one of the finest Industrial policies of the country which is comprehensive and holistic in its approach to create a predictable and stable business environment while facilitating innovation and investments.

Citing WEF reports, Sinha, he said, underlined the importance to put dedicated focus on skilling the younger generation as per the market demand and called upon on the innovators and the academicians to take on the challenge of skilling and educating youth for the jobs of tomorrow, up-grading traditional model of education. Let's work together to make a better future for all of us, added the Lt Governor.

"With sizable fund allocation of Rs 200 crores, part of which we will allocate towards building a Centre of Excellence supported by one of the national institutions of eminence providing a dedicated platform for the youth in digital economy, public policy, culture, media and governance," the LG said, as per official spokesperson.

J&K Records

The Covid death toll rose to 4,343 as six patients died in the past 24 hours.

Meanwhile, there were 30 confirmed cases of Mucormycosis (black fungus) in the UT as no fresh case had been reported since last evening, they said.

Sikh Bizman Leads

Article 370. We will be happy if Sikhs and Hindu community members coming to India from any part of the world can stay with us. We will ensure everything for them, including starting of their livelihood," the letter reads.

Besides, the delegation also demanded minority community status for the Sikhs of the Kashmir valley, "whose chairman should be from the Sikh community. We are only 1.5 Lakhs left with 60,000 registered voters from Sikh community which is spread to 6 districts and 135 villages."

Raina said his group manages about 135 gurdwaras in the valley, some of which are historical.

In view of the delimitation process currently underway in J&K, the delegation demanded reservations for two seats i.e. Baramulla and Srinagar/Tral for Kashmiri Sikhs in the assembly.

"We used to enjoy two seats in Poonch and Baramulla. Now Poonch has gone to Jammu. We requested Union Govt. to kindly reserve two Assembly seats Baramulla and Srinagar/Tral for Kashmiri Sikhs in the House," reads the demand letter.

They said they have maximum villages in these two districts and want to bring changes in their democratic strength.

In another demand, delegation demanded appointment with immediate effect a Sikh advisor to the J&K

Lieutenant Governor, who knows each and everything about Sikhs.

Another key demand made is that Awantipura airport be declared as "Baba Guru Nanak Dev Airport", as it is very close to Mattan Sahib Gurudwara, where the first Sikh Guru had come in 1516 AD and stayed for almost 12 days.

"Gurdwara Mattan Sahib should be declared as National Heritage and international flights should land at Awantipura for darshan of this gurdwara. The road between the airport and Gurudwara Mattan Sahib should be made a dedicated corridor through which Sikhs can come and develop markets, hotels. This area will become a major tourist hub as we expect major international tourist arrival on a daily basis who will definitely want to visit other places in valley and Jammu", read the letter.

The letter also sought "job reservation on an urgent basis to stop Sikh migration from Kashmir. In the last many years, no govt. in the state has given them jobs and due to which they are gradually shifting to other parts of the country and world."

"We also request you sir to kindly arrange a special recruitment drive from Central/State forces for valley Sikhs and formation of a local regiment on the lines of JAKLI for the Sikhs of Kashmir Valley, JK Sikh Light Infantry. "We know in and out of the valley and will make a significant change in the fight against terror in Kashmir," the letter reads.

It also urged the Centre to consider the appointment of the micro minorities living in Kashmir for the posts still vacant under the Prime Minister Relief package for migrants, of which more than 50% seats are still vacant.

"We lost 35000 Sikhs in Choor near Baramulla on National Highway. That place should be demarcated and a National Monument should be built in that place," reads the letter, adding "Govt should make it compulsory to introduce Punjabi language in the study so that Sikh history can't be diluted."

Meanwhile, When Kashmir Observer contacted Baldev Singh Raina to know about the veracity of the letter, he feigned ignorance saying, he has no knowledge about the letter that is going viral on social media.

"Someone told me about the letter but I will have to check it before making any comment," he said.

Raina, however, categorically denied that the letter has to do anything with his recent meeting with the Home Minister.

Sinha Led Group

Valley during their three-day visit. "Tomorrow, we will be meeting people from south Kashmir. In the second half of the day, we will meet people from Srinagar and north Kashmir," Barve.

She further said that the group has frequently been visiting Jammu and Kashmir after government of India revoked the special status and split the state into two Union Territories.

The group has been critical of government's policies and have accused the Centre of making attempts to incubate artificial political processes in Jammu and Kashmir and implement domicile laws for the Union Territory by using lockdown as an opportunity.

Pertinently, CCG delegation's visit to Kashmir comes ten days after 14 political leaders from the Union Territory attended an all part meet convened by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi on June 24 to discuss the future course of political action.

Nearly 2.5 Kg

installations in India on June 29.

Two IAF personnel were injured in the explosions that took place within six minutes of each other. The first blast ripped off the roof of a single-storey building at the technical area of the airport manned by the IAF in Satwari on the outskirts of Jammu. The second one was on the ground.

The probe by the investigators pointed to the involvement of LeT militants who were actively assisted by the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) of Pakistan in carrying out the covert operation, the officials said. They said the probe indicated that the drones with bombs, containing nearly 2.5 kgs RDX, came from across the border.

The aerial distance from the Jammu airport to the international border is 14 km.

The use of RDX in the explosion was confirmed by experts after samples from the scene were sent for examination. While one of the bombs was laced with 1.5 kg of RDX, the other contained nearly 1 kg of RDX, the officials said.

On July 2, Jammu and Kashmir Director General of Police (DGP) Dilbag Singh said the involvement of Pakistan in the drone attack cannot be ruled out as there is a strong suspicion about the role of LeT in it.

Singh had said the use of armed drones by Pakistan-based militants is a serious threat to the security system and there was a need to have a re-look at the security of vital places and persons.

"We have got very serious and strong suspicions that LeT is involved in this case... Since LeT is involved and the outfit is run from Pakistan, so in a way, Pakistan's involvement cannot be ruled out," the police chief had told reporters on the sidelines of a function in Kathua district.

To what extent Pakistani agencies are involved would be known only when the investigation proceeds further, he had said.

The DGP said over a dozen incidents had taken place earlier wherein the LeT was involved in dropping weapons, ready-made IEDs and narcotics using drones.

Singh said it is very much possible that the drones came from across the border.

"In the earlier drone droppings, the drones covered a distance of 10 to 15 km and the aerial distance of the Jammu airport (from the international border) is not more than that. The particular route which is suspected to have been taken by the drone if it had come from across (the border) also comes within the range of 15 km," he had said.

Singh said there have been incidents of drone droppings in Akhnour and Arnia on the outskirts of Jammu and Samba and the initial indications and questioning of people who have been caught pointed towards it.

Mughal, Sinthan

July 5," Sinha said. "Opening these will not only facilitate movement for people but also improve J&K's overall economy. I've issued orders. People of Rajouri & Poonch can now come to Srinagar easily. People of Kishtwar & Doda will be able to come to the Kashmir division easily," he added.

CRPF Man Killed

the constable "either died due to fire from outside or as a consequence of suicide."

"There was an accidental fire from his rifle and he died on the spot," he added.

Cop Injured In Doda

took place in an under-construction building outside DPL at Doda. Though Doda is militancy-free, it could be the work of active over ground workers (OGWs) who want to revive the militancy in the area, the officer stated.

The injured cop was shifted to a government medical college hospital at Doda, where his condition is stated to be stable, police said.

Medical Superintendent of the hospital Yudhvir Singh said the cop have injury in his leg.

"He is stable and out of danger, Singh said. Meanwhile, Kumar said additional police and Army personnel have been rushed to the area to take stock of the situation.

"Extra personnel of security forces have been deployed and search operation is going on as the area has been cordoned off," he added.

Bears Injured

grazing his sheep and goats when the incident took place, officials said.

Najamu Din Nayak, in-charge, Wildlife Control Room (Banihal) said after the two incidents, teams from Banihal and Khari were dispatched to Chapanari and Kharpora upper reaches to drive away the wild beasts from the area to avoid more man-animal conflict.

He added that compensation will be provided to the victims.

Hideout Busted

and utensils were recovered from the hideout.

Bandipora Villagers Protest Against Water Shortage



Observer News Service

BANDIPORA: Dozens of residents from Usman Colony Shahgund area of North Kashmir's Bandipora district Monday staged a protest against the Jal Shakti department over shortage of drinking water in the area. The protestors assembled in

the premises of Jal Shakti Department at Irrigation Colony Sumbal, with ply cards in their hands and raised slogans against the department.

The anguished locals said that they have been facing acute shortage of drinking water and said that despite repeated requests to the department, it is yet to look into the matter.

"Due to lack of clean drinking water, we are forced to consume water from a nearby stream, which may result in the break-out of any disease."

A senior official of Jal Shakti Department, said, that the department will look into the issues of the villagers.



SOLITARY SOWER: A Kashmiri woman farmer working in her paddy field at Khag area of Central Kashmir's Budgam district. KO Photo Abid Bhat

Twin Bank Robbery Attempts Foiled In Dooru, Two Arrested

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir police Monday claimed to have foiled bank robbery attempts by arresting two burglars in Dooru village of south Kashmir's Anantnag district.

An official said that during last night, burglars first made an unsuccessful attempt to rob JK Bank branch in Chenigund village in Dooru after they managed to break the wall of the bank, however, they failed to break inner locker of the bank, where money was kept.

"After failing there, they managed to steal some cattle in the area and later they tried to rob State bank branch in Verinag," the official said.

He said that while they were trying to break the wall of the bank, a police team headed by SHO Verinag reached the spot



and arrested one person and his vehicle was also seized.

He said that later one more person was arrested, while further investigation has taken up into the matter.

The official identified the duo as Mohammed Saleem Shan son of Jamal din and Mohammad Maqsood Mir son of Mohammad Shafi Mir—both residents of Ramban.

Meanwhile, duty officer Verinag, Tajamul Hussain while confirming the incident said that two persons have been arrested and further investigation has been taken up—(Agencies)

Budgam Admin To Set Up Sacrificial Animal Sale Outlets At Tehsil Hq's

Rs. 20 Per Kg Rebate On Poultry Birds



Observer News Service

BUDGAM: Additional Deputy Commissioner Budgam, Dr. Nasir Ahmad Lone Monday directed the Municipal authorities to ensure proper fumigation, sanitation and cleanliness of all the places amid COVID-19 pandemic. He said that on the eve of Eid, the Animal Husbandry Department would set up sale outlets for sale of poultry at Tehsil Headquarters of Chadoora, Charar-e-sharief, Budgam, Beerwah and Khan Sahib.

The meeting was informed that the Animal Husbandry department is going to offer 20 per kg rebate on poultry birds to consumers up on the rate to be fixed by the government during the auspicious days.

The ADC said that no one would be allowed to violate SOPs related to COVID-19 be-

cause of anticipated consumers rush in the markets, and anyone found violating the order will be dealt with strictly under law.

The ADC also said that all SDMs shall remain vigilant within their jurisdiction and ensure that the public follow Do's and Dont's of COVID-19 pandemic during the festival of Eid ul Azha. They shall also constitute special market checking squads with equal participation of department of revenue, legal metrology, police and concerned municipalities in order to check illegal profiteering/hoardings of essentials particularly during the celebration days, he added.

Regarding water and power supply the department Jal Shakti and PDD were asked to ensure uninterrupted supply of water and electricity with alternate arrangements across the district during festival days, the ADC exhorted.

Contractor Booked For 'Assaulting' Executive Engineer

AIJAZ ALI

BUDGAM: The Jammu and Kashmir Police Monday booked a contractor for assault, mischief and criminal intimidation after a government official accused him of allegedly assaulting him and creating ruckus in his office.

A police official said that the contractor, Ghulam Hassan, who is also the President of Contractors Association (PWD) Budgam, has been booked under sections 353, 427, 506 Indian Penal Code.

On Saturday, Hassan allegedly barged into the office of the Executive Engineer R&B Muhammad Ashraf, and assaulted him besides threatened another official of the department.

Ashraf told Kashmir Observer that Hassan tried to throw a glass table at him and also threatened another official of killing him.

Ashraf had gone to the R&B office to demand the release of payment for the contractors who had cleared snow during the winters.

He alleged that the draftsman at the office allegedly demanded a commission for the release of payments and then he went to the Exin's office to complain about the same.

"For the past two years our payment's are still pending. We have met the LG's Advisor and concerned Commissioner who have sought directions about the liabilities from the Exin's office. However the Exin is delaying the response," Hassan alleged.

The Exin, however, said that he is not aware of any directions issued by the Advisor's or Commissioner's office. The Exin, Ashraf, has been in the office for the past one month.

Interestingly, the former Exin Asgar Ali Watali also feigned ignore about any directions. "I did not receive any directions from the Advisor's office or Commissioner's office."

Ashraf said that he cannot ascertain the amount of work that the contractors have done during the time when he was not in office. "I cannot ascertain the work since it is related

to snow clearance," he told Kashmir Observer.

He came into my office and started yelling and said that the department owns him Rs 8 Crores. "This amount is not even the budget for my office," Ashraf said.

If the contractors have done some work, it has to be checked by the officer who was in office then.

"They have some internal issues. This is pressure tactics. It has been a history in Budgam that these contractors have used these tactics to put pressure on the officers."

Ashraf said that the contractors threatened him to lock his office. "How can they say so," he questioned, adding, "they have been threatening the Exin's who held this office before."

The Exin said that the pictures of the assault are with the police and it is for them to investigate the matter.

Meanwhile the Deputy Commissioner of Budgam, Shahbaz Mirza did not respond to the calls from Kashmir Observer.

Govt Institutionalises Awards For Meritorious Service In Forestry And Wildlife Conservation

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Government Monday institutionalised Awards to recognise outstanding work done by Forest Personnel, Village Forest Committee(s), Educational Institutions and Gram Panchayats rendering Meritorious Service.

The awards would be given on the World Forestry Day (21 March) every year.

In this regard, Forest, Ecology and Environment Department issued an order stating that the objective of the award is to recognise outstanding work done by Forest Field Staff and to encourage and promote competence and dedication among forest personnel.

According to the order, while mentioning the eligibility of the Award, 20 Forest officials working as Forest Rangers, Foresters and Forest Guards in the Forest Department will be honoured with this award every year (2 Forest Rangers,

6 Foresters and 12 Forest Guards).

The award shall consist of a citation and a medallion along with a cash award of Rs 25,000 to be given to each recipient and will also be noted in the Annual Performance Report of the official.

While giving the selection criteria, the order stated that the awards will be given for meritorious service and achievement of the individual field personnel in the area of Forest Protection and anti-smuggling operations, afforestation and plantation work, working plan, training and demarcation works.

While innovative ideas and practices will be recognised, emphasis will be on the outcomes and contributions made by the individual in the course of discharge of his duties, it added.

Enumerating about the selection procedure, it said that the recommendations for the award will be made by a selection committee comprising of the Additional PCCF (Central) as Chairperson while

CCF Jammu, CCF Kashmir, CCF Planning & Project as members.

The department has also institutionalised an award for outstanding performance in Plantation/Afforestation.

Giving further details about the award, it said that the objective of the award is to encourage peoples' participation in tree planting and afforestation through Village Forest Committees, Gram Panchayats and educational institutions.

Cash award of Rs 10,000 for the best educational institution at district level (one for each district) and cash award of Rs.20,000 for the best Gram Panchayat at district level (one for every district) will be given for outstanding performance in Plantation/Afforestation.

"These awards will be given each year in the District level function on the World Forestry Day on 21st March. The DFO stationed at District headquarters will act as nodal officer and organize the function at district headquarters," it stated.

OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION OF FOREST PERSONNEL, Village Forest Committees, Educational Institutions and Gram Panchayats to be recognised.

Absconder Arrested After Three Years In Kishtwar

Observer News Service

KISHTWAR: Jammu and Kashmir police on Monday said that a hardcore criminal cum absconder, who was evading his arrest for the last three years, has been arrested.

A police spokesman in a statement said that an absconder Shah Nawaz, son of Mangatulla, a resident of Dossa in Doda district, who was booked in a case under FIR number 06/2018 under sections 376/363/343/109/ RPC of Police Station Atholi, was arrested.

"Kishtwar Police was looking for the person from the last three years and finally information was received through reliable



sources about the accused. Acting quickly on the information, a special police team of Police Station Atholi under the supervision of SDPO Atholi Pardeep Singh was constituted," police said.

The statement said that the team raided the suspected locations of Jammu and Srinagar and finally arrested the accused person from Doda.

DDC Bandipora Stresses On Climate-Resilient Construction Of Roads



Observer News Service

BANDIPORA: Deputy Commissioner Bandipora Dr Owais Ahmad Monday stressed upon officers to ensure the quality standards in road construction with climate-resilient construction so that the roads can withstand the vagaries of climate in higher reaches especially in Gurez.

He took a review of the progress achieved under PMGSY and a held a discussion with regard to the bottlenecks that hinder the early completion of various projects.

Executive Engineer PMGSY was asked to frame month wide timeline chart of completion to monitor the progress.

DC Bandipora directed Executive Engineer PMGSY to complete the work on Authwatto-Lab-

kachal project by October 2021.

Meeting also discussed progress on Peer Bhutto to Chandiji road and other similar projects. DC Bandipora directed the executive engineer PMGSY to explore possibilities of repairing of eroded portion of part of Binlipora-Ketson road.

While taking a detailed review of the stage/scheme wise progress and completion of scheme, the DDC directed the officers to review the pending projects for want of any clearance and get the issues resorted so to complete these projects at the earliest. He directed the officers of PMGSY to coordinate with concerned authorities and settle all the issues including pending land acquisition cases, forest clearances etc for early completion of PMGSY roads.

Shopian Land Records To Be Digitised Before July 15



Observer News Service

SHOPIAN: Additional Deputy Commissioner Shopian, Mush-taq Ahmed Samnani today reviewed the functioning of Revenue department and discussed revenue related matters here at an officer meeting held today.

Among others the meeting was attended by Assistant Commissioner Revenue, SDM Zainapora, all Tehsildars, Naib Tehsildars, Girdawars and other concerned officials.

ADC emphasized upon the rev-

enue officers to complete thrust on fast track service with proper focus on providing the necessary helping hand to the needy and to ensure time bound redressal of public grievances and compilation of all pending works.

On the occasion ADC said that Digitization of land records should be completed before 15th of July. Jamabandi preparation should be done on priority with proper verification with regard to entries and the consonance with the Aks Laatha.

He also directed for keeping strict vigil to prevent any kind of encroachments on State land.

Empathizing on implementation of Public Service Guarantee Act and Right to Information Act in letter and spirit, the ADC directed the concerned officers to maintain a proper record of applications received and disposed thereof."

Students Rue CUK's 'Failure' To Provide 'Merit Scholarships'

KO NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR: A group of students from Central University, Kashmir Monday alleged that the varsity has failed to provide the provisional "Merit Scholarship" of first two toppers of every department for the last few years.

To promote competitiveness among the students, the University provides scholarships to the students registered for various programmes of study under the

scheme "Merit Scholarships".

Under this scheme, two meritorious students, determined on the basis of their End Semester result from each programme, are provided a fellowship of Rs. 5,000/- per month for every semester.

However, the students told Kashmir Observer that since 2018, the University failed to do so.

Vice Chancellor, CUK, Prof. Mehraj ud Din Mir told Kashmir Observer that he will look into the matter and sort it out.

Leopard Captured In Uri

URI: A team of Wildlife Department captured a leopard in Rampur Boniyar area in frontier Uri town of North Kashmir's Baramulla district.

Officials said that acting on complaints about sightings of a leopard in and around residential areas, a trap was laid by the department near Army's 106 Brigade camp. On Sunday evening the leopard was captured.

Range Officer Wildlife Department Baramulla Atif Koul said that presence of the wild animal had created panic among the local inhabitants. "The leopard will be set free at Dachigam wildlife sanctuary" he added. (CNS)

Rs 980 Cr Disbursed Among 44766 Beneficiaries In Kulgam

Observer News Service

KULGAM: The District Development Commissioner Kulgam Dr. Bilal-Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat, Monday, chaired the District Level Review Committee Meeting (DLRC) convened to review the performance of Banks and Line Departments.

The Meeting was attended by, ACD, CPO, District officers of line Departments, Lead District Manager, DDM NABARD, Cluster Head JK Bank, District Coordinators of other Banks and civil departments.

LDM, Arshid Qadri informed the meeting that deposits of Banks stood at Rs 2069.65 Crore as on 31.03.2021 witnessing growth of 13.68% over March 2020, Advances stood at Rs.1591.34 cr as on 31.03.2021 witnessing growth of 15.70% over March 2020. The Credit Deposit Ratio is 76.89% which



is quite above the National Bench Mark of 60%.

Under the District Annual Credit Plan for 2020-21 of Rs.1464.40 Cr Banks have disbursed Rs.980.01 Cr to 44766 beneficiaries for FY up to 31.03.2021 thus achieving 67% of ACP target despite Pandemic restrictions, the meeting was informed.

It was informed that achievement under the Priority Sector is Rs.795.38Cr (58%) of ACP and under the Non-priority sector it is Rs. 184.62Cr a total of 184% of ACP.

Under Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan 15821 cases under KCC crop and 5762 cases under KCC AH&F have been sanctioned during this year, the meeting was told.

DDC stressed for proper & timely implementation of Govt Schemes PMEGP, REGP, PM SVNidhi, NRLM, NULM & PMAY to generate self-employment opportunities in District.

DDC while reviewing sector wise achievements, directed Banks to improve credit dispensations in Agriculture, MSME, housing and education sectors.

Positivity Rate Declines To Less Than One Percent In Kupwara

Observer News Service

KUPWARA: Deputy Commissioner Kupwara, Imam Din reiterated his message for the general public to continue the use of mask and maintenance of Covid appropriate behaviour and other SOPs to inhibit the resurgence of the Covid.

He expressed gratitude for the people of district Kupwara for implementation of Covid appropriate Behaviour religiously. Besides, he also thanked employees of all departments who rendered selfless service in curbing the Covid pandemic.

The Deputy Commissioner again appealed to the people not to lower the guard against the Covid pandemic. He said the positivity rate has declined to 0.71%, while recovery rate has gone up to 97% which is a good sign of satisfaction for the district.



Regarding vaccination, the Deputy Commissioner said that 67% of the target population of above 45 age has been covered till date. Moreover, 16% of 18-44 years age group has been vaccinated so far in the district. He said the only way to keep the Covid at bay is to follow the Covid appropriate behaviour and get vaccinated.

On the occasion, District Information Officer, Kupwara, Mohammad Yousuf Mir and Nodal Officer Covid, Ghulam Nabi Sheikh was present.

India, Australia, 15 Others Express Interest To Host ICC ODI Events During Next Cycle

Press Trust of India

DUBAI: India, Australia and England are among 17 member nations to have expressed interest in hosting ICC white-ball events during the next eight-year tournament cycle from 2024-2031, the game's global governing body said on Monday.

As per a PTI report, the BCCI last month decided to bid for three global events -- including two World Cups in shorter formats -- during the next cycle that starts from 2024, but the Indian board is not keen on paying any hosting fee.

There will also be an issue of tax waiver which BCCI needs to get from its own government to host any ICC event.

The BCCI took the decision dur-

members were invited to submit a preliminary technical proposal as a potential host. This included individual country submissions as well as joint proposals.

Initial submissions have been received from Australia, Bangladesh, England, India, Ireland, Malaysia, Namibia, New Zealand, Oman, Pakistan, Scotland, South Africa, Sri Lanka, West Indies, UAE, USA and Zimbabwe.

ICC acting chief executive Geoff Allardice said: "We are delighted with the response from our Members to hosting ICC men's white-ball events post 2023. This process gives us an opportunity to extend our range of hosts and grow interest in cricket worldwide reaching more fans whilst creating a long-term legacy for the sport. "Cricket has more than a bil-



ing its last Emergent Apex Council meeting. It was learnt that the BCCI would bid for one Champions Trophy, a T20 World Cup and a 50-over World Cup.

Following the expansion to its event programme in the next cycle, the International Cricket Council has commenced the process to identify the hosts for men's white-ball events to be held post 2023.

The hosting of the ICC World Test Championship Final, the ICC women's and under-19 events in the new cycle will be determined in a separate process that will get underway later this year, the ICC said in a press release.

Eight men's ODI and T20 events, comprising two men's ODI World Cups, four men's T20 World Cups and two ICC Champions Trophies, will be staged from 2024-2031 cycle and the

lion fans around the world and ICC events have a proven track record of bringing significant economic and social benefits for host countries.

"These events provide hosts with a wonderful opportunity to work closely with local communities to grow the game whilst supporting economic and social development public policy goals."

Recently the ICC had announced that the Champions Trophy, which hasn't been held after 2017 in England, will be revived during the next FTP cycle and accordingly India has decided to bid for it.

Allardice added, "We will now move forward to the second phase of the process where Members will provide a more detailed proposal before the ICC Board takes decisions on our future hosts later this year."

Confident Brazil Take On Peru In Copa America Semifinals



Agencies

RIO DE JANEIRO: Defending Copa America champion Brazil is still regarded as the team to beat... not bad for a tournament some of their players didn't even want to be in.

Few expect that favorite tag to change as Brazil gets ready for Monday's semifinal against Peru, a team that the Selecao thrashed 4-0 two weeks ago in the group stage.

The winner at the Nilton Santos Stadium in Rio de Janeiro will play Saturday's final at the historic Maracana Stadium against Argentina or Colombia, which play on Tuesday.

"It is obvious we are favourites for being at home, but we need to know how to deal with that," Brazil midfielder Fred said at a news conference on Sunday. "Players want to have the match of their lives against Brazil. The last one (beating Chile 1-0 in the quarterfinals) was tough, but the next will be tougher. Peru will be motivated, trying to win, it will be the match of their lives."

Brazil and Peru played in the 2019 Copa America final, with host Brazil winning 3-1 before nearly 70,000 fans. Monday's match will be played without fans due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Two key strikers won't be playing in the semifinal. Brazil's Ga-

briel Jesus and Peru's Andre Carrillo (against Paraguay) were sent off during the quarterfinals. Brazil's Everton, one of the top scorers at the 2019 Copa America edition, and veteran Christian Cueva are set to take their places.

Brazil advanced to the semifinals after a hard-fought win with 10 men for almost all of the second half against Chile.

Peru recovered from its 4-0 defeat against the hosts by beating Colombia and Venezuela and securing a draw with Ecuador. It reached the semifinals on penalties after a 3-3 draw with Paraguay.

"We will have the chance to face Brazil and correct all the things that went wrong in the first match," Peru coach Ricardo Gareca said. "Brazil continues to be a very powerful team, this Brazil is very good. Our team is also improving."

Alex Sandro, Neymar, Everton Ribeiro and Richarlison scored for Brazil against Peru.

Peru will look to striker Gianluca Lapadula, replacing its all-time top scorer Paolo Guerrero who missed the tournament due to a knee injury.

Brazil will once again count on Neymar, its best player in the tournament so far, who finished the clash against Chile in a state of exhaustion, along with many of his teammates.

IT IS OBVIOUS WE ARE FAVOURITES for being at home, but we need to know how to deal with that, Brazil midfielder Fred said at a news conference on Sunday. "Players want to have the match of their lives against Brazil. The last one (beating Chile 1-0 in the quarterfinals) was tough, but the next will be tougher. Peru will be motivated, trying to win, it will be the match of their lives."

18 Goals Scored On Opening Day Of Premier UT League 2020-21



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The 2nd Phase of JKFA and JKSC organised Premier UT League 2020-21 kicked off on Monday at Synthetic Turf Ground TRC with two matches played which saw a combined total of 18 goals scored.

The event was inaugurated by Nuzhat Gul, Secretary JKSC, accompanied by Nuzhat Ara, DSO (Kashmir), Nusrat Ghazala SO (C), Fayaz Ahmad Sofi, President JKFA & JKSC.

The first match of the day was played between Khudwani Quomoh

FC (Kulgam) and J&K Bank XI. A one-sided affair, J&K Bank defeated Khudwani FC by a margin of 10 goals. The 2nd match was played between Kashmir Avengers FC and Iqbal FC (Bandipora). The Avengers dominated the field right from the start and scored 8 goals against the team from Bandipora.

Earlier, the JKSC Secretary was introduced to the players of the competing teams. The Secretary interacted with the footballers and coaches and listened to their genuine demands. She asserted that the youth of J&K should actively partic-

ipate in different sports events. She said that the JKSC will always provide logistics support and informed the players that they are welcome to suggest certain measures for the development of sports and games.

Two more matches of the Premier League are scheduled to take place today. In the first match, Ethihad FC (Pulwama) will take on Dar Sports (Kupwara) at 2:30 pm. While in the 2nd match, Ferrari Lions (Ganderbal) will lock horns against Shopian FC at 4:30pm. The matches will be played at the Synthetic Turf Ground Srinagar.

Mary Kom, Manpreet Singh To Be India's Flag Bearers At Tokyo Olympics

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Celebrated boxer M C Mary Kom and men's hockey team skipper Manpreet Singh will be the country's flag bearers at the opening ceremony of Tokyo Olympics, the Indian Olympic Association announced on Monday.

One of India's biggest medal hopes, wrestler Bajrang Punia, will be the flag bearer at the closing ceremony on August 8.

The IOA has communicated the decision in this regard to the organising committee of the Tokyo Games.

In a first, India is having two flag-bearers -- one male and one female -- at the upcoming Tokyo Games to ensure "gender parity". This was recently informed by IOA chief Narinder Batra.

"It would be a huge moment for me given that it is my last Olympics. Who knows I might even get emotionally overwhelmed," Mary Kom told PTI after being named as one of the flag bearers.

"I am truly honoured to get this



opportunity of leading the team out during the opening ceremony and I thank the sports ministry and IOA for naming me. It would be added motivation for me. I promise to do my best for a medal," the six-time world champion added.

The country's lone individual Olympic gold-medallist Abhinav Bindra was the flag bearer at the opening ceremony of the 2016 Games in Rio de Janeiro.

The Tokyo Games are scheduled to open on July 23 and over 100 Indian athletes would be gunning for podium finishes at the

showpiece, which was postponed by a year because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

At its executive board meeting last year, the International Olympic Committee had made provisions for flag-bearers from both genders at the opening ceremony.

"...the IOC Executive Board also decided that there should be for the first time ever at least one female and one male athlete in every one of the 206 teams and the IOC Refugee Olympic Team participating at the Games of the Olympiad," IOC chief Thomas Bach had said.

Djokovic Wins At Wimbledon For 50th Major Quarterfinal Berth

Agencies

WIMBLEDON: Two-time defending champion Novak Djokovic held every service game Monday and reached his 50th Grand Slam quarterfinal by beating No. 17-seeded Cristian Garin at Wimbledon, 6-2, 6-4, 6-2.

Djokovic earned his 12th quarterfinal berth at Wimbledon, which ties him with Arthur Gore for third place on the men's all-time list, behind Roger Federer's 18 and Jimmy Connors' 14.

Three men became first-time Wimbledon quarterfinalists, including No. 25 Karen Khachanov of Russia, who won a bizarre fifth set to beat American Sebastian Korda on his 21st birthday, 3-6, 6-4, 6-3, 5-7, 10-8. With both players battling fatigue and nerves, there were 13 services breaks in the final set.

For Korda, it was a disappointing end to an otherwise impressive Wimbledon debut.

Khachanov will next face No. 10 Denis Shapovalov, who hit 15 aces and beat No. 8 Roberto Bautista Agut 6-1, 6-3, 7-5.

Khachanov and Shapovalov joined Wimbledon's final eight for the first time, as did No. 7 Matteo Berrettini, who became the first Italian man in 23 years to reach the quarterfinals by ousting Ilya Ivashka 6-4, 6-3, 6-1.

Top-ranked Ash Barty also became a first-time Wimbledon quarterfinalist when she beat French Open champion Barbara Krejčíková 7-5, 6-3. Barty was troubled again by a shaky serve but saved eight of 10 break points and did manage an ace on match point to end Krejčíková's 15-match win streak.

Barty has yet to play her best in



the tournament but is the favorite to claim her second Grand Slam title. The Australian won the 2019 French Open and was the Wimbledon girls' singles champion in 2011.

"I love coming out here and test myself against the best in the world," Barty told the crowd. "And there's certainly no place I'd rather be at the moment."

Ons Jabeur of Tunisia became the first Arab woman to reach the Wimbledon quarterfinals by rallying past 2020 French Open champion Iga Świątek 5-7, 6-1, 6-1. Jabeur, seeded 21st, converted all seven-break point chances. No. 2-seeded Aryna Sabalenka reached her first Grand Slam quarterfinal by defeating Elena Rybakina 6-3, 4-6, 6-3. No. 8 Karolina Plíšková hit 10 aces and eliminated Ludmila Samsonova 6-2, 6-3.

All 16 fourth-round matches for men and women were on the schedule to start the tournament's second week.

IPL Will Wear Out UAE Pitches Before T20 World Cup, Fears SA Coach Mark Boucher

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: The remainder of Indian Premier League being held in the United Arab Emirates will hugely affect the pitches, which might get worn out and help the spinners "massively" during ICC T20 World Cup, feels South Africa head coach Mark Boucher.

The 2021 IPL, which was suspended following COVID-19 cases inside the bio-bubble, will be completed in UAE, which will also host the T20 World Cup after the ICC decided to shift the showpiece event from India due to the unprecedented health crisis.

The second leg of the IPL is scheduled to be held from September 19 to October 15, while the T20 World Cup will begin on October 17.

"The wickets after the IPL are going to be a bit dry. It's not the same as we are used to back in South Africa where you can go out and bash your way to 180 to 200 runs. You've got to be skillful here; you've got to be smart," Boucher was quoted as saying in ESPNcricinfo.

"If anything, it's going to go even further into subcontinent conditions, on the extreme side. They are playing the IPL there, there are not a lot of grounds and those wickets



are going to be worn, so scores will probably go even further down."

Boucher said batting will be tough on this pitches as spinners will hold the key.

"It's going to be tough to bat on especially at the back end as we saw here," said the South African.

"We will have an idea of what scores are going to be by watching the IPL and then taking a look and assess how the wickets are playing during the beginning part of the World Cup.

"I suspect spinners will play a massive role."

Left-arm wrist spinner Tabraiz Shamsi had claimed seven wickets as South Africa won a five-match T20I series against the West Indies 3-2 at the National Cricket Stadium in St George's, Grenada.

Mohammad Amir Needs Domestic Success For International Return: Waqar Younis

Agencies

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan bowling coach Waqar Younis feels it will be tough for paceman Mohammad Amir to make a comeback to international cricket without first impressing domestically.

Amir retired from international play last December, saying he was mentally tortured by his teammates and coaches. The left-arm fast bowler played in the recent Pakistan Super League with minimal success.

He reportedly met with Pakistan Cricket Board chief executive Wasim Khan earlier this year, leading to speculation of a return before the Twenty20 World Cup in October.

"No doubt he's a fine cricketer, but if he doesn't want to take his retirement back and impress selectors by playing cricket, it will be hard," Younis told reporters via videoconference from England on Monday.

"It's Pakistan cricket, it's not yours or my cricket (team), you have to do the right things to play for your country. This is not a franchise cricket and one got to remember that," Younis said he was not aware about any meeting between Khan and Amir.

"To be honest I didn't know about this (meeting)," he said. "He



(Khan) is head of the cricket and he has every right to meet whosoever he wants to see; he went there in his personal capacity and we didn't know about it."

Amir played for Karachi Kings in the PSL, but could take only five wickets in 11 matches at an average of 69.80. Karachi was knocked out after losing both of their playoffs. Amir took 259 wickets across 36 Tests, 61 one-day internationals and 50 T20s. He was 18 when he was banned in 2010 for five years and jailed for three months for spot-fixing in a Test series in England. He was allowed to return to cricket a few months early and recalled by Pakistan in 2016.

In 2019 he no longer wanted to play Tests, to focus on white-ball cricket and prolong his international career. Amir's last international was in August 2020 in a T20 against England.

Euro 2020: Italy, Spain All Set To Take Unbeaten Runs Into Semifinals

Agencies

LONDON: Luis Enrique thought for a couple of seconds, looked straight back at the questioner, and gave the curt reply.

"No," said the Spain coach, with the blankest of looks on his face, after being asked if he had seen a better team than his at the European Championship.

An answer out of blind loyalty? Perhaps. Or was it the fact that Spain was the leading scorer at Euro 2020? Maybe.

On the fact that La Roja is on an unbeaten streak stretching back to October, a run of 13 games? Quite possibly. Spain's opponent in the European Championship semifinals on Tuesday might have something to say about all that.

Italy, another of the continent's traditional powers, brings an even better run of form to Wembley Stadium -- a national-record 32 matches unbeaten, going all the way back to September 2018. From the moment tenor Andrea Bocelli cleared the field at Stadio Olimpico after his stirring rendition of "Nessun Dorma" at the opening ceremony, making way for the start of the tournament, the Italians have been right on the money.

Three impressive wins in the group stage, without conceding. A gutsy victory over a better-than-expected Austria in the round of 16. The elimination of top-ranked Belgium in the quarterfinals.

Maybe Luis Enrique isn't aware, but Italy is rolling at the moment.

This might be a match between teams who have almost forgotten what it feels like to lose -- Spain has only one defeat in its last 29 games -- but Italy looks to have the edge, at both ends of the field.



Much has changed since Roberto Mancini took charge in May 2018, with the team having evolved into a high-energy unit that presses hard and attacks at pace. But the Azzurri's defense needs little introduction.

Formidable center backs Leonardo Bonucci and Giorgio Chiellini are still holding the fort, like they have been for more than a decade, and Italy has conceded only two goals so far.

Spain's defense, on the other hand, is a work in progress while center back Aymeric Laporte integrates following his switch of nationality from France.

In attack, striker Alvaro Morata continues to frustrate for Spain and Luis Enrique has seemingly yet to settle on his preferred wingers. Italy, though, has had strong and reliable performances from striker Ciro Immobile and wide forward Lorenzo Insigne, the scorer of the decisive second goal against Belgium.

Neither team has made it this far in a major international competition since 2012, when they met in the European Championship final in Kyiv. Spain won that match 4-0. Two players remain for each country: Bonucci and Chiellini for Italy, and Jordi Alba and Busquets for Spain.

So while this is far from uncharted territory for two countries with nine European Championship or World Cup titles between them, it is for most of the players involved.

Expect the Spanish to have the majority of possession, but maybe by not as much as they are accustomed. And expect the Italians to launch quick counterattacks from turnover balls, seeking to get behind the aging Busquets and attack the soft center of Spain's defense.

A win for Spain, which has the youngest squad at the tournament, sets up the prospect of a third European Championship title in four editions and potentially the start of new period of success for a nation that dominated world soccer from 2008-12.

A win for Italy surely means Mancini's team would enter the final as the favorite, no matter who wins the second semifinal match between England and Denmark.